Mitigating the 'Trial by Fire': The Experiences of Residency Teachers Participating in a Post-Graduate, Pre-Service Teaching Residency Program

by

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Abstract

This is a case study of the experiences of five teachers who returned to university for an after degree diploma in effective teaching and learning in urban contexts. The ten month school based residency was facilitated by a partnership between a large school district and university. The residents maintained a weekly online journal, they completed assignments for their university professors, they participated in the full range of activities and responsibilities as their cooperating teacher partners, and they invested heavily in reflective and responsive processes. At the conclusion of their residency, they were asked to identify which components of the residency were the most significant in their development. The findings have implications for university program developers and school board leadership.

Length of practicum, the nature of the relationships that occur within the practicum, and the activities that encourage, guide and support new teacher growth are essential. All of the residency participants identified the brevity and superficiality of their student-teaching practicum as a significant weakness in preparing them for the realities of the classroom and the challenges of the career. Learning to teach, and shifting one's identity from student to teacher is a complicated process that requires on-site supportive and critical relationships. Schools that take on the responsibility of preparing teachers must have in place a culture that expects and models reflective and responsive processes; moreover, rather than student-teacher placements based on the availability of mentors, there should be a process by which cooperating teachers are selected because of their commitment to inquiry, collaborative learning activities and life-long growth.

Especially for new teachers, professional learning must be relevant to their student and subject context, connected to the challenges they are facing in their teaching assignment, and afforded time and space to practice, get feedback and integrate changes to improve their practice.

Finally, if teachers are going to be effective learning leaders regardless of the student variables they encounter, they require expansive experiences working with diverse student populations where they can explore, practice and apply a wide range of intervention strategies to mitigate the impact of issues predominant in urban classrooms.

Key words: pre-service, diversity, residency, relationships, action research, case study, professional learning, urban, teacher researchers.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Kelly Joanne Harding. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Mitigating the 'Trial by Fire': The Experiences of Residency Teachers Participating in a Post-Graduate, Pre-Service Teaching Residency Program," No. Pro000389150, September 3, 2013. It received Cooperative Activities Program approval from Edmonton Public Schools on October 30th, 2013.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family; to my husband, Dan Harding and to my children, Ian and Blythe Harding. Without your support, I would not have been able to fit this work into our already busy lives. Dan - you took up all the slack, forgave my frequent absences and understood that I needed, and will always need, the time and space to read, think and write. I am so grateful that you understand my calling and the passion I have for this career. Ian and Blythe – I am so proud of you, and who you are both becoming. You inspire me every day. May your learning journeys always be fulfilling and rewarding, and bring you to places of joy.

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This dissertation has been both the result of, and my response to, the incredible changes in the teaching landscape. Teachers have an impossible task given to them, and the consequences of how new teachers are prepared and brought into the profession are wide-reaching. This experience would not have been possible without the support and influence of the following people:

- To my supervisor, Jim Parsons; you encouraged me to do this work, to build a space where educators at all points in their professional lives could engage in deep learning and affect improvement in their schools. You invited me into a different world and pushed me to grow and learn. You cultivated the path for my passion to make things better for kids. You taught me how to write, and to think. You trusted me to work hard, to take risks, and to make a difference; and you trusted me to love Larry Beauchamp as much as you do.
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CHAPTER ONE

In praxis there can be no prior knowledge of the right means by which we realize the end in a particular situation. For the end itself is only concretely specified in deliberating about the means appropriate to a particular situation (Bernstein, 1983, p. 147).

This research study sought to explore the effectiveness of an extra-to-degree, post-baccalaureate teaching residency experience for new teachers. A teaching residency year has the potential to offer new graduates of education a four-fold learning opportunity to better transition, and ensure their effectiveness as teachers, in the profession: (a) they can get experience with a wide range of learners in a supported, collaborative environment; (b) they can begin to work through their own beliefs, values and understanding of theory in a variety of contexts; (c) they can begin course work that moves them into deeper practices of reflection, self-assessment and theorizing, usually not standard in most undergraduate education curricula; and (d) they can begin to engage in site-based research processes, using classroom issues and challenges to develop self-efficacy and inform their own learning leadership capacities.

During their ten month residency, participants co-constructed their experience through action research processes. This case study sought to capture which characteristics of the ten-month teaching residency experience the participants identified as essential to their sense of effectiveness, knowledge and confidence to work in diverse, urban classrooms.

Background and Context

To ground my lens and ethos as an applied researcher, I am beginning this dissertation by describing the experiences that encouraged me to seek a way to make the beginning year(s) of teaching better, a complex topic that has been expansively explored over many decades, and for which significant resources and initiatives have been applied. During the 2010-2011 school year, I was granted a study leave from my school board to pursue my doctoral degree in education. As a result, I was afforded the opportunity to work alongside my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Jim Parsons, then Director of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) at the University of Alberta. The Alberta Initiative for School Improvement, or AISI, was a government funded program that supported the improvement of student learning by encouraging teachers, parents, and the community to work collaboratively to introduce innovative and creative initiatives to improve education in Alberta based upon local needs, local challenges, site specific contexts and circumstances.

In my role as research assistant within the AISI university partnership that looked at site-based research, I spoke with teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, board personnel, leaders in our teachers' association, and teacher educators from across our province, and other areas in the northwestern states and provinces. The engaging work of improving schools *by* teachers *in* schools based on the specific needs of *their* students meant that many educators experienced a re-engagement in their learning. Empowered to address their contextual challenges, teachers could engage in professional learning activities that honed

their research skills, supported the development of critical analysis skills via multiple data sources, and directed their gaze towards unconsidered areas in their practice and philosophies (Parsons & Harding, 2010).

Spanning two decades, AISI created a space for educator collaboration, networking, partnerships and an ethic of continuous improvement to flourish. The schools that worked well showed fearless commitment to asking tough questions and paying careful attention to *what* was working to engage learning, and *why* (Parsons & Harding, 2011b). They also became increasingly aware of the need to communicate their insights and understandings with policymakers.

The philosophical underpinnings and epistemological foundations of the AISI initiative – more than any other school reform activity I have read about or experienced before – concretized theory and informed practice for Alberta's educators. As Bernstein (1983) stated, "In praxis there can be no prior knowledge of the right means by which we realize the end in a particular situation. For the end itself is only concretely specified in deliberating about the means appropriate to a particular situation" (p. 147). AISI and its dynamic, critical reflection/creative/dialogic/committed action research processes valued a space where educators could find the 'right means' for their specific challenges. AISI supported *praxis* – that is, the stakeholders were able to make informed choices as to the right direction to move based on their situation (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

The belief that there is a 'right' direction to proceed based on the specific context and situation, blends well with the notion of the third space – a non-physical location that challenges the idea that one source of knowledge is more

important or privileged than the knowledge attained from a second site – for example, the academic or institutional knowledge versus the practical or field knowledge. My inquiry seeks to locate this 'creating new understanding' space for all beginning teachers – a third space that can support, sustain, and esteem the process of coming-to-know what it means to be an effective, knowledgeable, reflective, critical and evolving learning-leader.

An applied action ethic allows the opportunity for a critical freedom that can be theorized through praxis and critical conversations. Knowing just how challenging and overwhelming the transition from student to teacher can be, I am concerned for beginning teachers entering into a profession where, in many cases, the new graduate is held to the same expectations for competency and effectiveness as those who have been in the career for years.

My concern is grounded in the reality that many beginning teachers have only a small window to prove their capacity to an administrator. If they cannot, and they are not fortunate enough to be working with an administrator who understands the new educators' need for formal supports and coaching processes, a long line of newer prospective teachers waits behind them to take their place. A dialogic, curriculum-as-praxis oriented third space for coming-into-self as beginning teachers challenges both the notions of the institutions and most school districts that 'we know better than them'. Veteran teachers, administrators, professors, cooperating teachers, policy makers, and curriculum theorists have carved out and staked their claim on knowledge. A third space, committed to a

dialogic, critical, informed action pedagogy has the potential to deconstruct epistemological stances, and political influences on the profession.

A third space – where neither institution nor board controls the agenda – would support the belief that institutions cannot do the complete work of preparing educators. Such a space would acknowledge not all schools or school districts do an adequate job supporting new teachers' transition from learner to learning leader, and that specific contexts or changing landscapes require stakeholders to engage in the process of creating new knowledge. Such a space would suggest that school districts want to be different than other corporations who want a specific product and see people as cogs in the production process.

I decided to pursue my doctoral studies in 2010, in part, because of the incredible capacity I saw in my teaching colleagues to address and improve the challenges they identified in their classrooms, and how it led to the creation of a space in my school where talking and critical reflection became the new normal. It seemed, from my particular experience of working with beginning teachers, that the skills, knowledge, and self-efficacy teachers gained from directing teaching and learning improvement projects within their classrooms needed to become an inextricable part of teacher knowledge (Barth, 2001). I started to wonder what kind of impact school improvement leadership (and its constant investment into, and attentiveness between, *what* and *why* and *what next*) would have on new teachers (Harding, 2011). Would involvement in naming, claiming and fixing some aspect of their own transition into the career, or of their work in school

address some of the issues that led to beginning teacher attrition, issues such as isolation, alienation, or feeling powerless in the system?

Where it worked, AISI, specifically *the dialogue* it supported and prioritized, had changed the learning field and altered its hierarchical shape to something more horizontal where information flowed multi-directionally. Teachers became partners. I am left wondering *where or how* do the educational preparation institutions see the re-positioning of practitioner expertise in their curriculum? Could I provide a space for new teachers at my school where they could continue to learn and develop their skills and knowledge alongside a mentor who also wanted to grow and evolve?

After five cycles of AISI, Alberta's teachers exemplified the notion of praxis – *informed or committed action* – and the subsequent impact informed and committed action has had on their own, and student, learning warrants those insights be shared – specifically with those teacher educators responsible for pre-service teachers. Theory (the idea) and practice (living the idea) are not opposites; they are entwined, constantly informing each other and evolving to meet contextual challenges. Informed practices – which informs theory – informs next actions, and leads to *praxis*. As Freire (1972) explained, "We find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed, even in part, the other immediately suffers" (p. 60). As I watched hundreds of pre-service teachers move through the hallways of the education building, I could not help but consider how the incredible positioning of teachers as 'research-leaders-problem-solvers' who engage in critical dialogue could

become part of an essential curriculum that transcends subject knowledge and achievement results.

In the last month of my sabbatical year, I visited two Advanced Practicum Term[1] classes on their call-back days to moderate a de-briefing discussion of their field experiences. I was not surprised by a general sentiment within the groups that they felt the institution put too much value on theory, with too little time spent on the practical knowledge they felt they needed in order to excel in their practicum (Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007). They felt that the schools expected them to have competencies and knowledge that they had not encountered or developed as part of their degree program. This complaint is heard often from new teachers struggling with the transition. Although the theory versus practice argument is not completely supportable, there is some merit in the perception that the school-based component of learning to teach is more relevant to the pre-service teacher's need to be successful on the job than the theories explored at the university. In very practical terms, if the student does not pass the practicum, regardless of his or her academic success and grasping of theory, he or she will not meet the degree requirements for successful field work, and will not be granted a teaching license.

In hoping to encourage students to understand where they were located in their learning journey, I explained the theory/practice disconnect to the pre-service teachers this way: a theory is someone's idea about something he or she conceived – which, from the location in a specific socio/politico/cultural place in

[1] At this institution, the final or Advanced Practicum Term placement is 9 weeks in length.

time, made sense. Pre-service teachers have little to work with in terms of *situating* theoretical ideas (perhaps a flaw in some programs' design that pre-service teachers are not getting field experiences before they are introduced to theory). With experiences to reflect upon, abstract concepts, theories, ideas, and the specific skills and techniques they call for can make sense. Theory is matched or situated in events, scenarios, and circumstances. The intersection or merging of a theory within a situation provides the space where pre-service teachers can actually reflect and decide on their beliefs about teaching and learning.

Many students in the groups I spoke with felt that leaving the practicum until the end did not serve them well. I agreed. Understanding the complexity and nuance of ideas needs context. After these conversations, a question started to take shape in my mind: how could I use my school as a third space platform to provide the time and support new teachers needed to better transition from institution into the teaching career?

Contextualizing the Problem.

After meeting the credential criteria for acquiring an education degree, beginning would-be educators still have a series of hurdles to successfully clear in their attempts to secure a teaching contract: to secure an interview with personnel, to impress a principal to be given an assignment; to stand out during the assignment term as a 'candidate to keep,' to receive the backing of administration for a probationary term assignment, and again, to stand out as a probationary teacher to receive administrative backing for a permanent contract. Crocker and

Dibbon (2008) pointed to statistics from 2003 that, at any given time in Canada's universities, approximately forty-six thousand students were enrolled in education programs: graduating approximately eighteen thousand new teachers each year (p. 11). And, while those numbers may be a decade old, there is no evidence that education faculties in Canada are short program applicants. It should also be noted that budgetary constraints that dictate hiring policy and the programming needs of specific districts/schools can play a significant role in potentially wonderful educators not getting positions. From a practical point, most adults require a stable and secure source of income in order to start a family, purchase a home, and most immediately as a new graduate, cover the cost of their existence, which may include the repayment of student loans. The process of securing a teaching career can take years, and it can be emotionally exhausting, if not devastating to morale. Deciding to leave teaching as a career may be less a choice than a response to the aforementioned issues.

The variations in teacher education programs across Canada (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008) means that education graduates have experienced widely different curricula and learning experiences; length and location of practicum experiences – including the style of mentorship provided by the cooperating teacher – the length of the degree, the activities and experiences within each program creates as many degrees in skills, attitudes, and perceptions of readiness as there are graduates. Vastly different lived experiences, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds of the individuals competing for jobs present challenges to human resource officers who want to hire qualified, effective teachers. There is no single standard against

which a human resource official can measure potential hires. That leaves human resource officials with few criteria from which they can build their preferred interviewee list: namely relevant experiences, courses and grade point average. From my own experience as someone who has had to short-list whom to invite to an interview, I know first-hand how difficult it can be to find the perfect candidate for a particular assignment from a cover letter, resume, and transcript.

The problem for would-be teachers intensifies when graduates can only superficially speak to experiences in classrooms where they may or may not have put into practice the various theories and concepts they were taught in university. "Generally regarded as a significant component of teacher education programs" (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008, p. 32), practicum length and the criteria for which placements are selected are not consistent across education faculties. Many student teaching placements are determined by availability and a willingness by a teacher to take a student-teacher. Although deep reflection about teaching is hoped for, the placement may not have been one where reflective practice was demonstrated, practiced, or expected. As well, the artificial construct of the student-teaching practicum rarely provides pre-service teachers the opportunity to really explore their beliefs and understanding of good assessment, authentic student engagement, collaborative practice, and data use to inform instructional choices – let alone understand the innumerable decisions that go into setting up an effective and engaging learning program (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

During the all-important interview, young teachers might not be able to speak to the key competencies large urban boards seek – experience in

differentiated instruction, inclusion of special needs or English language learners, authentic assessment, student motivation, or knowledge of how to manage a classroom of diverse learners, for example (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). Because they cannot get work, they cannot get experience. Even if they are hired for the substitution pool and afforded a short-term contract, they are expected to act in substitution for the returning teacher; and, as such, it is assumed by the teacher-on-leave, students, parents, and administration the substitute teacher will maintain already established classroom procedures, policies and routines, and adhere to a course outline he or she had no say in creating. The chance to reflect, adapt, grow, and evolve is slim. A novice might find himself or herself with significantly limited skills, attitudes and knowledge for many years into their career (McCormack & Thomas, 2005).

Supporting the New Teacher.

Over my career, I have served in many informal and formal mentorship roles – first as a friendly colleague to new educators or teachers new to site, and later as a supervisor as part of various leadership roles. It had always seemed intuitively good for students that their teacher have a trusted colleague to whom he or she could go for advice – and better, too, if that person were a door or two away and understood the culture of the school, the makeup of the student population, and the district's initiative and priorities (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). I had come to see the wrong-mindedness of a 'sink or swim' introduction to teaching (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003) many new teachers encountered. They suffered, schools suffered, but most alarmingly, students suffered.

As a teacher, I found that speaking about my own strategies for just not knowing what to do not only mitigated possible pit-falls for newer peers, it ameliorated some of their anxiety and stress. Talking about teaching with teachers sped up their confidence and deepened their reflective practice. In more formal mentoring relationships, the process of explaining my decisions and choices to new teachers challenged me to explore my core beliefs in what it meant to *be* a teacher. *Why do I do things like this?* My own practice improved as well.

Instead of explaining what to do, I found my conversations with new staff grounded in *why* I do what I do, and *how* I teach as an extension of my goals, roles and responsibilities within the given context;

> The knowledge of a teacher who is acting with a purpose and taking responsibility for his or her own actions … develops through praxis, which is through a situation – limited in time and space – in which teachers intervene purposefully in the reality of others ... to 'learn something', and 'learning something' involves normative choices about what has to be learned and how. (Ponte, 2002, p. 401)

As a staff supervisor, I recognized the benefits matching up new staff with highly effective and supportive teachers and have often thought that new teachers should have a reduced workload, more time to observe their more skilled colleagues, time to reflect on appropriate and context specific instructional choices and the beliefs that guide those choices, and more structured collaboration time to explore, develop and hone their problem-solving and leadership skills (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Moore Johnson, & Birkeland, 2003).

For Freire, all learning is relational, and *knowledge is produced in interaction*: "Knowledge is not a piece of data, something immobilized, concluded, finished, something to be transferred by one who acquired it to one

who still does not possess it" (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 47). Within the transition phase of student to teacher, a space is needed where novice educators are supported in their acclimation to the new role, and in the acquisition of skills and knowledge needed to be effective for the full range of learners they may encounter.

I am intrigued by the idea of a third space, first conceptualized by Bhabha (Rutherford, 1990), as a creative location for new educators to make sense of their experiences in classrooms: "the metaphor of the third space evokes a hybrid, in-between, disruptive space that can operate to disturb normative or deficit perceptions and to disrupt [pre-service] teacher subjectivities" (Gannon, 2010). I first encountered the concept when studying theoretical lenses encountered within action research. To me, such a space did not value one's knowledge or expertise over another's, and could support dialogue and relationships between new and more experienced teachers, to learn and grow new understandings together. My hope is that a third space – defined as neither a physical location or as a fixed identity, but as an ambiguous, inclusive, searching, collaborative and exploring state-of-mind – will help to undo or challenge dominant cultural biases created in institution or field locations, or by association to identity, as in student *or* professional. Rather than the typical positioning of either/or, the third space allows for 'and': other positions and associations to emerge, new possibilities for what it means to teach, for what it means to be a teacher, a learning leader, a life-long learner (Rutherford, 1990).

Wanting to Know More.

> Research to date on the nature and practices of teacher education indicates it is a somewhat conservative enterprise (for example, Smith and Zantiotis, 1989; Carr & Kemmis; 1983; Hursh, 1992; Grundy and Hatton, 1995; Groundwater-Smith, Cusworth & Dobbins, 1998)… the changing role of teachers, together with the increased demands and expectations placed upon them, will significantly influence the types of knowledge teachers require in their undergraduate education and ongoing professional development…the process of becoming (and staying) a teacher is increasingly being acknowledged as a multi-faceted process which involves the person intellectually, socially, morally, emotionally and aesthetically (Beattie, 1995). In such a context, continuing learning, both structured and self-directed, is critical to professional practice. (Graham & Phelps, 2003, p. 2)

Leading up to the action research pilot that lead to this case study, I found myself returning to the same questions: what experiences *best* shaped the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills exceptional teachers possessed? How could pre-service teachers *best* be supported into the career to ensure they are ready for the demands and complexities of schools? What does it mean for schools as community hubs that the majority of pre-service teachers are white and middle class when their student populations grow more culturally and racially diverse?

These questions were never far from my thoughts as I contemplated the new educators with whom I work, and helped to shape my review of the literature. Extended from these questions is the role I play as an applied researcher and school administrator. How can I insinuate myself into this complex process to make it better? What assumptions and mythologies guide or restrict my beliefs and actions?

The questions that I have encountered from my thinking specifically about how to improve the new teacher transition, and my own experiences with action

research have inspired my interest in specific programs that have been created to better prepare new teachers for the challenges, tensions, and demands of the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003). I felt a pull towards stewardship ethic emerge in my research focus within a framework of educational sustainability, defined by Fullan (2005) as "the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose" (p. 10). How can we do a better job, imagine a sustainable process, of preparing and supporting new educators from student of education to teacher?

Many new graduates, attempting to create a professional teacher identity, entering the complicated immediacy of school demands, entrenched in this culture's obsession with the self and instant gratification, are not always aware that their professional identity is not a single role they will play, but will be an ongoing, ever-changing, transforming development – and likely they will experience dilemmas where their image of teaching is challenged by their lack of knowledge, wanting to care for students, or external expectations of their content expertise (Beijaard, et al., 2004). Many beginning teachers are unsure how to separate the teacher-self from the individual self, or to negotiate the switch from consumer to provider (Lortie, 1975). Professional identity formation is often presented as a struggle because pre-service and new teachers have to make sense of varying and sometimes competing perspectives, expectations, and roles that they have to confront and adapt to (Beijaard, et al., 2004).

From my own journey of learning and growth as an educator, I have come to see that a good theory informs practice, and practice shapes theory in a

continuous process. In context, people's actions are based on implicitly held assumptions, theories, and hypotheses; and, with every observed result, their knowledge is enhanced. Theory, practice, and reflection are intertwined aspects of learning to be an effective educator. It is up to me, as a researcher, to explore the beliefs that support the actions I take, and to question the basis of those beliefs as I make decisions, apply an action, gather, and then analyze the feedback from my efforts. I propose that this process is a site for authentic learning. Within a specific context, when reflection, action and application are subjected to further analysis, beginning teachers can learn to be critical, reflective, effective and responsive educators.

Alternately, if new teachers are not equipped with this insight, they may come to see themselves as powerless, ineffective, and alone; thus, when work gets overwhelming – as it will – there may be little incentive to persevere in the career. Teacher training programs that include instruction and practice conducting site-based or situational research empower beginning teachers to tackle and solve their own problems (Trent, 2010; Parsons & McRae, 2009). Research (Kincheloe, 2003; Richards & Farrell, 2005) also assesses how the processes of effective and empowered teacher-identity formation - the process of becoming - might be addressed through site-based research participation.

Trent (2010) supports participation in action research as part of teacher training because it provides a space and set of processes through which narrow, rigid, and unexamined beliefs about the *right* ways of teaching and learning might be explored and challenged. The spiral of processes and activities inherent in

action research – observe, think, collect data, reflect, propose a problem, discuss with others, propose a plan or action, observe, collect data, reflect, co-generate knowledge, adapt the problem statement, etc. – helps "student teachers come to recognize and accept the roles of imperfection and incompleteness" (Trent, 2010, p. 166) as part of developing into a skilled, reflective and responsive educator.

Informed action positions teachers in an ethic of efficacy; it values community, relationships, dialogue and equality, achieved by "reciprocity, reflexivity and reflection" (Robertson, 2000, p. 309). Such a commitment has the potential to help construct a third space and conditions for a more democratic and just society. It rejects the idea of participant neutrality, individualism, grand narrative, and single answers; it embraces the many perspectives and experiences that serve as the foundation of other peoples' understanding. It has the ability to react to the immediacy and complexities of life-in-schools while maintain commitment to making things better. Particularly, for the beginning teachers whose transition into the profession can be rocky, involvement in naming, claiming, and attempting to improve some aspect of their work and using that work to inform their sense of self as it emerges in a third space might be able to address some of the issues that lead to beginning teacher attrition – issues such as isolation, alienation, or feeling powerless in the system.

As I concluded my sabbatical year and headed back to my urban high school in the fall of 2011 as an assistant principal charged with the task of mapping and reflecting on the effectiveness of our professional learning investments and where we needed to go as a staff, I was awarded yet another

opportunity. Through the joint works of my doctoral supervisor and my principal, the university and the school district agreed to pilot a teaching residency year. Unlike the board's previously attempted internship program (where new educators had been hired at half salary and were given a significantly lessened work load to aide their transition into the profession), the residency diploma in urban teaching would be an additional year of education and learning situated within a specific school – a full-year or ten-month practicum – for individuals who already held a degree in Education.

The Research Question

The goal of this doctoral research is to understand the experiences of new teachers who, after acquiring their degrees and attaining certification, decided to expand their skills and understanding in a ten-month teaching residency program. The research question guiding this study asks: What characteristics of a ten-month teaching residency program do the participants identify as essential to their effectiveness, knowledge and confidence to work in diverse, urban classrooms?

The standard student-teaching practicum does not always provide an expansive space and/or attention to the development of a teacher identity as part of the process of learning to teach (Pittard, 2003). As noted above, once in a classroom of their own, lack of know-how and an absence of support can leave new teachers feeling overwhelmed and defeated. The development of one's identity as an educator takes time and a commitment to reflective practice. By asking participants to extensively describe their experiences of the residency program, to identify the experiences most effective to their success, and to explore

and analyze the meaning they have constructed from the experience, I hoped to gain a deeper understanding of how a residency year option, supported by teacher-training institutions, school boards, leadership staff, and teacher-colleagues might be able to better support the transition from student to effective teacher.

This research study centers on capturing, and understanding the teaching residents' experiences throughout their residency. Research conducted by Berry, Montgomery, and Snyder (2008) describes the Urban Teacher Residency Model as an example of a third way – a space where the best of the traditional and alternative pathways meet. Expansive student teaching merges theory and pedagogy within recursive and reflective processes, thus addressing the common complaint that the academic and the practical are taught in competition of the other. And, although Berry, et al. (2008) report that resident graduates are "emerging as teacher leaders and taking on leadership role" (p. 13), there is not a sense of *how* the residency experience secured this outcome. What aspects of a residency experience are most essential to the creation of teacher leaders? This research study explores the characteristics of the program, the events and experiences, which had significant impact on the residents' development.

The Teaching Residency Pilot

In August of 2011, seven new and returning teachers returned to university, enrolled as residency diploma students, taking site-based courses structured to encourage their growth in skills and competencies relevant to urban

boards: specifically, working with immigrant, refugee and English Language Learners, at-risk populations – including large numbers of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, and providing differentiated instruction to meet full range of learner styles, including learners with special needs. The residency pilot sought to provide a space and opportunity for new teachers to develop essential professional skills and begin to explore who they were and wanted to become as teachers.

To ensure that participants had a complete view, they began their placements at the end of August, 2011, – joining their teaching colleagues in the pre-instructional days to not only see the many different kinds of decisions and choices educators make, but to also have insight into why. They were able to experience informed decision making, hearing the background and rationale for why their teaching mentors set up their classrooms, wrote unit and year plans, organised and determined course outlines, and determined core assessment tools the way that they did. They were part of every conversation and decision-making process. From there they shared the workload of their teaching partner(s) – preparing units, planning lessons and activities, assessing and reporting student learning, working on whole-school problems or initiatives, analysing data – essentially getting the complete experience of daily teaching without the pressure and stress of working alone. One day a week, resident teachers met as a cohort with their university instructors to discuss, explore, and reflect on the issues and challenges they were encountering in their teaching assignments. The university course work connected their individual teaching contexts, school contexts,

professional growth plans, personal interest areas, and individual leadership projects.

I hope that, through an in-depth exploration and subsequent sharing of this case study, the experience's impact on the participants will resonate as readers recognize aspects of their own experiences and understandings, and illuminate how the findings might be used across contexts to improve how new teachers are supported into the profession.

Purpose of the Study

Particularly alarming to many effective and committed teachers and administrators is the problem of teacher attrition (Anhorn, 2008; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003) in the early years of teaching. Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) researchers (2010) conclude that, although induction and mentorship programs for newcomers show a reduction in turnover (citing Glassford & Salintrini, 2007; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Whisnant, Elliot, & Pynchon, 2005), there is *no mandate* that these programs be standard in every district, let alone specific schools or departments. There is no standardization of what occurs within induction programs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011); and, certainly there is no expectation that substitute or temporary contracted teachers be invited or allowed to participate in formal supportive processes (McCormack & Thomas, 2005).

First, school boards interview candidates based on their need to fill vacant positions. A school board's process for interviewing staff is directed by the district's programming needs. Potentially talented educators – if they do not fall

into the required criteria (for example, second language specialists, special needs teachers, reading specialists, secondary physics and mathematics specialists) – may not be given an interview – they may never be seen by personnel and principals. They may eventually be called for placement on a substitution roster. However, this likelihood is entirely unpredictable and based upon program need. Participating in a teaching residency makes participants known, and they can practice their practice. Their principal will get to know them. They will develop relationships with the school staff. And they will become part of the school team. No longer just a name on a piece of paper, the resident would then be part of a community and would have leaders in the system, who are able to speak to specific skills and, if applicable, advocate for them.

Second, when teachers first enter a school, they are assessed on their content knowledge and teaching capabilities. They are expected (correctly or incorrectly) to hit the ground running and to intuitively read the school culture. Moreover, there is an expectation that students are engaged, well-behaved, and succeeding in the course. Students requiring differentiated instruction, learning supports, individualized programming – this all falls under teacher responsibility. The practical questions of setting up a classroom, constructing unit plans and daily lessons, managing a grade-book, how to establish parental communication, classroom management, working with colleagues, are significant concerns that can sabotage a new teacher's ability to be an effective educator (Beck & Kosnik, 2007). The pressures on beginning teachers are high. Whether their students demonstrate acceptable standards of achievement often determines whether young

teachers will be considered for a probationary contract. Not being recognized as effective, strong, and capable within one's first assignment as a teacher is a potential kiss of death (Harding & Parsons, 2011).

The residency year provides opportunities for participants to see and explore the decision-making, instructional strategies, classroom routines, rationales, negotiations and practical considerations that frame and support the choices effective teachers make in regard to the afore mentioned issues. This 'practice' space encourages risk-taking, creativity, and feedback for growth.

Third, the curriculum for any given subject is, on its own, dense and lengthy. Given the tendency of most schools to give the new teacher a disjointed assignment of odds and ends, beginning teachers are expected to become curriculum experts for numerous subjects and/or grade levels (Harding & Parsons, 2011). Co-teachers, acting as mentors, can make a significant difference (McClain, 2010). Effective teachers understand the process of back-mapping curriculum and are pragmatic in their consideration; what is essential, how will we get there, what informal assessments will direct instruction, and what will the acceptable criteria look like? Effective teachers have had a few years to explore and master a range of pedagogical and instructional practices to keep learners engaged. Effective teachers know how to mediate, negotiate, and invite students to become active participants in their learning journey. Effective teachers are learning leaders who hone their philosophical understanding of the value and purpose of education; through their understanding of research, they can apply relevant research-informed interventions to mitigate learner challenges. Effective

teachers understand the importance of relationships, collaboration, community, and the influence they can have on the humans in front of them; they understand that content is merely a vehicle; knowing how to learn and think critically are the essential outcomes of education (Harding & Parsons, 2011). Learning how to make curriculum relevant and seeing it unfold as a living, exciting, and accessible course for all learners is an invaluable experience for beginning teachers.

This study argues a case for teaching residencies as a platform for better preparing teachers for the complex work of teaching, and of classrooms.

Case Study Research in Education

Improving teaching practices for enhanced student learning defines the heart of the work of educational policymakers, district leaders and school principals. Merriam (1998) suggests the strengths of case study research make it effective in examining the strength of educational processes, problems, and programs. Case study design:

- Offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variable of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon
- Results in rich and holistic account of a phenomenon
- Offers insights and illuminates meaning that expand its readers' experiences. (Merriam, p. 41)

Merriam (1998) asserts that case study research, situated in real-life, "plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base" and is thus, "particularly useful in studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs and for informing policy" (p. 41).

Schools and districts looking to support the transition of new teachers into increasingly more diverse and challenging classrooms will move to construct effective, 'value-added' programs. The range of options – formal or informal in-house mentoring, induction programs, new teacher work-shops – and the ensuing costs of implementing such processes require an extensive understanding of the 'thing', the context in which it will occur, and how it is perceived by those individuals involved in the experience. Case study research allows for the attainment of that specific, contextual knowledge and the potential it holds to improve practice (Merriam, 1998).

Case Study Defined.

Yin (2009) defines case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 18). Simons (2011) defines case study as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a "real life" context" (p. 21, in Thomas, 2011, p. 512). Creswell (2002) says, "a case study is a problem to be studied, which will reveal an in-depth understanding of a "case" or bounded system, which involves understanding an event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (p. 61).

Researchers Baxter and Jack (2008) state, "rigorous qualitative case studies afford researchers opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources" (p. 544); within qualitative case study, reality is subjective and pluralist, knowledge is socially constructed, and context –

with *all* its variables – is inextricably linked to forming, shaping, influencing and altering understanding (Mertens, 2010).

As a case study, the post-graduate/pre-service teacher residency year pilot has the potential to address a number of issues or problems that lead would-be-educators to leave the profession. The findings from this and other educational research pilots can serve to inform educational policymakers, school districts and degree granting institutions.

Potential Significance

Significant research has been done on the challenges and demands of entering the teaching profession (Anhorn, 2008; Beck, Kosnik, & Rowsell, 2007; Ewing, & Smith, 2003; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Mandel, 2006), and on the new teacher induction programs implemented to address those challenges (Angelle, 2006; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; Long, McKenzie-Robblee, Schaefer, Steeves, Wnuk, Pinnegar, & Clandinin, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Yet, even as the knowledge that trial-by-fire practices continue to exist, and new-to-teaching induction programs are not standard in all districts, research continues to support the connection between student achievement and the quality of the teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hanushek, 2010; Kaplan, & Owings, 2002; Sparks, 2002). Unfortunately, there continues to be a disconnect between securing a specific outcome - student achievement, and the process to ensure the best training initiatives, and school-based supports for teachers to develop and evolve their skills and knowledge for an always changing classroom context.

It is my hope that this research study illustrates a potential new model for transitioning pre-service teachers into the profession. Rather than sharing more stories of why potentially wonderful teachers leave the profession – either because they cannot get the experience they need to get a job, or because they are not supported once they do get the job – we can understand how a specific opportunity and the structures therein may provide essential scaffolding. The voices of this study's participants can inform university faculty, school board directors, principals and department heads as to what kinds of supports are most effective and in what kinds of contexts.

Not unlike our own understanding that one-size-does-not-fit-all in instructional choices for the classroom, the same is true for generalized teaching preparation programs, or induction programs that do not account for the specific backgrounds and needs of new graduates. As we strive to be learning leaders for our students' achievement, as a profession, we must become learning leaders for teachers. Perhaps the conclusions of this case study will be so informative to the issues of new teachers that they will lead to the creation of a formal professional residency year for many beginning teachers – perhaps it will become the new normal. Students across North America will benefit from teachers who have been professionally brought up in a culture that values collaboration, relationships, and support – qualities that extend far beyond the classroom walls, and that help to keep new teachers in the profession (Moore, Johnson, & Thomas, 2003).

Philosophical Framework

Kurt Lewin (1946), considered the father of action research, argued the best way to understand something is to try to change it. Lewin was an avid proponent of the principle that decisions and changes are best implemented by those who help make them. The research most teachers do in schools (and especially the site-based goals supported through the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement that formed my ethos), comes from their own contextual concerns, frustrations, and insights, and from the sometimes conflicting external expectations that they need be accountable for how well students are learning, performing, behaving, and feeling. Motivated to improve their practice, their students' learning, or to address a whole school issue, the questions that bring teachers to try to fix or improve their particular focus are also the underlying premise of my research conceptualization – that is, a commitment to make something better.

In speaking about their work, Parsons (2013) and Parsons and Beauchamp (2013) name themselves as "applied researchers." As such, they outline their research agenda by noting that, as applied researchers, they ask and answer three research questions:

1. What did we find?
2. What do these findings mean?
3. What should we do after we make sense of the findings?

My research and framework follows this pattern. As a school-based curricular and instructional leader, I am interested in the knowledge I claim from my lived

experience as an educator and as an educational researcher. And, in both reporting the specific findings of my work but, perhaps more fully, to consider what these frameworks might suggest for my own ethical and practical actions as a leader within schools. I believe I share a responsibility for teacher education – that is, for engaging in practical and ethical actions that eventually improve student learning and add to the field of educational research. I also recognize that the knowledge gained from the lived experiences of those with whom I work alongside and collaborate represent legitimate and valid knowledge that needs to be integrated within educational research that seeks to capture how we can do our work better.

It is my understanding that these foundational beliefs that inform my own research practices and goals fall within the framework of action research. An action orientation, and its positioning of local participants as equal partners in knowledge construction, allows teachers to work together to find localized solutions informed by data specific to the site-specific issues. Action research supports a "better, freer, fairer society through collaborative problem analysis and problem solving in context" (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 3). This claim is supported by the inclusion of all stakeholders, thus "leading to a more just, sustainable, or satisfying situation" (p. 3).

Generally, from the broad foundations of my own thinking and insights gained during my graduate work, I have come to understand that the philosophical framework of my study should be the same structure I use to support my research work. This framework helps explain how I have chosen to study, and serves as the

basis for how I will conduct research. In this study, I have identified action research as this study's philosophical framework because I believe action research better helps me, as an educational researcher, clearly understand the issues I have chosen to study and provides me with a general framework for my data analysis.

Some may see action research as a research methodology only; however, when digging deeper, one finds that action research has deep philosophical and theoretical foundations in educational research. For example, McNiff and Whitehead (2005) argue that the contextual experiences of the educational researcher, practitioners seeking to improve some aspect of their work, can create a "lived educational theory" (Whitehead, 1989). As a conceptual lens, action research informed how I experienced, reflected upon and responded to the residency participants' insights and learnings. That is, as their growing and changing knowledge impacted and shaped the actions we took within the residency, and as a way to collect my study's data. In other words, this study began as a question I asked of myself: how can I improve the preparation and transition platform for pre-service/beginning teachers? Philosophically and in practice, I am an action researcher because I believe in the philosophical underpinnings that ground action research and have chosen to use the practice of engaging in action research as the methodological direction to my study. Ponte (2005) writes:

> In the debates on action research there is consensus on the need for teachers themselves to reflect on education in a research-oriented way. The argument for this need is as follows. The reality of education is complex, changeable and cannot be accurately predicted in advance. This means that teachers' practice cannot be laid down in advance either. Although teachers are bound to a certain extent by the wishes and visions of stakeholders such as

> the government, the school, parents, educational science, as they attempt to realize their educational goals, they constantly have to face the question: What is in the given circumstances the best way to act to achieve what is important at the moment? (p. 280)

Rearick and Feldman (1999), unable to offer a single definition of action research, offer a three dimensional framework that can be used to better position one's action research orientation, or the nature of the research; the researchers define the dimensions as theoretical orientation, purpose and type of reflection (p. 334). I am drawn to a relational/situational/reciprocal orientation because it allows teachers to construct research as they live their practice in context: in a natural setting to change the way that the teacher-researcher interacts with that setting – in the hopes of improving the lives of teachers and students (Parsons & McRae, 2009).

Based on the framework imagined by Rearick and Feldman (1999), my interest in understanding, of producing knowledge "through the making of meaning", and of basing decisions to act "as a result of interaction…with the environment" (p. 334) situates my proposed study in practical orientation. Described by Grundy (1987), a practical orientation has "a fundamental interest in understanding the environment through interaction based upon a consensual interpretation of meaning" (p. 14). However, my desire to challenge the normative view that the academy or institution, and the knowledge therein, is more important or valuable than the knowledge of the practitioner in the field, or my interest to hone in the "educational goals, activities, and experiences [that may] contribute to a humane, just, equitable and fulfilling life for students" (Grundy, p. 335) and educators who want to empower themselves and their students, edges

me along the framework continuum towards an emancipatory orientation (Rearick & Feldman, 1999; Parsons & Harding, 2011a).

In reflecting upon my work now, it seems to me that action research was more than a way to collect data. Indeed, it was the ethos upon which my study and my beliefs about teaching are built. Specifically, as I conversed with those young teachers who participated in my study, I collected data. However, I also engaged in a philosophical enterprise that pedagogically showed us all – as we worked together to better understand teacher education – how teachers *should* engage teacher education in order to improve it.

We employed action research together to analyze what was typical and atypical among the data, to uncover similarities and differences or relationships between the *data* and experiences we discussed, and to determine whether the *findings* we agreed upon were only real for us, within our small group, or might become "best practices" for a larger population beyond our own experience. As noted, we engaged together in the What?, the So What?, and the Now What?

The action research orientation guides teacher-researchers to identify issues inherent in teacher practice and to improve one's service. The primary purpose of action research is to provide the means for people to engage in systematic inquiry and investigation to 'design' an appropriate way of accomplishing a desired goal and to evaluate its effectiveness, and suits a qualitative paradigm (Parsons & McRae, 2009). Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest action research is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve:

- the rationality and justice of their own practices,
- their understanding of these practices, and
- the situations in which the practices are carried out. (p. 162)

The conjunction of three elements - action, research, and participation – define the basic structure of action research, and all three parts must be present to generate knowledge for the express purpose of taking action to promote social analysis and democratic social change.

Much early work has helped describe both the methodological and philosophical foundations that supported my specific study. For example, almost forty years ago, McKernan (1988) reviewed the evolution of action research and described what he called the countenances of action research. For him, these were circumscribed into three conceptions: the traditional, the collaborative, and the emancipatory-critical. These he tied to ideological perspectives. Specifically, in traditional action research, participants are assumed to have common interests and share consensus as a basis for the resolution of problems found within the system. Collaborative action research is grounded in the goal of reforming curriculum, the development of teacher skills, or as a method of reforming or improving schools. Finally, action research as critical emancipatory is grounded in critical theory, critiques the status quo, and works to reform a broader social structure.

Even longer ago is the work of Grundy (1987), Habermas (1971), and the University of Alberta's Max van Manen (1977) who helped outline action research's theoretical orientations. Habermas especially grounded the work in the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory. Habermas, and those who

followed, noted that the technical orientation worked to control; the practical orientation worked to understand; and the emancipatory orientation worked to liberate. These orientations and the actions that flowed from them were grounded upon the belief that human action is situated in the moral and ethical, and that decisions to choose to act come by considering alternatives. All these work to produce knowledge as humans together make meaning through historical and hermeneutic interpretations – all the actions of interaction. Specifically, in terms of my own study, I have chosen the practical orientation, which I understand to engage a fundamental interest in understanding an environment through interaction of that environment using consensual interpretations of meaning by those who participate within it.

An action-oriented ethic strives to bring about positive social change in a democratic way for all those involved in an issue; everyone is invited to lend knowledge – formal research knowledge included. The involvement of community members makes change more sustainable and increases the likelihood of people feeling more effective and in control of their own lives; thus creating a culture where continual improvement cycles can exist. True democracy embraces diversity and invites all group members to enjoy emancipation; "for Dewey, [it is] a ongoing form of social action, a combination of institutional forms and ethical commitments that works toward the increasing ability of all members of society to contribute their intelligence to the greater sophistication and discernment of the whole" (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, p. 60). Action research – performed in schools by those who live and learn in schools – is a process that gives "credence

to the development of powers of reflective thought, discussion, decision, and action by ordinary people participating in collective research on 'private troubles' they have in common" (Adelman, 1993, p. 8).

Action research helped us engage the qualitative data upon which my research problem focused and helped outline the meanings, perceptions, symbols, and descriptions of the work we engaged for the year. It helped me, as a researcher, observe and understand behaviors, situations, interactions, and the environment in which teaching insights occurred. I helped me, as a researcher, better comprehend our collective observations for patterns and categories. And, it helped me, as a researcher, answer the research questions based by better understanding our collective findings.

I also chose action research as my framework because it shares the purposes of my own action research: these include professional understanding, personal growth, and political empowerment (Noffke, 1997). My own professional goals and purposes for this study included adding to and improving our knowledge base for teacher education. I believe the action of my action research will lead to shared knowledge and to improving our academic and professional socialization curriculum.

Finally, action research helped me organize the specifics of my data collection. Rearick and Feldman (1999) identified three forms of action research reflections: autobiographical, collaborative, and communal. For the specific purposes of my own research, as Rearick and Feldman note, communal reflection helps action researchers better understand their perceptions, values, and deeper

meanings to understand social action. Engaging in communal reflection means that action researchers must be able to engage in discourse with others as conversational partners. These communal reflections move groups toward freedom and understanding because, as a group, those who participate in communal reflection believe that such actions are more powerful than separate actions or engagements. These actions toward understandings promote insight about the past and future, the origins and the hopes, the traditions and the dreams, and the values that a community holds. Thus, action research holds the promise of greater self-understanding, professional growth, and organizational change. It is, at its base, a form of collective and reflective inquiry that participants engage as a way to improve their own practices and their understandings of those practices so that a situation might be improved.

Limitations and Delimitations

For Freire, all learning is relational and knowledge is produced in interactive community: "Knowledge is not a piece of data, something immobilized, concluded, finished, something to be transferred by one who acquired it to one who still does not possess it" (Freire and Macedo, 1987, p. 47). I am aware of my own biases towards action-as-a-solution. Part of my own journey in this doctoral program has been to see the danger in believing all struggle is problematic and requires fixing. Inherent in the experience of working through a problem is the strength and wisdom gained for encountering greater challenges. An important part of the learning journey is the intersection with one's goals and with the hard work and self-reflection required to achieve them. If

I assume, in advance, that a new teacher needs me to step in and rescue her, how might that diminish the opportunity for her to learn about herself?

My research study was supported by two institutions agreeing to support the residency pilot which sought to locate a third space for critical reflection/creative/dialogic/committed action processes reflected as *curriculum as praxis* for all beginning teachers. Not all institutions or organizations are open to dialogue, nor to examine how their processes or policies may not be entirely suited for all those they serve; nor are they willing to co-construct new pathways or experiences when it means relinquishing control. As Freire (1972) stated:

> Dialogue cannot exist . . . cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming— between those who deny other men the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied to them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression… [dialogue cannot exist] in the absence of a profound love for the world and for [human beings]. Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to other [people]. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is [a] loving [one], is dialogical. . . Only by abolishing the situation of oppression is it possible to restore the love which that situation made impossible. (pp. 89-90)

As is the norm across Canada, universities have dominion over teacher preparation curricula, and determine which activities, experiences or knowledge will best prepare new graduates to meet the criteria for certification in their province or territory. From this reality, *whose* knowledge is esteemed in educational research can create a power imbalance. For this study, the participants co-constructed, altered and evolved their curriculum based on changing knowledge goals they deemed to be most important as they progressed through

the residency. An action-oriented mindset conditions the researcher to be reflective but always with the view of taking informed action (praxis) to answer the research question – to do something about it (McNiff, Lomax, and Whitehead, 1996). The goal of the residency pilot was not to test ideas by trial and error but to take deliberate actions collectively chosen to promote change.

The findings of this study are also limited by time and residency site-locations. An entire school calendar year provided the residents time and space to encounter and reflect on a wide range of decisions, circumstances, student cases, challenges and experiences specific to the province, school district and specific sites in the study, and from within the relationships they had with their co-teaching partner(s). The main residency site had a specific mandate to meet the learning needs of a diverse student population, and offered a unique architectural design. The principals who supported the partnership in satellite schools were themselves part of a self-directed learning group that esteemed collaboration, conversation, peer-to-peer learning and site-specific improvement initiatives.

I made specific choices to make the study manageable, and to create the conditions I thought necessary to secure and support the professional learning goals and growth of the residency participants. The study participants were registered in the post-baccalaureate Diploma program at the university where I am pursuing my doctoral degree. All of the participants had a B.Ed. and were certified to pursue teaching assignments in the province. The decision to pursue the residency year was a choice. Three of the participants had experienced work as teachers prior to joining the residency. The course work and assignments were

aligned to emphasize and support the residency participant's individual growth plan.

Finally, the professors who worked with the residency cohort had extensive experience and success in leading change, taking risks, and were deeply committed to school improvement initiatives. What the professors emphasized in the course work, and how they engaged the cohort in thinking, learning and achieving their professional growth goals were grounded in applied, action research beliefs and practices.

Summary

In this chapter, my goal was to explore how my own learning journey and experiences gave rise to this study, and to the philosophical framework for this study - found in the theory of learning from experience; people bring their past experiences, their values and beliefs, their cultural identities, and their worldview with them through which they then interpret and make meaning of all new events. New knowledge and learning is a construction of an always-expanding collection of experiences. Context, culture, location, relationships, and a spectrum of other variables challenge the idea that a generalized understanding of what it means to *be* a teacher can exist. Because each person's pre-service experience is different, the meaning he or she makes from it can be just as disparate. This difference is problematic for new teachers, who, once in classrooms, find themselves accountable for roles and responsibilities they may not little knowledge, skill or capacity.

If the goal of a teacher education program is to prepare effective learning-leaders for diverse 21st century classrooms, what experiences and structures are essential? What processes and experiences should students of education encounter?

In this chapter, I also established that the conceptual approach for the pilot upon which this study is based is action research, which more than a method of research, is a commitment to a series of beliefs as to how, and processes selected and applied to make things better (Parsons and Harding, 2011a). If our goal is to improve teacher knowledge and skill in service of student learning and achievement, and ameliorate the confusion, anxiety and terror of making mistakes that define the transition phase of learning to teach, then it makes sense the teachers who will be evaluated and determined competent in their capacity to lead and facilitate learning be included in the process.

Chapter two is a review of the literature. Learning to teach 'on the job' has long been the way in which new teachers are brought into the profession, and has led to the common 'sink or swim' narrative of isolation, stress, fatigue, self-doubt, and disturbing statistics of teacher attrition. School districts with the resources to address the lack of preparedness for the workload have arranged for supports such as mentorship and other formal induction processes. Research shows that teachers are aware of what they needed to be successful, and recognize that aspects of their preparation program were not effective or adequate. Urban Teaching Residencies, and the processes and structures therein, offer insights into what institution-school

district partnerships can do to better prepare new teachers, and thus improve student learning.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter examines literature related to the experiences of new teachers, explore supports that contribute to the success and retention of beginning educators, and argues for new initiatives that hold the potential to better prepare teachers within the contexts where diverse skills and competencies are needed for increasingly complex teaching assignments and student populations. Alarming statistics suggest that the successful transition from 'student of education' to 'teacher of student learning' is uncertain, and has accounted for upwards of half of teachers leaving the classroom within the first five years of their careers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Research indicates the implementation of induction processes which include mentoring have become more common in North American school districts; however, the *quality* of induction programs and the specific processes that occur within their parameters vary significantly making it difficult to guarantee the implementation of induction will improve teacher retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The literature will explore the new innovation of teaching residencies. Within the last decade, some large urban school districts have moved to produce their own teacher development programs, called Urban Teacher Residencies (Berry, et al, 2008). Like medical students who begin their hospital residencies at the conclusion of their science undergraduate degrees to transition into physicians, 'teaching residencies' provide would-be-educators, who already hold a degree in a much desired content area, in-the-field training alongside effective educators who act as powerful instructional coaches. Given the extensive research

findings on new teacher attrition, a new method for better preparing teachers – perhaps found within the residency model - is warranted. This literature review will conclude with a brief definition of case study research and its strengths for understanding programs in an educational field.

New Teacher Experiences

The trials and tribulations of the beginning teacher's experiences have been well-documented (Anhorn, 2008; Kutcy & Schulz, 2006; Cherubini, 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Hellsten, Prytula, Ebanks, & Lai, 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Loughran, Brown, & Doecke, 2010; McCluskey, Sim, & Johnston, 2011). The prevalence of *survival* metaphors used by teachers to explain those early experiences – 'trial by fire', 'sink or swim', 'tread water'– suggest that many new professional educators believe they are entering a hostile environment where they are given no time and sometimes few supports to adjust to their new roles, an environment that, while familiar in its physical structures and layouts, has a culture (a.k.a. *way of doing things*) that must be navigated, and professional expectations they may not feel prepared to meet (Anhorn, 2008; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

In helping explain why so many beginning teachers leave the profession in their first five years in the field – upwards of 50% (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), Anhorn (2008) asked a group of first-year elementary teachers to reflect, then describe their experiences; when the participants expressed their feelings as "overwhelmed, hectic, isolated, beaten down,

unsupported, scared, humiliated, afraid, stressed and drowning" (p. 15), Anhorn looked more closely at what might have generated these alarming responses:

> Difficult work assignments, unclear expectations, inadequate resources, isolation, role conflict and reality shock are some top reasons for the horrendous attrition statistics with the widespread "sink or swim" attitude that is prevalent in so many schools. A beginning teacher is expected, from the first day of her career, to complete all tasks asked of the veteran teacher. (p. 15)

In addition to these pressures, Anhorn also found that beginning teachers were unprepared for the challenges of meeting the needs of diverse learners – a problem compounded by their fear of asking questions (p. 16).

Reports of isolation and 'expected expertise' for beginning teachers are common. In a study that looked at new teachers' experiences with their colleagues, Kardos and Moore Johnson (2007) report that "many new teachers today are likely to begin their teaching careers in schools where they must find their own way" (p. 2085). Despite their novice status, lack of experience and know-how, beginning teachers do not receive a graduated, supported entry into the work; "their work is solitary ... they mostly plan and teach alone ... they are expected to be expert and independent from the start" (p. 2085). Ingersoll and Strong (2011), also concerned by the high turn-over rate in the profession, point to many decades of wrong-minded practices, isolation being one, but also the practice whereby new teachers are "placed in the most challenging and difficult classroom and school assignments" (p. 202; see also Cherubini, 2007).

In their work with new secondary teachers who had made it into their second years, researchers Kutcy and Schulz (2006) found five themes or categories of frustration. Teachers in the study reported frustration with their

inability to motivate or engage adolescent students, and often felt disappointed that the ideal that compelled them into the profession did not match with the reality. They struggled to respond to student apathy, their own lack of know-how to inspire disengaged learners, and feelings that the theories they explored in university had not prepared them for an unanticipated classroom dynamic. A second source of frustration, linked to student apathy, was a lack of response by parents when teachers communicated their concerns. Such a seeming lack of concern added to the anxiety new teachers faced: despite expectations from administration that they maintain communication with parents, there was no explicit training or support in an effective way to do so.

The third source of teacher-reported frustration in the study was aimed at administration (see also Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), specifically, the lack of transparency in decision-making that impacted their work. For example, being assigned a content area for which they have no training; receiving no feedback about their work; and the inequality in how time, classroom resources and the school budget was allocated created frustration. Their lack of a permanent contract and 'want to impress' exacerbated their helplessness as they felt they were unable to express their concerns. As an extension of the frustration they felt within their school, respondents also expressed frustration with the school system in general – seeing it as "floundering" (p. 83) – feeling policies left them powerless.

The final frustration Kutcy and Schulz (2006) noted had to do with the tension new educators felt between their personal and professional lives –

pointing to the fairly common practice of the general public's evaluation of teachers and the work they do. Researchers point to a changing perspective of work-life balance, where "working at teaching seven days a week is not one of these expectations" (p. 84), and the ensuing frustration the new teachers experienced when there was not enough time to maintain the balance they had enjoyed previously as "the work consumed them" (p. 85).

What Do New Teachers Want?

Wanting to understand the experiences of new teachers after seeing them struggle to adjust to the profession, "unable to manage student behavior or motivate students; unsure how to plan for short-term or long-term instruction; unable to distinguish an objective from an activity; and, insecure about differentiating lessons to meet a range of student needs" (Chesley and Jordan, 2012, p. 41), former school superintendent Gary Chesley and associate superintendent Janice Jordan decided to ask the teachers themselves what they thought to be lacking in their preparation. Chesley and Jordan conducted two focus groups, one with teachers with less than three years experience and another with mentor teachers who worked with beginning teachers. Respondents reported their student-teaching programs (albeit considered "most effective" when compared with their university classes) were not consistently structured or adequately controlled for quality to ensure they were being prepared for classrooms of their own. Chesley and Jordan (2012) found:

> The quality of [student-teacher] experiences depended entirely on the knowledge and skills of their cooperating or mentor teachers. Given the important role of cooperating teachers in the student-teaching experience,

> the new teachers indicated that colleges need to ensure that the skills and the commitment of assigned cooperating teachers themselves are models of best practice. (p. 42)

As a result of their research, teachers identified eight specific gaps in skills and/or know-how as missing from their preparation experiences. When invited to imagine a report back to their institutions of training (seventeen in total), teachers said they wanted their former professors to know the following:

- We didn't understand what's required of the profession
- We didn't learn how to teach content
- We didn't grasp the essentials of classroom management
- We didn't know how to plan for instruction
- We needed to better understand student engagement
- We needed to learn how to integrate technology
- We needed experience using and managing student achievement data
- We were unprepared to differentiate instruction (pp. 42-44)

Aware that this report places much of the struggle new teachers experience on the shoulders of the institution, researchers Chesley and Jordan (2012) are unapologetic. They connect their directive that universities become more collaborative with the schools they serve as student learning is "the very heart of the daily life of classroom teachers" (p. 44).

Zeichner (2000) described the traditional model of teacher education as under-funded, under-valued, and no longer in sync with the times. He wrote, "cooperating teachers and university instructors are often mutually ignorant of each other's work and the principles that underlie it" (p. 61). Aware of the disconnect between universities and schools, he shared his concern that the institution "places school-based teacher educators in a secondary role in the teacher education program and undervalues the importance of practitioner

knowledge in the process of learning to teach" (p. 61). A decade later, Zeichner (2010) continued to be critical of the campus – field divide, noting "the disconnection between campus and field-based teacher education" as a significant, ongoing problem (p. 90). He questioned the "hegemony over the construction and dissemination of knowledge" (p. 90) institutions still maintain despite growing calls from schools for increased collaboration.

Zeichner (2010) described the dominant model of pre-service education: "prospective teachers ... learn theories at the university and then go to schools to practice or apply what they learned on campus" (pp. 90-91). He pointed to a number of issues inherent in this segregated approach. On the faculty side, he acknowledged his own institution's tendency to allocate teaching undergraduate courses to graduate students, a problem in that "they do not necessarily think of themselves as teacher educators" (p. 90). As such, there is little interest or awareness of the research on transitioning students of education to teachers. Furthermore, there is often an absence of contextual or local knowledge because graduate students may have come from other places. In addition, there is high turnover of instructors because graduate students move through their own programs – making an in-depth assessment of the undergraduate program difficult. He also pointed to the lack of incentives offered tenured staff to pursue work in the teacher education program (p. 90).

Zeichner (2000) stated that "student teaching is a critical aspect of pre-service teacher education and cooperating teachers are key participants in determining the quality of learning for students" (p. 59), but in a later publication,

noted the process of assigning pre-service teachers a field placement as a matter of *finding a space* rather than *getting the best*: 'availability' versus quality (Zeichner, 2010, p. 90). From the clinical side – the wide range in assumptions, experiences, activities, assignments, opinions and opportunities to practice, explore and reflect – none of which are standardized or consistently applied – is typical in field placement experiences; he referenced Darling-Hammond's observations to illustrate his concern that "often, the clinical side of teacher education has been fairly haphazard, depending on the idiosyncrasies of loosely selected placements with little guidance about what happens in them and little connection to university work" (Zeichner, 2009, p. 11).

In her article *What New Teachers Need to Learn*, Feiman–Nemser (2003) suggested that a disservice to beginning teachers occurs and the process of learning to teach is undermined when they are seen as "finished products" of their pre-service experience (p. 26). She indicated that much of what teachers need to learn requires a specific context to frame the relevance of an approach. In student friendly terms; you *won't* know what you *don't* know until you *realize you don't know* what you're doing.

Feiman-Nemser (2003) asked key stakeholder (mentors, new teachers and principals) to consider what aspects of the profession new teachers would not be able to grasp until they were in the classroom. Their responses included an awareness of a wide-range of instructional strategies to provide multiple entry points into multiple curricula; an ability to navigate and project a "performing

self" (Featherstone, 1993, p. 11 in Feiman-Nemser, 2003); and an ability to problem-solve and adapt as the situation needed (pp. 26-27).

The other challenge that cannot be fully explained in a university course is the "process of enculturation" (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 27). In addition to an overwhelming learning curve, beginning teachers are new to the school and have to learn the culture – its way of doing things. Mindful that learning will occur with or without a specific new teacher agenda, and equally aware that the school's culture and the conditions in which the new teacher finds himself, she asks, "What implicit and explicit messages do new teachers receive about teaching in this school and district? How do interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and students strengthen or weaken new teachers?" (p. 27).

In the absence of a supportive, reflective, and encouraging space, "loss of idealism" and ensuing negative emotions may compel beginning teachers to blame students or other external factors they feel powerless to control. They may also receive wrong-minded advice from veteran teachers that "indoctrinate new teachers with attitudes, behaviors, and values that they have defined as appropriate for teachers working in an educational bureaucracy" (p. 27). Instead, Feiman-Nemser (2003) argues for powerful induction programs that help new educators become good teachers; "we must treat the first years of teaching as a phase in learning to teach and surround new teachers with a professional culture that supports teacher learning" (p. 25).

New Teacher Induction

> We cannot assume that grade-level teams or other school structures automatically provide a forum for addressing new teachers' learning needs. Without the school's explicit endorsement of induction as a shared responsibility and a professional culture that supports collaboration and problem solving, new teachers may still find themselves alone with their questions and problems. Nor can we assume that assigned mentors have the time and the expertise to help novices improve their teaching and their students' learning, or that mentoring can make up for inappropriate teaching assignments. (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 28)

Knowing the challenges that await them in their first years as teachers and aware of the potential deficiencies in their pre-service preparation, many school districts have identified the need for specific supports for new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The move to put induction processes in place is based on an extensive body of research indicating the benefits of providing meaningful assimilation of new educators into the profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2012; Kelley, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Long, McKenzie-Robblee, Schaefer, Steeves, Wnuk, Pinnegar, & Clandinin, 2012; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008; Wong, Britton, & Ganser, 2005).

Wong, et al. (2005) defined induction as "a highly organized and comprehensive form of staff development, involving many people and components, that typically continues as a sustained process for the first two to five years of a teacher's career. Mentoring is often a component of the induction process" (p. 379). Long, et al. (2012) acknowledged that mentoring and induction are often interchanged; yet, they point out the distinctions outlined by Neilsen, Barry, and Addison (2006, p. 15) before reporting a general understanding that induction is:

> a period when teachers have their first teaching experience and adjust to the roles and the responsibilities of teaching" (p. 15). Induction programs vary in goals, levels of formality, structure, length, and planed activities. Mentoring may be one component of an induction program; in some cases, mentoring is considered the induction program. (p. 9)

Wong (2004) agreed; no two programs are alike, nor should they be. Quality induction is driven by the specific needs, goals, and mission of the school or district it serves. Nevertheless, Wong (2004) suggested that there are common criteria or components typical in successful programs:

- Begin with an initial 4 or 5 days of induction before school starts
- Offer a continuum of professional development through systematic training over a period of 2 or 3 years
- Provide study groups in which new teachers can network and build support, commitment, and leadership in a learning community
- Incorporate a strong sense of administrative support
- Integrate a mentoring component into the induction process
- Present a structure for modeling effective teaching during in-services and mentoring
- Provide opportunities for inductees to visit demonstration classrooms (p. 51).

In this framing, induction is a phase in an over-reaching professional development banner under which teachers see themselves engaging in a life-long learning network (Wong, 2004).

Long, et al. (2012) reviewed the research literature on mentoring and induction from a critical perspective, concerned that induction was a "taken for granted solution to the problem of early career teacher attrition and retention" (p. 8). Long, et al. selected the work of Wood and Stanulis (2009) to serve as a conceptual framework, providing them with six criteria from which to consider "*quality* induction" (p. 10; italics original):

- Educated mentors
- Reflective inquiry and teaching processes
- Systemic and structured observations
- Formative teacher assessment
- Administrators' involvement
- School culture supports (p. 10)

They concluded, as have many researchers (see also Bullough Jr, 2012; Hobson, Ashby, Maderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004), that a wide range of content is provided to new teachers under the umbrella of 'induction' (p. 21), making a comparison between schools, districts, states, provinces and countries difficult and the creation of a specific structure improbable. Perhaps Long, et al.'s (2012) most problematic conclusion was the lack of data correlating induction programs and teacher retention (see also Kelley, 2004).

Rather, a research finding Long, et al. (2012) noted in much of the literature was the "significance of the school culture and context in which beginning teachers work" (p. 22) – a finding reported earlier by Joiner and Edwards (2008; see also Feiman-Nemser, 2012) whose research on high attrition rates in new teacher cited "weak socialization structures" as a cause (p. 36).

Joiner and Edwards (2008) pointed to the case of Ravenswood City School District in Palo Alto, California, with a distressing 75% teacher turn-over rate. The creation of an individualized induction program designed specifically around the needs of that school district saw a three-year improvement to 85% retention in their teaching staff, and a 100 point gain on state achievement tests (Maciejewski, 2007, in Joiner & Edwards, 2008).

The research supports the potential of teaching residencies to mitigate many of the issues that undermine new teachers. Furthermore, the residency

model and experiences therein can play a significant role in changing school cultures, especially that aspect of school-wide systems that acculturates new practitioners into the career.

The Impact of Culture.

The Teaching Residency model esteems collaboration, support, inquiry and growth. As new teachers experience a supportive, collaborative and reflective transition into the profession, which becomes their narrative of learning to teach, and thus forms their beliefs about the role they play in helping to transition new colleagues. The collective understanding of one's responsibility to support each other's professional practice has a significant impact on how things are done in the school. Fieman-Nemser (2003) agreed that the impact of working conditions and school culture cannot be underestimated; "even the best induction programs cannot compensate for an unhealthy school climate, a competitive teacher culture, or an inappropriate teaching culture" (p. 29). Context, the individual needs of the new teacher within a collaborative and supportive school culture, is a crucial component of supporting and keeping them in the profession (Joiner & Edwards, 2008; Long, et al., 2012).

Kelley (2004) cites the University of Colorado's induction collaboration with six local school districts, Partners in Education or 'PIE', as an effective program boasting a 94% retention rates for novice participants in their five years of teaching (p. 440). In her analysis of PIE's success with teacher effectiveness and retention, Kelley focused on the induction components within the program: specifically, Kelley looked at PIE's implementation of key recommendations

from the work of researchers Darling-Hammond and Sclan (1996), Huling-Austin (1992), and from the National Association of Teaching & America's Future (NCTAF) (2003) that stressed intensive mentoring, cohort group networking, and ongoing inquiry into practice.

Kelley (2004) described the extensive commitment of PIE to the development of the mentors, who were selected for their specific attributes and skills which match a lens framed by the work of Feiman-Nemser (2001) and Gold (1996). Mentors are deeply committed learners themselves and work alongside their mentees to enhance and encourage the development of all aspects of their professional role; the esteem of the work they do with new teachers is reflected in the release time they are allotted to do the work well (Kelley, 2014).

Monthly district, intra-district, and network meetings facilitate building professional relationships and collaborative learning cohort groups ensure that novice teachers are not isolated; further, the effort to pull all novice teachers together in cross-grade, cross-district, and intra-district group enriches their growth and learning (Kelley, 2004).

The third component of PIE's successful induction program reflects a significant commitment to the belief that teachers are learning leaders, and that the best educators are always looking to improve their practice. Ongoing inquiry into practice asks mentees to engage in a number of self-awareness and reflective activities and assignments, in addition to completing three off-campus graduate level courses during their induction year. Kelley (2004) stated, "the goal is to reinforce these teachers' beginning instructional repertoires in purposeful ways so

that teachers don't abandon what they know in favor of less complex or challenging activities" (p. 443; see also Loughran, et al., 2010).

As a result of their mentors' guidance and efforts, novice teachers reported "high levels of professional growth and efficacy" (p. 445). Kelley (2004) noted that this particular finding supported the earlier work of Henke, et al. (2000) who also reported a correlation between mentoring and teacher efficacy with retention. PIE's commitment to supporting new teachers in their development of cohort networks was noted for deepening their understanding of assessment, classroom management, and differentiated instruction, often aspects of teaching practice that take many years to evolve (Fullan, 2002, in Kelley, 2004). The program's encouragement of new teachers to begin graduate level course work positioned the new teachers as problem-solvers – capable of naming and claiming aspects of their work where they were empowered to really delve into their teaching, adding to their sense of self-efficacy and positioning them as sought-after educators by principals aware of the impact of PIE's induction program on new teachers (Kelley, 2004, p. 446).

Kelley (2004) concluded, "induction does indeed matter, that a meaningful induction experience has lasting effects on teacher quality and retention" (p. 447). The inclusion of the adjective 'meaningful' clarifies an important finding similarly outlined in the works of Feiman-Nemser (2003), Helsten, et al. (2009), Hobson, et al. (2009), Ingersoll and Smith (2004), Ingersoll and Strong (2011), and Joiner and Edwards (2008). The types and range of events, activities, supports, relationships, processes, core values, and underlying beliefs that shape

and exist *within* the induction program will determine its ability to successfully transition new teachers into the never-static, always changing, challenging work of helping young people to learn. The teaching residency model provides such a platform.

In her recent article *Beyond Solo Teaching*, Feiman-Nemser (2012) overviews three models of teacher induction. By highlighting the goals and components of the different models (Figure 1), Feiman-Nemser is able to point to the outcomes achieved by each. The comparison invites administrators and district leaders to carefully consider the beliefs and long-term vision for their district teaching staff that underpin the district's decision making.

Figure 1. Models of Teacher Induction (Feiman-Nemser, 2012 p. 15)

	Goals	Components	Outcomes
Induction as Temporary Support	• Ease transition into teaching • Reduce stress and address problems of beginning teachers	• Reduced workload • Oriented to school and community • Informal buddy system, offering advice and emotional support	• Teacher survival and retention
Induction as Individualized Professional Development	• Foster new teacher development • Promote more effective teaching and learning for all students	• Orientation to school and community • Reduced workload • Curricular guidance • Serious mentoring for at least two years (sanctioned time, initial training, ongoing development, appropriate	• Improved teaching and learning • Teacher satisfaction and retention

		matches) • Administrative support	
Induction as Cultural Trans-formation	• Reduce teacher isolation • Incorporate new teachers into an integrated school community that supports the continuous learning of all teachers • Promote more effective teaching and learning for all students • Reduce the achievement gap	• Reduced workload or team teaching assignment • Serious mentoring (as above) • Integrated learning teams • Administrative involvement	• Continuous learning of all teachers • Collective • responsibility for teaching and learning • Quality learning environment for students • Increased student achievement • Rewarding career path for teachers

Unfortunately, the logistics, costs, and politics associated with the construction of effective induction programs might determine what is offered, how it is offered, how long it is offered, and the overall quality of the experience (Hobson, et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The teaching residency partnership model has the potential to provide the goals and outcomes of Feiman-Nemser's (2012) 'induction as cultural transformation' while mitigating the afore mentioned obstacles.

That said, some large urban school districts in the United States, wanting to tackle the issue of retention and effective teaching for their most difficult-to-staff schools, have established innovative collaborations with neighboring

universities. Pre-service teachers – not unlike doctors and the residency rotations that provide them with the opportunity to hone their skills – are becoming 'residents' in the very schools where they one day might teach.

Urban Teaching Residencies

> Teacher preparation should not continue as an institution isolated from the schools and school districts it aims to serve; likewise, school districts cannot continue to outsource so much of their human capital development work. Rather, these efforts must be combined. (Solomon, 2009, p. 487)

At the same time Ingersoll and Smith (2003) reported that the shortage of qualified teachers would better be addressed, not be increasing the rate of hiring, but by doing a better job of supporting new teachers into the profession, Boston Public School Superintendent Thomas Payzant was increasingly concerned with what he was seeing within his board's high-needs schools: a lack of mathematics, science and special education teachers, an alarming attrition rate of new teaching staff (50% of new teachers within three years), and a dominantly White teaching staff that did not reflect the diversity of the student population (Solomon, 2009). To address these specific issues and position the district as a producer of teachers, Payzant worked with a non-profit foundation to create the Boston Teacher Residency.

The Boston Teacher Residency is housed as a separate entity but works with and alongside Boston Public Schools and the university. The residency program recruits and develops new teachers within the district's large urban schools that most need effective teachers; induction is built into all aspects of the two-year program.

The Centre for Teaching Quality describes Urban Teacher Residencies as an "emerging innovation designed to embody best practices in recruitment, screening, preparation, placement, induction and teacher leadership for urban school districts" in their analysis of the Boston Teacher Residency and the Academy for Urban Leadership in Chicago (Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, Hernandez, Wurtzel, & Snyder, 2008b, p. 5). The general structures of the two programs share common features. Would-be-residents undergo an extensive screening process based on the district's needs and the potential the recruiters see in the applicants. They must already possess an undergraduate degree in the desired content area.

Much like a medical school experience, teacher-residents spend an entire year working alongside an experienced mentor, integrating professional course work for their master's degree into their clinical experience. Mentors receive compensation for their commitment to the development of new teachers. Four days of the week, teacher residents are fully immersed in their mentors' classrooms; the fifth day they attend to their course work. They receive a modest stipend and tuition support in exchange for their commitment to remain in the district for a given time period after they complete the program (Berry, et al., 2008). They continue to receive "intensive mentoring" in their second year, when they become the teacher of record for their own classroom (Berry, et al., p. 5). Described as "rigorous … intensive" (p. 5*)*, the program has been lauded for retaining its graduates (90% - 95% after three years teaching), and its ability to attract racially and ethnically diverse recruits (Berry, et al, 2008; Honawar, 2008).

Unlike the traditional or alternative models of teacher preparation, urban teaching residencies have distinct criteria in that they:

- tightly weave together education theory and classroom practice
- focus on Residents' learning alongside an experienced, trained Mentor
- group candidates in cohorts to cultivate professional learning community and foster collaboration
- build effective partnerships among school districts, high education institutions and non-profit organizations
- serve school districts by recruiting and training to meet specific district needs
- support Residents once they are hired as teacher of record
- establish and support differentiated career goals for experienced teachers (Berry, et al., 2008, p. 5).

The program affords residents a perspective of a teacher's reality seldom seen in a typical student-teaching placement; they get the full year from set-up to wrap-up; they learn "first-hand how to build culture and community, long-term instructional goals, create formative assessments, and use data to reflect upon their teaching practice" (Berry, et al., 2008, p. 15). The residency model recognizes the importance of the practicum – both the length and the experiences play a significant role in how well-prepared new teachers are for the demands they will face: "ten to twelve weeks somewhere near the end of one's preparation is simply not sufficient time for the quality preparation teachers need and their students deserve" (Berry, Montgomery, & Snyder, 2008a, p. 15).

To highlight the benefits of Urban Teacher Residencies, Berry, et al. (2008b) cite the many difficulties new teachers experience, more so for new teachers assigned to work in high-needs urban schools; in addition to curriculum, instruction and assessment know-how, urban educators need "skills to work with special needs and second language learners, [the] ability to engage and motivate

diverse students, and strategies to reach out to families" (p. 8); they frame this "grinding reality" by referring to the general 50% attrition rate for new teachers within their first five years, but then point beyond to Ingersoll's (2003) research that "attrition rates are *significantly higher* for teachers in high-poverty schools and high needs subject areas" (p. 8, italics added).

Berry, et al. (2008b) suggest that Urban Teacher Residencies can play an important role preparing a diverse and effective work force; they describe the model as a third way, listing five pathway contributions key stakeholders might find beneficial:

1) Systems for preparing a critical mass of teachers who are highly capable, well-educated, and prepared to stay in the profession for more than just a few years;
2) Models for teacher learning that help transform both traditional, university-based and alternative certification programs;
3) Opportunities for universities and districts to capitalize on the experience of their best teachers as teacher educators;
4) Entry points for reconfiguring a district's human capital system to bring a coherent approach to recruiting, preparing, supporting, and retaining quality teachers; and,
5) Leverage for school reform that systematically focuses on improving school conditions that promote high quality teaching and high levels of student learning (2008b, p. 10).

Given the complexities of preparing new teachers for any number of site-specific or contextual challenges they may encounter, universities and school boards would benefit tremendously from collaborating and partnering to support teacher residencies as valid platforms to address school improvement.

Quality Induction and Student Achievement.

A focus on student achievement as a measure of program success is an essential outcome of the Urban Teacher Residency model (Solomon, 2008). There

is “urgent interest in understanding whether and to what extent having a Resident in the classroom affects student achievement during the preparation year and whether and to what extent program graduates are producing significant student learning gains” (p. 489); in other words, is there improvement in student learning when there are two teachers in a classroom, and does the mentorship process develop more effective teachers than their non-resident counterparts?

Program stakeholders are committed to analyzing multiple sources of data, including student work, to assist the residency teams in their conversations about the best ways to ensure students are learning; however, Berry, et al. (2008b) state that too little data have been collected and interpreted to determine the links to increased student achievement. Yet, it should be noted that research examining linkages between teacher collaboration and student learning have been reported going back to research conducted by Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran (2007), who looked at student achievement gains made in standardized mathematics and reading exams when teachers began to work in collaborative teams. They noted that the activities, relationships, and networking that occurred *within* collaborative work moved teachers out of isolation, exposed them to new ideas and strategies, and focused conversations around strategies to improve teaching and engaged learning; the indirect result is improved student learning.

The effectiveness of the resident graduates once they gain a classroom of their own has been noted; 95% of resident graduates were placed in Boston Public Schools upon completion of the program (Berry, et al., 2008b); 94% of administrators indicated a desire to hire more resident graduates, finding them

"significantly more effective" than their traditional prepared colleagues (Solomon, 2008, p. 479). Recently, The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) sited the Memphis Teaching Residency "as the most effective teacher preparation program in the state of Tennessee (out of 44 total programs) for the 2011-2012 academic year" (2012, THEC Report).

Nevertheless, teaching residencies are not without their problems: difficulty securing quality mentors, budget constraints, and negotiating the granting university's traditional degree pathways to fit into the residency model are on-going challenges (Sawchuk, 2011). Infrastructure, management, personnel, and administration details can also get complex (Berry, et al., 2008a). Yet, given the relative newness of the model, the benefits noted suggest there is value in this alternative way of preparing quality teachers for urban schools in addition to recruiting more ethnically diverse teachers (Berry, et al, 2008b, p. 21). In their case study of The Bank Street College and high-needs New York City schools, Berry, et al. (2008a) report: "(a) the school climate in the partnership schools is becoming more collaborative and more focused on students and rich curriculum offerings; (b) teachers are emerging as teacher leaders and taking on leadership roles; (c) teacher attrition is decreasing; (d) student learning is increasing" (p. 13).

Believing "there is specialized knowledge new teachers to the urban context must develop to successfully teach urban students, including identifying the resources and challenges urban teachers face" (p. 50), researcher Andrea Stairs (2010) sought to examine and evaluate pre-service students' experiences in

an Urban Immersion program where would-be-secondary teachers completed course and field work one day a week in an inner city high school.

Aware that teachers destined for urban schools need more than "generic teacher preparation" (Stairs, 2010, p. 47), creators of the Urban Immersion program (a collaboration between the university and an inner city high school) held to a transformational philosophy of education. Stairs (2010) references the work of Oakes, et al., (2002) to point to the specialized knowledge urban teachers need to know:

> They need to understand local urban cultures, the urban political economy, the bureaucratic structure of urban schools, and the community and social service support networks serving urban centers. They need skills to draw on and develop in urban youth literacies across the academic content areas, promote college access for first-generation college goers, build social capital across schools and community organizations, and create alliances and engage in joint work with other reform-minded teachers. (pp. 228 – 229, in Stairs, pp. 47-48)

Interested in what participants learned about becoming professional educators in the urban context, Stairs (2010) asked 'What do pre-service teachers learn in an integrated course and field experience in an urban school-university partnership?' Her sub-questions included, 'What do pre-service teachers learn about secondary curriculum and instruction and urban teaching?' and 'In what ways is their learning evident?' (p. 50). Stairs sampled fifty-five participants in the study, and collected data from open-ended pre-and post surveys, coursework, lesson observations, interviews, and artefacts such as course syllabi, course evaluations, and pre-practicum materials. Stairs aggregated her findings, when, upon the conclusion of her data analysis, she noted that most of the students shared a

'typical' experience in the Urban Immersion program. She shares her findings through a single case participant, 'Laura' (p. 52).

Laura, like many students in education programs (Zumwalt and Craig, 2005), is White, middle-class, and received her K-12 education in suburban public schools. Stairs notes that prior to the Urban Immersion experience, Laura had not considered seeking such a placement after graduation. Early in the placement, Stairs (2010) relates Laura's focus on classroom management as an indicator of 'good' teaching, while sharing her "outrage" for the situation that teachers have to provide engaging learning activities for a classroom population where many of the students are English language learners (p. 55). Laura's opinion that the state-mandated policy of immersion is wrong-minded reflects the Urban Immersion's goal to develop a transformative lens for urban teachers: the "ability to reflect on policy and practice issues in the urban classroom ... a move toward viewing teaching as a political act" (p. 55). Laura got her first glimpse into how difficult it is for the non-English speaking students to access the content.

A decision to focus a history of Harlem's Renaissance unit on issues related to race and class emerged after Laura and her teaching partner survey students' interests. Stairs reports that Laura's decisions to explicitly teach the students about inequities in their history, and engage in rather than avoid the messiness of, open discussions around racism, discrimination and poverty reflects an "important aspect of *how* professional [urban] educators teach the content" (p. 56, italics original). Again, Stairs (2010, p. 56) points to the specific criteria for urban teaching effectiveness as identified by Oakes, et al. (2002):

> In urban schools, competence cannot be parsed into teacher skills and social action. An effective urban teacher cannot be skilled in the classroom but lack skills and commitment to equity, access, and democratic participation. Likewise, if one is to be a teacher, a deep caring and democratic commitment must be accompanied by highly developed subject matter and pedagogical skills. (p. 229)

At the conclusion of her study, Stairs (2010) reports that Laura's "greatest" understanding as a result of her experience in the Urban Immersion program as the importance of knowing "students well, their learning styles and interests" (p. 57)

Stairs (2010) offers four perspectives "from which pre-service teachers operated during their semester in an urban school-university partnership: (1) Noticing, (2) Critiquing, (3) Enacting, and (4) Reflecting" (p. 58). As Laura spent more time in the classroom, she was able to move away from a teacher-centred orientation on curriculum content, to a student-centred understanding of effective instruction for urban school settings. As Stairs (2010) reports, Laura "learned the importance of teachers' making professional decisions about secondary curriculum and instruction, especially balancing curriculum requirements with engaging lessons that emerge from students' cultures, interests, and needs (p. 59).

Summary

> *Authentic collaboration in teacher preparation presents opportunities that cannot be replicated when coursework is viewed as the domain of the schools. (Stairs, 2010, p. 60)*

Transitioning from student to teacher is difficult. Many institutions privilege theoretical knowledge and undervalue the experiential knowledge gained through extensive time in the field working alongside experienced,

effective practitioners. The traditional experience of teachers new to the profession has been described as isolating, overwhelming, and disillusioning. Many new teachers report their professors did not adequately prepare them for the realities of their teaching contexts, and they question the practice of reading theory without a particular setting or event in which to frame it. Teacher residencies hold the potential to address many of these challenges.

Not unlike effective classrooms, where an effective teacher can determine the needs of individual students and provide them with meaningful, engaging, and relevant learning experiences, teacher residency programs can provide a space where pre-service teachers – already versed in content knowledge – work to become effective learning leaders.

Rearick and Feldman (2007) do identify 'political purposes' as an orientation in action research if the goal is to "critique the nature of teachers' work and workplaces… [to become aware] of the interconnections between knowledge and power" (p. 335). The literature review shows evidence that the current practice of preparing education students for the profession by segregating their learning about theories of learning from the very students they will be teaching, and limiting their time in the field to the end of their undergraduate degree, is not adequate enough for the development of effective teachers for most urban classrooms (Crocker & Gibbon, 2008). Our most at-risk youth need powerful teaching role-models.

The teacher residency model supports individual learning needs: mentors and residents collaborate to determine a co-constructed agenda. Through

processes of co-teaching, assessing data, reflecting on their instruction and planning, negotiating complex curriculum, participating in collaborative work and teacher networks, exploring instructional strategies for diverse learner groups, assessing student learning, exploring educational theories in graduate course work, and participating in *all* aspects of the teaching life over the course of the school year, residency graduates are less likely to experience the panic and self-doubt responsible for driving many from the profession. Most importantly, rather than merely hoping new teachers develop the skills, attributes, and 'know how' that characterize effective teaching, the experience can ensure it.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of an extra-to-degree, post-baccalaureate teaching residency year. In the previous chapter, I discussed research literature to provide a background for practices and programs that serve to transition new graduates from their previous identity of students into their new role of teacher, and the relatively new practice in the education field of preparing teachers within schools as an alternative to the traditional training route.

The pilot program described in Chapter One, with its action research orientation, concluded at the end of June 2012. During the residency period, the participants' views were used to shape and direct the structure and activities within the program. This research study sought to capture the entirety of the experience of the participants who graduated from the teaching residency pilot; and, from their collective experience, determine the appropriateness of the residency model as a potential solution to the problem of new teacher transitions and the issues that often lead to teacher attrition.

The research question guiding this study asks: What characteristics of a ten-month teaching residency program do the participants identify as essential to their effectiveness, knowledge and confidence to work in diverse, urban classrooms? The pool of research in which the actual experiences of residents participating in programs have been documented is small; furthermore, the residency year in this study is not an *alternative route* to becoming a teacher – it

is a self-selected professional learning opportunity that extends the traditional training route – adding up to 200 practicum days. In a cross-Canada review of B.Ed. program structures, researchers Crocker and Dibbon (2008) found typical Canadian program structures ranged from as few as 50 (ten weeks) to as many as 120 practicum days (24 weeks), with the majority falling somewhere in the middle. During this residency pilot year, education graduates were immersed in the full range of responsibilities, skills, and roles required of their teaching partners. These young teachers' experiences provide the context and rationale for this study. In this chapter, I will discuss and describe the methodological details of the study. Pseudonyms are used for the school district, the school sites, and the residency participants.

Originally the residency cohort was located in a single location, but the demand by elementary graduates for this opportunity expanded the locations to include two elementary schools, and a shift from one principal – whose support and willingness to engage in the pilot stemmed from his deep belief in preparing new teachers better – to a cohort of four principals and four sites. However, the principals belonged to their own self-lead professional learning group, had known each other for most of their careers, trusted each other's leadership, and believed in the goals of the residency pilot.

We were concerned that, while the resident teachers had their teaching partner(s) and a supporting principal on site, the chance to share with their cohort peers would be hampered by scheduling conflicts, their geographical locations in a large, sprawling city and site specific demands on their time. Nevertheless,

while new challenges emerged which required more purposeful ‘check ins’, conversations and communication supports, the network already established by the four principals around their shared beliefs and commitment to improving teacher practice in research-based ways ensured the physical distances were not an issue.

A Moodle site (online digital platform) was established at the beginning of the experience for the teacher residents to post a weekly reflection or discussion; in addition, they were expected to read all their peers’ posts and respond to two; both myself and one of the university professors also engaged the resident participants – either by asking deeper questions, sharing similar experiences, or by simply acknowledging how the resident teacher was feeling. The Moodle was also used to share articles on timely or relevant topics and the teacher residents were invited to respond with their thoughts or questions. The threaded discussions allowed for the participants to track their own participation and engagement with their peers, but more significantly their growth and confidence as the weeks progressed. And, although the participants were not physically at the same residency site, they were connected, aware of, and supportive of each other’s learning.

The principals took different approaches in ‘merging’ the residency teachers into the school, either encouraging partnerships to emerge more slowly and organically, or situating the residency teachers in specific partnerships from day one. There were positives identified in both approaches. Timetables and co-teaching partners were developed around two specific goals: 1) to match

residency teachers to their subject area/content knowledge goals and 2) to match residency teachers to teaching partners with similar/complementary teaching styles/philosophies. Residency teachers were introduced to students and parents as teachers, and began to take responsibility for 50% of their teaching partners' workload from the first day of classes.

The district that supported the pilot had a specific priority tied to collaborative practice, and was familiar to the extent to which Centennial High had embraced the practice not only within its cultural practices, but how it had made use of its physical space orientation.

Weekly seminars occurred on Friday afternoons in the first semester and moved to Friday morning's in the second semester to accommodate an assignment change for two of the residency teachers. The face-to-face seminar was semi-planned; generally, the two professors would open by asking the residency teachers to share an important learning or event from their week. The ensuing conversation often included instructional or cognitive coaching, offers of advice, links to similar experiences, encouragement, or deeper questions from the resident teachers, myself, and the professors.

After all cohort members had their opportunity to share from their specific contexts, the seminar moved to a more structured agenda to address specific topics that included classroom management, relationships and conflict, instructional choices and strategies, differentiation, assessment, lesson planning, literacy, teacher leadership, teacher wellness and emergent issues. As the year unfolded, residency teachers felt confident to excuse themselves on specific

seminar days to remain at their school sites to participate in professional learning or in an important class or school function they determined most important to their professional growth goals.

The physical architecture at Centennial High is unique and not typical in the construction of schools. Centred in the middle of the school, the teachers' planning room houses all Centennial High's teaching and educational assistant staff. Similar to college or university, teachers meet their students at a classroom for the assigned time, and return to the teachers' planning center when they are not teaching. The room is arranged by subject and, within each subject, teachers are proximal to colleagues who teach the same course. The purpose of this structure is to facilitate collaboration and project work, data analysis, reflection, and peer coaching.

The teachers' planning room has a significant impact on how the staff function and work together. Unlike other large urban high schools where distance between different areas of the plant act as impediments to the staff knowing each other, the staff at Centennial High know each other well - the subjects they teach, the skills they possess, and who also teaches the students they teach. These relationships advance the staff's understanding of students' challenges, issues and behaviors, and expedite strategies and practices that work to help students overcome their challenges and find success. Because the staff know and discuss their students with each other, the students too learn to share their knowledge of, and experiences with their teachers with their classmates, their other teachers and

with their administrators; many staff and students have come to realize quickly that there are 'no secrets' at Centennial High, and word travels fast.

The teachers' planning room also serves to induct new teachers into Centennial High's culture. Within a very short time, new teachers and teachers new to Centennial are socialized into an environment that, as Curwin (2010) describes: builds hope, believes all students can learn, genuinely cares about students – and shows that care by allocating a significant portion of its budget to in-house counseling, guidance, and intervention supports does not give up on students and supports teachers to pursue responsive actions to their classroom challenges. Educators without these beliefs or who have not encountered a space in which these attitudes are developed quickly adjust or they move on. The nature of the physical space makes it difficult to fake an attitude or offer contrived compliance; again, there are few secrets at Centennial High.

Design

Because I was interested in better understanding teachers' experiences in a professional residency option to address the problems many new graduates face in the transition from student-of-education to learning leader, this study required qualitative data. Mertens supports the use of qualitative methods when a researcher is seeking an "in-depth description of a specific program, practice, or setting" (2010, p. 225). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices include field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this

> level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

In this study, grasping an understanding of the residency experience for the individual participants is best supported by a qualitative approach. The extended program was ten months in duration, including full-day, full-week residency structured around a set of specific and negotiated practices, and took place within a particular context. Creswell (2007) explains qualitative research as an opportunity to build a "complex holistic picture" (p. 15) through the research process - a process he describes as "involving fieldwork for prolonged periods of time, collecting words and pictures, analysing this information inductively while focusing on participants' views, and writing about the process using expressive and persuasive language" (p. 24).

As both researcher and the administrator in one of the schools where the residency program ran, I had a multi-layered, eleven-month perspective, affording me a vantage point from which I was able to collect extensive detail. Multiple means of data gathering were utilized. My observations and field notes, combined with the experiences of the participants – situated at four different schools within a large urban district - served to the creation of the in-depth, complex holistic picture of what a post-degree residency year might offer beginning teachers.

I chose a case study research strategy not only because it has a long-established history in educational research (Merriam, 1998), but because it is well-suited to gain an understanding of the experiences of these individuals who

have chosen to deepen their pre-service readiness for a teaching career by participating in a teaching residency program extra to their education degree; "[case studies] are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system (Smith, 1978) such as an individual program, event, group, intervention, or community" (p. 19). Merriam further refines the definition of case study this way: "I can "fence in" what I am going to study. The case then, could be a person, such as a student, a teacher, a principal; a program; a group… and so on" (p. 27).

Yin (2009) describes case study as an all-encompassing research method and - because of the nature of its in-depth exploration of the uniqueness of a situation, event, program, or phenomena - a richness of understanding of an individual`s experience in a particular context can be garnered. Case study approaches provide researchers a space to ask: *What happened? How did this happen?* or*, Why did this happen?* within a specific context. The individual's account thus provides key stakeholders – like teacher-education institutions, school districts, and school administrators – new insights, which can then be used to adapt, alter, or reshape a program - to better prepare teacher graduates. Hence, data collection sub-questions include:

- What motivated the participants' decision to invest in the extra residency year after graduating with their education degree?
- What experiences, relationships, and/or activities did the participants find to be most beneficial in their transition from student to teacher?
- How does the residency experience contrast with the practicum placements they experienced as part of their undergraduate program?
- How effective was the ten-month teaching residency program in preparing them in key areas of teaching knowledge and skill?
- What aspects of the residency were absolutely essential for them to become more informed educators?

- And, if they are employed as teachers at the time of data collection: What aspect of the residency program's co-teaching, peer-coaching and collaborative structure do they maintain as part of their professional practice?

As the site administrator at one of the four schools, and a member of the residency instruction and coordination team, I was afforded constant and personal interactions with the resident participants. My understanding of their teaching assignments, their co-teacher partnerships, and the context of those assignments, in addition to their own insights and understandings (described in their reflective writing including online conversations, self-determined leadership projects, professional growth plans, and course assignments for their university classes) supported the rich description inherent in good qualitative research (Mertens, 2010). In addition to analyzing the written assignments, online resources and focus group, other data sources include a survey, individual interviews using semi-structured questions, and member checking.

Setting and Population Selection

The post-graduate-pre-service teaching residencies occurred at four sites: two secondary and two elementary schools within Century City Public School District[2], a large urban school board in Alberta. Initially, the residency pilot proposal was offered to secondary education graduates only. However, interest in the opportunity to experience a full year of learning by teaching alongside highly effective educators spread to graduates in the elementary route, so the residency became a multi-site program. The two secondary sites, Centennial High School

[2] Name of district and subsequent school names altered to maintain anonymity

and Mountainview High School, have diverse student populations between twenty-three and twenty-seven hundred. Prairie Elementary is located in an upper middle class neighborhood with approximately 360 students. The number of special needs or English language learners was less than 5%, and most students participate in the writing of the grade level achievement exams. Riverview Elementary is located in an older, more economically diverse neighborhood with a student population of approximately 200 students; there is a higher number of special needs students (approximately 20%), but not a significant population of English language learners (less than 3%).

Centennial High School was determined to be the primary site for the residency program for key reasons. This particular location makes for a rich learning environment for teachers and educators. First, it is centrally located and a short commute to the university campus; its location in the core of the city introduces many suburban youth to individuals and issues rarely encountered outside the downtown core: individuals with mental illness and/or addictions, to urban issues of poverty, transiency and homelessness, and to the violence often associated with these problems. Centennial High School provides teachers – many of whom come from middle class backgrounds – insight into the often complex and harrowing lives of urban youth.

Second, the school is considered unique in that it provides programming for high school students requiring upgrading and/or course completion beyond the three years, or six semesters, they already received in their community high school; this context challenges even the most effective teachers to inspire,

motivate, and engage sometimes reluctant, unfocused, and disengaged youth. Centennial High School is known throughout the district and parts of the province to be innovative, responsive to its students' needs, and cutting edge in its program offerings. Teachers who have come to Centennial High School from community schools have commented on the high expectations in instructional excellence and focus on relationship building the staff prioritize – even above content expertise - and with the purposeful absence of extra-curricular commitments enables staff to focus completely on teaching and learning supports.

Third, the student population is diverse – reflecting all Century City's neighborhoods – from the most to the least affluent - as well as students from communities outside of the capital, students switching from the Catholic district, as well as First Nation communities located around the province, and recent refugee immigrant youth whose age prevents them from attending their local neighborhood school. In the province where the study was situated, students are able to access publically-funded education until they are twenty years old. As a result, Centennial High School serves as a kind of 'alluvial basin' for the region; students are able to discuss openly and honestly their prior learning experiences and reflect on what they have learned about their own learning styles and strengths. The willingness of staff to listen to students is reflected in the wide range of learning platforms and program choices the school offers.

Fourth, upwards of thirty percent of the student population at Centennial High School do not speak English as their main language; close to thirty-five percent of the student population has an individualized learning program with

required supports to address special needs' learners. No longer relegated to pull-out programs, special needs, and English language learning, students are integrated into regular programming, supporting the government's move to inclusion. Teachers at Centennial High School have made significant commitments in staff development and data-supported resources to become district leaders in adolescent literacy instruction, English language learning instruction, differentiated instruction, and universal design.

Finally, the population at Centennial High School struggles with the conflicting priorities of its student population. Eighty percent of the student population is employed, half work upwards of thirty hours per week to provide themselves with food, clothing and shelter; often, they are expected to contribute to the financial support of other family members. Many of the school's immigrant students are also expected to act as translators for their parents and grandparents resulting in a high percentage of absenteeism. Between ten and fifteen percent of the student population are unwed teen mothers. Fifteen percent of the population has indicated ongoing struggles with mental illness and addictions.

Centennial High School's student population is diverse: highly motivated, academically focused, and enthusiastic students; reluctant learners with low credit counts; immigrant, refugee and English language learners who have never attended school; special needs learners - to name a few of the groups – all trying to complete high school before their public funding runs out. Teachers at this site have become incredibly effective working with diverse learners and have built a substantial knowledge base of strategies for working with a wide range of learner

challenges. This diverse population and its ensuing challenges require teachers to make substantial connections with students, to take the time to get to know their students' lives and backgrounds to determine the best supports and learning activities for their students. This complex and often challenging population presents an incredible training field and promises that the residents will be prepared for diverse classrooms – regardless of their future location at any of the district's neighborhoods: urban, suburban, affluent, working-class, or poor.

The school site is built – both physically and conceptually – around a collaborative model. Unlike typical high schools, Centennial High School has a designated teacher planning room where all of the teaching staff and educational assistants are located and organized by subject area. Teachers do not have their own classrooms. Similar to a college campus, both instructor and students meet at a classroom for the allotted instructional time then disperse at the end of the block. After meeting with program advisors and career/post-secondary counselors, students construct their own timetables – selecting courses and the times when they would prefer to attend. They can choose to fast-track their courses (doubling the time of the course per day to complete in ten weeks), take their courses online, or negotiate a hybrid option with their instructor and an online instructor. As part of the teaching staff, resident participants were able to experience a range of programs and supports seldom seen in other sites.

Midway through the school year, a second high school location was added to provide a secondary resident-teacher with an extensive experience in a non-core program not available at Centennial High School. Mountainview High

School, a community school offering more traditional programming to a typical population (fifteen to eighteen years old), has a growing diverse learning population (albeit, the bulk of its student population is representative of the suburban, middle class), with its English language learner population just over ten percent and its special needs population just over seven percent.

Between the two secondary sites, four secondary residents were able to co-teach with multiple partners in a wide range of courses over two semesters – affording them a multi-layered perspective of teaching styles, programming, and activities that suit a gamut of subject areas, levels, and student needs.

Prairie and Riverview Elementary, as mentioned above, became satellite schools when the residency program director was asked prior to the residency year commencing to provide an immersion experience for recent elementary education graduates. These sites were selected for two reasons: first, both principals are deeply committed, exceptional learning leaders whose personal philosophies and value-systems support collaborative, innovative work places that foster growth and professional learning; second, after meeting with the residency candidates, the principals were able to determine important co-teacher sponsors with whom the residents would be supported and mentored. Unlike the secondary placements, where residents taught a variety of subjects with different teaching partners, elementary residents would be primarily partnered with one teacher in one classroom for the entire school year. The success of the experience depended heavily on each resident's placement with a generous and reflective partner; therefore, it was key that the program directors knew the principals who would be

the first point of contact for the elementary residents and trusted their judgments in making those important matches.

The research study application process commenced the year after the conclusion of the residency pilot. After passing candidacy, I applied for ethics approval at the university, and within the school district. I intended to invite all seven participants to participate – aiming for the sample size to settle into two secondary participants and two elementary participants - falling within the recommended sample size suggested for case study methodology (Mertens, 2010, p. 332). Access to one of the former resident participants was limited by coordination through another school district. I mailed out six invitations to participate (see APPENDIX A), outlined the main question and sub questions (see APPENDIX B), and asked the participants who consented to participate to complete a survey twice and return to me prior to our interview (see APPENDIX C). One of the former residents was no longer in the area, so the sample size settled at five.

Although three residency participants had already experienced some kind of paid teaching on their own before applying to the residency program, the remaining two participants had never been hired as educators. I wanted the group to be able to generate a wide range of reflections and experiences while, at the same time, ensuring opportunity to go into depth with each of the participants. As Merriam (1998) points out, in qualitative case studies, "two levels of sampling are usually necessary…. 'the case' to be studied … and some sampling within the case" (pp. 64-65). This sample group was made up of four females and one male.

All of the participants – at the time of the pilot – were in their twenties, and none were entering education as 'second' careers.

Qualitative research seeks to understand the experience of the individual. Thus, I kept every document created during the length of the pilot, I reflected daily on the relationships within the cohort, and the depth to which I engaged in on-going conversations (face-to-face, online, the focus group, and interviews) with the residency-teachers. These investments afforded me an expansive pool of information from which meaning made by the individual as to the impact of his or her experiences can be drawn (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006).

Data Collection

Throughout the pilot, participants posted their thoughts and experiences in Moodle. Merriam (1998) points out those personal documents can provide the researcher with a "reliable source of data concerning a person's attitudes, beliefs and view of the world," and the subjective nature of a personal accounting – such as a diary – is not a limitation if the point of the research is capture the "perspective of the participant" (p. 116). In addition to their online journal, much of their course work required them to reflect on key experiences and events that occur during their field placements as it correlated or intersected with the theories they encountered in the academy – findings from those assignments were also included. Finally, as a researcher, I kept a reflective journal to record my questions and conclusions, and if needed, to account for my own biases when I analysed the data. The advantage of documents as a data source in qualitative case

studies, as Merriam (1998) states, is their ability to "ground an investigation in the context of the [question] being investigated" (p. 126).

Each school setting had its own culture and distinctive context. A school's culture plays a powerful role in shaping the activities, processes, events, and relationships that take place within its walls. As such, the residency experienced by each participant was heavily influenced by the culture of each site. The data – online journals, assignments, researcher's journal – "are products of the context in which they were produced and therefore grounded in the real world" (Merriam, 1998, p. 127) – providing multiple access points into the daily, timely, situational, and situated experiences in the residency.

All data were collected, labeled, and organized in my notebook and laptop. These data include transcriptions of the individual participant's recorded interview, the interview audio files, the online posts, results from a focus group, emails from participants, their class assignments, and my journal notes. The location and time of the final face-to-face individual interview was determined by the participants.

Interviews afford the researcher with an opportunity to come as close "as possible to a sense of what someone is thinking" (Merriam, 1998, p. 71). In seeking to understand all aspects of the participant's experience, individual interviews within qualitative research generate the best data. Merrian suggests as "the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals" (1998, p. 72). Stake (1995) agrees, "the interview is the

main road to multiple realities" (p. 65). Each participant holds a distinct worldview. Although structuring the questions assumes that the researcher and participants share a common view (Merriam, p, 74), the purpose of the study is to identify *which aspects* of the residency were deemed by the participants to be most effective.

As an administrator at Centennial High School, employee of Century City Public, and co-director of the residency pilot, I was a complete participant (Mertens, 2010), and had full access to the participants' on-line journals, their course assignments, and their focus group responses. The data I collected from participants in the one-on-one interview conducted eighteen months after the residency pilot concluded came from an inquiry process that employed semi-structured individual interview questions, but which were "open-ended, searching, and extensive" (Mertens, 2010, p. 90).

The documents produced throughout the pilot residency year, and the responses collected during a first semester focus group, served dual purposes. The ongoing reflections and conversations served to inform what next steps or actions needed to transpire within the program to maintain its action research orientation; and, in aggregated form, the organized data served to create the narrative arc, or "holistic picture" qualitative research methodology affords (Creswell, 2007, p.15).

In their research *Teacher Education in Canada: A Baseline Study*, Crocker and Dibbon (2008) asked graduates from across Canada to rate their preparedness

(from “not very well, to “very well”) on twenty-seven areas of teaching knowledge and skill (p. 136). I adapted their survey to reflect this study’s context (see APPENDIX C), and asked the participants to consider each question in this survey two times: first, in reflection of their practicum within their undergraduate program; and second, in reflection of their residency experience. This information helped the participants identify specific areas of knowledge they had not gained from their undergrad experience, and helped me to identify aspects within the residency pilot that provided that understanding. They returned this survey with their consent forms, giving me time to examine their responses, and identify areas of greatest contrast for each of them prior to their individual interviews.

After I transcribed the individual interviews, I presented each participant the script of our interview, and invited them to clarify, alter or add to their interview script to ensure what I presented in this dissertation appropriately reflected their experience. Member checking – that is, providing participants with an opportunity to accept the researcher’s interpretation and understanding of their experiences in written format – was used to ensure that each participant’s experience had not been misunderstood; and, if clarity was needed, this process both invited and allowed the participants to clarify their insights. Upon receipt of their script approvals, I began the process of amalgamating each participant’s multiple datum in order to ‘write’ their experience. Once aggregated, each participant’s experience ‘story’ was again presented to them to review.

Figure 2 provides a breakdown and overview of the relationship of the pilot’s data sources within the action research initiative that informed *what* would

occur within the residency, and to the research study's question that sought to understand *what aspects of the residency* provided the greatest sources of professional learning.

Figure 2: Data Collection Matrix

Questioning Framework: used throughout the pilot 1. *What*? Identification of issues, challenges, topics to explore with the cohort. 2. *So What*? Negotiating change, next steps. 3. *Now What*? Reflecting on successes, areas still needing attention: return to first question.	**Data Sources** Weekly online forum, weekly cohort discussion, term and course assignments, individual coaching conversations, researcher's journal, teaching-partner observations.
Questions asked at 8 week Stakeholders' Meeting 1. What is the value in the residency experience for your learning? 2. What are your best outcomes, or expectations, for your residency experience? 3. What are your current "I wonders" at this point in the residency?	**Focus Group** Held once at 8 week meeting.
Research Question What characteristics of a ten-month teaching residency program do the participants identify as essential to their effectiveness, knowledge and confidence to work in diverse, urban classrooms? **Research sub-questions include:** • What motivated the participants' decision to invest in the extra residency year after graduating with their education degree? • What experiences, relationships, and/or activities did the participants find to be most beneficial in their transition from student to teacher? • How does the residency experience contrast with the practicum placements their experienced as part of their undergraduate program? • How effective was the ten-month teaching residency program in preparing them in key areas of teaching knowledge and skill? • What aspects of the residency were absolutely	**Data Sources** Weekly online forum, weekly cohort discussion, term and course assignments, focus group event, individual coaching conversations, researcher's journal, Questionnaire (APPENDIX C). One, final individual semi-structured interview.

essential for them to become more informed educators? • And, if they are employed as teachers at the time of data collection: What aspect of the residency program's co-teaching, peer- coaching and collaborative structure do you intend to maintain as part of your professional practice?	

Data Analysis

"Data analysis in qualitative studies in an ongoing process…recursive, findings are generated and systematically built as successive pieces of data are gathered" (Mertens, 2010, pp. 423-424). Initial analysis of data and interpretation happened during data collection as to adhere to the tenets of action research, and as Merriam (1998) advocates is "the right way" (p. 162) because collecting and analyzing data occurs at the same time. And, as Stake (1995) asserts, "analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions" (p. 71).

At each Friday cohort meeting, the questions, challenges or issues explored in the online conversations or during the weekly class meetings resulted in a rich sharing of perspectives and opinions: the 'what' and 'so what' of applied research (Parsons, 2013). These ongoing conversations helped me to start to identify codes. Throughout the year, the participants were invited to identify, debate and challenge the 'meaning' they make from their experiences, and from that meaning, determine direction or negotiate how they needed or wanted to proceed. I continued to identify repeated phrases, recurring patterns and new topics as they emerged in their documents.

In preparing for the final face-to-face interview with each participant eighteen months after the residency pilot concluded, and after I had received both

ethical and board approval to conduct a research study of the pilot experience, I arranged each participant's documents chronologically, and viewed the entirety of his or her data (including three assignments they completed for their professors during the residency and their responses from the first semester stakeholders' focus group) as an aggregate of a story arc – from beginning of the pilot in August of 2011 to the end of the pilot in June of 2012.

As I read and re-read each resident's experience, I began to tentatively chunk the codes mentioned throughout in the margins (see APPENDIX D); I used colored post-it notes to track the various topics, phrases and patterns. After viewing the participant's journey, I re-read my own journal notes, flagging similar codes within questions, assumptions, conversations with teaching-partners and the professors, conclusions, and subsequent actions or interventions we had employed within the pilot. I used the same color coding process in my journal to check for biases. I repeated this process five times for each participant.

I continued to return to the data collected during the 10 month pilot, comparing and contrasting the participants' observations during their experience, to their responses from the individual interview conducted 18 months later, carefully refining my initial codes, leading to the creation of categories (Creswell, 2007). These categories were then assigned a new specific color. As I re-read each participant's data collection, I applied the colored sticky notes and coordinating colored markers and pencils crayons to identify the text that highlighted its appropriate placement within the specific categories (see APPENDIX D).

In their efforts to provide a baseline for research on teacher preparation in Canada, Crocker and Dibbon (2008) conducted surveys with representative samples of school principals, education faculty members, and recent education graduates. They identified seven categories in which to frame the questions they asked the three different stakeholder groups: "program structures, the nature and value of program content, teaching knowledge and skill, the nature and value of program content, teaching knowledge and skill, the nature and value of the practicum, and transition to the teaching profession" (p. 11).

One key area, the nature and value of the practicum and the specific characteristics of field-situated learning, served as my main framework for identifying the effectiveness of the practices, processes and activities experienced by the participants in their ten month residency. Specifically, I used six features of the practicum Crocket and Dibbon (2008) noted as having an impact on pre-service teacher perceptions of effectiveness, altering the criteria to reflect the context of this study:

- Duration of the [Residency]
- [Co] Teaching Activities
- Teaching [and Learning] Supervision
- Quality of the [Resident] Teaching Experience
- Faculty and Principal Perceptions on [Resident] Teaching
- Induction/Mentoring (pp. 100-101)

These categories, adapted to reflect the status of the residency participants (as residency teachers holding a valid teaching certificate) and somewhat modified to acknowledge the pilot as an extended learning choice rather than as a required

component on graduating with an education degree served to organize the data into themed findings.

As Creswell (2007) explains, "undeniably, qualitative researchers preserve the unusual and serendipitous, and writers craft each study differently, using analytic procedures that evolve in the field … one enter with data or text or images and exits with an account or narrative. In between, the researcher touches on several facets of analysis and circles round and around" (p. 142). I transcribed each interview as it was conducted to ensure my best understanding of what was said and how. Merriam (2007) states, "data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity" (p. 151); therefore, I anticipated that my own meaning-making evolved as I read each interview and as I mined the other data sources – the participants' online reflections and assignments. With each read, re-read, and reflection, as they merged and compared to my own reflections, new perspectives and insights emerged – leading to the formation of new questions and ideas.

Throughout the data analysis process, I revisited the data, a circular, recursive activity, looking for the emergence of tentative themes, and to the ongoing refinement of categories, which were explored and discussed more deeply in conversations with the participants. Stake (1995) reminds researchers that "case studies are undertaken to make the case understandable" (p. 85) and, as such, it falls to the researcher to look for patterns, consistency, and "consistency within certain conditions" (p. 78). From there, the research should seek to diligently interpret perceptions. Merriam (1998) reminds researchers that collection, analysis, and reporting of data is highly interpretive and the extensive

details and rich description of the case are necessary to help readers understand the researcher's conclusions (p. 152).

Trustworthiness

Merriam (1998) suggests six basic strategies to support a researcher's findings are valid: triangulation, member checks, long-term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative modes of research, and the transparency of the researcher's biases (pp. 204-205). For this study, I employed member checks, detailed observations and reflections from my yearlong participation in the residency pilot, and I utilized thick description by ensuring each participant's account provided lengthy contextual detail as to enhance understanding.

My role as a site-facilitator in the pilot and as a mentor to the participants afforded me the opportunity to develop trusting relationships. The collaborative and supportive model of the residency gave rise to an authentic learning space where residents were encouraged to share feelings, ideas, and challenges without fear of judgment. Due to my proximity to the residency participants and their experiences, I had the opportunity to observe much of what they encountered in the contexts in which events occurred – allowing me to provide rich description, or story, for each participant (Creswell, 2007). The ensuing texts and reports were taken back to participants to confirm accuracy, emerging themes, and interpretations. This invitational method created an on-going review that allowed me to clarify the interview transcripts, parts of the data analysis, and the final

report. This method helped me attend to a key condition of maintaining trustworthiness.

At the conclusion of the residency year in June 2012, the seven participants were encouraged to pursue employment as educators. It is important to state emphatically that, during the residency, I was never in a position to assess or evaluate the residents, and that my main role as instructional coach would have undermined that trust had there been such a dynamic (Knight, 2007). The former resident participants are no longer students at the university where I am currently pursuing my doctoral degree; and, as an employee of the school board, I have no power over the participants, nor can I yield influence over the board's ability to offer them a position.

Ethical and Political Considerations

Prior to engaging in this research study, I sought ethics approval from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) at the University of Alberta and from my school board. After the study was approved by both, I sent out the approved 'Invitation to Participate' (APPENDIX A) to finalize my sample. I also developed an informed consent form as part of my application to FGSR. After the applicants had sufficient opportunity to understand the scope and nature of the study, they signed and returned their informed consent, where I repeated that they could withdraw at any time without penalty.

Protecting the anonymity of the participants' responses was a challenge within the district because the residency pilot ran with only seven participants;

nevertheless, I was vigilant in protecting the identity of the participants by using pseudonyms in writing and by using discretion in the use of direct quotations and specific details which could otherwise be traced back to specific people or the specific site. There was no power imbalance; as a researcher I was in no position to influence or affect participants' grades because the research study commenced after the conclusion of the residency pilot when all grades had been finalized and the graduates moved on to find employment.

In addition, as a researcher, while an employee within the district where the residency occurred, it is important to reiterate that I had no power to influence the future employment potential of the participants. The school board had a firm commitment to hiring educators based on program needs and relevant experiences. All interviewing and hiring falls to the board office; teachers are hired by school district human resource personnel, and are then interviewed by site administrators depending on the specific needs of the assignment. Contracts are offered to teachers based on their ability to effectively fill a teaching assignment.

The residency participants were first and foremost students of the university and at no time were they told that participation in the pilot would ensure them employment in the district. The collaborative, co-constructed 'site-based' orientation and nature of the pilot program, housed over four sites, sought to eliminate any hierarchical structures that would put the cohort participants at risk (Parsons and McRae, 2009).

I conducted this research ethically, with permissions from the appropriate authorities, and from a position of deep caring and respect for the participants. At each conclusion, I sought confirmation from the participants, and during the final focus group, gave the participants a chance to adapt, alter or omit any of the statements I made through analysis of the data. Although the close relationships I forged as a result of the experience allowed a potential for blurring lines between friend and research participant, the professionalism of all involved managed those risks, and the benefits of deeper learning and growth for the participants and the profession outweighed the concerns.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The data were collected in keeping with the aims of the qualitative researcher - that being in "understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 13), in recognition that case study research involves "three strategies of interviewing, observing and analyzing documents" (Merriam, 1998, p. 137), and to determine what characteristics of a ten-month teaching residency program the participants found most effective – the question posed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

To ensure that the participants' identities remain anonymous, pseudonyms are used, and where applicable, the findings are aggregated. Where there was an over-lapping of responses due to the similarity of some of the questions from across the range of data sources, the data were collapsed. The length of the five participants' quotes aims to capture their voices and give weight to their learning journeys.

The first part of this chapter reveals what motivated the individual residency participants to invest in the extra learning year – given that three of the participants had already experienced some aspect of paid work as educators. Their reasons for pursuing an addition learning experience provide valuable insight into ways that generalized or standardized processes within a program may not meet the learning needs or styles of all students. The chapter then shares reflections from the residents' Bachelor of Education program practicum placements.

In the second half of this chapter, the participants identified aspects of the residency they found most beneficial to their growth as learning-leaders, and reflected on the effectiveness of the teaching residency program in preparing them in key areas of teaching knowledge and skill, as identified by Crockett and Dibbon (2008). Again, due to the similarity in questions and subsequent responses from the various data sources, the data have been collapsed. Finally, because all five of the resident-teacher participants were employed as educators at the time of the final face-to-face interview, I will report on what aspects of the residency program's structures (peer-coaching, reflective and collaborative activities) they maintain as part of their professional practice.

No Two Roads Alike: Why a Residency Experience?

Beth.

Upon meeting Beth for the first time, many people would describe her as a shy and quiet person, perhaps reluctant to voice her opinions or challenge the status quo. Within a short time however, Beth's quiet demeanor revealed a keen intelligence, huge heart and bubbly personality. Her colleagues acknowledged her as dependable, unflappable, funny, reflective, and personable. Her students described her as lovable, patient, supportive, empathetic, and hard-working. Beth was the oldest daughter in an immigrant family, having migrated to Canada at seven years old. She pointed to her third grade teacher as her inspiration for becoming a teacher when, as a newcomer to the language and the culture, her teacher ensured that Beth was supported in her learning and not ignored or

isolated because of language; “I owe all of my success as a learner to the wonderful teacher...who influenced me throughout my transition to [Century City]... She was readily available for help, and her caring nature touched my heart.” Beth’s own experience as an immigrant learner and the impact that her elementary teacher made on her sense of accomplishment shaped the personal responsibility she felt for students of similar backgrounds; “I can’t help but recall my own struggles and triumphs, and the pivotal role I now play in these young people’s futures...as an immigrant, learning English did not come easy to me.”

Unfortunately, Beth’s collaborative spirit and incredible work-ethic, concern, and understanding of the struggles and challenges of learners, and passion for empowering diverse youth with a solid educational foundation were not being realized in a classroom. After completing her degree, Beth’s pursuit of a teaching position floundered.

> *When I graduated my grandma passed away in May. And I kind of put my whole application aside, and then I tried to dig it all back later. And then I realized ‘oh I don’t have enough reference letters.’ And it was already too late. So when I graduated I felt really lost because I didn’t know what to do... ‘*oh yeah; I put in my application and get my interview*,’ and then I was like ‘*so how do you do this?*’ I had a lot of trouble filling in the application because I didn’t feel like I met the things that they were looking for...experience...my lack of confidence was a big, massive, huge thing for me. I never ever submitted my application to [Century City Public] because I felt like my...like I wasn’t good enough. I didn’t know what the next steps were.*

Asked what motivated her to participate in the residency pilot, Beth was reflective and insightful about the self-doubt, lack of direction, and lack of clarity as to how one actually went about acquiring a teaching job she felt after graduating with Bachelor Science and Bachelor of Education degrees in Secondary Education. Her

delay in applying for teaching jobs, initially hampered by her grandmother's passing, became exacerbated by her belief that she was "not brave enough" to ask for reference letters during her student practicum, so did not have the necessary proof of her skills and abilities, and did not believe that her volunteer work at her church, or the tutoring help she'd provided to struggling students counted as the right kind of experience the school board sought in its potential hires. She was not sure how to navigate the gap between new graduate to getting a teaching assignment. She noted that her more successful fellow graduates had been able to ask and secure reference letters from principals or other leadership staff during their final practicum placements, and that many of those bolder individuals were working as educators. The longer the delay between graduation and asking for reference letters, the harder it got to start on her application package, in part, she suggests from her cultural background:

> *Growing up in an [immigrant] family, just had a lot of pressure...so high pressure really got me into thinking 'hey I need to get better'...So I always tried to push myself harder and harder. And just felt like my application wasn't good enough because in order for me to submit something I needed reference letters. And I had none.*

Beth likened the pressure to be better, in combination with her lack of action, to a paralysis: wanting to move, but unable to.

Prior to her joining the residency pilot, Beth had been working in a coffee franchise for a whole year. She felt "sick", and realized that she could "do better" given her investment: "six years of university; two degrees...and I still see myself being a teacher." At this point Beth set aside her fears, and although she had considered that trying to get a teaching job was "just too much work...and maybe I

should just stay with the coffee company forever," she sought information about the goals and the structure of the teaching residency pilot: "when I saw the program, I was like 'I think that's something that I want to try'."

Specifically, what attracted Beth to the pilot was the opportunity to get the experience she wanted within a expansive time-frame – a significant component of a quality practicum (Crocker & Dibbons, 2008). She points to the length of the residency as necessary to "get her feet wet" and as what really caught her eye; she was a self-described "slow learner" – that is, someone who needs to reflect, talk, explore and consider an experience prior to having the confidence to speak to, react to, accept, reject or assimilate learning from that experience – a learning style not suited to a typical student-teacher experience. "Just in terms of *being* in a school for 10 months and actually learning *how* to become a teacher, or what a whole first year of teaching would look like...that really got me thinking. And that's when I did all the application stuff. For that."

Beth was tired of being "frustrated...embarrassed...angry with [herself] for what [she] put herself through." And after two years of "trying to figure out what to do," the pilot program beckoned.

Alexis.

Within five minutes of meeting Alexis, no one would be surprised to hear that she came from a family of educators who deeply valued community engagement and - despite her youth and gentle laugh - already had a resume packed with experiences successfully coaching elementary to college-aged

dancers, often in very competitive categories. In addition to her lengthy coaching experiences, Alexis had invested a decade volunteering with kids. In our initial conversations, I was impressed by Alexis' quiet confidence, attentiveness to others, her organization, and especially her light-heartedness. She seemed to be the epitome of the grade one teacher – kind, mindful, soft-spoken, well-informed about professional practices, and more than capable of corralling twenty or so five and six year olds. Alexis described her self-assured approach and positive attitude towards getting a teaching job:

> *I remember upon graduating how confident I felt about getting a job. I had a great APT placement with a great review from my mentor teacher and facilitator, I did well in my classes that last semester...I had meetings with principals around the city, I talked to one of the guys who used to be part of the hiring process, and I showed my resume and autobiographical statement to what feels like a tonne of people who gave me lots of input and who had said to me 'you shouldn't have a problem.' Once I submitted my application package I felt like I did absolutely everything I could to secure a job.*

The general public would be baffled by Alexis' inability to secure a teaching contract; Alexis certainly was. "To my surprise though, I got a letter back saying that I wouldn't be considered for an interview. I was a bit alarmed and confused, especially after talking to so many 'high up' people, and hearing about a few people who had gotten jobs."

Despite the initial set-back, Alexis persevered; she contacted human resources and asked why she had been rejected. Based on polite but unspecific feedback, Alexis re-did her application, tracked down more reference letters and

re-submitted her package; while awaiting a call for an interview, she spent four days a week at three different schools volunteering.

> *I got another letter back from [Century City Public] saying no. By that point, the confidence that I had upon graduation had slowly diminished into what felt like nothing. Having all of that wait time made me start to really think about everything I still needed to learn about being a teacher and how much I didn't know yet.*

Unfortunately, Alexis represents a large number of new education graduates who potentially could be wonderful classroom teachers. She is one of tens of thousands of elementary generalist graduates who have acquired a degree for which there are not an equivalent number of jobs. As is the case of many education faculties, supply and demand rules do not apply. The number of students in education programs far outweighs the number of positions made available by retirements, illness, maternity, personal or study leaves, provincial funding, and population growth – upwards of 60% more graduates than there are teaching posts(Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). Sadly, despite doing everything she thought to make herself stand out, Alexis was merely one of over three thousand general elementary applicants who applied to teach for Century City Public that summer.

Undaunted by the board's rejection, and bolstered by her inherent positive attitude, Alexis decided to move abroad to London, to substitute teach. "I almost became grateful that I didn't get a job right off the bat because I started thinking that maybe I needed to make some changes in my life and gain more teaching experience in a different way...hence, my teaching adventure in London!"

Alexis' description of teaching in London echoed the experiences of many beginning teachers, an experience she likened to riding a rollercoaster. Despite being on a different continent, Alexis' description of her first teaching experience, with references to exhaustion and survival, sounds no different from the dominant narrative captured and shared in the literature review:

> *Some days I felt confident...some days I had no idea what I was doing, and some days I questioned whether or not teaching was for me...I truly began to realize how much work teachers have to do. I was coming home every day exhausted. I also realized teaching wasn't as easy as I thought it was going to be, which showed me that I had a lot to learn still...and although it was a tough year, I still came out of it knowing that I wanted to be a teacher. I decided that if I could survive the year subbing in London, then I could survive anything! What do you know? I survived!*

Nevertheless, putting a tough year behind her and knowing that she wanted to teach, getting a teaching job in her home city continued to be an elusive goal. After returning to Century City, and hearing from many sources – including the media - that there were no teaching jobs, Alexis thought she would return to university to begin her master's degree. But she lacked the requisite 'one year' teaching experience needed for the program that interested her. While researching alternatives, Alexis found the advertisement for the residency pilot. She was enticed by the opportunity to pursue her professional growth in a sheltered environment, where she felt she could develop her skills, re-build her confidence and focus on her goal: "[T]here is a difference between teaching and being a teacher. I mean anyone can teach something; but, being a teacher, you have to identify with *being* a teacher, I think, and it takes time and effort and *learning to become* that teacher and figure out what's involved in being a teacher."

Peter.

> *I couldn't find a teaching job right at that exact moment to save my life pretty much. I knew I struggled in my first year and I struggled a lot. I got into survival mode by the end of it, where my heart just wasn't in it anymore...I had been isolated for so long. I needed to figure out where I needed* to be *as a teacher. And I contemplated leaving the profession at that point too. But then I was thumbing around on the university website and I stumbled across [the pilot] and it was definitely invaluable.*

Peter was one of two males who participated in the residency pilot. Newly married, Peter had returned to Century City having taught for a year in a northern hamlet with a population under 400. In our initial conversations, and with his cohort peers, Peter was reluctant to offer an opinion or comment that was not merely an extension or a paraphrasing of someone else's comments. I worried about Peter's confidence and his 'hesitant' presence within the school, within the cohort, and the lack of his online presence. While the other residents arrived on the first day nervous but excited to jump in, Peter seemed to be holding himself back - unless he was talking about his experiences as an air cadet, his love of airplanes, and his passion for sharing his knowledge about avionics with others. We knew that Peter had already experienced a year of teaching, and due to a drop of enrollment within the district, he had not been invited back for a second year. Given Peter's experiences as a paid educator, it seemed odd that he was quiet on so many topics to which I believed he should be jumping to speak.

During a private discussion later in the semester, Peter revealed that his experience teaching up north had been "dreadful," and had left him burned out and wondering about the reality of his confidence in his abilities.

> *When I graduated, I thought that I would have no problem running a class of my own. Why would I? The university had given me a full toolbox of techniques to ensure that my instruction was spot on and that my assessments were spectacular. I did get a position after many interviews but I was terrified by how* not *ready I felt.*

Not wanting to appear that he did not know what he was doing, and motivated to secure a permanent teaching contract, Peter worked in isolation, "an island...[he] rarely talked to anyone, trying to plan and trying to reinvent the wheel the whole time." His teaching assignment was also typical of a small town, newbie assignment: three grade levels of math and three grade levels of Physical Education to plan, teach, and report on a total of eight different student groups. Compounding his sense of isolation, Peter's new wife had stayed behind in Century City for her career, and there were no other math teachers on-site with whom he could approach for curricular assistance. Although there were other new teachers within the district, they were scattered within a geographical area covering 14, 800 square kilometres; and, because Peter had been hired on the first day of classes, he did not meet any of them until he had already burnt out, and at that point had checked out emotionally.

> *[The other new staff] had a meeting just before classes started and they all met and all the new math teachers in the division met and I didn't know any of them because I came in last minute. So I didn't have any contacts. I just had the nine other teachers in the school to talk to, and none of them were math specialists.*

Having never taught before, not knowing how to ask questions – nor what questions he should ask - and seeing his colleagues "roll so well", Peter sought to emulate the 'lone' expert culture of the staff. Peter's upbringing also pointed to a traditional belief that grown men were to solve their own problems and not appear

weak or vulnerable. Within his family dynamic, there was an expectation to appear knowledgeable and confident. There was nothing in Peter's experience – past or present – to help him navigate his experience and show him a better way to *become* a teacher and to find a way to re-capture the passion he had discovered for teaching others as a young air-cadet leader.

Janie.

The youngest participant in the residency pilot, Janie had submitted application packages to a number of school districts upon graduation in the spring. The night before the residency pilot began at the end of August, she was offered a teaching position in a district a few hours north of Century City. Upon contemplation, Janie realized that she was not interested in picking up her life to move away from her family and friends.

Janie saw the residency pilot as an opportunity to meet a few goals she identified for herself in response to her counter-intuitive decision to decline a job offer: first, she wanted the chance to get valuable teaching experience to deepen her learning and to "put the textbook skills and knowledge [she] had learned during [her] university career into life in the classroom"; second, she wanted to build relationships with administrators and board personnel in the hope these references could assist her in attaining a position within Century City.

Janie's confidence at the end of her degree was not unlike the confidence shared by the majority of new graduates; nor was her later shift in understanding the overwhelming aspects of the job for new teachers, or the impact that not

letting anyone know they need help can have on the students in their classrooms. In the following reflection, Janie's illustrates her 'coming to understand' how new teachers can be tempted to hide their struggles.

> *As a new graduate, I felt ready to take on a full-time teaching position and was excited to get out into the real world. At the time I had hoped (just like everyone else) that I would be super lucky and land a job in the city. Perhaps I was a little naive in that respect, but I truly thought I would be a great teacher at that point – and maybe I would have been...but being a first year teacher is busy...I could hardly imagine juggling teaching with 'learning the ropes'.*
>
> *Being a new teacher is difficult, and often learning how to be a teacher and survive occupies one's time and the growth and learning aspect becomes pushed to the sidelines. New teachers often feel the need to just get through the school year in one piece and tend to play it safe to ensure that all ends well. I have seen a lot of teachers get stuck in this cycle and continue to shy away from change and challenges for the rest of their careers. Not only do teachers suffer from this fixed mindset, but student learning also suffers. When I first graduated, I was not in short supply of confidence in any way, but I feel as though it was somewhat superficial.*

In my initial conversations with Janie, I found her to be shy but friendly, quick to smile and go with the flow. She had been a good student throughout her schooling experiences. While Janie described herself as a "cautious learner...not one who likes to make mistakes (especially if others know about them)," her choice to pursue the residency pilot – a space shaped by specific, contextual professional learning, risk-taking and reflection, structured collaboration, teacher-leadership initiatives and relationship building experiences - over a paid teaching experience, better reflected Janie's learning style and personality. In a few months, she revealed herself to be an experiential learner who excelled in the classroom and was quick to soak up feed-back, a thoughtful risk-taker, a critical thinker who sought to understand her students and was highly motivated to mitigate the

struggle of others to find meaning in their education. The pilot's focus on the skills and expertise for teaching urban youth matched and supported Janie's vision of herself as an effective high school teacher in a larger urban secondary school.

Gabrielle.

The initial target group for the teaching residency pilot was new or recent graduates. Gabrielle's email identified her wrapping up her fourth year of teaching, currently working in another province, in her fourth school and third school district, and "at the breaking point" where she needed to consider another career. In four years, she had yet to build on her previous experiences, relationships, or professional learning in any meaningful way; as a result of multiple back-to-back temporary contracts, she was always the 'new' teacher in the school, and, in many cases, the lone teacher in her subject area.

Gabrielle's interest in the possibility of joining the cohort of beginning teachers initially caught me off guard; we had not considered the possibility of the residency space as a location to repair or undo the damages done to a new teacher who had horrible and repeatedly horrible 'first year' experiences. Nevertheless, I felt compelled to meet with this young woman to see if the fresh start she was looking for could be found within our residency goals and vision.

Incredibly open and vulnerable, Gabrielle's account of her first four years of teaching touched on every theme in the research on beginner teacher experiences: isolation, subject assignments for which she had no formal preparation, career uncertainty, lack of formal mentorship or board induction

processes, no subject peers for advice or support, fear of not meeting 'invisible' administration expectations, unsure how to say no to over-whelming extra-curricular supervisions, and terrified that asking for help would be seen as weakness.

> *As I walked into a situation that I thought I was fully prepare for, I quickly realized I needed to resort to survival. I was working from seven in the morning until seven at night and then on my weekends, teaching full time, teaching subjects I wasn't familiar with, implementing a course I developed myself because I did not know how to teach band. Plus I coached every team! I was doing absolutely everything with minimal support, not supported by admin., not supported by colleagues.*
>
> *I spent 98% of last year in the PE office. I was so busy planning athletics that I had no choice but to be in there the majority of the time. It was easy to feel segregated and alone. And [everything I did] was undervalued and underappreciated. I was definitely in over my head, and I was not the best version of myself.*
>
> *And to top it off, at my last school, so many staff seemed jaded, told me I was too 'enthusiastic' and 'involved'. This made me even more isolated and afraid. Again, I managed to survive the duration of the year. But is this what we would really want to do, just survive?*

When I asked why she decided to participate in the residency pilot – given her repeated "disastrous" experiences – Gabrielle explained:

> *From the time I was young, I knew [teaching] was what I wanted to do. And I was ready to quit? Four years and there was no sign that anything was going to change for me. There were no jobs. Is this really what [teaching] is about? I said, 'This can't be it'! There has to be more to it.*
>
> *When I saw the program and the details, and the thinking behind the program goals, I always connected with the at-risk learners, it was something that I was interested in, having the opportunity to maybe explore that deeper and having a safe environment in which to take risks...with what I did in the classroom and being able to take risks in having support from more experienced teachers and administrators who were there to support [me] was what had the appeal. There had to be something to save me, and I think that's what [the chance to participate in the pilot] was for me.*

Gabrielle, Peter, and Alexis all experienced paid teaching in varying capacities, and all three had experienced similar feelings of self-doubt, uncertainty, and of being overwhelmed. What they also shared was a commitment to their dreams of teaching, and resiliency – an important trait that Gabrielle pointed to when I asked her to consider her journey into the residency pilot:

> *Like I said, I was ready to leave the profession and it was because of burnout. I think the biggest thing is to trust yourself and know that it's okay to fail. You know, you can take chances and you can try something new because it's not always going to be perfect, and I think the expectation that a lot of new teachers have is because we're being evaluated is like, 'oh, I have to be perfect, everything I have to do has to be absolutely perfect'. And that's not reality. Nobody is perfect in other aspects of their life, so why are we expecting to be perfect in our [first] professional [experience]? We have to be able to take risks, we have to be able to take chances. And part of that is, yeah, we might fail sometimes, but we have to be able to rebound from that, so resiliency [matters].*
>
> *And it's so funny because we teach resiliency to our students, we allow our students to fail, we allow our students to take multiple chances in order to be successful, so shouldn't it be the same for our teachers? ... So it was being able to be like '[this is] the human aspect of the profession', I guess.*

Reflections on the Undergrad Practicum

As mentioned in earlier sections throughout this dissertation, research shows a shared perception among many teachers that the practicum part of their program was the most relevant aspect of their pre-service education degree in preparing them for their future teaching assignments. Furthermore, once in classrooms of their own, many teachers do not think their practicum was long enough for them to learn or, at the very least, encounter a wide enough range of scenarios and challenges to inform or provide direction to solutions once on their own.

Given the value that many teachers assigned the practicum, it is important to point out the means by which cooperating teachers are chosen is less than rigorous. Instructional mastery, teacher practices of collaboration and reflection, beliefs around student-centered learning ... none of these characteristics or qualities are *required* for the cooperating teacher. It is hoped that the school boards who facilitate the practicum have some process by which excellent placements are found – but that depends on the willingness of teachers to open their practice – and extend their already demanding schedules - to add student-teachers to their work load.

Unfortunately, there are stories of terrible (or absent) guidance and mentorship, bullying, humiliation, and isolation. Given the vastly different structures of practicum placements in the fifty-plus education degree granting institutions across Canada, it was important for this study to capture the difference that the 10-month field placement had on the resident-teachers' know-how to effectively engage students across a wide range of contexts and situations.

The participants were invited to reflect on their previous five week and nine week practicum experiences in light of their residency experience; or, in the cases of Peter, Gabrielle, and Alexis, how the two practicum experiences, 13 weeks in total, prepared them for their first jobs. In retrospect, Peter describes his practicum as not an adequate training experience for what he needed to be able to do and know for his first teaching assignment:

> *I felt like I was given a full woodworking shop with all the bells and whistles and was told to build a ship and sail it...an insurmountable task. The*

problem I had was that the only thing I had ever built was a piggy bank and the only sailing I had done was floating down a stream in a canoe.

He recalls his preparation for the secondary school practicum placement to be entirely focused on the program of studies, and "content, content, content" with a "side mention about getting to know your kids." Now in his fourth year of teaching, Peter sees how important relationships with students are – especially with at-risk youth - to whether or not they will engage in the learning process. Yet, in Peter's experience, this was not a focus for the university:

They said, 'oh, you should get to know your kids, too'; but they don't talk about what that means and [the practicum] doesn't give you the experience to figure it out. In five or nine weeks you can't figure anything out about a kid. And if they don't know and trust you, they won't learn from you.

Alexis also identified relationships with students as essential to her role in the classroom – an aspect of her practice she could not explore as a student-teacher or as a substitute teacher.

You treat all your students as equals, but that doesn't mean you plan to teach them all the same, because they're not the same. Some really need specific support in their learning, but some just want attention. So if you don't get the chance to have those relationships, to know the students really well, to see where they started, and how far they had progressed, who you can push a little, or who needs different stimulations, you can't be the best teacher for them.

Another aspect of the student-teaching experience that all participants noted was their awareness that, to 'pass', they needed to please their supervising teachers – not a concern for Gabrielle, Janie, or Alexis. However, Beth and Peter felt the pressure to perform, albeit in different ways, and "the act" felt restrictive. Peter felt his cooperating teacher was not interested in his development as an

effective educator – someone who could determine the best means to engage the learner with the material and facilitate learning. Peter summarized his mentor teacher's attitude towards their relationship this way:

> 'You're the new person. I'm the experienced teacher, you listen to me, and I know what I'm talking about, I've been doing it for years'. *And at the end you listen because they're going to sign a piece of paper saying whether or not you should be a teacher. So you're going to listen to them, you're going to knuckle under and say* 'well maybe I've got this idea but I'm being told I should I should do it this way.'

Instead of focusing on Peter's teaching, the focus was on how Peter taught 'the math', not whether or not the students were learning the math.

Beth recalls that her five week practicum experience – her first ever foray into the field – almost led to her quitting the program. Within her first week, she had been chastised for her quiet personality and for the misbehaviour of one of her mentor teacher's classes:

> *Other teachers complained to my mentor teacher that I was too quiet of an observer and not asking enough questions when I visited their classrooms. Within the first few days of observing at the school, my mentor teacher left me with a sub and a terrible grade 9 class. The sub got me in trouble with the assistant principal who blamed me for how poorly managed the class was and all their bad behaviors. I asked myself 'I learned all about classroom management!?' I tried my best to control that class, and in the end I had to take all the blame because it was my fault for [not controlling] that classroom. I cried that night...and thought about giving up...I pulled it through at the end...I didn't give up on it, but it tore me down.*

Following their nine week practicum placements, Janie, Gabrielle, Peter, and Alexis described feeling confident that they were ready to take on a teaching job. But after her subbing experience, Alexis describes the full work of teaching as

"hidden" from pre-service teachers during their practicum; "There is so much that we don't learn and really have no idea about until we begin teaching...which [is] overwhelming." Gabrielle discovered the same thing when she found herself trying to fill in the gaps between the practice scenarios she had encountered in her course work, and the challenges she faced on the job.

> *When I was at the university, they would have these benchmarks for scenarios: 'this is how we deal with this situation'. The minute you're in a real classroom, and you're dealing with a diverse group of students who all have different needs, you're like 'great, that [benchmark] might work in an ideal world and ideal classroom,' but here everything's off the table. No two students are the same or learn the same – how do I deal with that when there's 40 of them? We were not given those tools. Or like, when you walk into a classroom on day three, and you have a student tell you to f--- off; they don't tell you how to deal with that one. You're problem solving on your own.*

For Janie, whose student-teaching experiences went extremely well and played significantly into her 'pre-service confidence', seeing everything that went into planning for a successful semester in a busy urban high school was an eye-opener:

> *Those first days were a whirlwind... meetings, planning sessions, timing labs, preparing resource materials and making arrangements...my head has been spinning from the massive amounts of information I have received... It [was] extremely intimidating...I was unaware of the amount of work, of meetings and decisions, the operational 'behind the scenes' set up that takes place. And the last minute changes to schedules or teaching assignments because of enrollment changes! As someone who likes to be organized, I could see myself panicking. What truly amazed me was how vital the first few days before school commences are.*

Because Peter had missed those important non-instructional preparation days as a last minute hire the previous year, he too was stunned by how much front-loaded information there was to absorb in a large urban high school:

> *There are so many little things, and those little things add up to big things, so if you miss too many of the little things...you really struggle. Those first few days [at Centennial High] was...culture shock...I felt bombarded with information and policies that I was expected to know and [implement]. Luckily I had lots of support [this time], and with their help, felt very prepared.*

Janie explained her student-teaching experience in retrospect following the residency experience:

> *Student teaching…was like a "parachute approach"…I was dropped into a classroom in the middle of the semester… relationships are already made, roles are already claimed, teachers have declared their territory, and I was expected to understand the dynamics that already existed… as an outsider… stepping on to foreign territory.*

> *In contrast, the cohort allowed me to be present right from the beginning of the year, and as a result, I was able to take on an active role in the classroom…to forge relationships with students early on and to understand the niches these students took on in the classroom accordingly. I stepped away from trying to be like the other teacher, and from relying on the more experienced teachers' advice on making decisions. I learned how to trust myself, and figure out if what I was doing worked for the students, and if it felt right for me too.*

> *Being able to spend an entire year in a school setting was incredibly effective. This time allowed me to see the work behind the set up and tear down of the school year. Not only do I feel as though I would have been less than prepared, I would have not understood the rollercoaster of emotions and exhaustion as the term progressed.*

First 10 Weeks of Residency – Focus Group

In addition to the weekly digital discussions and seminars, the residency teachers took part in a stakeholders' focus group ten weeks into the pilot, and were asked to identify what was most valuable of their initial experiences. These 'first' ten weeks were already longer than their final student-teaching practicum had been. And unlike their previous student-teaching placements which were made available to them through a general all-call for cooperating teachers, the residency

school sites were purposely selected, and the teaching-partners were chosen and invited because of supportive cultural practices, beliefs and values that esteemed on-going professional learning as it impacted and engaged student learning.

First and foremost the participants acknowledged the insights they gained working alongside a 'master' teacher from the beginning of the school year; these master teachers did not just outline *what* they were going to do, but *why* they were making those choices, and *how* all of their practices were part of their ongoing reflective practice to ensure that students were learning. For many participants, this was their first understanding just how impactful teacher beliefs were. As one participant shared on the survey:

> *Now I get what my professor meant about 'philosophy' being underneath all my decisions, which didn't make sense when we were looking at the learning outcomes. How thinking about what I thought was really essential for [the students] to learn in my classroom. For example, I thought 'hard work is important', or to always 'at least try', and 'respect others'. Now I include 'learning how to do fractions might take some kids a few days longer', and they might need some background help, and different practice examples… and that's something I agree with.*

The resident teachers also shared their growing understanding of how a curriculum – as outlined in a program of studies – were destinations that required the teacher's expertise and vision to map out a learning journey. In context, with their students, they gained a deeper understanding of 'authentic' assessment as a means for teachers to see if students were learning, and that the reflective use of informal assessment techniques by teachers with students was "good teaching and learning." As Beth explained: "the second week in my practicum, my mentor teacher just gave me a lesson to teach, and 'okay, I'll just teach it.' I don't know

why the students need to know it. I don't know why I'm teaching it. But I'll teach it for the sake of teaching it, and get done and graduate."

Their anonymous responses as to their feelings about their first ten weeks, and what they had learned included the following:

- *Know how; all the decisions and factors that go into setting up the year…wow?!*
- *I love that we can take risks and explore what we learned at university, and begin to develop who we are as teachers without fear of failure. I felt that in my APT, I was expected to mimic my cooperating teacher to pass. I didn't feel I could ask questions.*
- *I have already experienced the infamous 'start up' and trying to figure out the school culture a couple of times as the new teacher; that being said, I feel incredibly lucky and privileged to have this experience which is unlike anything I have ever experienced in [all those other] schools. What a difference any of this would have made for me.*
- *Everything. I have no idea how I could have done, what takes two of us to do well, all by myself as a new teacher.*
- *Communication...talking to other teachers, and sharing or comparing the elementary and secondary experience – our weekly seminars let us bridge the gap. I now have an idea of what happens in elementary schools and how hard their work is.*
- *I can pursue my professional growth to support the learners in our classroom now, but I'm going to be so much further ahead when I get my own classroom – I have a sense of the direction my professional learning should continue to go.*
- *The theory finally makes sense! I'm integrating research readings and articles into my practice.*
- *Relationships: I love working with my teaching partners, and I love my students. What I've learned is that the relationship has to come first. No more isolation, yeah!*
- *We're the first cohort to try this – we're taking a risk, yes, but we're also showing leadership. We want more – more time, more experiences, more support, just more – and it's worth it. We are seeing things that some first year teachers might take years to recognize. We're going to be light-years ahead of the pack.*
- *Equality – I'm an equal partner with my co-teacher in our students' learning, and I'm a teacher in the school, not a student-teacher. And no one treats me differently, or dismisses my ideas, and we just want for each other to be the best teacher for our students.*
- *Being there for those first days and seeing the preparation and scheduling the staff goes through to get ready was such an eye opener for me. Seeing them negotiate times for gym, music and*

> *library/computers as well as them being so accommodating to each other…they really did work together to make everyone happy. They are so willing to help each other out.*

Not surprising, there was a consensus within the residency group that employment in the district was their general hope; however, there was a *much deeper understanding* of the benefits of a well-explored professional learning experience as it related to *their teaching effectiveness and subsequent identification by district personnel as a potential hire*.

The residency teachers' responses recognized the steep learning curve for the beginning teacher, and the pressure of that year to perform well: sink or swim, so to speak. Ironically, the desire to get a teaching job could undermine one's growth and become the reason he or she does not succeed in education. They emphasized how important the focus on learning and risk-taking without fear of judgment or evaluation was to their sense of value within their placements and their excitement to grow. The participants appreciated how all the site principals introduced them as fellow teachers who were investing in a professional learning year. Alexis explained, "After meeting my staff [that first day], I knew right away that I would have a great experience. [The principal] made sure that everyone – staff, students, parents – knew that I was a teacher, and that I cared enough about being the best teacher I could be, so *I chose* this experience. Everyone took me really seriously."

The residency participants were asked to reflect on how effective their first ten weeks had been in creating a safe and supportive space where they could explore their 'successful integration into the school,' and imagine a professional

learning *journey* that both reflected and directed their ongoing, emerging growth areas. Their responses indicate an awareness of their growing efficacy and sense of agency:

- *"Student learning…how do I know if what I'm teaching is what they're learning? I'm learning how to answer that question!"*
- *"Leadership used to mean, to me anyways, the person who had a title – what I'm learning about real leadership is the willingness to name and claim some part of an issue or need. Leadership is about responding to need and dedicating yourself to trying to fix it. I see leadership differently now."*
- *"I'm so confident! I'm excited about every day, every chance to try something new, every challenge – it's all learning, isn't it? I think I will always try to see the learning opportunity for me in every challenge."*
- *"I will be friends with my teaching partner 30 years from now. She is part of my support network, one that I will have for the rest of my career."*
- *"They talk about collaboration in university; I never saw collaboration during my IPT or APT; this is collaboration. This is what was missing, and now I know what it means. I want to be a part of collaborative culture."*
- *Since we were part of the classroom and the school from day one, it is easy to feel as though you are a valued member of the school, and that you belong there. You have a say in things; these are my students. If anything, that is a definite confidence booster.*

The confidence the residents gained in their first eight weeks was encouraged through the relationships they had formed within the cohort, with their co-teaching partners and with their students. The structure of the pilot afforded the participants the time and courage to take risks and move beyond their comfort zones.

Essential Aspects of the Residency

Safe and Non-Judgmental Partnerships.

For all participants, the relationships they experienced within the cohort and with their teaching-partners were mentioned as being the most significant

aspect of the residency. What makes these relationships different from the typical relationships one might form at work is that these relationships were formal arrangements within the residency program. First, the cohort group was a deliberate learning structure, a conscious decision to ensure that the residents had each other, and would experience their journey together. No one was "in it alone." However, after determining no resident worked alone at a site, Alexis did find herself 'alone' at Prairie Elementary after her cohort partner fell ill before the end of September. We had to decide if we should move Alexis to join our two other elementary residents at Riverview Elementary to form a triad, or let her stay at Prairie.

Alexis chose to stay at Prairie, explaining that she was not prepared to abandon the relationship she had established with her teaching partner and her students.

> *I love my students, and I love seeing how they learn and change every day. [My partner] is incredible in making me feel confident and that I can try anything. He and I are awesome partners, great communicators, and he makes sure everyone knows he and I are a team.*

In addition, our decision to incorporate Moodle into the residency structure ensured a space for her to connect with the cohort in between their Friday face-to-face seminars to seek advice or encouragement that the four residency teachers at Centennial High enjoyed in real time.

The online Moodle space encouraged resident teachers to share their experiences, their fears, their perceived failures, and their challenges. They appreciated the chance to share and support each other in the online forum, which

allowed for ongoing and asynchronous exchanges that often included personal examples of how another resident teacher had responded or felt in similar events – as well as encouragement, praise, specific advice, and offers of assistance.

For Beth, the online forum proved to be a space where she excelled; initially she shared her nervousness about writing her thoughts online. However, her learning style and preference "to sit back and look at the big picture" flourished. "I could see myself growing." The online platform – where time was not an issue – allowed Beth to construct lengthy and insightful reflections that illuminated her strengths, compassion and fearlessness. "I think that I saw where things were [over each week], and how things were going. And, I think that really helped shape me in terms of taking risks, and how effective I was as teacher, and how I can continue to become better." Beth's willingness to share her vulnerability and her questions about her learning journey proved to be the benchmark for the cohort's posts; the online space truly was a safe space to share fears and seek help. Beth counts the cohort as essential to her success:

> *We came to really care about each other. [Two years later] and we're still talking. They were like my family. I don't think I would have pulled through my year without having those residency friends. Like, if I was by myself in solitude, I wouldn't have pulled it through. And we would discuss, like, how to become better at what we do and, like, sharing ideas with each other. I gained so much confidence knowing they were rooting for [me].*

In this venue many previous experiences were 'unpacked' and brought to light. For example, Beth shared her horrible student-teaching experience and her two years of being "stuck" following graduation, and Gabrielle shared how four years of

temporary contracts, lack of recognition for her hard work and efforts, and the constant moving to find a job left her "emotionally scared, insecure, jaded" and "hesitant to ask for help or be vulnerable because [she] did not want to appear incapable". The structured cohort and co-teacher relationships initially caused frequent tension points for Gabrielle who struggled to open up to the reflective process. At the end of the residency, Gabrielle was able to grasp the emotional impact the first four years of her career had had on her. She explained; "the walls [she] built up … were out of necessity… at the end of every year, saying good bye to people [she] cared about, programs and students she had invested in, and knowing [she] wouldn't be coming back in the fall. It was goodbye. It hurts. So [she] stopped going deep with people."

Finding the right person or people to coach Gabrielle was difficult for me as well. I saw the passion and love for teaching in Gabrielle. And, in our private conversations, she was able to articulate her feelings of frustration. Yet, as much as a challenge Gabrielle's situation proved for me, it also revealed to me just how careful administrators and mentor facilitators need to be in matching team-teaching teams. Quality mentoring is not just as simple as matching up an effective teacher to a new teacher. In addition to knowing the residency teachers' backgrounds and growth areas, it is just as important to ensure that the mentor or partner teacher has the passion, patience, and curiosity to support the expansive work of engaging their colleagues in becoming the best teachers they can be. The safety of the relationships formed within the cohort team, and the deep trust they experienced as a result were important factors in Gabrielle, and later Peter, seeking placement changes. Gabrielle

explained her first co-teaching relationships as "failure, but also as the beginning of [her] change."

> *In my first pairing, I was working with a teacher who was younger than me, who had fewer experiences working in other contexts than me, and sometimes I felt like what I was bringing to the table in terms of my experiences, of working with students or teaching ideas, weren't valued by my co-teacher because she had a contract and I didn't. It was clear she didn't 'approve' of my decisions or choices when I was leading the instruction but she didn't say anything – it was awkward. I felt judged. We weren't a good match personality wise. My second co-teacher and I worked really well together at first, but then between the stress of the diploma exams, my health and her pressing me to be more open and vulnerable, and I thought 'I am! What the heck?!' … so it just felt like I was doing everything wrong, I was overwhelmed by the pressure and being sick, and I shut down. It was just too much. But I didn't want to quit the program. I knew that wasn't the answer. I knew that this was something I needed to address. My mom said I was the type of person who'd rather fail than admit I needed help with something.*

Gabrielle's request for a placement change made sense to us. At Centennial High, she felt that everyone had seen her struggles, so there would be no 'judgment free' pair option left in the department. Gabrielle wanted a chance to find success, a chance to "get back on the right path." After reflecting on the right direction to move, Gabrielle voiced her desire to teach her major, having spent her first semester focusing on her minor. She wanted to participate in the 'team culture' she loved and that she identified as "a real source of confidence," but that did not exist at Centennial High because of the school's mandate and focus. Originally, we had cautioned Gabrielle away from spending more time developing her Physical Education (PE) background. Century City Public was clear in their mission to build a pool of excellent young math and science teachers. PE teachers were not on their list. Nevertheless, Gabrielle moved to another large urban site,

Mountainview High School, at semester end. The principal ensured Gabrielle would have a rigorous teaching assignment, as well as an invitation to participate in an instructional coaching initiative.

Within days, Gabrielle was "back in [her] element…loving teaching senior boys' PE, sports performance, coaching senior girls' handball, and playing club volleyball." Unlike her previously held teaching positions where she was the sole PE teacher, Gabrielle now found herself in a large and robust PE department with "lots of PE colleagues who regularly discuss their teaching, collaborate and support each other." More importantly, Gabrielle felt her new co-teaching relationship was "perfect; [she felt] equal and respected for what [she knew] and [could] do."

During a conversation at the end of the first semester, Peter voiced his concern that he was not experiencing a similar sense of enthusiasm and joy in his teaching assignment that he was seeing in Beth and Janie. He was thinking that "maybe senior high [wasn't] for [him]." In our weekly seminar 'check in', Peter found himself more and more curious about the other male resident's elementary experience. After reflecting on how much he had enjoyed mentoring the younger cadets, we moved Peter to join Alexis at Prairie Elementary. For Peter, the change in environment and dynamic was exactly what he needed. In the following five months, Peter worked in a grade three classroom where he could focus entirely on re-discovering his passion for "encouraging the curiosity inherent in nine year old brains."

From each other, the resident teachers received support, encouragement, advice, and empathy. The ebb and flow of struggle and support gave rise to multiple instances where all residency participants were in a position to get and give comfort. The reciprocity in giving support and taking advice proved to be important for all the resident participants to expand their problem-solving capacities. The topics of the "pep talks" ranged from how to combat fatigue and feeling overwhelmed, to questions of teaching strategies, to identifying significant obstacles they perceived to be hampering their professional growth. Janie described how the cohort relationship "allowed us to focus on aspects of our teaching we felt we needed to work on or develop more. Those chats and support [from the two professors] provided a safe space to explore the ups and downs of teaching, and to find solutions and ways of growing to make us better teachers."

Second, the residency teachers were partnered with their co-teaching partners around specific courses – which necessitated conversations about curriculum knowledge, instructional choices, and how content and teaching methods connected to the students in the classes. In matching resident teachers to their partners, principals were asked to reflect on who exemplified instructional expertise, reflective practice, and a genuine collaborative ethic, and who had the personality to open up their classroom to another teacher. The principals approached these teachers, spent considerable time discussing the goals of the pilot, and emphasized that the mentor would never be in a position to judge, grade, or evaluate the resident teacher. In addition to the characteristics noted above, the teaching partner also needed to be open to including the resident in his or her

professional learning agenda, because the resident teacher would be attending and participating in that as well. The pilot vision – to create a learning safe space for new teachers to develop a deeper learning of how to work effectively with urban youth – was embraced by the mentor teachers, who saw themselves in an esteemed position to help (not only their resident teacher, but themselves as well) expand and deepen the knowledge of effective teaching with diverse populations. Janie instantly felt the difference from her previous practicum:

> *[The mentor relationship] I formed with my teaching partner was so different from the relationship that developed during student teaching. Since the mentors are not evaluative in any way, it is truly a coaching relationship. Whatever is said, or done, is not used against you in any way. In fact, the coach mentor is just as excited as you are when it comes to making you the best teacher you can be. It is almost as if you have a reflective mirror to look into and to bounce ideas off of. No longer a solo journey; there is someone looking out for you, and offering you the best advice they can to make you successful in your career.*

Team-teaching required frequent ongoing discussions, resource decisions, delegation of workload, lesson planning, assessment and data review and instructional-coaching. This relationship was essential to the quality of instruction and to the tone of the learning space for the students, so could not be superficially undertaken.

Janie, Gabrielle, Peter, and Beth – as secondary high school placements – had more than one teaching partner to correspond to their varied teaching assignment. For Beth, who had seen her previous student-teaching supervisor use Beth's practicum to "go get coffee" and who was frequently "too busy at the end of the day

to talk to [her]," having both the current and former department heads as her teaching-partners couldn't have been better:

> *It was a blessing…I have an incredible perspective. I know what the most important question to ask myself is 'how do I know if my students are learning?' And I see the two most experienced science teachers in the department still asking that question and the value they have in learning…from me, from students, from each other.*

Over two semesters, the secondary resident-teachers worked with at least four different master teachers. They were able to see different teaching styles, styles for planning and reflecting, how they viewed data, and how effective teachers interacted with a wide range of different learners. Peter explained;

> *When I was [in my practicum], my supervising teacher talked about how to engage the students with the content…talked about it, but never did it. We talked about a lot of things [in my undergrad] but never did them. 'Cause you can't do most of [learning how to be a great teacher] without a student, and you don't know what'll work best until you meet 'the' student and get to know him. And that takes a conscious plan…to get to know the students well – not just 'hey, how's it going', but to really have a conversation with them about their lives, and their learning. [My residency teaching partner] was so good at that…building authentic relationships, and really putting the student first. And [my teaching partner] and I would have these conversations about kids who are really struggling, and he would say 'Well, I tried this in the past in a similar case', and it was so important to me to have that perspective.*

In addition to advice, instructional coaching, and content expertise, the residency teachers all pointed out how their teaching partners – for the most part – encouraged them to take risks, change things, and really focus on learning, rather than playing it safe so as to not make 'any mistakes'. Beth and Janie were matched up with both the head of science, and the assistant head of science – both of whom had a genuine professional passion for instructional coaching; as Janie noted:

> *The transition from student to teacher is…intimidating… especially without support, both in the classroom and outside of it. The coaching relationships I had with my mentor teachers were incredibly helpful in allowing some of the anxiety of not being perfect right away subside. These relationships helped me realize that taking risks in the classroom is both acceptable and a wonderful learning experience for both students and teachers alike…these will be lifelong relationships.*

In addition to the informal friendships that often occur naturally in collaborative and supportive high school departments and elementary grade level teams, Alexis, Gabrielle, and Peter were adamant – based on their experiences - that no beginning teacher should be without a formal mentor; *and,* if not a teaching partner, at the very least they should share preps with an experienced teacher in the same subject area who was available for advice, support, and to bounce ideas off of. As Peter noted, "there's the great teaching part, then there's the amazing content expert part, and there's the 'getting along with everyone and getting the work done' part; you need lots of critical friends."

Gabrielle, who had been so careful to bury her feelings for years, said: "Being part of this cohort I have realized the importance of relationships, and venting and support. We can't just come to school, close our classroom doors, and feel alone. It's not ok. We need to connect with our colleagues frequently and have a support system, including administrators." This sentiment was shared by Alexis, who, as an elementary resident, spent a whole school year with her teaching partner in a grade one classroom.

Through the experience, Alexis found the courage to address an overwhelming personal issue that was causing untold stress to her health and her state of mind. The support and encouragement she received from her partner and

cohort peers – and her opportunity to give important, problem-solving advice in return - proved to be pivotal in regaining her confidence back:

> *Through the relationship with my co-teacher, and the residency cohort, I understand how powerful relationships are for questions to be answered, insight on new ideas, and feedback on teaching…this is an easy and seamless way to grow as an educator, a wonderful support system. I opened up and talked about things I never shared with other people. And I needed that support for professional and personal reasons this year…it has allowed my confidence to rise back to where it should be.*

Beth summed up the impact of her relationships within the pilot experience by noting:

> *I experienced the biggest growth in my life. I have learned how to become a better learner. I am able to apply my vision of a life-long learner. There was so much happening that I needed to figure out. Not just content knowledge, but how to deal with people in all situations. I have learned teachers are not alone, and never will I be alone. I will make professional relationships with others so that meaningful, purposeful conversations can happen. I have learned from my team that it's not about me and how fancy I can make a lesson. It's about my teaching as a way to role model authentic learning to my students.*

Powerful Professional Learning Opportunities.

In most cases beginning teachers, similar to pre-service teachers' experiences with theories in their education programs, encounter professional development events around wide topics (often board or government mandated) that do not align seamlessly with their specific teaching contexts. Effective teachers as life-long-learners have their own process of meaning-making and of determining how to investment their time, study and personal funds to make sense for themselves and their students. As thoughtful as they are to managing their students' learning, they are as equally mindful to managing their own.

The principals at the residency sites were known for their commitment to making school professional learning relevant to their teachers. At Centennial High, resident-teachers participated in subject collaborations, department professional learning, and school-wide professional development in addition to their subject area council professional development and the union teachers' convention. They engaged in professional learning around adolescent literacy or reading recovery, student-centered lesson planning, 'catch and release' techniques, peer learning strategies and assessment.

In addition to these professional development events, residents also participated in professional learning activities with their teaching-partners that usually required years of teaching experience and otherwise would have been closed to them. Beth and Janie's pairings allowed them to attend diploma exam technical review meetings for the 30 level courses they were teaching. Within their first month of teaching a diploma course, they were engaging in complex conversations about what learning outcomes meant, what standards showed levels of mastery, how to best assess student knowledge, and the quality of questions to evoke that knowledge. Attendance at these meetings, and the expansive knowledge and understanding of the program of studies required, made a significant impact on the ways Beth and Janie 'saw' the course – its philosophical stance and rationale – as it related to the overall goals of science and their role in facilitating those outcomes.

> *Within one day, we got to learn in-depth the whole curriculum. Before that we were basically learning it in pieces as we went. But this gave us the whole picture, and we could see how the different topics fit into the whole.*

> *That was incredible, and so unique. All those experienced teachers talking about the course, and their perspectives and ideas, and then how that related to the diploma exam and the way the questions are formatted and shaped. We understand that course so much better now, and the concepts…it will totally affect how we teach these concepts and how we will assess and test students. What an experience!*

Beth and Janie's response to the experience was noted by the technical review meeting organizers, and they were invited to attend for the rest the review meetings for the rest of the semester. What initiated an invitation to participate in the chance to writing diploma exam questions in the second semester was their incredible responsiveness to and application of what they were learning from attending the review meetings. Janie explained:

> *One of my big goals was learning how to ask better questions, higher order thinking questions, questions that pushed students to apply their learning. From going to these technical reviews, and being challenged to thinking about what kind of questions would best capture what students know and understand has really helped me with the kinds of questions I ask in class, and when [Beth and I] plan, we include questions in our lesson plan. We think 'what question could we ask about this that would really show us whether or not they're getting it?'*

Their attentiveness to becoming "experts of the course" and their willingness to "talk about everything and anything to make sure our students benefit" was also noticed by a staffer for adult continuing education. After hearing about Beth and Janie, he interviewed them and offered the resident-teachers a paid position team-teaching the diploma course for night school - precedent setting for two reasons: this was the first time an official team-teaching section had been offered, and it was not policy to offer diploma level course assignments to a brand new teacher – let alone two. As Beth noted, "there is no way that we could be in this incredible position if we had not been in the residency. We are getting opportunities and

chances to stretch our learning and expertise that new teachers would never get, or even know how to do."

For Peter, the elementary change proved to be the "best professional development anyone can do." He was able to see how undiagnosed learning difficulties presented in his youngest students and was empowered to learn what he could do to address these difficulties with the help of his school team; he was able to see how the instructional choices and learning activities elementary teachers used could be transferred "into a secondary setting and really help students who struggle." He saw the nuances of informal and ongoing feedback "done right... [so] that students were motivated to keep trying and pushing themselves instead of focusing on a mark." And, he saw how "naturally collaborative" his elementary colleagues were.

At Prairie Elementary from the onset, Alexis participated in the principal's year-long professional learning focus on aligning teacher practices around student assessment, evaluation and achievement reporting. As part of her under-grad program, Alexis had encountered 'assessment' as a "course that taught us how to make exams" and as a student had not experienced "ongoing feedback to improve my learning. I found out my grade when I got my grade." Alexis learned that, in context of her role as a facilitator of learning in her grade one classroom, assessment meant "every aspect of planning, teaching and making sure students are learning." As Alexis explained,

> *Assessment is my thinking about every student in relation to what they are learning, and what I need to do next or differently....and this is huge! This*

> *is the teacher's most important job. It's everything that I'm observing and monitoring: body language, eye contact, what they're saying to me, their behavior responses not just in academics, looking at their work, reading with them. I'm making anecdotal notes* ***all*** *the time. Assessment is so important to student learning for it shows them where they are at and what they can work on and improve. It puts them in charge of their own learning and steers them in the right direction. They are only in grade one, but we are teaching them how to learn forever.*

At the opposite end of the grade spectrum, the three high school residency teachers, who were also engaged in school-wide PD around assessment and evaluation, agreed. Gabrielle explained;

> *Sure there's content they need to learn. But rather than just learning the content, they need to learn how to learn. They're going onto post-secondary. They need to direct and own their own learning. I need to prepare them with the skills and attitudes necessary to be successful in for the next part of their lives. Create processes. The real life scenarios and challenges I can link to the curriculum will help them be real problem-solvers in the other parts of their lives – where success is more than picking the right answer on a multiple choice test or to fill in the right blanks on a worksheet.*

Applying the concepts they were encountering in the professional readings they received from their PD, Gabrielle, Peter, Janie, and Beth made sure their students were tracking their own learning, efforts and choices by including self-reflection activities before every unit exam and building plenary activities in each lesson; "These guys need to know what they know and what they don't know, there should be no surprises when they see their marks."

As part of an intra-school professional learning initiative, Gabrielle, Beth, and Janie were invited to join their master-teacher partners in an opportunity attended by many teacher-leaders, and teachers in formal leadership positions. The team of cross-curricular and multi-grade level teachers, led by their principals,

engaged in a year-long process to learn the language and practices of instructional coaching.

Every six to eight weeks, one of the five principals hosted the group thus enabling the group a chance to see K – 12 teaching and learning in a wide range of classrooms and contexts across the district. The format for each visitation remained the same. Upon arriving at the site, the whole team engaged in an in-depth seminar on a specific topic related to improving instructional practice. This seminar was usually facilitated by a pre-reading (a research or professional development article, or a chapter from a book) and 'consideration' question all members of the team received the week before. The topics became part of the ever-expanding lens that examined 'effective teaching for *all* student learning'. Following the whole group session, five groups circulated through two different classrooms.

The teachers whose classes would be observed met with the observation group both prior to, and following the observation. In their initial conversation, the teacher would describe the class and provide specific details that helped inform the team as to challenges or questions the teacher was working with. The teacher would also describe his or her lesson plan – the learning outcomes, his or her choices or activities and assessment plan, and would then typically identify things he or she wanted feedback on. During the 30-minute observation phase, the team would observe, ask questions of the students (when appropriate) and make their notes. In the de-brief phase of the process, the team would practice asking

reflection questions. The principals mediated the discussions and, whenever needed, both modeled and re-focused the group back to reflective questioning.

While the residency teachers initially found the process intimidating, after their first instructional talk-through, recognized the incredible growth opportunity this was, and how the practice of thinking about questions to evoke thoughtful reflection parlayed into their own classroom practices and changed how they engaged in thoughtful debate with their colleagues. After a year of working with principals, teacher-leaders and master teachers from across the district to explore, model, discuss, observe and de-brief instructional coaching practices, the notion of being nervous, and fears of being judged and evaluated no longer had a place in their mindsets. When asked to reflect on the risk she was taking, associated with her previous fears about being judged, Beth said:

> *When I thought of risk-taking before, I thought it was a negative thing, dangerous, a time to lose everything. How often did I waste my time listing everything I could lose, and then realised the opportunity had passed? Look at me now! I'm a HUGE risk-taker, saying yes to everything; opportunities that will help me grow and be reflective on what I do, and why I do what I do. If I am thinking about the students' learning, and collaborating and talking to my colleagues, and trying new ideas to engage my students, why wouldn't I want my principal to know how effective I am in the classroom? A year ago, I didn't have the confidence to think I could get a job tutoring! I am proud and accomplished!*

For Janie, who initially "wanted everything to be perfect", the experience of seeing how more experienced colleagues dealt when things went "off plan" the most beneficial aspect of the opportunity.

> *The privilege of working with other teachers in the district experiencing similar pressures and realities...my confidence has become one of experience. I know I am truly capable of being a great teacher and I can take on a full school year without a single doubt in my mind. I am more*

> *outspoken and less hesitant to share what I know with other educators because I know that [my opinions] come from a place of true understanding. I developed such a confidence to take risks in the classroom, and to understand that some of the best lessons where those that were not on the plan!*

Gabrielle, who expressed her absolute "terror of being judged," found participating in the instructional coaching PD a pivotal experience.

> *It was a huge step for me. I had such a hard time trusting that feedback wasn't criticism. For years, I was always being evaluated, I was always the new person on staff, and I was always trying to get contract...and was terrified of making any mistakes. So you do what's safe. So you do more direct instruction, you do more hand-outs and worksheets...because it's safe. In the instructional talk-through process, people were taking risks, asking for insights, openly saying what wasn't working and I was giving advice, and saying 'hey did you think of this' because it would make things better for the students. And I wasn't thinking badly about the teacher, or judging their choices. I was trying to help them be better, and the learning environment better, and it showed me 'hey, I could receive feedback and it wasn't the end of the world, it wasn't about that.' What we learned about peer-coaching opened my mind to other opportunities for collaboration back at my school, and that I could give great feedback to my colleagues. It was the best PD I've ever had. It changed me. And, all of it transferred over into my teaching, and I was giving better feedback to my students.*

Building Cultural Competency and Diversity Expertise.

One of the greatest stressors for any educator is feeling unable to meet the needs of learners in their classrooms. Government policy, socio-economic changes, and globalization have impacted classrooms: inclusive learning, English language learners, poverty and transiency, high-stakes testing, refugees, uncertain budgets, and shifting public opinions about teachers' workloads are just a few issues and dynamics that leave teachers feeling overwhelmed and under-prepared.

The focus of the residency and the decision to house the pilot at Centennial High reflected our vision of a space for new teachers to the understand the impact of urban issues on student learning, and to develop the competencies, skills, confidence and instructional expertise required to effectively engage a wide range of diverse learners. Working with challenging learners can be incredibly crushing to most teachers' sense of efficacy. Without an experienced teaching partner to help explore solutions and strategies alongside the new teacher, feelings of helplessness and failure can cause otherwise compassionate educators to disengage and avoid working with these populations – populations that also hold the potential for incredibly joyous and inspiring experiences.

Janie's first term teaching assignment included a non-academic grade eleven science course. The majority of students who take this course at Centennial High have very difficult lives, as Janie discovered: "In reality, they have experienced things that I've only really seen in movies or on TV. Many of them have children, are in bad relationships, and are dealing with family troubles. They really struggle to attend and learn the material." Peter's first term assignment in a non-academic grade ten math course left him feeling anxious only six weeks into the semester;

> *This class is chaos; some of the students have never been to school. Half of them speak different languages other than English, and a few of them don't speak any English at all, and no matter what we try, nothing seems to be working. On the first unit exam, less than half the class passed. My teaching partner and I are constantly trying a variety of methods in order to effectively teach them and make sure they are motivated to learn. We thought for sure the results of the next test would be much better. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Now we really need to re-think our strategies.*

All the residency-teachers encountered students with special needs coding who required individualized program plans, alternative and/or adapted resources, and specialized accommodations for exams and testing. With their teaching-partners, they received specific and contextual professional learning in understanding what the various 'codes' meant in terms of abilities and capacities, and how to engage each of the students in ongoing conversations about their learning to guide their instructional strategies and measurements tools to assess progress.

Gabrielle recollected that none of her university courses or experiences prepared her to teach young adults "who had never been to school before." The residency-teachers found that working in their urban classroom assignments required a different preparation perspective – one that included an understanding of world cultures, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) history and issues, world religions and conflict negotiation. Gabrielle gave this example:

> *I had a [student] who didn't understand a single word of English, or what was appropriate behavior in school, or how to treat [people] with respect. He was acting out, but I don't know why, 'maybe he is frustrated, maybe he is having flashbacks, maybe he doesn't know how to relate to a female teachers'. And I found out that there was another [student] in the class from another tribe, and these tribes had a conflict in Africa and there was bad history, and I had no idea then how to appropriately deal with that. Everything at university was too generic, too general, too homogenous. Every student in education needs to spend a term in an inner-city school.*
>
> *Now, cultural integration and multi-level capabilities and English language learners all in one classroom is the norm. I am not going to teach rationales to a student who isn't ready, who barely know how to add, 'but the program of studies includes algebra.' I am going to go back to the basics with them. And I am going to be working with one level with some students, and another level with others. I'm not going to force a test on a student who's missed two weeks of math because he's attended his fourth funeral this semester on the reservation. We have to support all the learners regardless of the level they're at. These students need*

compassion, and they need me to be really skilled, and flexible, and calm. I need to help them negotiate their realities and learn math at the same time.

Beth and Janie, who were teaching the same diploma level course to two very different learner populations – one at Centennial High and the other at a community high school in a suburb – were able to experience the difference in direct contrast; "We were teaching the exact same thing [in the daytime] as [night school], and the [night school] students had a class average over 70% on that exam; but, over 13 of our day students failed!" The discrepancy between the two groups led the critical thinkers to really explore the reasons for it; "Is it attitude, effort, or me? Wasn't I clear in my expectations?" What they discovered in their daytime group was that many of their students had complicated school histories: significant number of missed days, undiagnosed learning disabilities, mental health issues, family abuse, drug and/or alcohol addictions, a history of lengthy absences (sometimes an entire school year was missed) going back to their elementary years where crucial literacy skills were missed, death of a parent, suspensions, expulsions, foster care, and numerous school 'transfers.' In a few cases, their most challenging students had been in upwards of 20 different schools in 13 years: one young man attended nine different schools by grade three.

When Beth arranged for her grade eleven science students to donate blood as part of her leadership project to encourage community involvement, the scary realities of her students' lives and lifestyles hit home.

Of the 30+ students in my class, not even a handful of them could donate that day. They didn't pass the screening test. They all lived high-risk lifestyles: drugs, unprotected sex, piercings and tattoos. But it wasn't a

> *waste. The trip wasn't a failure. We talked about what it meant that they couldn't give blood – what they were doing to themselves. They were like, 'my blood is too dirty to help someone who is dying...' I think that was the best thing to happen to them – a wake-up call, and they had a chance to talk about it in class and I'm glad I could help them and encourage them to make changes if they wanted to. They can go back and try again in a year. It was a challenge I made to some of them.*

Regardless of the problems they encountered, the residency experience included instruction on site-based action research; the assignment provided a space where these teachers could understand, address, and tackle some of the issues impacting on their students. For her teacher-leadership assignment, Janie pursued the possibility of a daycare centre relocating closer to Centennial High after a site-wide survey revealed that 15% of the school's 2800 students needed care for their children while they were at school. Peter implemented an initiative to collect and sort teacher practices that seemed most effective to improve attendance for at-risk learners; and Gabrielle explored how participating in a yoga and meditation class might teach students how to centre themselves and use positive visioning as a means to mitigate their stress.

Following their teaching-partners lead, the residency teachers rejected the viewpoint that their students' complex lives were deficits. Rather, they sought to understand each student individually and looked for ways to mitigate obstacles by encouraging students to re-write exams, re-do assignments; they reached out daily to students who had failed to show up to class through emails, texts and phone calls, and used relationship building strategies in their classrooms to create multiple support networks between the students. Gabrielle, Beth, Peter, and Janie challenged the notion that they needed to be stricter with tough kids; instead, they

focused on building structures, processes, and routines to secure trust, communication, and supportive relationships. After checking with their teaching partners, Janie and Beth decided to re-organize the classroom desks from rows into cooperative learning pods of six students.

> *If we primarily focus on relationships first and foremost, we can move the students along into building a growth mindset, and towards our biggest goal of helping them build the skills that they need. We have noticed the change in dynamics with [the pods]; they are more on task, more willing to help each other if someone in their pod doesn't understand the material, and to help catch someone up who's been away. We are seeing community, and natural leaders come out of this change, and we're complimenting them on what we see. And some of them are really changing for the better, and their grades are showing it, too.*

The residency teachers agreed that their students needed to see adults caring and encouraging structure, responsibility, and practical problem-solving; their students needed to attend and to try to the best of their abilities; but, most importantly, they needed to see that learning and life was better when they had each other to rely on. Janie summed up her experience of working with these challenging populations this way;

> *It wasn't until I found myself teaching to suit a diverse [group] of students that I realised I was least prepared to do this. Many of these students have diverse backgrounds: culture, prior knowledge, socioeconomic backgrounds, and even prior life experience. I had no idea coming into my career what that diversity would mean for my teaching, and how I would have to determine and model the skills, and relate the knowledge that I wanted them to obtain in meaningful ways for them. This opportunity showed me that [effective teachers] are so much more than teachers – they are secretaries, mothers, fathers, social workers, custodians, cooks, judges, referees, counsellors, and care givers. Being emerged in this school allowed me to fully understand what it means to be an educator. I learned the curriculum for every course I taught inside and out ...because I had to accommodate it for the different students' needs, and adapt my*

lessons when things needed to change fast. Nothing is ever as black and white as it seems. There is no way to [textbook] this experience.

Self-Evaluating Teaching Knowledge and Skill

Research conducted by Chesley and Jordan (2012) and Crocker and Dibbon (2008) indicate that, once in their own classrooms, beginning teachers are able to identify gaps in their preparation programs. However, for new education graduates, their lack of readiness – without a scenario or event to reveal the paucity – may not be evident until after they find themselves in the classroom.

As noted earlier in the literature review, Crockett and Dibbon (2008) created a survey that identified 27 characteristics or aspects of teaching knowledge and skill needed by new teachers for their teaching assignments (see APPENDIX C). As part of the data collected, the five study participants were asked to complete the survey twice – once in review of their undergraduate experience and once in review of their residency experience. The purpose of this activity was to capture the residents' evaluation of their own growth based on the Crockett and Dibbon's (2008) criteria for a quality preparation program as a result of their participating in the residency pilot.

By asking the participants to first consider how well they were prepared within their undergraduate program, I was hoping to capture, at the very least, if specific outcomes were commonly achieved within undergrad programs. In addition, the individual reviews of their undergrad perception of preparedness (see Figure 3) helped established a benchmark from which individual growth as a result of the residency experience could be captured. The second run-through of

the survey asked the participants to rate their preparedness from the residency to determine how effectively (if at all) a residency experience contributed to their sense of preparedness, and how expansively.

The results of the participants' surveys from their undergraduate programs reflect no commonalities in specific skills the participants acquired, noted by Crocker and Dibbon (2008), as skills and knowledge necessary for teacher effectiveness. Yet, as a result of the residency, Peter identified he was "fairly well" and "very well prepared" to demonstrate the 27 skills and knowledge criteria (see Figure 4). As mentioned previously, Peter's first teaching experience had been isolating, overwhelming and had left him questioning the appropriateness of his career choice. His before and after survey suggests that the residency provided the time and support Peter required to move past his harrowing initial experience. The relationships that Peter found within the residency allowed him to re-discover his affinity and passion for teaching; and in terms of Crocker and Dibbon's (2008) research, the residency provided the space for Peter to build competency and confidence in all key areas of teaching knowledge and skill:

> *When I consider my growth, the most important aspects of the residency were the relationships: within the cohort, with my teaching-partner and with the students. From this foundation of trust and encouragement, I felt confident to take risks, be vulnerable and really think about what it means to be a teacher. Once that [confidence in myself] was restored, everything else flowed: asking for help, offering to help other teachers, collaborating, being open to trying everything. [The residency experience] was amazing – it made me a better teacher. It made me a better person. At work now, I collaborate and seek meaningful relationships with other teachers; physically, I'm more isolated than I've ever been, but professionally, I am part of the team, networks, and I talk to everyone.*

Figure 3. Participants' Survey Results from Undergraduate Program

Of the 27 expectations, Peter identified only these 8 items he felt 'fairly well prepared' to exhibit after his undergrad degree: 1. Teach the concepts of the discipline. 7. Design developmentally appropriate learning experiences. 11. Teach multiculturalism, anti-racism and social justice. 16. Use assessment techniques for diagnosis and grading. 19. Use direct instruction techniques. 21. Use technology in instruction. 22. Use effective presentation strategies. 23. Resolve interpersonal conflict.
Of the 27 expectations, Beth identified only these 6 items she felt 'fairly well prepared' to exhibit after her undergrad degree: 2. Manage the classroom effectively. 10. Use appropriate communication strategies 16. Use assessment techniques for diagnosis and grading. 17. Give timely feedback to students. 18. Use praise and criticism constructively. 21. Use technology in instruction.
Of the 27 expectations, Janie identified only these 4 items she felt 'fairly well" and 1 item where she felt 'very well prepared' to exhibit after her undergrad degree:* 1. Teach the concepts of the discipline. 13. Use higher-order questioning strategies. 14. Use cooperative learning strategies. 17. Give timely feedback to students. *19. Use direct instruction techniques.
Of the 27 expectations, Alexis identified only these 4 items she felt 'fairly well prepared' to exhibit after her undergrad degree: 10. Use appropriate communication strategies 13. Use higher-order questioning strategies. 18. Use praise and criticism constructively. 26. Think critically about how to improve your teaching.
Of the 27 expectations, Gabrielle identified the first 9 items as 'fairly well prepared' to exhibit after her undergrad degree, and the last 3 items she felt 'very well prepared': 1. Teach the concepts of the discipline. 8. Identify and address special learning needs 13. Use higher-order questioning strategies. 14. Use cooperative learning strategies. 16. Use assessment techniques for diagnosis and grading. 17. Give timely feedback to students. 21. Use technology in instruction 22. Use effective presentation strategies. 25. Apply research results to teaching 4. Evaluate lessons and unit plans 18. Use praise and criticism constructively. 19. Use direct instruction techniques.

Figure 4: Participants' Survey Results from Residency Pilot

Following the residency year, Peter identified himself as 'fairly well prepared' to meet these 19 items, and 'very well prepared' to meet the last 8 the expectations.

Beth, Janie, Alexis and Gabrielle identified themselves as "very well prepared" to address and demonstrate all 27 of the listed criteria:

1. Teach the concepts of your discipline(s).
3. Develop curriculum that builds on students experiences.
4. Evaluate lessons and unit plans.
6. Relate classroom learning to the world outside school.
7. Design developmentally appropriate learning experiences.
8. Identify and address special learning needs.
10. Use appropriate communication strategies.
11. Teach multiculturalism, anti-racism and social justice.
12. Teach in multi-age or multi-grade classrooms.
13. Use higher-order questioning strategies.
14. Use cooperative learning strategies.
16. Use assessment techniques for diagnosis and grading.
17. Give timely feedback to students.
18. Use praise and criticism constructively.
19. Use direct instructional techniques.
21. Use technology in instruction.
22. Use effective presentation strategies.
24. Design a purposeful, task-oriented learning environment.
27. Deal with student diversity including gender, class and sexual orientation.

2. Manage the classroom effectively.
5. Create interdisciplinary curriculum.
9. Teach in ways that support new English learners. 15. Deal with students from diverse backgrounds.
20. Act as a facilitator of learning.
23. Resolve interpersonal conflict.
25. Apply research results to teaching.
26. Think critically about how to improve your teaching.

Probably the most open about her self-doubt and hesitation to pursue a teaching career, Beth's reflection of her undergraduate experience shows she felt prepared in only six areas (see Figure 3). Freed from pressure to compete or the expectation to impress a supervisor within an artificial construct, Beth excelled within the residency model. In fact, Beth, Janie, Alexis and Gabrielle, identified themselves as all "very well prepared" in Crocker and Dibbon's (2008) 27 'preparedness to teach' criteria because of the structure of the residency and the activities and values that shaped it (see Figure 4).

Beth embraced the residency processes of sharing and reflecting and took every opportunity to take a risk and learn. The ten month time-frame afforded Beth the space she needed to build trusting relationships, reflect, ask questions, connect with her strengths and address her growth goals.

> *I reflected so much that year! Reflected and took risks. I was all in! I said YES to everything, I think one has to go with the other. When you take risks it's because you know something better can be done for your teaching and for your students' learning. But 'what' to do better? And 'how' do you know that risk was worth it? You have to reflect – ask tough questions of yourself and then be open about what you've learned. This residency shaped me and my vision of* why *I want to teach. And the kind of teacher I want to be. The collaboration, reflecting, peer coaching, using research and data to better my teaching...it's all part of what I do, and will always do. It made me. I can't imagine how a teacher doesn't and survives. I am so confident with my abilities, and I know I can be a mentor and a coach to any educator. A residency placement should be mandatory.*

Beth pursued what was authentic to her core values: relationships, collaboration, purposeful risks to improve teaching and learning, and being a support for others. As a result, she flourished in her mastery of Crocker and Dibbon's (2008) key teaching knowledge and skills.

Janie's residency experience reflection emphasized the importance of context, experiential, hands-on learning opportunities, practice and peer-to-peer learning for teachers – regardless of how many years they have under their belts – to thrive and excel. Like Beth, Janie was all in, and flourished in the residency goals of building efficacy, agency and team. She recognized in herself the skill and interest in working with her colleagues to assist them in their growth as a means of ensuring her own on-going growth:

> *The confidence I have now I know is real confidence. The majority of the knowledge and skills teachers need require hands-on experiences with students in classrooms engaging with the content. That's why the residency was invaluable to my growth. You can't learn these skills until you are in an environment where you can learn – and it can change from each student and the kind of course too. But I learned 'the processes' of working with any kind of student or content.*
>
> *As a working teacher now, I'm always collaborating with other science teachers – I would never even consider working alone. I've gotten a few chances to co-teach over the past two years since the residence with some incredible educators which gave me the confidence to push myself to take on really challenging, academic courses. The peer coaching training I got has made me so strong and thorough; I am a better colleague and I can assist others in becoming the best teacher they can be as well.*

Alexis' reflection of her residency year identifies how the environment, and the relationships and activities that transpire within, is paramount.

> *Fear holds people back; fear of failure and fear of judgment. The residency program was all about a safe space, safe relationships. It worked for me because I was never afraid; I took risks, I pushed myself out of my comfort zone, and said yes to everything that came my way.*
>
> *My teaching partner, the cohort team – everyone was so supportive and we were so tight as a group and shared such personal things without fear. This environment – free from judgment and free from feeling evaluated...it has done me well, and I have grown so much as a person and as a professional. Even though at [Prairie] I didn't have lots of social problems like [the other residents' experienced], I learned how to approach every student as a learner and watched [my co-teacher and*

> *principal] work through challenges. They always focused on student learning, and putting supports and processes in place. They were calm because they were confident. And confident because they were doing the right thing for the students. I have that confidence now.*
>
> *I think the co-teaching for anyone's first year of teaching is essential. You get to learn all these skills with a master teacher, who is also sharing the workload with you so you aren't overwhelmed by the day-to-day, you can work on being an amazing teacher. And the students benefitted so much from having two of us in the classroom all year. It was so different [from London]. I had energy throughout the year and didn't feel like I was burning out. But the residency...it was necessary...it absolutely shaped my development as a teacher, and gave me the confident to take on a variety of different teaching assignments.*

Without trust and freedom from judgement, few people are motivated to take risks, or to reveal their struggles or challenges. Alexis recognized the impact the residency had on the student growth and learning in her placement; all of the principals noted the correlation to improved learning and retention in the classrooms where two teachers were available to support and guide student learning.

Gabrielle's addition to the residency cohort posed an unknown. She had been working as a teacher for four years, and I was worried that her experiences had solidified her response to change, and that the residency activities, and her position as 'student' would create too much tension with her adherence to an already formed notion of what it meant to be a teacher.

Of all the participants, Gabrielle encapsulated the 'attrition narrative': no site support, assignments for which she had no formal training, working alone, afraid to ask for help, and uncertain career opportunities due to external forces – such as school and district budgets – she could not control.

As we worked through the residency, Gabrielle struggled to re-capture her trust in 'the system'. Because she had never been engaged with colleagues or administration that saw her ongoing learning and growth as a whole-school benefit, she had never experienced instructional coaching or feedback for improvement as a *normalised* practice for excellence; feedback, in Gabrielle's past experiences, had been one-way criticisms where she was told what she was doing wrong. Or worse, she heard nothing at all, and was not offered work the next term.

Breaking through the walls that Gabrielle constructed to deal with her despair and anger took tremendous patience and conversation on her part, and within the residency team. We changed her co-teaching partners three times to find the right fit; we changed her site location and teaching assignment to shift the focus off content and onto teaching. Despite these challenges, Gabrielle's residency experience offers significant insights:

> *Overall, I would call the residency experience "I wish I knew then what I know now." The residency was really hard for me because of what I had already gone through, and the toll all that stress took on my body because I just buried it and pushed on. I learned that you can only do that for so long and then your body just shuts down, and says 'nope, can't do it'. Finding that balance between work and life, and maintaining wellness – that was what I needed and the pilot year brought me back around to remembering that my body, my spirit and my emotions were all connected.*
>
> *My greatest source of growth was from the relationships in the cohort – I learned to trust the people I work with. Through the instructional coaching PD, I saw where communication can break down and cause the mindset that can lead people to make judgments instead of thinking about 'how can I help the other person'.*
>
> *Instead of spending money on PD for new teachers, and money for their sick days, and money on replacing teachers who are burning out, school districts should have residency partnerships with universities. I think about all the money that goes into improving schools, improving teachers. It doesn't make sense. Why not prepare teachers better? Make practicum*

placements longer, at least one year; have them in cohorts and teaching pairs talking about why they think they should be teachers, and what great teaching requires. People who think they want to be teachers need to see it all; the start up chaos, the politics, the energy, skills and knowledge you need. It's the right thing to do and school boards would get the best teachers and they would be ready for anything.

More than the other participants, Gabrielle was able to speak to the difference, or contrast in impact, between transition models into the career. She experienced the sink or swim orientation; she then experienced and witnessed first-hand the impact of the residency on herself, her residency peers, and her new teacher colleagues. Her experience identified key aspects of career longevity supported by the residency: the wisdom of time and space for learning how to learn for the long haul, negotiating balance and wellness across all aspects of the self, finding critical relationships with peers, and self-directing professional learning networks. Gabrielle also argues how important it is for senior board and ministry personnel delegate resources to ensure teachers are prepared for the incredible responsibilities the job demands before they are thrown into a classroom of their own.

Summary

From their varied perspectives – as student-teachers and/or as paid educators, the residency participants all agreed that the ten-month teaching residency was the most relevant learning experience they had encountered, and was perceived as being substantially more effective than their student-teaching practicum in preparing them for the "realities of teaching in today's big city's classrooms." The length of the residency, a full ten months, was indispensable to the scope and depth of the activities therein.

Within the residency activities, the participants noted the formal relationship structures to be invaluable in creating a safe and supportive environment. From this "essential foundation", the participants found the courage and confidence to excavate, reveal and explore their evolving beliefs about what practices were inherent to their development as effective teachers. Not surprisingly, what they valued most in the residency – the relationships – was noted as the most important foundation for student learning.

From the relationships they shared with their teaching partners, the residency-teachers gained access to professional learning opportunities they otherwise would not have had. Learning in proximity to master teachers, teacher-leaders and principals-as-instructional-leaders reinforced the act of reflecting, sharing, using data, and taking risks around one's practice as a 'norm' to better schools and improve student achievement.

Urban classrooms are rich with diversity. Learners from around the world converge in one classroom can share incredible stories, scenarios and perspectives, and help make the curriculum a relevant and vibrant experience. Urban classrooms can also be overwhelming environments for new teachers who have not been adequately prepared to effectively support and facilitate learning in the context of widely different cultures, languages, belief-systems, and capabilities. For the residency-teachers, the ten-month placement provided the time, the environment, and the student-specific opportunities required to shape and hone their teaching knowledge and skills for the every-changing classroom, and to believe that all students can learn.

The data collected from the resident participants provided examples of processes and structures to help mitigate the struggles many beginning teachers face. Moreover, their

recollected experiences prior to, and their growth and development as a result of, the residency experience suggest that learning to be an effective teacher for 21st century classrooms and diverse learners requires an extensive, intensive practicum.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS

Finding Meaning in Experience

The goal of the pilot residency was to see its potential to address the questions that led me, my doctoral supervisor, and my principal to see if it were possible to imagine a way to prepare teachers for the critical work of being a teacher without relying on the *chance* of supportive administration, the *hope* of good mentorship, or *luck* that the board's budget can provide induction supports for new educators to reflect, collaborate, and build on their practice with experienced peers. 'Hope, chance, and luck' should not be the benchmarks that determine whether or not effective educators are facilitating learning in our classrooms.

The resident participants in this study identified their early passion to be teachers, whether it was because of the impact a beloved teacher made to their success in school, or because of their own earlier experiences 'teaching' gymnastics, swimming lessons or how to properly fold a flag (Palmer, 1998). They connected to the emotional feedback of accomplishment: helping someone accomplish something – or being on the receiving end of that help, imparting knowledge and/or skills to another, inspiring another to keep trying, or the recipient of another's encouragement to not give up.

This chapter explores how the residency year, and the experiences therein, facilitated, supported, and encouraged the participants in their individual journeys to becoming confident and very well-prepared educators for the challenges of the

urban classroom. Researchers Crocket and Dibbon (2008) identified six critical components of a quality education program. This residency pilot addressed all six criteria, albeit adapted to reflect the goals of the residency for the participating teachers' status as certified teachers. The pilot addressed the researchers' recommendations through: duration of the residency, activities within the residency, coaching during the practicum, quality of the experience, staff and principal support, and mentoring.

Over the course of the ten month full-school immersion, the resident-teachers experienced co-teaching with master teachers, maintained online discussion journals, and participated in weekly seminar conversations that covered topics from assessment, to board policies, to universal lesson design. Based on their classroom challenges, they envisioned and initiated leadership projects, took part in specialized professional development initiatives, practiced peer-coaching, collaborated with other educators in and outside of their departments and schools, learned to think critically about their role as learning-leaders, and developed a lens for reflective, responsive risk-taking towards the aims of improving learning and student achievement.

As a result of their residency experience, the participants identified key structures, activities, and processes essential to their professional growth. What became clear in our conversations was how important the length of the residency was in allowing for sustained growth and deeper understanding through many activities and opportunities, and for the development of safe and non-judgmental relationships. These relationships provided a space where questions, prior

experiences, self-doubt, uncertainty, and fear of failure could be unpacked, unravelled, and explored without embarrassment or dread of evaluation.

The structured relationships within the cohort and co-teaching teams provided the participants opportunities for: 1) gaining understanding of themselves, their students, and the demands of the profession; 2) building trust in their capacities and skills to address the learning needs of their students; and, 3) finding support, encouragement, and inspiration to take action and "say yes to things that pushed [them] outside of [their] comfort zones." From my observation, these relationships evoked and encouraged resiliency, increased self-awareness, and reminded them why they were called to teach. Most importantly, these relationships – or mentor network – took place in the context, and with the student populations wherein the residency participants envisioned their future careers occurring. They had the 'urban mentors' in an urban setting that would ensure their preparedness for urban teaching assignments they sought (King & Bey, 1995).

In addition to these important relationships, the residency participants noted that access to and participation in professional learning events otherwise reserved for more-experienced teachers or teacher-leaders contributed significantly to their broader understanding of curriculum goals and to the importance of self-directed, life-long professional improvement in ensuring career satisfaction. These opportunities served as platforms for networking and perspective building; through conversation, debate, and action the resident teachers developed efficacy – a genuine sense of their ability to effect change. They came to see themselves as effective

teachers – capable of reflective, responsive and innovative learning leadership - regardless of whether they were 'employed' as such. This realization helped mitigate the powerlessness they had previously felt in seeking teacher positions (Scott-Ridley, Hurwitz, Davis-Hackett, & Knutson-Miller, 2005).

Third, assigned to a diverse group of learners, engagement with different levels and areas of content, and the chance to consider, try, and reflect on the effectiveness and appropriateness of a wide range of instructional strategies - while partnered with a master teacher - provided residency participants the time, modeling of collaboration and reflection, and the critical coaching necessary for the emergence of master educators in turbulent times. Rather than seeing themselves as merely purveyors of important content, the residency-teachers made substantial shifts in what they could do to coach, encourage, and facilitate learning for otherwise disengaged, apathetic, and over-looked students. They developed efficacy.

During their 10-month residency, the participants engaged in specific activities in addition to the work of co-teaching and meeting the various expectations for teachers in their site schools; those extra activities included attendance at weekly seminar, maintaining an online journal, writing leadership initiative papers for their professors, and participating in the same professional development events as their teaching partners. During the residency, we came to believe that Crockett and Dibbon's (2008) framework, and the six criteria their research has established as a standard to determine 'quality,' was reflected in the residency pilot.

Their framework helped me to sort the participants' experiences into three key themes: relationships and culture, purposeful professional learning, and processes to develop teacher efficacy. These themes captured the specific aspects of their residency experience they identified as most effective in preparing them for complex and diverse classrooms and challenging teaching assignments of their own.

Relationships and Culture

> *One incontrovertible finding emerges from my career spent working in and around schools: the nature of relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else. If the relationships between administrators and teachers are trusting, generous, helpful, and cooperative, then the relationships between teachers and students, between students and students, and between teachers and parents are likely to be trusting, generous, helpful, and cooperative. If, on the other hand, relationships between administrators and teachers are fearful, competitive, suspicious, and corrosive, then these qualities will disseminate throughout the school community.*
>
> *In short, the relationships among the educators in a school define all relationships within that school's culture. Teachers and administrators demonstrate all too well a capacity to either enrich or diminish one another's lives and thereby enrich or diminish their schools. (Barth, 2006, p. 8)*

There is no shortage of research that shows the impact relationships and the culture they create (and vice versa), have on how a new teacher experiences his or her first years of teaching. In the residency pilot, the relationships participants experienced from the site principals, their teaching partner(s) and cohort peers, their university instructors, and their site teaching colleagues provided trusting and encouraging spaces where stories of success and struggle were shared and advice was both sought and offered. Within the residency cohort structure, the participants

received both the emotional and instructional support they needed to thrive (Paulus & Scherff, 2008).

> It is to [her colleagues] that [the novice] looks for advice about how to teach well and for support in how to become a full-fledged member of the teaching staff. Whether the novice can count on those colleagues will depend largely on the prevailing norms and patterns of interaction that exist within the school (Kardos, Moore Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, 2001, p. 251).

Supportive colleagues and an integrative professional culture that recognizes the learning needs of new teachers, that values the new ideas and fresh perspectives they bring to schools, and that anticipates the novice's self-doubts and questions, are superior learning environments said researchers Kardos, Moore Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, and Liu (2001). In their study of different school cultures on new educators, schools with "formal structures and embedded values" (p. 283) focused on teamwork, collaboration, interdependent learning, mentoring, renewal of practice, and ensuring career long growth in the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning. This culture makes learning and support normative and challenges the mythology that new teachers looking for help and wanting to talk about their learning tensions are failures.

Kardos, et al. (2001) noted that principals, successful in securing an interactive professional culture, were committed to providing ongoing supervision, observation, and specific feedback to their new teachers. Their singular goal of improving teaching and learning brought both novice and veteran teachers "together on the collective mission of educating all students in their school. [Their] leadership facilitates collaboration and teamwork, is supportive and

embedded in the work and life of the school, and has as its primary focus the improvement of teaching and learning" (p. 283).

In 2011, Portuguese researchers Caires, Almeida, and Vieira (2012) examined the experiences of 295 student teachers completing their training program to confirm previous research that identified learning to teach as "a particularly stressful and demanding period" marked by "considerable amounts of distress, changes in psycho-physiological patterns and an increasing sense of weariness and vulnerability" (p. 172) and *the most important phase* in the novice teacher's professional development. Therefore, the degree to which placement schools and the relationships therein make student teachers feel welcome, supported, and accepted plays a significant role in their "sense of belonging, [but also their] self-fulfillment regarding the teaching profession" (p. 172). The creation of that sense of belonging, Caires, et al. say, is a reflection of the supervisor's belief in the "sharing of experiences," "the joint exploration," and the "joint construction" of meaning where pre-service teachers are shown the tremendous growth opportunities inherent in a learning community; "self-exploration, exploration of the teaching profession, mutual knowledge and the strengthening of [a network of] relationships" (p. 173) combat the stories of isolation and self-doubt typical in new teachers' narratives of beginning practice; but, more importantly, they suggest a better way to establish and secure key values and practices, such as collaboration, inquiry, action, and reflection.

In 2001, Australian researchers McCormack and Thomas asked 248 beginning teachers to describe their transition into the profession. McCormack and Thomas (2003) discovered that the socialization process – the care, support, and

encouragement with which new teachers are brought into the profession – "caused the beginning teachers ... the greatest range of professional concerns. [Most concerning] was the lack of ongoing support from principals ... lack of formal supervision and unclear school expectations" (p. 132). The stress of not knowing how they were doing and whether or if they would be identified as competent and worthy of ongoing employment conflicted with their need to seek support (Murray-Harvey, Slee, Lawson, Silins, Banfield, & Russell, 2000; Scherff, 2008).

During their research, McCormack and Thomas (2003) heard too often tales of superficial or overly-generic mentorship and induction processes rather than quality of the *relationships* with on-site colleagues, supervisors, and principals where "encouragement, respect and assurances" (p. 137) were related to the context and based on ongoing observation and feedback: necessary relational activities if new teachers are going to thrive and engage in reflective practice as career-long norms.

As noted earlier in this dissertation, the practices *within* the relationship, shaped by the stance or beliefs held by the coach or veteran teacher in relation to the school's role in encouraging the development and growth of the novice, and how that can happen will influence how well the relationship provides a supportive environment where individuals feel safe to share stories from their experiences, to reflect on their growth and challenges, and to ask questions (Beck & Conick, 2002; Bullough, Young, & Draper, 2004; McCormack & Thomas, 2003).

Similarly, Israeli researchers, Smith and Lev-Ari (2005) surveyed 480 students in the final year of their four year teaching degree at Israel's largest teacher preparation program as to the value they placed in the practicum in comparison with other aspects of their program. The students reported that the practicum afforded them the opportunity to encounter and explore the realities of the job while still sheltered under the umbrella of 'student of teaching,' and was seen as the most effective activity in preparing future teachers for their new role. They reported that the relationships they encountered as part of their practicum experience – from the mentor teacher, and their university facilitator, to their on-site peers – provided them the most support. However, Smith and Lev-Ari (2005) caution that the activities which shape the practicum experience - determined by the principal, the school culture, and the relationship the teacher candidate has with his or her associate – also determine how effective the new teachers rate the experience in retrospect (also noted in the research findings of Beck & Kosnik, 2002; and, Bullough, Young & Draper, 2004).

Similar to the relationships this study's participants experienced, Carter and Francis' (2001) evaluation of a mentoring initiative experienced by 220 novice teachers at six government of New South Wales schools in 1998 and 1999 found that the most authentic and meaningful mentoring relationships they encountered were a combination of physical proximity, availability and compatibility; specifically they identified seven criteria for an effective mentor or partner teacher:

1. can empathise with the circumstances of the beginning teacher and can provide psychosocial support;
2. teaches close by;
3. shares the same students and/or teaches at the same class level;
4. is regarded as an exemplary teacher by others;
5. is friendly and approachable;
6. is the same gender as the beginning teacher; and
7. is capable of initiating and fostering collaborative enquiry and reflection on practice and conceptualizes teacher learning as moving beyond transmission and incorporating transactional and transformational processes. (p. 258)

Carter and Francis' (2001) seven criteria – with the exception of the 'same gender' point – reflected the characteristics of the co-teaching partnerships within this study, and matches the important role induction and mentorship play in determining the quality of the practicum experience as identified by Crocker and Dibbon's (2008) research. Supportive relationships and a culture that fosters growth and learning are essential if the profession seeks to undo the 'sink or swim' mentality that continues to exist despite its complete contradiction to good practice, teacher effectiveness and career-long growth (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Crocket & Dibbon, 2008; Murray-Havey, et al., 2000). Unfortunately, the pressure to "avoid any appearance of incompetence" (White & Bembenutty, 2013, p. 11) is not an uncommon practice where high costs are associated with failure, and where self-regulatory strategies are absent or under-developed in pre-service and novice teachers.

Tellez (1992) suggested that the social norms that inhibit help-seeking or offering help as a success strategy for novice teachers are "a) the belief that teachers should be thought of as equals, and b) the belief that a request for help implies that the help-seeking teacher is of low status" (p. 216). Nevertheless, Tellez reported that 77% of the 128 beginning teachers in his study did seek the

advice of a colleague – regardless of whether or not that was from a formal mentor; the majority of questions were curriculum related, followed by issues with discipline. Seeking help for personal issues or to garner emotional support was not noted; however, Tellez indicated that solutions to "severe problems" were sought from "close friend or family member before going to their mentor...sources they perceive as least threatening" (p. 218). Again, the role of the principal to build a school culture where inquiry, reflection and learning are standardized, and the challenges of learning to teach are explicitly explored and supported cannot be underplayed.

In their study of 'help-seeking' as a strategy used by students preparing for their teacher certification exams, White and Bembenutty (2013) found that "students who are in most need of assistance are often the least likely to seek it" (p. 2) and, for those students, the act of acknowledging struggle and seeking help is "uncomfortable and embarrassing" (Tellez, 1992, p. 4). They emphasize the crucial role teacher education programs play in ensuring there were spaces and structured processes where reflection, self-awareness, and strategies to garner advice and feedback are embedded, practiced, and valued (Tellez, 1992). Furthermore, the schools that help prepare new teachers need to make 'asking for help' a norm. Schools that model and encourage collaborative relationships often have the culture that supports collaboration, reflection and help-seeking from and between peers.

> Psychological support is an umbrella term that covers many aspects, including emotional support, positive regard, empathetic listening, confidence building, stress management, and increasing efficacy and self-reliance (Gold, 1996). New teachers should be provided with psychological support that includes awareness of individual needs,

> knowledge of how to meet those needs, and support networks. Likewise, novice teachers need (a) to feel valued, safe and connected to others; (b) have power over their own ideas and actions; (c) find meaning in their professional lives; and (d) be willing to take risks. (Gold, 1996; Tang, 2003)

Beck and Kosnik (2002) researched the reasons *behind* participants' identification of a 'quality placement'. They found that teacher candidates experienced empathetic and emotional support, were treated as peers, and collaborative activities – including team-teaching - were standard within their relationships. Their study reveals the extent to which emotional support is valued during the practicum as pre-service teachers negotiate the work load with their personal lives. Their data matched the findings from this study in that all residency teachers noted the impact their network of mentors and supporters had on their experiences.

During the pilot, all the residents identified a significant personal difficulty as adding considerable stress to their already overwhelmed realities. Whether it was due to health – as in the case of Gabrielle, Beth, Janie and Alexis; family – in the case of Alexis and Beth; relationship pressures – in the case of Peter, Gabrielle and Janie; or financial difficulties – in the case of Gabrielle, Peter, and Beth, the residents' identified how difficult it was, and could be, to leave those stresses outside the classroom. They needed and, through the structures in the residency, found a safe place to reveal "how bad things are" outside of school. The emotional support they felt within the network of the cohort and the online journal space, and their teaching partners was essential to their opening up, to sharing, and to getting or giving encouragement through the hardship. Beck and Kosnik (2002) supported this finding;

they note that while there is always going to be some stress associated with negotiating the balance between school and personal lives, "excessive stress can get in the way of learning", can hinder their development into "well rounded people" (p. 95), and, worse, can have a significantly negative effect on student learning. (Murray-Harvey, et al., 2000)

Beck and Kosnik's (2003) identification of emotional support as a key component of learning to teach correlates with Paulus and Scherff's research (2008) into the role computer-mediated communication (CMC) played in creating a consistent opportunity for the students in a 15-week field placement to access any-time support from peers at other sites. They predicated their research rationale by pointing to the "bleak numbers" of early career leavers who exit before they can "make the transformation from beginning to master teachers" (p. 114) and noted how this revolving door of new teachers has a significantly negative impact on student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Nicolson and Bond (2003) suggested the positive research findings of CMC - to mitigate the 'survival year' tribulations as well as to challenge the ego-centric nature of new teachers - have implications within teacher education programs:

> Novice teachers rated CMC high for providing a way to view problems from multiple perspectives, improving their ability to solve problems, giving them the emotional support they needed, and promoting feelings of confidence. Online support networks provide beginning teachers with "social, emotional, practical, and professional support" (DeWert, et al., 2003, p. 319), a place to make connections (Romiszowski and Ravitz, 1997), deeper understandings of teaching and learning (Ferdig and Roehler, 2003-2004), and practice with collaborative reflection (Nicholson and Bond, 2003). In addition, DeWert, et al. found that as teachers' feelings of isolation decreased, their confidence and enthusiasm increased,

> and they became more critical thinkers with improved problem-solving skills. (p. 116)

Nicholson and Bond (2003) also encouraged teacher education programs to consider the role that CMC can play in modeling and perhaps securing reflective, shared and help-seeking strategies. They acknowledged the pre-professional learning community structures that may exist in many teacher education programs; but, like Paulus and Scherff's (2008) findings, cautioned that access to peer support may fall away once these students are out in the field, and later when they are employed in their first job may not exist at all (McCormack, et al., 2006).

While the online discussion board addresses the issues of time and geography that can lead to isolation and loneliness, the activities that occur *within* CMC – namely *learning in community* – reflecting, sharing stories from the classroom and negotiating their new realities within safe relationships with peers experiencing a similar journey – have the biggest impact on teacher candidate and novice educator growth and learning (Carter and Francis, 2001; McCormack, et al., 2006; Nicholson and Bond, 2003).

Nicholson and Bond (2003) highlighted three key outcomes in their use of electronic discussion boards during the development of 17 pre-service teachers during their field practicum, and helped our team to mitigate many of our 'multi-site concerns: "[f]irst, they benefit pre-service teachers in terms of time, scheduling, and geographical issues. Next, they provide emotional and intellectual support and foster a sense of community. And finally, they promote growth of reflective discourse" (p. 3). Further research around learning communities supported that a structured, facilitated online discussion board would support an

"emphasis on the importance of collaborative learning among members of close-knit teams in schools [in] structuring opportunities for teachers to reflect on instruction together…increasing educators' motivation and engagement" (Ferriter, 2009, p. 34). My prior experience using online forums to share my thinking with other educators during my master's degree played a significant role in the sharpening of my thinking and my ability to communicate well; furthermore, one of the professors was highly skilled at attending to the subtle and not-so-subtle tensions of new teachers broaching 'graduate level' thinking in an online space.

Within this study, the residency participants identified relationships within their school-university cohort and the school culture as invaluable. These relationships introduced, modelled, and supported help-seeking strategies; shared experience and the impact of others' stories revealed provided exceptional space for increased self-awareness. In these spaces the residents felt empowered to disclose painful and personal challenges knowing they would not be judged but encouraged. Five of the six criteria Crockett and Dibbon's (2008) require for quality education programs were met *within* the relationship structures the residents experienced within their cohort and with their school principals.

First, the activities of the 10-month residency and its duration ensured the opportunity for rich friendships and professional networks to develop. The luxury of time provided the participants - and the people working with them – space to develop the trust necessary for intensive reflection and critical analysis of personal beliefs about the work of teaching to occur.

Second, the deeply-committed principals ensured the participants received extensive opportunities to observe and be observed, give and receive feedback, and see the necessity of inquiry as a lens through which to consider a life-long allegiance to professional growth. Knowing that their principals supported the residency as a learning year, and that these administrators valued growth and analysis of practice, the participants were freed from many fears of being judged for making mistakes. Instead they were empowered to take risks and ask for advice and feedback.

Third, the schools' cultures embraced learning and because of their understanding of school improvement practices, recognized the right-mindedness of providing a sheltered space for their new teacher colleagues to encounter, explore, practice and develop the knowledge, skills and attributes (K.S.A.s) needed for effective teachers ready to tackle the challenges of 21st century classrooms (in the context of this study, these K.S.A.'s are listed within the Alberta Teachers' Association Teacher Quality Standard, introduced in 1997, also known as the T.Q.S.). In this context, the participants had an entire school year to not simply encounter the K.S.A's, but to understand and master them in an expansive way and as they related to a wide range of learners (see APPENDIX D).

Fourth, the resident participants were recognized as equals in an interdependent learning network; the questions they asked of their partners, their principals, and their university professors posed considerable reflection and renewal opportunities for veteran educators. This "inquiry as stance" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999) perspective situated all stakeholders in the residency pilot along a

learning continuum that esteemed critical reflection and conversation about improving teaching and student learning.

Finally, because of the structure of the pilot, its duration, and its emphasis on the co-construction of learning, collaborative practice and team-teaching, the teachers who teamed with the resident participants were purposeful and intentional in choosing professional development events and experiences known to facilitate and ensure the attainment of the above noted K.S.A.'s. The resident participants benefited significantly from these opportunities, engaging in professional learning that expedited their mastery of early literacy interventions, subject area curriculum, and peer coaching to improve practice and student achievement.

Purposeful Professional Learning

By *purposeful* professional learning, I refer to site and context specific challenges or questions identified by the teacher as worthy to address as they relates to his or her teaching assignment. I would suggest that the participants' determination to pursue the residency experience for themselves was their first purposeful professional learning selection.

Throughout their careers, teachers encounter professional development that they will, at times, be required to attend. Depending on the government/board/school policies and mandates, an educator may find him or herself at any number of superficial professional development sessions, hosted or led by an unknown consultant who may or may not have any sense of specific context, with little to no follow up or support to implement and reflect on the new idea, concept, or practice.

There is little if any 'practice' in the practice. As a result, and despite considerable money being spent, there may be little to no improvements noted in teacher practice and increased student learning.

At the same time, teachers are encouraged and, as part of their professional association, expected to construct an individual annual growth plan in which they identify specific learning goals based on their own practice needs. However, whether or not the professional growth plan is a relevant, engaging growth journey, or simply more arbitrary paper work, depends on the capacity for self-reflection within the individual teacher, the school's teachers-as-learners culture, and how the principal works to understand, support, and assess the effectiveness of the individual teachers' goals as they relate to improved practice for student learning.

Borko's (2004) efforts to 'map the terrain' of professional development and teacher learning suggest that the "fragmented, intellectually superficial" professional development - that does not take into account the research that already exists about the best way to support professional learning for teachers - is the biggest obstacle to school improvement goals worldwide (p. 3). Even within successful learning communities where discussions around ideas and resources occur, Borko noted the lack of "critical examination of teaching" and conversations that encourage and support the critical analysis of teaching - necessary for significant improvements in teaching and practice (p. 7). Borko pointed to research findings that emphasize *what* teachers learn is shaped by the context (and ensuing activities) *in which* they learn. The significance of context is reflected in the residency's focus: to ensure that participants engaged in professional learning events that supported their enriched

understanding of content, the diverse population they would be serving, and helped them develop an extensive repertoire of pedagogical choices to ensure student learning: professional learning linked to specific classroom challenges, curriculum-based PD, learning environments of teachers-teaching-teachers, and the opportunity to develop leadership skills for student/classroom/school-based problem-solving.

Kagan's (1992) research into professional learning for pre-service and novice teachers pointed out the need for processes and experiences within education programs and new teacher professional learning that serves to expedite a shift from an "idealized view" of teaching; pre-service and novice teachers often have inaccurate knowledge of how to engage and support their students, and a paucity of skill for "routiniz[ing] and integrat[ing] management and instruction" (p. 145). Kagan warned that, when pre-service or novice teachers try to teach without an understanding of how to seamlessly integrate pedagogy and content with an appreciation and plan for the diverse ways students learn, they will find themselves struggling with classroom management and have no sense of whether students are learning. Additionally, Kagan revealed the extent to which the pre-service/novice's self-image will influence learning. She wrote that if emerging educators do not see themselves as teachers (specifically, as designers rather than transmitters of knowledge) they will struggle to grow and learn beyond the merely "shallow and imitative" (p. 146).

It is typical that pre-service and new teachers focus primarily on themselves rather than on their roles to facilitate and support learning for the student; it is also typical that beginning educators privilege a task, process, or style that was effective

in their own learning experience, rather than critically assess the effectiveness of any activity or process to promote student achievement (Kagan, 1992). Kagan's research emphasized the role that cognitive dissonance, "a direct challenge to personal beliefs," plays in dislodging the ideals that often predict the overwhelmed pre-service/novice teacher's retreat into safe or limited lessons to control student behavior (p. 146). Within the pre-service and novice phase of learning to teach, faculty program designers and school leadership need to create spaces where the realities of the job are addressed. Even in the presence of a reflective and seasoned cooperative or mentoring partner, pre-service and novice teachers require experiences and contexts, including extended field work, that would allow them to unpack and challenge their personal beliefs and histories so that "adequate procedural knowledge of classrooms...and of pupils" and skills they need to be effective learning leaders can take hold (p. 162).

Within the residency, the participants had 10 months in which they could develop their understanding and knowledge of effective teaching and to master the K.S.A.'s (T.Q.S., 2013) expected for certification and contracts; within the cohort and team-teaching relationships, the residents considered how their own past educational experiences and personal beliefs would shape how they would exist and work within schools as educators.

The ensuing changes in identity, confidence, and competency were encouraged by the structures within the residency where context embedded analysis of student learning, ongoing reflection, and purposeful action processes engaged the residency teachers in critical analysis of their role. In relation to Kagan's review of

Berliner's (1988) model of teacher development, the residents began to show behaviors typical of fifth-year or "proficient" teachers: "when intuition and knowledge begin to guide performance and a holistic recognition of similarities among contexts is acquired. [They] can now pick up information from the classroom without conscious effort and can predict events with some precision" (Kagan, 1992, p. 160).

The structure of and learning activities within the residency supported the characteristics required for effective professional learning to occur. Referencing research that has established the link between professional learning that improves teachers' practice and student learning, Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) reported that the promise of significant student learning gains as a result of teacher professional learning is contingent upon essential criteria: "effective professional development is intensive, ongoing and connected to practice; forces on teaching and learning of specific academic content; is connected to other school initiatives; and builds strong working relationships among teachers" (p. 5).

Eschewing the "episodic...topic" workshop model of professional development, Darling-Hammond, et at. (2009) reported that, if student learning gains are expected, effective teacher learning must happen over time and be afforded many hours: "over six to twelve months...average of 49 hours in a year" (p. 9). Furthermore, the new knowledge teachers encounter has to be relevant to the challenges they encounter in their work with students and within the specific academic disciplines they teach; and, the proposed pedagogical changes must be

supported with time to practice, reflect, review against student performance data, adapt and re-apply.

Darling-Hammond, et al. (2009) also emphasized the importance of teacher professional learning integrated into a larger improvement agenda and that builds strong relationships between and amongst teachers; isolated activities that reinforce the mythology that teachers work alone, or that do not dovetail into the overall learning goals of the school will be ineffective, unsustainable, and will maintain professional isolation. According to the researchers, teachers "observ[ing] each other's teaching and [providing] constructive feedback" results in "teachers' instruction [that is] more student-centered, with a focus on ensuring that students gained mastery of the subjects as opposed to merely covering the material and [the participant teachers] reported having more opportunities to learn and a greater desire to continuously develop more effective practices" (pp. 10-11).

Perhaps the most significant research finding to support the residency model as a preferred space for introducing and cementing effective career-long professional learning practices and activities is the research around teacher learning in communities conducted by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) who argued for a conceptualization of a teacher professional learning *stance* that makes labels such as expert or novice less important than the ongoing questions and exploration as to the purposes and intended outcomes of teacher learning. They propose a vision of "teacher learning across the professional life span" – an ongoing process of growth and learning from a perspective of inquiry (p. 292).

The relationship between the residency teachers and their many supporters matches this concept. Despite their differences in experience and years, both the resident and his or her partner engaged in "similar intellectual work" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, p. 293) as a result of their relationship and the specific professional learning events they encountered together. By having to explain their decisions, or to coach their residency partner to consider the beliefs or assumptions that underpinned theirs, the partner teachers and school leaders were provided an essential opportunity to put into words, or make visible, their extensive knowledge of pedagogy and pupils (Kagan, 1992); and, at the same time, they were able to consider if those underlying principals were due for an overhaul.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) explained *inquiry as a stance* which I borrow to illustrate the 'stance' of the residency pilot:

> Working together in communities, both new and more experienced teachers pose problems, identify discrepancies between theory and practices, challenge common routines, draw on the work of others for generative frameworks, and attempt to make visible much of that which is taken for granted about teaching and learning. From an inquiry stance, teachers search for significant questions as much as they engage in problem solving. They count on other teachers for alternative viewpoints on their work. In a very real sense, the usual connotation of "expertise" is inconsistent with the image of the teacher as a lifelong learner and inquirer (p. 293).

Within the residency, the participants experienced the typical professional development event – they attended "time and place bound" workshops that addressed 'topics' as separate issues from their teaching (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, p. 293) which served to meet an expectation that they 'learn this'. However, because of the structure of the residency, participants were afforded the time and support to

consider how to integrate and adapt new practices or recognize the existence of skills or ideas already within their practice but not yet labeled as such: integral criteria for lasting learning to occur and important changes in practice to follow. The relationship network in which they learned ensured inquiry and reflection was ongoing.

Returning to Crocket and Dibbon's (2008) criteria for a quality preparation program, residency participants joined professional learning opportunities where they worked alongside senior curriculum leaders, district principals, and teacher leaders. They were embraced and welcomed into communities of professional educators who saw themselves as learning leaders, passionate about improving teaching and learning. As a result, the resident participants were immersed in a culture of professional learning that sought to establish an ethic and esteem for learning, *lifelong learning,* an ethic that Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) state "is sensitive to particular and local histories, cultures and communities" (p. 292), and essential to working with 21st century students.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the residency model of professional learning for new teachers offered a superior platform for providing the learning experiences, activities, supports, relationships, and time needed for teachers to meet the Teacher Quality Standards that allow them to become certified as teachers with the province of Alberta. Before participants began the residency, they applied for their interim certification through the provincial's qualification board. The Teacher Quality Standard, T.Q.S., (2013) describes the specific knowledge, skills, and attributes teachers are expected to meet if they are going to be granted certification

necessary to acquire work as educators. In the geographical context of this study, the pre-service teacher receives interim teacher certification as part of the degree-granting process, despite, in many cases, only having shallow, unrealistic and superficial field experiences with students from their practicum. Perhaps this process contributes to the fact that many beginning teachers do not ask for help or show signs of struggle; if it is assumed that novice teachers can already – at the conclusion of their education program – confidently meet the interim professional K.S.A.'s, it would be career suicide to admit they cannot. Thus, the sink or swim mythology is perpetuated.

Develop Teacher Efficacy

> The importance of powerful teaching is increasingly important in contemporary society. Standards for learning are now higher that they have ever been before, as citizens and workers need greater knowledge and skill to survive and succeed...the demands on teachers are increasing. Teachers need not only to be able to keep order and provide useful information to students but also to be increasingly effective in enabling a diverse group of students to learn ever more complex material...[teachers] are expected to prepare virtually all students for higher order thinking and performance skills once reserved to only a few. (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 300)

To be effective educators for all students, pre-service teachers require experiences where they can encounter, practice, and develop the cultural competencies and skills needed to work with mixed-ability, culturally-diverse student populations, taking into consideration that students learn in different ways and at different rates; and, increasingly, future educators need to know how to work with youth who have never experienced formal schooling. If neither real life nor their clinical experiences provide these opportunities, novice teachers will

find themselves completely overwhelmed and unprepared for 21st century classrooms.

Empowering teachers to see themselves as capable and effective, regardless of the challenges they encounter, requires experiences where they can develop and practice competencies for a constantly changing world. Teachers need opportunities to deepen their understanding of the community where they work, to gain insight, empathy and response strategies for the wide range of issues and obstacles students routinely bring to the classroom, and to develop the research skills necessary to effect change in their practice and in their schools.

Developing Competencies for Constant Change.

Within the T.Q.S. (2013), beginning teachers are expected to "know how to identify students' different learning styles and ways [they learn]...to understand the need to respond to differences by creating multiple paths to learning for individuals and groups of students, including students with special learning needs"; teachers are also responsible to meet "students' needs for physical, social, cultural and psychological security...to engage students in creating effective classroom routines...to know how and when to apply a variety of management strategies that are in keeping with the situation" (p. 2).

In addition to working with immigrant students, students with learning disabilities, and learners from all socio-economic backgrounds, more and more teachers are encountering refugee students who have had little to no formal education. In such cases, it would not be unusual that these students have also experienced chaos, strife, and poverty associated with war or racial/religious

persecution. They may have witnessed and/or been victims of violence and loss; they may exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress or behaviours considered disruptive or negative, and/or have health conditions related to poor nutrition or restricted access to medical treatment. They will require significant, structured supports, patience, and compassion as they acquire understanding of the school culture and the expected behaviors therein, in addition to their acquisition of English language, and subsequent subject specific outcomes (British Columbia: Ministry of Education, 2009)

Ryan, Carrington, Selva, and Healy (2009), aware of the challenges a lack of diversity awareness could pose for new teachers, and equally aware that university education programs were not capable of securing "knowledge of equity, diversity and global interconnectedness" without contexts and lengthy field experiences where information could solidify into pedagogical practice, proposed community engagement projects for pre-service teachers. Ryan, et al. (2009) write that pre-service teachers need a much "broader worldview related to pedagogy for diverse contexts and diverse learners ... that [teachers'] work ... is central to the future role of schooling for social responsibility, democracy and social justice" (p. 156).

Given globalization, the complexity of students' experiences and the various challenges that they create, Ryan, et al. (2009) argue that future teachers require space, support, structures, and multiple lenses through which they explore the need for expansive pedagogical strategies, and to unpack or "disrupt" their

beliefs, stereotypes and assumptions about students from diverse cultures and/or socio-economic backgrounds (p. 167).

Similarly, Gay and Kirkland (2003) argue that "developing personal and professional critical consciousness about racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity should be a mandatory component of pre-service teacher education" (p. 181). They point to the typical dominant demographic (white, middle-class, monolingual, female) of students in education programs as support for their case, in addition to three premises:

> (a) multicultural education and educational equity and excellence are deeply interconnected;
> (b) teacher accountability involves being more self-conscious, critical, and analytical of one's own teaching beliefs and behaviors; and
> (c) teachers need to develop deeper knowledge and consciousness about what is to be taught, how, and to whom. (p. 181)

In addition to identifying why cultural consciousness is needed, Gay and Kirkland (2003) suggest why it is much more a complicated process than merely introducing a 'cultural diversity awareness' course within an education program. They point to a paucity of self-reflection *know-how*; specifically, the researchers describe "analytical introspection, continuous reconstruction of knowledge, and the recurring transformation of beliefs and skills [as] essential elements" of self-reflection: rarely expected, modelled, and thus not a developed skill within education programs (p. 182). In addition to a shallow understanding of reflective process, Gay and Kirkland noted the challenges of helping pre-service teachers understand the "highly contextualized" landscape of effective teaching. Rarely will pre-service teachers have a chance to explore, let alone develop, the expansive pedagogical toolbox required to address challenges created by issues of

race, wealth distribution, or ethnic diversity, or to build a deep understanding and wisdom of the changes needed in attitudes and behaviors that underpin social justice movements (p. 182).

Working with their teaching partners, this study's residency teachers encountered students from around the globe, and from all levels of society. At Centennial High, the residency teachers "[engaged] in cultural critical consciousness and personal reflection" (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 186); the structures and activities within the residency created a space where participants had to develop their competencies to effectively engage their students with the curriculum, with their classmates, and with the larger community. These experiences afforded them the lens to consider the feelings, biases, and assumptions that guided their attitude towards working with diverse populations; with their critical partners, they were able to develop a critical understanding of how often under-considered choices – use of metaphor, examples, analogies, formal or informal language, or instructional activities - could impact their aim for a welcoming, inclusive and effective learning environment; most significant, Gay and Kirkland (2003) contend that real-life experiences, where pre-service teachers encounter "concrete situations, guided assistance, and specific contexts and catalysts", are key to turning "critical thoughts into transformative instructional actions" (p. 186).

As part of the residency, participants were asked to reflect on an aspect of their experience where they could imagine and implement a leadership initiative – or, to highlight Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) conclusion of teachers learning

in communities as noted above, to 'be sensitive to the needs of their community'. The goal of this particular assignment was for the residency teachers to "construct tangible results...assess the quality of their efforts, and continue to improve them" to build and develop a critical lens for specific, contextually relevant student intervention supports (Gay & Kirkland, 2003, p. 186). In addition to a critical lens, we hoped to provide residency participants the space and support to understand the obstacles that their most vulnerable learners faced, and to identify how those issues might present in behaviors in the classroom, and most importantly, engage new teachers in action/improvement practices that establish their efficacy and professional control (Ponte, 2005).

Understanding Students' Lives.

In helping inform teachers improve their work with urban youth, Curwin (2010) began by identifying the underlying roots and causes of disengagement which often precedes students dropping out of high school. He used a commonly heard criticism from teachers in tough neighborhoods to illustrate how complicated the home lives of some students can be. In this scenario, two boys refuse to do homework – and they have been labelled as 'not motivated'– and it is impacting on their learning and achievement. Digging deeper, Curwin discovered the reasons *why* they are not doing school work at home. In one case, the youth is required to work in his family's store from right after school until it closes. In the second case, a home visit reveals hording and a rat infestation; the youth is terrified of the rats and spends his evenings and nights with "a baseball bat on his lap" (p. 8). Both boys are exhausted. This illustration points to the necessity that

teachers be able to recognize a behavior – tardy, absent, no homework done, or acting out – as a symptom of an issue that requires understanding, compassion, patience, and supportive intervention plans rather than blame, judgement and punishment.

Developing the Teacher-Researcher Ethos

Educational research conducted by classroom teachers has been an essential aspect of school improvement for decades. Parsons and McRae (2009) contend that good teachers often engage in classroom research when they identify a problem, seek to understand it, then systematically work to improve it, reflecting all the way. Action researchers Greenwood and Levin (2007) point to Dewey's "resolute focus on diversity and conflict as essential elements in a democratic society. Dewey viewed democracy as a process of working through conflicts, not to a final resolution but toward an improved situation" (p. 61). It seemed to me, from my particular experience of working with beginning teachers and from many years of working with colleagues in collaborative, informed action research projects, that the skills, knowledge, professional growth, and self-efficacy teachers gained from directing school improvement projects needed to become an inextricable part of teacher knowledge.

Classroom teacher Sheila Baldwin looked specifically at addressing the tensions in her diverse urban high school in her study, *Students and Teacher as Co-Researcher: Developing Multicultural Awareness in a High School Class* (Baldwin, 1997, in Stringer, 2008). According to Baldwin, many of her students appeared to lack interest in learning. Her concern with student apathy and lack of

engagement led her to create a pilot study to investigate possible answers for the disconnection she was witnessing in her classroom.

Baldwin worked with students through an action research lens to generate and inform action steps to motivate students. Her work with the students revealed school-wide cultural and racial divides that marked the school as an unsafe and unwelcoming environment. Further actions with her students led to the creation of a new course and to the generation a variety of personal, collaborative, critical and reflective assignments where the group began to explore the roots and histories of people's attitudes. Through ongoing discussions, students in the course examined their thoughts, questions, and assumptions about theirs' and others' cultures.

In addition to 'unpacking' and evaluating their own cultural opinions, Baldwin invited guest speakers from other countries, and organized a field trip to enrich the information and opportunities for gaining insights into many different cultures. Baldwin notes the increased attentiveness of the students to visitors and outside experiences as their interest in different countries and cultures expanded, but concludes that the biggest growth in positivity came from their relationships with each other.

As the course drew to its end, Baldwin had class members interview other classmates they still did not know well. The process revealed just how important conversations that build relationships and community are in changing attitudes; "It doesn't matter who you are, color or background, we are all humans and have feelings and needs" (in Stringer, 2008, p. 199). Students had come to see the

'sameness' in the others after spending time with each other discussing their experiences, attitudes, and feelings about culture.

When the *American Cultural Studies* course ended, the student researchers and teacher researcher began the process of viewing and analyzing video tapes and audio recordings of the class sessions. Baldwin informed the research group of Spradley's (1979) nine major dimensions of every social situation to guide their recognition of key elements, which she then identified into themes. Both researcher and student researchers learned that creating collaborative, inclusive, and engaging classrooms depends on taking the time to build relationships with an emphasis on people getting to know each other. Given the diversity seen in many urban schools, Baldwin suggests that schools consider how they too might create spaces for genuine interactions to occur.

Baldwin encouraged students to use their lives and their experiences to generate deeper understanding and perspectives. The creation of a dialogic community (Freire, 1990, in Springer, 2008) ensured that everyone had a shared ownership and commitment to the space: "a comfortable environment in which to discuss with their peers how they felt, their lived experiences" (Baldwin, 1997, in Stringer, 2008, p. 201). The space allowed for critical conversations, such as addressing racial stereotypes, prevalent racism and sub-group prejudices inherent in the school's culture. Baldwin identifies that dialogue was an essential vehicle of change.

Baldwin notes that her own perspectives and attitudes changed as well. Learning about the young people, their dreams, their families and cultures, and

their past hurts and injustices opened her eyes to issues and experiences her own prior socialization did not provide (Parsons and McRae, 2009). Baldwin notes that the make-up of the class population, of varying "ability, interest and motivations" challenged her to focus on the "*process of learning"* about cultural awareness rather than the *products* (Baldwin, 1997, in Stinger, 2008, p. 201). Rather than mandating the curriculum for the group, Baldwin invited students to share and explore their perspectives; their own explorations and reality of their community and school became the 'content' of the course. Enthusiasm, engagement, and authentic interest in learning indicated the researcher's commitment to co-creating the learning event with the students.

Baldwin (1997, in Stinger, 2008) offers a number of recommendations from the action research project that she hoped other researchers would pursue as her time frame for wrapping up had ended. First, Baldwin encourages schools to focus on building cooperative and collaborative learning communities that, by their nature, eschew competition. To ensure engaged learners, the researcher instructs teachers to invite students to co-create and co-construct their learning, and affirm students' cultural identities by making a connection between the knowledge they bring to school and school knowledge, and to make curriculum relevant. To ensure engaged, vibrant, and open-minded schools, Baldwin suggests that students be involved in critical thought and action, that administration support teachers as reflective practitioners and support teachers-as-researchers, and that districts provide teachers with ongoing professional development to address changes.

Baldwin's (1997, in Stinger, 2008) project revealed the answer to 'What do we do about the racial tension in our school'? People need to take the time to get to know each other. Proximity of lockers or merely being in the same section of Chemistry does not create the conditions for relationships to form. The same can be said for teachers. The proximity of one's classroom or similarity in teaching assignments does not guarantee the formation of collaborative, supportive relationships.

Baldwin's (1997, in Stinger, 2008) recognition that her students were not engaged in their learning led her to discover the 'real' issue behind their apathy. They did not risk showing or revealing their 'true' selves because the school environment did not create the kind of space where they felt safe, appreciated and comfortable. Their lack of commitment was merely an expression of their sense of disconnection and alienation. By creating a space where attitudes and feelings could be shared and explored, Baldwin helped change opinions and perspectives – her own included. Action research, in this case, provided a perfect vehicle in which a concerned and 'research' motivated teacher was able to positively co-construct authentic learning and change for her students.

Centennial High was the chosen site for the residency because it provided the richest range and access to diverse learners whose behaviors could present significant challenges to their learning and achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2006): chronic absenteeism, skipped exams, cheating and plagiarism, or substance abuse. Centennial High's students' complicated lives became essential 'case' experiences for the residency teachers to gain the attitudes and skills necessary to

become effective teachers in urban contexts. They began to understand the issues that impacted their students' lives and recognized the need for specific supports and external programs to address those issues. Thus, their leadership project proposals reflected their growing awareness for concrete solutions that took their students' specific challenges into mind.

Four of the five study residency participants situated their initiatives within classroom issues marked by high numbers of diverse student populations. Janie, concerned by the waning numbers in her non-academic science class, pursued the feasibility of an inner-city, onsite daycare centre to mitigate absenteeism and drop-out rates amongst her predominantly Black and Indigenous female class population.

Beth intended to introduce her largely disengaged and transient student group to community service. She wanted to give her students the positive feelings associated with helping others. Aware that the youth did not have money or other resources to share, she linked a learning outcome from the course curriculum to a hypothesis that the students could donate blood as a way to give back to their community. In addition, she arranged for the students to visit the local college campus where a mobile blood drive was set up. She hoped to provide an experience where her students could see themselves helping others in a location where they had never envisioned themselves.

As the students walked through the college campus, they saw students, similar appearances and ages, participating in post-secondary learning – sparking

conversations about their own capabilities for college. As an unintended consequence, Beth helped them to see the risks associated with drug use, 'home-done' body modification, and unprotected sex with multiple partners. The field trip became a pivotal event for many students in her class.

While at Centennial High, Gabrielle encountered many individuals who had avoided P.E. because of their painful experiences in typically gender-biased and competition oriented instructional approaches. She was shocked at the high number of Centennial High students who engaged in cutting, drug use, or alcoholism to alleviate their emotional or mental anguish. She was concerned that so many students at Centennial associated P.E. with humiliation, embarrassment, locker room bullying, or social exclusion because they were 'different' or unskilled. Gabrielle realized that youth who did not fit into specific gender roles, who were not motivated by wins or loses, who had experienced trauma, who were different, or who had alternative cultural practices or beliefs about fitness or wellness did not have access to the benefits of physical activities to release tension and activate the body's natural hormones – something that had been integral to her own health and mental wellness. Gabrielle sought to introduce yoga practices to address the stress and frustration that, unless addressed in positive ways, often leads students to self-harm and high drop-out rates.

The largest and most pervasive obstacle Peter sought to understand was why so many of the most vulnerable learners at Centennial High missed so much school. Despite their previous lack of success, and their choice to register for classes that would get them the prerequisites for a career or post-secondary

pathway, these students continued to skip, avoid tests and exams, cheat or copy other students' work, and often would drop out because they had missed too much to recover and pass the course. Peter wanted to understand and replicate the specific criteria Centennial High's most challenged learners (criteria associated with use of this label include: low credits, codes for special needs and/or English language delays, chronic absenteeism, significant gaps in attendance or no experience in formal schooling, life-style concerns around substance abuse and addiction, and mental illness) used to determine whether or not they would attend their classes that day or from period to period. He hypothesized that, if he could get these students to identify why they attended when they did, he might use that information to establish those conditions more purposefully and thus improve attendance, learning, and course completion.

As a result of their efforts, the residency participants experienced considerable understanding of the issues underlying student learning and achievement. Because of Centennial High's stance and belief that all students can learn and that the school and staff must reveal that belief in all aspects of their practice, they saw the impact their attitude had on their actions and how their actions either built relationships or added to walls the students were bringing in with them (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Similar to Balwin's study (1997, in Stringer, 2008) and Curwin's (2010) conclusions from years of successful work with inner-city youth, and youth detained in detention centers, the residency teachers embraced what it takes to ensure that *all students can learn* and the belief system this goal requires.

Similar to the participants' findings, Curwin suggests five key school/teacher attitudes; he sums them up as 1) hope, and building hope if it is missing; 2) belief in all students' ability to learn, 3) genuine care and concern for the students – their physical, mental, emotional, and psychological well-being; 4) refusing to give up on a student (no matter how hard he or she pushes us to quit); and 5) *choosing* to make a difference through specific and concrete actions.

During their residency experience, the participants exceeded the KSA's expected for interim or beginning teacher certification (T.Q.S., 2013). Specifically, their action into understanding and addressing the issues and complexities that come with diverse, urban learners, expedited their expertise in:

- determining and applying appropriate pedagogical choices based on a wide range of specific contexts,
- establishing welcoming and engaging learning environments for all students,
- recognising and providing for the multiple ways that students can learn, and show their learning, and
- engaging and leading their colleagues in classroom/school improvement initiatives.

Based on their critical and ongoing analysis of the students' needs and the suitability and effectiveness of their efforts, the residency teachers learned to determine which resources, approaches, activities, and accommodations met the challenges presented by a range of student and/or societal variables. They often exceeded the efforts of veteran colleagues in similar classroom contexts when diploma exam results were reviewed for student retention and successful course completion, and definitely surpassed early career teachers who, despite a few

years experience, continued to struggle to understand the role they placed in ensuring all students could learn.

Summary

Similar to the six criteria Crocket and Dibbon (2008) identify as markers of a quality education program, Darling-Hammond (2006) identifies common features amongst various teacher education programs that, despite their differences, are noted for producing exceptionally well-prepared beginning teachers "able, from their first days in the classroom, to practice like seasoned veterans, productively organizing classrooms that teach challenging content to very diverse learners with levels of skill many teachers never attain" (p. 306).

First, Darling-Hammond (2006) cites an over-arching coherence in all aspects of the program – from the courses within the program, to course assignments and activities, to the clinical experiences. Darling-Hammond sees an inter-weaving and cross-connection between subject matter and pedagogical learning in context, in the field, with both university and school personnel working in partnership. The researcher praises this framework for its ability to "explicate, justify, and build consensus on such fundamental conceptions as the role of the teacher, the nature of teaching and learning, and the mission of the school in this democracy" (p. 306).

Second, Darling-Hammond (2006) emphasizes the "critically important aspect ... of extensive clinical work, intensive supervision, expert modeling of practice, and diverse students [with whom] to learn ... serious teaching skills" (p.

307). This criterion reinforces the need for a lengthy practicum where pre-service teachers engage in ongoing reflection of their practice while receiving extensive feedback and coaching as they learn to facilitate learning for a wide range of students – including their peers. In addition, the fieldwork provides an essential space for pre-service teachers to unpack their biases and assumptions about students from different backgrounds and/or cultures. Ultimately though, Darling-Hammond (2006) concludes, the most important criteria for producing outstanding educators is the quality of the relationship between the universities that prepare the teachers and the schools who hire them. She writes:

> It is impossible to teach people how to teach powerfully by asking them to imagine what they have never seen or to suggest that they do the "opposite" of what they have observed in the classroom. No amount of coursework can, by itself, counteract the powerful experiential lesson that shape what teachers actually do. (p. 308)

It seems impossibly wrong-minded that the institution and the profession do not see their inherent dependence on each other in the service of ensuring effectively-prepared educators for student learning and achievement – and the impact their disconnect has on society as a whole: a condition that must change, according to Darling-Hammond (2006), if future teachers are going to "understand deeply a wide array of things about learning, social and cultural contexts, and teaching and be able to enact these understanding in complex classrooms serving increasingly diverse students" (p. 302).

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Naming What Matters in a Teaching Residency

This research has asked the participants in a teaching residency pilot, supported by a university and school board, to identify key aspects of the experience as essential to their growth and development as effective learning leaders. Becoming an effective teacher is a cyclical, ever-evolving spiral that demands constant introspection and problem-solving (Worthy, 2005). This professional residency – *applying, practicing and deepening their learning* – unlike a practicum experience that is often significantly directed by the co-operating teacher – situated new teachers as co-creators of their professional skills and identity. They worked alongside effective teachers in a co-teaching model, developed professional skills and competencies, and explored what it meant *to be* a teacher – finding relevance and wisdom in theories, previously dismissed, as now critical to their pedagogy (Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, Hernandez, Wurtzel, & Snyder, 2008b).

This case study is important because it provides evidence to policy-makers, institutions and school board officials that differentiated and personalized learning platforms that allow for longer, more supportive transitions into the career for new teachers are wanted. From a career longevity or 'initiative to mitigate attrition' perspective, teaching residencies have the potential to ensure that no new teacher finds him or herself thrust into responsibilities and roles for

which he or she have not been prepared. More importantly though, is that student learning and learner success maintain its priority as the focus of educators' work.

The participants in the teaching residency pilot praised the opportunity and time the partnership provided for them to consider the wide range of beliefs, skills, attitudes and know-how required for effectiveness in diverse classrooms. Moreover, the residency's ethic of care and focus on structures to encourage learning, taking risks, and reflecting on what worked, became a foundation from which the participants felt prepared to take on ever increasingly difficult challenges.

Specifically, the participants identified the length of the residency, and especially those important non-instructional days preceding the school year, as critical to ensuring their extensive and intensive learning. Within the time and space allotted by the entire school year, three themes emerged from their residency experiences as integral to their development and confidence as effective educators, fully capable and prepared to meet all of the Knowledge Skills and Attributes (K.S.A.'s) noted and expected for permanent teacher certification (T.Q.S., 1997; see APPENDIX E): relationships and culture, purposeful professional learning, and opportunities to develop and practice efficacy.

Relationships and Culture: within the cohort and residency network, the residency participants experienced unconditional support and encouragement, and at the same time, recognized how this support afforded them to be critically reflective of their practice. As a result of the growth they experienced because of

the cohort and its expansive network of supporters, the residency teachers embraced and esteemed relationships, collaboration, and community as powerful learning platforms which established the benchmark for their work in classrooms with their students – trust, taking risks, human capital investments, going above and beyond, giving and seeking specific feedback, taking time to understand, removing obstacles – these outcomes and attributes were made possible because the residency teachers recognized the impact relationships had on their own learning within a judgment-free environment in which they were encouraged to learn, where their principals and colleagues also engaged in ongoing professional conversations, reflection and action.

Purposeful Professional Learning Experiences: unlike the single day events that typify teacher professional development, or the overly generic and superficial workshops associated with large-scale district induction supports, the professional learning that the residency teachers experienced during their ten month placements helped to establish the importance of making mindful, purposeful and student – relevant learning investments. The extended field placement provided them the time, context and supports to learn, practice, reflect, and develop the most important aspects of their classroom work: that is, to understand and develop their capacity to determine the best routes to engage a wide range of diverse learners with the course outcomes.

Teacher Efficacy: the residency participants encountered and co-constructed embedded structures and processes through which to explore their own beliefs and biases. The learning sites were marked by a school-wide

expectation that educators take ownership of challenges and enact initiatives to understand and remove obstacles to learning. The results were efficacy, confidence, expertise, compassion and patience. Most importantly, these environments enabled the residency participants to shift their primary focus from 'getting a job', to ensuring students were engaged, and that they were learning. This critical shift in energy elevated their abilities and competencies to those board office individuals in a position to offer contracts.

One of the biggest challenges to preparing pre-service teachers to facilitate learning for any student or context they encounter is creating a space where they can experience and practice the skills necessary for professional expertise with and for vulnerable and at-risk learners. Any number or combination of student variables can shape a teaching assignment (T.Q.S., 1997). The confidence to make sound judgements about what steps to take requires extensive practice in context, with embedded, proximal support, and the space to reflect and discuss the success of an initiative – and adapt practices when and where needed.

These opportunities are necessary to teachers' understanding that students' choices and behaviors often act as symptoms of larger and/or darker underlying issues within society and communities within. Understanding the issues and challenges that impact on student learning, and engaging new teachers in action research practices or school improvement initiatives to mitigate the influences of these issues, builds compassion and teacher efficacy, and situates teachers as positive change agents in their classrooms. The wisdom, knowledge, skills and attributes attributed to the veteran teacher, and required for permanent

professional certification, were expedited in the participants as a result of the residency pilot and the activities therein.

Implications

This study has reiterated the issues that much research around beginning to teach as shown: that improvements to how teachers are prepared and transitioned into the career are wanted, needed, and effective. Rather than focusing on 'surviving' the first year(s), school boards and university preparation programs can consider how residency partnerships ensure confident, effective and thoroughly prepared educators. However, this will have consequences.

Improvements to mitigate those issues that lead to early teaching attrition may challenge institutions to consider how many seats they make available for degrees in education (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). If there are fewer certified teacher applicants, school boards will have fewer candidates from whom they can draw. Perhaps there will be more incentive to ensure the new teacher is better supported. And as career transition improves, and fewer teachers leave, school boards will have fewer assignments they need to fill.

Teaching is a career in which successful and effective educators are continuously challenged to learn as their roles evolve and the demands on their profession increase. Constantly changing situations and shifting societal values means that teacher knowledge is never complete; furthermore, the feedback teachers get in response to the millions of judgements that they will be required to

make will continue to influence and alter their beliefs about learning and teaching - as well as test their own efficacy in times that challenge their practices.

Excellent learning environments shape beginning teachers' attitudes and commitments to life-long professional learning. The relationship that pre-service teachers both see and experience between the institute that prepares them and the system that employs them can color a new teacher's enthusiasm and attitude towards their professional learning agenda. For example, if the pre-service teacher has a distinctly binary experience where there was only a perfunctory relationship between their university program and their field experience, they may reject 'academic' work (i.e. conducting school research or regularly reading academic journals) because they were socialized to associate these kinds of activities as the purview of the institution.

Yet in my case, and for many educators, the university has and continues to play a key role in supporting my growth and competencies as an effective educator. As I mentioned earlier in the dissertation, the knowledge and theories that have constructed my pedagogy came as a result of my classroom encounters reflected on and through researched frameworks and the applied researcher theoretical lens that I have sought to help me understand and give voice to what I am experiencing.

The residency, and the benefits the opportunity afforded the participants, was made possible because the university, the school board, and a large urban high school team worked together with university professors and satellite

principals and teachers to provide a group of young educators an experience they wanted. The stakeholders engaged "in a mutual transformation agenda, with all the struggle and messiness [any new venture] implies" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 302). The residency provided the participants a space where the theoretical and the practical were not dichotomies that situated the supremacy of one over the other, but rather highlighted the wisdom of identifying what makes sense, when certain choices or actions make sense, and why those actions and beliefs make sense in specific contexts. The residency space modelled this 'thinking, collaborating, reflecting and applying' process for the participants, thus increasing the probability that these activities will seamlessly underpin their career-long growth.

The willingness of the institution to work with the school board for this study created a space for critical conversations to take place. The demand for a residency experience, and perhaps most importantly, the impact it had on the participants, suggests that the typical route of teacher preparation – one that does not give equal importance to course and field work and the events that occur within (Crocket & Dibbon, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006) – are not meeting the needs of 21st century educators. Not unlike expansive research that illustrates the multiple and complex ways that students learn requires differentiated and individualized instruction, so too then, it makes sense that pre-service teachers need access to differentiated preparation routes and specific contextual and prolonged field work to ensure they are ready for the complex and demanding profession in which they have committed themselves.

The challenges teachers encounter are always increasing and becoming ever more complex. If educators are to be thoroughly prepared for the critical work of ensuring students' learning, then the weight of this responsibility must be reflected in the quality of the processes and experiences – both within the institution and the classroom – that prepares them.

Suggestions for Further Research

Difficult-to-Staff Schools

The circumstances that prompted then Boston Public School Superintendent Thomas Payzant to being the Boston Teacher Residency initiative were shortages of qualified teacher for specific contexts, sites and assignments. For hard-to-staff schools, including rural, distant or remote areas, teaching residencies, especially the practices and activities that shape them, offer a platform to attract and retain new teacher candidates.

Impact on Host School

As discussed earlier, school culture is significantly determined by the principal. The culture of a school influences and is influenced by how teachers engage with their colleagues, with their students, and how they work to maintain and advance their skills and knowledge base in the service of student learning. In this case, there is an opportunity to explore the impact the residency relationships and activities had on the cooperating teachers, principals and site schools. In what ways did the residency experience inform, reinforce, alter, or challenge their beliefs and practices, and thus impact the school's culture?

While not covered in this dissertation, the impact of the residency on the other stakeholders, for example the principals who supported and facilitated the residency, the teachers who partnered with the residency participants and the department heads who welcomed the new teachers into their team – warrants further study. In addition, the university professors who supported the initiative were pivotal in supporting a new space where neither the theoretical nor the practical held supremacy. Authenticating the validity of the knowledge and skills garnered in the field through the limitless challenges inherent in the experience while substantiating the need for frameworks and theories to organize and better understand their new understandings played a not insignificant role in the residents' appreciation for all aspects of their preparation. It would be worthwhile to capture the professors' attitudes and beliefs, and the experiences that helped to shape them, in order to identify what aspects of their philosophies about preparing teachers for a rapidly changing world made them particularly suitable to ensuring the success of the pilot.

Building Schools for Collaboration.

As mentioned earlier, the main site for the residency pilot – Centennial High School – has a specific architectural design feature, a purposeful decision made in the construction of the facility: a centralized teacher planning room that houses all of the teaching staff in one location. The extent to which this physical space influences new teachers' behaviors and beliefs –and the role it plays in modeling and/or reinforcing the preparation and planning activities of effective teachers and in facilitating and supporting collaboration and critical relationships –

is an area of considerable potential given the expectations for teachers to engage in these practices as part of their teaching day. As the government continues to construct traditional schools where the physical design persists to reinforce teachers working independently and separately from their colleagues, there is a need to examine how physical space can support – or continue to undermine – teachers' thinking, planning, researching, working and learning together in community.

Residency Graduates and Student Learning.

As more universities and school boards work together to better prepare future teachers, researchers need to determine the impact a residency model has on student learning and achievement. Already mentioned earlier in the dissertation, teachers are the key variable in ensuring student learning (Muijs, Kyriakides, van der Werf, Creemes, Timperley, & Earl, 2014). Thus, it makes sense to pay attention to which activities, processes, assignments, practices and aspects of teacher preparation programs produce the most effective new teachers; moreover, given the costs associated with mentorship, induction, consultants, workshops, and a host of other programs school boards use to address or 'fix' the learning needs and attrition rates of new teachers, a shift in funds to better prepare pre-service teachers through a residency model is warranted.

Why Teacher as Researcher Matters.

When teachers are invited to improve some aspect of education – be it instructional, pedagogical, means of assessing learning, curricular, or any other

process, process, or method used to engage meaningful learning – and when they feel supported, heard, and respected for the knowledge and experiences they bring to inform their choices and decisions – and when they work in collaboration with equally committed stakeholders who value the rich source of data and insight other people's experiences can bring to give shape to solutions and ideas, then substantial and sustainable improvement occurs. Their findings have led to contextual social action and systemic change in a variety of educational contexts. They have helped children learn.

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APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participate
November, 2013

Dear Graduate of the Residency in Urban Education Pilot, 2011-2012;

I am currently engaged in a doctoral program at the University of Alberta in the Faculty of Secondary Education where I am looking at the experiences of new educators. Now that my study has received the approval from the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Ethics, I am able to invite participants and embark on my research. The topic of this doctoral research is *Mitigating the 'Trial by Fire': The Experiences of Residency Teachers Participating in a Post-Graduate, Pre-Service Teaching Residency Program.* By collecting the experiences of participants in the U of A – EPSB residency pilot, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of what aspects of the extended residency year were most effective in shaping their understanding of important processes, knowledge and skills for effective teaching.

It is my hope that you would be interested in sharing your experience in the Residency in Urban Education Pilot during the 2011-2012 school year. I am seeking participants with whom I can conduct interviews and a focus group; in addition, I intend to will use the online journal postings written throughout the year by the cohort, and the assignments the cohort submitted for course work to the university as data.

The research question guiding this study asks: What characteristics of a ten-month teaching residency program do the participants identify as essential to their success?

Research sub-questions include:

- What motivated the participants' decision to invest in the extra residency year after graduating with their education degree?
- What experiences, relationships, and/or activities did the participants find to be most beneficial in their transition from student to teacher?
- How does the residency experience contrast with the practicum placements their experienced as part of their undergraduate program?
- How effective was the ten-month teaching residency program in preparing them in key areas of teaching knowledge and skill?
- What aspects of the residency were absolutely essential for them to become more informed educators?
- And, if they are employed as teachers at the time of data collection: What aspect of the residency program's co-teaching, peer- coaching and collaborative structure do you intend to maintain as part of your professional practice?

Participation is voluntary. Though I was a full participant in the residency pilot as a supervisor and facilitator, you are in no way required or expected to participate as a service to me. In collecting and analyzing the data, I will take every precaution to maintain your anonymity. Although the participant number for the pilot was small, I will use pseudonyms, refrain from using direct quotations that will identify the specific participant and location, and do everything I can to ensure and protect the identity of the participants. The interviews will be conducted at a location of your choosing, and at a time that is convenient for you. In addition, you will have the opportunity to check my interpretation of your input, and edit it prior to it being included in the dissertation. You can also stipulate posts, information or assignments collected through-out the pilot you do not want included in the research. At the conclusion of this study, the data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office for five years.

The data you provide will be used to identify activities and processes that can inform an effective residency experience, and will form a chapter in my dissertation for my Doctor of Education degree. Readers of the dissertation may include board personnel, faculty members, members of our association, government officials, co-teaching partners and participating principals. Sections of the dissertation may also be adapted into articles and considered for publication in professional and academic journals.

If you have any questions about this research, or are interested in being a participant, please contact me by phone (780-416-2890), or email kjh@ualberta.ca, so that we can set up a time to speak in person and more fully discuss what involvement in this study will entail. Again, I'll reiterate that you are under no obligation to participate in this study. As an assistant principal in the district, I have no say in who personnel chooses to interview for teaching assignments. Hiring is based on program needs. If you choose to decline my invitation, there will be no repercussions to your ability to secure future teaching assignments in this or other school districts.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Kelly Harding

APPENDIX B

Examples of Semi-structured Questions for One-on-One Interviews

1. The purpose of this study is to identify the most effective activities and processes you experienced as a participant in the residency pilot; what stood out for you as the most important aspects of the program? What made them so effective?
2. What motivated your decision to invest in the extra residency year after graduating with an education degree?
3. What experiences, relationships, and/or activities did you find to be most beneficial in the transition from student to teacher?
4. How does the residency experience contrast with the practicum placements you experienced as part of an undergraduate program?
5. How effective was the participation in a ten-month teaching residency program in preparing you for key areas of teaching knowledge and skill?
6. What aspects of the residency were absolutely essential for you to become more informed educators?
7. How did that aspect of the program move you ahead as an educator?
8. And, if you are employed as teachers at the time of data collection: What aspect of the residency program's co-teaching, peer- coaching and collaborative structure do you maintain as part of your professional practice?

**Refer to the Survey: Resident Ratings of Preparedness in Areas of Teaching Knowledge and Skill.

9. Please describe the areas of **least preparedness** in the teaching knowledge and skill survey you completed prior to our interview; can you talk more about the areas you indicated as not very well prepared, and not well prepared ?

APPENDIX C

(sent **prior to the interview** in order to collect a baseline for question 9 in APPENDIX B.)

Resident Ratings of Preparedness in Areas of Teaching Knowledge and Skill.

Consider the 27 areas of teaching knowledge and skill. In one color, indicate effectively you thought your undergrad student-teaching practicum prepared you; in a second color, indicate how effectively the residency experience **prepared** you for the below listed areas by placing checkmarks in one of the columns to the right.	Not at all well	Not very well	Fairly Well	Very Well
1. Teach the concepts of your discipline(s)				
2. Manage the classroom effectively				
3. Develop curriculum that builds on students experiences				
4. Evaluate lessons and unit plans				
5. Create interdisciplinary curriculum				
6. Relate classroom learning to the world outside school				
7. Design developmentally appropriate learning experiences				
8. Identify and address special learning needs				
9. Teach in ways that support new English learners				
10. Use appropriate communication strategies				
11. Teach multiculturalism, anti-racism and social justice				
12. Teach in multi-age or multi-grade classrooms				
13. Use higher-order questioning strategies				
14. Use cooperative learning strategies				
15. Deal with students from diverse backgrounds				
16. Use assessment techniques for diagnosis and grading				
17. Give timely feedback to students				
18. Use praise and criticism constructively				
19. Use direct instructional techniques				
20. Act as a facilitator of learning				
21. Use technology in instruction				
22. Use effective presentation strategies				

23. Resolve interpersonal conflict				
24. Design a purposeful, task-oriented learning environment				
25. Apply research results to teaching				
26. Think critically about how to improve your teaching				
27. Deal with student diversity including gender, class and sexual orientation				

Survey questions taken from Crocker & Dibbon (2008)

APPENDIX D

Codes Used for Analysis

Initial Codes and Patterns From all data sources	Codes aligned and refined within frame work/categories adapted from Crocker & Dibbon's 'Features of the Practicum' (2008)	Themes
Asking questions/for help At-risk Authentic self Aware/unaware Bad experience Caring/Love Classroom impact Change Collaboration Confidence/lack of/false Contract: Work/career Conversation Co-Teacher Culture/classroom Culture/school Location of residency Didn't know what to do Disappointed/rejection Diversity/ESL/SN/Poverty Doubt Exhaustion Expectations Fear Feedback/negative Feedback/positive Feedback/sought/given Hard work Identifying need for help Identity/student/teacher Illness/sick Isolation Judgement/free from Lack of experience Lack of support Leadership Learning Lesson planning Mentors Mindset/growth - fixed Mistakes	**Duration of the Residency** Awareness of false confidence Confidence based in experience/growth/authority Conversations/coacing/reflecting Mentor/formal Mentors/informal New understanding/making decisions Range of experiences Risk-taking Time/to build deep relationships/trust/friendship Time/organising Time/pacing Time/planning Time/thinking/practicing **[Co] Teaching Activities** Relationship Collaboration Conversation Feedback/sought/given/difficult Reflection Risk-taking Support Teaching/curriculum Time Trust Role-model Asking questions/of self, students, peers Authority/ownership Lesson Planning Strengths/areas to grow Student relationships **Teaching [and Learning] Supervision** Relationship Feedback/sought/reciprocal/unk	The importance of relationships (and what is needed to create great ones: time, trust, conversations, risk, judgement-free feedback, reciprocity) Environment/Culture (and attitudes of staff @ reciprocal/peer learning and development; growth/learner mindset; supportive leadership – role of principal to set the tone) PD - self-directed, relevant professional learning (related to context, teaching assignment, facilitator understands site/assignment issues, challenges); emphasis of follow through, application, reflection, integration into practice Confidence and authority to pursue equity for students

Money/stability Need experience Nervous Not enough time Not prepared/un-prepared Overwhelmed Ownership of classroom/course Ownership of learning Positive experience Problem solving Reflection Relationships: peer, student, with co-teacher(s), within cohort, struggles Re-location Risk-taking Stagnation Stress Students Support/encouragement Teaching Team Time/planning, organizing, marking, tracking Tired Too little time spent in classrooms during undergrad/not real Trust/lack of trust Uncertainty	ind Instructional coaching/practice Investment over time/ risk-taking Reciprocal growth with co-teacher/trying new things Reflection/self-awareness/identity Support/encouragement Trust/lack of trust Learning/Growth Ownership of learning Professional development/self-directed learning Risk-taking Student achievement Student learning **Quality of the [Resident] Teaching Experience** Depth and Breadth of Learning At-risk experiences/SN/ESL/poverty Authentic experience Growth/understanding gained Multiple experiences in desired context/location Self-direction of professional learning/ownership Relationships: students, peers, professors Confidence Conversation/discussion Feedback Reflection Support/Encouragement **Faculty and Principal Perceptions on [Resident] Teaching** Culture/change of culture Impact on students' learning/achievement Investment/network/PD Relationships Support/encouragement Time/growth/reflection/values Trust/confidence	–take ownership of classroom or school issues; develop ethic of care and focus on teaching the student first; content second; encourage teacher-leaders

	Induction/Mentoring (2008, p. 100-101) Curriculum understanding Instructional strategies Leadership/confidence/school improvement PD/relevance/site specific/student context Reciprocal growth and learning Relationships/trust Time/reflection/conversation/collaboration Understanding of challenges/issues	

APPENDIX E

Teacher Quality Standard (1997)

1. Pursuant to Section 39(1)(f) of the *School Act*, I (Minster of Education, Peter Mar) approve the following as the Teaching Quality Standard which shall apply to teacher certification, professional development, supervision and evaluation, and which is supported by descriptors of selected knowledge, skills and attributes appropriate to teachers at different stages of their careers:

(1) Teaching Quality Standard

Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's ongoing analysis of the context, and the teacher's decisions about which pedagogical knowledge and abilities to apply result in optimum learning by students.

All teachers are expected to meet the Teaching Quality Standard throughout their careers. However, teaching practices will vary because each teaching situation is different and in constant change. Reasoned judgment must be used to determine whether the Teaching Quality Standard is being met in a given context.

(2) Descriptors of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Related to Interim Certification

Teachers who hold an Interim Professional Certificate must possess the Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Related to Interim Certification (Interim KSAs), and apply them appropriately toward student learning. During their first two years of teaching, teachers should use the Interim KSAs to guide their teaching, reflect on their practice, and direct their professional development in collaboration with their supervisors and evaluators.

As situations warrant, teachers who hold an Interim Professional Certificate are expected to demonstrate consistently that they understand:

a) contextual variables affect teaching and learning. They know how to analyse many variables at one time, and how to respond by making reasoned decisions about their teaching practice and students' learning;

b) the structure of the Alberta education system. They know the different roles in the system, and how responsibilities and accountabilities are determined, communicated and enforced, including the expectations held of them under the Certification of Teachers Regulation, A.R. 261/90 as amended and their school authority's teacher's evaluation policy;

c) the purposes of the Guide to Education and programs of study germane to the specialization or subject disciplines they are prepared to teach. They know how to use these documents to inform and direct their planning, instruction and assessment of student progress;

d) the subject disciplines they teach. They have completed a structured program of studies through which they acquired the knowledge, concepts, methodologies and assumptions in one or more areas of specialization or subject disciplines taught in Alberta schools;

e) all students can learn, albeit at different rates and in different ways. They know how (including when and how to engage others) to identify students' different learning styles and ways students learn. They understand the need to respond to differences by creating multiple paths to learning for individuals and groups of students, including students with special learning needs;

f) the purposes of short, medium and long term range planning. They know how to translate curriculum and desired outcomes into reasoned, meaningful and incrementally progressive learning opportunities for students. They also understand the need to vary their plans to accommodate individuals and groups of students;

g) students' needs for physical, social, cultural and psychological security. They know how to engage students in creating effective classroom routines. They know how and when to apply a variety of management strategies that are in keeping with the situation, and that provide for minimal disruptions to students' learning;

h) the importance of respecting students' human dignity. They know how to establish, with different students, professional relationships that are characterized by mutual respect, trust and harmony;

i) there are many approaches to teaching and learning. They know a broad range of instructional strategies appropriate to their area of specialization and the subject discipline they teach, and know which strategies are appropriate to help different students achieve different outcomes;

j) the functions of traditional and electronic teaching/learning technologies. They know how to use and how to engage students in using these technologies to present and deliver content, communicate effectively with others, find and secure information, research, word process, manage information, and keep records;

k) the purposes of student assessment. They know how to assess the range of learning objectives by selecting and developing a variety of classroom and large scale assessment techniques and instruments. They know how to analyse the results of classroom and large scale assessment instruments including provincial assessment instruments, and how to use the results for the ultimate benefit of students;

l) the importance of engaging parents, purposefully and meaningfully, in all aspects of teaching and learning. They know how to develop and implement strategies that create and enhance partnerships among teachers, parents and students;

m) student learning is enhanced through the use of home and community resources. They know how to identify resources relevant to teaching and learning objectives, and how to incorporate these resources into their teaching and students' learning;

n) the importance of contributing, independently and collegially, to the quality of their school. They know the strategies whereby they can, independently and collegially, enhance and maintain the quality of their schools to the benefit of students, parents, community and colleagues;

o) the importance of career-long learning. They know how to assess their own teaching and how to work with others responsible for supervising and evaluating

teachers. They know how to use the findings of assessments, supervision and evaluations to select, develop and implement their own professional development activities;

p) the importance of guiding their actions with a personal, overall vision of the purpose of teaching. They are able to communicate their vision, including how it has changed as a result of new knowledge, understanding and experience; and

q) they are expected to achieve the Teaching Quality Standard.

(3) Descriptors of Knowledge, Skills and Attributes Related to Permanent Certification

Teachers who hold a Permanent Professional Certificate must demonstrate, in their practice, professional repertoires that are expanded beyond the Interim KSAs.

The following descriptors comprise a repertoire of selected knowledge, skills and attributes from which teachers who hold a Permanent Professional Certificate should be able to draw, as situations warrant, in order to meet the Teaching Quality Standard. Teachers, staffs, supervisors and evaluators should use the descriptors to guide professional development, supervision, evaluation and remediation strategies in order that teachers can meet the Teaching Quality Standard consistently throughout their careers.

a) Teachers' application of pedagogical knowledge, skills and attributes is based in their ongoing analysis of contextual variables. Teachers' analysis of contextual variables underlies their reasoned judgments and decisions about which specific pedagogical skills and abilities to apply in order that students can achieve optimum learning. Selected variables are outlined below.

student variables	regulatory variables
▪ demographic variables, e.g. age, gender	▪ Government Organization Act ▪ School Act and provincial regulations,

▪ maturation ▪ abilities and talents ▪ relationships among students ▪ subject area of study ▪ prior learning ▪ socio-economic status ▪ cultural background ▪ linguistic variables ▪ mental and emotional states and conditions	policies and Ministerial Orders ▪ Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act ▪ Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ▪ school authority policies ▪ Guide to Education ▪ Program of Studies
school variables	parent and societal variables
• resource availability and allocation • teaching assignment • class size and composition • collegial and administrator support • physical plant • physical plant • teacher variables • teaching experience • learning experiences	• parental support • parental involvement in children's learning • socio-economic variables • community support for education • multiculturalism • cultural pluralism • inter-agency collaboration • provincial, national and global influences

b) Teachers understand the legislated, moral and ethical frameworks within which they work.

Teachers function within a policy-based and results oriented education system authorized under the School Act and other legislation.

Teachers also function within policy frameworks established by school authorities. This includes policies which require: a commitment to teaching practices that meet their school authority's teaching quality standard(s); and that teachers engage in ongoing, individualized professional development.

Teachers recognize they are bound by standards of conduct expected of a caring, knowledgeable and reasonable adult who is entrusted with the custody, care or education of students or children. Teachers recognize their actions are bound in moral, ethical and legal considerations regarding their obligations to students, parents, administrators, school authorities, communities and society at large. Teachers acknowledge these obligations and act accordingly.

c) Teachers understand the subject disciplines they teach.

Teachers understand the knowledge, concepts, methodologies and assumptions of the subject disciplines they teach. This includes an understanding of how knowledge in each discipline is created and organized, and that subject disciplines are more than bodies of static facts and techniques - they are complex and evolving. Their understanding extends to relevant technologies, the linkages among subject disciplines, and their relevance and importance in everyday life at the personal, local, national and international levels.

Teachers understand that students typically bring preconceptions and understandings to a subject. They know strategies and materials that are of assistance in furthering students' understanding.

d) Teachers know there are many approaches to teaching and learning.

Teachers appreciate individual differences and believe all students can learn, albeit at different rates and in different ways. They recognize students' different learning styles and the different ways they learn, and accommodate these differences in individuals and groups of students including students with special learning needs.

Teachers understand the fluidity of teaching and learning. They constantly monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of their practices and students' activities, and change them as needed.

e) Teachers engage in a range of planning activities.

Teachers' plans are founded in their understanding of contextual variables and are a record of their decisions on what teaching and learning strategies to apply. Plans outline a reasoned and incremental progression toward the attainment of desired outcomes, for both teachers and students. Teachers monitor the context, their instruction, and monitor and assess students' learning on an ongoing basis, and modify their plans accordingly.

Teachers strive to establish candid, open and ongoing lines of communication with students, parents, colleagues and other professionals, and incorporate information gained into their planning.

f) Teachers create and maintain environments that are conducive to student learning.

Teachers establish learning environments wherein students feel physically, psychologically, socially and culturally secure. They are respectful of students' human dignity, and seek to establish a positive professional relationship with students that is characterized by mutual respect, trust and harmony. They model the beliefs, principles, values, and intellectual characteristics outlined in the Guide to Education and programs of study, and guide students to do the same.

Teachers work, independently and cooperatively, to make their classrooms and schools stimulating learning environments. They maintain acceptable levels of student conduct, and use discipline strategies that result in a positive environment conducive to student learning. They work with students to establish classroom routines that enhance and increase students' involvement in meaningful learning activities. They organize facilities, materials, equipment and space to provide students equitable opportunities to learn, and to provide for students' safety.

Where community members work with students either on-campus or off-campus and where students are engaged in school-sponsored off-campus activities, teachers strive to ensure these situations also are secure and positive environments conducive to students' learning.

g) Teachers translate curriculum content and objectives into meaningful learning activities.

Teachers clearly communicate short and long range learning expectations to students, and how the expectations are to be achieved and assessed. They engage students in meaningful activities that motivate and challenge them to achieve those expectations. They integrate current learning with prior learning, and provide opportunities for students to relate their learning to the home, community and broader environment.

Teachers apply a broad range and variety of instructional and learning strategies. The strategies vary in keeping with contextual variables, subject content, desired objectives, and the learning needs of individuals and groups of students. The strategies are selected and used to achieve desired outcomes, primarily the expectations outlined in the Guide to Education, programs of study and other approved programs.

h) Teachers apply a variety of technologies to meet students' learning needs.

Teachers use teaching/learning resources such as the chalkboard, texts, computers and other auditory, print and visual media, and maintain an awareness of emerging technological resources. They keep abreast of advances in teaching/learning technologies and how they can be incorporated into instruction and learning. As new technologies prove useful and become available in schools, teachers develop their own and their students' proficiencies in using the technologies purposefully, which may include content presentation, delivery and research applications, as well as word processing, information management and record keeping.

Teachers use electronic networks and other telecommunication media to enhance their own knowledge and abilities, and to communicate more effectively with others.

i) Teachers gather and use information about students' learning needs and progress.

Teachers monitor students' actions on an ongoing basis to determine and respond to their learning needs. They use a variety of diagnostic methods that include observing students' activities, analysing students' learning difficulties and strengths, and interpreting the results of assessments and information provided by students, their parents, colleagues and other professionals.

Teachers select and develop a variety of classroom assessment strategies and instruments to assess the full range of learning objectives. They differentiate between classroom and large-scale instruments such as provincial achievement tests, administer both and use the results for the ultimate benefit of students. They record, interpret and use the results of their assessments to modify their teaching practices and students' learning activities.

Teachers help students, parents and other educators interpret and understand the results of diagnoses and assessments, and the implications for students. They also help students develop the ability to diagnose their own learning needs and to assess their progress toward learning goals.

Teachers use their interpretations of diagnoses and assessments as well as students' work and results to guide their own professional growth. They assist school councils and members of the community to understand the purposes, meanings, outcomes and implications of assessments.

j) Teachers establish and maintain partnerships among school, home and community, and within their own schools.

Teachers engage in activities that contribute to the quality of the school as a learning environment. They work with others to develop, coordinate and implement programs and activities that characterize effective schools. They also work cooperatively with school councils.

Teachers strive to involve parents in their children's schooling. Partnerships with the home are characterized by the candid sharing of information and ideas to influence

how teachers and parents, independently and cooperatively, contribute to students' learning.

Teachers seek out and incorporate community resources into their instruction, and encourage students to use home and community resources in their learning. Teachers make connections between school, home and community in order to enhance the relevance and meaning of learning. Home and community resources are utilized to make learning meaningful and relevant, and so students can gain an increased understanding of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to participate in and contribute positively to society.

k) Teachers are career-long learners.

Teachers engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their: understanding of and ability to analyze the context of teaching; ability to make reasoned judgments and decisions; and, pedagogical knowledge and abilities. They recognize their own professional needs and work with others to meet those needs. They share their professional expertise to the benefit of others in their schools, communities and profession.

Teachers guide their actions by their overall visions of the purpose of teaching. They actively refine and redefine their visions in light of the ever-changing context, new knowledge and understandings, and their experiences. While these visions are dynamic and grow in depth and breadth over teachers' careers, the visions maintain at their core a commitment to teaching practices through which students can achieve optimum learning.