A CURRICULUM OF TEA: RESTORATIVE TEACHING PRACTICES FOR STUDENTS FROM REFUGEE CONTEXTS

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Dedication

To my family:

Marisela, for your patience with me and your eternal love. You are everything I need.

Andres and Lucas, I strive to make your world a better place to live in.

Mom, Dad and James, for giving me the love of humanity and a hope for change.

Thank you

Abstract

Students from refugee contexts coming to Canada often do not have the necessary

foundations to be placed into mainstream classes successfully. Limited formal education

and trauma prevent students from integrating into mainstream Canadian classrooms and

closing the achievement gap with their peers. Restorative Teaching Practices for Students

from Refugee Contexts challenge common practices of teaching and instead offer a more

democratic way that engages all stake-holders in classroom decision making. Restorative

teaching practices that include teatime, morning pages, and home visits present an

alternate curriculum that meets the needs of refugee students more effectively. This study

builds on research in multiliteracies, reciprocity of perspectives, ecological (and

bioecological) theories of human development, and restorative education. Through an

autoethnographic study, I take on the role of investigating my own practice to ask: how

can I learn to teach and live well with my students from refugee contexts and how do

restorative teaching practices (morning pages, teatime, and home visits) affect my

teaching? My conclusions demonstrate that Restorative Teaching Practices for Students

from Refugee Contexts have helped me and perhaps others to build positive relationships,

and recognise and begin to address the diverse and profound needs of the teaching self

and learners in the high school classroom.

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Prologue

As a child I never had any ambition to become a teacher. All through school I listened to those who planned on being teachers describe their passion for learning and helping others learn. I was never motivated by the inspiring teachers I had to join a profession that is, essentially, the sacrifice of self for community. My path to teaching came from a very different origin and has had a profound influence on the manner and curriculum I share with students.

Growing up in a small city in Western Canada, my mother was a bank teller and my father a police officer. They had both been teenagers in the 1970s listening to the works of Simon and Garfunkel, the Eagles, and America. My brother and I were both born in the mid 1980s and the influences my parents brought to the home and taught us were of service and equality. In this way I cannot claim that my teaching practice, based on my philosophy of education and humanity, are my own. Everything that I believe and practice has come from the influence of others as I have interpreted it for my own life. These lessons have had great impact on me and my brother as we are both teachers. Teaching is a common profession in my family. There are four other teachers in my extended family, and I believe that this is a testament to the effects of a philosophy of service and a love of life-long learning.

In my teen years I began taking initiative to serve in my own way and spent four years working and saving money for four summer trips to Mexico to build houses for the poor in Tijuana, Mexico. I had visited Mexico with my family on one occasion before, but never had I seen the poverty of "las colonias" (the colonies) outside of the city's electrical and sanitary grid. Houses with tin roofs, plywood walls, and dirt floors

surprised me and motivated me to act. Over my high school career I continued to study

Spanish to prepare me for our trips, but there never seemed to be enough time to learn

enough to get by. By the end of high school I was ready for a greater challenge and

applied for a yearlong exchange program.

In July of 2001 I boarded a plane to study in Ulan-Ude, Russia. Ulan-Ude was a

city of 500,000 people in central Siberia about four hundred kilometers north of

Mongolia. During my time there I lived with two families and the culture shock was hard

for the families I stayed with and for me. After only four months I was recalled back to

Canada because of fears for my safety related to the theft of military-grade weaponry

from a Soviet-era weapons factory. I only became aware of the risk after a bomb

exploded on the street in front of my home apartment complex, opening a van like a tuna

can and killing both young men inside who were unlucky enough to find it. As told to me

by community members, there was no surprise or shock in the theft of these weapons but

it was treated with indifference. What concerned me most about Russia was not the

quality of life that many of my classmates endured but the despair with which so many of

the people lived their lives day to day. I came home dejected and disillusioned with the

state of the world outside of my middle-class Canadian life.

When I began my university studies I did not plan on entering Education to stay

in my hometown, but saw education as a tool to help me travel and begin to transform

what I believed was an inability to find hope for the future. For a large portion of the

world's population a lack of access to education is the greatest hindrance to a better

future. If I could bring education, I could bring hope back to the dead eyes I had seen in

my travels. I chose French/Spanish as my major in Education and filled the rest of my

schedule with anthropology and archaeology. My studies in anthropology helped me to see that my desire to serve the international community was founded, but my ethnocentric view that I could change them was false and inappropriate. Instead, I came to believe that service is not about changing people, but about finding how I could be used to help achieve the community's goals.

In 2005 I began another study exchange program in Guadalajara, Mexico. As a French/Spanish major, it was a mandatory semester for my studies. This was an exciting experience for me because I was arriving to study Spanish in a place I had never seen before with people I had never met. The University of Guadalajara was not only a place for me to continue with my Spanish language, but also a way to continue my Latin American studies through anthropology. Most engaging to me was the history of social injustice, false ideas of democracy, dictatorship, genocide, and the response to these issues by Canadian and American political systems. My time in Mexico profoundly changed my understanding of market influences on our political decisions and even how human life becomes a commodity to be calculated if there is a profit to be made.

It was during this time that I was exposed to the work and philosophy of individuals like Noam Chomsky, Paolo Friere, and the neo-Marxist Zapatistas in Southern Mexico's state of Chiapas. The Zapatista movement in Chiapas took a vital turn in 1994 when Canada, The United States and Mexico signed the NAFTA agreement, (Gilbreth & Otero, 2001) which would modify article 27 of the Federal Constitution ending land reform and shut down outstanding land claims. The Zapatistas began a military rebellion against Mexico's political ownership of the area and to this day exist in an area of the south independent of Mexican government control. What drew me to this

group was their focus on two elements: education and public service (volunteerism).

Education was essential to social growth and continuous community service a

requirement for maintaining the title of Zapatista. (Brenner, 2014). These influences

changed my understanding of the purpose of education as providing individuals the skills

to secure better employment to a process of social action and self re-imagining. If I were

to pursue a career as a teacher, it would no longer be to move students from one grade to

another, but instead a process of discovery, social activism, and democratic participation.

While on my studies in Mexico I met many different people who shared my views

of society and even found the love of my life. Marisela was studying philosophy and a

year and a half later we were married in Guadalajara in a Catholic cathedral. We planned

to return to Canada to finish the last two years of my education program and then return

to Mexico to continue the work we both loved in Education. By the time I graduated in

2008, the drug war in Mexico was spinning out of control and even her neighborhood

was no longer as safe for us to live in. I accepted my first teaching contract in Lethbridge

in 2009 teaching grade six language arts and social studies. Over my six-year teaching

career I have often felt pressured to view education as I had before, that I am the owner

of knowledge and it is my job to deliver this knowledge to my students. It is hard to

maintain a philosophy of education focusing on service to community when one is under

the pressures of provincial examinations, evaluations, and curricular restraints. Through

all of this, my one guiding mentor has been my wife. She has kept me in check by

reminding me, "What is education about? What are you about?"

In 2012, I began the next stage of my teaching career and my graduate studies in

education and literacy. The timing of these two events cannot be understated as I have

had the opportunity to grow and immediately begin using what I learn in a classroom that I felt lost in. My career took a turn when I was hired to teach a class of refugee students with limited formal schooling in their home countries. Primarily from Bhutan, these students required a different kind of education from other Canadian students because of their historic background and educational experiences. For me, this became a journey into the unknown, as the way I was taught to teach did not meet my needs as a teacher of refugee students. However, my graduate studies began the process of joining teacher and researcher as I gained theoretical structure and practical confidence in a new environment. In this thesis I take on the role of investigating my own practice to ask; how I can learn to teach and live well with my refugee students and how do restorative teaching practices (morning pages, teatime, and home visits) affect me and my teaching?

This thesis is the documentation of my experiences as I discovered how to live my philosophy of education and imagine a new way of teaching and learning from refugee students. It is my desire that this thesis will serve readers in two primary ways. First, I want my research to be an example of growth as I have striven to meet the needs of my students and my own teaching self. Second, I hope that this research will create a dialogue and examples for practice in which teachers will feel confident to attempt restorative teaching practices for their students. This thesis is also about my professional growth and the decisions I make are for my own practice. The ways I live and grow with my students do not have to be, and should not be, the only ways we teach our students. If teachers are willing to research their own teaching method as it relates to their own context and the research of others, the teaching profession can continue to grow to meet the needs of teachers, students, their families and society.

A Curriculum of Tea:

A Model of Restorative Practices for Refugee Students

Chapter 1: How We Came to Be Together

Introduction

Teaching refugee students in my classroom has been the greatest teaching

opportunity I have had. I love being able to work with students who are new to Canada.

Their innocence about school in Canada makes everything so fresh and new for them.

With all the excitement in my classroom, however, I remember the shock I felt when

asked by a teacher, "What can they do?" The question angered me because there was the

insinuation that a refugee student cannot do anything or be expected to learn anything in

our schools. So much of what I do in my classroom is about healing, about returning to a

whole being. I have been so focused on these elements that the question about what they

can do is insulting and absurd to me. "What do you mean, what can they do?" It is not

about what they can do or not do. It is about learning to live well, to become who we

should be.

For me and my students, school is about life. How do we live? How do we heal

from our life experiences to become a person that can live better? It is not about *doing*

things. I believe that my students will be able to do many things, graduate from school,

get a job, and buy a house. But I am not teaching them so that they can *do* anything. So

what am I teaching? As a teacher, what am I to *do* about them? Who am I to say there is

anything wrong with them that I need to fix? Forcing people to work so that things are

done is servitude, is it not?

I want my classroom to be about more than skills and knowledge. I am in agreement with what Dewey wrote about nearly a century ago, "I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living." (1897, par. 9). As I reflect on this this, I realize that I am part of the same battle that has endured since Dewey wrote My Pedagogic Creed, *human being now* or *human doing things for later.* Today we live in a society that places value on what you do and how well you do it. Instead of placing value on *human being*, we have placed value on *human doing*. I find that in many ways, my classroom has become my own neo-Marxist revolution against traditional ways of being in school. When I speak about my neo-Marxist revolution, I am referring to the Marxist alternatives to ways in which consumerism can affect the language and process of school by turning it into nothing more than performance and efficiency analysis (Peters & Lankshear, 1996). In contrast, Marxist models can provide emancipation from the *doing* of education. By attending to the *being* of my students, I am rejecting the instrumentalist model of a student becoming a useful person. How, then, am I to attend to the *being* of my students? How do I *be* with them so that we can become the human beings that we desire to be?

I have taken ideas from Freire's emancipatory literacy and traditional models of restorative practices in education to understand my role in breaking down oppressive systems of academic and social control my refugee students face. In traditional models of restorative practices all stakeholders become part of resolution to problems (Porter, 2007). Combining offender, offended, and community into small groups, the practice strives to teach problem solving through an empathic process. Much of this work has come about because in other models of conflict resolution (legal system is a good

example) the offender and the offended become witnesses to the resolution as a third party rewards punishment and compensation. Porter suggests that these traditional models of punishment in schools only lead to more bullying, violence, poor academic performance and parental apathy (2007). Research in restorative education focuses primarily on conflict resolution and new attitudes to behaviour and punishment. Restorative practices are often referred to as "restorative justice" (p. 2) as it responds to mending relationships before things get out of hand.

In my context, I use restorative practices as a way to refocus my practice to meeting my needs to build authentic curriculum with students and become a more complete person in teaching. It restores us to a better way of living. Like Maslow and his Hierarchy of Needs (1943), I believe that until we are secure in the basic physical and emotional needs in our lives, we are stagnating in our potential. In this way, teaching refugee students can be very different than teaching other immigrant students in our classrooms. While there are, surely, many immigrants who come to Canada having suffered traumatic experiences, the nature of the refugee communities is that they may have experienced forced expulsion from homelands on a community-wide scale. To properly address the needs of refugees, then, the teaching practice must begin to address to these community differences. For my students and their community, the condition of refugee status or conditions existing over nearly three decades, has a different impact on their understanding of education and society that I must address in my classroom through restorative teaching practice. In contrast, an immigrant student tends to immigrate for other reasons than expulsion (ie. work, exchange programs), but may have experienced trauma in their home countries on a smaller or more isolated scale. In order to meet the

needs of refugee students through a new framework, a restorative teaching practice can help re-imagine a future as something more than being a refugee. Gorman (2010) believes that this is particularly true of disparaged individuals, "…then it stands to reason that someone who has been disconnected from their culture will be impeded from achieving those needs." (p. 28). As a child, I was provided for well, and given a supportive and healthy home that encouraged me to try new things and express my identity. My life circumstances allowed me to do what I wanted to do with my life. Refugee students have been living in situations that do not often meet those basic needs and, as a result, they do not have the capacity to grow into the people they desire to be.

Equally unfair, we may assume that because students have arrived to Canada, they can immediately begin living the way they desire. The reality for many may be that early trauma, the trauma of transition, and the fears of their new homes do not remove them from the fear and uncertainty they experienced in refugee camps. Most people cannot just "get over" the trauma they have experienced. Restorative practices matter because they are the first steps to starting a healthy and productive life. Instead of letting refugees fend for themselves in a scary new world, restorative teaching practices give me the tools to help make connections, build healthy relationships and begin to deal with the emotional and physical trauma of life. Many refugees continue to live as refugees in their own minds for the rest of their lives. In her interviews with new refugee students to Canada, Stewart (2011) describes how our ideas of care for refugees need to change as she discovered their continuing psychosocial trauma. Stewart also addresses the school system's response as a disconnect between administrators who are not observing the

trauma and the teachers who feel unprepared to, or unsupported in, addressing the continual spiritual and emotional needs of students.

To use restorative teaching practices in a classroom in a meaningful way, the practice must be a way of living, not just a blocked period of time in the school day. The reason this must be the case is because confidence and security are not built into lessons, but rather into the culture of the classroom. Building a classroom that is healthy and productive means that it is a *classroom of learning*, not a *classroom of performance*. The difference, I believe, lies in the subtleties of these two ideas. One is to perform in order to get the right answer (doing) and to do better than your peers and to achieve a standard of proficiency. Learning, on the other hand, implies imperfection: striving for growth while accepting faults and struggles, living in education.

In a classroom that expects performance, students feel pressured to do well even if they have not had all of the opportunities to learn the material. For refugee students in performance-based classrooms there is a lot more anxiety and fear to try to learn because of the fear of failure. In contrast, refugee students in learning classrooms understand that they have the opportunity to try new things without judgement or fear of rebuke. A learning classroom provides students with endless attempts, endless support and, as a result, the students are more willing to try to learn. I strive to make my classroom a learning classroom.

My role, as teacher, is to design and implement those learning supports with immeasurable patience and love. Months of trust building can be destroyed in a single moment of impatience or harshness. I am far from faultless, and when I do behave curtly, the relationship I have been attempting to build is affected. The learning culture of my

classroom is for my learning as well. The relationship building and restorative teaching practices are not just for my students, but help create in me a passion for what I do. These practices generate patience for the individual needs of each student and an understanding of my role in the classroom. In a democratic classroom, restorative practices heal both teachers and students (Porter, 2007). This research is about such teaching, learning, and curriculum practices, as lived and planned.

Bhutanese Refugees in My Classroom

The Canadian government began settling more that 5000 Bhutanese refugees into Canadian communities in 2007. ("Resettling Bhutanese Refugees," 2014, par. 2). Lethbridge was designated a primary destination city and over the last seven years, we have received nearly one thousand refugees. (V. Rizal, personal communication, September, 2014). A difficulty facing the Bhutanese community is how best to address their needs and begin integrating into the Canadian and local community. Before addressing the needs of the community, however, it is important to first understand what context the Bhutanese community has come from and why it has arrived to Canada.

Beginning in the late 1980s and continuing into the early 1990s, the Bhutanese government (a constitutional monarchy), including the King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, enforced a process of ethnic cleansing and national conservatism called Gross National Happiness. ("Backgrounder – Bhutanese," 2007, par. 2). One of the aims of Gross National Happiness was to separate ethnic Bhutanese from all others and begin revoking citizenship of those without Bhutanese ethnicity. As a result, hundreds of thousands of ethnically Nepali Bhutanese citizens found their claims of citizenship revoked. Taking property, taking slaves and evicting people from their ancestral homes was now legally

permitted and encouraged. (Rizal, 2009). By 1995, most of the ethnic Nepali were in seven refugee camps in South-Eastern Nepal, forced there at gunpoint by military forces as the rest of the world sat back and turned their eyes away from the slaughter. (Rizal, 2009).

For a refugee, the destination of migration can be as fearful and uncertain a place as from where he or she has fled. For the Bhutanese refugees, Nepal was not a place waiting to welcome them with open arms. Nepal was in no position to help the 100,000 people arriving from Bhutan. This poor country of 27 million people had more poverty than it could handle without taking on foreign populations, which fairly argued, the Bhutanese refugees were. Nepal and Bhutan would argue about whether the population was Bhutanese or Nepali for two more decades. ("Backgrounder – Bhutanese," 2007).

One of the difficulties, the Bhutanese refugees faced was the search for individual and group purpose. They were not free to move in and out of the camps and were not permitted to work. Over a period of twenty years this can have disastrous effect as people forget what they are. Rizal (2009) goes as far as calling the actions of the Bhutanese government "ethnic cleansing" (p. xvi). The effects of "ethnic cleansing" and a refugee lifestyle has had a disastrous effect on the people living in the camps. In a recent study by the United States Centre for Disease Control (CDC), anemia, vitamin B12 deficiencies and mental health were identified as the top priority concerns for large numbers of the Bhutanese refugee community (Bhutanese Refugee Health Profile, March 20, 2014). It also reported that up to 28% of children between six months and five years of age were suffering from chronic malnutrition. For adults who remember the expulsion from Bhutan it could mean the loss of everything they were. The history and achievements of their

lives were destroyed. For younger adults (most of the parents of my students), the loss of

what they hoped their lives would become. The future of their family, careers, and

education were taken away before they could really start. But the most difficult may have

been the reality of life for the youth. Those who were children in the camps, and those

born in the camps did not know any other life than that of the refugee camp. How does

one plan for life when there may not be a future? Many of my students never learned how

to colour, use scissors, or glue. It makes me wonder how many parents never asked their

children what they wanted to be when they grew up. Rizal (2014) believes that to an

extent, much of the community may be experiencing mass amnesia, forgetting how to

build a career, forgetting how to make life plans, and forgetting how to motivate your

family to work harder. For twenty years, they sat waiting to return to Bhutan or integrate

into Nepal. (Personal communication, September, 2014)

Ultimately, with no return to Bhutan in the foreseeable future the United Nations

began discussions to relocate the populations into a handful of countries including

Canada, Australia, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and The United

States. For many of the refugees, this is unacceptable as they feel the only viable option is

an unconditional return to Bhutan and that all property and citizenship be restored. In

2014, this was still not a possibility. Most Nepali/Bhutanese have decided to emigrate to

a third country and start their lives anew. Of the seven camps that were built near Jhapa,

Nepal, only two remain today (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Refugees, 2014).

The process of refugee immigration is very difficult. Selecting home countries,

destination cities, ensuring the least disruptive family separations (an impossible task),

and instructing the basic elements of the new society is overwhelming but essential. I

have listened to community members speaking to me about what it was like learning to use a toilet or order food at a restaurant. Many families have been split up between countries as well. Families who were separated by five feet are now separated by five thousand kilometers. To a population so committed to community, this is unthinkable. The move to Canada from Nepal is incredibly long, often taking thirty hours of flight through three or four different countries. In the case of the Bhutanese refugees, this is even more difficult because they are tied closely to the land they come from. For me, it is relatively easy to move as I do not have a strong bond to the land I grew up in. But the Bhutanese are tied spiritually and physically to the land they live on and separation from it is very difficult.

When refugees arrive to Canada, there is a long process for basic settlement that can take between two and four months. ("Resettlement Assistance Program," n.d.). During this time, new residents go through medical evaluations, dental check-ups, inoculations, housing settlement, and basic English instruction. Later, they are eventually given time to register for English classes, register youth in school, and begin applications for work. In Lethbridge we have Lethbridge Family Services Immigrant Services to help settle new residents. Settlement services help the new families get adjusted to the new home and meet all of the requirements for settlement that the federal government has set in place. (par. 12). I rarely see residents in the first stage of settlement because the families are so busy. Most of the first contacts I make are with families who have finished initial settlement and are ready to begin school or work.

The Problem with Traditional Education for Refugee Students

As a policy, my school district places all new residents into mainstream classes with the intent of inclusion (English as a Second Language, 2013). Students from grade one to twelve have been placed in all of the same classes as their Canadian counterparts with the exception of some pull-out time for English language instruction. Overall, this has been a very successful plan of action as students begin to build knowledge and language skills in a natural way. That is to say, most children learn language best by using it in real situations (Nassaji & Cumming, 2000). I believe that it is for this reason that elementary students become successful very quickly in our schools. Children are immediately invited into classroom activities and the language gaps close very quickly as other students and teachers help the new residents along. This seems to be the case for both new residents and refugee students. In the younger grades, before an academic foundation is essential for success in school, refugees appear to do nearly as well as the other immigrant groups. Once students enter into higher grades, however, the success rates change. Much more of the academic success is based on the skills already acquired and brought into the classroom. Students who have not attended school regularly, or who have come from an education system significantly different, have a higher likelihood that they will not close the achievement gap between themselves and their Canadian classmates.

Before I taught refugees full time, I was teaching English as a Second Language at a local middle school and we found that the Bhutanese refugee students did not have the same successes as many of the other international students. We also received many students from the Philippines. Frequently, the older Filipino students were more

successful when they could make connections to their first language. It may be that this is because the Filipino education system prepared students for the western content they would find in Canada. When language is the main barrier to learning, it can be overcome easier by connecting the first language. Other elements of school were easier for the Filipino students as well: understanding classroom behaviour expectations, building study habits, and high expectations for performance have been built over years of schooling. In 2010, when we first started receiving Bhutanese refugees in our schools, there was a lot of excitement from students and staff that quickly turned into frustration with our system of inclusion. Many of the teachers who had these new students in their classes often reported to me that it felt as if the administration of their schools dropped the students off, said "good luck," and then abandoned the student with the teachers. While this is not the intent of the administration, it is clear that the teachers recognised a difference between the academic and social needs of this group of students and other groups that had come to our classrooms.

When I confronted the issue of teaching Bhutanese refugees in my own class, I found that language was not the sole, or main, deficiency. It became very clear that the new students did not know how to be students. Nearly all of the students had claimed to be in school before, but the extent to which that school was engaging, inclusive or prepared to instruct the students is unclear. I found that a number of students had not held a pencil before, never written notes on paper, and could not write anything in English, Hindi or Nepali. I did not begin to recognise the gaps in learning and preparedness for school until I started with the refugee students in a separate program. Students struggle to come to terms with a new and alien curriculum, unfamiliar language, inapplicability to

their home context, and inability to overcome past trauma. The problem was that the

classroom activities did not meet the needs of the students and resulted in exclusion

instead of inclusion. Students were becoming more and more withdrawn and I struggled

to think of ways to give them what they needed. Johnston, Carson, Richardson, Donald,

Plews and Kim (2009) report that this is a common feeling in their study of pre-service

teachers, "many respondents reported feeling unprepared to teach in classrooms with

students from a wide range of ethnocultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds."

(p. 2). For me, a problem was the issue of time. How was I to provide the interactive

language support, social and emotional support, and attention to basic academic skill

building for these students when I had to teach a complete curriculum to thirty other

students? Classrooms are difficult places to be with different learning abilities and

behaviour difficulties, without building a new curriculum to meet the needs of a few

students. Fowler (2012) considers the humanity and mindfulness of education. Her

opening argument is a challenge of plasticity, in which teaching is not a job but a

"currere", a way to run one's life (p. 24). If an educator is mindful and aware of what he

or she teaches, then there is an opportunity to teach in restorative ways, what Fowler calls

"restorative education" (p. 25). Fowler describes the heart of wisdom in restorative

education as, 1) engagement in *currere*, a description of Pinar's (1975) four stage process

of authentic curriculum, in which one looks back on the past, looks forward to the

present, describes the details of the present and synthesizes knowledge and understanding

of their work. 2) Skillful research for democratic participation, an evaluation of the

politics of the classroom as students encounter responsibility for governing self and the

classroom. 3) Non-matronizing contribution to a diverse cosmopolitan community, an

attentiveness to issues of power, gender, race, class, etcetera. 4) A selfable inner government that is a cultivation of patience, self-regulation, and respect for self and other. 5) A mindful research practice that includes appropriate compassion with self and others. If I was to meet my diverse teaching needs and discover how best to teach my students, then I must begin to discover what my students truly need.

Fowler (2012) suggests that restorative education develops empathy, not just for students, but also for us as teachers. Returning to her original thesis, Fowler emphasizes that story, study, and care can help educators grow in wisdom and discernment for their lives and the place they dwell in teaching. This work has had a profound impact on my understanding of restorative education and restorative teaching practices as it emphasizes a teacher's study and desire to live well with teaching. As a foundation for my practice, restorative education has helped me develop empathy for my own students, the most essential of all attitudes when working with refugees. Through empathy, ideas of colonization are brought to the table and evaluations of what I teach and how I teach democratically become essential aspects of self and student care.

Pinar (1994) expresses this self and student care in another way to help clarify the purpose of working to develop empathy and living well in teaching. Pinar describes his teaching as a painter approaches painting: instead of drawing sketches and painting the outside world, the painter paints from within, letting the discovery of art be part of the project. Likewise, Pinar has come to teaching with an idea of what is to come but allowing the authenticity of the moment to take learning in new directions. The distinction he makes is that he does not come to the classroom as only a teacher but as a person. Pinar believes that working from within is key to making "cognitive and

emotional contact" (p. 9). Research in *currere* and restorative education can help provide a research-based method for meeting my teaching needs.

Designing Inclusive Education for Refugee Students

As the 2011-12 school year pushed on, more and more teachers were advocating for change in how we addressed the needs of our refugee students. There was even a council set up by a group of teachers to challenge school and district administrators to provide a more intensive and inclusive classroom for refugee students to better meet the student and teacher needs. I argued that the educational experiences that Bhutanese refugee students were receiving were not sufficient to prepare them for academic achievement, work, and even independent living. Administrators agreed that there needed to be a change and in the spring of 2012, the school board had approved funding for an intake program to meet the particular needs of new refugee students in high school. Based in a designated high school, the new program was a city-wide program that would bus new refugee students to the school from around the city and provide them with alternate programming until they were ready to integrate into mainstream classrooms or leave high school for work or college. When I was given the task to build this program I asked, "what, exactly, is this supposed to look like?" The answer surprised me; nobody knew. To begin the process I began by reading and researching an initial design of what I hoped would be a functional methodology of language and culture instruction. I presented the model to my administration in May of 2012.
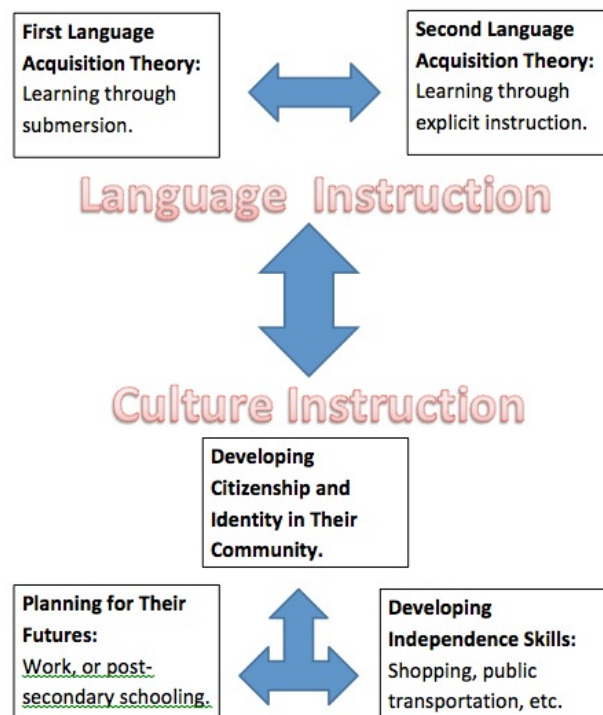
Figure 1

Model for English Language Acquisition. (Fuller, 2012).

The language instruction section of the design was separated into two different sections:

first language *acquisition* theory and second language *learning* theory. The intent behind

the first and second language acquisition theories was based on the work of Krashen

(1981) who argued adult learners both *acquire* and *learn* language. *Acquire* is a more

natural learning method just as children acquire their first language whereas *learn* is

being based on explicit language instruction and focus on error correction. Krashen

explains,

"…informal environments must be intensive and involve the learner directly in

order to be effective. One might then distinguish "exposure-type" informal

environments and "intake-type" environments. Only the latter provide true input

to the language acquisition device. … it seems plausible that the classroom can

accomplish both learning and acquisition simultaneously." (p. 47).

Using Krashen's understanding of the balance between language learning (structured) and acquisition (informal), building an intake program that met the needs of older students became clearer.

Administrators and I viewed the "cultural instruction" section of the design as a key purpose of the program. Knowing that the students would be of high school ages (14-18), we felt that a program designed to transition students to mainstream classes alone would be inappropriate. Instead, the purpose of the program would be threefold. First, it would address the students' individual goals for the future that could include, but were not exclusive to, transitioning into mainstream educational programming, post-secondary education, work, and career or homemaker life. Second, we needed to develop the independence skills for the students as they would learn to navigate the physical spaces in their community and complete tasks like paying bills and buying food. Third, we needed to help make sense of the local culture as they would learn about the history, language, ethnicities, and identities of people in their community and how they related personally in identity and community participation.

Working through the initial stages of my graduate studies in literacy and uncovering the purpose of my classroom as I came to know the students, I discovered that the model I had proposed was not effective. I found that the model has some flaws that need to be addressed. In the language section of the model I did not account for the role of the home language as it would interact with English. As a French/Spanish student in my undergraduate courses I was instructed in a way that led me to believe the language would not interact with me but that I needed to learn how it existed apart from me. In my

classroom, however, English language should not be for the sake of language itself, but should become a way to grow linguistically in English and in the first language simultaneously. I felt that my initial model suggested that what really matters is English, not the first language. Naqvi (2009) suggests that, "Too often, languages have been reduced to the acquisition of grammatical, phonetic, and oral mechanisms." (p. 43). In effect, I was trying to colonize my students to my own way of learning.

The cultural instruction was also inappropriate. Whose culture would I be teaching? On what authority do I teach Canadian community as if it is absolute or as if they existed outside of it? Instead of teaching Canadian culture as if it is an entity that the students need to adapt to, I could help students discover their identity in Canada and recognize it as part of the Canadian narrative. I believe I came to recognize these inadequacies in my model when I recognized that the students had very little interest in viewing Canadian language and culture as superior to their own. I was trying to teach my students in the same ways I taught students who were born in Canada and came from similar backgrounds I did and had been successful. But teaching in my habitual ways was not successful with refugee students and a new curriculum and delivery was needed.

After defining the curriculum of the classroom, selecting students for the program was the next task. Not every student struggling in school was a candidate for the program. To be selected for the program, the students needed to have refugee status and have limited formal schooling. Over the last three years my understanding of *limited formal schooling* has changed, however. Even students who had attended school for years may not be ready for mainstream schooling. If there were significant struggles with academic life (apart from a language barrier), a student could be considered for the

program. These struggles could include medical, emotional, social, and linguistic. I have struggled significantly with the selection of students because when the program started there were many students who needed our support and a limit of eighteen students to be selected. Generally, I have only taken the newest students to the program but there were a few who we could have taken that were already registered in mainstream classes before the program started. I struggle with this because many of the students that we did not take, but wanted to take, have not been as successful in school, while those we have moved into mainstream from my program are frequently achieving better and surpassing their classmates. That is a difficulty of teaching in my field: the needs of students are so great and individualistic, and resources are so limited. I did not expect to find this when I started because I did not understand the nature of the students' needs. Initially, the goal was to provide language and cultural instruction in a model that would teach these skills independently. The goal of this design was to prepare students for future academic life or for entering the work force. Looking at the model now, however, I feel as if I wanted it to be an assembly line:

[student] + [language instruction] + [culture instruction] = successful integration

This was not a good design because it does not take into account the individual needs of each student. It took me less than a month with my students before I began to abandon this assembly-line model. Identifying the students' individual needs helped set a new direction and method(ology) for the program. I do not teach Bhutanese refugees, I teach human beings. This makes a huge difference. The risks of limiting my role, to say I teach refugees, removes the identity of the people I teach and restricts my perception of them to preconceived ideas I have associated with the label of refugee. To teach a human

being, however, is to teach the variety and diversity of the human experience. In turn, the world is open to students, not just the world of a refugee enclosed. Responding to what I saw as a deficit in my teaching practice—an understanding of what students need and how my teaching practice must reflect that need—I knew I must evaluate and reform my teaching practice so that I could understand my students lives, their literacies, and make my teaching more effective.

Recognising the Multiliteracies of the "Illiterate"

Culture shock. The word shock finds its origins in 13 century French *choquer*, which means to come into violent contact, to collide, to clash together (OED, 2014). The connotation, when used in the term culture shock, is the colliding of two cultures; a clash in which both are affected. In my classroom, the experience of culture shock is carried to its full meaning as we discover differences, similarities, and expectations that choquer with our ideas of the world. A difficulty I face is learning to bring these moments together into a better understanding of what multiculturalism is in Canada. While I associated multiculturalism as mere tolerance of the other because I believed that multiculturalism did not require me to evaluate my own prejudices, Cazden et al. [also known as The New London Group] (1996) argue; that moments sharing language and culture are more than acts of tolerance but,

> "When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles, and approaches, they gain substantively in meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic abilities and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions." (p. 69).

In order to incorporate these language and cultural skills, I must first recognise the skills and literacies that students bring to the classroom. A re-[e]valuation of students'

literacies is, with this intent, a way to bring relevancy and purpose, and democratization of education to their lives.

What is literacy? Teachers of language and literacy rarely take time to contemplate what literacy really is. As successful products of a school system that emphasizes traditional views of literacy, we rarely challenge our own views. Truly, what we consider literacy appears to be decided for us. The Oxford Dictionary defines literacy as, "the quality, condition, or state of being literate; the ability to read and write." (2013). But is literacy nothing more than the ability to read and write? A view of literacy this restricted would find many illiterate students in my classroom. For any number of reasons, it could be said that my students are illiterate, for they can no more read and write in English than they can in Nepali or Hindi. However, Tompkins, Bright, & Winsor (2015) provide a much more comprehensive definition of literacy that provides a window to recognising the literacies of my students,

> "**Literacy:** having once meant *knowing how to read,* it has expanded to connote the competence to carry out the complex tasks of reading and writing related to the work world of life outside school. Other kinds of literacy (computer literacy, visual literacy, critical literacy, cultural literacy) indicate other crucial modes of making meaning. Literacy, then, is not a prescription, or reading list, but rather a way to come to learn about the world and to participate more fully in society." (p. 443).

An exploration of critical literacy, socio-cultural literacy, multiliteracies, new literacies and new technologies with my students demonstrates these literacies.

Critical literacy: "Gross National Happiness". In the middle 1990s, when ethnic Nepali had been stripped of Bhutanese citizenship, hundreds of thousands of people were forced out of southern Bhutan towards Nepal through India. Twenty years later, after ten years of torture in prison and then exile to Nepal, Tek Nath Rizal has had numerous attempts on his life. Once an advisor to the King of Bhutan, he has become a voice of Bhutanese refugees around the world. In his book, *Torture: Killing Me Softly,* (2010), he writes,

> "Bhutan today is still under a totalitarian regime. The international community
> must pay attention to the plight of people inside the country and must not accept
> the pseudo constitutional monarchy or believe in the pompous slogan: 'Gross
> National Happiness.' The fear, intimidation, persecution and denial of basic rights
> to the citizen bear testimony to this." (p. 157).

How different are the views of human rights that my students and their families have from my own? When I speak about a constitutional monarchy, do they fear the country to which they have arrived? Critical literacy is the literacy that brings awareness of the power structures of language. Shor (1999) expands this understanding stating,

> "[critical literacy] …connects the political and the personal, the public and the
> private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical, for
> reinventing ourlives and for promoting justice in places of inequity." (p. 1).

To explore critical literacy with my students, then, is to discover power imbalances of their past and present. Friere and Macedo (1987) expand on the importance of critical literacy as social practice to analyze literacy as a way to promote democratic and emancipatory change. The work of Freire and Macedo provides my classroom with a

platform to explore and make sense of the difficulties faced by my students and their families.

When I present my students with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms we can have a frank discussion about what their new freedoms mean. One of the difficult elements that I have faced with my students as they have arrived to Canada is the disillusionment that they face when they realize that some of their rights are not as guaranteed as they have been led to believe before they come to Canada. In discussion with students, this is a terrifying conversation to have. Many are still fearful of losing the chance for citizenship they once had. For a population that has already been stripped of citizenship and rights, it is very difficult to read in the very first section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that rights and freedoms can be limited or revoked if it meets three requirements: 1) prescribed law, 2) reasonable, 3) justifiable in a free and democratic society (The Canadian charter, 2006). But while there are dangers to the Charter in Canada, generally, students are amazed at how protected they are in their own ethnic diversity in Canada. Language, religion, and legal rights were unimaginable to them just five years ago. A key intent of critical literacy is that it will incite action in people. For my students, journaling their exploration and sharing with family at home is a way they can act. My students' parents have little or no access to schooling and it falls to my students to take the stories of their new country into their homes. Taking these cultural and legal aspects into their homes and sharing their own contemporary and historical perspectives with me is critical literacy.

Socio-cultural historical theories of literacy: rebuilding refugee camp communities through transactional theory. I discovered the beauty of socio-cultural

historical theories of literacy with my students when I found them using the library computers. A significant difficulty that the students have faced as they moved into their new countries is the separation of families and communities that were established in Nepal. Not all families went to the same destination. In fact, most communities have been split because most Bhutanese went to locations around the United States. In a very short time, however, the youth have rebuilt their camp communities electronically. Most of my students spend hours every evening chatting with friends. These are the same families they would be visiting with in person if they were still in Nepal. Not only has it been surprising *how* they have re-established their communities, but also how it is taking place through literacy. While the students are beginning to communicate through video, it is currently limited to two people. If, however, they write each other, the conversations can include many more people. Most of the students are not fully literate in Hindi and even if they were, all of their keyboards are in an English alphabet. As a result, they have learned the basic sounds of the English letters and applied them to the Nepali words as best they can. This has resulted in a new form of literacy, a transaction or a lamination of literacies (Prior & Shipka, 2003) from previous experiences that they now all share. They prefer not to use Google Translate, because it is too time consuming and instead have created something new. Here is an example of how a text might look.

हाय दोस्त, आज तुम कैसे हो ? (Hindi version)

Hi friend, how are you today? (English version)

Haya dosta, aja tuma kaise ho? (Cronotopic Lamination/ or hybrid version).

This literacy is hard to define because language is constantly changing as we use it. Louise Rosenblatt argues that we are constantly creating and re-creating language as we

interact with it socially. In her article, *The Transactional Theory: Against Dualisms*, she states,

> "While I understood that language is socially generated, I saw that it is always individually internalized in transactions with the environment at particular times under particular circumstances. Each individual, whether speaker, listener, writer, or reader, brings to the transaction a personal linguistic-experiential reservoir, the residue of past transactions in life and language." (1993, p. 381).

This description speaks to the beauty of human ability to create and invent. Socio-cultural historical theory and Rosenblatt's theory of transaction describes the process of continual invention and the participatory evolution of language. Continuing with Rosenblatt's theory of transaction, Prior and Shipka propose Chronotopic Lamination in which all literacy activity of individuals over time—and across different fields of study—come to be tied together in a new literacy experience that hold all elements simultaneously (2003, p. 181).

This type of laminated communication is essential in rebuilding a community that has faced multiple separations and diaspora. What appears to be a natural process for this community may actually be a fascinating example of how socio-cultural historical theories of literacy and cronotopic lamination can be used and adapted to suit the needs of the community in a generative way to be studied more in depth in another study.

Multiliteracies: graphic novel identity texts. At the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year I began a project in which the students would share their own stories of immigration to Canada. The problem we faced was that the students were not capable of writing a purely textual piece that accurately and completely shared their stories. For the

process of traveling to Canada I proposed a graphic novel approach. As we began to draw

an outline of the project in comic slides (or frames) the students began to correct my story

of how it may have occurred, understanding that this was their story and not mine. The

class became very quiet as they began to re-live the sadness of those days. As we worked

through the writing of each narrative, I was presented with individual, but similar, stories

of loss: leaving the homes they were born in, leaving family behind, leaving pre-arranged

marriages, leaving the bodies of siblings who had died in the previous years. My students

produced pieces of literature and shared narrative literacy that could not be told through

traditional methods or restricted views of literacy.

When I began my graduate studies I started by reading a foundational piece of

research, *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures,* (Cazden et al., 1996)

explained the ramifications of their work and it has immense affect on Canadian

schooling.

> "The expanding, interventionary states of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
>
> used schooling as a way of standardizing national languages…In the New World
>
> this meant assimilating immigrants and indigenous peoples to the standardized
>
> "proper" language of the colonizer." (p. 68).

In other words, old systems of education and literacy were about maintaining a power

structure supporting the most powerful individuals in society. Multiliteracies as a system

supporting minority language rights in Canada, however, is an empowerment to other

literacies that take authority out of the hands of linguistic traditionalists and move it into

a meaning-making process for people who are literate in non-traditional ways. Fairclough

(1992) argues that intertextual analysis can show how production of text uses, "orders of

discourse" (p. 194), as writers chose varieties of genres, discourses and narratives to build

text for particular social circumstances. Through graphic-novel identity texts, students

can demonstrate their social circumstances and participate in identity affirmation.

New literacies: networks and blogging together. New literacies are the literacies that

have developed and grown in response to new technologies as individuals have greater

access to publishing tools such as Twitter, blogs and messaging programs. New literacies

are ways to help students explore and express in ways that did not exist a decade ago. We

worked on a novel/film study of *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) because it was a new

and very popular series that my students identified as having interest in. I found it

difficult to keep students on the intended themes while responding in a way that is

genuine, but the student responses to *The Hunger Games* are heartfelt and excited.

Figure 2

The Hunger Games Blog. (Fuller & Diachok, 2012).

Just as the story tells, they know what it is like to live in a community starving and

surrounded by walls. The arrival in the Capitol and all its affluence may appear similar to

arriving to their new home in Canada. The cultural shock students feel is still evident as they slowly begin to act and look like Canadians.

I am still unsure how to find the correct balance of freedom and collaborative work while maintaining individual participation. These are elements identified as essential by Lankshear and Knobel (2005). Through blog postings, students would compare elements of the book with the movie, personal reflections or foreshadow ideas and events to come. I have found, however, that our blog postings have motivated students to work hard and publish for their classmates openly. This may be due, in part, that this format of communication is comfortable as they are constantly publishing online together in their private lives. The students have opportunities to make comparisons between the story and their own lives while interacting with new technologies and writing in ways that are becoming more familiar to them.

More than ever before, everyday people can publish in a way that has the potential to be read by millions of people. Many attribute new literacies and mass publication a key tool of the modern Arab Spring. In the field of literacy studies, New Literacies are a response to a new world of mass online publishing. Among the eight principals of New Literacy proposed by Larson and Marsh, the first speaks to how new literacies are located in the social, cultural, historical and political realms (2005, p. 23). In many ways, New Literacies practice is tied closely to Critical Literacies practice because the purposes of the new literacies are generated through social needs, in so far as traditional systems of publication are insufficient to meet the creative needs of people.

Expanding on the work of Larson and Marsh, Lankshear and Knobel explore the issues of freedom and collaborative learning through new tools in the networked society

(2005). They argue that while we want students to publish collaboratively online, we often restrict technology as a tool of classroom management (p. 354). They argue that freedom to publish is directly tied to freedom to publish how individuals want (p. 355). This is a difficult element for my teacher side to confront because I want to be able manage what the students are working even though I understand that it may also be restricting what they say. But I believe this struggle between liberty and control of process/product should be a discussion each teacher has with one's self because when the conversation does not happen, there is a tendency to control more because it causes fewer issues for management.

  Literacy and new technology: when the student becomes the teacher. Many of the Bhutanese refugees in my classroom did not have a functioning power grid, let alone internet or television in their homes in Bhutan. In just a short time in Canada, the students have been introduced to new technology and have begun interacting with it in new ways I cannot. In spite of their late start, my students are bringing some incredible skills to the classroom. Every October my students celebrate Dewali through dance and song. Practicing for weeks in small groups, they learn the new songs and dance steps to entertain their community. On a variety of occasions they have practiced during class breaks and how they practice became a lesson on literacy for me. To learn the new dances and new songs coming from India and Nepal the students use YouTube, but they also use the time to practice their English. Nearly all of the most popular songs and dances have closed captioning that they translate into English. While learning to dance to a new song for their community they engage in many aspects of multiliteracies simultaneously: 1) Learning new dance steps 2) Learning to sing new songs, 3) Practicing

reading in Nepali or Hindi, and 4) Translating to English. There are few literacy practices that I could find in my classroom that are engaging so many literacies at once. Figure #3 is an example of how my students access and share their literacies with me through the song, *Mere Haath Mein.* (ank021, 2009). My students provided me access to the world of Nepali and Hindi pop-culture that I never had access to before.

Figure 3

Mere Haath Mein Tera Haath Ho. (ank021, 2009).

I believe the reason that education continues to fall behind in the technology cycle is because students do not see a separation between school and home life when it comes to new technology but education tends to see technology and literacy as separate events. Schultz and Hull (2008) describe this issue as a blurring of lines. The separation of in-

school and out-of-school is blurring as students work with literacy from school at home and bring home literacy back to school seamlessly. In these cases, when students have so much more time exposure to new literacies and technology than teachers, it is inevitable that teachers will become the students and students will begin to teach about a new life with technology.

Many of my students will only have one or two years with me before they enter mainstream schooling, homemaker life, post-secondary school, or the workforce. While many standards of literacy show them to be illiterate, they (the traditional standards of literacy) are missing the bigger picture. As I have seen in my classroom, my students are more than capable of using symbolic language and symbols to convey meaning. In many ways, I am illiterate in the literacies they have shown. Limited access to school has not left them illiterate but with a different skill set based on a different set of indicators. They are no less illiterate in their community than I am in my school community. The goals for school, therefore, need to be different. Instead of trying to build literacy skills for irrelevant indicators of school success (government-mandated examinations), I need to help students bridge their literacies with those that help them integrate into Canada as equal partners. The struggle I continually need to face is whether or not I can put my own restricted presuppositions aside and let my students continue to show me what their literacies are.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Interventions for Refugee Students and Bioecological Theory

An ecological theory helps bring a focus back to the individual needs of students based on a comprehensive exploration of a student's environment, both past and present. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory has seen major growth since the original work in the 1970s to the bioecological models in the 1990s. The transformation of his models as he grew to understand them more completely shows a developing understanding of learning and our interaction with environments. Bronfenbrenner's ecological and bioecological models are key to understanding the reasons for research in restorative practice for refugee students. In the most recent of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, he suggests the PPCT model: (P)roximal processes- quality of learning processes as they respond to and meet the needs of students. (P)erson Characteristics- the predispositions of the learner. (C)ontext- locations and systems that influence and are influenced by the learner. (T)ime- continuous and sustained proximal processes around the learner (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). To understand the manner of this influence on my restorative teaching practice, I will first explore the history of the shift from ecological to bioecological models, how researchers have already been using his models when working with refugee and immigrant learners and then explore how this research is a response to a call for research by Bronfenbrenner with his bioecological model.

From ecology to bioecology. Bronfenbrenner's model took the first steps in the early 1960s. The motivation for Bronfenbrenner to develop this model was in response to what he saw was a lack of awareness of the effect of laboratory research on learning. He argued that research would be more valid if it was conducted in the locations in which

people actually lived (1979, p. 12). This would have a great effect on the direction of his

research as he explained a series of system (environments) that affect the development of

individuals. Many researchers have described his model as Russian dolls in which each

environment sits within another. (Boon, Cottrell, King, Stevenson & Millar, 2012, p.

391). The inner circles of microsystems are small environments (such as school, home,

work, etc.) interacting with the learner and each influencing in different ways. These

interacting microsystems constitute a mesosystem within which an individual lives and

are central to the individual (p. 390). The exosystem is the next layer that contain

organizations or systems that have influenced the construction of the mesosystem and to

which the individual may have direct access (p. 390). These might include organizations

such as child-protective services, immigrant services or medical services. The

macrosystem is the system in which political ideology, social norms and cultural

awareness exist (p. 390). These are not necessarily accessible to the individual but play

an important role in their development nonetheless. Finally, the chronosystem (or passage

of time) influences how these different systems affect an individual because of the lack of

frequency accessed or the enduring contact with the individual (p. 390). In his later

model, Bronfenbrenner refers to this simply as time. Rosa and Tudge (2013) make the

connections between ecological theory and the influences of parent/child relationships as

it related to development and the naming of his ecological model for development in

1973.

The second stage of Bronfenbrenner's model addressed an issue that he saw was

not necessarily addressed in the first phase of the model. In the second phase,

Bronfenbrenner addresses the role played by the individual in his or her environment

(Rosa & Tudge, 2013). It was in this second phase that Bronfenbrenner used the term PPC (Person-Process-Context) and PPC (Process-Person-Context) later on. It appears that Bronfenbrenner changed the order of these words to demonstrate the middle ground an individual takes between the processes of learning and the environment within which they are learned. Rosa and Tudge believe that a difficulty researchers who work in this phase of Bronfenbrenner's model continue to struggle with is the concept that "…proponents of this model assume that all individuals living in the same environment are equally affected by it, regardless of their biological or psychological characteristics." (p. 249). This may have been the reason for Bronfenbrenner to continue the refinement of his model. It would not take long to recognise that there is more at play than an environment that affects all individuals equally.

To address this difficulty, Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) took the argument to the issue of Nature-Nurture itself. Taking up the challenge posed by Anastasi asking how interaction occurs. Bronfenbrenner and Ceci attempt to build a framework exploring heritability of an individual and his or her environment instead of discerning which is more influential. Bronfenbrenner and Ceci propose five characteristics to this new model with the central issue being around proximal processes that activate genetic potential. They suggest a framework for heritability (the genetic predispositions for development) in joint function with proximal processes and environment.

> "This formulation implies that when proximal processes are weak, genetically based potentials for effective psychological functioning remain relatively unrealized but that they become actualized to a progressively greater extent as proximal processes increase in magnitude." (p. 569).

The consequences of this model are staggering as it is the first time Bronfenbrenner and Ceci posit that proximal process not only has an effect on development, but under the right conditions (quality of proximal processes and continuity of contact with these processes) there can be growth in the genetic potential itself (p. 570).

Supporting their argument, Bronfenbrenner and Ceci make the connection to the processes of evolution in which an organism not only interacts with the organism but is changed by it. The environment becomes part of the organism and then is again affected by it in a cycle of change and interaction. Evidence of this process is the variability of living organisms we see today. Using this logic, Bronfenbrenner and Ceci hypothesize that proximal processes actualize genetic potential and for that reason heritability will be greater when proximal processes are strong and lower when proximal processes are weak.

Taking the argument into the realm of sociology, Bronfenbrenner and Ceci elaborate on the importance of environmental influences on the value of proximal processes. Rosa and Tudge's analysis indicated that Bronfenbrenner placed less value on the context of development than he did proximal processes (2013, p. 253). They come to this conclusion stating that Bronfenbrenner only provided definitions but no elaboration on the systems he described in great detail in his earlier work. I would argue, however, that Bronfenbrenner did not feel that his ecological systems were inappropriate or outdated, but that they did not need to be amended in his third phase. This argument gains credit as Bronfenbrenner did not withdraw his previous model but built upon it as his understanding of it grew. Thus, in the final edition of his bioecological model, context plays an important role but still yields to the importance of proximal processes (1994, p.

570). Bronfenbrenner and Ceci argued that the actualization of genetic dispositions was highly dependent on the environment in which the proximal processes occurred and highlighted evidence suggesting developmental dysfunction is greatly increased for disadvantaged and unstable families. For my own research this contains significant ramifications as to the quality of proximal processes and influences upon student learning and my own responses to them as refugee students tend to come from less stable environments.

Bioecological research with immigrant and refugee students. The final version of Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's model provides an expanded version of the Person-Process-Context model and instead proposes PPCT or Proximal Process-Person Characteristics-Context-Time (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). According to Bronfenbrenner (cited in Rosa & Tudge), an operational bioecological model would take into consideration all four of these elements when evaluating developmental outcomes (p. 254). In working with immigrant and refugee students through Bronfenbrenner's model, Hamilton and Moore (2004) expand Bronfenbrenner's work to include the aspects of migration in which a refugee lives within pre-migration, trans-migration, and post-migration ecology consisting of various layers of systems that influence the refugee.

Hamilton and Moore's (2004) work has been instrumental in helping me understand my place in students' lives because it suggests an inability to know all aspects of a child through transitions over time. It suggests that the student is not only influenced by environment but that the student *influences* the environment and for this reason mutual accommodation must be made in a classroom (p. 3). Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, Hamilton and Moore explore refugee trauma, loss and grief: implications for

intervention (p. 12-34), second language concerns for refugee children (p. 35-52), resilience (p. 53-63), issues of migration (p. 64-82), schools, teachers and the education of refugee children (p. 83-96), conceptual and policy issues (p. 97-105) and education of refugee children-documenting and implementing change (p. 106-116). These researchers argue that each refugee comes from a diverse and complicated background, therefore, educational interventions need to be as diverse and malleable.

Lerner (2012) carries the work of Bronfenbrenner, Hamilton, and Moore further as she challenges long-held school policies of school integration for refugee students. She suggests that, on the whole, U.S. educational resettlement for refugee learners has been unsuccessful (p. 9). Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, she argues that policy makers, administrators, and teachers do not know how to meet the needs of refugee students because they are not taking the time or putting in place the resources to understand the personal, social, and academic needs of the students they are receiving (the environmental systems proposed by Bronfenbrenner) (p. 13). Lerner suggests that assimilation is less effective and educational systems should be striving for more inclusive (a refugee's way of learning) policies and practices instead (p. 13). She argues that until individual student contexts are understood, no useful recommendations for policy and practice can be made (p. 14). How am I capable of making sound academic decisions for learning if I do not take time to understand the environments of my students and how those environments have changed over time? I find that Lerner's consideration of the possibilities come up short because she did not include later phases of Bronfenbrenner's theory to include a bioecological model as it could have provided a

greater understanding of how educational resettlement could occur through the implementation of a PPCT evaluation model.

When considering the implementation of an ecological or bioecological theory, teachers must also take care as to how other academic communities interpret the model as it pertains to a philosophy of working with immigrant and refugee students. Yok-Fong Paat (2013) uses Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as a way to see more clearly the quality of living environments and social context as, "central to their assimilation pathway" (p. 954). Elaborating on his understanding of assimilation, Paat describes Alba & Nee's (2003) models of assimilation: upward assimilation that includes upward mobility that results in the offspring of immigrants appearing indistinguishable from the rest of society; downward assimilation described as a cultural stagnation and dissonant acculturation (likely faced by immigrants of low parental resource and control); and upward assimilation with biculturalism in which the children of immigrants successfully navigate society within two social worlds (p. 957). Most disturbing to me about this system is the assertion that in the model of downward assimilation, those who do not chose integration are choosing societal marginalization for their "lack of interest in interacting with either culture" (p. 959). As a part of multicultural education and antiracist education, each society will need to assess what it desires for their immigrant populations and teachers will be essential in this conversation. From my Canadian perspective on multiculturalism, the assertion that assimilation is the correct model or that families and communities choose marginalization in their resistance to assimilation contradicts my understanding of multiculturalism as social pluralism and not assimilation to the dominant. In the context of my classroom, this integration is not for my students to

demonstrate how they will integrate and assimilate to Canadian standards, but for how I will use my understanding of ecological systems to integrate non-mainstream society into my classroom activities and curriculum. Instead of assimilating students into a *Canadian* society, I can change my practice to value other ways of learning.

Responding to a call for research. The bioecological theory has helped build a theoretical foundation for the purpose and development of restorative teaching. Restorative teaching practices help me discover and uncover the lives of my students so that the instructional decisions I make are more relevant and appropriate for my students. For example, a daily teatime draws me towards a better understanding of student needs, which is an example of proximal process, and this process helps me to identify continuing learning experiences that are customized to student learning. Using Hamilton & Moore's research into the pre-migration, trans-migration and post-migration systems, I can better understand the environments and histories my students bring and how they will change my practice to better meet those needs.

Boon et al. (2012) provide a surprising interpretation of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological method as a way to assess individual and community resilience to disaster and prepare for a faster recovery from loss. While they are speaking primarily of responses to natural disasters, they use the United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction's definition of disaster, "Serious disruption affecting a community or population, causing deaths, injuries or damage to property, livelihoods, or the environment, that exceeds the ability of the affected community to cope using its own resources" (as cited in Boon et al., 2012, p. 383). This definition, too, describes the state of refugee resettlement as it pertains to the loss and danger

experienced by refugees. Their work suggests that bioecological models can be useful in organizing the factors that increase individual and community resilience if the factors are used as proximal processes. Their understanding of the model helps work with personal characteristics such as adaptive coping, self-efficacy, optimism, family support, and exosystem environments that include health, education, and other community services (p. 389).

Combining the work of Bronfenbrenner and Ceci and Boon et al. I can attempt to build a restorative teaching practice that is based on proximal process-person characteristics-context-time and focuses on a curriculum of improving individual disaster resilience and practicing democratic education. This, in its entirety, may be a response to Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's (1994) call for research, in that proximal processes provides an awareness of the classroom systems and individual interactions that accounts for the complexity and variability of experience. Restorative practices for refugees can begin to address the issue that education systems are complex and individuals within these systems are complex. Bronfenrenner and Ceci suggest that actualized potential in cognitive potential would be higher in classrooms that respond to needs and are reciprocal between students and teacher. This study also has the potential to compound the actualized potential as there is not only one restorative practice, but a series of practices, working together to meet, recognise, and adapt to multiple student environments including school, home, and community life. From a teaching perspective, the level of adaptation that occurs is the proximal process and a response to personal characteristics as practice evaluates and draws closer to the needs of students. Study of family and history, as discovered through restorative teaching practices is a response to

context and the expression of these practices over extended periods of time can be the

chronosystem (time) in action. The key element of this practice, as Rosa and Tudge

(2013) accurately identified in Bronfenbrenner's work is that the effectiveness of

proximal processes could be increased when developed through strong relationship. That

is to say, the model will work better if the relationships I build with students affect my

instruction, thereby affecting the quality of proximal processes that are actualizing

potentials.

Multiliteracies and Democratic Education

The New London Group (1996) generated one of the first comprehensive

challenges to perceptions of literacy as a way to understand literacy as a way of being and

not just a skill set. Arguing that our ideas of traditional literacy are too restrictive, the

New London Group strove to open the conversation into an understanding of

multiliteracies based on design. Meaning making, they argue, includes design elements,

mode of meaning and multimodal literacies. The authors draw the discussion back to the

purpose of literacy, in which they argue differences and variety are critical in the world.

These differences respond to the diversity in globalized communities in which multiple

and alternate literacies exist parallel to what traditional dominant culture believes to be

literacy (p. 88).

This work is foundational to restorative teaching practices in my classroom as it is

necessary to build the languages of school, home life, and the larger Canadian

community. Key to my work is how I engage students' own literacies and experiences.

The New London Group has been instrumental to my work as they have built a praxis on

which I can challenge traditional ideas of literacy and open my practice to alternate representations of meaning making.

The New London Group desire education to be about all students benefiting from learning in the ways that best prepare them for full public, community and economic life (p. 60). In order to prepare students for these spheres, teachers need to provide literacy instruction in the ways that are most natural. For my students this can be through alternate forms of communication (such as television, art, music, video), as well as alternate viewpoints and representations of the world around us, for example: Eastern versus Western philosophy (p. 64).

Visitors to my classroom often remark how they expect to see illiterate learners who have spent very little time in formal schooling. Instead, literacy is found everywhere my students live. They have come to my classroom as literate as any other student, but with different literacies. As a teacher, it is my task to teach multiliteracies, not just alphabetic literacy. It is for this reason that the cornerstones of my practice have less to do with reading and writing skills, but focus instead on meaning making of the new world, to which they have arrived.

Balanoff and Chambers (2005), provide a concrete example challenging traditional ideas of what literacy is. They demonstrate that the skills that we associate with traditional alphabetic literacy (recognize, interpret symbols, decode, understand, imagine, create and pass on knowledge) should be applied to what has not traditionally been recognized as literacy in western education. Balanoff and Chambers expore Northern and Inuit communities in their understanding of nature, dreams, spirits, tattoos, songs, and many other elements that are often categorized as non-literacy (p. 19). To

Northern and Inuit people, however, these artefacts and conditions have all the aspects of literacy, "They can recognize and interpret symbols, decode, understand, imagine, create and pass on knowledge." (p. 18).

This is a relevant article for my research as my refugee students come to school as literate individuals, but with different literacies than are thought to be valuable in Canada. By engaging in home visits and sharing spaces in teatime, literacies I encounter challenge my ideas of what my students are capable of. Teaching refugee students, I need to assess what literacies my students have and incorporate them in a meaningful way into my instruction. I can play a role in the development and instruction of the literacies they already have. A difficulty I face is that I am not literate in many of the literacies they have and, therefore, need to be diligent to provide opportunities for students to build literacy skills together in a meaningful way. In order to address the needs of my students' literacies I need to make clear to my students that that I view their literacies as having purpose and value equal to my own literacies.

Multicultural and Antiracist Education

Lupart (2009) examines the larger realms of student diversity not frequently discussed in educational circles, "For too many years, Canadian schools have been chasing the concept of a standard, "one size fits all" approach within our public education systems." (p. 15). To meet the needs of my students, understanding this problem in my own practice requires an examination of the meaning of multiculturalism, eurocentrism, and antiracist education.

Lupart's suggests that our education systems "are not malleable enough" (p. 15) to support everybody [every diversity] that enters the doors and for that reason students

will not develop to their full potential. This raises a serious question about the purpose of school. Should school be about every individual achieving their potential? Or should it be about preparing and standardizing students to be ready for a very competitive international job market?

Lupart believes the faults in our education systems lays in the hands of inactive teachers and unwilling politicians. Fullan, as cited by Lupart, argues, "Education change depends on what teachers think and do — it's as simple and complex as that." (p. 25). I believe that this is an oversimplification of the problem teachers face because teachers often do not have the freedom to design their school classrooms demographics or policies of inclusion or exclusion. The reality of a teacher's classroom in Alberta is largely defined by a school board's policy on inclusion and the education ministry's mandate of government approved curriculum. Carson and Johnston (2000) also recognise this problem that academic debates around Eurocentricity are occurring in post secondary and going unrecognized in mainstream curriculum development. Teachers are legally bound to both realms. The other difficulty faced in Alberta is provincial governments that decide where funding is allocated across the provinces. One of the sad realities of public education, that Lupart does not discuss, is the lack of resources available for an education system that helps everybody reach their full potential. I agree with the Lupart's premise that school in Canada needs a fundamental change and restructuring towards a new, truly inclusive system. The process, however, by which it is proposed, may be too idealistic. Lupart suggests that,

"government departments or ministries of education, teacher preparation

programs, school boards, teacher unions, and advocacy groups all need to review

their policies and practices, and if those practices run counter to the promotion of inclusion and support of student diversity, the necessary changes need to be made." (p. 22).

One of the obstacles we will face is that not everybody agrees on the definition of inclusion. Does inclusion mean that every student is dropped into the same classroom? Or does it mean that there is a place for every student that is fully supportive but does not necessarily have to be in the mainstream classroom? The difficulty will be if every group (ministries of education, teacher preparation programs, school boards, teacher unions, and advocacy groups) gets together, will they be able review policy on inclusion and adjust it? Not only would this be difficult in a provincial setting, but Lupart is suggesting this approach on a national scale. Stake-holders may not be willing to give up their control of educational decision-making. Getting all stakeholders to the table to "review policies and practices" (p. 22) may be unrealistic, especially at a national level. Educational change in Canada in inclusion may be far too complex for a series of stakeholder meetings to fix.

Cultural sensitivity. Canada became one of the world's first countries to officially declare itself as a multicultural nation in 1971 (Canadian Multiculturalism: An Inclusive Citizenship, 2010) In 1985, Canada enacted the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1985), thereby granting legal equality to all people living in Canada. Over the last thirty years Canadians, and new Canadian residents, have been struggling to determine exactly what this means. Declaring multiculturalism is much easier than enacting true democratic reform that multiculturalism demands. Lauder, Brown, Dillabough and Halsey argue that the potential development for social change can occur through education as it sits in a globalized context (cited in Carr, 2008). Educators tend to appreciate the impacts of

globalization better than many Canadians, as it is often through school that new

immigrants first experience integration into Canadian society. But how much has

globalization affected the demographics of immigration? According to the Government

of Canada's records on immigration, the immigration landscape has changed significantly

over the last fifty years. In 1966, about 84% of all new immigrants to Canada arrived here

either from Europe (75%) or the United States (9%). Of the European arrivals, over 30%

were from England alone (Department of Manpower and Immigration, 1967). By 2011,

the numbers had changed drastically; of the nearly 250 000 new permanent residents to

Canada, only 13% came from Europe and 3.5% from the United States. The biggest

contributors to Canadian immigration came from Africa and the Middle East (24%), and

Asia and Pacific (48%) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). These changes are

evident in Canadian classrooms as educators are faced with growing cultural and

linguistic diversity for which many are ill prepared to deal with. Teaching in a culturally-

diverse classroom needs to involve new tools and new ways of teaching to meet the

challenge of different learning needs which, according to Sturz and Kleiner (2005), may

be attributed to culturally different ways of learning.

Over the last few decades, significant discussions into cultural sensitivity and the

nature of multiculturalism have taken place around the world, especially in Canada. The

conversations about cultural sensitivity and multiculturalism in school are loosely divided

into the categories of *educator practices* and *school management*. Cummins and Early

(2011), suggest that one of the most powerful tools for enabling marginalized students,

who tend to frequently be new immigrant students, is to develop "identities of

competence" (p. 4). According to Cummins and Early, active learning (i.e., the goal of

education) can only take place if students take ownership and can invest in their learning and, "invest their identities in learning outcomes…" (p. 38). Therefore, *active learning* tends to be more tied to one's cultural identity and how they relate to what they are learning than to the content of what is presented. If teachers can help students tie their cultural identity to the curriculum, true learning can occur. One of the ways educators can affirm identity is through the creation of multilingual classrooms. Cummins, Bismilla, Chow, Cohen, Giampapa, Leoni, Sandhu, and Sastri (2005b), argue that dual or multi-language texts serve well to confirm identity and foster cultural sensitivity for students who are exposed to new languages and cultures. In a multicultural society, one would expect to find multilingual education occurring, however, educators in Canada tend to be constrained to Canada's official languages. Chow and Cummins (2003), argue that a student's first language (L1) can be a significant asset when learning curriculum, especially when family members and other members of the community work together to complete school tasks, as in translating books and volunteering in the school.

Gunderson (2004) demonstrated how bilingual and multilingual education greatly improves academic performance in English schooling. Gunderson's research aimed a critical eye at American emphasis on English-only education. In his research, two significant pieces of information arose: not only does English-only education cause lower performance over time, it also results in significantly higher levels of student dropout rates (p. 1). Gunderson demonstrates that language learners need not be treated as learning disabled, but supported through multicultural and multilingual education. Doiron and Asselin (2010), challenge the roles of literacy and reading in education as not merely about knowledge acquisition, but also about identity and discovery. They promote

multilingual programming as a tool for community building and cultural sensitivity development.

Johnston (1999) posits that this lack of multicultural and multilingual diversity is especially true in the absence of diversity in Canadian high school literacy maps,

"During the last decades, Canadian students have had increasing access to national literature, bur for many immigrants to Canada from non-Western countries, first-generation Canadians, Native Canadians, and other minority students, gaps and absences remain in the literary landscape." (p. 12).

Johnston suggests that part of the difficulty lies in the unwillingness to consider alternatives to the canon. While the canon texts have changed, western writers from English speaking backgrounds still primarily dominate. So teachers may argue they are not teaching the canon of historic literature, but they still may fall under the cultural canon. Johnston clarifies this argument,

"Canonicity is not so much about texts as about status and evaluation, the criteria and standards according to which not only individual works and authors, but also entire movements and discourses themselves fall in or out of favour." (p. 14).

This change towards inclusivity in literacy can occur when educators begin to explore unfamiliar linguistic and cultural contexts. Undoubtedly, this will create a level of discomfort in educators but is essential in developing a truly postcolonial literature profile in schools by providing alternate languages, experiences, and perspectives.

Duff and Li (2009) also maintain multilingual avoidance for First Nations indigenous and visible minority heritage languages. Duff and Li suggest that Canada— although still struggling with these issues—is viewed as a leader in heritage language

instruction; however, some academics argue that multicultural education is inadequate to promote cultural sensitivity or democratic equality in Canada. Dei and Calliste (2000) argue that multiculturalism is insufficient because it deals with acceptance of "the other" (p. 21), while anti-racism education incites action and highlights the critical power structures that exist within Canada. A main difference that Dei and Calliste propose as compared to reformist anti-racist education researchers is the restructuring of the whole education community. Dei and Calliste argue that it is unreasonable to expect students to experience a truly anti-racist education if educators and administrators are not competent in anti-racism education. They argue that until the teachers begin to deconstruct the power systems of racism in society, teachers are no better equipped for anti-racist education than their students. Carr (2008) shares Dei and Calliste's dissatisfaction with multiculturalism because, multiculturalism is supported by the Social Contact theory (i.e., interaction) with the hope that democratic reform will occur through the evolution of social awareness. Anti-racism is, by contrast, a criticism of the power structures that require action (2008, p. 10). Carr suggests pillars of reform for educational institutions to consider when approaching anti-racist education, which include: 1.) resisting change and rupturing progressive work; 2.) shaping the policy message; 3.) controlling the agenda; 4.) developing curriculum and educational policy; and, 5.) white complicity and privilege (2008, p. 16).

Sturz and Kleiner (2005) believe that one of the most useful tools for pedagogy is to use a variety of instructional techniques and styles. Sturz and Kleiner also suggest that while it is common practice for teachers to follow a permissive style of education that has become popular in the west, "assertive and authoritative teaching styles gain[s] the

respect of diverse students and enables them to be more cooperative" (2005, p. 64).

Anakwe (2002) believes a key element to cultural sensitivity lies in the power of student

dialogue and sharing different perspectives Anakwe suggests that the key to cross cultural

awareness is that students understand how culture affects management practices and

style. Feng (2009) asserts that individuals need validation of their own identity and the

creation of a 'third space' (i.e., common ground) in which people can find common

ground to collaborate and learn together.

The population of Canada has seen, and will continue to see, drastic changes in its

population. As reported by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2012), new immigration

to Canada has shifted to a point where nearly 75% of all new arrivals are coming from

Africa, the Middle East and Asia. As a result, this shift has had a huge effect on the

populations in Canadian classrooms and the cultural and linguistic background these

immigrant students bring to the classroom. However, the conversation about how

teachers deal with these students needs to continue to change. A common response to the

growing diversity has been, and continues to be, that new immigrants will learn the new

language and gradually integrate to be Canadian. But is this response truly *multicultural*?

Some argue that the title of *multicultural* means nothing more than interaction between

diverse groups. The opposing view, argues that multiculturalism must represent a change

in the power structure and cultural values of the society. If one argues that each culture

holds equal value, then should equality of representation in society's social structure not

also be evident? Equality of culture really means democratic multiculturalism. According

to Paolo Friere, democracy is more than elections; it is about educating people about

power and inequity (as cited by Lund & Carr, 2008). Kubow, Grossman and Ninomiya

propose multidimensional citizenship as a way of enacting democracy in our schools, a concept containing four elements to promote democratic equality: 1.) The personal dimension; 2.) The social dimension; 3.) the spatial dimension; and, 4.) the temporal dimension (2000, p. 133). Kubow, Grossman and Ninomiya (2000) suggest these four elements can be used to help individuals find a place for themselves and their culture in history and in the future in Canada.

Developing cultural sensitivity in a classroom needs to begin with student equality, which means that a student's identity needs to be recognised as having value for all members of the learning community. Identity consists of all the aspects—Kubow et al.'s elements—people use to define who they are; all of these elements need to be of worth in the classroom. Building curricular activities that connect to each student's identity is a necessity if students are going to learn actively. Cummins, Bismilla, Chow, Cohen, Giampapa, Leoni, Sandhu, & Sastri (2005a) suggest that identity centered instruction allows students to connect knowledge to pre-existing cultural and linguistic knowledge. Connecting different identities is about finding common ground between people. Recognising the need to find common ground (what Aoki refers to as the third space, 2005a), provides educators with a framework to move towards cultural sensitivity by providing students with elements of what they find comfortable and comprehensible. This common ground shows students how ideas of compromise and respect can be shared between cultures (Feng, 2009). For many educators, this may include the integration of authoritative attitudes for which many cultures express as the normal teaching persona (Sturz & Kleiner, 2005, p. 59). Meeting students half way between cultures will have a huge impact in bridging cultural differences.

Being culturally sensitive is not just about having diverse students work together; it is also about sharing differences and similarities in a safe and supportive way. Multicultural education—and more frequently referred to as "intercultural education" (Berg, Dhillon, Kershaw and Maheu, p. v, 2010) because through interaction between cultures, cultures change and evolve—also include a variety of classroom activities that support student identity and create cultural awareness for other students. Two strategies educators can use is the development of multilingual texts and identity texts. Identity texts are pieces of literature made by students, often in multiple languages, which are designed to expose their identity for others. Cummins and Early(2011) suggests that the benefits of an identity text is that they can be developed with the help of family or other community members who may have a better grasp of the first language or cultural markers. Identity texts activate the student's prior knowledge and challenge the power structures of traditional educational systems by allowing democratic process to decide what has value.

Anakwe (2002) also proposes the use of personality profiles and dialogue. Anakwe suggests the use of personality profiles as a way to promote cultural sensitivity because the exercises challenge students' responses to cultural diversity and help make connections between how culture affects action. In a personality profile, students research information on a certain country or region and research elements that are pertinent to conversation rules, language, and family structure. Then students build an individual profile of a person who may live within this culture and share the profile with other students in a group. A student may pick the country of Brazil, for example, and create a profile to share with his or her classmates, and then role-play that they are from this

location with a profile that demonstrates the cultural norms. However, there are significant criticisms of Anakwe's inter-cultural training model. First, most of the experience that Anakwe has through this work is with undergrad and graduate university students. Secondly, students were not representing their own culture, but were selecting one from a list to represent. A very real risk of playing into stereotypes (negative or positive) may overtake the goal of realizing commonalities. Moreover, from an anthropological standpoint, there is no defined cultural set of markers that everybody follows, only experiences from within the culture. Therefore, a better way to promote the personality profile may be to have students create a profile of their own culture that they share, not an imagined one. In this manner the risk of stereotyping and overgeneralization can be reduced. Teachers must always exercise caution when permitting students to represent another culture other than their own.

Antiracist education. Equally important to multicultural and identity education in cultural sensitivity is the notion of anti-racist education. Anti-racist education poses its own challenges to educators, as it requires an evaluation of power and cultural bias that may be present in the classroom. Even in multicultural classrooms, teachers often unknowingly present ethnocentric material and points of view. Ethnocentrism is hard to detect, especially if one comes from the dominant cultural group. Anti-racist education's goal is to deconstruct the prejudice and authority of power to reform society's understanding of what *multicultural* and *intercultural* needs to become. One of the difficult aspects of anti-racist education is the reflection and deconstruction of what it means to be white in Canada. Gabriel Bedard (2000), fears that anti-racist education will not progress as needed because of the disproportionate representation of white educators

within Canadian education. One of the concerns raised is the unwillingness of teachers to

work on anti-racist education because of the perception that it fosters racism against

whites. Carson and Johnston (2000) believe that the concerns are valid arguing for more

professional development with schools before anti-racist education begins because,

"…such programs have a negative effect of producing widespread guilt and anger even

among those who share an opposition to racism." (p. 29). Before a conversation about

whiteness and power occurs, the first step towards anti-racist education needs to be

appropriate delivery of awareness of racist language, prejudices and stereotypes in

school. Attwood (2011) believes that one of the most important elements to teaching anti-

racist education comes from teachers working together from different cultural

backgrounds. Teachers who work together to teach anti-racist education were more

successful as each relied on their "communities of practice" (p. 122) and developed styles

and techniques of teaching that were aimed at different learning modalities.

A difficulty in presenting a template for building cultural sensitivity in Canadian

classrooms comes from the arbitrary separations we make in academia regarding the

issues. The problem is that culturally sensitive approaches to education should include

multicultural, identity education and anti-racist education as if it were a single unit. But

how many teachers are being prepared to bring these skills to the classroom? By failing

to adequately prepare student teachers and reform practicing teachers, education is

sending a message that the status quo is just fine. To develop multicultural democracy,

educators must demonstrate equality of value and value of all identity. Rejection of who a

person *is* may be contributing to academic failure in students from non-white

backgrounds. Teachers must lead their school communities towards cultural sensitivity, not just multiculturalism but anti-racism as well.

James (1995) argues that having friends that come from different races is not enough to overcome ethnocentric or racist views. Instead, James argues that there must be a precondition of, "…critical and painful self-analysis and self-awareness," (p. 161) when dealing with racism and prejudice. James' research included situations in which individuals would interview members of other races or ethnicities and document their responses as they came to know and understand other perspectives. While the responses were very similar, James shares the perspectives of one individual as he came to understand the nature of this process.

> "I believe that interaction and experience are the best teachers. Whether a one-on-one interview or a class debate, delicate topics or situations such as the subject of cross-culturalism and prejudice need to be addressed and explored personally for it is only through these methods that true emotions and consequently value examinations occur." (p. 163).

These personal moments appear to be an essential element of anti-racist education. If interactions in which the prejudices are explicitly explored are important, then educational practices that shy away from these interactions for fear of conflict may be supporting the status quo of an imbalanced power system. James (1995) concludes by suggesting that if prejudices and racism are taught to us as children (as opposed to being natural dispositions), then anti-racist and anti-prejudice must also be instructed to have real effects.

Working with refugee students, I need to learn anti-racist and anti-prejudice beliefs just as my students do. This is one of the most important elements of a Curriculum of Tea. To avoid the difficult conversations with my students is support for historical power systems from within my own classroom. Aoki's *Reciprocity of Perspectives* (2005b) builds a framework for these difficult conversations that are democratic and thoughtful to the needs of students.

Reciprocity of Perspectives

To appropriately address the value system for literacy I encounter in my classroom, I use Aoki's (2005b) *A Reciprocity of Perspectives*. He argues that people cannot just watch alternate perspectives (literacies) in a toleration of multiculturalism, but must become empathetic and open to changing perspectives. Cautioning against problem solving or scientific inquiry of the process, Aoki suggests that we view the reciprocity of perspectives in terms of a "conversation of mankind" (p. 220). Aoki elaborates on three case studies in which different perspectives are shared and laboured over, and to which the process of learning is the discovery itself. Aoki speaks to Dr. Chung's East/West dilemma in approaching education as instrumentalism, a Western philosophy, as opposed to his own theory of being. Aoki is referring to Bom Mo Chung in, *Developmental Education: An After Thought*, (1981). Concluding his thoughts, Aoki believes that the sharing must be authentic conversation and not empty conversation. The difference, he suggests, is the engagement in a reciprocity of perspectives.

Authenticity of a reciprocity of perspectives is one of the foundational pieces in my work with critical teatime. This can exist in my classroom only if I consider the perspectives of my students (Eastern philosophy) to be of equal value and quality to my

own (Western philosophy). In essence, this is a framework for the democratization of the classroom and an end to colonialism of my students' minds. Aoki expresses this fear of Western education and imperialism as he writes about his experiences working with graduate students from Africa, Asia and Europe. His work in reciprocity of perspectives provides a manner of existing in school and life that does not create a colonizing education system, but instead strives to share perspectives and create agency to share and participate in public life within these perspectives.

Freire (2005) also shares the importance of authenticity of reciprocity of perspectives as he explores the systems in antidialogic and dialogic matrices. It is not absurd to suggest that our system of prescribed curriculum is antidialogic in nature. Freire suggests that antidiologic matrix is a process of domination and control by inhibiting true communication of subversive classes. A key element to this is the way in which the new country is shown to be a "fixed entity" (p. 139) to which we are all spectators and must then adapt ourselves to fit in.

This construct, as seen in a prescribed government curriculum largely separate from the teaching profession, is antidialogic as we (the community of educators and learners), become passive observers of the status quo we must support. This philosophy of the "mythic" system is no better seen in Alberta than in the policies set forth by Inspiring Education (2008) of the Government of Alberta as it set in place plans for the educational direction of the province until 2030. Claiming to be a response to the desire by the people for an educational plan, the plan set forth already has a description of what a student graduating in 2030 will be like.

"Children who enter kindergarten in 2017 are now graduating from high school.

They are engaged thinkers and ethical citizens with an entrepreneurial spirit. The

world has changed significantly. And Alberta's approach to education has

changed with it." (Alberta Education, Inspiring Education, Roadmap, 2008).

This statement suggests that the future of education is not in dialogic, but antidialogic

because what education is and should be has already been decided.

In contrast to the colonial *antidialogue*, Freire describes *dialogue* as a matrix in

which the subject names the world. That is to say that *dialogue* constructs the world

around it through the building of relationships and cooperation. This is a key element of a

democratic classroom that is often missed in the classroom of prescribed government

curriculum. Dialogue (or reciprocity of perspectives) builds a curriculum through

relationship by responding to what education should and could be as opposed to seeing

education as something that is.

To practice this understanding of the possibility of education as dialogue, Aoki's

(2005a) work in the "third space" (p. 160) is key. The curriculum-as-planned versus the

curriculum-as-lived is a balance that I explore much more liberally than most teachers

who are tied to a government mandated curriculum. The research of Nykiel-Herbert

(2010) with Iraqi refugee students demonstrates Aokian theory about how curriculum-as-

planned leaves many refugee students in the margins of performance as students struggle

to make meaning of their new contexts. Aoki's work provides a framework to evaluate

the needs of students and hold them with equal or even greater importance than

government mandated plans. When curriculum-as-planned is unsuccessful in meeting the

academic, social and emotional needs of students, the curriculum-as-lived needs to fill

that role. Moving forward in my research, Aoki's work in third space and reciprocity of

perspective will provide authority to the work of democratic practices in teaching refugee students.

Nykiel-Herbert (2000) argues that while many educational institutions celebrate the diversity of culture in their schools, few are "culturally responsive" (p. 3). That is to say that while culture is recognized, it is not used to optimize the learning of refugee students. Using research of refugee students with limited formal schooling, Nykiel-Herbert suggests that the most effective academic interventions come from the home and community culture of the refugee student and not from the imposition of the dominant culture to which these students have arrived. Her research of refugee children from Iraq with limited formal schooling demonstrates that culturally responsive practices (narratives and storytelling) have a greater effect in stimulating student engagement and stimulation than culturally exclusive education. Nykiel-Herbert concludes that culturally homogenous learning environments can create unique opportunities for learning when community and culturally responsive tools are used.

While Nykiel-Herbert's research shows democratic education and a practice of reciprocity of perspectives in action, her methodology, however, focuses on the student response whereas I propose reforming teaching practices. For example, Nykiel-Herbert stresses the importance of connections to home life and community as primary factors in student success. I have built a foundation of home visits into my program because I cannot fully understand home literacies or academic goals if I do not take into account the larger family and community. If I have family investment in education for both home literacies and host country literacies, students will be much more successful because I will be more understanding of student needs. Education, in this way, becomes more about

a ways of living in Canada than a means to an end. That is to say, family and community become partners in education for life (living in learning) instead of observers of a course that exists outside of themselves and their input.

Restorative Practices

Historically, restorative practices in school have been focused on the judicial and legal practices in school. However, restorative practices can provide teachers with a way of meeting their particular needs when working with refugee students. In order to do so, a more comprehensive understanding of traditional restorative practices is warranted. Varnham (2005) provides a framework from which one can begin their exploration of restorative practices based on five different principles, "repair the harm done, expect the best from others, acknowledge feelings/harm done, care for others, and take responsibility for behaviours and feelings." (p. 97).

The origins of restorative teaching practices. Upon my examination of research I found the field of restorative practices has had significant growth in New Zealand over the last twenty years or so (Varnham, 2005). Researchers in New Zealand have had significant results supporting the value of these practices and Varnham (2005) has reported a variety of positive outcomes that include: offering students a chance to see conflict as an opportunity to grow, providing a structure for problem solving, teaching acceptance and responsibility, developing life skills in respect, growing empathy, promoting interest in the justice and legal systems, instigating citizenship activities, reducing discipline referrals and increasing instructional time. Through their work, New Zealand researchers have also been able to provide a framework for schools and communities demonstrating how successful programs should be run. Varnham suggests

that for a restorative practice to be successful, the authorities must require that students'

participation be authentic and meaningful for both the offender and the victim. A key

factor she notes is an emphasis on relationship building between offender and victim that

must be central to the restoration process (2005). A difference I face when deciding to

employ restorative teaching practices in my classroom is that the victims are refugees

who have faced expulsion from their homes and the offenders are the governments and

military forces that removed them. I do not necessarily think that the offender must be

present for some restoration to occur as the victims will probably never meet the

offenders. My role, then, changes from mediator to one of discerning what my students

need and providing them with healthy restorative experiences.

   Restorative practices are about relationships. Porter (2007) argues that

restorative practices are about reconnecting people into healthy relationships that can

transform a school's culture into a caring and democratic community. The effects of

relationship building and community building are so powerful that Porter believes

restorative practices have the ability to interrupt the cycles of violence and abuse

witnessed in bullying.

   Restorative practices as social conflict theory. According to Wachtel (2012),

traditional justice and legal systems that act over conflict through our governments—or

school administration—are interrupting our communities' ability to heal by imposing

abstract penalties on people instead of helping them to heal from conflict. Citing the work

of Christie of Norway, Wachtel argues that the state is guilty of "theft of conflict" and the

potential learning opportunities that are lost along with the conflict itself (p. 13). Not only

is the state stopping the healing that restorative practices bring by imposing outside

penalties on individuals, it is also robbing society of its ability to learn and apply problem solving techniques. Braithwaite argues that the common experience of modern democratic societies is disenfranchisement and alienation from the elites that run our country. As state becomes more abstract to our lives, society grows in its appeal to produce true healing and learning experiences (Braithwaite, as cited by Wachtel, p. 14, 2012).

Restorative resolution. Zaslaw (2010) suggests five principles in the implementation of resolution. First, for the fair solution to be determined, all stakeholders in the issue must be present and have a voice. If someone is "done-to" it cannot be an acceptable resolution. Second, accountability for the offenders must include a plan to repair the harm done. A punishment alone is not acceptable, but the issue must be fixed. Third, the goal of restorative resolution must always be the restoration of relationships and the well being of the community. Fourth, both the offender and the victim must be active members in the process to give back to the rebuilding of the community. Lastly, reparative conferences must be used to bring all parties together in a face-to-face meeting along with parents, supportive adults and a trained facilitator to lead the relationship building process (p. 12).

Results in restorative practice. Results on the positive effects of restorative practices in education have been comprised of both qualitative anecdotal reports as well as quantitative analysis. A study in Minnesota conducted over a three-year period from 1998 to 2001 showed that restorative practices resulted in a reduction of 30% to 50% in school suspensions (Zaslaw, p. 13, 2010). In Michigan, teachers reported a 73% decrease in disciplinary referrals (Porter, p. 2, 2007). Students, however, are also reporting the

changes. In Pattengill, USA, 90% of students reported that restorative practices had taught them new problem solving and resolution skills (Zaslaw, 2010). Restorative practices have the potential to drastically change the school environment, but how do restorative practices develop when the conflict is outside of us and the restoration is a healing process for refugees and for myself as a teacher? To take the model to my context, restorative teaching practices need to change from an issue of justice to one of restoration of being, of healing.

What are restorative teaching practices for students from refugee contexts?
Restorative teaching practices are the ways teachers attend to the lived curriculum in a classroom. To be restorative for a teacher's practice, the curriculum (teacher and student curriculum) needs to be relevant to the current life circumstances, responsive to changing needs, and about relationship building. Aoki's (2005a) *lived versus planned curriculum* explores the need of teachers to be active participants in the wellbeing of their students. Refugees come to my classroom with a history of trauma and horror that is different for each student, similar only in that many of their Canadian peers will never understand the struggles they have survived.

Refugees come to my classroom because traditional classrooms may not meet their needs. Traditional classroom structures may not work for them for a variety of reasons. The students in my program need restorative teaching practices because of the difficult circumstances in which they live and have lived. I draw on the work of Maslow and his 1943 article, *A Theory of Human Motivation,* in which he outlines his "hierarchy of prepotency" (p. 375), which we later refer to as the *Hierarchy of Needs*. My students come from refugee backgrounds with limited access to physiological resources (food,

clean water, and shelter) and are now living in conditions where they are dependent on government assistance for these needs, and may not yet be capable of addressing the needs that other Canadian students have (comradery, personal agency, and higher learning, for instance). Maslow states, "If all the needs are unsatisfied, and the organism is then dominated by the physiological needs, all other needs may become simply non-existent or be pushed into the background." (p. 373). My students, many of whom live in physiological need, may not be capable of learning as other students learn until they have had these needs met. Many refugee students are not capable of closing the achievement gap with their Canadian peers and this is occurring not because of attitudes or attendance, but because of a psychological and safety barriers that we must address.

Another aspect that restorative teaching practices address includes issues of power structures and self-determination in a new society. Refugees come to their host countries as outsiders struggling to find their place and their voice. The dominant culture in Canada (being English speaking and culturally European) may unknowingly limit the possibilities that refugees have for work and personal life because of language difficulties, educational difficulties, and the dominant culture's sense of entitlement to the best while new immigrants get what is less desirable (housing, employment, and access to medical services).

Restorative teaching practices can serve as an empowerment tool. Freire and Macedo (1987) refers to this as *emancipatory literacy*, in which literacy serves to both make sense of a person's history and experiences and, "…they must also appropriate those codes and cultures of the dominant spheres so they can transcend their own environments." (p. 47). Providing students with an understanding of their history and

experiences as well as those of the host country can provide them with ways to overcome past difficulties and make their own way in the world. Macedo and Freire believe that *emancipatory literacy* (or a "critical educator" (p. 48)) can help students recognise the constraints under which they live so that they can be overcome restorative teaching practices can be a way of designing the learning experiences of students in a manner that provides new ways of seeing the environment they live in and discovering life that is free and democratic.

Restorative teaching practices tend to my teaching needs to better serve the needs of those students in ways that help them discover a new identity and place in Canada while finding the support to come to terms with their personal histories. Restorative teaching practices develop empathy in me and are manifestations of what Fowler calls, "a mindful research practice that includes appropriate compassion with self and others." (2012, p. 25).

Restorative Education Theory and Narrative Analysis

In my own practice as a beginning teacher, the classroom preparation is a classical art: representing objects in the world and disconnecting myself from it. This, however, is less effective at meeting the needs of students. Modern art can be more effective because it is about representing what is within, both of teacher and student. I believe that this is part of what Fowler speaks of when referring to a mindful research practice that includes appropriate compassion with self and others (2012). When teaching becomes a practice from within, the lived experiences become a compass for reading the needs of students and teachers. Without the ability to observe those moments and act on

them, the teacher-as-researcher is absent and the classroom is no longer appropriate for meeting the needs of students.

Initially beginning as a single restorative practice: teatime, was generated by Fowler (2012) and I as a way to address the need to find appropriate teaching in my classroom with refugees. To find common ground between me and my students, Fowler suggested a critical teatime. (personal communication, September 15, 2012). Fowler's work in teacher and student care has been essential in developing the attitudes and behaviours necessary for me to be a thoughtful and caring teacher in my classroom. Since the initial practice of teatime began, two other elements of restorative teaching practices arose: morning pages and home visits. This division into three different streams came as a response to the differing needs of the teaching practice in relation to the different styles of relationship building. Teatime is a whole class activity where students and teacher communicate freely in a small group. Morning pages is a one-on-one activity where students and teacher interact directly and privately, that is the contents of conversation in morning pages are not open to read freely among students. Home visits, then, has a much broader scope bringing student families and community into discussion and relationship. In this way, restorative teaching practices addresses teaching needs as it relates to individual students, whole class, and family and community.

Tied closely to the work of Ted Aoki, Fowler emphasizes the need for empathy (2012). She suggests that unlearning heartlessness is a product of restorative education in which teachers tend carefully and thoughtfully to their needs and the needs of their students. It is very easy for teachers to become cold and indifferent to the needs of students as the colonizing effects of government curriculum commandeer the systems of

school. Fowler's work in mindful teaching and learning has provided me with confidence to teach in ways that are true to the self. Just as Fowler does not want to be a teacher "without qualities" (2006, p. 17), I do not wish to approach my classroom with the latest ELL trends because someone has sold it to me. Instead I wish to evaluate ways of living with my students in the shared space we create.

What is my experience of teatime in teaching refugee students? Teatime, as a critical practice, is designed to be an act of democratic education in which the perspectives, opinions, and learning modalities of refugee students are held equal to those of the dominant western perspectives that I bring to the classroom. Teatime occurs nearly every day and follows a similar pattern day to day. In preparation for teatime I will set cups, brew tea and mix with milk and sugar before teatime begins. Some years, the students bring their own mugs, others, I provide for them. In teatime, the students sit with me in a circle drinking tea and we discuss a variety of topics from current events to family history and stories of settlement and re-settlement. These often include current events such as the political movements locally and internationally or the potential of new refugee populations arriving to Canada, as in the case of the current Syrian refugee crisis. Students bring other topics as they experience success and difficulty in their communities. Often, the topics for discussion have no forward planning but come about as the students settle in for tea and wish to share something that is occurring in their lives. Through teatime, students can discuss the difficulties, joys, loss, and fear of living as a refugee and migrating to a third country. The open format provides all students with a chance to speak and be heard as they come to terms with new identities of their host country. At the end of tea, usually taking place between 20 and 40 minutes, students

collect the cups and place them in a bin to be washed. In this setting, students reinvent their understandings of life in Canada and their place in it. With foundations in Aoki's practice of reciprocity of perspectives, teatime strives to achieve an authentic conversation (2005b, p. 228). As a result, I am more capable of recognising the needs (academic, social, emotional, physiological) and therefore more effective in meeting those needs.

What is my experience of Morning Pages in teaching refugee students?

"Morning pages" is a restorative teaching practice designed to create confidence, develop fluency and experience freedom in writing that is supported by English speakers. At the start of every day, the students take 20 minutes to write in their journals to me. The journals are written in duotangs with lined paper and at the end of every school day I write back based on where I feel the students want the conversation to go. The direction of the conversation is primarily dictated by what Rosenblatt (1988) refers to as the Transactional Theory. Under this structure, I read the content of the writing and, as Rosenblatt explains, "the reader adopts a selective attitude, bringing certain aspects into the centre of attention and pushing others into the fringes." (p. 5). In response to my selective attitude, I then respond to the student with intent to continue on what I perceived the writer to be intending to communicate. The effectiveness of my selection becomes increasingly effective over time as themes continue to dominate in student writing and relationship building continues. If students want to continue writing about a topic, they continue to write about it and I respond to it. As interest or focus changes, my perceived intent changes and the topics of discussion change towards what is becoming more dominant in the writing. This allows students to write freely and openly without my

own agenda taking control. At no time do I grade student work or correct the form of writing but encourage the students to practice writing about what they find of interest. The original design comes from Cameron's morning pages in *The Basic Tools* (1992). She intends the act of *morning pages* to be a tool in creative recovery (along with the *artist's date*) in which the physical act of free writing unlocks creative potential that has been lost in corrective, deficit based writing instruction. While Cameron's design was for censor-free writing with the goal of re-igniting the creative child within (p. 11), my own classroom uses *morning pages* as a way of improving literacy fluency, developing writing creativity and reflecting on self in relation to the new community. Using *morning pages* has been an evolving process that has changed as my teaching style and method has changed. Through morning pages I can learn about my students, their histories and expectations for me as their teacher.

Andrew (2011) proposes that English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners can benefit from the use of journals as they reflect on their own identities, the host culture and future participation in the culture. Andrew observed the process of forty EAL students as they journaled their experiences in community placement. The community placement provided situated identities or ways of being and forms of life of discourses. Key to the research, Andrew suggests that the journals not only create authentic discourse but a better understanding of self and others through written re-creation. Andrew's research question contains three aspects, 1) changing perceptions of English literacy, 2) identity relative to the host country, and 3) understanding of how participation socializes individuals into the discourses of their communities. Within this research, the purpose of

morning pages becomes: creativity and re-imagining of identity and citizenship in Canada.

What is my experience of home visits in teaching refugee students? I brought home visits, as a restorative practice, into my classroom because of the difficulty of initiating home engagement. When I began working with Bhutanese students I found it difficult to engage parents at the school. I decided to go to each student's home two or three times a year to share how the student is doing and hear from parents that which they desired for their children both from school and life in Canada. From a Nepali point of view, a teacher visiting the home is a point of honour. (Rizal, personal communication, September, 2012). Traditional home contact methods used in Canadian classrooms (report cards or calls home) did not have the effect of increasing family investment in education. Instead, I make contact with home through the use of translators and the help of Immigrant Services to determine when would work best for families to meet. Arriving to the student's home, translators are on hand to make the linguistic connections and provide us with a better understanding of the expected behaviour in the home. Occurring for 30 minutes to one hour, the structure of discussion is not set but usually led by families and students in the topics that they find most important. Some families wish to know if their child is attending school everyday and others wish to make an academic plan for graduation and entrance to university studies. Home visits attempt to bring home culture, expectations of learning, and educational planning into a more inclusive and culturally-responsive setting in which parents, extended family, and community participate in the academic planning and direction of their student's learning. This methodology has its foundation in Nykiel-Herbert's (2010) work with Iraqi refugee

students that demonstrated refugee students provided with hybrids of host and home culture settings performed better and have higher levels of academic engagement.

"Hybridized cultural environments, on the other hand, in which the norms, values, and expectations inherent in our public education system provide space for the norms, values, and expectations of students from outside the majority culture, appear to positively affect these students' experience of the education process and their academic performance." (p. 13).

Home visits are a restorative teaching tool that allows me to better understand home life and histories of students and the ways that family and community can be better integrated into the school experience for better school engagement because student needs and ways to support students in both places become visible.

In the following chapter, the research will support my detailed experiences as I work recursively in cycles of experience. I will share experiences, then reflect on those experiences as it relates to research, and then return to the pedagogical implications it entails. This recursive cycle is a way to demonstrate changing experiences through examination and study of my own practice.

Chapter 3: A Curriculum of Tea- Restorative Practices for Refugee Students

Research Question and Methodology of Research

My central guiding research question that arises from my own teaching context is, "In what ways and to what extent do restorative teaching practices (morning pages, teatime, and home visits) affect me and my teaching?"

Autoethnography of this nature moves into the area of critical research with an intent to effect change in practice as opposed to non-interfering observation. Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) go on to explain, "critical researchers often regard their work as a first step toward forms of political action that can redress the injustices found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself." (p. 305). A difficulty I will face, therefore, is how do I make this research enlightening for my own practice and capable of being transferable into other contexts. To address this difficulty, I need to be very clear about the structure of the research. The format, an ethnography, is structured around four issues of writing, as proposed by Potter (1996). "Form of expression, locus of argument, contextualization and degree of self-reflexivity" (p. 174); those become the lenses through which I have identified the nature and purpose of my own research. The *form of expression* that I have chosen for this research is *confessional tale*. This allows the research to return and focus on the researcher much more than the culture of the classroom itself, in this case, studying a teaching self through my narratives of experience with refugee students. The *locus of argument* falls between "logos" (logical argument) and "evidence" (p. 175) as I confront difficulties I have faced with the students and search for evidence based changes in teaching practice that meet my teaching needs more effectively. *Contextualization,* referring to the depth and detail of my description of

events and my responses, needs to be qualitatively rich and thick as I respond to my true

self in teaching within a very specific population of refugees. With this depth of

description of context, the analysis of action becomes more comprehensible as I explore

the site of experience, so that a fuller understanding of the experience is possible.

Because of my connection to the research the fourth issue of writing, *self-reflexivity*, I

must write, as Potter describes, by "illuminating biases" (p. 190). To do this, my

interpretations and analysis will show all of the aspects of the culture I am part of,

including my concerns and difficulties. To leave these negative reflections out of my

research would be an inaccurate representations of the teaching culture I exist in, and

therefore must be included and explored as part of my growing understanding of the

culture.

Needing to provide such dynamic *self-reflexivity* autoethnography provides an

appropriate way to explore the culture of my teaching and classroom. Schwandt (2001)

explains, "The aim of composing an autoethnographic account is to keep both the subject

(knower) and object (that what is being examined) in simultaneous view" (p. 13). That is

to say I can use autoethnography to view my teaching self and teaching practice in view

together. The observation of the teaching practice is how autoethnography becomes part

of critical research driving change. Autoethnography is more than just reporting what you

see and observe, but instead becomes what Holman Jones (2005) calls a "performance"

(p. 764). Holman Jones elaborates on this by clarifying that autoethnography does not

work as if culture was static but instead, "a world in a state of flux and movement…it

creates charged moments of clarity, connection, and change." (p. 764). This distinction

between a static and moving culture is what brings autoethnography its power to affect

critical change, for it is in this structure that we not only see the world how it is but also how we imagine it to be. Within this research structure I am then capable of sharing how I have seen my teaching self as incapable of meeting my teaching needs and moving to a practice that is better meeting my teaching needs. Ellis (1999) describes this process as the act of focusing and refocusing between the ethnographic wide lens and the close personal lens in order to make sense of ourselves in the world.

In every academic stream, historically and currently, there has been a preponderance of quantitative analysis in order to get the most out of every moment. This, too, is present in education and manifests in the classroom, regardless of the cost and who is left in the margins. Fowler (2006) provides a framework for narrative qualitative research, which can inform my research. She believes that the study of narratives in curriculum of educational research is effective and responsible, working against the risk of being narcissistic, self-interested and destructive to those with whom we work. I, too, desire to record and narrate experiences, knowledge, and insights of my restorative practice in a way that is responsible and attentive.

Finding academic merit in autoethnography is a problem that still affects this field as traditional scientific method is still viewed as the dominant form of research (Wall, 2006). Postmodern theory, in contrast to traditional scientific method, provides qualitative research in autoethnographic inquiry, "…understanding of the social world and allow[s] us to reflect on what could be different because of what we have learned." (p. 148). Freire (1985) refers to this process of becoming self-aware as *conscientization*. He believes that conscientization is more than overcoming "false consciousness" (p. 85) but the arrival to a "demythologized reality" (p. 85) in which we see the world for what it

truly is and can be. In this way, my autoethnographic inquiry is bound to my actions and perceptions as I develop curriculum with students instead of observations of student and student culture.

In writing an autoethnographic inquiry, my research focuses on the major elements of planned and lived curriculum (Aoki, 2005a) of my classroom. I have built my primary research around three foundational restorative teaching practices: 1) morning pages, 2) teatime and 3) home visits. The research in these three areas is not a simple description of what each looks like, but an analysis and evaluation of how they have evolved and changed to meet my teaching needs.

The data I collected is in the form of morning pages and research field notes in which I describe my own understandings, contemplations, and explorations of curriculum and practice of restorative teaching practices. Many of the field notes were events and reflections that I that I have had over the past couple of years and many were new field notes that I collected through the process of research. The structure of each field note set was modeled after Bernard's *Four Types of Field Notes* model (2006, p. 389). Each day that I entered the classroom I had already prepared my *jottings* (p. 389) in which I wrote down a rough schedule for the day as well as some ideas of themes or topics I was looking for. As the day progressed I continually entered information into a *log book* (p. 392) that was a rough outline of my day and served as a memory tool for when I was writing my field notes and morning pages. Over this time I carried a notebook and wrote all of my observations on paper before retyping them and converting them to field notes. At the end of each day I wrote *proper field notes* (p. 395) describing in greater detail the specific events, decisions, and thoughts observed throughout the day. Finally, I would

write in the *diary* (p. 391), or morning pages as a place to explore the research in a less formal way.

Over a period of six months of research, in which I reflected on past practices and current experiences, I collected 87 different documents containing nearly 140 pages of research notes. After I had written each entry into the morning pages or formal field notes journal I applied the Yale Outline of Cultural Materials (OCM) coding system to the title of each entry to help manage and organize my field notes (2013, p. 8). I did this to help organize the volume of research notes I had collected and codify them into themes I could later use in reporting the research. Primarily occurring in the 870 Education codes, I applied my own suffix codification to the events and actions in which I participated in the classroom as they were specific to my program. This is the list of modified codes I created that was an attempt to manage the topics of the field notes.

871 CU – Education System- Curriculum

871 CU-AL – Education System- Curriculum- Alphabetic Literacies

871 CU-BS – Education System- Curriculum- Book Studies

871 CU-CCW – Education System- Curriculum- Core Class Work

871 CU-DPA – Education System- Curriculum- Daily Physical Activity

871 CU-FT – Education System- Curriculum- Field Trips

876 CT – Educational Theory and Methods- Curriculum of Tea

876 DE – Educational Theory and Methods- Democratic Education

876 MP – Educational Theory and Methods- Morning Pages

877 FD – Students- Family Dynamics

877 GV – Students- Group Values

877 HV – Students- Home visits

After codifying this research into the OCM system, I then reviewed all of the research notes and began uncovering the common themes that made the new and changing practices effective for me. While the codified daily practices (critical teatime, morning pages, and home visits) were the means by which the practice developed to meet my teaching needs, the themes that emerged are what Cresswell (2015) refers to as the "Call to action" (p. 481) in a critical ethnography. These themes; relationships, democratic education, and adaptive curriculum are what make a curriculum of tea an effective model for meeting my teaching needs.

Taken from my morning pages and field notes, this thesis contains my analysis of these restorative teaching practices: morning pages, teatime, and home visits as they lead to better relationships, democratic education, and adaptive curriculum. Within this framework of evolving curriculum, I strive to demonstrate that restorative teaching practices for refugee learners should be fluid and responsive to ensure the greatest effectiveness of teaching practice.

A Curriculum of Tea

When I first began my teaching career after finishing an undergraduate program I had a well-founded fear that I would become a teacher who stressed over elements of a teaching career not essential to the learning of my students. Items such as report card deadlines, supervision schedules, and staff meetings were becoming more time consuming than the face-to-face time I was spending with my students. In light of these new pressures, it was easy for me to rely more heavily on the prescribed and mandated plans of curriculum than making meaningful relationships with students. At the time, I

was unaware that this was the beginnings of my understanding and exploration of Aoki's (2005a) curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived-experience. In my more simple understanding of my internal struggle, I saw the beginnings of my resistance to the curriculum-as-plan because of my own boredom. All of the stories of teachers living in joy with their students gave way to the mundane day-to-day of textbook-homework-marking that I found so easy, but so unsatisfying. Aoki describes this phenomenon, " if the planners regard teachers as essentially installers of the curriculum, implementing assumes an instrumental flavour." (p. 160). But I am not a tool and could not be used as a tool to meet the status-quo expectations set before me by those who have never met me or my students.

My despair in teaching grew as I then faced the difficulties of applying this mandated curriculum to those who did not fit the mould of "regular student" in my classroom. These included students with learning difficulties, English Language Learners from other countries, First Nations students and students who came from difficult backgrounds and were struggling to follow my instructions. How was I to include these students in my curriculum when they could not participate with the rest of the class? I often felt that this was a mark of my inadequacies as a teacher and my inability to modify this curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. My inability to reconcile my own dissatisfaction in school is what drove me down the path of graduate studies in literacy. Nor did I enter graduate studies because I was successful in education and this was an indicator for advancing my profession. Instead, I came out of frustration and a growing understanding that there was no way I could hope to better my teaching practice and my students' success rates if I continued down the same path of utilitarian monotony.

Through my studies I began to find a new way to live in education that met both my personal need to stand up to injustice I perceived in school by a mandated curriculum and better recognise the power of teaching to bring real continuing change to the lives of students. Freire and Macedo (1987) express my unease with mandated curriculum in understanding what made it ineffective,

> "In this curriculum then, there is a quality that is hidden and that gradually incites rebelliousness on the part of children and adolescents. Their defiance corresponds to the aggressive elements in the curriculum that work against the students and their interests… Because of the rebelliousness of children and adolescents who leave school or who are truants and refuse to engage in the intellectual activity predetermined by the curriculum, these students end up refusing to comprehend the word." (p. 122).

I can now come to understand that it is not my inability to teach curriculum-as-plan but natural for people to resist that which does not have any place in our lives and is forced upon us as if the world existed outside of us. Coming to a new way of living in education meets my creative needs and my desire to see democracy in education, both for me and for my students. Under a new restorative teaching practice model, I can unite my curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived-experience (Aoki, 2005a) that is true to who I am. The restorative practice is both for me to return to a healthier way of teaching, and for my students to become part of educational dialogue.

The research I have collected and present in this next chapter is a documentation of my restoration to a true teaching self. The true teaching self is teaching in a way that is following my social ideals and focuses on curriculum I identify with my students as

important for them and their futures. But this is only my path. The decisions I make in the difficult and joyful moments of teaching are based on a personal history and a history with students, and for that reason it should not look the same for every teacher. Each of the following sections is part of the continuing narrative of my daily experiences in restorative teaching practices and the structure of each section will be the same. In each section will be a description of how the practice has developed and grown over time to meet my restorative teaching needs. Then a selection of narratives of events that documents the true nature of the living experience in restorative teaching practices while protecting the identities of students I have and have had. The research field notes are of such specificity that they would shortly become redundant and ethically questionable for the safety of my students. Instead, autoethnography provides a way to speak about my experience in a way that is encompassing and true without being redundant. Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) argue that, "For autoethnographers, validity means that a work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true." (p. 282). This is to say that the details I share may change but the experience I explore is authentic.

Genesis and development of a Curriculum of Tea. Teatime is a cornerstone of my practice and came about through discussions with my graduate studies cohort. We were exploring what Aoki's (2005a) "third-space" could look like in practice. Fowler suggested that if students could have time to sit and be together to learn from one another, this practice could be more important than forcing through a lesson (personal communication, September 15, 2012). As we discussed together I considered, what do Nepali do when sitting together? They drink tea. What does my family do when they sit

together? They drink tea. Finding our *third-space* and then building relationship and knowledge together is what a curriculum of tea is about.

Each day we sit for 15-30 minutes to share and drink tea. Usually in the morning, students help prepare the tea and set up chairs. This develops a sense of ownership in teatime because they are part of the process from beginning to end. I will often bring a topic to the table, like current events from around the world or elements of life in Canada perceived by students, but some times we just sit and talk. There is little planning that goes into teatime because of my tendency to devolve into another lecture, something students experience too often in my class. This is a struggle for me because I have lived in school for so long and am predisposed to expect the teacher to be instructing at all times. I often feel that by giving up my instructional time, I am missing learning opportunities for the students. Falvey, Givner and Kimm suggest a different idea of student inclusion for learning arguing,

> "Inclusive education is about embracing all, making a commitment to do whatever it takes to provide each student in the community—and each citizen in a democracy—an inalienable right to belong, not to be excluded." (as cited in Berg, Dhillon, Kershaw, and Maheu, 2010, p. 9).

In this instance, inclusion is also about stepping back and letting students lead the classroom. The discussions and conversations then come more authentically and in a way that promotes speaking the truth by both the teacher and students. This act of democratic education is difficult to share with teachers I work with because of my fear that the perception is a lack of instructional time. Before a curriculum of tea I could not find, in the two hundred days of a school year, the time to sit and be together in a meaningful

way. But in a classroom struggling to understand identity and purpose, we use the time to grow and become something more complete; a community of learners.

One of the difficult elements of teatime for me to observe is the tendency for students to revert back to their first language. This is unfair for a few of us, as we do not all understand Nepali. I constantly fluctuate back and forth in how much I allow other languages besides English in teatime but only because I can begin to be left out of conversations and not because I want students to practice their English skills. While I encourage students to speak English, demanding they stop speaking their home language can hinder growth, not only because it is anti-democratic in the classroom, but because as Nykiel-Herbert explains, "It is the culture of the child's home—not the cultures of the other—that enables and supports cognitive development through the complex systems of social and cognitive factors…" (2010, p. 2). Explorations in other languages occur because of interaction in our home culture, not in spite of it.

I have put some rules in place to keep the conversation together and to provide fair speaking time for all of the students. First, each person only speaks if they have the talking stick. This is an adaptation of many Canadian First Nations' practice of turn taking (Baskin, Koleszar-Green, Hendry, Lavallée, & Murrin, 2008). To show respect for our classmates, I demonstrate that we must allow one to speak while everybody else listens. Students are not required to speak, but are given the opportunity to do so. This is one of the reasons that I have pushed to keep my class under 20 students while other classes move into much higher numbers. Conversations become much more difficult in groups over fifteen. I think it is because students have less time to share and there are

more eyes to judge. The best teatimes I have tended to be with groups under 15 members because time with students becomes more divided with larger groups.

I encourage students to share honestly and carefully with me and their friends. The truth is not always friendly or happy, but it is real. The danger here, is that what a student or I may see as truth can be hurtful to other students. For this reason, we must strive to be honest and caring so that we do not become destructive in our truth-telling. It is in these spaces that students have the confidence to share. If I, as a teacher, am condescending or harsh with students, they would not share. For example, I once argued with a student over how many refugee camps remained in Nepal. This arguing was not caring and affected the conversations over the next few days. Giving students a chance to speak freely and truthfully helps to break down biased ideas—that I also carry—and show that my students are complex people with needs and wants just like everyone. I think this is important because many in the Nepali community, my students included, are afraid that they will lose their culture now that they have arrived here. Carr (2008) suggests that this is due to lack of validation in Canadian society. Many people are ashamed of their culture and see it as some how inadequate or less valuable than the one they have arrived to, "They feel ashamed of their culture and neglect their cultural identity." (Sturz & Kleiner, 2005, p. 58). Instead, teatime allows us to delve into the beauty of culture and explain that Canadian culture is not standard or united either, but changing and growing as we invite new people to be Canadian. I believe that this *equality of being*, this equal place, has been very important to share with the students and has led to many amazing experiences. In the following section, Living a Curriculum of Tea, I will explore three experiences through autoethnographic narrative that expose the culture

of teatime as I see it advising and guiding my teaching practice. Narrative expression is the most appropriate manner in which to share these stories as it is my desire the reader will feel the experiences of a curriculum of tea, connect them to practice, and, as Starr (2010) expresses, we can locate who we are in what we do.

Living a Curriculum of Tea.

Becoming part of the Canadian narrative. I arrived to school and was told by a student that a family member had died of illness in a Nepali refugee camp. Not every member of a family comes to Canada and not all families are united again. He had died in his sleep as a young man and we were left with a broken child. All of my daily plans changed in a moment as I tried to reconcile what I saw as important that day. Is this the goal of education: to take the important moments, stop, and live? I felt I could not continue with the regular class day as I thought about how best to serve my students. Instead of planning and delivering, I lean on Aoki's (2005e) understanding,

> "[curriculum and instruction] must give way to a more open landscape that offers possibilities by, in part, giving legitimacy to the wisdom held in live stories of people who dwell within the landscape." (p. 214).

Democratic education is not always about what I say, but also in the times I listen to the lives and stories of my students. So this day, instead of talking, I listened and we passed the day in teatime.

Collectively, my students shared some of their stories and many topics came freely as if they had been held in a bottle, my planned curriculum the cork; the difficulty of life and healthy living in the camps, the difficulty of separating families, remembering the losses of other family members in the camps, and the fear of death in their journey

from Bhutan. I found that many of my students had lost siblings and close relatives while in the camp. It must have been so hard to leave, knowing that these people were buried there still. At this point, I faced a crossroads in my practice that I have rarely had to cross: how do I serve my students in their times of need while not being able to fully understand the lives and histories they have come from? My inability to empathise in a meaningful way led me to search for our common ground and build a shared narrative in the shared space we called teatime. Freire and Macedo (1987) clarify this as they describe my difficulty in the terms "emancipatory literacy". They state,

> "On one hand, students have to become literate about their histories, experiences, and the culture of their immediate environments. On the other hand, they must also appropriate those codes and cultures of the dominant spheres so they can transcend their own environments. (p. 47).

That is to say, my role in building student freedom from the isolation of solitary suffering as a refugee became the task of helping students build ways of sharing their stories that were not outside of the Canadian experience, but part of it.

In my first draft of this thesis I wrote, "all of this eventually led to" into the narrative as if, one thing led to another but did not need to be elaborated upon. That is akin to saying, "Franz Ferdinand was shot, one thing led to another, and World War II started." I have come to realize, that this process of understanding is the essence experience of teatime. As it was mid October, the appearance of poppies began to bring my class's attention to the role of Canadians in international conflict both in the past. What surprised my students, and me, was that Canadians have been wearing poppies for nearly a century but that this is not just a representation of Canada in World War I but of

all the conflicts since. The question then arises, what constitutes conflict categorically

part of this continuing narrative? Watching the news reporting about who and what is

included in Remembrance Day ceremonies, it would be hard not to see the patterns that

arise, emphasizing the Eurocentric, military sacrifices we have made as a society. Giroux

(1996) supports this analysis when speaking about cultural studies and its place in

education.

> "Embodying dominant forms of cultural capital, schooling often functions to
>
> affirm the Eurocentric, patriarchal histories, social identities, and cultural
>
> experiences of middle-class students while either marginalizing or erasing the
>
> voices, experiences, and cultural memories of so-called "minority" students. (p.
>
> 43).

I asked my students if they felt their stories are part of the Canadian experience, and they

responded that yes they were. Bhutanese refugees are permanent residents and some were

already becoming citizens. The reason for immigration was, as Rizal (2009) stated,

"ethnic cleansing" (p. xvi) and therefore, should become part of the Canadian narrative

around Remembrance Day.

As most Canadian schools do, the school I work at develops a Remembrance Day

ceremony that includes military parade, recognising local military service and some sort

of video presentation to help students understand the sacrifices Canadians make around

the world. It was in this video presentation that I determined the Canadian narrative

should expand to show the histories of Bhutanese refugees and how this then is a valid

part of our identity as Canadians. As a class we all decided to make a video that would

show the stories of loss my students had experienced in a theatrical way. Tedlock (2005)

refers to this work as performance ethnography. She believes that performance ethnography has particular strength because, "…performances become vibrant forms of ethnography that combine political, critical, and expressive actions centering on lived experiences locally and globally." (p. 469).

Initiating the process of building the videos, I encouraged students to consider sharing their stories of loss. I was very careful about this process, fearing if I pushed too hard, it could force students to re-live the trauma of their experiences. So students were given the option to share or to help another student share if they did not want to participate in that way. While some students were hesitant to share, I was pleased to see most of the class earnestly and thoughtfully chose to share their stories. For each of the students who wanted to participate, he or she would show two or three slides of text with a description of what happened to their family and why they are now in Canada. I felt that this would have a greater emotional impact on the viewers because they would not have to discern what students were trying to say because of their spoken language struggles. Once the videos were made I tied them together with video editing software and added a sound track. We watched the video together before I took it to the teachers organizing the Remembrance Day ceremony. At the outset of the project, some of the students were unsure about the project because they could not conceive of how it would come together to share their stories, but upon watching the video, were very proud of their work. I think that this final screening for my students had an important effect on our relationship. For twenty years, the world community turned a blind eye to their suffering, and now we were sharing them together as an important and significant element of the changing Canadian narrative. Tedlock (2005) argues that this kind of performance work is part of

revolutionary theory and an important pedagogical strategy because it proves new ways to describe and change the world at the same time.

After the Remembrance Day ceremony, a question that was asked of me, by both Canadian and Bhutanese students, was how these stories are relevant for Remembrance Day? This opportunity to explore Canadian identity outside of my classroom was especially important as I shared that the reason they were in a refugee camp in the first place was because of war and genocide. As new residents to Canada, these stories are part of the Canadian Remembrance Day narratives as much as remembering the First and Second World Wars. Rizal (2009) believes that third country settlement (to Canada in this case) of Bhutanese refugees is beneficial to their continuing struggle.

> "The narration of these resettled refugees in different countries will, without
>
> doubt, add to our strength in consolidating and mobilizing world opinion against
>
> the bonhomie of the despotic regime of Bhutan." (p. 314).

Performance ethnography by the students became a way of becoming Canadian, Canada becoming more pluralistic and continuing the fight for Bhutanese rights that would not have been possible had we not taken the time to share together over tea. The performance was also a great impact on other students in the school who realized that their classmates had come from such difficulty, had experienced loss and that these stories too are Canadian. Brody, Witherell, Donald and Lundblad (1991), writing about a new approach to professional school, express most appropriately the experience of relational pedagogy,

> "It tested the limits of our ability to create a deeper dialogue among ourselves and
>
> with our students, to be creative in our vision of what the curriculum would be,

and to practice pedagogy that truly respects our students as adult learners and

fellow teachers." (p. 258).

While my students may not be teachers in the traditional sense, once I was ready to forgo

the planned curriculum and engage in relationship, I was amazed at how much they

taught me.

Translations of a new world. Sometimes I forget that there is a whole new world

around my students they are trying to make sense of. Apart from trying to establish a new

quality of life and dealing with racism and prejudice by some members of the

community, McBrien argues that new members to a society also struggle with unfamiliar

language and cultural changes. (2005). Because of this lack of language and cultural

literacy, I frequently share news stories from Canada and around the world that students

then take back to their families. Family members who are working or unable to interact

with the community around them may find their lack of world events isolating. In many

ways, the students have become the messengers of the world around them to their

families. As with Canadian students, global and local events are often seen as boring

because they have little relevance to the day-to-day experiences of life. There are times,

however, when a topic arises to catch and hold the attention of students. Recognising

these moments and keeping them close to students is important. One such example was

the Newtown shooting of 2012. Shortly after the events, I wrote a short journal entry the

experience of sharing this with my students. The following sort narrative is my reflection

of the process one week after it occurred.

Where Students Hurt Students – David Fuller

On December 14, 2012 the world was shocked by the murder of twenty-seven people by Adam Lanza. Millions of people sat around their TVs listening for the updates about who was the perpetrator and how many casualties there would be. But what if you saw the pictures of students crying, SWAT teams stacking up on doors, and ambulances bringing stretchers towards a school, and you did not understand the spoken words that accompanied the images of horror? Would you think this was your town? The school your children attended? Would you be fearing a visit by police to your door? For people who have experienced death more closely than I, the refugee parents of my students may have been too fearful to call me on the phone. It is in these situations that the curriculum-as-planned carries little immediate value. My class shares a daily tea-time in which the curriculum-as-lived becomes a necessity of life. The refugee students that I sit with are burdened with roles that should be reserved for adults. Around the circle with tea we discuss the horror of the Sandy Hook massacre. The students have been feeling scared and want answers to their questions:

"Did this happened in our school?" *Translation 1- Where did this happen?* Geographical thinking is a difficult skill for students to master. I have grown up in the land that belongs to me, but my students have grown up as outsiders in a different community. Now they are here with me, but do they feel this land belongs to them? or in their minds are they still outsiders? Hurren (2003) expresses how important these questions are, "Attending to our place, and encouraging students to do the same, is one way of acknowledging the

autobiographical and geographical cartographic imperative within curriculum." (p. 120). It is for this reason, that I speak using the first person plural so frequently in speaking about geography. Students have and are equally of the land we share. **We** do not live close to these events but they did happen at a school. **We** have a safe school to come to everyday. As the students continue to work through where we are compared to the shooting, they come to see that **we** are not and were not in danger.

Another student asks, "how many children died?" *Translation 2- What happened?* It is so difficult to understand that a violent death for children can come to a society that considers itself to be so advanced and morally superior to many others. As for my students, how many of them have experienced this kind of violence in their home countries? Does this story make students afraid to come to school because they thought it was different in North America? Webster and Robertson (2007, as cited by Hart, 2009) explain, "Most asylum seekers and refugees have escaped conditions of discrimination, domination and exploitation in their home countries, only to confront similar experiences in their host countries." (p. 355). I have to take care to assure students of their security when they fear continuing trauma.

Finally, the conversation leads to the question, "who would do something like this?" *Translation 3- Students can hurt students too*. It is so strange to my students that people here in North America still suffer from mental disorders, anger and fear. Now my students are a bit more afraid to go to school. As I share stories about school shootings, guns brought into our schools and numerous other

schools in Canada we contemplate the purpose of tea-time and the importance of building community in our schools. Healing, and the value of overcoming trauma take on new meaning as they see the consequences of enduring in suffering. It is my desire that working through these stories of difficulty will result in my students looking back on their life and claiming as Deng (2006), one of the "lost boys" from Sudan did, "We are no longer lost, for our long journey has led us from suffering to life." (p. 72).

These three translations are more than just language. Making sense of this new culture and language move from me to my students. What is their role with this new information? For December 14, 2012 and in the weeks to follow, the students take on a new role. They have become messengers, the translators of their new home for the family and friends they live with that do not have the opportunities to sit and drink tea. My hope is that the discussions, questions and pondering have resulted in greater understanding that will be carried home. My students have become messengers.

It's not you, it's me. After teaching in the English Language Learners with Limited Formal Schooling program for a few years, I felt that I had finally acquired the skills to greet new students in a new school year and deliver the same activities and in the same instructional models that I had been operating in previously. My assumption was, although I had moved students into mainstream programming and replaced them with new students to Canada from the same Bhutanese refugee background, the students' experiences with school would be similar and I could continue as planned. Whether this was laziness on my part or presuppositions about the lives of my students, the results were damaging.

Within a span of two weeks from the beginning of the school year, 70% of my students were not completing daily or weekly homework, arriving to school 30 to 60 minutes late for class, and many students were beginning to withdraw from the excitement we had begun the school year with. Not even a month into school I was feeling exhausted and tired of holding students through lunch and after school to catch up on work they had not completed. It was very tempting to blame this trend on my students. Thoughts of, "we just are not getting the same quality of student we used to," and, "other refugee students have taught them to be lazy in my class," put me in real danger of losing all the rapport I had built with students over my years with them. Even after working with the same demographic of student for more than five years and engaging in a curriculum of tea regularly I still fell into the trap I had encountered as a new teacher. Lerner (2012) enlightens my mistake best, "Just as programs cannot be 'one size fits all,' research practices should also be tailored." She continues, "What are the factors that cause these children to struggle or meet with success in their school community, classroom community and larger community?" (p. 14). It is very clear that when 70% of my students are behaving in a way that is counter to what I desire: it's not you [students], it's me.

My co-worker and I began to discuss this problem as our problem. If I am the problem, what must I do to rectify it? How do I change what I do, so that students will once again begin to engage in my classroom in meaningful ways? I believe that my lack of appropriate education was because of my own desire to control all the aspects of being a student in my classroom. Freire (2005) speaks to this when referring to freedom through dialogue,

"Dialogue as the encounter of those addressed to the common task of learning and

acting is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility. How can I dialogue

if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own?" (p. 90).

How arrogant was my behaviour to assume I could assume the existence of my students

and not plan according to what their needs were. It was not necessarily my desire to plan

ahead that was the issue, but that I then projected the ineffectiveness of my plans upon

the students. Freire believes that this lack of dialogue is "dehumanizing aggression" (p.

88), therefore engaging in dialogue is an act of humanizing my students.

Dialogue with students, however, was more difficult than I anticipated because

the students were not used to being asked how I was able to better serve their needs.

Some students thought it was a trap that I would then report back to their parents. Others

had never considered that they would have a voice in the content of their education and

for that reason, were unable to participate. As we sat together in teatime, I had to reiterate

again and again that this conversation would have direct impact on their learning as we

negotiated what it was students needed, not what they wanted and I would not deliver.

Over a few minutes, the students began to share what was too difficult or causing grief.

Connecting classroom work to home life conditions, students began to share that it was

not necessarily that they did not want to do the work, but that they were unable to

because of lack of technology, family circumstances or academic inability to work alone

on the content. This, in turn, caused students to fear coming to school early and confront

my line of questioning about why their work was not done. It was easier to sleep in late

and deal with the consequences of being late for school than the humiliation of not

completing their work for me. It made me feel sick to think I was creating such pressure on my students that had already experienced such difficulty.

How, then, do I move forward into a better way of teaching? Fowler (2006) expands and clarifies this question, "How can I move into a mature, meaningful, aware, compassionate, knowledgeable, effective teaching being? How do I remain present amid difficulty?" (p. 17). If dialogue and relationship are the key, then I must begin to act on what my students told me. To begin with, I reduced the homework volume from daily work to once or twice a week that would require no technology at home. In order to do this I eliminated the requirement for an on-line home reading program entirely. The classwork is already full enough to move this to school time. Second, I made spelling homework optional. I would still leave the assignments available for students if they wished to complete them, but I would not be checking to see who completed their assignment because most of it was left to after school. Third, I relaxed my own planning timelines. At the beginning of the year I created unit plans that included daily and monthly deadlines for content. To meet these deadlines I had been assigning incomplete work to students to finish at home at night, regardless of how conducive the home was to working. Instead, if a topic was not finished or a chapter not read, I would push my schedule back a day and pick up where we left of the next day. Fourth, everyday we began the day with a short run (750 meters) because it helped to wake the students up in the morning. Instead of a mandatory run under 5 minutes, students could do the full run, half run, or walk as they choose that morning.

The results of these four changes, as proposed by students, had a dramatic effect within two days of its implementation. Late arrival to school dropped from 70% of

students being late daily to five percent (one student every other day). Incidence of incomplete homework dropped by more than half and students were more willing to come to the school early to get help completing their work with me. Students who felt pressured to run every morning were more willing to participate as they could now change their run or walk in three ways at anytime they decided. What was most surprising however, were the results from our weekly spelling tests. I fully expected to see a dramatic drop in spelling test scores as students were no longer required to do any homework or studying for the test. Instead, the class average score rose ten percent the very first week and continued in that trend. I cannot fully understand how student scores improved when there was no obligation for them to do well except to argue that the students' intrinsic motivation to perform well in school was more impactful than my teacher motivation for them to perform. That is to say, the freedom to perform well was more affecting than the expectation to perform well. I believe that this is a student response to my authoritative approach to school. Students do not want to perform *for me* because I told them to, but because they want to perform with me. Freire supports this analysis when referring to dialogue in education, "Authentic education is not carried on by "A" *for* "B" or by "A" *about* "B," but rather by "A" *with* "B"…" (p. 93).

Conclusion. Participating in *a curriculum of tea* has yielded many fascinating results both for my practice and my own philosophy of education. Ultimately, the changes in my practice and the changes in the students are constantly in movement as one changes the other. That is the primary benefit of the practice of teatime. Both restoring my practice to one that is true to my teaching self and one that meets the needs of my

students, teatime is providing a framework to interact more closely with my students, discovering the true purpose of my role as a teacher.

When I read the work of Aoki on living in the middle of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-live(d) (2003) I often find myself skimming over the poetry and short prose. I still feel trapped to the critical researcher mind that has been implanted on me by years of education that reinforces explicitly and implicitly that poetry is nice, but not critical research. But I found in Aoki's description of this paradigm a four-line by Leonard Cohen refrain that guides me back to the purpose of a curriculum of tea.

"Ring the bells that still can ring,

Forget your perfect offering.

There is a crack, a crack in everything,

That's how the light gets in." (as quoted by Aoki, 2003, p. 1).

After reading this I began to research what this meant to Leonard Cohen. I wanted to know what he was speaking about directly. I was pleased to find that the meaning I was hoping for did, indeed, exist in his words. Part of Cohen's interview describing the meaning of the song Anthem explain: "Ring the bells that still can ring," is a call to act. Although things may not be going well, that is no reason to abdicate personal responsibility. "Forget your perfect offering," speaking about original sin, we need to stop trying or pretending to be perfect, but dwell in imperfection. "There is a crack, a crack in everything," because of our imperfection we cannot create perfectly but there will be cracks and breaks to what we do. "That's how the light gets in," repentance and life comes from our acceptance of imperfection. (Close & Mory, "Diamonds in the Lines: Leonard Cohen in his own live words", 1992).

Understanding Leonard Cohen's words brings me closer to an understanding of the purpose of a curriculum of tea: the balance of a curriculum-as-plan curriculum-as-live(d) (Aoki, 2003). As I constantly struggle between the extremes of *plan* and *lived*, it is this inability to find the perfect way to do it that gives it power. It is in the sway (cracks) between plan and lived that the beauty is discovered. The analogy of a pendulum on a clock may work best to solidify my understanding of this phenomenon. As a clock pendulum swings it keeps the clock working. If the pendulum stops, one can no longer tell what time it is; the system has stopped. In the same way, I must constantly negotiate the balance of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived. For if I stop trying to balance the two and discover the correct balance, it no longer works and I have lost authentic education. A curriculum of tea is what helps me to keep searching for this balance.
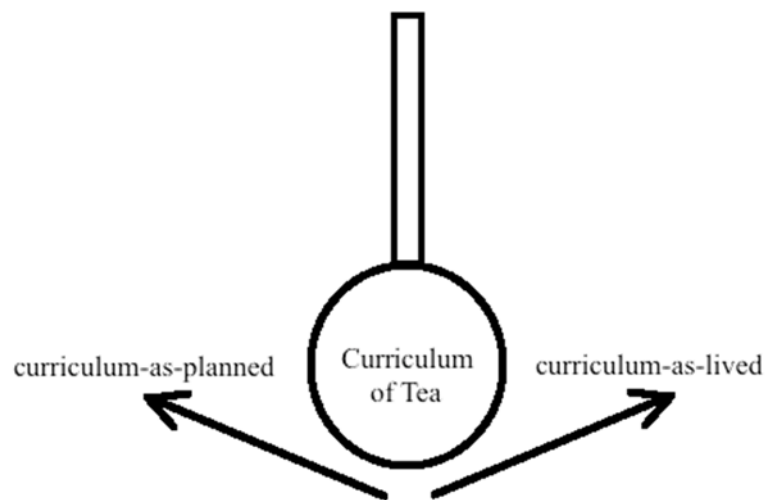

Figure 4

Pendulum Curriculum of Tea (Fuller, 2015).

Morning Pages

  Introduction. Morning Pages is the restorative teaching practice I have come to

see as subtle. Of the three restorative practices, morning pages seems more mundane and

onerous than teatime or home visits. When visitors come to my class to observe

restorative teaching practices, they are usually drawn to teatime and home visits, but pay

little attention to morning pages. I believe that the reason for this is that morning pages

are seen as another journaling activity that students everywhere do. There is nothing

perceived as original or ground-breaking. To view it this way, however, is to assume that

morning pages is like any other journaling activity that focuses on the skills of writing

instead of the content of writing. In this way, morning pages as part of a restorative

teaching practice are different. Learning the skills of writing requires a critical eye to

evaluate the quality of grammar, orthography, and structure. To be aware of these

elements becomes easier over time as writers become more proficient at observing and

censoring their own writing. Cameron (1992), believes that each writer's internal censor

also has a negative side, "The censor says wonderful things like: "You call that writing?

What a joke. You can't even punctuate. If you haven't done it by now you never will…"

(p. 11). If this is true for all writers, how much more loudly may the censor speak to my

refugee students who struggle with the most basic elements of language? In this way,

more than any other, morning pages is different from a typical journaling activity; my

students and I learn to write to each other, by writing without a censor or criticism of

structure or content.

  Part of the difficulty in reporting on my experiences in morning pages is the

private nature of the practice. Whether writing morning pages for no one, or writing

between student and teacher, the conversations are simple and mostly private between

each student and me. This is because morning pages are a place for students to explore

their identity free from the cultural restrictions of their families and friends. Students ask

questions and bring about topics that are often taboo in their communities, such as class

structure in a caste system. Andrew (2011) describes this process in his study with

English as an Alternate Language (EAL) students,

> "Students measured their increased sociocultural awareness not only through
>
> micro-narratives of language use, but also through stories that demonstrated their
>
> enhanced sensitivity to culture as a part of individuals' identities." (p. 70).

It is because of this foundational difference purpose between journaling and

morning pages that morning pages has undergone much more development and change as

compared to teatime or home visits in my class. My desire for the purpose of morning

pages has changed as I experience them differently with different groups of students.

Finding ways to engage students in morning pages is difficult, but when achieved can be

incredibly rewarding. The strength of this practice, more than teatime or home visits, is

the ability to reach the needs of students individually. Herein lies the difficulty in

reporting the results of my experiences with morning pages: the stories are tied to

experiences with individual students, so sharing the stories in an ethical way is difficult

because finding the balance between protecting students and telling a complete story is

difficult. To address this appropriately then, I need to describe how these conversations

with students have changed social relations. As Starr (2010) states, "such a conflict

[cultural conflict of identity] requires that those involved in teaching take a critical stance

towards the social relations created within difference" (p. 1). Through the rest of this

chapter I will explore the history of how morning pages grew and developed to meet my need to engage students and relate two narratives of the experience of morning pages and how they changed my understanding of the needs students bring to my classroom.

Genesis and Development of Morning Pages. I was first introduced to the practice of morning pages in my graduate studies in 2012. Dr. Erika Hasebe-Ludt and Dr. Cynthia Chambers encouraged me to engage the work of Cameron (1992) in a way that surprised me in its simplicity: just write about anything in your mind for ten to twenty minutes every morning. What most intrigued me was what Cameron suggested was an outcome of the practice, a growth in creativity. I was genuinely excited about this because I feel I have not had many truly creative outlets since I was a child. In our class we discussed how often school can kill creativity in youth. As creativity in form leads to pragmatic instruction in later grades, creativity and variability of product drop. Cameron suggests that our Western Hemisphere brains (logic) sees creativity (anything new) as a danger, "Any original thought can look pretty dangerous to our Censor" (p. 13). I was excited to think how this form of writing could re-new my own creativity.

With this new tool, I planned to bring morning pages, as I had experienced it, into my classroom. I assumed that my immigrant students had experienced a similar process of reduction of creativity I had. Clearly, I had no idea what the historical influences of my students would be. I hoped that the practice would start each day by bringing calmness to the class. What I found, however, was the students' inability to write. My initial expectations for the students were very unrealistic because I did not yet know who my students were or what they were capable of. The problem, primarily, was the lack of ability to write even simple sentences. It was not uncommon for students to sit and stare

at the page for the full fifteen minutes. There were no consequences for this behaviour, as I had also followed Cameron's idea that morning pages were to be a private matter for the writer, "Nobody is allowed to read your morning pages except you" (p. 10). She suggests that if morning pages were free from the critical eye of another, it would create a writer that did not censor what or how he or she would write. I had found this very liberating to me. As a proficient writer (compared to my students), I had no fear of writing without traditional writing restrictions and this meant that I could write continuous streams of consciousness as my brain processed them. This freedom from the censor was not yet applicable to the case of my students. I believe that this was the case because the students had not written before, with or without a censor.

After a few days of frustratingly little progress, my assistant and I began to write as well. I hoped that the students would observe how we were writing and begin to emulate the process. This, too, was not a solution, as it did nothing to teach the students how to write. I believe that the students looked up and watched us writing feverishly with a sense of shame that we could write pages and pages and they drew blank lines.

As the first weeks progressed, I tried a variety of different techniques to get the students writing more. I began permiting the students to write in Nepali or Hindi, as Chow and Cummins (2003) describe how this practice can be incredibly beneficial for students who were confident in their first language, "Through this opportunity to demonstrate their true competence, both boys gained status among their peers and self-esteem in the process" (p. 42). I quickly discovered that none of the students could write fluently in Nepali or Hindi, but when given the chance, would write only the alphabet, or their name in the script. Again, finding the literacies of my students was difficult.

When this was not successful I permitted the students to draw the pictures out or make a comic strip. The New London Group (1996) included visual design as a "mode of meaning" (p. 83) in their collection of literacies, but my students had never had access to or resources for art or building comics in the refugee camps. Nothing seemed to be getting the students started. Not only was there an inability to write in English, there was an inability to be visually and alphabetically literate in a way they could demonstrate to me. Speaking with the students at teatime, I found that the process of writing and expressing ideas was one that needed to be more guided, just as one would do with elementary students who are just beginning school.

After a few weeks of struggling, I decided to take a different approach. With a start in multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996), I believe that there are other forms of non-alphabetic literacy that include visual, audio or body movement. With this multiliteracies approach, I began demonstrating to student the visual literacy approach to story telling. I showed them single frame graphics that had no words, multi-frame comic strips with words missing and comics with word bubbles only that did not yet have the pictures. A key element to the task was that students needed to be comprehensive in their art and connect the pictures to a story or message they were trying to share. To build a foundation for this, I prepared examples with emphasis of the description and purpose of the artwork over the quality of the art.

When students began drawing pictures there was much more enthusiasm for morning pages. However, this form of visual morning pages also had its difficulties. One of the struggles was that the student's artistic skills were extremely underdeveloped. A lack of resources in the refugee camps meant that children did not have access to art

supplies. The second difficulty I faced is that students did not see the value in trying to tell a story or explore meaning in their drawings. Instead, when asked, a typical response was, "This is someone playing soccer" or "it is a tree". The students find it very difficult to draw elements that are particularly meaningful to them or share a story or message.

The first year that I worked with morning pages I finally tried writing in English but with a sentence starter or a prompt for everybody written on the white board. Initially, I was sceptical of this as well because I felt that the students would not have the skills to continue writing what I had started. I also removed the freedom to write without teacher interference or a critical eye. This meant I would read the students' responses and respond back to them. Students seemed to like that I was reading what they wrote more because they felt that there was more purpose to it. This was encouraging to me because that meant that the students were willing to write truthfully and trusted me to keep their stories and their writing a secret from the other students. This was good as an indicator that I have been practicing confidentiality in a way that students recognise. Nassaji and Cummins (2000) express how this is important in dialogue journal writing. They describe how this collaboration (between student and teacher) in writing is important for second-language learning as it is tied to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Gillen (2000) closely examines what Vygotsky meant by development (as translation from Russian to English has often been suspect) arguing that, "Vygotsky emphasises investigations of cognitive developments as they occur rather than as manifestations of abilities viewed as static at any particular point of time." (p. 190). This, I argue, is what Nassaji and Cummins speak specifically about in describing the ZPD in collaborative journals. The practice has power because of the changing status of the ZDP as opposed to

the identification of it. For this reason, my experiences of dialogue with students became much more important than the act of determining what my students were capable of in a single moment because I could identify and grow my understanding of students as they developed and grew in language proficiency.

Upon determining that this practice of dialogue in morning pages had potential for serious growth, I changed the nature of morning pages. Every day, I had a new prompt with different topics in order to start a discussion based on ideas that were relevant to students. For example, one morning the topic was, "If I could go back to Nepal for one day I would…" These kinds of topics had a profound impact on the students' writing. Instead of blank lines we found students could write between three sentences and a whole page. This was incredibly encouraging for me, as students had more clarity for the purpose of their writing and the potential for growth. I believe that the clarity came out of a greater ability to connect with the text in a meaningful way because the topics were of their choosing and relevent. Morning Pages became a much easier part of our day after that point. I feel that, while censor-less writing worked for me personally, I needed to teach and develop creative writing (within each students ZPD) before students could understand what the purpose for writing was.

At the start of this second year of the program I had a template for starting morning pages (sentence prompts) but now faced a new issue. Many of the students who had responded well to morning pages prompts had left to work, attend post-secondary schooling, or moved into mainstream classes and the students that came new to Canada were not yet academically strong enough to engage as the last group had. Again, I found that sentence prompts were leaving student morning pages blank and confused. Instead of

a word prompt, I began using picture prompts. I put up a variety of pictures including

mountains, food, sports, families, and school. I hoped that students would see the images

and write about how they felt, what they thought of and how they related to the pictures.

This was not very effective and I feel that part of the issue is the complexity of the

images. Pictures draw complex thought, but if you do not know the complex systems of

words to explain them, the decoding is done in your head. Even the pictures that I

believed would have had the greatest influence did not generate much writing. For

example, a picture of a Nepali refugee camp left no room for written text as students just

sat staring at the photo. How can I expect students to write what they are experiencing

with that photo when they can only remember the beauty of home in Nepali? The

pictures, although of familiar topics were not in the students ZPD. I, too, have

experienced this phenomenon with language. Language is not just about finding the

words that match in other languages. It is about a new way of thinking. Many times I

have tried to say something in Spanish and it just does not feel right. The English words

have the connotations and the right feeling. I remember the first time I said, "te amo" (I

love you) to my wife. It felt so hollow, but I knew it was so much more for her. Over the

years I have built the meaning of those words with her. But that took time and an

understanding how "I love you" did and did not mean "te amo". If I was going to receive

more from the students, I needed to start by finding what they were primed for, to

discover their Zone of Proximal Development.

A few weeks into the second school year I began writing dialogic journals back

and forth with the students. As this had worked to a certain extent in the previous year I

engaged it more fully and the conversations changed from a possible shared narrative

between them into individual experiences we shared between teacher and student. Every day I read what the students wrote and I wrote back to them for the next day. This was much more time consuming than the previous forms of morning pages, as I had to write fifteen journal entries a day, but the results were incredibly rewarding. Students loved the way I interacted with them personally and I could push into topics that had previously been hidden because they were afraid to talk about it in a group. Issues of depression, family loss, secret romances, and the frustrations with how Canada is became open conversations in morning pages. I was amazed to see how many of the students had so much to say. A few students, who wrote three sentences before, were now writing two pages in fifteen minutes. Equally surprising was the great interest that students began to show in my own life; where my family was from, how my family was organized (familial and social structure), and the things I like to do outside of school. Some of the conversations became very serious as questions that students were not willing to ask in teatime came out privately. Much of this is due to the social pressures of what is acceptable to speak about in public settings. In the case of my Hindu students, questions about caste, religion and social purpose became open conversations. Kids need to have a place to talk about life. Nassaji and Cummins report this as an expected outcome describing similar experiences in their research, "[Ali and Ellen] used these written interactions as a focused context to communicate in English, attempting to understand and appreciate each other." (2000, p. 104). Specifically relevant were the similarities between my experiences and those reported by Nassaji and Cummins in how this development of the ZPD showed patterns of questioning, give and take interactions,

reporting and requesting, evaluating and the appropriation of spoken language into written language.

In the following section, Living Morning Pages, I will explore in detail two narratives describing the dialogic nature of morning pages with students and how it helped me to identify their learning needs so that I could better meet my needs as their teacher. The autoethnographic narrative is a powerful tool to use in reporting these experiences as it provides me the tools to show the process of learning I underwent when approaching morning pages. Ellis (1999) describes my purpose for engaging in autoethnography because it is only fair that I share my difficulties in morning pages. "…honest auto-ethnographic exploration generates a lot of fears and self-doubts—and emotional pain." (p. 672). Finding my way to meaningful morning pages, but finding it is only the first step. Once I found the way to engage, continuous engagement becomes much more difficult as the lives of my students and my life become more transparent to each other.

Living Morning Pages.

Learning to be a writer. In my undergraduate studies I was a French/Spanish major. As such, the language learning struggles that my students experience are often familiar to me because I know the difficulty in language learning. One of the most difficult aspects in learning to read and write in other languages was the form of feedback I received from teachers. It is probably the most common experience students have across language learning classrooms: the red pen. I vividly remember the stress of returning assignments covered in so much ink that one would wonder how many pens it took to mark it. Bardine, Bardine and Deegan (2000) argue that this is constantly directed to a

teacher's tendency to find mistakes. In various studies on this issue, at least 89% of all assignment comments were found errors. (Kaiker, Draga and Harris, as cited by Bardine, Schmitz Bardine and Deegan). Yet after years of schooling and teaching, I still go for the red pen when marking or correcting student work. I have tried to convince myself that I chose red because it is easier to see on the page, even going so far as to find the brightest red marker I can find. But in truth, I am a product of a system I was successful in (and in the case of French, not successful), and so I refer back to the red pen.

So when Mohinder (pseudonym) came to me after morning pages and asked me to mark English corrections on his writing I instinctually grabbed for my red pen. I saw it as a good sign that he would ask me to correct his English in this way, it showed a desire to improve English skill and be more precise in his writing, something I was not as eager to do in my own studies. The corrections were easy enough for me to identify and not very time consuming as there would only be three or four sentences in a period of 20 minutes of writing. I began to see, however, that as the quantity of corrections I made did not change over time, the content of my students writing did not change either. We were stuck in a rut of repetition that neither he nor I were able to escape through our engagement in morning pages of this manner. Bardine et al. suggest this could be because students see written comments, "as a way to get a better grade, not necessarily to improve as writers." (p. 96). But morning pages do not receive a grade in my class. Did Mohinder know this?

As I thought about how to approach this issue I realized that my time with him would be short lived. He was a very motivated student and was acquiring the academic foundations for mainstream integration very quickly. If I was going to teach him to write

freely and thoughtfully, I needed to take a different approach. Until now, Mohinder was not taking chances to write about unfamiliar topics or complex themes about his life in Canada. But as I wanted what Andrew (2011) describes as a sociocultural awareness through micro-narratives and enhanced sensitivity to culture in order to prepare for better integration into other Canadian classrooms, I received the same descriptions of family members, sports teams, and questions about how I was today day after day. So I asked Mohinder why he did not write about how he felt about being in Canada and how his plan towards graduation would change as he faced different structures of learning in other classrooms. He responded the next day that he was afraid to write about these things because he did not know the words to use or the way he should use them to write correctly. I realized that the red pen was holding him back.

Over the next few days, I began to pull away from correction of his form and into a discussion of his content. At first, Mohinder did not like that I had stopped correcting his writing, but I explained that he would have plenty of that in his future studies. Now was not the time to discuss how he wrote, but what he wrote and how we could explore life and identity through writing. As the conversation themes in his writing changed to explore new and difficult topics, he would stop me after class to clarify what he was trying to say, and I would respond with, "yes, I understood that in your writing". This, in turn, generated more confidence in his ability to write and Mohinder began to write more extensively and in depth.

Two significant elements to the process of writing I saw through this experience are also reported by Nassaji and Cummins (2000) in their work with the ZPD and second-language learners. Firstly, Mohinder began to demonstrate language use that had not been

directly instructed, but that which he observed in my writing back to him and attempted to use himself. In that way, the form of writing improved while little value was placed on it. Secondly, we came to see together that the English we shared had meaning because we gave it meaning. That is to say I did not divide the writing into sections (spelling, grammar, vocabulary). But instead, we used the language, as best we could to understand each other. When language became about sharing and I was no longer the judge of his voice, he was no longer worried about what I wanted to hear and became focused on what he wanted to say. Freire describes the difference as one of dialogue and antidialogue, "…dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's "depositing" ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be "consumed" by the discussants." (2005, p. 89). It is for this reason that I can say the morning page became a dialogue between us and was no longer my imposition of how language should be.

*Waiting for a saviour***.** There are times in morning pages I feel inadequate to meet the needs of my students. For five years I trained to be a teacher that could meet the academic needs of my students. Lesson planning, unit planning, pyramids of intervention and content mastery were the main focuses of my pre-service teaching practice. In my studies I focused on these things because I did not want to be a school counsellor and deal with the trauma and difficulty of personal lives. In a class with refugee students this is not possible and I needed to develop empathy for the lives of my students I did not previously possess. The *hidden curriculum* my classmates spoke of truly was hidden to me.

Now in a place of morning pages where students engage in authentic conversation with me, the hidden curriculum began to take on new meaning. The curriculum truly was

hidden from me because it is the curriculum that my students bring to me. While I often engage equally in a way that Aoki describes as Reciprocity of Perspectives, I find that there are times the metaphor of a bridge in which we meet on is inappropriate. Aoki, too, feared that this bridge metaphor was insufficient to grasp the complexity of reciprocity as it suggests, "but a tourist's surface sense of awareness of culture" (p. 28). Instead, Aoki argues for a deeper understanding, engaging in what he calls a "conversation of mankind" (as quoted by Pinar, 2005, p. 28).

I first met Sahana (pseudonym) as a grade nine student after she had been living in Canada for ten months. She had come to my class after a short six-month period in middle school and her teachers' comments were that she was hard to engage, withdrawn and not capable of the simplest of tasks in English. She was, then, a very typical student in my classroom except that the withdrawal from engaging with adults and English speakers endured much longer than most. After a full year of school with me, there was still nearly no engagement in academic life and I feared that this would be a student I would never understand or be able to engage with. This began to change when after a few months of speaking about the weather and food in morning pages I finally asked if she would ever return to Nepal. "Never, I need to be here in case she comes looking for me."

Over the next few weeks I struggled with my role in morning pages as I was moving past the role of tourist in her life and began to engage in so much more. Sahana was living with a couple who were not her parents because her father died in Nepal and her mother had abandoned the rest of the family. Being one of the last families to immigrate to Canada, they had lingered hoping she would come home. When she began writing about it, she had not seen her mother in three years. What role am I to take in this

child's life? I am not capable of engaging in the medical counselling that she would need

for this trauma, neither was she willing to meet with a counsellor because that is for,

"crazy people".

As a teacher, I struggle to know and understand my next steps. One criticism I

have heard from my own wife is that I always try to fix things. The colonizing "fix"

lingering in my own habits as if I can fix the complex difficulties of life or even have a

place to assume a right to fix. Fowler (2006) speaks of this tendency in my own teaching

self, "the basic mode of engagement" (p. 125), in which I engage in the practical projects

in teaching. The challenge, Fowler argues in her fifth orbital, is to deal with, or maintain

in, difficulty. If I cannot "fix" the difficulty of my inability to meet the need of my

student, what then is my role?

As the conversations with my student progressed and I continued to come to

understand the continuing trauma she experienced I thought about Fowler (2006)

describing her childhood experience in church, "Hey God, if this is your house, how

come you are never home?" (p. 21). Then looking at my student, I came to understand

more about her life in Canada: if this is the beautiful land promised, where is my saviour?

Sometimes, I cannot fix anything because there is nothing to fix. Learning about the lives

of my students does not always end in a happy resolution for either of us, but then I can

come to know the truth a bit more clearly.

Speaking with Fowler about these difficulties she asked me, "how do you deal

with this trauma you experience through your students?" (Personal communications,

September, 2015). My response is that I do not deal with it, I become cold. Watching my

father act as a police officer most of my life, I learned through him to feel nothing when

trauma happens around me. Upon reflection, however, this is not true. I get angry, I feel

sadness when I try to empathise with the lives and continuing trauma of my students, but

I also learn how I can act. My actions do not fix lives, they do not heal the pain my

students feel, but they do have an impact. I can behave with more patience in my

classroom, learn to speak with more love and less criticism, and provide a safe place to

think and feel without fear of rebuke. Those actions are what I am capable of doing to

respond to the lives of my students.

Conclusion. Over the four years I have used morning pages with my students

there has been significant changes to how I used them and for what purposes I used them.

More than teatime or home visits, morning pages was a practice for which I had more of

an idea of what I thought it should be. I think that it is for this reason that morning pages

has evolved so far from what I initially intended until now. At first, I used morning pages

as a way to start student creativity without my involvement. When this did not work

because students were unable to write, I tried to narrow the practice even more by

directing students to write about something specific. In hindsight, it is unrealistic to

believe that if students struggle to write about anything they wish, they can then write

about a topic I chose. This was my unconscious attempt to colonize the conversations I

permitted in my classroom, as if I told students, "these are the topics we will discuss

because I am the teacher and I know what you need." Friere (1987) speaks about this

control as he discusses literacy and the difference between being present in history and

being represented in history.

> "Poor are those people, for example, who passively accept without the least
>
> concern, a notice that reads, "it was decreed that on Tuesdays we begin to say

good night starting at 2:00pm." This would be an act of people who are

represented but not present in history." (p. 65).

In the same way, I cannot pretend that restricting what my students can say, or speak

about, is any different. If I want my students to be writing themselves authentically (be

present), then I must facilitate ways for students to write about what is important to them

and in ways that are liberating from my own colonizing tendencies. This colonizing trend

in my teaching practice is vilified even further by realizing the vulnerable state of my

refugee students who have come from a history of cultural genocide (Rizal, 2009).

The change from colonizing practice to emancipatory literacy did not come about,

however, because I became aware of my colonizing practice, but because I found such

student resistance to this colonization. Students did not behave defiantly by refusing to

write what I told them, but they were not able to write. I know this is true, because when

students were given the opportunity to drive conversations by what they felt was

important, they were not held back by a lack of basic skills but found ways to speak about

what they wanted after just a few short weeks in school. This poses a difficult question,

then, to educators who work with a variety of different cultural backgrounds: who is

illiterate, and what is illiteracy? If I had not pressed into a new practice of morning pages

consisting of two-way conversations between me and the students, I would have

incorrectly concluded that my students were illiterate because they were not able to

regurgitate the dominant western cultural markers I expected from them. Instead, I had to

forgo my own expectations of literacy and allow students to demonstrate their lives and

histories. This means I need to put the red pen away and encourage the conversations in

directions that the students felt important. In doing so, I did not discover my own culture again, but found new ways of thinking and experiencing the world.

To understand the needs of my students, I needed to develop more than a basic understanding of who my students were and delve into a more complete realm of history and experience. Learning about my students is more than just the information to make better decisions for my students, for in the moment that I understand more about them, they have achieved the purpose of morning pages:

> "…a political project in which men and women assert their right and responsibility, not only to read, understand and transform their own experiences, but also to reconstitute their relationship with the wider society." (Friere, p. 7, 1987).

Morning pages, in this praxis, has two purposes. First, I learn about the students to become more empathetic to their personal and educational needs. Second, for students to learn to be active participants in society. As my understanding of students grows, so too must their ability to express who they are grow. This symbiotic relationship of refining practice and growing student ability is referred to as "proximal processes" by Bronfenbrenner (1994) and yields great growth in developmental potential.

Home Visits

Introduction. Teachers often jest amongst themselves the changing tone of parental engagement over the last twenty years. What used to be a parent/teacher interview to discuss the growth and behaviours of students has comically been changed to an attack on the teachers' inability to teach to the specific needs of a student. This is the

perception by many teachers and is even highlighted in comic relief on teacher blogs

about how to deal with difficult interviews because of difficult expectations by parents.
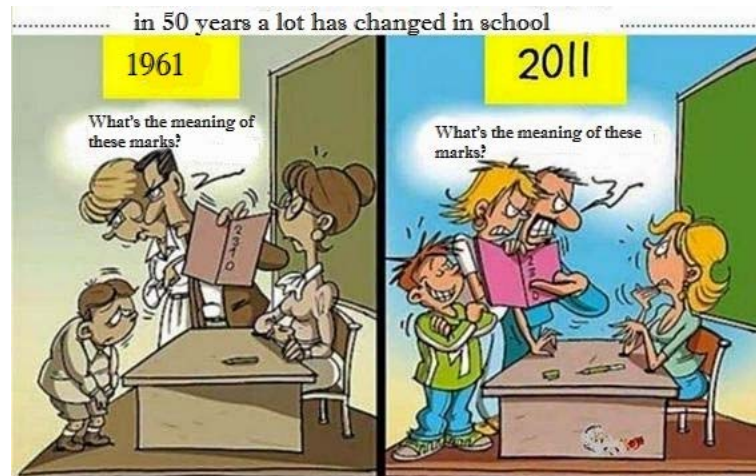

Figure 5

Parent-Teacher Interviews Without A Gradebook. (Bower, 2014).

Bower (2014), in his blog, *for the love of learning*, identifies an aspect of this

change in parent-teacher relations: parents expect you to know their children, not tell

them how they did on a test. What is at issue may be the changing understanding of

parental roles in Western Education as parents come to understand that they have the

authority to advocate on behalf of their children desiring to work together with educators

instead of blindly accepting the authority of teachers and administrators who tell them

who their children are. Sarmento and Freire (2012), describe this as a move towards

democratic education,

> "In ancient times, school was regarded as an object of possession of a set of
>
> teachers, who had the role of disseminating the knowledge in an externally
>
> constructed way, which was transmitted in a standardized way; today, in a

democratic society that calls for the participation of all people, that social

representation can no longer be accepted." (p. 107).

While I believe that Sarmento and Freire use the term "ancient times" loosely to describe

any time in which teachers were reporting on students with all burden (success and

failure) falling to the students, there is a sense that this kind of reporting is inappropriate

in the modern age of democratic participation in schools.

The Bhutanese understanding of parent-teacher relations, then, could be seen

under the lens of "ancient times". Expecting to engage in democratic communication

with the families of my students has been difficult. I found very early on that the parents

of Nepali refugee students were never coming into the school for any reason. Even when

I requested that the parents come to the school, they would not engage. Working with

immigration services, I found family disengagement for two reasons. First, there is a level

of cultural respect resulting that parents do not go to a school because that would show a

lack of confidence for the work of the teachers. In the Bhutanese community, teachers

have high levels of respect. (V. Rizal, personal communication, October 2012). Secondly,

parents do not come to the school because it may be perceived, by other members of the

community, that their child is having difficulties in school. For fear of this shame and for

respect of teachers, I did not see a Bhutanese refugee parent in the school for the first two

years I worked with them in a mainstream setting. To begin to engage with family I

needed to build a practice in which contact with home was more regular and would be

seen as a point of pride for parents.

Genesis and development of Home Visits. Whereas inviting parents to school

was inappropriate, visiting the students' homes became a way to engage parents in a safe

and familiar setting. I attempt to visit each family home two or three times throughout the

school year: once at the beginning of the school year, at semester break and at the end of

the year. I also meet with parents more regularly if there are students struggling or

parents request a meeting. I, inevitably, spend much more time out of school visiting with

our students and their families than I would in the 20 minute parent-interviews at school,

but it also means that other school necessities (like report cards) have different value and

take less time. I feel that home visits are much more important than report cards or letters

home in this context because the outcomes of my program are different. While most high

school classrooms have students working for grades, the main focuses of my program are

attitudes, habits and life skills. How am I to have accountable reporting to parents if I

need to communicate these issues over a report card comment they cannot read? Instead,

sitting with parents for an hour is much more productive and appropriate. Lerner (2012),

in her suggestions for classrooms with refugees recommends home visits as a better way

to connect with a student's family.

A typical home visit will follow a similar format. Usually there are three of us; an

immigrant services translator, my educational assistant and me, who go to the homes and

meet with parents, siblings, and sometimes extended family (cousins, grandparents, aunts

and uncles). First we sit and wait for the family to join us and frequently they will bring

food or tea while we speak. I begin by asking how the family is doing in Canada and how

members of the family are. This is as common in my meetings with Canadian families,

but I have found that parents are more open to discuss school once they see I value the

family unit and have shared my own family as well. After speaking about the family and

how they are doing in Canada, I shift the conversation to ask if the parents have any

questions or concerns about the education the students are receiving. Usually there is not much discussion here because of the cultural pressure to not question the kind and quality of work a teacher is doing. The main responses from families usually include questions about homework and if their child is completing all of the work they need to do. A discussion about homework with family in front of the student is usually enough to ensure that the student does all of his or her homework every week.

Following the initial discussion, I begin to share classroom expectations and how the student is meeting, or not meeting, the expectations for the class. These conversations are usually very positive and it is a great opportunity to start the conversation towards building common goals for the year. Parents play a key role in this goal building by sharing their desire for their child's future. Berg, Dhillon, Kershaw, and Maheu (2010) suggests that while it should be assumed all parents want their children to be successful in school, even though it may be expressed in a negative way. They also suggest, "Get to know your students' families by establishing trusting, caring relationships with students, their parents and the community. Try to understand the complexities in your students lives." (p. 29). It is through these conversations that my classroom is understood by parents to be more than graduation and grades; but about preparing for life outside of school. Some parents are bothered that their child is not ready to graduate, but through understanding the difficulties of education in Canada realistic goals can be set.

Over my four years meeting with Bhutanese parents I have found a variety of desires for student learning depending on what they (community, family and students) collectively understand the purpose of education to be in their lives. Some want their child to get ready for mainstream schooling. Other parents want their child to learn

enough English to get a job and those goals can be set as well. This is a very important

aspect about customizing the learning for each student. Not every student has the same

goals for school and life and we need to accommodate that as best we can. It may be in

this way that Bhutanese parents understand education in similar ways to Dewey (1897),

> "Education, therefore, must begin with a psychological insight into the child's
>
> capacities, interests, and habits. It must be controlled at every point by reference
>
> to these same considerations. These powers, interests, and habits must be
>
> continually interpreted—we must know what they mean. They must be translated
>
> into terms of their social equivalents—into terms of what they are capable of in
>
> the way of social service." (Par. 7).

This is part of the process of developing a democratic education system. When students,

parents and teachers build goals and communicate freely, everybody is motivated to work

to achieve these goals.

Frequently I bring my own wife and children to the homes as well. My students

love to see my kids and I have noticed meetings are more relaxed when the parents

realize we just want to talk and get to know each other. When I bring two toddlers it can

create a lot of confidence in parents to see that I am working to raise a family, just as they

are. Parents are also encouraged to see that I live in a home with immigration too. My

wife has struggled with many elements of living in Canada in much the same way they

do. To see her successful and confident creates trust in my work with them and their

children. When my wife communicates in Spanish with my children also allows us to

discuss their role at home in the education of their children. Many families believe that

they need to speak English and do things Canadians do if they are to be successful in

Canada. It can be very relieving to speak about how their first language is as important as English and that the culture and literacies of their home are important and need to be maintained and developed. Chow and Cummins (2003) argue that reading in any language is key to literacy development and use that foundation to argue, "[We want] to engage parents in reading with their children at home and to encourage discussion and sharing of experiences between parents and children." (p. 34). I often share how important the "heart" language is. I like to describe the heart language as the true language of each person. Just as Spanish will never feel perfect in my heart, English will never be their heart language, and for this reason they must keep their heart language most important in the home. Parents not only hear me say it, but watch my wife and I live it with my own children.

Home visits are an essential part of my class and a significant part of why my students are so successful. Building an individualized educational plan with parents, community and the student helps me to keep students focused and parents invested in their child's education by demonstrating a critical literacy democratic process to parents, community and students. In the following section, Living Home Visits, I will explore two experiences in home visits that demonstrate how experiences with families and community directly affect my daily classroom experiences as I come to understand more fully my teaching needs and therefore am more capable of appropriately adjusting my practice to meet these needs.

Living Home Visits.

School Is Restorative Place. In my first year of teaching I began to see childhood in a different way than I understood it growing up. When I was young I had family

support and security that created in me a sense of being to follow my dreams and believe

that I was capable of anything I put my mind to. At no time in my youth do I ever

remember feeling that my personal value was in question and because of this support, I

was able to pursue the higher levels of experience, what Maslow (1943) describes as; the

need for self-actualization. In this need, one wrestles with who one is, can be and should

be. "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be

ultimately happy. What a man *can* be, he *must* be." (p. 382). It is this privilege that took

me towards teaching, even when I was unaware it was my path to take and would bring

me to this thesis; an exploration of my social mind in action. My understanding of the

lives of my students, however, did not always fit what I expected to be a shared

experience. Instead of students exploring who they should be, I found students struggling

to make friends, resolving broken family issues, and even unsafe homes because of drugs

and violence.

Into my third year of teaching I found that some of my coworkers struggled with

the same false presumptions I did. I remember one conversation in particular in which I

argued that there is the very real possibility some students have never experienced love

from family because from their birth they have been seen as a burden to the family. That

is not to say many students experience this, but that we cannot ignore the possibility it

may occur. How then do I attend to this difficulty in my meetings with students and

families? Fowler (2006), describes how teachers need to find ethical ways to approach

this work,

> "years ago I intuitively began to write narratives about difficulty in teaching as an
>
> ethical way to make sense of educational work, to examine perplexing places of

my own pedagogical actions, to deal with the hundred tiny griefs in a school day,

and to explore my own life in order to understand better what I bring to that which

lies beneath the prescribed curricula I teach." (p. 185).

This then, becomes the purpose of my writing about this difficulty with my student and

families. Most of the home visits I participate in are around the issues of student attitudes

and behaviour (both academic and non-academic) and very little about assignment

scoring. Yet there are times, where I become the advocate for students in spite of what

family feels is the reality of a child. The story I share is my discovery of my

understanding of teaching difficulty in response to student difficulty.

After the initial introductions, and discussions around family health and wellness

in Canada, I began sharing the student's grades by explaining that some of the lower

scores could have been higher if the student had studied more. I observed how the parent

became very angry and started putting blame onto the student. "I knew she was no good"

rang in my ears. So I changed the direction of the conversation immediately. Lupart and

Porath (2009) write about how schools can enable families because, "Families are the

experts on meeting their children's needs, and schools can benefit from this expertise by

forming collaborative relationships with families not only to learn from them, but also to

give them appropriate supports within the home." (p. 3). Not today, however. When the

emotional security of children at home are absent, I need to become the advocate and the

expert on meeting the child's needs. Instead of focusing on the difficulties and struggles

of the student, I shared how the student has been doing so well as compared to when she

first arrived to the class more than a year ago. Even as I spoke it appeared to me that the

parent was looking for more proof that the child was a failure to the family. Confirmation

of poor behaviour in school could be more proof that the problem is outside of the parent. Recognising this, I quickly shifted the focus from how we work to overcome difficulty to how we have been working and seeing positive growth.

When there is not a supportive environment at home, the school must become that supporting environment when reporting to family. The difference, is found in the way the criticism is expressed. In a supportive environment, the criticism is of student behaviour. In a non-supportive environment, the criticism is a personal attack on character. Instead of *I dislike your behaviour*, it becomes *I dislike you*. Understanding the home-life of this student allows me to reflect more closely, then on positive school behaviours the student has demonstrated: zero absences, zero late arrivals. Over more than one year, this student came regularly to school in adverse weather and through illness. So then, what about the structure or culture of my classroom is appealing to this student? Banning, Clemons, McKelfresh, and Gibbs (2010), explored restorative places stating, "Restorative environments are places to relax, rest, recuperate, unwind, and feel safe. They are places that offset the effects of mental fatigue." (p. 907). Whereas the home I grew up in was my restorative place; where I could relax and recuperate, it appears that my classroom is a place where some students find peace. When I consider what I have come to understand in the difficulties of my students' lives, the purpose of my classroom and my teaching must be affected.

In this experience of home visits, I discovered that as an act of restorative teaching practice, the home visit can guide my classroom practice because I understand the lives of students more completely and then need to adapt to this need. In my restorative classroom place, I can now focus on esteem and security because students

view my classroom as more than just a place for learning, but as a place to become a more complete human being: finding relaxation, comfort, peace, and recuperation. Home visits has developed in me a tool and an ability to recognise student needs working with and through family. This too, is my growth into critical literacy as I come to communicate, interpret and share my teaching life through narrative exploration. Fowler (2006) feels that this can be the tool through which we find hope in difficulty,

> "While many seem to dwell in future shock in a harsh, warring, degenerating planet, I want to think that hope (for ourselves, for others, for the educational enterprise) is possible through creating new literacy of narrative, which in turn fosters a literacy of metaphor, hermeneutics, and relationship." (p. 186).

Critical literacy through home visits as a restorative teaching practice must continue to provide me with the tools to uncover the learning needs of students.

What is school? One of the difficulties that my students frequently face when arriving to Canada is the difficulty of school integration as a teenager. Truly, it is for this reason that my program began; students' educational needs could not be met in traditional classrooms. The difficulty, for my Bhutanese students, lies in two factors: arriving to school for the first time as a teenager leaves a student ten to twelve years behind in curriculum and trauma and difficulty often interfere with learning opportunities, as I have explored earlier. The difficulty, then, is discovering what the purpose of school is. Walqui (2006) reports that large numbers of immigrant students in the United States continue to drop out of school in staggering numbers even after years of schooling. This is a trend that I too have seen, with only a couple of students achieving

graduation within four years of transitioning out of my classroom and moving into mainstream schooling.

With little likelihood of achieving the basic requirements of graduation (grade 12 English and Social Studies), the question about the purpose of school arises. Are students in school to graduate? To earn work experience? To develop basic living skills? For my students, the answer is all of them, depending on what we decide as a community is the purpose. This, however, is not a new idea for education: that the purpose of school should be decided by the needs of student, family and community life. Dewey (1897), understood education to be about life, not future imagined life;

> "I believe that the school must represent present life-life as real and vital to the child that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground. I believe that education which does not occur through forms of life, or that are worth living for their own sake, is always a poor substitute for the genuine reality and tends to cramp and to deaden." (par. 10).

If, then, the purpose of school is to prepare for real life at home and community, the activities of the classroom must reflect that life or become less relevant to the student. Home visits as a restorative teaching practice is a tool to make the real life visible to me and can then help guide the conversations with family and community to reveal what they see as the purpose for school, the reasons to learn. This was the case for Maya (pseudonym), whose experience in my class is unique because of the way I discovered, uncovered and tailored her educational experiences to meet family and community needs.

Maya joined my class after a secondary migration from another Canadian city. While already in Canada two years, she struggled with basic literacy skills in both

English and her first language, Nepali. Already in her last year of high school, Maya's prospects for graduating with a diploma were very low and her previous teachers reported that she may have a learning disability that was keeping her from catching up to her Canadian peers. With less than one year of schooling available to her before she would have to search for something new, school had very little interest for her and on numerous occasions I would hear her talk about how much she hated school. These appear to be common traits among refugee learners who struggle in school. Nykiel-Herbert (2010) shares similar descriptions of student difficulties in her study with Iraqi refugee students,

> "Because of their struggles with the English language and literacy, the academic gap between them and their grade-level peers widened as time went by. As a result, about 30% of the Iraqi student population ended up with referrals to special education services, and many others were retained in the same grade." (p. 4).

It is easy to understand the frustration of students who see the prospects of graduation becoming less and less likely within their time at grade school.

For Maya, this appeared to be an impossible task, so with the purpose of school in question, she started to behave in ways that demonstrated her frustration in school; arriving late, taking long walk breaks in the hallway and keeping her classmates from school work became regular issues that caused me to question why she was coming to my classroom at all. There were times that I felt I wanted to begin the withdrawal process for her from school. Not because I felt like she needed something different, but because I did not want to work with a non-compliant student who was nearly an adult. Again, I found myself externalizing student difficulty as an unwillingness on the part of the student to change behaviour without considering how my own practice was contributing to the

situation. Hart (2009) built a variety of frameworks demonstrating how environmental

conditions around responses to trauma affect students in many ways and can ultimately

lead to adverse effects in school. He suggests that,

> "…the effects of depression slowing down cognitive functions; loss of
>
> motivation; effects of stress making it hard to differentiate relevant from
>
> irrelevant information; and mood states that overwhelm the ability for self-
>
> regulation leading to behavioural problems." (p. 360).

The conditions for enduring trauma and insecurity were unknown to me because I had not

yet met with family or taken the time to discover what the life of this student entailed.

About two months into my time working with Maya, I began a set of home visits

with all students and their families to discuss how school was progressing and what

parents expected for their student. As I prepared to meet with her family I collected notes

on her poor behaviour, attendance and progress. I felt that I may be able to get her parents

to be aware of my difficulty with her, so they would take care of it. I am ashamed to say I

was ready to cause this student difficulty at home to make my six hours a day with her

easier. When the family meeting began I found that she was from a large extended family

and that with so many children in the house, one child's educational difficulties were not

a great priority. I also discovered that the family had other, more pressing, difficulties

around the corner. Within a few months, government support in housing and food money

would expire and they would have to support the family with whatever job they could

acquire. Much of the hope of good family income was relying on Maya's future high

school diploma to get her a good job, and now I was taking that away as well. As her

father shared the difficulty of finding a job with limited language and literacy skills, I began putting my prepared notes away.

When Aoki (2005e) speaks about curriculum-as-lived and curriculum-as-planned, he is not necessarily speaking exclusively about the day-to-day lesson plans we create for students. He is speaking about how we approach the boundaries of education,

"These words [that science must be taught as a humanity] claim me, cause me to pause and to question the way we have traditionally textured the curriculum landscape into epistemic categories, writ large, often labeled faculties—…" (p. 200).

Aoki continues by speaking to how we, in secondary school, tend to reflect these university settings. This is the risk I face with this student: am I an English language teacher or a teacher? If I were an English language teacher exclusively, I could not presume to work with this family as it would be outside of my professional mandate. But I am not an English language teacher, but a teacher—looking for ways to develop my student's skills to better meet the lived needs today.

I proposed a shift in the educational intent for Maya. Instead of using school as a way to work towards mainstream integration and graduation, school can be a tool to develop the skills for acquiring and maintaining employment. At first, her parents were unsure because it would mean an interruption in schooling and push graduation even further back than it was to be. Now as a democratic approach to Maya's schooling plan, I discussed and negotiated with parents and Maya as we navigated the difficulties of a decision of this magnitude. I am reminded of Freire as he spoke of dialogue and anti-dialogue as a dichotomy of revolutionary action against suppression and control. I have

come to the place where I do not have all the answers for this student and cannot fix the world for this student. Freire (2005) states, "How can I dialogue if I consider myself a member of the in-group of "pure" men, the owners of truth and knowledge, for whom all non-members are "these people" or "the great unwashed"?" (p. 90). Instead, I am part of the conversation to enable and engage the family in Canadian society. I proposed a plan in which I worked with Maya to prepare resumes, cover letters, application forms and practice job interviews. Maya's family proposed a work experience program where she acquires work and was paid at least minimum wage part time. Maya wanted me to work as a liaison between Maya and her employer to maintain healthy working habits and job satisfaction.

As the details around this educational shift are explored and set, the evidence I have brought on paper to show a disinterested and unengaged student appear to become more and more absurd. For what I expected to be the purpose of education is different than what Maya, her family and her community needed. Returning to my classroom did not mean that the difficulty I faced with her was absent, but now the difficulty was not between us because we desire different things, but it was the shared difficulty of preparing her to integrate more actively in the Canadian work experience.

Conclusion

Every mid-August I arrive to my classroom to prepare for an imagined class of students. I arrive two or three weeks early to prepare my classroom, my plans and supplies that I will use. I even know about my students' collective history in refugee camps and general details about their migration to and within Canada. Just as Miss O in Aoki's story state, "Can I establish myself here as a teacher?" (2005e, p. 202), I make the

classroom with my plans and intentions. But when my students start arriving and I start teaching, my plans begin to change. Some students need to be pushed harder, others just need a place to relax, and some need something different altogether.

Home visits is a tool to provide me with knowledge about my students' individual lives, families and communities. To act outside of this information is inappropriate and anti-democratic. I agree with McLaren (1996) when he states, "It is plainly time to push western civilization up against the wall and demand that democracy live up to its name." (p. 119). If I am going to participate in a society that claims to be democratic, then I must behave that way from within my own classroom by providing opportunities to students, family, and community to actively be part of the educational process of my classroom. Antidialogic, undemocratic processes are a foundation of our educational structure exemplified in programs of study that are mandated by law and include everything a student needs to be successful. Nordkvelle (2015) argues for a history of this Eurocentric process of legalizing the superiority of western ideology, "This European transformation was performed through legal, religious, and cultural institutions. Geographical colonisation accelerated this development; Eurocentrism became a tool, which enabled Europeans to conquer the world." (p. 55).

Left to my own plans, I become a colonizing figure within my own classroom upon the less powerful outsider whether I intend to do so or not. The strength of home visits as a restorative teaching practice then is the power to restore a democratic education in which my values are not imposed upon another, but become part of a bigger narrative of the purpose and intent of school. It is through this practice that students, family and community can find their voice and become active and equal members in

Canadian society. I have often stated that one of the greatest difficulties facing refugee families is the lack of agency. When financial trouble hits schools, English Language Learning programming are often the first cut, because there is less agency and advocacy from parents and community to keep the programming available. To clarify and explain what I mean, I again lean on Freire's understanding of human action, "Freire notes that all human activity is by definition purposeful and has, therefore, a direction. For a teacher not to undertake to make this direction apprehendable and to join in dialogic action to examine it is to refuse "the role of a subject of that directive practice". (1987, p. xviii). I do not get to claim support of democratic principles and then ignore democratic practice without consequence. Democratic participation requires action and expanding agency. Within my classroom, democratic education cannot exist without the integration of familial and communal participation. Home visits, as an act of restorative teaching practices, restores the active democratic practice to my classroom.

Chapter 4: Interpretations and Analysis

Process of Analysis

The goal of every ethnographic research project is to discover the underlying themes that accurately describe the culture of an environment. In chapter three I described a series of events surrounding what I intended to be a specific restorative teaching practice, but the culture of my practice is not tied to separate events as it were a collection of independent academic streams. Instead, a deeper examination can expose common themes throughout that provide a more complete understanding of the culture of restorative teaching practices. In the beginning, to discover these overarching themes I **tried** to apply a variety of different tools provided in sociology and anthropology, including Spradley's (1980) cultural domain paradigm in which each experience is compared through a componential analysis according to experiences within and across the Outline of Cultural Materials (OCM). But as I worked through this process and developed tracking grids, as seen in figure #6, I found that the nature of the work became lost in the detailed tracking because of the divisive nature of such a process.

	A Curriculum of Tea	Morning Pages	Home Visits
871 – Education System -Curriculum			
871 CU-AL – Education System- Curriculum- Alphabetic Literacies			
871 CU-BS – Education System- Curriculum- Book Studies			
871 CU-CCW – Education System- Curriculum- Core Class Work			
871 CU-DPA – Education System- Curriculum- Daily Physical Activity			
871 CU-FT – Education System- Curriculum- Field Trips			
876 CT – Educational Theory and Methods- Curriculum of Tea			
876 DE – Educational Theory and Methods- Democratic Education			
876 MP – Educational Theory and Methods- Morning Pages			
877 FD – Students- Family Dynamics			
877 GV – Students- Group Values			
877 HV – Students- Home visits			

Figure 6

Cultural Domain Paradigm (Fuller, 2015)

Instead of following this structure, I decided to view my analysis of restorative teaching

practices as a process of discovery in response to philosophical beliefs becoming

practice. In this structure, my understanding of the themes becomes a process of the

discovery and practice of restorative teaching practices for students from refugee

contexts. Figure #7 is the culmination of the process of, A Curriculum of Tea: A Model

of Restorative Practices for Refugee Students, as an original and independent experience

through: difficult beginnings, philosophical underpinnings, developing practice, research

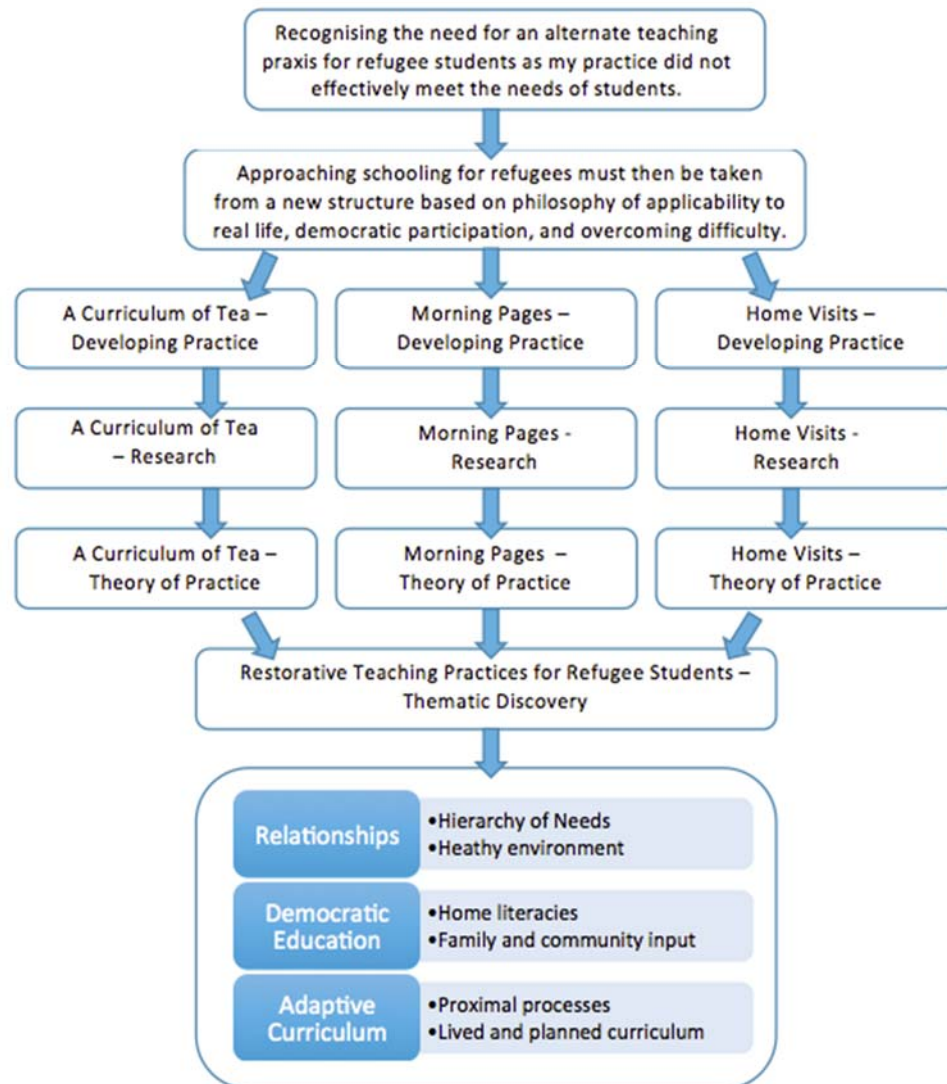in action, theory of practice, and thematic discovery.

Figure 7

A Curriculum of Tea: A Model of Restorative Practices for Refugee Students. (Fuller, 2016).

Moving forward, I elaborate on each of the three themes (relationships, democratic education and adaptive curriculum) as they have been foundational and guiding in the practice. Educators who desire to begin using restorative teaching practices with their refugee students may find this a guide for developing their own foundation of

practice as these themes may provide alternate practices than a curriculum of tea,

morning pages, and home visits as their lived experience produces.

Relationships

Primary to all aspects of restorative teaching practices for students from refugee

contexts lies the importance of relationship building between me, my students and their

families. It is through these relationships that I am able to make adjustments to my

practice to better meet their needs. As opposed to conducting research (which could be

seen as a one sided relationship), the purpose of a curriculum of tea, morning pages, and

home visits was to create relationships to better understand my students, their families

and for them to better understand my place with them. This primarily comes about

through the sharing of stories, back and forth between us. The stories that students share

and the stories I share are ways that we share our histories and then come to understand

our present more fully. Fowler (2006) explains why stories are so important in education,

"Stories seduce: they build desire—to know *what* happened, to watch *who*, to visualize

where and *when*, to make meaning about how, and to more deeply understand *why*." (p.

8).

Understanding who we are and what we do in the classroom is a way that students

and I begin to build safe and caring environments for each other. Refugee students often

experience trauma and that trauma does not necessarily end when settlement occurs.

Building relationships with students informed how I could approach student needs with

more complete understanding. If, as Gorman (2010) suggests, students need to be

connected, to the familiar to move into higher stages of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs,

building relationships is a key aspect of that process. Building relationships builds

familiarity and a shared culture within the classroom which becomes a safe place for students and me. If, instead, I was to ignore the foundations of building a relational school community and students were expected to adapt to my cultural expectation exclusively, the disconnect from familiar culture would impede growth.

In my experiences building relationships with the students, I found that it was because of healthy relationships that important and difficult conversations could happen. These important and difficult conversation are an aspect of truly meeting the needs of students as I shared in stories such as: *What is school?* and *Waiting for a Saviour.* Looking in my own life experiences, how many of the difficult conversations would have been possible had I not had a healthy relationship with that person? Probably very few. And these relationships do not just extend to students, but with the families and community as well. Without the relationships developing through home visits, conversations around family settlement, student progress would be more restricted and incomplete. This leads towards an understanding about the nature of the relationship as being one of power or domination, or one of democratic equity. Relationships are better formed when all participants are viewed as having equal value and import.

Democratic Education

Democratic education, overcoming an anti-democratic power structure in school, is well understood by Freire's (2005) discussion of dialogic and antidialogic relationships. If I were unwilling to take a dialogic approach to teaching with students, family, and community, I would be implementing another form of colonialism on my refugee students. The connotations of this shift, however, were more costly to my control than I expected them to be because this shift is more than just agreeing that home

literacies are important. Instead it is including values and literacies into every aspect of my interactions with students and their families. I found that for parents and community, the shift towards encouraging home literacy in the first language was an unexpected conversation. Often, families assumed that in the new world they moved to they were expected to give up their home country values and literacies. Instead, the encouragement to maintain what I called the "heart language" was confirming that they, too, had value in Canada just as they were, not what they would become as they became more Canadian.

This extended into the classroom as students were passionate about demonstrating their own literacies and I encouraged and fostered them. While I often found students struggled with the reading and writing in first languages, most of the pleasure in their values was found in the impromptu dance parties and time to celebrate their own festivals like Happy Holi during Dashain in October. I found that the older students were more adamant than the younger ones about maintaining their *heart language* values and traditions. But I also found this in my own experiences with my wife who was reluctant to learn English, even after we wed, because it may mean sacrificing part of who she was. This is a shift in educational dialogue because students do not come to us needing to change or be fixed. They are complete persons as they are and I need to confirm this in every interaction we have. In this structure then, school becomes less about educating them and more about sharing together to discover new ways of thinking and interacting.

When school becomes the discovery of the purpose of school, it becomes a task for us to discover with individual students and their families. As someone who was successful within the academic structures of Canadian schooling, it was difficult to come to terms with families that school may not be about acquiring a high school diploma and

moving on to post-secondary schooling. This becomes a difficult task for students coming as teen-agers. That is not to say they do not have the ability to graduate in the future, but the immediate need within school is different. In my time teaching refugees I have guided students into work from the classroom because the immediate needs of families guided the purpose of school. Dewey's (1897) understanding of the purpose of school as being preparation for living instead of planning for a future life now is understood more clearly. Restorative teaching practices for students from refugee contexts is a practice of living, not a practice of planning to live.

Adaptive Curriculum

"Ring the bells that still can ring,

Forget your perfect offering.

There is a crack, a crack in everything,

That's how the light gets in."

(Leonard Cohen, as quoted by Aoki, 2003, p. 1)

It does not seem to matter how comprehensive or detailed my planning is, I cannot meet the needs of my refugee students by teaching them the materials that are prescribed by government mandate alone. Every year I plan for ten months of designed curriculum and find that my students need something different. But this "something different" does not come freely and is not the same for every student. A democratic approach to education helps provide me the relationships necessary to discover what it is my students need because as I come to understand them better, I can better provide what they individually need. For some students, it is the rigor of academia that leads them to be successful in education when they leave my classroom, but for others it is a safe

environment with a warm meal. These needs change as students linger in my program as well. Students who begin strong encounter other difficulties as culture shock wears off and the individual and family begins dealing with the emotional burdens of trauma.

Now what? is the question I asked when facing the reality of the lived curriculum. I recognise that students need something different than my plan and that each student faces different obstacles. Now what do I do to meet a student's need? Democratic, relational education brings me closer to students to provide the learning opportunities students require to overcome adversity and grow. Bronfenbrenner (1994) likened proximal processes to the interaction between mother and infant in that as one comes to know the other more completely the needs of both are better understood and the process becomes a positive feedback loop of accelerated discovery and growth. Likewise, restorative teaching practices become a way to draw closer to the needs of students, address those needs, re-evaluate and begin again.

Addressing lived curriculum becomes praxis within curriculum studies. Teachers who use restorative teaching practices to discover and meet the needs of students are entering the research within curriculum studies. Aoki (2005c) believes that curriculum studies belong in the classroom. In addressing the move to the classroom he states,

> "There is an ongoing *deinstituting* of the traditional understanding of 'development', 'implementing, 'evaluation' and so on, and a *reconstituting* of these commonplaces of curriculum practices, firm in their insistence of recognizing the presence of people who subjectively act." (p. 233).

In my new role as a Lead ESL Teacher working among different teachers and immigrant students, I encourage educators who struggle with the purpose of school in the lives of

their students to enter the living research in curriculum studies by beginning the process

of restorative teaching practices.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Significance of Research

Teachers in Canada continue to have more refugee students in their classrooms every year. As globalization continues, these populations will continue to grow in diversity and teachers need to have a way of meeting the needs of these students by the ways that they teach. It is my desire that this research demonstrates the need for teachers to follow a different curriculum than one that is mandated to them, and instead follow a critical practice that meets the needs of student and teacher. Restorative teaching practices for students from refugee contexts can create a greater purpose for school as teachers develop the tools to meet the personal and academic needs of students. Morning pages, teatime, and home visits are a praxis to work with students and their families to develop more complete ways of living and participating in a democratic society. Public education as curriculum-as-planned alone will continue to marginalize students and their families as they cannot meet their needs sufficiently. In this traditional practice, teachers become frustrated and indifferent to student struggles. Restorative teaching practices can reinvigorate teachers' lives as curricular outcomes become refocused and students grow into active citizens in our communities.

Conclusions of Research

Restorative teaching practices for students from refugee contexts is about a new way of living in school. In his book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire speaks to the authenticity of life as a result of communication. (1970, p. 77). This authenticity comes as a result of equal balances of power in our classrooms. "The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the student's thinking." (p. 77). Freire accurately

describes the nature of learning as a process of being as opposed to a process of filling

the students. (p. 77). The lives we share in my ELL classroom are to re-establish a power

structure of democratic education where the stories students share are as important a tool

for learning as the stories that teachers share.

Restorative teaching practices for students from refugee contexts can help

teachers discover who they are in teaching and who their students are. For it was only

through the difficulty of failure that I began to discover who I was as an educator with

my students. Johnston et al. (2009) discovered this difficulty when trying to pre-plan

student self-discovery. Undergraduate education students struggled to recognise

themselves in their experiences and it is for this reason that the lived-experiences of

difficulty in the multicultural classroom is so necessary. Through difficulty, teachers can

discover their own identity in restorative teaching practices that guide them towards more

effective teaching. Every engagement in restorative teaching practices will be different

because the teacher and students are different; they should not appear the same. The

practice could, however, be similar in this: the desire to be the most effective in the

classroom by meeting student needs. Creating a third-place, therefore does not adhere to

any set of specific conditions that everybody must follow, but is built together with

students as they become more engaged learners willing to share their lives.

The restoration of restorative practice is not just for students but primarily for me

as an educator. How am I to be true to my teaching self? How do I live in education in a

way that is true to my beliefs of learning? Restorative teaching practices can restore a

teacher's heart to the genesis of teaching: to learn how to live. I believe that the greatest

danger in education today is utilitarianism and pre-determination. I did not enter

education to continue the status quo of society, but to help people realize their potential. If I am to help restore the learning of my students into a true way of living, I too must be restored into a better way of teaching and living and restorative teaching practices can help me do that. Paulo Freire speaks to this process. Education is not what we want it to be, but how we change it. "In order to *be*, it must *become*." (Freire, p. 84).

Call for Further Research

In this study I have demonstrated how restorative teaching practices for students from refugee contexts can bring a new life back into teaching and provide teachers with a practice that can help meet the needs of students as they come to know more about themselves as an educator and the students. As such, this research is limited to a teacher's perspective working with a specific population.

Future research into restorative teaching practices can expand into different areas and with different populations. Of particular interest to me is how restorative teaching practices for students from refugee contexts will occur with the current influx of Syrian refugees we are experiencing following their horrific civil war. Changing from a teacher focused research model restorative teaching practices could also begin to address how these practices affect student engagement and restore youth from traumatic histories both in the short term and over a longitudinal study as students move past school into adult life. Moving from grade school, do restorative practices have the ability to move across age demographics into adult education settings? And finally, how can restorative practices affect the teaching of teachers who work with other marginalized and disenfranchised populations who are not labeled as refugees? Teachers working with high numbers of immigrant students, low-income families and First-Nations populations may

benefit from some of these practices, as it is a way to meet the diverse needs of these populations.

As teachers continue to employ these restorative practices with different populations and in different contexts, I hope that we will find a new way of living in teaching that is authentic for teachers and effective for students. These practices then, have the potential to continue the work that Dewey began more than a century ago when he stated, "I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living." (1897, par. 9). This deep autoethnographic study into the culture of my own teaching self has been a humbling and incredibly rewarding process nothing short of an internal revolution guiding my understanding of the theory and practice of democratic education. I believe that this kind of mindful reflection and exploration can bring me towards a more complete educational experience that focuses on the importance of relationship, care, and community.

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