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**Designing for the Dissonance: Community-engaged Field Experiences for Challenging
Curricular Misconceptions of Place toward Localizing and Indigenizing Curricula within
Elementary Teacher Education.**

By

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Bachelor of Arts in Earth Science Teaching, University of New Hampshire, 2004

Master of Elementary Education, University of New Hampshire, 2005

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
Education
Curriculum and Instruction

May, 2023

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Elaine Marhefka

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On March 20, 2023

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to our inspiring and compassionate children, Idelle and Frankie who spark and continue to fuel my curiosity, connection to nature, and love of teaching, and my partner Frank for his continuous patience, love, and belief in my creative process.

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As we all journey on the trail of life, we wish to acknowledge the spiritual and physical connection the Pennacook, Abenaki, and Wabanaki Peoples have maintained to N'dakinna (homeland) and the aki (land), nebi (water), olakwika (flora), and awaasak (fauna) which the University of New Hampshire community is honored to steward today. We also acknowledge the hardships they continue to endure after the loss of unceded homelands and champion the university's responsibility to foster relationships and opportunities that strengthen the well-being of the Indigenous People who carry forward the traditions of their ancestors.

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Abstract

Harmful oversights remain in elementary social studies curricula which overlook or misrepresent minoritized communities. This dissertation explores designs for teacher education which address these oversights through community collaborations. This multi-manuscript dissertation is an empirical-conceptual inquiry design (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), as it is not purely empirical or conceptual research. This design allows for an independent discussion of each study, while interpreting phenomena across the three chapters. Acknowledging my positionality as a white female, in a predominantly white, female profession, I look to Indigenous and Black scholars, both locally and broadly, to inform my perspective and project design. Using a phenomenological lens and ethnographic approaches, I conducted two empirical studies within two different community-based field experiences through an elementary social studies methods course. Sociocultural considerations of space, socioecological considerations of place, and critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) provide the theoretical frame for this series of investigations. Guidance from *Decolonizing Methodologies* (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2021), methods from the fields of S-STEP, Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices, and reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), necessitated attention to self-reflexivity, improvement, and relationships. Researching from the positionality of a traditionally defined teacher educator, I hope to build upon collaborative research scholarship which expands who is considered a teacher educator. These studies investigate teaching practices through community *and* preservice teacher narratives, which critically explore places as a means of overcoming curricular misconceptions. Findings describe curricular possibilities and limitations, and the implications when these two phenomena clash, what I am conceptualizing as *curricular dissonance*. I provide evidence of this phenomena in the first two empirical chapters. In my third

chapter, I conceptualize this phenomenon as a site for learning through field experiences which confront the tensions inherent in teacher education and curriculum studies, to engage scholars across both fields of research.

Keywords: curricular agency, curricular dissonance, elementary social studies curricula, indigenizing, teacher education

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Executive Summary

This dissertation is about learning how to design for change, curricular change. Why? We are currently the audience to many performances to which we would never have attended willfully; injustices exacerbated through a global pandemic, demonization of critical approaches, and a spiral of misinformation. Not only are we audience members, but we are also actors in these interactive performances. Prior research illustrates the power of curricula to support or challenge these social, emotional, political, and cultural performances. Recognizing my participation in the performances of curricular and teacher education design, I needed to examine the interactions, curricular decisions, and relationships contributing to these acts, with attention to casting.

Who is auditioning for these roles (preservice, community, and teacher educators) in *reconceptualizing teacher education, and curricular revision*?

What acting classes, (teacher education experiences), are necessary to support their breakthrough performances of *curricular agency*?

What plot twists (sites of curricular dissonance) inhibit the journey toward *indigenizing, localizing, and diversifying*?

How does the scenery (sources of curricular consonance) of these *educational spaces* support these agents of curricular change?

First a word about metaphor, I love it. Although critiqued that metaphors may only take a concept so far, oversimplify complex ideas, or incur unsteady comparisons, it relates to both my methodological use of narrative inquiry, phenomenology, artistic interpretations, and my concept of *curricular dissonance*. As a participant in this research, I introduce two curricular projects as their own cultural microsystems (Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Opppenheimer, et al.,

2017) using ethnographic approaches within the frame of Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP). This methodological lens highlights gaps in my cultural pathways which demand learning from scholars and community members from BIPOC communities who are informing these gaps in curricula through critical pedagogies. However, the current political climate, ignores and even exacerbates the social, environmental, and educational injustices occurring in public systems. Additionally, the marginalization of elementary social studies, which I consider riddled with interdisciplinary opportunity, minimizes attempts to overcome these gaps through representation of minorized communities, histories, and narratives.

Given the urgency for these justice-oriented curricular changes, I consider a time, lost on a winding, rural, dirt road, sharing the trepidation in my voice, yet hearing the wise words from my daughter “I prefer to check my surroundings before I panic”. First, we will look carefully at the dissonant soundtrack of curriculum studies and the dissonant performances of teacher education. This research seeks to converse with scholars across these traditions and consider the ways we may design the scenery together. This empirical-conceptual inquiry design explores the experiences and spaces for working to overcome these pervasive problems through collaborative curricular design with community experts, preservice teachers, and teacher educators. I chose this research design as it centers, “the identification and empirical documentation of the daily dilemmas and contradictions of practices which then become grist for the development of new conceptual frameworks and theories” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 95). Discerning, navigating, and designing for these dilemmas and contradictions is the primary purpose for this research, to understand curricular design in teacher education as a necessary form of social action toward educational equity and inclusion.

Introduction

Rejecting Curricular Approaches Reliant on Hierarchies, Settler Colonialism, and Anti-Blackness: A Necessary Step for Decentering Teacher Education and Reconceptualizing Curriculum.

Invitation

Imagine a time, enjoying a concert, watching a film, listening to an audiobook, when the music morphs from serene or passive, to mysterious or startling. Dissonant chords foreshadow tension and conflict of what is about to happen. Then consider these dissonant motifs continue throughout the concert, film, or audiobook, there is no return to harmony, no resolution for the ears, or the mind. In the context of curriculum, there are two choices, one, leave the performance, *avoidance*, or two, acknowledge the tensions, sites of *curricular dissonance*, and be empowered to navigate within them. Elementary social studies, as a marginalized subject, is wrought with sites of *curricular dissonance*, or conflict between curricular possibilities and limitations. Although we are all audience to political divides, consequences of climate change, and increases in hate-motivated violence and rhetoric, teachers are often unable to devote the time to tackle the major themes around social and environmental justice, minoritized histories, and place consciousness in their curriculum development or instruction. Illustrating the environment surrounding my time as an elementary teacher, Pinar (2012) describes how leaders continue to consider teachers unworthy and incapable of curricular decisions, and instead, subject them to the judgements of institutional leaders, “Demonized, teachers have no rights, only obligations” (p. 6). Educators admittedly are not always the victims of external obstacles and may construct their own barriers as a form of self-preservation. This self-preservation in the form of avoidance,

turning away from tensions, inherent in our curricular decisions, becomes protection from fear of community backlash, legislative consequences, or professional jeopardy, based on racialized perceptions. Drawing attention to the traumatizing potential of curriculum erasure (Au, Brown, & Calderón, 2016) and evasion pedagogies (Viesca & Gray, 2021), heightens the urgency and names what these patterns truly are doing. Teachers now more than ever are looking for affective support from their communities. This research seeks to explore the necessary supports that enable the second choice, to navigate these tensions together, and despite its relief from the discord, recognize avoidance as a detrimental choice.

I begin by narrating my formal and informal educational experiences as sources of inspiration. I then locate this research within the literature highlighting the urgency for curricular change and how teacher educators and researchers are responding to this urgency. Using the theoretical lenses of sociocultural conceptualizations of space, socioecological conceptualizations of place, and critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014), I propose how relationships to place may help us overcome misconceptions in elementary curriculum and inform the design of teacher education practices. I then describe the relevant phenomena that persist in these places and practices, settler colonialism, anti-Blackness, and dissonance. To understand the persistence of these phenomena, I interpret and conceptualize *curricular dissonance*, and *curricular agency*, to illustrate connections and themes among narratives. I use ethnographic and phenomenological approaches across two empirical studies to glean an in-depth understanding of participant reflection and experience. With considerations from *Decolonizing Methodologies* (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2021), these approaches lend themselves to the frame of Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP), which I use to investigate the reflective process of teaching, curriculum, and teaching about

curriculum. As in the discussion of what counts as research, and the concerns of not validating self-study, or practitioner inquiry, Cipollone, Zygmunt, and Tancock (2018) argue “Teachers, teacher education, and educational researchers need to push back against neoliberal logics that marginalize community and educator voices” (p. 723). This welcomes opportunities to rethink who has knowledge worth knowing, and from where our sources for inspiration and reconceptualization of teacher education may originate. I close with the organization of this dissertation and each chapter’s potential contribution to the fields of curriculum studies and teacher education.

Cochran-Smith & Lytle (2009) offer the concept of empirical-conceptual inquiry a necessary form of practitioner research as it does not “fit neatly” or entirely into purely empirical or conceptual research. Following this introduction, I foreground the empirical data in the subsequent two chapters. Then I use these empirical discussions to inform a conceptual chapter for troubling and designing critical inquiry experiences in teacher education and conclude with a discussion which highlights the alignment of these three chapters. These chapters rely on theoretical foundations, however, beyond the scenery, actors, and plot twists of curriculum studies and teacher education, participants use their words, hear the motifs of practice, and wince at the dissonant sounds related to this work of creating justice-oriented curricula for an elementary audience. Across the two settings I analyzed curricular decisions which reflect how preservice, community, and teacher educators perceive their participation with a) justice-oriented curricula, b) place-consciousness, c) educational spaces, and d) expressions of agency. This overarching research question inspires and connects the following three chapters; *What is the experience of designing and implementing teacher education practices toward localizing and diversifying elementary social studies curricula through community collaborations?*

Inspiration

My wonderings about Indigenous scholarship, and place-based pedagogies are deeply seeded in my early childhood experiences within matriarchal spaces, fostering appreciation for the natural world. As Tuck (2011) offers I am exploring my interest in “Rematriating Curriculum Studies”. This is perhaps most inspired by my close relationship with my maternal grandmother, eternally questioning, researching, and connecting to the land through observation, gardening, and appreciating. Raised on a farm in a rural setting, she was the first of her eight siblings to attend college, where she studied teaching, but never formally taught, and instead provided spaces for navigating our own understandings of the natural and social world. This freedom of exploration perhaps too nostalgic or optimistic, remains an inspiration for my work as a teacher. As I have always identified strongly as a creative thinker, my Nana would often remind me of the logic necessary to learning anything new. This was particularly true as she taught me the process of pickling, each step mattered, and mistakes here, meant with her background, less food for the family and even worse, waste. She emphasized the necessary appreciation and care for food and land, and researched Indigenous practices of using plants, and stewarding the local conservation land. This relates to my wonderings about the institution of teacher education, who is considered a teacher educator, and the minimization of this historically female, and therefore ‘non-professional’ life choice.

Both of my parents were educators, a math teacher and middle school administrator, and therefore education also took the form of ‘schooling’. I always wanted to be a teacher, and in my sixth-grade yearbook wrote, “Ambition: College Professor”. However, I have worked with students in a variety of settings, camp counselor, tutor, caretaker, and often found myself finding ways to engage that student on the periphery. This important work of teaching gets lost in the

programmatic substitution for curricula. Although not a new argument, it underpins a perpetual lack in preservice teacher ability and willingness to create, explore, and imagine beyond these scripts. This inquiry investigates what happens when they do engage in this work and confront the overwhelming potential of design.

As both an undergraduate and graduate student, I loved recognizing education and teaching as its own ‘thing’. As an Earth Science Teaching major, I thrived through the outdoor engagement, taking core samples in Great Bay, or P8nagok Bay in oceanography, and finding fossils on an overturned ocean floor on a weekend excursion in paleontology. These experiences reengaged childhood interests in nature, but also developed my wonder about experiential education. This further informed my view that teaching practices were something worth studying and improving. As an elementary educator, and cooperating teacher, I was fortunate to have the support to work on various community science and social studies projects which I integrated across disciplines. Students used GPS technology to map the school yard, and Claymation technology to illustrate different ecosystems. We cared for live specimens in the classroom, which we released in the local river, within the context of water quality restoration. These experiences expanded students’ inquiries beyond the required scripted programs and asked them to contextualize and localize their understandings. However, we were all still handing in plan books, to be signed by my administrator each week, and I was “off-pace” with the rest of the grade level in math. Although my students were doing map scale and charting the temperature needed to support trout development, the district priorities were clear. This same year, we were required to administer 33 formal assessments for each child, standardized, program-based, and district based. In a critical review of the S-STEP literature’s portrayal of self, Ergas and Ritter (2020) note a similar frustration, “how teachers’ wings are clipped by traditionalist principals

and supervisors some of whom seem to forget that the entire endeavor is about human beings not about sustaining systems” (p. 4). The breakdown of affective and cognitive support that I felt, even as a teacher with self-perceived agency, left me in no hurry to return to space of the elementary classroom, without some inquiry therapy. Santoro (2018) synthesizes this phenomenon with her subtitle of *Demoralized: Why teachers leave the profession they love and how they can stay*. However, these community engagements, learning alongside my students foster my hope for these curricular possibilities, not as additions, but as the curriculum.

Although I have identified as a writer, since elementary school, becoming a parent reinvigorated my love of writing. I began writing about natural connections, and the inherent love and curiosity of the outdoors. Watching my daughter and son evaluate experiences, textures, temperatures, conversations, faces, sizes, and patterns reignited my interest in thinking and writing about learning. Although this can happen in many settings, it often does not, and teaching becomes no longer synonymous with inquiry. This became the impetus for creating an outdoor preschool science program called Outdoor Investigators. Through Outdoor Investigators, I became a community science educator, mutually learning with families. Inquiries took the form of investigations around natural questions in local conservation areas. These experiences highlighted the value of informal community, and intergenerational knowledge. Being in these natural spaces, provoked my interest in place-consciousness, and how the energy and nature of the space fosters questioning and necessitates flexible teaching approaches. It also inspired my curiosity about how immersion in a place, beyond one’s backyard, welcomes continued participation overtime. Although there is movement toward this goal, teacher education programs so infrequently ask preservice teachers to venture into non-school contexts and may unintentionally limit who recognizes themselves as a teacher.

As a new mother teaching this program with a one- and three-year-old in tow, I returned to the university and began researching these questions regarding outdoor and community-engaged education. I had the opportunity to become a research assistant with the SPIRALS (Supporting and Promoting Indigenous and Rural Adolescents' Learning of Science) curricular project which offered both qualitative and quantitative methods to develop research skills such as transcription, interview coding, survey data analysis, and article writing (Honwad, Abrams, & Middleton et al., 2019). Members of the SPIRALS team encouraged my entry into this program, and further inspired our shared goal to engage students with the concepts surrounding sustainability. My experiences as an adjunct teacher educator provide an opportunity to explore these curiosities that coalesce into why become an educator, why this is project worthwhile, and what teachers are doing in their local spaces to maintain and enhance its worth. Loudly and purposefully, you hear my assumptions, that yes public education is a worthwhile endeavor, however underpinned with collaboration, compassion, and creativity.

My initial experience as a doctoral student, began the more formalized reconciliation of creative and critical thinking, that I often envisioned as two mutually exclusive experiences. Remembering back to my grandmother's insistence on valuing the logic required for new learning, I identified deeply with what Walters (1994) describes as the pattern of discovery, a concept of recognizing the value of creativity for opening our minds to possibilities, while employing the logical aspects to develop an in depth understanding. This is where I find myself in this process, reining in creative possibilities into a logical and possible form, while researching how various teachers participate in this process. This required investigation into the background of curriculum studies and teacher education, and what future directions this research may offer to

these fields. I outline the sources of conflict inherent in the fields of curriculum studies and teacher education as well as current approaches for overcoming these challenges.

Locating These Studies

First we must consider the temporal and geographical places teachers and communities are navigating. Situated in the Northeast, United States settler colonialism lives in our museums, historical markers, school board meetings, and 400-year celebrations of European land displacement. Headlines such as “Parental bill of rights narrowly fails in NH House, but debate isn’t over yet” (Dewitt, 2023) discusses the recent proposed legislation, House Bill 10, introduced as the parent bill of rights which concludes,

“Any teacher or administrator with certification to teach found guilty of violating any section of this law shall have his or her teaching credentials suspended for a minimum of one year for a first offense or employment terminated for multiple offenses. . . Any contractor or third party employed by the school that violates any section of this bill shall be fined \$2,500 and be restricted from any further access to all schools in the district for 1 year for a first offense and fined \$5,000 plus permanent restriction from all schools in the district for additional offenses” (House Bill, 2023).

This proposed legislation, was tabled, specifically for its focus on requiring educators to disclose changes in gender pronouns to parents even if the child anticipated emotional or physical consequences (Dewitt, 2023). However, the design of this bill illustrates the national phenomenon toward parental rights over educator discretion or student experience. Florida legislation regarding banning books and minimizing gender inclusivity provide precedent for New Hampshire lawmakers. A New Hampshire state legislator, and proponent of this national movement for parents to exercise their rights introduced House Bill 514, which he claims is not

meant to ban books, but does remove the exemption for K-12 educators from the state's obscenity laws. It also allows a process for parents to object to materials in the school, which although a potential selling point, disregards that many districts already have a system for parental communication in place.

Although I am the first to include parental knowledge and participation in a child's education, parental choice is being weaponized as a mechanism of silencing. Legislators manipulate the collective agreement that parents are important to a child's wellbeing and propose legislation which protects these essential relationships, and childhood innocence. What is not discussed is whose innocence is truly being protected. Au, Brown, and Calderón (2016) consider these choices in curriculum as either sustaining the *invisibility* narrative, where minoritized community histories and lifeways remain invisible, and the *visibility* narrative, in which specific dominant narratives are included for the purpose of controlling the narrative of these communities (p. 5). However, they argue that even these attempts at visibility "still places the experiences of diverse communities as outside of the common debates and trajectories of the U.S. curriculum" (Au, Brown, & Calderón, 2016, p. 5). They critique curriculum studies as having a 'blind spot' when it comes of multicultural perspectives.

Not only are glaring curricular misrepresentations evident, locally and globally, but educators are overlooking the benefits of prioritizing Indigenous ways of knowing for our future. A proposed summit for this coming September of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals seeks to discuss actionable items and scientific progress toward the care for our planet and the intertwined social, economic, and humanitarian obligations participating nations are prioritizing. Although the United Nations are designed from Western traditions which often incites critique, the goals and summits create opportunities to share knowledge, statistics, and

practices toward a more sustainable future. Creating relationships with Indigenous communities that actively sustain and have sustained their lands for thousands of years is essential to the future health of the planet. Indigenous members are playing an active role in the design and maintenance of the sustainable development goals. The Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues/DSPD outlines a declaration for the “Empowerment of Indigenous Peoples” with the primary goals of equal access to education, and small-scale agricultural endeavors, as well as protection from discrimination through human rights laws. Most importantly, the indicator of “Secure tenure rights to land” appears twice and reflects the ultimate goal, achieved through access to economic prosperity, education, and inclusivity (Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues/DSPD., n.d.). This global context heightens the urgency of educational transformation and addresses the question or hesitation of why indigenize, why care? We cannot ignore this climate crisis and there is knowledge that lives in communities that model the symbiosis that could sustain human life.

The Dissonant Soundtrack of Curriculum Studies

Given the intensity of these local and global contexts it is essential to explore what may be done through the lens of curriculum studies. Curriculum scholars illustrate the persistent discord, composed of the minimization of teacher agency due to political influences and gendered perceptions, curricula which is detached from local places, favoring dominant narratives, with little attention to student, teacher, or community cultural pathways. Although this necessitates research toward social and environmental justice, there remains potential for a new form of discord when intentions cloud our judgement of what our curricula prioritizes. This dissonant soundtrack resonating through our curricular decisions, concludes with the cautionary tale from Savannah Shange, from the tradition of Black feminist geographies.

We are creating institutions and curricular expectations that devalue the cultural patterns and practices of students' and teachers' lived experiences in their communities. Considering curriculum as a dialogue means when feeling empowered to do so, we choose to voice or not to voice our experiences. Ravitch (2000) constructs a historical chronology of the destruction of teacher, student, and community agency as "an extraordinary shift of power away from teachers, parents, and local communities" (p. 164) meant to discredit the intellectual and professional capacities of teachers. These movements toward standardization and institutionalization exacerbate the dissolution of agency and narrow the field of prospective teachers to those that exhibit the 'norms' which educators are afraid to supersede. This silencing is further exacerbated by structures of "accountability" . . . a covert gendered and racialized demand that disables teachers from the thoughtful performance of their profession" (Pinar, 2012, p. 216). Dewey (2007) notes that the very individuals they want to empower through education are voiceless and therefore lack "any agency for securing the development of its ideal" (p. 54). This reminds us that we cannot remain static in our thinking, but rather we must dissect our reality, "criticize undesirable features and suggest improvement" (Dewey, 2007, p. 47). While offering Dewey's historical wisdom in the creation of educational spaces that prioritize localizing, I must also critique that in his discussion of elementary history instruction, he uses the term 'savages' in his discussion of teaching about Native peoples.

Attempts to discuss the history of minoritized communities and issues of race may still perpetuate a 'heroes and holidays' form of elementary social studies curricula. Pellegrino, Mann, & Russell (2013) highlight gaps in curriculum regarding Black education, and identify racialized stereotypes used to teach about segregation. Busey and Walker (2017) investigated elementary social studies standards and discovered "Unfortunately, our findings demonstrate physical

resistance, political thought and activism, and intellectual agency by Black people were sacrificed in favor of the master narrative of U.S. history and citizenship” (p. 176). Beyond US curricula, in the context of African Indigenous knowledge in Nigeria, “Schooling has been explicitly and implicitly a site of rejection of indigenous knowledge and language” (Ogbo & Ndubisi, 2018, p. 25) as Western approaches have silenced Indigenous lifeways as a means of assimilation and elimination. Additionally, standardization has minimized instructional time for elementary social studies, (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012) as a site for these historical place-making discussions, both in K-12 and teacher education curriculum. Nxumalo and Cedillo (2017) bring together Indigenous onto-epistemologies and Black feminist geographies and echo the urgency of bringing these narratives to our youngest learners.

As the elementary workforce is predominantly white women, developing critical place-consciousness continues becomes a necessary form of social action. Evans, Turner, and Allen (2015) trouble the high percentage of white female teachers, who perhaps with ‘good intentions’ employ pedagogical approaches which “are often manipulated and diluted to match conventional mainstream values of white norms” (p. 54). From the landscape of Black feminist geographies, McKittrick (2006) poses, “human geographies are unresolved and are being conceptualized beyond their present classificatory order” (p. 122). The unresolved nature of our placemaking within our multiple geographies we are working to understand, echoes Bahtkin’s (1963/2013) concept of unfinalizability, which encapsulates the unfinished potential of learning and identity. Developed through literary analysis, many contemporary scholars reference this idea such as Spektor (2017) who through a state of transformation, hopes to return to the open state of “unfinalizability and freedom” (p. 248). This concept reminds us of our ever-changing understanding of our world, which in the context of curriculum, our decisions are never final,

and necessitate a constant cycle of critique. Pinar (2012) defines this process, considering curriculum as a verb, “The method of *currere* – the infinitive form of curriculum meaning to run the course” (p. 44). Recognizing our participation and mutual creation within the curriculum, we shape what and how we learn with others. Pinar emphasizes “Without the agency of subjectivity education evaporates, replaced by the conformity compelled by scripted curricula and standardized tests” (p. 43).

This freedom and imagination, however, within its unfinalizability, may become so ideological that it loses site of the social justice intentions that sparked the curricular or educational design. Shange (2019) captures many curricular oversights supported by the contradictory structure of Robeson School in San Francisco, California. Shange (2019) locates her work within the community of Black feminist geography (Finney, 2014; Gilmore, 2002; McKittrick, 2006; Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017; Opperman, 2022) a tradition placing and locating Black female lived experiences, historically missing from geographical traditions, in their multiple geographies. Black feminist geography draws attention to these place-related oversights. In *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Anti-Blackness, + Schooling in San Francisco*, although the school prized a “mission to offer culturally responsive, social justice-themed education to low-income youth of color” (p. 2), disciplinary and pedagogical decisions caused sites of dissonance particularly for Black students. Shange (2019) uses the readers’ understanding of dissonance to frame the overview for her work which “attends to the tensions between coalition, anti-Blackness, and the state by documenting the afterlives of slavery as lived in one corner of San Francisco” (p. 3). This text employs the broad use of dissonance which welcomes investigation into tensions inherent when curricular aspirations and realizations are in conflict, what I later detail as *curricular dissonance*. Attention to these oversights and conflicts incite the necessary

recovery of the curriculum by educators, students, and communities (Thomas, Tancock, Zygmunt et al., 2020; Warner, & Hallman, 2017).

The Dissonant of Performances Teacher Education

Attempts at redesigning models for teacher education are often still unable to dismantle the governmental and financial infrastructure, which perpetuates racialized and gendered disparities, and a minimization of agency of educators in public and higher education. These limitations have sustained exclusionary practices regarding who is qualified as a teacher educator. This discussion traces the historical pitfalls of teacher education as ‘women’s work’ and schools of education as ‘cash cows’ and concludes with possibilities for expanding the notion of who is a teacher educator and where this education occurs. Thomas, Tancock, Zygmunt et al. (2020) note we are at a “critical crossroad in American education” as there remains a racial discrepancy in the population of students and population of teachers, which necessitates “community-engaged teacher preparation” toward “critically conscious, socially just, and equity-focused future teachers” (p. 124).

Governmental, functional, and financial motivations continue to suffocate the potential for reconceptualizing teacher education. Various scholars (Kliebard, 2002; Phelan, 2011; Pinar, 2012; Ravitch, 2000; Zeichner, 2007, 2020) critique the political and social paths of teacher education as logistical training, isolated from K-12 settings, ‘women’s work’, for the purpose of social efficiency, university financing, and neoliberal cultural domination. Labaree (2019) traces the historical origins and development of teacher education through the common school movement, to normal schools, to the university, and distinguishes between schools of education, that are more academically, and less practically or professionally focused, with teacher education programs developed through the model of the normal school, that focused primarily on

developing professional skills. Labaree troubles both university settings for teacher education, for although providing money, as a “cash cow” for the institution, they are neither professional nor academically rigorous. This metaphor positions schools of education as a means of tuition, which is then distributed to other places in the university and purposefully removes agency from departments of education. This mirrors the patterns of settler colonialism as “Nature and labor, including land, plants, animals, and human bodies, are exploited for utility” (Gorlewski, & Tuck, 2019, p. 96-97).

Current models of teacher education at times do overcome the two worlds pitfall (Braaten, 2018) of the often mutually exclusive experiences of formal university teacher education, and inservice K-12 education. Field experiences in teacher education offer the social ecology in which to engage in critical pedagogy of place and justice-oriented curriculum development. Studies explore the various ways to decenter knowledge away from the university and reconceptualize teacher education through the schools and communities (Cipollone, Zygmunt, & Tancock, 2018; Chaplin, & Daoud, 2017; Clarke, 2020; Donahue-Keegan, Villegas-Reimers, & Cressey, 2019; Dover, 2017; Fernández, 2019; Ford, 2017; Gullen, & Zeichner, 2018; Noel, 2016; Popielarz, 2022; Zygmunt, & Cipollone, 2019). In a local exploratory study of a New England community, Washington (2021) employs CSRP as a theoretical framework to examine how Native students and families are interacting with their own educational settings, in contrast with the local public-school settings. She highlights the need in this local context,

“all educators in the district should receive ongoing PD focused on building their “critical historicity” about settler colonialism and its impact on the survivance of local and national Indigenous communities while also building their cultural knowledge and

commitment to developing and teaching lessons that are culturally sustaining”

(Washington, 2021, p. 26).

Decentering teacher education, or moving away from dominant norms, involves both agency of those who are currently considered teacher educators by institutional standards, and newly appreciated teacher educators in communities. San Pedro and Kinloch (2017) acknowledge “co-creating a humanizing, critical classroom space was not easy and was not absent of differences” reflected through student stories as they mutually informed the construction of their course (p. 389S). As Zeichner (2020) urges,

“the most important thing that needs to be kept in mind by teacher educators is the importance of developing mutually respectful and beneficial relationships with community partners, and to include them in all phases of ongoing program improvement including the conceptualization and development of practices and structures” (p. 45).

Cipollone, Zygmunt, and Tancock (2018) suggest when expanding who is considered a teacher educator, candidates are more prepared to educate within their communities. With the recognition of a need for collective improvement that reflects our local places, in spaces of inclusion, critical dialogue, and agency, perhaps we can come to consensus that this work is in fact intellectual and academic in nature. Research designs that observe and analyze actions and interactions that foster these goals of the reimagined teacher education, are necessary to understand the intellectual processes inherent in the profession of teaching.

Theoretical Framework

As these three chapters are about change, they are inexplicably tied to conflict, or sites of dissonance. My positionality as a white female educator establishes conflict of mind and curricular design at the onset. Who am I to design curricula surrounding local Black and

Indigenous histories? To lessen this conflict, relying on the expertise and experiences of Black and Indigenous scholars and community members in curriculum studies and teacher education, offers spaces to support preservice, community, and K-12 teachers through this necessary process of evaluation and reimagination. This incites support through sociocultural considerations of space, socioecological considerations of place, and critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014), to provide the theoretical frame for this series of investigations.

Sociocultural Considerations of Space

Dissonance and disagreement are necessary for critical research. To revise our theoretical perspectives, we must exhume prior assumptions and reevaluate their effectiveness to understand the interactions among culture, development, and behavior. Scholars such as Dewey (1902/2010) and Cole (1996) critique models and theories which consider context as surround or external. Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory moves beyond these demarcations and centers learning through interactions with other people and their cultural influences. Vygotsky's predecessors understood, "Sociocultural theory is based on how culture mediates human experience and transforms human activity" (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017, p. 903). Vygotsky was central to considering culture as part of everyday activity as Rogoff (2003) explains that "Cultural processes are not part of a hierarchal system that interacts indirectly with the individual: rather, culture permeates all aspects of life (routines, habits, language) and therefore developmental outcomes and processes" (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017, p. 905).

Educators are situated within and among their cultural influences. Recognizing the cyclical exchange and movement of culture, underpins this research design and my teacher education practices. This welcomes considerations from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological

theory of development, and its critiques from Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppeneimer et al. (2017) who emphasize how this theory was originally acclaimed for its visual representations, however, depicts only “adjacent” relationships. “Bronfenbrenner is homogenizing rather than diversifying the human experience” (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017, p. 903). They offer a cultural microsystems model which depicts these interactions and cultural pathways as a spiral and seeks to overcome these critiques to represent the non-hierarchical nature of the interactions of our cultural pathways (Vélez-Agosto et. al, 2017). This model echoes Bakhtin’s unfinalizability, as the spiral continues to move about, around, and through the self, interacting with various influences, simultaneously within an ever-changing environment. Preservice teachers and I, at the beginning of each course, consider the cultural pathways within their cultural microsystems which inform our learner identities. As we continue to develop as learners, we examine our participation in our learning activities.

As this study explores educational spaces for curricular change, it is essential to consider the activity necessary for this work. Derived from Vygotsky and his collaborators, CHAT cultural historical activity theory, describes space as activity, and how motivation, emotion, identity, and educational praxis all inform this space (Roth & Lee, 2007). Engeström (2008) emphasizes the importance of relationships while beginning the work, as well as their careful maintenance throughout the space of the activity. These sociocultural considerations echo Indigenous relational pedagogies, which require and value “creating and maintaining respectful and mutually beneficial relationships between researchers and Indigenous communities” (Smith, Tuck & Yang, 2019, p. xi). Upholding these relational pedagogies requires attention to what Holmes and González (2017) describe as ‘critically relevant pedagogies of survival’ “*ethical usefulness*”, “*collective*” “*visiting*”, “*perception*” “*slowness and deliberateness*”, “*consistency*

and *dependability*” “*honor, integrity and honesty*”, “*noninterference*”, “*orality*”, “*generosity*”, “*humility and gentleness*” “*responsibility and reciprocity*” and “*relationship*” (p. 213-214).

Participation is inherently collective, as the word itself means to be in, or active with something else. Therefore, these studies considered how they are constructed with “sociohistorical” aspects of communities (Gutiérrez & Jurow, 2016, p. 569) and developed with “democratizing forms of inquiry” (2016, p. 566), all of which are simultaneously evolving.

Socioecological Considerations of Place

Theories within the traditions of sociocultural theory are at times subject to critique for oversight of the ecological considerations prioritized through socioecological traditions (Adams, Greenwood, Thomashow, & Russ, 2017; Azano, & Stewart, 2016; Cravey, & Petit, 2012; Gruenewald, 2003; Stevenson, 2011). Research designs investigating place and space must call upon the literature in both frames. Andrews, He, and Marciano et al. (2021) insist on decentering through “countering the normative culture of Whiteness in teacher education and the perpetuation of its oppressive and debilitating impact on program design and implementation, pedagogy, and community interactions and partnerships” (p. 134). Decentering Whiteness requires discussion of who is teaching teachers, and how they are interpreting the places they inhabit. Hart (2010) a scholar in environmental education, credits critical pedagogy for “questioning how culture constitutes us (as teachers and learners) as well as how we come to construct our educational identities within such discourses” (p. 165). Merging the traditions from sociocultural and socioecological scholarship, critical pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2003) invites various educators to evolve in their educational identities to see themselves as teacher educators to decenter teacher education. Working within the literature of critical pedagogies and place-based pedagogies, Gruenewald (2003b) notes “The ecological challenge to critical pedagogy is to expand its socio-cultural analyses and agendas for

transformation to include an examination of the interactions between cultures and ecosystems” (p. 5). The exchange that is so often discussed in the sociocultural tradition, of individuals and collective groups mutually informing their cultural experiences, may be considered within the ecosystems in which these exchanges are taking place. Gruenewald (2003b) offers,

“a critical pedagogy of place ultimately encourages teachers and students to reinhabit their places, that is, to pursue the kind of social action that improves the social and ecological life of places, near and far, now and in the future” (p. 7).

However, as place is inextricably tied to perspective, (Page, 2020) broadening how we see place through curricular decisions seeks to mitigate the shock many white preservice and in-service educators have when learning outside their so-called safe spaces (Chimbganda, 2017) of schools. Recognizing land, as central to place-conscious approaches, highlights the interrelationships of humanity and nature which minoritized communities have stewarded throughout history. Adams, Greenwood, and Thomashow et al. (2017) insist that “we need to redefine education and research as forms of inquiry that are identifiably place-responsive and afford a multiplicity of approaches to define and describe people’s relationship to the environment” (p. 70).

As I explore in more depth in chapter two, Bourdieu’s (1979/1984) conceptualization of place, and sense of belonging, is necessary to consider when creating inclusive spaces for professional and curriculum development. Bourdieu understood that a sense of belonging in a place develops through familiarity and experience with the habitus or everyday social practices and actions. The place embodies the habitus of the space, which is understood by those who participate in the place. Page (2020) reminds us of the necessary discomfort, to “enable placemaking and a sense of belonging” through participating in these everyday practices (p. 108). Collaborators across these

empirical studies participated in the habitus of the spaces, and either joined or challenged the habitus of the space through their curricular agency.

Critical Culturally Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogy

Paris (2012) argued for the necessary expansion of the concepts, culturally relevant and responsive as he began wondering "if they go far enough in their orientation to the languages and literacies and other cultural practices of communities marginalized by systemic inequalities to ensure the valuing and maintenance of our multiethnic and multilingual society" (p. 93). Paris and Alim's (2017) *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies* has been a pivotal resource through the Teaching Elementary Social Studies course, which was inspired by culturally relevant, (Ladson-Billings, 2005) and responsive (Pirbhai-Illich, & Pete, & Martin, 2017) pedagogies. McCarty and Lee (2014) offer an even further expansion, moving beyond sustaining toward *revitalizing*. This distinction resonates with this work as I consider not only how communities are upholding or sustaining, which has the danger of stagnation and fatigue, and instead I am studying how they are revitalizing, bringing new life and breath into their own understanding of their cultural pathways. With elementary teacher preparation, this means interrogating current patterns of racism and marginalization present in curriculum and collectively deciding first that the curricular changes are imperative, and second, developing the agency to make curricular decisions and revisions.

Revitalizing, bringing new life, requires a connection with our lifeways, and our presence in the places we make and inhabit. By "using embodied knowledge to disrupt the hegemonies and politics of power" teachers and learners are "resisting dominant discourses" (Page, 2020, p. 119). In teacher education this means encouraging teachers to critically explore their cultural pathways, bringing new life into their perceptions through mutual discovery and appreciation.

This work begins as educators collaborate to “break down students’ stereotypes of place” (Broom & Bai, 2021, p. 159) by recognizing funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). As Lee and McCarty (2017) argue “CSRP attends directly to asymmetrical power relations . . . recognizes the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted by colonization . . . and recognizes the need for community-based accountability” (p. 62). Applying this Indigenous lens to this pedagogy to investigate the phenomena of settler colonialism, welcomes an acknowledgement of gendered considerations in human and non-human relationships, considerations of agency, and opportunity for overcoming hierarchal limitations. However, given political backlash and local legislation challenging even the word critical itself, these discussions with educators are more essential than ever. It is the spaces that identify the sources of conflict, sites of *curricular dissonance*, and allow educators to work within and through it that is central to my investigations and professional motivations.

Conceptual Framework

Relevant Phenomena

Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness

The phenomena of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness (Gorlewski & Tuck, 2019) continue to thrive in teacher education systems. *Settler colonialism* has been defined as a form of conquest, conquering Indigenous land and people through settlement, as “Through genocide, assimilation, appropriation, and state violence, Indigenous presence is erased” (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2019, p. 31). *Anti-Blackness* relates to this idea of settlement and land dispossession as Black life is “to be kept landless” (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2019, p. 32). This withholding and removal of land and resources echoes the power dynamics among racial identities that continue to thrive through a corporate lens on education. As illustrated through Indigenous and Black feminist

scholarship, anti-Blackness and settler colonialism remain ominously present. These oversights result in the silencing of the educational experiences and resistance of Indigenous and Black students and educators. These phenomena illustrate that “the history of schooling and preparation of teachers is the history of white and settler approaches to teaching and learning” some of which “establish and maintain settler colonialism and white supremacy” (Gorlewski, & Tuck, 2019, p. 90). Recognizing the presence of these phenomena means designing confrontations with these histories and perspectives in elementary teacher education.

Teachers need to educate themselves about these phenomena, as well as acknowledge their participation. Personal accounts of anti-Blackness in teacher education (Banks, 2017; Berry, 2010; Butler, 2022; Hanna, 2019; Kohli, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2005) highlight the need for collective action through necessitating a critical consciousness with teacher educators, who need to understand the power of “knowledge from the African continent, brought and practiced, often undetected, by enslaved people, by freed slaves, by descendants, and Black people who were never enslaved but lived in slave states” (Gorlewski, & Tuck, p. 91). Studies on Indigenous liberatory education and resistance (Lees, 2016; Martin, Pirbhai-Illich, & Pete, 2017; Pratt, Danyluk, & Beech et al., 2019; San Pedro, 2017) call for critique of capitalism, and its relationship with the land. Exploring both Black history and Indigenous history, as local history, is essential to overcoming these curricular oversights. This necessitates a restoration of agency, as Washington (2021) urges educators to “be initiators and funders of change that dismantle policies, practices, curricula, programming, and instruction that uphold colonial education while actively working to build a decolonized educational system that is culturally sustaining and revitalizing for all students and families” (p. 28). The role educators play in upholding these unjust structures must shift to a role of deconstruction. In creating a teacher education course, Butler (2022) describes “evicting anti-

Blackness from ecologically conscious teacher education” as an “urgent possibility” (p. 212). Recognizing the inextricable links between these phenomena and their relationship to the land, requires forms of localizing and indigenizing.

Localizing and Indigenizing

These concepts seek to overcome the related phenomena of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness present in the curriculum and in teacher education. These two empirical studies developed and informed through my evolving understanding of teacher education practices explore two similar contexts, to foster awareness with educators, through course resources and experiences, of the perpetuation of anti-Blackness and the colonization of Indigenous land and ways of life in schools and curriculum. *Localizing* means bringing curricular attention to the places we make and inhabit, in conversation with historical people and narratives that shape these places overtime. Pinar’s (2012) *currere* applies to these two phenomena, as teachers, students, and community members are,

“Speaking not only among themselves but to those not present, not only to historical figures and unnamed peoples and places they may be studying, but to politicians, and parents alive and dead, not to mention to the selves they have been, are in the process of becoming, and someday will be” (p. 43).

Participating in collective work of localizing is not without the historical and contemporary structures that continue to privilege colonialism. The same is true as we begin to demythologize, or critically evaluate or remove false narratives, as we make movement toward indigenizing. *Indigenizing* requires learning from Indigenous communities and recognizing these essential perspectives throughout educational approaches, curricula, and consciousness more broadly. However, indigenizing often reveals more untruths which need critical attention by localizing,

and recognizing the places we inhabit as Indigenous land. Indigenizing and localizing are in constant conversation, as McCarty and Lee (2014) insist we move beyond sustaining cultural knowledge, toward actively revitalizing it, and illuminating potential sites of dissonance.

Dissonance

Musical Dissonance. Dissonance is a clashing of sounds, often unpleasant and unharmonious. Musical dissonance is purposeful, creating emotion, imagery, and narrative. Although also occurring unintentionally as one learns a new song, dissonant sounds are primarily placed intentionally to create emotional distress, as in a scary movie, or a musical score. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is well known for building these dissonant relationships and frequencies with the intention to resolve the work with consonant sounds for the listener. Conversely musical dissonance is “used to create forward motion, anticipation, and emotional tension” (Newman, 2022). Scholars such as Kanellopoulos (2011) explore a similar connection between music and educational opportunity in the context of music education. Applying Bahktin’s ideas of improvisation, Kanellopoulos (2011) suggests “characteristics of classicism conflict with improvisation’s complex paths of development and radical problematization of what counts as success, as well as with the essentially local, socially situated processes through which it renders itself meaningful” (p. 114). This idea of improvisation relates to curricular revision, as it continues to problematize our current curricular oversights.

Cognitive Dissonance. However, what if the created dissonance is not intentional, and instead beliefs or ideas are inconsistent with your actions or perceptions? Harmon-Jones & Mills (2019) outline the various paradigms that recognize dissonance theory. These authors outline a thorough analysis of cognitive dissonance, building upon the work of Leon Festinger (1957), “The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, motivates the person to

reduce the dissonance and leads to avoidance of information likely to increase the dissonance. The greater the magnitude of dissonance, the greater the pressure is to reduce dissonance” (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019, p. 3) as this discomfort manifests through “behaviors, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings” (2019, p. 5). These authors assert that challenging decisions incur a higher level of dissonance and may even incur more dissonance. Conversely, if the outcome is perceived to be desirable, the consonant cognitions may outweigh the discomfort. Following critiques and forms of reconceptualization of cognitive dissonance, scholars concur that behaviors and cognitions are still related as “the affective state of dissonance signals a problem and dissonance is reduced so that effective action can occur” (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019, p. 6). As these studies were not designed in the psychological tradition, nor with experimental settings, I focus on the utility of the relationship of cognitions, and do not claim evidenced changes in behaviors or motivations, rather report on stated perceptions and experiences from the participants.

Cultural Dissonance. Ybarra (2001) first employed the term of cultural dissonance to understand the tensions experienced by Latinx communities in English writing. She notes that in the space of cultural contexts, fellow scholars were applying cognitive dissonance to describe the conflicts that arise when two cultural environments come together. She realized a need to nuance the concept and identifies that cultural dissonance “emerges between Basic Writing requirements and the culturally encoded discourse patterns of Latino students” (p. 40), which like many forms of dissonance, resulted in avoidance, in this case a student dropped out of the class. Allan (2002) applies the definition of cultural dissonance in an international school context and argues not for avoidance of dissonance but rather that “schools recognize, acknowledge and work with this cultural dissonance” (p. 84). Prest (2022) relates this phenomenon to performance, however,

given the use of the term alien in legislative concepts, I prefer this author use the term unfamiliar.

“Many international performances, be they theatrical or social, result in the experience of cultural dissonance (the discomfort felt by the spectator or performer when encountering something alien) or of bemused interest. When this jarring is left hanging, the performance is not transnational; when, on the other hand, the jarring leads to the creation, deliberate or otherwise, of a new kind of performance, this may be described as transnational” (p. 228).

This concept of transnational means the audience would think across nations, or cultural understandings to create new understandings. Patterson (2021) explores rising cultural dissonance in the context of Black undergraduate students at a predominantly white university within a section titled “Becoming More Uncomfortable” (p. 65). Pratt (1991) conceptualizes these interactions as contact zones, or “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (p. 34). These encounters as Prest and Goble (2021) describe in the context of music education for revitalizing Indigeneity, characterize these spatial zones as “fluid spaces of possibility and vulnerability that lead either to collaboration and invention, or to misinterpretation and decimation” (p. 25). This work, as Butler (2022) describes, of evicting anti-Blackness and settler colonialism from curriculum, necessitates contact zones with experts, historians, and educators of color to inform curricular practices, through collaboration and invention. Like my conceptualization of *curricular dissonance*, which provides opportunities for creation, cultural dissonance when left unacknowledged may amplify the clashes. This welcomes further conceptualization of the sites

of dissonance that occur in these zones, beyond cognitive or cultural dissonance into the fluid space of curricular design.

Interpreted Phenomena

Curricular Dissonance and Curricular Agency

Investigation through persistent conflicts in these fields informs my conceptual framework of *curricular dissonance*, briefly framed in this introduction, interspersed throughout the two empirical studies, and illustrated in the third conceptual chapter. Both organizations in the contexts of these two empirical studies, working against the historical and contemporary life of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness, are building, noticing, and navigating tension and conflict. When teachers and teacher educators who are newly recognizing these tensions, consider these conflicts insurmountable, they perpetuate the burden placed on minoritized communities to inform, navigate, and overcome these conflicts independently. Instead, it is essential to learn directly from community members who perform within the discord and may have little empathy toward this tendency of avoidance, or evasion pedagogies (Viesca & Gray, 2021). Teachers, especially from historically dominant or oppressive communities, need experience with support through the discovery and navigation of *curricular dissonance*, where curricular possibilities and limitations clash. This is only possible with purposeful communication and learning from experts and community members that are informing the public through research, activism, and collaboration about the pathways for overcoming these tensions.

Teacher agency through critiquing and improving practice challenges hierarchical structures meant to other, exclude, and demoralize (Grumet, 2010; Ravitch, 2000; Santoro, 2018). Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory outlines the cognitive, motivational, and affective processes inherent in his conceptualization of human agency. Educators within these

collaborations “are just as much agents influencing themselves as they are influencing their environment” (Bandura, 1989, p. 1811). Research in teacher agency (Matusov, von Duyke, & Kayumova, 2016) explores how the social construction and maintenance of spaces may promote collective agency, toward the more collaborative goals of shifting teacher and public education toward a “harmonious interdependence” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 224). I rely on the conceptualization for curricular agency through the lens of CHAT, or cultural historical activity theory. “Activity theorists believe that human beings are not merely at the mercy of extant institutional contexts but that they are endowed with the power to act (agency), which allows for critique and revision” (Roth & Lee, 2007, p. 210). I use *curricular* to describe a specific type of agency that teachers employ to adapt their curricula. I use the term *curricular agency* as a form of transformative agency (Virkkunen, 2006). To be considered transformative it needs to be collaborative, as Virkkunen (2006) argues there “is an increasing need for a new kind of developmental intervention that prompts and supports practitioners’ active involvement in transforming the system in which they are involved and their development into a collective subject of change” (p. 44). What Alvunger (2018) describes as ‘curriculum agency’ acknowledging the limitations of standardization on curricular decisions, I use *curricular* as a descriptor in the same way as transformative, as descriptors sharpen our understanding of the place in which the agency is occurring. Although agency is perceived and felt by the individual, the visible agentive actions (Laitinen, Sannino & Engeström, 2016), embody this feeling. Considering Pinar’s *currere*, the curriculum is living and reflecting the people and places, such as the educators enacting their agency toward curricular change.

I consider curricular dissonance as a learning space, and a means of overcoming the tendency toward evasion pedagogies which “serve to sustain the status quo and are powerful

tools to maintain oppressive projects, often under the cover of the institution of schooling” (Viesca & Gray, 2021, p. 3). As Farley (2014) argues, these historical patterns of silencing, result in “the profession’s denial of emotional life” and welcomes the “performance of invulnerability” (p. 130). This performance must end, as our historic battle with a pandemic, teachers are no longer able to appear invulnerable. This research examines these activities and opportunities for agency. Embracing this vulnerability requires understanding of the spatial interactions that motivate participation, create relationships, and enable transformative curricular agency to develop justice-oriented curriculum and pedagogy that moves teacher education beyond the silence.

Qualitative Methodology

Ethnographic and Phenomenological Approaches

Phenomenology allows us to trouble a space, idea, or feeling, and discover new understandings of the presence and essence of phenomena. van Manen (1989) in *Researching Lived Experience* argues, consciousness cannot be directly described, it is our participation, and experience with consciousness that phenomenologists seek to interpret and share. Echoing Husserl’s foundations of phenomenology “Reflection on lived experience is always recollective; it is reflection on experience that is already passed or lived through” (van Manen, 1989, p. 10). Packer (2018) describes “By showing the dialectical relationship between the body-subject and the world, [Heidegger’s] phenomenology avoided the dualism of subjectivity and objectivity” (p. 233). Phenomenology is concerned with the first-person point of view, which lends itself to interviews, recollecting experiences, as well as the lens of self-study, which encourages investigation into my own point of view as I experience and participate in this research. This required ethnographic approaches, such as field notes, memos, reflective journaling, and above

all listening. During semi-structured interviews I used artifact elicitation with preservice teacher field experience logs, in which preservice teachers reflected on their observations, actions, and reflections throughout their participation in the project. I rely on the work of qualitative methodologists (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Lowes & Prowse, 2000; Maxwell, 2015; Packer, 2018; Schram, 2006; Seidman, 2006; Wolcott, 2009, 2012) for designing and conducting interviews, being a participant observer, and analyzing ethnographic data sources for interpreting “crucial relationships” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 45). This attention to experience illuminates the unique qualities of each participant, as Levitt (2021) distinguishes as variation, while addressing common hurdles and conflicts inherent in this work, unique to the phenomenon.

Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP)

I focused on interactions and observations to shape my pedagogical approaches through Self-study of Teaching Education Practices (S-STEP). Recent offerings of S-STEP scholarship illustrate the creativity, reflexivity, and productivity of spaces for exploring our teacher education practices. I needed “to be open to, and act upon, the curiosities, surprises, and challenges of everyday teaching practice; and to actively seek out alternative perspectives on practice” (Berry, 2015). As much of the research asserts, educators must recognize their own cultural experiences, and self-study provides the opportunity for overcoming the historical neglect of the self as a researcher. Zeichner (2007) suggests “there is clear evidence in many self-studies in teacher education that the teacher educators who conducted them benefited from the research experience . . . and become better teacher educators as a result” (p. 37). Santori, Ven, & Hennessey (2019) necessitate “dedicated time and space to reflect on our practices and examine our roles and beliefs” (p. 69). Recognizing self-study as an important inquiry

opportunity for the betterment of both personal practice and understanding, returns me to my discussion of inspiration, seeing educational practices as something worthwhile of study.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2021) assert reflexive thematic analysis is often misunderstood in other forms of thematic analysis. They warn of the propensity toward historical positivist notions of coding and in their most recent text clarify exactly what not to use in reflexive TA such as “Inter-coder reliability” and “Themes as topic summaries” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 262). These distinctions reified my choice of using reflexive thematic analysis and assessing my implementation of the six non-linear phases of this process, improved upon from Braun and Clarke (2006), in this latest edition. For each study I gathered and interpreted categorical and in vivo codes (Saldaña, 2021) to create a comprehensive list. Through Atlas.ti, I analyzed the alphabetical list of codes to sort for patterns and themes in a form of pattern coding. During focused coding I analyzed each source of data individually and then revisited data with the recognition of new codes and categories I interpreted from subsequent data sources. Reflexive thematic analysis and thematic mapping allowed me visualize connections and relationships among the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 85-87) across the two empirical studies. Although these phases follow a linear organization, Braun and Clarke (2021) and Xu & Zammit (2020) necessitate a cyclical movement through these phases to ensure depth of understanding, making connections across disparate contexts, and challenging myself to critically evaluate these relationships. Although these authors argue this analytic method is conducive to those new to the field with its ‘strengths and opportunities’ they caution that its flexibility, although also a strength, can offer ‘limitations and challenges’ (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 261). However, I

prefer this flexibility as an educator, curriculum maker, and proponent of creative design, as Finlay (2021) distinguishes this approach to analysis as ‘artfully interpretive’.

Non-verbal Analysis

As these projects occurred during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews, meetings, and courses occurred all or partially over Zoom. Although we were looking to design field experiences, given the nature of Zoom spaces and primarily digital communication, the field had become limited. We had to embrace the new means of communication and participation and redefine how we supported each other. Through ethnographic approaches as a participant observer within the space of the course, organizational meetings, and interview videos, I could analyze the interactions among participants in a new way, in real time and side by side. My units of analysis focus on relationships, interactions, and dialogue. I gathered examples of language, non-verbal exchanges, and themes from various data sources to understand how students, and teacher and community educators participate in this work.

Participants

As these two empirical studies are exploring teacher education practices (S-STEP), I as a teacher educator am a primary participant. Monitoring the design and implementation of these curriculum projects across 18 months of coursework, illustrates both the temporal changes in teaching practices and field experiences, and how I am learning and adapting with feedback from preservice, inservice, community, and teacher educators. I invited preservice participants from the Teaching Elementary Social Studies course for my first empirical study to participate in a longitudinal design of two interviews over six months. This allowed for discussion of the variation in agency in relation to the nature of their educational spaces. While for my second empirical study, I invited participants from the local Indigenous collective including Indigenous

and non-Indigenous members. Following initial analysis, I opened participation to preservice teachers from the second curricular project. This call for participants shaped an understanding across positionalities, of Indigenous leaders, community members, preservice teachers, and me as the traditionally defined teacher educator.

Researcher Positionality

Self-reflexivity is an essential component not only to self-study but also educational research in general. Recognizing and divulging one's positionality requires not only an environmental and relational form of spatial acknowledgement but articulating where in the philosophical space of education you live and its relationship with where you want to be. I considered my own initial lack of knowledge of systemic racism and oppression and needed to recognize my subjectivity (Picower, 2021; Picower & Kohli, 2017), coming from lived experiences of white-washed, white-savior, dishonest curriculum, and my personal and professional distrust with prior curricular shifts and standardization. It is not enough to recognize my positionality in the curricular projects and teaching practices, I also must monitor my interactions with participants through the research process (Kayi-Aydar, 2014; Saldaña, 2018). As the teacher-student relationship often appears hierarchical, I describe my vulnerability and continual need to learn with preservice teachers to minimize this power differential.

Methodological Considerations

Beyond educator knowledge, epistemological, relational, and ethical concerns arise with various research designs. The people and places, considered knowledge sources, changes depending on research design, researcher positionality, and the extent of the project's ecological validity. Scholars, exploring self-study and forms of practitioner inquiry, note that time dedicated to this inquiry, although often critiqued as self-indulgent (Zeichner, 2007), highlights the often

undervalued (Santori, Ven, & Hennessey, 2019) work of teachers as professionals. To overcome the relational concerns, I needed to investigate what it means to participate, echoing the description, “PDR works toward joint activity *across* researchers and communities, rather than being led by one or the other” (Bang, & Vossoughi, 2016, p. 189). Although these designs are not able to erase power dynamics, especially those exacerbated by political and institutional forces, they offer spaces for collaborative work that does not favor one type of positionality or knowledge over another. This instigates both an awareness of my ethical obligation to the participants, but also careful examination of my interpretation of the data. Although decolonizing has many interpretations, and may be manipulated, I continue to refer to Tuhiwai-Smith’s (2021) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* for guidance in the context of Indigenous scholarship and research design. Appadurai (2006) argues for the right to research, however, reminds us that access to inquiry and discovery remains privileged, particularly in K-12 settings. This welcomes opportunities to rethink who has knowledge worth knowing, and from where our sources for inspiration and reconceptualization of teacher education may originate.

Dissertation Organization

CHAPTER 1: Discerning Curricular Dissonance, “*What Else am I Missing?*”: Preservice Teachers’ Efforts toward Localizing and Diversifying Curricula through Community-engaged Field Experience.

Chapter one considers, what do preservice teachers hear or want to hear in these performative contexts toward curricular change? This first empirical study uses a phenomenological approach to document the self-reported experiences of two preservice

teachers and me as the teacher educator, during a community-engaged curricular project surrounding local Black history in the Northeast, United States.

Research Question 1: What makes it possible or challenging for preservice teachers and teacher educators to create the space for justice-oriented collaborative curriculum development?

Research Question 2: What actions and supports are deemed necessary by preservice teachers for making curricular decisions?

These conversations reveal complicated relationships among these themes that offer both curricular possibilities and curricular limitations. The title of this chapter introduces what I am asserting is a form of *curricular dissonance*, which perhaps by identifying and acknowledging these sites, teacher education may dedicate time and space to not only discovering this phenomenon but learning to navigate through and within it.

CHAPTER 2: Navigating the Dissonance, “No One Can do this Work by Themselves.”: Community, Preservice, and Teacher Educator Efforts Toward Localizing and Diversifying Curricula Through Indigenous Places and Perspectives.

This chapter expands upon the perspectives on this work of diversifying and localizing curricula with a specific focus of Indigenizing public curricula with an Indigenous organization, the Indigenous Collective (IC). This study investigates what do Indigenous leaders, community members, preservice teachers, or teacher educators hear or want to hear in these performative contexts? I investigate phenomenologically, how the nature of this educational space encourages curricular agency, while acknowledging the tensions inherent in this work. This study employs ethnographic approaches with elements of S-STEP (Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices)

to immerse myself as the researcher in an educational space designed for creating curricular change.

Research Question 1: What creates and fosters one's sense of belonging in collective educational spaces?

Research Question 2: How does one's sense of belonging relate to expressions of agency and their place-making practices toward curricular change?

Seeing these community members as teacher educators, this research seeks to understand how this local knowledge benefits and challenges traditional approaches and curricula for preparing teachers. These various perspectives also illustrate the sites of curricular dissonance, however, this collective educational space offered potential pathways for navigating these sources of dissonance.

CHAPTER 3: Community-engaged Field Experiences for Challenging Curricular Misconceptions of Place toward Localizing and Indigenizing Curricula within Elementary Teacher Education.

This conceptual chapter is based on the empirical evidence from the first two studies. As we know as educators, these sounds, conversations, and interactions are not always harmonious. I unpack three disciplinary descriptions of dissonance, musical, cognitive, and cultural, to situate what I am considering *curricular dissonance*, which revealed itself through reflexive thematic analysis of these lived experiences.

Research Question 1: How might teacher education experiences support educator navigation of social, political, cultural, and environmental sites of curricular dissonance?

Research Question 2: How might place-based, community-engaged experiences foster a sense of belonging and curricular agency with educators toward expanding and diversifying narratives in their local curricula?

The purpose of this article is to propose a teacher education field experience design which recognizes and navigates the curricular dissonance inherent in localizing and indigenizing elementary social studies.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION: Recommendations for Indigenizing, Localizing, and Diversifying through Place-conscious Teacher Education.

My concluding discussion proposes future directions for my work as a teacher and public educator, as well as the implications and limitations of these findings in the broader context of teacher education and curriculum studies. This discussion argues for understanding the inherent tensions as possibilities for designs for field experiences in education, as well as decolonial participatory action research with in-service teachers. Following this summary I will offer further questions, and research possibilities to explore and reflect upon the Teaching Elementary Social Studies course, and the iterative nature of collaborative design. Embracing curricular and relational sites of conflict inform potential strategies for public, community, and teacher educators to exercise agency toward these necessary curricular revisions.

CHAPTER 1

Discerning Curricular Dissonance, “*What Else am I Missing?*”: Preservice Teachers’ Efforts toward Localizing and Diversifying Curricula through Community-engaged Field Experience.

Abstract

This qualitative study explores a collaborative teacher education field experience, working with a community organization to develop curricula surrounding narratives of local Black history. Although many recognize the presence of false narratives, misrepresentations, or outright omissions, within elementary social studies curricula, teachers remain trepidatious to exercise their curricular agency toward justice-oriented revisions, given the current social and political climate. As part of a social studies methods course, we are working to create meaningful field experiences interrogating how we understand our local places and histories. This chapter discusses the experiences of two preservice teachers within this community field experience, and their subsequent educational spaces with a longitudinal design. Using a phenomenological lens through ethnographic approaches, including interview analysis, teacher educator reflection, and artifact elicitation, I used reflexive thematic analysis to depict relationships among these preservice teachers’ expressions of *curricular agency* and descriptions of their educational spaces. These oscillating, often dissonant relationships highlight curricular possibilities and limitations for expanding narratives through justice-oriented elementary social studies. I offer a phenomenon of *curricular dissonance*, discerning these tensions between curricular possibilities and limitations, through a truth-seeking community-engaged curricular project.

Keywords: community-engagement, curricular agency, curricular dissonance, elementary social studies curriculum, justice-oriented teacher education

Introduction

Elementary social studies curriculum in the United States and abroad needs reconstruction. For this reconstruction to occur we need elementary teachers with the experience, will, and care to participate in reconstruction. To provide and scaffold this experience in a meaningful way, we need to design teacher education models which incite awareness and care for the diverse populations of students they will have the privilege to work with in their elementary teaching careers. Au, Brown, and Calderón (2016) offer critiques of curriculum studies through *Reclaiming the Multicultural Roots of the U.S. Curriculum*, as even historical discussions of curricular decisions remain focused on white scholarship and experience. They describe that not only are Black histories and perspectives silenced in curricula over time, but the inclusion of Black narratives was also carefully selected to “reproduce ideas about Blacks as inferior, violent, uneducated, and intellectually dim-witted” (p. 120). When positive narratives present themselves they are still limited to a ‘heroes and holidays’ form of elementary social studies curricula. Pellegrino, Mann, & Russell (2013) echo these concerns as they excavated American historical textbooks only to find various stereotypes which attempt to tell the story of segregation. Busey and Walker (2017) investigated elementary social studies standards and discovered “Unfortunately, our findings demonstrate physical resistance, political thought and activism, and intellectual agency by Black people were sacrificed in favor of the master narrative of U.S. history and citizenship” (p. 176).

Locally teachers are grappling with this urgency to revise their curricular oversights, with the threat of legal and financial consequences. In the state in the Northeast where this research is

taking place, three recent bills have been proposed with various levels of support to empower parents to report teachers for so-called divisive concepts (House Bill 544, 2021), for removing curricular materials deemed obscene (House Bill 514, 2023), and for incriminating teachers who fail to disclose any changes in student gender pronouns to parents (House Bill 10, 2023). The state is looking to Florida's curricular and book banning approaches that seek to demonize teachers and minimize their agency to determine with their expertise what is considered age-appropriate for their students. Local librarians are speaking out to celebrate the presence of banned books, which often illustrate roadblocks for social progress. Each banned book mirrors the threshold of social groups and norms, and instead of considering the human narratives and perspectives the book depicts, the book itself, outside of our human obligation to care becomes weaponized. Given the geographic, social, and political positioning of the work of this local curricular revision, our department of education's design of these field experiences, had to recognize the tensions preservice, inservice, and community teachers are experiencing.

This study focuses on the narratives of two preservice teachers, who took part in a curricular collaboration with a local organization centering Black history in the Northeast, United States, through the course, Teaching Elementary Social Studies. The collaborating organization, for which I use the pseudonym, the Black Historical Organization (BHO) is composed of researchers, community members, and scholars of color who create public resources on African American history and contemporary life. Its walking and virtual tours with associated monuments and informative historical markers make visible the Black history across the state. The organization was working on a project with local educators to design curricular artifacts surrounding a documentary they produced. The course design engaged preservice teachers in researching specific narratives or sections of the documentary with support from

community educators. Examining their experiences longitudinally reveals ways preservice teachers perceive these experiences and how they may relate to their current curricular approaches. The purpose of this paper is to share key findings of part of a larger multi-year series of studies exploring designs for teacher education field experiences with community, preservice, and inservice educators, co-constructing justice-oriented social studies curricula. My participation through this project inspired the following research questions.

Research Question 1: What makes it possible or challenging for preservice teachers and teacher educators to create the space for justice-oriented collaborative curriculum development?

Research Question 2: What actions and supports are deemed necessary by preservice teachers for making curricular decisions?

Evelyn and Kenna were enthusiastic participants throughout the course collaboration, and documented in their field experience logs, and interviews what made this work possible and challenging. Their perspectives offered examples of the supports they needed to make their curricular decisions during the course and in their subsequent elementary classroom settings. They represented a common demographic within these methods courses in the education department from my experience teaching over the past five years, white, female, and often local to the Northeast or even the state. Both Kenna and Evelyn grew up near the university, and as I will describe, were not familiar with the local Black history in their communities. Evelyn, as a junior, was not yet sure if she wanted to pursue education, and therefore had little experience creating curriculum. Kenna, perhaps more representative of the preservice teachers in our area, was a senior, and seeking her internship placement for the following year. Their commonalities and differences in positionality raised sites of what I am characterizing as *curricular dissonance*,

when they feel the tensions between curricular possibilities and limitations, and how these feelings related to their curricular decisions. As Gorlewski & Tuck (2019) pose, *Who Decides Who Becomes a Teacher?*, it remains important to consider how teacher education curricula is designed and how it informs teacher agency in the form of curricular decisions in subsequent educational spaces.

Researcher Positionality

The people and places, considered knowledge sources, changes depending on research design, researcher positionality, and the extent of the project's ecological validity. As the teacher-student relationship often appears hierarchical, addressing one's positionality throughout the research is essential. It was not enough to recognize my positionality in the curricular projects and teaching practices, I also monitored my interactions with participants through the research process (Saldaña, 2018). This research informs not only my teaching practices, but also the co-construction of data. As a white, female educator, I needed to be mindful when exploring and discussing these unearthed narratives of local Black history in the documentary. I also needed to continually monitor my positionality within the collaboration, to make sure our contributions aligned with the goals of the BHO. Recognizing positionality as a social studies enthusiast, I am informing field and classroom experiences, through a series of studies which recognize local experts and the complexities involved in expanding narratives in elementary curricula. Although "Feeling that what you do can make a difference has been well studied as political efficacy, personal agency, and self-efficacy" (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 38) exploring curricular decisions as a form of agency within our current elementary education context of the minimization of social studies, persistence of dominant narratives, and standardization of curricula, remains an active area of study. This research explores what I characterize as

curricular agency, or making curricular decisions which reflect personal, collective, and community objectives and visions. I use curricular to describe where the agency is taking place, within the space of curriculum development. I consider this as a form of transformative agency with these necessary curricular revisions there “is an increasing need for a new kind of developmental intervention that prompts and supports practitioners’ active involvement in transforming the system in which they are involved and their development into a collective subject of change” (Virkkunen, 2006, p. 44).

Perspectives

Over the last 25 years, scholars provide evidence of the deliberate minimization of student and teacher agency in curriculum development (Grumet, 2010; Nel, 2015; Pinar, 2012; Ravitch, 2000; Santoro, 2018). This minimization leads to curricular oversights which perpetuate the related phenomena of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism in education (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2019). In a recent study in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, authors emphasize the importance of “Embracing Teachers as Curriculum Makers” (Schroeder & Curcio, 2022, p. 138), to reassert professionalism and agency with elementary educators. However, with social studies, as a marginalized subject, (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012) teachers are often unable to devote the time to curricula surrounding social and environmental justice. Anderson (2014) investigates, what he considers outliers, elementary teachers who actually teach social studies and notes “Negotiating these two tensions [total control or coercion and complete autonomy] impacts the extent to which elementary students are taught social studies” (p. 92). He noted that he considered only one teacher in his study to have autonomy, due to a complicity and acceptance of these tensions, without the necessary ‘negotiating’ or navigating among them (Anderson, 2014, p. 97).

Uncovering these areas of friction between contemporary and historical contexts within the social studies requires critical literacy which has become a foundational teaching practice.

Settler colonialism and anti-Blackness loom in our elementary social studies curricula. Teacher education which employs critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) and critical pedagogies of place (Gruenewald, 2003) works to identify and overcome these sneaky phenomena. McCarty and Lee (2014) remind communities to maintain a critical stance which seeks to not only sustain cultural and linguistic practices and identities with minoritized communities, but to move beyond sustenance toward revival or breathing life into historical and contemporary understanding of existence. Gruenewald's (2003) critical pedagogy of place draws attention to how we perceive and experience places, and how that may be challenged as we value diverse perspectives and lived experiences. As Patel (2013) writes in the context of educating undocumented immigrant youth, students must have opportunities to challenge curricular decisions and participate in their education which reflects their communities and lifeways. However, as illustrated by Shange (2019) this is not to be at the expense of one community, such as Black youth, over another community. This work is informed by Black and Indigenous scholars, who challenge the persistence of Whiteness in teacher education, and curriculum studies. Tuck & Gorlewski (2019) assert the relationship between the phenomena of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism in teacher education is upheld through Whiteness or "the way in which people—generally White people—enact racism in ways that consciously and unconsciously maintain this broader system of White Supremacy" (Picower, 2021, p. 6). Looking to curriculum scholars (Dewey, 1902/2010; Grumet, 2010; Phelan, 2011; Pinar, 2012) and Black feminist geographies (McKittrick, 2006, 2011; Shange, 2019) while applying the lens of Indigenous scholarship provides a theoretical foundation for the design and

interrogation of elementary curricula and teacher education field experiences prioritizing these revisions (Brant-Birioukov, Ng-A-Fook, & Kane, 2020; Kana'iaupuni, Ledward, & Malone, 2017; Smith, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021). Many studies have illuminated the ways in which students and teachers have been excluded through curriculum decisions, related to their experiences with place (Anthony-Stevens & Griño, 2018; Averill, & McRae, 2019; Ericson, 2016; San Pedro, 2017, 2018; Stanton, Carjuzaa, & Hall, 2019). Scholars from traditions of Black feminist geographies characterize places as essential for understanding identities, similarly, Gorlewski and Tuck (2019) argue, educators ought to consider our interactions within physical places, and their relationship with oppressive economic and political systems. This study situates community-engaged collaborative curriculum development as action toward disrupting Whiteness (Picower, 2021) in teacher education, and elementary social studies curriculum.

Curriculum helps us understand what places and what about those places to pay attention to, Black feminist geography challenges conceptualizations of places, and draws attention to these place-related oversights. Two Black female educators are the primary researchers and founding and current leaders of the BHO. Their narratives situated their lived experiences in the context of the documentary. They welcome the audience into a critical dialogue about the narratives that have been living in familiar places, however, not in the consciousness of many local communities. Critical pedagogies challenge our assumptions and perceptions; however, it is what we do with these new understandings that is the focus of this research. Giroux (2007) states, "Critical pedagogy opens up a space where students should be able to come to terms with their own power as critical agents" (p. 2).

Critical pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2003) and Black feminist geographies offer a way of critiquing our conceptualizations of places through teaching practices and curricular

decisions. This allows for identifying curricular oversights, where a familiar seaport is not simply filled with yachts and selfie opportunities, it hosts a historical narrative of enslaved Africans. Phrases such as, ‘I am so surprised’, ‘I knew nothing’, ‘I can’t believe’ have been common conversations over the ten semesters I have been teaching the social studies course. The opportunity to learn from these local experts, educators, and resources has not only highlighted preservice teacher gaps in knowledge, but also my own. Through this research, I investigate my own developing place-consciousness, one’s recognition and awareness of their understanding of places, and place-making (Page, 2020), the activity of creating and characterizing places. These place related processes work to uncover my understanding of systemic racism and oppression present in the curriculum and the structures of teacher education (Hawkman, 2020; hooks, 1994; Kenyon, 2022; Kitchen, & Brown, 2022; Picower & Kohli, 2017).

Methods

I take inspiration for this study from the proceedings of the first Castle Conference for S-STEP, introducing this literature to the AERA network, in which Richards & Russell (1996) recognize teacher educators as agents for social change. Lunenburg, Korthagen, & Zwart (2011) remind readers that teacher educators, acting as agents for change, design questions for self-study based on a “fascination or problem rooted in the researcher’s own practice” (p. 407). I am interested in the collective effort of overcoming harmful gaps in elementary curricula, its disconnection from our communities, and its movement away from creative curricular design more broadly. This obsession provoked the questions about what the experience may be like for preservice teachers to create curriculum with an expanded concept of teacher educators, including community and K-12 teachers. Therefore, I was grateful for the opportunity for designing field experience associated with the methods course, Teaching Elementary Social

Studies, to investigate not only what these experiences are, but also what is essential to the nature of spaces which foster these mutual learning opportunities. I have also created my own brief narrative, as researcher interpretations cannot be removed from the discoveries. I acknowledge that these narratives reflect the ways I see and interpret actions, dispositions, and perceptions through these experiences.

Research Design

This phenomenological study takes place within a teacher education program at a predominantly white, public university in the northeastern US, with approximately 15,000 students. The racial demographic of white preservice teachers and teacher educators is essential to acknowledge as “Disrupting Whiteness in teacher education requires an explicit shared commitment among all stakeholders to center race and address racism” (Picower, 2021, p. 110). Following a department initiative to integrate more community field experiences, I began brainstorming with the education department chair and colleagues, ways to connect course objectives of the required elementary social studies methods course with authentic audiences and purposes through field experiences. In the summer of 2020, the collaboration with BHO began, and preservice teachers across two semesters participated in the curricular project. Given the necessary revisions of elementary social studies curricula in our area, this opportunity aligned with the pedagogical and content related goals of the elementary social studies course. This collaborative experience with local historians and in-service teachers working with historic documents and resources related to minoritized narratives offered potential for developing students’ critical place-consciousness.

This methods course met once per week for 2.5 hours from late January to early May of the spring of 2021. Ten students enrolled in the course, the majority of whom aspire to be

elementary educators, all of whom were invited to participate in this study. Centering critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) we explored diverse contexts and narratives from which preservice teachers developed iterative lessons to reflect the inquiry process and locally relevant disciplinary content. Through the field experience, five pairs of preservice teachers worked with local collaborating educators to support research and development of lessons associated with different sections of a documentary. The local historians were experts in the content whereas the veteran teachers were experts in school curriculum development, frameworks, and standards. One of my responsibilities as the teacher educator, was to streamline contacts and communication, as well as evaluate and compile the relevant resources which students and collaborators shared. Throughout the course I organized and reorganized the research processes, as advised by the organization, necessary to inform the curricular work. Students explored examples of elementary curricula, literature, and portraits of pivotal Black resistance, educational initiatives, and monumentality. Through critical literacy preservice teachers traveled through the inquiry arc from the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for the Social Studies, (National Council for the Social Studies, n.d.) from questioning, to finding disciplinary content in history, to evaluating the reliability and accuracy of sources, to communicating their findings.

As this course used a hybrid format, due to the pandemic, preservice teacher pairs met each class, in Zoom rooms to accommodate those attending in person and virtually, to discuss progress and share resources. On Zoom, collaborators and students met whenever possible to exchange ideas, critique, and brainstorm. To emphasize the importance of self-awareness, preservice teachers had many opportunities for quick writes exploring personal reflections of course experiences. These experiences included responses to community visitors, small group

collaborative meetings, research and resources, immersion in critical discourse surrounding the documentary, practice with the vetting process, and creating their own ideas and support materials using the principals of Understanding by Design (UbD) (Wiggins & McTighe, 2000) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014). Finally, they compiled these reflections in a field experience reflection log that connected course and field experiences.

To further contextualize this work, the BHO offered a free tour to all students on site, or virtually due to persistence of the pandemic in the spring of 2021. Although not all students were able to attend a tour, because they were working in groups, they shared their experiences. With other educators on this project, I was able to experience the tour in person and learn from Black scholars who are uncovering and re-narrating these familiar local places. This moving and emotional tour heightened our sense of urgency for this project. This step was essential for my own learning, development of teacher education practices, and understanding of the situated stories. As a teacher educator, I have been documenting my own experience through reflective memos to inform pedagogical designs with community and teacher educators, preservice teachers, and in-service teachers. While reflecting on this curricular collaboration the way we see, and experience places was a central part of our critical conversations. The hidden histories that preservice teachers and I admittedly overlooked or had not learned about in elementary and even secondary curricula, was a source of frustration and impetus for developing awareness of local people and places. This critical approach encouraged us to first consider our place-making practices as well as misconceptions, and curricular omissions.

Participants

This study focuses on the perspectives of two female preservice teachers, Evelyn in her third year, and Kenna in her fourth year, who identified as white educators who grew up close to the university. Evelyn is working in a fourth-grade classroom as part of a course field experience, while Kenna is in a second-grade classroom for a yearlong internship. These preservice teachers worked with one peer, one local educator, and one community advisor, to research and develop curricular artifacts for one section of the documentary, however, each collaborative group had varying levels of communication due to the pandemic. During interviews Kenna and Evelyn describe their experiences during the course working in these groups and how this compares to their current educational spaces. Through analysis I noticed their cyclical emphasis on unlearning and relearning, which became an important aspect for interpreting themes.

Data Sources

This study uses a longitudinal approach by scheduling two semi-structured interviews, per participant, the first interview, five months following the participation in the course, and the second interview, five months after that to monitor how student perspectives are evolving over time. As a form of autoethnography (Reed-Danahay, 1997) as the instructor of the course, and one of the facilitators of the curriculum project, I designed this assignment as a culminating reflection within which students wrote reflective and observational descriptions over the course to monitor their own critical perspectives, actions, and learning experiences during the curriculum collaborations. Through artifact elicitation they referred to their field experience reflection logs, artifacts capturing perspectives from the spring of 2021, in both their initial interviews in the fall of 2021, and their final interviews in the spring of 2022. My interview

questions refer to these artifacts to help participants overcome the limitation of time between their participation in the course, and the two interviews. Evidence from these logs also serves to fill in any gaps in the students' recollection of their initial perspectives. As phenomenology is concerned with lived experience, I developed temporal interview questions to keep the conversation deeply rooted in specific contexts and experiences.

Data Analysis

Triangulating with preservice teacher artifacts, field notes of teaching practices, and interview transcripts I conducted reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Saldaña, 2021). I referred to the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis: “1. Familiarizing yourself with your dataset, 2. Coding, 3. Generating initial themes, 4. Developing and reviewing themes, 5. Refining, defining and naming themes, and 6. Writing up” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 35). Interspersed within cyclical rounds of initial open coding, pattern coding, and focused coding, I developed themes that categorized what something “is” and what something “means” (Saldaña, 2021). This helped with both the development of my attributes and characterizations of my categorical codes, as well as my interpretation of themes. Themes described the relationships between participant descriptions of their educational spaces and the actions or forms of agency they observed or experienced within them. Although this research, as with most research, is not designed to affirm causation, it illuminates relationships between experiences, educators, and community contexts that inform the conversation of reconceptualizing teacher education.

Findings

Analysis of these data sources inform the narratives of the participants' curricular decisions and actions as well as my critical analysis of my own teaching practices through these collaborative curriculum development experiences. As Zeichner (1999) and Hauge (2021)

emphasize, recognizing these preservice teacher narratives as a mirror of practices and approaches, their perspectives illustrate the challenges and possibilities fostered depending on the nature of spaces for this work. These narratives depict a chronology of the ways Kenna and Evelyn perceive, observe, and make curricular decisions. Through this chronology they each discuss sites of tensions, what I conceptualize as *curricular dissonance*, that relate to these decisions. Table 1. organizes the various sites of curricular dissonance for each participant and each educational setting. I then contextualize these sites within Evelyn and Kenna's narratives.

Sites of Curricular Dissonance

To address my first research question, *what makes it possible or challenging for preservice teachers and teacher educators to create the space for justice-oriented collaborative curriculum development?* I considered the experiences of the three participants overtime to consider the variation in positionality, meaning how one is positioned or positions themselves, their perceived curricular agency, and the nature of educational spaces. Field notes, memos, and interview data from the four interviews, captured many dissonant, or conflicting relationships. Evelyn and Kenna discussed tensions that arose between how they described the space and their agency within it, with their observed and enacted curricular decisions. Investigating preservice teachers' actions, observations, and perspectives revealed changes in volume and oscillation of the dissonance over time through this longitudinal structure. The theme of *curricular dissonance* provides a lens for exploring the sources of discord between philosophy and action, and space and agency.

Table 1.**Sites of Dissonance Interpreted through Participant Narratives**

Participant	Sites of Curricular Dissonance
Evelyn <i>Field Experience (BHO)</i>	a) prioritizing these necessary conversations for overcoming dominant narratives in curricula, with a fear of navigating perspectives b) reconciling your prior misconceptions of places with new understandings
<i>Elementary Classroom</i>	c) feeling a sense of belonging in a space despite a lack of curricular agency d) making curricular decisions that do not align with student need or one's educational philosophy
Kenna <i>Field Experience (BHO)</i>	b) reconciling your prior misconceptions of places with new understandings f) teaching curricula without time for developing background knowledge g) acknowledging the amount of time reimagining curricula takes within the time constraints of public-school teaching
<i>Elementary Classroom</i>	a) prioritizing these necessary conversations for overcoming dominant narratives in curricula, with a fear of navigating perspectives c) feeling a sense of belonging in a space despite a lack of curricular agency d) making curricular decisions that do not align with student need or one's educational philosophy e) realizing differing levels of background knowledge and comfort h) having the desire to revise curricula with the pressure to maintain the same curricula
Elaine <i>Field Experience (BHO)</i>	b) reconciling your prior misconceptions of places with new understandings e) realizing differing levels of background knowledge and comfort g) acknowledging the amount of time reimagining curricula takes within the time constraints of public-school teaching

Evelyn

As this course used a hybrid model during the pandemic, Evelyn participated via zoom, and due to internet challenges participated with her camera off. This left break out groups and office hours as precious times for conversation. She was communicative with me, however, very much valued her collaborative time with her partner. My first interview with Evelyn began the interpretive quest to understand the conflicts she described inherent in this work. She would shift in posture from confident and expressive, to slouched with pursed lips, gestures I did not have the chance to witness often due to her Zoom participation. These types of non-verbal cues continued throughout the two interviews and were often associated with a complex confrontation

regarding curricular and instructional decisions. Not only did she emphasize her lack of experience with curriculum development, but she also noted a lack of awareness of the Black narratives and perspectives we were learning about in the documentary. She shared her initial understanding of local Black history, as “Really eye-opening to see how much of an impact slavery has had on [the local city]”. She acknowledged that the “most challenging” aspect of designing this curriculum is anticipating having “uncomfortable conversations”. She oscillated between highlighting the gap in her own elementary curricula, and this fear of “random questions” that as a future teacher, she does not feel prepared to answer. She suggested getting to know your community and “learning the history it”, as “to learn and grow you need to have those uncomfortable conversations and educate yourself and others”.

Evelyn highlights this site of dissonance, a) prioritizing these necessary conversations for overcoming dominant narratives in curricula, with a fear of navigating perspectives.

Acknowledging her positionality in a predominantly white community, she described what I interpret as another site of dissonance, b) reconciling your prior misconceptions of places with new understandings. Evelyn characterized the opportunity for “bouncing ideas off of” each other with her partner as the “highlight of the course”. She describes the iterative aspect of lesson planning with a K-12 educator as “helpful getting his standpoint on our lesson plans and how we could improve. Working with her partner and a local educator, she incorporated “stopping points” for questions surrounding “heavy topics” in her curricular artifacts, as a form of agency for navigating these potential sites of dissonance. When characterizing the space of the course, she shared the “environment of the course was just very open and understanding”. Her position within the collaboration appeared horizontal and mutually informing.

However, she contrasts this experience with her current educational context, observing in fourth grade at a public elementary school, Evelyn describes how she was physically and collaboratively positioned in the space,

“I think the most challenging thing for me is not knowing when . . . to step in. My teacher was like ‘oh you can observe, or you can help out’ . . . So, I kind of just sit at my desk, she has a little desk for me in the corner”.

Having a chair in the corner may contradict a sense of agency, however, I perceive that she did feel a sense of belonging, as she attributes being in this classroom to her “deciding that I wanted to teach” which “feels right”. She shared that she has not made curricular decisions for this classroom which illustrates the potential dissonance of c) feeling a sense of belonging in a space despite a lack of curricular agency.

Evelyn observed her cooperating teacher’s frustration and concerns within the context of teaching in a pandemic. She recognized the potential for teacher burnout and decided to research about it within her current context. It appeared as if her relationship with the teacher and empathy for her and her students overshadowed the hardest or most challenging obstacle, which was deciding when to step in and help students. She discussed many challenges students and teachers were facing, causing another site of curricular dissonance, d) making curricular decisions that do not align with student need or one’s educational philosophy. In her final interview, she reiterated her appreciation of her partner’s contribution, of sharing lesson formats which she had “no idea” about and subsequently shared her own lesson format with peers. Evelyn’s pride gleamed through as she discussed her peers’ familiar relief. Her last entry in her field experience log noted that she and her partner when creating their final lesson, had to “think critically . . . to make it the best” version. Throughout her participation in the course and her

subsequent educational space Evelyn's expressions of agency included her approach to making the lessons for the local organization "learning how to slowly make each lesson plan better", deciding formally on this profession, paying forward her expertise in curriculum development, and researching teacher burnout to inform affective approaches. Each of these actions related to her discomfort from what she describes as a lack of experience or familiarity across these two contexts. This discomfort welcomed interpretation of these important sites of conflict, which I conceptualize as curricular dissonance, which these preservice teachers are discerning through their experiences.

Kenna

Kenna identified as a rule follower, and frequently attended office hours, alone, and with her collaborators to make sure to she was headed in the right direction. She often had a serious disposition during the course and participated in person behind a mask. It was always a refreshing opportunity to have conversations on Zoom to exchange smiles and speak directly about her concerns or creative ideas. Although she highlighted her appreciation for the perspectives of her cooperative educator, she noted during the course that it was challenging to work in her peer partnership as they often had different ideas, contrasting Evelyn's perspective. Kenna reflected on the course structure and her experience with the community organization learning about local history. "I think I was pretty interested to learn more; I was pretty engaged . . . I think I was also curious". As she was curious to learn about these narratives depicted in the documentary, she was also experiencing a rising awareness, especially spatially of the stories happening in her local community. Like Evelyn's discussion of her initial experience learning about local Black history, Kenna shared her confrontation with this site of dissonance b) reconciling your prior misconceptions of places with new understandings,

“Like it is so crazy how I haven’t encountered this at all . . . maybe I wasn’t looking hard enough for this. What else am I missing? . . . have I not done my own personal research enough?”

Kenna observed the reactions and discussion with her peers in the course, “Our environments really shaped our opinions”. While questioning how she missed this history, she describes that she never came across this, even though it was twenty minutes away from where she grew up and went to school. Although the goal of teacher education curriculum is not to shock or incur guilt for any student, she expresses her positionality as a researcher, and how she wonders if she should have been looking out for these histories. She notes that it is not one person’s fault, which I recognize as a site of dissonance e) realizing differing levels of background knowledge and comfort. She implies a collective fault surrounding the minimization of these narratives. This becomes an important inspiration for her later discussions of attempting to overcome inaccuracies within her current social studies curriculum. This gap in her knowledge, instigated her discovery of the same gap in the second-grade curriculum and explained “I think students should know about this and wouldn’t necessarily get exposed to otherwise” as some of the social studies curricula were “not necessarily the most accurate”. She provides an example when discussing her choice of two cooperating teachers and describes their contrasting curricular decisions.

“We are learning about the Mayflower right now and the other teacher in part of the video, at the end it says they all died. And she cut that out, she wouldn’t let her students hear that, but my teacher was like ‘No, that’s important for them to know’.”

Kenna distinguishes the collaborating educator during the curricular project, “had so much knowledge and she was so passionate”, and “really listened to what we wanted to do”. She

positioned her and her classmate as “creators with support”. Kenna described this opportunity to express curricular agency as “getting your feet dirty” which made her “invested in it”. She contrasted this with her current educational context, as she attempts to implement a curriculum in her internship classroom, “Like right now, it is a lot harder to teach, but with this I really did the research, then kind of planned from there, versus having a curriculum given to me”. She emphasized the importance of developing background knowledge thirteen times over the course of the interviews. This discovery illuminated two sites of dissonance, one, f) teaching curricula without time for developing background knowledge, and two, g) acknowledging the amount of time reimagining curricula takes within the time constraints of public-school teaching. She contrasts the collaborative structure of the curricular project with her current setting, and positions herself, rather than ‘creators with support’ as “being under someone” illustrating a vertical rather than horizontal recognition of mutual expertise or knowledge. She notes that through her “personal teaching” which she casts in the future, that her influence from the curricular project from the course may be more impactful, beyond a “pre-planned kind of curriculum”. This discussion of positionality amplified the need for expressions of agency if she wanted to be a full participant in the educational space, and therefore exercise the skills she had honed, including developing background knowledge, collaborating with peers, and “putting her own spin”.

These oscillations throughout our interviews welcomed the coding scheme of curricular limitation and curricular possibility. As Evelyn first discerned, Kenna noticed conflict when curricular possibilities meet limitations, a) prioritizing these necessary conversations for overcoming dominant narratives in curricula, with a fear of navigating perspectives. Although these phenomena may happen simultaneously, I noticed a chronology, and how each limitation

informed or inspired a possibility which then often incurred a subsequent limitation. In Table 2, each number is associated with a curricular decision, that was either made by her teachers, collaborating educators, or by Kenna. When these possibilities and limitations came together, they composed a sense of tension, within which Kenna would have to decide what action to take and why. For example, she entered the space of the course with little to no knowledge or experience learning Black history. Despite this limitation, following her field experience researching about local Black history, she offers a curricular possibility with her second-grade team in her internship about their Black history curricula. However, she met another curricular limitation, as members of the team shared there is no time or space in the curriculum. Like Evelyn's discussion of her cooperating teacher, Kenna described "I have great relationships" which illustrated c) feeling a sense of belonging in a space despite a lack of curricular agency. By belonging I mean over time she is developing relationships with her colleagues through which she perceives positive interactions. Although she used the word 'great' to characterize these relationships, she contradicts this feeling, as when they are together in a working and planning environment, she describes disparate rather than mutual goals. Kenna placed great emphasis on being a "contributor" and however shared that she had to fight to "get her foot in the door". She again oscillates between feeling supported to enact curricular agency, "I think she would help me plan it" amidst the reality that "I don't think the rest of the team would necessarily change". This became a site of curricular dissonance with the tradition of her grade level team keeping the curricula the "same", h) having the desire to revise curricula with the pressure to maintain the same curricula. Kenna concluded "when I have my own classroom" she will be able to speak "more freely".

Table 2.**Chronology of Kenna's Perceptions of Curricular Decisions Surrounding Black History Instruction**

1	Curricular Limitation:	Kenna had little to no exposure to local Black history in her public school.
2	Curricular Possibility:	Field experience provides time to research, collaborate, and create curricular artifacts about local Black history.
3	Curricular Possibility:	Kenna approaches second grade team about their Black history curricula.
4	Curricular Limitation:	Members of second grade team share there is no time or space in the curriculum.
5	Curricular Possibility:	Kenna designs a unit on Black history independently to teach during her first solo week.
6	Curricular Limitation:	Student responds to text regarding segregation with "When do we celebrate white history month?"
7	Curricular Limitation:	Kenna does not create any curricular artifacts for her second solo week and keeps the curriculum the same as last year.
8	Curricular Possibility:	Kenna shared that she saved the curricular artifacts surrounding Black history and will use this in any future grade level or school.

Note: This chronology illustrates Kenna's perception of curricular decisions and experiences which I interpret as curricular possibilities, and limitations, across the two spaces of the course and her second-grade internship.

Following this discussion she asserts, "I did advocate for that" referring to her agency, designing a Black History Month unit during her solo week. Although her team members did not include Black history in their curricula, she took the initiative to "Show I can do it from start to finish" as she "wanted to expose them, but not scare them" as many students did not know about the narratives she was discussing. However, during her second solo week as described in her second interview, Kenna did not create any curricular artifacts and kept the curriculum the same, through which her non-verbal cues illustrated another potential site of dissonance. Both Evelyn and Kenna observed this site of dissonance, d) making curricular decisions that do not align with student need or one's educational philosophy, however, due to Kenna's positionality in the space, she was also grappling with this dissonance within her own practice. In each discussion she keeps coming back to this idea of "why reinvent the wheel?", "why change it up?",

highlighting the spatial limitations that her perspective and motivation alone may not be enough to inspire broader curricular change.

Elaine

Each semester of this course, preservice teachers bring their unique cultural pathways (Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, et al., 2017) into the space of these curricular collaborations. This often heightens a sense of dissonance for me as the teacher educator, g) realizing differing levels of background knowledge and comfort with the narratives, contexts, and perceived controversial issues inherent in the social studies. Students begin the course creating an illustration that depicts the many cultural pathways that inform their teaching and learning. This not only introduces me to the many sites of dissonance students may experience, but it also welcomes self-reflection of their perceived agency, essential to the subsequent collaborative efforts. Given the often predominantly white female demographic of these courses preservice teachers continue to report a lack of exposure, due to lack of resources and representation in their elementary and secondary curricula which makes b) reconciling your prior misconceptions of places with new understandings, daunting but necessary. Following the first semester of this project, leaders were looking for more research than we had currently gathered. As this was my first collaborative curricular project within the course, I needed to critically evaluate my role, and how to align teaching practices and outcomes with the intentions of the overall curricular project. This required a shift in focus for the second semester, now with Evelyn and Kenna, to see what specific research each educator needed for their section of the documentary. Different sections had different curricular approaches, such as writing an entire scripted narrative of a significant civic action, and one student created illustrations for a proposed children's book. Together we grappled with the sadness, anger, or disbelief of some

narratives, from the documentary and walking tour, with the seemingly impossible challenge of reconciliation for minoritized communities. Situating critical pedagogy of place was instrumental through the course to challenge how we see and interact with local places, and how we may design curricula that engages students in these critical conversations around their familiar places and spaces. The complexity of this process, associated communication, and relational tensions necessitated g) acknowledging the amount of time reimagining curricula takes within the time constraints of public-school teaching, which continues to be one of the most challenging sites of dissonance to navigate.

Teacher Education Practices and Curricular Approaches

These various curricular possibilities and limitations inform my first research question, of *what makes it possible or challenging to create spaces for developing justice-oriented curricula*, which suggest using the inherent tensions, or sites of curricular dissonance, as learning spaces, rather than issues to avoid. To address my second research question, *what actions and supports are deemed necessary by preservice teachers for making curricular decisions?* I considered the elements of the two spaces overtime which supported Evelyn and Kenna to exercise curricular agency. Feedback from participating educators and members of the BHO helped guide the iterative curricular design. Preservice teachers had to find and evaluate local sources, which often challenged their assumptions or raised emotional topics and questions. I reflected upon the collaboration and my associated teaching practices, from my reflections and Evelyn and Kenna's feedback and considered the following the most necessary as we are all discerning the dissonance.

- Developing relationships with students through critical conversations
- Interrogating preservice teachers' prior experiences with elementary curricula

- Creating student partnerships
- Preparing communication among various educators
- Offering place-based visits
- Researching specific narratives and locations from documentary
- Self-reflecting on perceptions of place through local knowledge
- Evaluating texts and improving that process through educator and organization feedback
- Providing iterative lesson feedback
- Conducting office hours to collectively look at curricular examples
- Using field experience reflection logs to reflect learning and unlearning
- Brainstorming curricular experiences that mitigate the possibilities for misunderstandings
- Looking at various curricular artifacts that do not teach about minoritized histories
- Collaborating with experts from the local organization, and local educators

It is the hope through these experiences that teacher background knowledge, empathy, and interactions with place do not remove the dissonance, rather offer spaces to motivate socially and environmentally just curricular decisions and collaborations. Having a conceptual context in which to place these conflicting curricular decisions, educational spaces, and expressions of curricular agency, forms a collective site for mutual reflection toward self-awareness requires agency in the form of dialogue, which then informs the activity that enacts social change.

Navigating alongside preservice teachers within these sites of dissonance for experiential education about how to construct curriculum across these different conflicting interests became an exploration in what teachers need to engage in this work, how they perceive it, and how teacher education may support their navigation through sites of dissonance. In the summer of 2021, further curricular dissonance arose and due to shifts in leadership, and circumstances of the

pandemic the project paused. Fortunately, this collaboration remained a rich experience, which informed three subsequent curricular collaborations, currently in progress.

Discussion

Discerning the Dissonance: “What else am I missing?”

Embracing the ever building, musical description of dissonance, there will never be a shortage of tensions to hear. However, we do have the opportunity to take what we hear and pair it with consonant objectives and learning opportunities. As Leavitt (2021) argues for qualitative research which generalizes toward the phenomenon rather than the population, this emerging concept of *curricular dissonance* resonates through these preservice teachers’ perspectives. The way these preservice teachers perceived the nature of the educational space and their positionality within it, related to their discussion of curricular agency. When perceiving horizontal positionality Kenna and Evelyn expressed excitement and agency through their curricular decisions, while when perceiving vertical positionality, they expressed tension and a minimization of agency. Evelyn and Kenna’s descriptions of their justice-oriented curricular decisions incurred discovery of dissonant relationships. Kenna notes that “I definitely felt proud of the work” and that it is “great work”, but she questions whether it is realistic as it took “a whole semester”. She wondered if it is something you do in your first year of teaching and then have it for years to come. As is evidenced in her follow-up interview, this position remained true as her second-grade team members were rarely researching and creating curricular artifacts, perhaps by trade or training, or the circumstances of the pandemic. This is where providing teachers and scholars with the evidence of *curricular dissonance* may be significant to name, explore, and navigate these inherent tensions that live in our curricular conversations. My

interpretation of these sites of curricular dissonance through these perspectives of two future elementary teachers, is cause for concern and opportunity.

Building upon curriculum as a complicated conversation, curriculum scholars (Dewey, 1902; Grumet, 2010; Phelan, 2011; Pinar, 2012) and Indigenous scholars (Brant-Birioukov, K., Ng-A-Fook, & Kane, 2020; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021) propose spaces for investigating our place-making practices, sense of place and belonging, and community-engagement. While discovering these sites of curricular dissonance, this study proposes these sites as learning spaces, not to remove these tensions, rather learning how to work within them. Researching field experience designs which intentionally immerse preservice and in-service teachers within these sites may welcome expressions of curricular agency. This research must acknowledge the current climate of silencing critical approaches, as teachers are vulnerable to various external forces which shape their curricular decisions. Depending on the nature of the educational space, those empowered to make curricular decisions may succumb to curricular limitations and seek safety and consistency, while those driven by curricular possibilities may prioritize creativity and empathy. If we support each other, no matter our positionality through recognizing these shared conflicts, perhaps we may see movement toward these urgent curricular changes. As part of a larger series of studies, understanding this theme of *curricular dissonance* may inform teacher education courses and field experience designs which offer directions toward curricular change.

CHAPTER 2

Navigating the Dissonance, “*No One Can Do this Work by Themselves.*”: Community, Preservice, and Teacher Educator Efforts Toward Localizing and Diversifying Curricula Through Indigenous Places and Perspectives.

Abstract

This study documents the experiences of co-constructing curricula toward educating the public about the lifeways of a local Indigenous community. As part of a social studies methods course, we are exploring the ways to create meaningful field experiences toward overcoming harmful curricular oversights in elementary education. I investigate my initial sense of belonging through participation as a new member of this Indigenous Collective (IC), and the experience of creating curricular artifacts with preservice teachers through guidance and support from Indigenous and non-indigenous community members. These outcomes inform organizational elements for navigating, what I conceptualize as sites of *curricular dissonance*, through the perspective of Indigenous leaders, a community teacher, a preservice teacher, and a traditionally defined teacher educator. Findings describe the nature of this collaborative space which fosters curricular agency, mutual learning and teaching, and a sense of belonging. This research investigates how the tensions inherent in this work become sites for teaching and learning, when community teacher educators inform the design of public justice-oriented curricula.

Keywords: critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy, indigenizing, curricular dissonance, sense of belonging, S-STEP

Introduction

Curricular challenges, such as perpetuation of false narratives, marginalization of social studies instruction, (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012) and silencing of minoritized histories, necessitate teacher education which engages elementary educators in critical research, and creative design. The historical and contemporary silencing of Indigenous histories and lifeways remains as a form of oppression, or what Friere (1970/2000) considers cultural invasion, or Au, Brown, and Calderón (2016) consider curricular erasure. This has been systematic as in the design and maintenance of the Canadian and American residential schools, which forced assimilation in favor of Christian ideologies and financial incentive and resulted in cultural genocide. Park (2015) writes, "Settler Colonialism and the Politics of Grief: Theorising a Decolonising Transitional Justice for Indian Residential Schools" which outlines the horrific and tragic practices and consequences of these educational systems on Indigenous communities in Canada through child narratives. Park (2015) argues the residential schools deemed Indigenous people ungrievable, for if you are considered unhuman, your opportunity to grieve or be grieved is removed. She warns of a settler tendency toward 'feeling bad', relegating grief to the purely emotion sense, without recognition of grief as a form of action and repair (Park, 2015, p. 286). Recognizing this necessary grief for the loss of life, culture, and language for many Indigenous communities, humanizes these experiences as real, lived, and intergenerational traumatic.

Participating in the grieving process allows room for celebration, reclamation, and revitalization of what was lost through Indigenous communities sharing their knowledge with each other and whomever they deem trustworthy. However, the social and political climate of the state where this research is taking place, minimizes these opportunities to grieve or celebrate. Only thirteen communities of the 234 cities and townships, recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day,

which continues to be an active debate. This echoes the historical tendency toward holiday contention as this was also the last state to officially observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Despite this context, celebrations of IPD and other interdisciplinary projects, continue to occur, as John and Heather, Indigenous leaders, co-founded an organization called the Indigenous Collective (IC) which develops opportunities to collaborate and inform initiatives toward social and environmental justice. This group is comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous members including community members, students, professors, and local educators from a variety of educational backgrounds, immigration experiences, political positions, and socioeconomic statuses. Public curricular revision is part of the revitalizing work of this Indigenous Collective. These projects informed by these Indigenous members and leaders illustrate the survivance (Vizenor, 2008) necessary to grieve the various attempts at silencing and eliminating these tribal groups from these legislative decisions. Introduced by Vizenor (2008) survivance is a state of being in which Indigenous communities are actively surviving and resisting the narratives of elimination.

This has both local and global implications when it comes to Indigenous generational and environmental knowledge. The local lands that here have been stewarded for over 13,000 years deserve attention from our elementary educators and students to develop a caring relationship with its histories and generosities. Recent local devastation due to climate change illustrates the state's pattern of not only educational inaction, but environmental inaction, as Hoplamazian (2022) writes, "As N.H.'s climate changes, a new report shows dire consequences of inaction". Arguments to shield communities and students from these discussions due to age appropriateness, political contention, or parental preference is a luxury. Locally we see these changes through flooding, sea level rise, and lack of preparation for invasive species

(Hoplamazian, 2022). Understanding local Indigenous seasonal practices may help inform how communities acknowledge and adapt with these changes. To recognize the value of current knowledge and practice, educators must draw attention to the proof of concept, from over 13,000 years of presence in the Northeast. This curricular collaboration afforded this opportunity to emphasize the current lifeways of one local Indigenous community.

San Pedro (2017) argues for centering Indigenous paradigms in colonizing spaces through awareness of human and environmental interactions within political, social, economic, and ecological places. Tuhiwai Smith (2021) argues that even the concept of space, or “Indigenous space, has been colonized” (p. 58). For non-indigenous educators, *indigenizing*, or integrating Indigenous cultural and historical expertise, and *localizing*, or integrating local cultural and historical expertise, requires acknowledgement of their own positionality, inhabiting stolen lands. As Tuck and Yang (2012) critique, “we have observed a startling number of these discussions make no mention of Indigenous peoples, our/their struggles for the recognition of our/their sovereignty, or the contributions” (p. 3). Bringing the work of Indigenous communities into curriculum interrogation and design is essential, particularly at the elementary level.

To engage in critical work, teacher educators employ iterations of Freire’s (1970/2000) critical pedagogy, such as critical pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2003), culturally relevant pedagogy, (Ladson-Billings, 1995) culturally responsive pedagogy (Pirbhai-Illich, Pete, & Martin, 2017), and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Alim & Paris, 2017; Paris, & Alim, 2017). In the context of an elementary social studies methods course, I encourage preservice teachers to explore these pedagogical approaches as they participate in these curricular collaborations. Most relevant to the context of this study is McCarty and Lee’s (2014) critical culturally

sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy which goes beyond sustaining toward restoring life and presence of culture.

Perspectives

Collaborative spaces for curriculum development with non-traditionally defined teacher educators, has the potential to promote awareness of human and environmental interactions within political, social, economic, and ecological places. Various studies from Indigenous and non-indigenous scholars illustrate how these collaborations challenge who is considered a teacher educator (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gullen & Zeichner, 2018; Gorlewski & Tuck, 2019; Johnson, 2017; McCarty & Brayboy, 2021; Paris & Alim, 2017; Phelan, Pinar, Ng-A-Fook, & Kane, 2020; Pirbhai-Illich, Pete, & Martin, 2017; Price-Dennis, & Souto-Manning, 2011; Whetung & Wakefield, 2018; White, Raphael, Hannigan, & Cripps Clark, 2020). As teacher educators at the university setting, we are expanding our conceptualization of field experiences by engaging students in curriculum development with local organizations that may be critiqued, shared, and appreciated beyond the university or classroom setting.

Critical culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) informs both the design of the curricular collaboration and my participation in the space. We began the course, recognizing our positionality as no students identified as having Indigenous heritage. This became a rich site for self-study of teacher education practices to understand how these community members strengthen our curricular approaches, and understandings of the lifeways of local Indigenous communities. Lunenburg, Korthagen, & Zwart (2011) remind readers that teacher educators, acting as agents for change, design questions for self-study based on a “fascination or problem rooted in the researcher’s own practice” (p. 407). The urgent problem of curricular oversights that proliferate elementary social studies instruction, combined with my

fascination with this initial sense of belonging where I could meld my background in earth science, environmental education, and elementary social studies, welcomed opportunities for curricular agency.

My initial experience with this local Indigenous Collective (IC), sparked my contemplation into my sense of belonging within this space. Bourdieu (1979/1984) explains that one's sense of belonging develops through familiarity with the habitus or everyday social practices and actions of a space. From this sense of belonging, I developed research questions to explore aspects of the habitus of the space that "enable placemaking and a sense of belonging" (Page, 2020, p. 108). However, placemaking incites conflict, as we all see, experience, and understand place, space, and land from our own unique perspectives. This research explores the patterns of work necessary for working within the inevitable conflict, which I conceptualize as *curricular dissonance*, where curricular possibilities and limitations meet. This collaborative space accommodated *curricular agency* toward *localizing* and *indigenizing* elementary social studies curricula for a public audience. I conceptualize *curricular agency* as making decisions which acknowledge curricular limitations, however, continue to work toward curricular possibilities. Within the tumultuous context of culturally sustaining and revitalizing work, this self-study explores teaching practices informed by Indigenous and non-indigenous critical friends, non-traditionally considered teacher educators, to explore the following questions.

Research Question 1: What creates and fosters one's sense of belonging and agency in collective educational spaces?

Research Question 2: How might a sense of belonging and perceptions of place inform or inspire teacher education practices toward co-construction of justice-oriented curricula?

Methods

Since 1992 self-study scholars have been inventing ways to study teacher education practices and their relationships to their own, and their students' learning. Vanassche and Kelchterman's (2015) systematic review of the body of Self-Studies of Teacher Education Practices, illuminated not only the purpose of focusing on one's own practice often through qualitative research methods, but also centers collaborative interactions as an essential principle to S-STEP. As Peercy and Sharkey (2020) advocate, "This 'turn to self' by the researchers illustrates how self-study methodology can bring together questions of identity and one's practices as a teacher educator" (p. 112). Kenyon (2022) writes "You Can't Be a Nice White Lady and Do Anti-Racism Work: A Self-Study on Teaching Against Racism" and explores the tensions of teaching social studies methods courses from the positionality of a white female. This aspect of my identity echoes the need for pause, and attention to my interpretation. I am interested in knowing what is essential to these spaces that welcome students and educators into collaboration, as well as how participants may develop agency, which may mutually benefit the organization, the educational project, and the teacher education field experience. This opportunity to investigate pauses among S-STEP researchers welcomed a self-reflexive, phenomenological approach, examining teacher education practices during a community-engaged field experience.

As S-STEP prioritizes, I investigate how a collaborating Indigenous Collective (IC), seeks to reposition, reframe, re-imagine, and integrate new learning. A department initiative to connect preservice teachers with the community through field experiences brought our coursework into the context of this organization. As part of this field experience, students attended at least two, two-hour meetings, via Zoom, with the Indigenous Collective to inform

their curricular artifacts. They also were invited to education working group meetings, which consisted of the vetting team that would evaluate our contributions to a curricular project centering the lifeways of a local tribal community. A primary focus of this research is to understand the nature of educational spaces that support the complexities of this work, as in our local area there is limited “exposure to the history” of minoritized communities. The spaces of the course and the Indigenous Collective were mutually informing, using meeting notes and in-class notes I found resources and adapted my teaching practices depending on where these areas of exposure were lacking. At the same time, learning and noticing the benefit of relational pedagogies across both spaces, preservice teachers were able to ask questions and be curious, which can be a source of consonance, for overcoming the dissonance of not knowing, or having little exposure to Indigenous histories.

Participants

I interviewed three members of IC, the Indigenous Collective, including two of the Indigenous founding members, Heather and John, who are also head speakers of their tribal community. For this chapter, I am using pseudonyms and general terms, as naming the specific community would not allow for anonymity. However, it was imperative that specific community names, language and contexts be used in the curricular artifacts as a form of distinguishing the unique aspects of specific Indigenous communities. Lily is an educator in many forms including formal school settings, has been an active member of IC for almost three years, and identifies as an activist, and Indigenous grandmother, as her daughter has three native children. These members and I were part of the education working group, a subset of this organization, which was essential to the vetting process of student research and artifacts. I also interviewed one preservice teacher from the Teaching Elementary Social Studies field experience, who continued

her work beyond the scope of the course and is a graduate student shifting careers to the elementary teacher profession.

Data Sources

Using ethnographic approaches, immersed in the space of this organization, I triangulated with multiple sources from organization members, students, and my own documentation of the process. I looked for themes within and across these sources.

- Observational jottings from meetings, educational working group exchanges
- Interview transcripts
- Preservice teacher field experience log
- Organization meeting notes
- In-class field notes following teaching experiences

While in the field I created jottings, to both be present, yet also capture examples of actions, language, and interactions of those participating in the discussion during and after course sessions, zoom meetings with IC, and the education working group. I then typed up the most relevant jottings into fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). With each significant field note, I created a reflective memo to capture any potential themes, or codes, as well as evidence toward an evolving understanding of what is happening in this space, and how I may adapt my teaching practices to enhance the collaborative project.

Data Analysis

Using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) I recognize my participation and decision making as essential to interpretation. During exploratory coding, I looked for in vivo codes in the participants' words that would best illustrate the phenomenological experiences that addressed my research interests, sense of belonging, place, curricular agency, and the nature

of the educational space. Organizing alphabetically, I looked for patterns, and codes that may be combined through the process of pattern coding (Saldaña, 2021). Through focused coding, I used Atlas.ti software to organize my substantive data with these iterative codes and evolving themes. My synthesis of these ideas in my reflective journal helped to unpack my understanding of these themes and how they may connect within and across interviews (Charmaz, 2006, Saldaña, 2021). I conducted thematic analysis phenomenologically which “focuses on meanings suggested by the data through the use of “is” and “means”” (Saldaña, 2021, p. 259). Throughout this process I used thematic mapping to organize my interpreted codes and themes. Using member checking, I shared the interview transcripts with participants with the aim of clarifying the narratives and minimizing any potential misrepresentations. Members of the educational working group served as critical friends (National School Reform Faculty, 2020) to the preservice teachers and me. This critical analysis from members of the working group coming from various Indigenous and non-indigenous backgrounds served one of the primary purposes of the critical friend structure as well as S-STEP more broadly, improvement of practice.

Findings

Teacher Education Practices and Curricular Approaches

Preservice teachers, none of whom identified as Indigenous, shared their lack of knowledge of Indigenous histories and concerns about how these curricular gaps may inhibit their participation in the project. These tensions, sites of *curricular dissonance*, where they see the possibilities, but feel the clash of curricular limitations, needed to be explored. I began recognizing these sites of curricular dissonance through data analysis and considering how they relate to teaching practices. As much of a methods course is modeling and discussing curricular and instructional decisions, I began each class with a jumpstart that would encourage students to

frame their thinking for discussion. This often was in the form of a quick write, in which students could purge their ideas in any form, unassessed to activate background knowledge and set them up for success through participation. Amy, a preservice teacher, noted the usefulness of this practice as well as our discussions which fostered “feeling comfortable expressing yourself” while not “making anyone feel bad”. This emphasized the importance of the developing relationships with peers in the course and members of the collective. Amy reflected on teaching practices during the interview and characterized the course resources as interesting and kindly shared that I did a “really good job picking them and having discussions about them in class”. However, she shared that although the “open discussions” were helpful, she wished our class size was smaller, a potential site of curricular dissonance, when the depth of discussion and inquiry may be limited by the sheer number of participants in the field experience.

Most influential to our teaching and learning practices were the visits within the course from the three collective founders, including Indigenous leaders, Heather and John. They necessitated the importance of seeing each Indigenous community for their unique lifeways within their local environments. This initial interaction became a “good starting place” for Amy to have a better understanding of this work in the battle against misinformation. From class notes, during Heather and John’s visit with students, they described different forms of exploitation of information, and how sharing this knowledge ought to be mutually beneficial.

Field note: Generosity with knowledge - Discussion with [Heather] and [John] about academic views and use of Indigenous knowledge, pinged with me, how might we frame the sharing of this knowledge through this curriculum project. They are sharing this knowledge in multiple ways for free and freely promoting awareness of the active Indigenous presence and specific [tribal name] community.

This incurred pause, as I was learning all this information, and needed to establish a symbiotic environment within the course, in which we may learn and in turn provide a service through creating educational resources to reach a broader audience.

Using the teaching practice of iterative lesson design, students chose a topic of interest surrounding Indigenous seasonal practices to research using resources from IC. Students shared their work with their peers and me through two cycles of feedback. Additionally, they familiarized themselves with the tenants of Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2000) and Universal Design for Learning (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014). However, as the audience for these curricular artifacts became the public, beyond school-based teachers, the rigidity of some of the tenets of these design models needed to be considered. Following these cycles of review, the education working group, a subset of volunteers, including Indigenous and non-indigenous members, reviewed curricular artifacts with these guiding questions.

“We've developed 4 guiding points to inform your feedback in this initial round:

- Accuracy: To the best of your knowledge, is the content accurate?
- Clarity: Is the lesson plan clear? Would you be able to use it easily as an educator? Is there anything that would help it be more clear or easily usable?
- Resources: If the lesson plan includes external resources, are those resources good quality? Should any of them be replaced with other more accurate or decolonized resources? Are you aware of any other resources that might be relevant?
- Representation of Indigenous Perspectives: To the best of your knowledge, does the lesson plan do justice to the traditions and to Indigenous history and ongoing presence in [state]? Does it steer clear of common stereotypes and pitfalls?”

Students received direct written feedback on their drafts from the working group members and discussed an overall positive reaction to sharing the lessons. For example, after a first examination of artifacts, the leader of the educational working group highlighted misconceptions evident that assumed the term Indigenous as a monolith. She noted this on specific artifacts, but then synthesized with other overarching recommendations for students to apply to their contributions. Feedback from this round in addition to the classroom visits and discussion, enriched this list of guiding points more specifically. Looking across the artifacts, we were to streamline format, purpose, and emphasis of the following curricular goals:

- Providing tactile, hands-on experiences
- Overcoming misconceptions and false narratives
- Centering/using/speaking language of the Indigenous community
- Making language accessible for K-12 and public audience
- Avoiding cultural appropriation
- Vetting resources
- Incorporating outdoor experiences

This incurred another pause, and shift in teaching practices. These important curricular goals from the vetting process required the students and I to consider structure, use of resources, and attention to word choice for a public audience. This collaborative process heightened the urgency of this work as Amy reflected in her field experience log, a course assignment that documented her participation through the curricular project.

Field Experience Log Entry: The vetting process that materials go through to be included on the [organization] website is extensive. The process that Heather and John go through

to make certain that everything . . . is as accurate as possible is truly a gift to the [Indigenous community].

As she elaborated in her interview this “encouraged her to think about what I am reading, and how accurate it was and the sources I was getting it from”. Although the preservice teachers and I were positioned to inform on curricular structures, these community teacher educators challenged our assumptions, and truly transformed our approach. Amy states, “they wanted to really be clear about current day connections . . . it’s not just a past thing. . . we want to say the Indigenous people were here and then they weren’t”. Following an educational working group meeting, seeing the energy and knowledge from this team of experts, I reflected upon subsequent correspondence.

Reflective Memo: This email provided enthusiasm, gratitude, and recognition for students and collaborators for this collective curricular project. . . Hopefully, and ideally, these perspectives may inform my future actions and curriculum development. It is also helpful to show students the willingness of a local organization to value their expertise in a public space.

These communications provided questions for recurring pauses, how might these suggestions remove some assumptions and barriers to what these curricular artifacts could look like? Are we allowing settler colonial approaches to curriculum cloud the curricular possibilities?

Sources of Curricular Consonance

The educational space of IC provided this essential affective and cognitive support from emerging educators, curious learners, local Indigenous educators and experts, and the various leaders and participants in their educational settings. The elements of this collaborative space enabled these teaching practices and curricular approaches. Although tensions continue to thrive

in this context, I interpreted six primary educational practices, sources of curricular consonance, or elements of the organization's *habitus*, that enabled the navigation through the curricular dissonance inherent in localizing and indigenizing elementary curricula: *developing empathetic relationships, positioning oneself as a learner, uncovering truth toward social and environmental justice, researching local community history, exploring a sense of belonging, and exercising curricular agency.*

Developing Empathetic Relationships: “You’re not alone.”

John and Heather make noticeably clear through their leadership in the collective, their gracious time spent with students during the course, and through our conversations, the importance of relationships and intersections. With the third non-indigenous founding member John and Heather explain, IC was founded based on bringing people from various disciplines together toward symbiotic discovery and revitalization of Indigenous lifeways. Heather explains,

“The majority of the time their goal will benefit our Indigenous goal. Because we are really trying to preserve our environment and our culture and our knowledge . . . we’re relearning old Indigenous knowledge as well, . . . we are on that road together”.

John added, “You’re not alone”, Heather echoed, “I’ve got friends!” which illustrated Lily’s characterization of the organization, “the relationships are very genuine. . . I think people mean what they say, they want you to help”. Heather emphasized through stewardship of the land, contributions should benefit all involved. The educational space does not support unidirectional extraction of information, a site of curricular dissonance, which mimics the colonial extraction-based economy. I documented in my meeting notes times when tensions and discord were palpable. Lily shares that “some people will come to meetings and want something out of [IC] but they don’t want to give anything back to it”. I witnessed multiple interactions with people

entering the space, whether intentionally positioning themselves to extract or not, and the emotions and intense discussions that ensue. What Lily characterizes as genuine, also entails blunt honesty and direct communication with members and non-members. Although my intentions of increasing exposure for preservice teachers, elementary students, and me to Indigenous lifeways through curricular decisions, the curricula needed to be useful for Heather and John, IC, and their Indigenous community more broadly.

Positioning Oneself as Learner: “Really put myself in the place of not knowing and being.”

This climate of learning from each other frames the space of IC as I documented through meeting notes and jottings, new members enter the space, and maintain this position of wonder. As Lily observed, “when you bring your students to our meetings . . . they all introduce themselves as learners”. She has acted as a critical friend for me throughout this experience, asking specific questions that made me question my own curricular decisions during the vetting process. She describes what I interpret as another site of curricular dissonance, “My lack of knowledge. . . you grow up with these myths . . . you don’t learn the history. . . That was the most challenging. To get educated”. She emphasizes the importance of developing this education as a collective endeavor, informed by various contributors including those who “haven’t had any exposure to the history” and she clarifies “it is not always peoples’ faults”. Through ten semesters of teaching this course, this lack of exposure arises, and becomes an important motivator for preservice teachers toward overcoming this gap.

Amy discusses her motivation to learn and participate in this work to “do justice for the organization” which required being “open to any suggestions and collaborations” as Amy noted when reflecting on offering her curricular artifacts to the vetting team. As vulnerability is necessary for learning, Amy shared her appreciation when asking questions, that Heather and

John were “very gracious about how they answered” as not having experience with Indigenous knowledge and having to research and create educational resources was an early site of dissonance for both Amy and me. She explained sitting in on meetings, researching, and having conversations with Heather and John during class,

“just made me more sensitive to the fact that . . . I can’t truly understand how people are feeling, but I can be mindful and as careful as I can be . . . to make things accurate. . . and be a more understanding person . . . really put myself in the place of not knowing and being”.

Heather and John, as critical friends with members of the educational working group guided our curricular decisions on our artifacts. Heather characterized their intentions when working with students, “to encourage and uplift, not to criticize”. This approach is fundamental to the critical friends’ protocol, maintaining a stance toward improvement. During the interview Amy discussed some of the important revisions we would make on the individual artifacts, and the overall project design.

“We wanted to . . . make sure that it was accessible to all kinds of people, . . . that a parent could pick it up . . . that there was a lot of opportunity for work in the environment and out of doors and hands on activities. . . words and pronunciations . . . the greeting, and the land acknowledgement”.

Amy was instrumental in operationalizing the suggestions from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the educational working group sharing her motivation that “it would be useful to people beyond our classroom, not just useful to me.” Lily conceptualizes, “honor it by action” like Amy and me, she comes from the position of improvement, and models improving herself through knowledge and actions. As Amy described what I interpret as sites of dissonance

arising through this process, I considered not only how to support her and her peers in the course, but what I might need to learn to make the revisions which reflect the visions of the Heather, John, and the members of the educational working group and IC more broadly.

Uncovering Truth toward Social and Environmental Justice: “The real story is slowly coming to the surface.”

Although one may argue there is no one truth, as it is reliant on interpretation, a quest for truth as a curricular emphasis was reflected through IC meetings, educational working group exchanges, course materials, visits from the founding members, and most notably during the interview as Heather,

“But as far as educational material, it is just about teaching the truth . . . you don’t want to continue to rehash the wrong story, because then it becomes a debate, and which is right, and which is wrong . . . We’re correcting the wrong, and we’re not erasing”.

To which John added, “Because the truth is out there you just have to recover it”. Heather and John modeled that they do not claim to know everything either, “that’s what we’re trying to do. through IC and all the help, we get through students and professors and others; it’s slowly hashing, the real story is slowly coming to the surface”. However, evaluating and sharing these stories becomes a common site of curricular dissonance, as people feel discomfort or fear when gathering new perspectives.

A common site of dissonance is the debate about what is considered developmentally appropriate with students. Amy addressed this concern in the context of the student friendly land acknowledgement that introduces each lesson, “I don't think that's the point to make a kid feel bad about what the past was but to recognize what it was." This site of curricular dissonance occurs as teachers and communities fear the backlash that students may be upset when learning

about the displacement and land theft of colonization. However, when considering the harm that is occurring, reflected through field notes in discussion with John and Heather, they are constantly in a state of survivance, employing agency in the form of teaching, action, and protecting people from misinformation that can be harmful, which Heather characterizes as “doing what is right for our culture” as they are “tired of being told we are extinct”.

Researching Local Community History: “This is about local history, period.”

Localizing requires learning about our historic and contemporary places, from local people. The Indigenous leaders, Heather and John commonly emphasized concepts with the prefix ‘re’, “re-narrate”, “re-envision”, and “reeducate the public” to illustrate this active practice of growth and change in our teaching approaches. Through transcription and analysis, the prefix “re” arose multiple times in rewrite, revise, and rehab. Our curricular decisions impact how we may reimagine or reeducate through our process of making places. As Heather asserted, “this is about local history, period”. Through learning from local experts and community members, Amy recognized a site for unlearning,

“the ways that Heather and John, and you described it, it, I felt silly not understanding it before that it was so local, and so place-oriented, that each group would have very specific, cultural differences and the way they live their lives with nature”.

Lily highlighted that localizing with some communities is challenging as “they want sanitized versions of colonial history only”. This site of curricular dissonance mirrors the backlash, prevalent in our local schools, where sanitized versions of local history are barricading students away from exploring balanced perspectives. Instead, she argued that in terms of Indigenous knowledge many students are starting “from scratch” however “they’d be very happy to learn more about Indigenous life . . . And they could see their local areas as a reflection of life well

before colonial times”. For example, a local statue depicts a colonial leader in triumph as she kills Indigenous families. Heather and John urge the community, not to erase or remove the statue, but instead to welcome the counternarrative in concert with the statue, so community members can see the misconceptions. This is an essential teaching practice, of not eliminating all resources, but teaching critical literacy strategies to form a perspective on the truth. John drew attention during an in class visit to a local political debate that many students living in the town did not realize was occurring. Exploring the multiple perspectives surrounding the ecological issue provoked wonder, and students began looking around for signs, and talking to people, and raising awareness in their networks. Heather explained, “people have become more sensitive to Indigenous issues”.

Lily notes the importance of learning this history at a young age, and the pivotal role of the parents, as it needs be “shared with families” so “they can learn together and be curious together about this”. This remains an important audience for the curricular artifacts, as IC, in the quest for educating the public, is encouraging parents to engage their own children in these experiential learning opportunities. From the positionality of a parent, this is my only approach currently, as my elementary daughter does not receive any social studies, or history instruction, by policy of the school to emphasize literacy and math.

Exploring a Sense of Belonging: “You don't come across these people that often.”

This source of support helped address my first research question, *what creates and fosters one's sense of belonging and agency in collective educational spaces?* Lily characterizes the leadership of IC, in contrast to previous groups she has left in favor of organizations with “a certain ability to organize, to show appreciation, to inspire”. Through these curricular collaborations the concepts of contributing, and enacting agency have been pivotal to creating a

sense of belonging in the educational space of the work, and the curricular projects. As Lily articulates, "I have to be able to do something to feel like I belong". Contributing to my understanding and connection through a shared sense of belonging in this space, "you don't come across these people that often". This space nurtured a sense of belonging which welcomed authentic relationships and friendships. However, with this compatibility comes interpersonal relations beyond professional. Lily speaks to this affective support, nurtured in this space, "[IC] allows for a real range, a wide range of emotions . . . They entertain humor, they entertain anger". I witnessed different relational conflicts, which illustrate the authenticity of the connections among the members of this collective. Compounded with the social and environmental urgency instigating the organizations initiatives, conflict is inevitable.

Lily cautions that although this space welcomes an exploration of one's sense of belonging, and enacting agency, as "they appreciate it all . . . they are very careful. . . They want people to commit, they don't want them to be takers, they want them to be doers". This theme addressed my research interest of the sense of belonging that arose as I began participating with this organization. I realized the nature of the educational space created by IC mirrored the types of spaces I desired for my own work, and for my course, interdisciplinary, creative, with abundant affective support. From my reflective journal of ethnographic jottings and field notes, the feeling of "we've got you" was evident. Lily echoes, "I think that a feeling of solidarity is there and mutual respect and an ethic of hard work". These aspects of working spaces are essential for me to be productive. I need to be able to express my questions, emotions, challenges, and contributions.

Exercising Curricular Agency: "I feel good that there is something new out there in the world."

Opportunities to deliberately create are often a luxury in teacher education and elementary teaching. This curricular collaboration offered this creative opportunity through these educational practices. These elements nurtured my sense of belonging with members of the collective and enabled preservice teachers, community members, and I to exercise curricular agency, which addresses my second research question, *how might a sense of belonging and perceptions of place inform or inspire teacher education practices toward co-construction of justice-oriented curricula?* Lily describes IC as, “outstanding. . . so well organized . . . everything leads to actionable items . . . you are actually accomplishing something”. Lily continues to be an active member of IC and reflects,

“We need to do the work and actively restore some of these pathways for Indigenous people to come back into the heart of society, and be valued and respected . . . So being here, and knowing this land never belonged to us . . . was a great inspiration to contribute”.

Amy and I would meet after class and over zoom, where she also acted as a critical friend to incur reflection upon my curricular agency and brainstorm curricular possibilities. Amy continued her work beyond the scope of the course, a decision she attributed to her love of research, and her empathy for the Indigenous members of the community, their generosity with their time and efforts, and the opportunity to create something new. She contributed to three curricular artifacts, in addition to the overarching template and introduction, and co-taught a webinar for local educators about how to use the artifacts we had designed with the class. Despite feeling nervous to teach the webinar with Heather, John, and I she notes “it feels really good to have created something” and be “more comfortable in my knowledge of how to talk to students about history”. I related to Amy’s creative inspiration and dedication to the work, which

again echoed the solutions-based approach of IC, here is a gap, let us research, collaborate, and improve it together. Amy articulated after class, during course discussions, and in her interview “I like a challenge when it comes to a curriculum project” which echoed my interest in curricular agency, limitations, possibilities, and dissonance. Previously I attributed my interest in curriculum development to its creative possibilities, and less so for its inherent challenges and problems. The methodological structure of self-study, reflexive thematic analysis, and relationship building, alerted me to my interest in curricular design, which is not purely creative, but overcoming the tensions, or sites of curricular dissonance in the process.

Discussion

Recognizing Community Members and Preservice Teachers as Teacher Educators and Critical Friends: “I can see why you as professional teachers do what you do. We totally get it.”

Amy, Heather, John, and Lily, and members of the educational working group, acted as teacher educators and critical friends for me throughout this curricular collaboration. Learning from the expert members of IC, and preservice teachers, I attribute my sense of belonging to these relationships and essential practices, or habitus, of this collaborative space. This course intended to provide this experience, not only for the development of this curriculum as a mutual benefit for the organization and Indigenous community members, but also to develop foundational experience about what localizing, and indigenizing curriculum may feel like and look like in subsequent educational spaces. The efforts of immersing in this research and exercising curricular agency with preservice teachers highlighted the necessary rigor and perpetual nature of this work. As Lee and McCarty (2017) argue the three primary aspects of “CSRP attends directly to asymmetrical power relations . . . recognizes the need to reclaim and

revitalize what has been disrupted by colonization . . . and recognizes the need for community-based accountability” (p. 62). The members of IC work in concert to support the survivance (Vizenor, 2008) of this local Indigenous community, and Indigenous knowledge more broadly. Introduced by Vizenor (2008) survivance is a state of being in which Indigenous communities are actively surviving and resisting the narratives of elimination. John and Heather along with two other Indigenous members, and one non-indigenous founder and coordinator of the collective, model a critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy in their public spaces. As what Murrell (2000) may characterize as community teachers, they also describe the ‘leeway’ through their educational space, not so easily afforded in the more rigid structures of formal teacher education. This provides further emphasis of the need to expand who is considered a teacher educator, and how “innovation in teacher education must be framed with a humanizing imperative” (Ellis, Souto-Manning, & Turvey, p. 8). This humanizing imperative seeks to recognize life as lived by historically marginalized and oppressed communities.

This research methodology of S-STEP necessitates investigating my teaching practices, however, simultaneously moving the focus away from my role, and into the expanded notion of teacher educator. Heather and John continue to offer their teaching and learning stances as models of collaborative and interdisciplinary research. While sharing their knowledge, they recognized and encouraged students to ask questions, get creative, and make necessary revisions. Lily is active member of the educational working group and is co-planning professional development on these curricular artifacts with teachers in her community. Amy, with her positionality as a preservice teacher, was able to overcome her nerves and present the work within a virtual room of various educators. Cipollone, Zygmunt, & Tancock (2018) suggest that by broadening the definition of “teacher educator . . . our candidates are better able to make this

shift and begin to feel *with* the community, and in turn, *with* their students” (p. 716). When we learn from the various teachers around us as a way of extending our knowledge, we welcome curricular possibilities for overcoming sites of curricular dissonance for expanding narratives within, before, and after we are considered ‘teachers’

Navigating Curricular Dissonance: “No one can do this work by themselves.”

Through my research I interpret sites of *curricular dissonance*, which occurs when curricular possibilities and limitations meet. As educators aspire toward raising awareness, infusing an Indigenous perspective to steadfast colonial curricula, or as Heather shares, “making better humans”, one can hear and feel the vibrations of various sites of dissonance, as participants describe, “political violence”, a loss of intergenerational knowledge, fear of ‘scaring’ students, or communities being emotionally attached to their colonial perspectives. John and Heather emphasize the importance not of removing colonial perspectives, rather expanding the narrative to include Indigenous perspectives and history. This echoes Dominguez (2017) who notes that it is the work of Western scholars to participate in “decolonizing, anticolonial, self-reflection, and reorientation” (p. 218). Although he emphasizes the importance, similarly to Heather and John, of recentering and renewing, he distinguishes that it is not a “return” (Dominguez, 2017, p. 219). He insists that “Cultivating types of educators for whom CSR is possible is going to involve new, decolonial approaches to teacher education” (Dominguez, 2017, p. 241). The decolonial approach of participating, as the organization prefers to say, as co-conspirators in the work of uncovering the truth, for engaging the public in the process of indigenizing and localizing through curricular decisions. This concept of community-based accountability is sustained through Indigenous tenets of respect, reciprocity, responsibility, and caring relationships (Brayboy, Gough, Leonard, et al., 2012, p. 436).

S-STEP affords this opportunity to pause, revise, and reimagine curricular decisions. Amy notes in her field experience log, “For a culture that passes on cultural history, skills, and language primarily through oral tradition and generational knowledge this has been devastating”. This site of curricular dissonance necessitates relationships which are mutually beneficial as Lily notes “no one can do this work by themselves”. It was essential that this curriculum collaboration provide mutual benefit for the Indigenous community members, and experience for preservice teachers and me with localizing, and indigenizing. Heather and John acknowledge the persistent conflict, or dissonance between possibilities and limitations, “Dreams and reality are two different things”. Similarly, about to embark on a full year internship in second grade, Amy highlights the site of curricular dissonance, “the curriculum looks pretty rigid”. You can hear the crashing of her creativity against the rigidity of preplanned curricular experiences. Lily explains “when things are suppressed there is a human cry against that suppression, and people come out even more determined to tell their story,” however cautions, “it could have a counter effect”. This highlights the persistence of sites of curricular dissonance, while providing opportunities to investigate local knowledge, an imminent backlash is always a risk. This requires “a lot of work” however, overcoming various sites of dissonance as Amy shared it is “going to be real”.

These curricular artifacts, developed through the expertise of Indigenous leaders, organized, and revised through co-conspiring collaborators, and shaped by the creativity of preservice teachers are currently available to the public. Being a part of organizing the completion of this curricular project, which was a learning experience for all, now has an additional benefit of educating young people and educators about these histories and lifeways with a broader audience. This initial sense of belonging was nurtured through support for navigating these sites of curricular dissonance. Recognizing these sites of curricular dissonance

as an educational space, I was able to exercise my curricular agency with various teacher educators. My sense of belonging, although challenged through my lack of Indigenous knowledge, inherent curricular tensions, and observation of interpersonal discord continues to foster my compassion, interest, and participation in this humanizing community.

CHAPTER 3

Community-engaged Field Experiences for Challenging Curricular Misconceptions of Place toward Localizing and Indigenizing Curricula within Elementary Teacher Education.

Abstract

This paper proposes a community-engaged field experience design which seeks to address the following intersecting problems: the marginalization of elementary social studies, the minoritization of BIPOC knowledge and histories in elementary curricula, and the minimization of teacher agency. I argue that our teacher education methods courses need to consider opportunities for expanding where and with whom preservice teachers are learning. Reflective notes on teaching practices, course experiences, and communication with local collaborators, provide context for the concepts I am proposing, *curricular dissonance* and *curricular agency*, that arose through reflective thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) from interviews and artifacts from preservice teachers. When teacher visions for curricular possibilities conflict with the perceived curricular limitations, *curricular dissonance*, arises. I build upon musical, cognitive, and cultural dissonance, yet I distinguish this as its own concept with theoretical and practical potential. The purpose of naming this phenomenon is to offer this as a learning space for public and teacher educators to navigate these sites of dissonance through field experiences which center community-engaged curricular collaborations.

Keywords: anti-Blackness, community-engaged teacher education, curricular agency, curricular dissonance, field experiences

Introduction

Designing experiences in which teachers seek to overcome misconceptions, untruths, and dominant narratives remains imperative for realizing social and environmental justice. However, preservice, and in-service teachers looking to develop indigenized or anti-racist curriculum are often not finding spaces conducive to this work. Some teachers continue to employ harmful resources and narratives that proliferate the false safe space for some, but not all in many elementary school settings. Scholars of color (Chimbganda, 2017; McCarty & Lee, 2014; Patel, 2014; San Pedro, & Kinloch, 2017; Shange, 2019; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2019) document the proliferation of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness in teacher education and curricula. As Tuck & Gorlewski (2019) argue, “We do not want to rely on a structure that is created to justify theft of Indigenous land and destruction of Black life” (p. 35). Settler colonialism continues to envision land as leverage, and instead of recognizing this phenomenon, preservice teachers, through their elementary experiences, continue to hear the stories of discovery and conquest and the gratitude and celebration we should pass on to our students. These authors insist that settler colonialism assures that “Indigenous peoples disappear at the same time that they require Black life to be kept landless” (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2019, p. 33).

Agency is often a means of disruption, a common theme in the literature surrounding reconceptualizing teacher education and curricula. However, educators who are not taking part in these necessary revisions, for many reasons, are perpetuating what Viesca & Gray (2021) consider “evasion pedagogies” which seek to avoid that which causes discomfort, and unfortunately has become a form of habitus in elementary education. The habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) is based on institutional and societal norms. One participating in the habitus is then placed within the current of the collective practices of the place. In the context of teacher education, the

habitus of evasion and avoidance promotes safety and security from proposed legislation and political backlash toward elementary teachers. This habitus of educational models upholds dominant norms perceived positively by local communities and society more broadly. Given the attempted pieces of legislation, keeping curricula tame and the same is the favored condition. To go against the favored condition has the potential for establishing a new form of habitus, in which educators' default positions seek to create and challenge the status quo. Bourdieu's (1977) habitus draws attention to the urgency for challenging the pattern of conformity where teacher agency is minimized. Bourdieu's (1979/1984) argument for place, and sense of belonging, is necessary to consider when creating inclusive spaces for professional and curriculum development. The place embodies the habitus of the space, the everyday practices that are understood by those who participate in the place. Teachers and students develop a sense of belonging in a place, through familiarity and experience with the habitus or everyday social practices and actions. "By participating in the field, individuals incorporate into their habitus the proper know-how learned from repeated practices that will enable them to function in that field" (Page, 2020, p. 104). Habitus is useful to consider in the design of these teacher education courses as we are navigating spaces that knowingly and unknowingly create everyday patterns that support marginalization and minoritization. What if our teacher education field experiences disrupt this habitus through the development and empowerment of agency that emerges through experiences and developing background knowledge?

San Pedro (2018) calls for culturally disruptive pedagogy for acknowledging and disrupting the patterns of whiteness in education that often support these evasion techniques. The National Museum of African American History & Culture (n.d.) offers accessible ways for "Talking About Race" and describe the phenomenon of whiteness, as an assumed normality of

being white, and how it is often operating ‘invisibly’ in our daily lives. However, the predominantly white female population of in-service teachers continue to describe a lack of time or space for this work, compounded with a fear of incorporating perceived controversial issues into the curriculum, inhibiting attempts at curricular revisions.

Given political backlash and local legislation challenging even the word critical itself, these discussions with educators are more essential than ever. Situated in the Northeast, United States settler colonialism lives in our museums, historical markers, school board meetings, and 400-year celebrations of European land displacement. In New Hampshire, recent legislation, House Bill 10 introduced the parental bill of rights which concludes,

“Any teacher or administrator with certification to teach found guilty of violating any section of this law shall have his or her teaching credentials suspended for a minimum of one year for a first offense or employment terminated for multiple offenses. . . Any contractor or third party employed by the school that violates any section of this bill shall be fined \$2,500 and be restricted from any further access to all schools in the district for 1 year for a first offense and fined \$5,000 plus permanent restriction from all schools in the district for additional offenses” (House Bill, 2023).

This proposed legislation, was tabled, specifically for its focus on requiring educators to disclose changes in students’ gender pronouns to parents even if the child anticipated emotional or physical consequences (Dewitt, 2023). However, the design of this bill illustrates the national phenomenon toward parental rights over educator discretion or student experience. Additionally, House Bill 514, proposes the removal of the exemption for K-12 educators from the state’s obscenity laws within the context of books and curricular materials. Our teacher education

designs need to acknowledge, discuss, and affectively and cognitively support our new and veteran teachers through these circumstances by engaging with the community.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Using data from longitudinal reflection, employing reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) and techniques from Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices (S-STEP) from two teacher education field experience collaborations within the context of a Teaching Elementary Social Studies course, I interpret sites of *curricular dissonance* that limit the potential for this work in current and subsequent spaces. To conceptualize this idea, I first explore variations of dissonance theory. I contextualize empirical examples of this proposed concept of curricular dissonance to illustrate its potential as a frame for the design of teacher education experiences. The two field experience designs offered insight into the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How might teacher education experiences support educator navigation of social, political, cultural, and environmental sites of curricular dissonance?

Research Question 2: How might place-based, community-engaged experiences foster a sense of belonging and curricular agency with educators toward expanding and diversifying narratives in their local curricula?

Dissonance Theory

I employed a narrative review of the use of dissonance, which revealed three concepts, musical dissonance, cognitive dissonance, and cultural dissonance. Several articles employ dissonance as conflict, difference, and contrast. Music is often place-based and place-conscious which aligns with my overarching theoretical dependence on both place literature, and place related teacher education practices. This is also why my interpretation of the phenomenon of

curricular dissonance, and following conceptualization took shape through musical relationships, a familiar understanding to capture the intersections of curricular possibilities and curricular limitations, and how educators navigate these intersections, a less well-known or researched phenomenon. Like when we find ourselves in a state of cognitive dissonance, identifying and investigating where the curricular dissonance arises and what forms of curricular agency are necessary to resolve the discord, may offer opportunities for professional development, as well as field experiences in teacher education.

Musical Dissonance

Dissonance is a clashing of sounds, often unpleasant and unharmonious. Musical dissonance is purposeful, creating emotion, imagery, and narrative. Although also occurring unintentionally as one learns a new song, dissonant sounds are primarily placed intentionally to create emotional distress, as in a scary movie, or a musical score. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is well known for building these dissonant relationships and frequencies with the intention to resolve the work with consonant sounds for the listener. His work **String Quartet No. 19 in C Major** was nicknamed the Dissonance Quartet. For the visual learners, picture the essence of dissonance captured in Vasily Kandinsky's abstract art. In the context of teacher education practices, each semester my students critique an example of Kandinsky's work, and question the artistic choices and colors, with often visceral reactions. I then introduce the text *The Noisy Paintbox* (Rosenstock, 2014) which provides a fictional picture book of his childhood, and the emerging concept of abstract art. Preservice teachers learn that Kandinsky hears colors, thought to be a form of synesthesia, a condition where experiences with one sense activate another sense. This work illustrates the contrast of sounds, as he hears colors, and paints the dissonant and consonant relationships and tensions which highlight the potential

complexities of contrast, change, and resolution. This inspires our discussion of knowing where someone is coming from, what cultural pathways they bring to the work, and how knowing this perspective may challenge our assumptions and perceived views. This depiction of dissonant relationships through music and visual art informs my conceptualization of the complexities of curricular decision making toward social and environmental justice as illustrated in Figure 1, explained in a later discussion.

Cognitive Dissonance

Harmon-Jones & Mills (2019) outline the various paradigms that recognize dissonance theory. These authors outline a thorough analysis and overview of cognitive dissonance, building upon the work of Leon Festinger (1957), “The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, motivates the person to reduce the dissonance and leads to avoidance of information likely to increase the dissonance. The greater the magnitude of dissonance, the greater the pressure is to reduce dissonance” (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019, p. 3), which relates to “behaviors, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings” (2019, p. 5). Harmon-Jones & Mills (2019) assert that challenging decisions incur a higher level of dissonance and may even incur more dissonance, as “the affective state of dissonance signals a problem” (p. 6). Through cyclical curricular decisions, dissonance perpetuates and perhaps becomes louder, and a stronger motivator for future avoidance. Conversely, if the outcome is perceived to be desirable, the consonant cognitions, or thoughts, ideas, and perceptions, may outweigh the discomfort and offer potential for navigating through the dissonance.

Cultural Dissonance

Ybarra (2001) first employed the term of cultural dissonance to understand the tensions experienced by Latinx communities in English writing. She notes that in the space of cultural

contexts, fellow scholars were applying cognitive dissonance to describe the conflicts that arise when two cultural environments come together. She realized a need to nuance the concept and identifies that cultural dissonance “emerges between Basic Writing requirements and the culturally encoded discourse patterns of Latino students” (p. 40), which like many forms of dissonance, resulted in avoidance, in this case a student dropped out of the class. Allan (2002) applies the definition of cultural dissonance in an international school context and argues not for avoidance of dissonance but rather that “schools recognize, acknowledge and work with this cultural dissonance” (p. 84). This relates to my proposed teacher education model, which acknowledges these experiences with dissonance as learning spaces. Prest (2022) relates this phenomenon to performance, however, given the use of the term alien in legislative concepts, I prefer this author use the term unfamiliar in the following description.

“Many international performances, be they theatrical or social, result in the experience of cultural dissonance (the discomfort felt by the spectator or performer when encountering something alien) or of bemused interest. When this jarring is left hanging, the performance is not transnational; when, on the other hand, the jarring leads to the creation, deliberate or otherwise, of a new kind of performance” (p. 228).

Prest and Goble (2021) describe these encounters in the context of music education for revitalizing Indigeneity as “fluid spaces of possibility and vulnerability that lead either to collaboration and invention, or to misinterpretation and decimation” (p. 25). Cultural dissonance often arises through contact zones or “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). This work, as Butler (2022) describes, of evicting anti-Blackness and settler colonialism

from curriculum, necessitates contact zones with experts, historians, and educators of color to inform curricular practices, through collaboration and invention. Like my conceptualization of *curricular dissonance*, which provides opportunities for creation, cultural dissonance when left unacknowledged amplifies the clashes. This welcomes further recognition of the sites of dissonance that occur in these zones, beyond cognitive or cultural dissonance into the fluid space of curricular design.

Curricular Dissonance

Curricular dissonance occurs when curricular possibilities and limitations meet. When applying the relationships created through dissonant chords and scores to curricular decisions, as my teaching experiences and the narratives from Kenna and Amy, two preservice teachers, who each participated in a different curricular collaboration, illustrate, there is both discomfort and opportunity. Engaging these tensions has the potential to create further sites of dissonance, seeing curricular oversights, yet not having the knowledge to overcome them. I interpreted the primary theme through recognizing sites of curricular dissonance from the data through investigation of the juxtaposition of curricular possibilities and limitations and how participants discern their potential curricular agency toward making curricular decisions. As with any analogy this has its limitations when differentiated from the three other forms, musical, cultural, and cognitive dissonance. I apply these concepts, of curricular dissonance and curricular agency, interpreted through two empirical studies, examining what it looks like to create curricula with preservice teachers, local educators, and community members, to explicate and illustrate this independent and collective competition for attention and action. I consider these sites of curricular dissonance as learning spaces. As with any concept formation, it is paramount to have clear definition of this phenomenon and its related elements.

Curricular dissonance: the phenomenon of curricular decision making during which perceived curricular possibilities are met with tensions, challenged, or inhibited by curricular limitations. Curricular dissonance both motivates and inhibits curricular agency. *Curricular agency* involves making curricular decisions to realize curricular possibilities or may involve no action, or avoidance of curricular decisions due to the perceived magnitude of dissonance.

To overcome a binary structure, I acknowledge the concurrent existence of both possibilities and limitations in the following narrated experiences. It is not always one or the other, rather the interpretations of the magnitude of these sources of dissonance, in relation to the potential for agency to minimize the magnitude. At times participants described a curricular possibility that was dissonant with the curricular requirements. At other times participants discuss how they enacted a curricular possibility, by overcoming a dissonant limitation. These possibilities and limitations related with the nature of the educational spaces and the perceived or animated agency of the participants.

Concept Criteria

I rely on John Gerring's (1999) Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences, for analyzing this concept of curricular dissonance for its elements of familiarity, resonance, parsimony, coherence, differentiation, depth, theoretical utility, and field utility (p. 357). This process challenges me to consider the audience for understanding, relating, and using this concept beyond the scope of these studies. As Gerring (1999) argues "the actual operationalization of a concept is a task separate from concept formation" (p. 378). Therefore, this discussion is meant to distinguish and define this concept but also locate this in the professional context through examples and consider how this may be a

useful frame for these types of field experiences in teacher education. This field experience design requires preservice, community, and teacher educators, to listen and decide what forms of curricular agency may be necessary to resolve the discord they are hearing in their practice. I expand the discussion of field utility with examples from two empirical studies exploring the presence of this phenomenon and concluding with its potential for teacher education design.

Familiarity and Resonance

Readers and educators have a disparate understanding of curricula. Using the word curricular invites readers to consider what curricular means, do they apply the context of extra-curricular, to mean that curricular means essential, or within a given time or structure? Or perhaps they think in terms of disciplines, math curriculum, or fine arts curriculum, or the broader conceptualization of curriculum as a complication conversation (Pinar, 2012)? Although there are variations in familiarity, each conceptualization of curriculum centers on the content, thinking, and learning approach. Dissonance also incurs a variety of contexts, for those immersed in musical settings, or lovers of film or literature. For those who dissonance is a new term, perhaps curricular dissonance does not meet this requirement of familiarity, therefore I hope my visual illustrates the meaning of the concept of dissonance in the context of this research (See Figure 1). Gerring (1999) suggests the evaluative question, “Does the chosen term ring (resonate)?” (p. 367). Curricular dissonance welcomes the reader’s connection to sound, which perhaps literally resonates through the feeling or familiarity with discord. It also may activate their prior knowledge of cognitive dissonance and perhaps cultural dissonance.

Differentiation and Depth

Differentiation means distinguishing the concept from prior concepts to justify its purpose. It is differentiated from cognitive dissonance, as although there are cognitions that

motivate or hinder curricular decisions which may be practical, emotional, or contextual, it is bounded by the site of the curriculum where it occurs. This is also related to cultural dissonance, the state of cultural clash, and may be a source of curricular dissonance in terms of understanding or inclusion of cultural pathways, however, this concept does not fully explore the relationship between the nature of spaces and curricular agency. Cultural dissonance also prioritizes explorations of place, as it often occurs as immigrant families or refugee populations enter a new area in which their cultural ways of being are not fostered and perhaps minimized. Dissonance, as used in music and the arts, is not purely negative. It is uncomfortable, yet meaningful, and depicts discomfort as a necessary state. Throughout this process of curricular revision, we call on it for its potential as sites for creativity and transformative change.

Parsimony and Coherence

Gerring (1999) states, “Arguably, the most important criterion of a good concept is its internal coherence” in which attributes and characteristics “actually characterize the phenomena” (p. 373), a form of “essentializing” which aligns well with the phenomenological approach to these studies. Literature often uses the term tensions to describe the challenges inherent in curricular and instructional decisions. However, tensions as a concept while it has familiarity and perhaps resonance, lacks in parsimony, as its uses are not limited to this context. Although our understanding of tensions, has theoretical and field utility I conceptualize curricular dissonance specifically in the context of developing justice-oriented curricular artifacts. With the boundedness of the musical frame, we can relate to discomfort of hearing a fire alarm, slamming hands on piano keys, and fingernails on a chalkboard. Savannah Shange (2019) sets the tone of her work in a state of dissonance, embedded in a contradictory structure of Robeson school in San Francisco, California. In *Progressive Dystopia: Abolition, Anti-Blackness, + Schooling in*

San Francisco, although the school prized a “mission to offer culturally responsive, social justice-themed education to low-income youth of color” disciplinary and pedagogical decisions caused sites of dissonance particularly for Black students (p. 2). She begins her investigation with what I recognize as curricular dissonance inherent in the school’s public, visible pedagogy of an “Our Lives Matter” campaign, which Shange argues minimizes the intentions of “Black Lives Matter” and states “this dissonance within what initially feels like such a liberatory coalitional move is sharpened by the signs in the front row held by a series of Latina girls reading, “My generation is next—don’t shoot”” (Shange, 2019, p. 3). Calling out these sites of curricular dissonance has the potential to welcome discourse, and actions in the form of curricular agency to navigate conflicts.

Theoretical and Field Utility

Curricular decisions are cognitive processes, however, often with observable actions that may or may not reflect teachers and students’ beliefs or values. Lisa (Leigh) Patel (2013) writes *Youth Held at the Border: Immigration, Education, and the Politics of Inclusion*, in which she connects with immigrant youth who are often considered undocumented. One of her students Magdana is assigned an immigration project, in which she is to describe her journey to this country. Although she was also experiencing cultural dissonance with a clashing of cultural worlds, Magdana wants to be a ‘good student’, and do the assignment, but she fears the legal consequences of telling her true immigration story (Patel, 2013, p. 52). Patel then helps her craft a fictitious journey narrative that would incur consonance of completing the assignment as well as alleviating fear. This illustrates the power of communicating about these sites of dissonance in our work and collaborating to overcome and resolve the discomfort. However, in this example, the potential curricular dissonance remains for the next student who may not be comfortable

sharing her journey, perpetuating this site of fear. This site of curricular dissonance illustrates both theoretical utility by recognizing the potential implications of these dissonant occurrences, as well as field utility, applying teaching practices contextually and experientially in the field for alleviating these tensions through teacher education.

A Rethinking of the Teaching Elementary Social Studies Course

Over the past five years, ten semesters of teaching this social studies methods course, I propose a conceptual framework for a teacher education field experience model that scaffolds the experience of navigating these various tensions, sites of curricular dissonance, through curricular collaborations. Preservice teachers participated in research with the lens of critical literacy, to develop iterative curricular artifacts, vetted and informed by community organizations. This iterative process incited a conceptual investigation into these noisy elements of designing teacher education experiences for diversifying, localizing, and indigenizing justice-oriented curricula. These curricular collaborations offer implications for future designs in various forms of teacher education. Data from sources such as meeting and class notes, interview transcripts, and student artifacts informed the curricular possibilities and limitations as well as the necessary elements of educational settings for these to be realized. This methods course prioritized three primary teaching approaches, field experience, place-based pedagogy, and critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy, necessary for discerning and navigating the dissonance.

Field Experience Design: Expanding Our Vision of Teacher Educator

These curricular collaborations complicate the linear progression of becoming a teacher. When we learn from the various teachers around us as a way of extending our knowledge, we welcome curricular possibilities and informed approaches for expanding narratives within, before, and after we are considered 'teachers'. Cipollone, Zygmunt, & Tancock, (2018) write,

“Community members are teacher educators: privileging community wisdom and expertise” they “suggest that by broadening the definition of “teacher educator” beyond university faculty to include community members, our candidates are better able to make this shift and begin to feel *with* the community, and in turn, *with* their students” (p. 716). These projects took place within the context of our Teaching Elementary Social Studies course as part of a university-based teacher education field experience.

This first project design centered collaboration with local educators and the Black Historical Organization, BHO, to research curricular artifacts surrounding a documentary on local Black narratives, while the second project centered collaboration with an Indigenous Collaborative, IC, to share the seasonal practices and lifeways of a local Indigenous community. Research and curricular design occurred virtually over Zoom, through break out groups, organizational meetings, and collaborative research outside of course time. Following analysis of the participants from one setting, where I first visualized this concept (Figure 1), I compared how preservice teachers perceived the interplay of their educational space and their perceived *curricular agency*. This inquiry continued across the second setting, as preservice, teacher, and community educators were iteratively making curricular decisions, and possibilities and limitations remained essential themes. As defined above, I use the term *curricular agency*, to mean the participation, interest, investment, and choice in the curriculum development process to reflect personal, collective, and community objectives and visions. Curricular agency is essential when teaching through justice-oriented contexts, which recognize and seek to overcome curricular oversights which perpetuate the related phenomena of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism in education. These field experiences offer implications for future course and professional development designs that provide opportunities for critical engagement with the

curriculum toward disrupting harmful prior practices. Educators may consider the local organizations in their communities that seek or may benefit from collaboration in the form of curricular development centering on their historical and contemporary contexts.

Pedagogical Approaches for Addressing Marginalization, Minoritization, and Minimization

Place-based Pedagogy

As all learners have varying relationships with place, understanding how various peoples have interacted with places overtime is an essential first step and iterative discussion during our course. Many misconceptions of place live in our elementary curricula, and to unearth these misconceptions, teacher education needs to encourage immersion in places. Gruenewald (2003a, 2003b) offers critical pedagogy of place as necessary for social action, as recognizing and analyzing our understandings and misconceptions of place “improves the social and ecological life of places, near and far, now and in the future” (p. 7). Our interactions with place are inextricably linked to our identities. This teacher education design seeks to develop a sense of belonging in these collaborative spaces that then “influence the development of an individual’s self-identity” (Briggs, Stedman, & Krasny, 2014, p. 157-158). Teacher identities often determine how they will begin to critically engage with places, which inform their curricular decisions in their educational spaces. Experience, materials, and discussions surrounding place through the course often induce feelings of discomfort which “enable placemaking and a sense of belonging” for all students and teachers (Page, 2020, p. 108).

In each curricular collaboration, preservice teachers were immersed in places. The BHO, Black Historical Organization, offered free walking tours which narrate the local narratives of Black history through monumentality, while the IC, Indigenous Collective, offered opportunities

to participate in organizational meetings, and educational working group meetings. The development of the students' critical awareness of local Black history came primarily through the immersion with a documentary, resources from local historians, and small group collaborations. As preservice teacher, Kenna, reflected on the course structure and her experience with the community organization learning about local Black history, "I think I was pretty interested to learn more, I was pretty engaged, with the topic". As she was curious to learn about these ideas, similarly to her peers in the course, she was also experiencing a rising awareness, especially spatially of the stories happening in her local community. Although the goal of this teacher education curriculum is not to shock or incur guilt for any student, she identifies as a researcher, and she wonders if she should have been looking out for these histories. "Wow is this my fault. . . obviously, it's not like one person's fault necessarily". She notes that it is not one person's fault, which implies a collective fault surrounding the minimization of these narratives. This incites this type of work to make sure that teacher education is doing their part in expanding understanding of minoritized historical narratives. This rising tension highlighted the existence of this site of curricular dissonance, reconciling misconceptions of place with new understandings. This became an important inspiration for her later discussions of attempting to overcome inaccuracies within her current social studies curriculum, and the context of revising inaccurate curricular narratives more broadly. I use this example to consider the types of decisions we are asking of educators at various levels, and their associated actions. Teacher educators ought to consider the impactful places that insight questioning about local histories and lifeways. The spaces of methods courses, professional development, and elementary curricula may reflect ways for students to engage with these places, challenge their prior assumptions, and critically examine the approaches and resources

currently in use. This requires instructors to critique the sources that are available to see what needs to be designed and reimagined in teachers' current and subsequent educational settings.

Critical Culturally Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogy

Revitalizing, bringing life, requires a connection with our lifeways, and our presence in the places we make and inhabit. Preservice teachers engage with critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogies (McCarty & Lee, 2014) to consider the work of local organizations informing the public about important histories and lifeways that have purposefully been marginalized. By “using embodied knowledge to disrupt the hegemonies and politics of power” teachers and learners are “resisting dominant discourses” (Page, 2020, p. 119). In teacher education this means encouraging teachers to critically explore their cultural pathways, bringing new life into their own perceptions through mutual discovery and appreciation. This work begins as educators collaborate to “break down students’ stereotypes of place” (Broom & Bai, 2021, p. 159) by recognizing funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). As Lee and McCarty (2017) argue “CSRP attends directly to asymmetrical power relations . . . recognizes the need to reclaim and revitalize what has been disrupted by colonization . . . and recognizes the need for community-based accountability” (p. 62). Through curricular materials and field experiences, preservice teachers explore various examples of critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy in K-12 settings to inform their curricular artifacts.

These field experience designs contextualize the affective and cognitive nature of this work beyond the expectations or logistics of a methods course. Amy, a preservice teacher, discusses her motivation to learn and participate in this work to “do justice for the organization”, IC, the Indigenous Collective, which required being “open to any suggestions and collaborations” as Amy noted when reflecting on offering her curricular artifacts to the vetting team. As

vulnerability is necessary for learning, Amy shared her appreciation when asking questions, that Heather and John, the Indigenous leaders of IC, were “very gracious about how they answered” as she did not have experience with Indigenous knowledge, which arose as an early site of dissonance. She noted that working with this Indigenous Collective, sitting in on meetings, researching, and having conversations with Heather and John during class, “Just made me more sensitive to the fact that I don’t truly understand, I mean I can’t truly understand how people are feeling, but I can be mindful and as careful as I can be”. The humanizing aspect of these curricular collaborations provided the justification for enacting her research, creativity, and curricular agency throughout and beyond the scope of the course. However, a common site of dissonance is the debate about what is considered developmentally appropriate with students. Amy addressed this concern in the context of the student friendly land acknowledgement that introduces each lesson in the curricular project, “I don't think that's the point to make a kid feel bad about what the past was but to recognize what it was". This site of curricular dissonance occurs as teachers and communities fear the backlash that students may be upset when learning about the displacement and land theft of colonization. These discussions are learning spaces for preservice teachers, community members, and me as the teacher educator, to problem-pose and promote discourse (Freire, 1970/2000) about the realities that entangle our questions surrounding what is right, and what is human. For Amy, it was a recognition of wanting to be a better human through her developing empathy and compassion for this necessary work, and her understanding of the burden Indigenous leaders and co-founders of IC, Heather and John experience, “I thought about them a lot”.

Utility of Recognizing Curricular Dissonance in Educational Spaces

Experientially, as in this course, many preservice teachers are often unaware of lived experiences of minoritized populations in their local communities and beyond. These perspectives provide the foundation for understanding the phenomena of localizing and diversifying justice-oriented curriculum through learning from different sources and experts, particularly who experience marginalization. Preservice teachers are entering spaces where they are grappling with the realities of perpetuated untruths, such as Kenna, when describing her current social studies curriculum, she notes some of the ideas are “not necessarily the most accurate” and “could use some updating” which creates dissonance with the idea of the team committing to the “same” idea when the “same” may perpetuate inaccuracies. She provides an example when discussing her choice of two cooperating teachers, and describes their contrasting curricular decisions,

“We are learning about the Mayflower right now and the other teacher in part of the video, like at the end it says like they all died. And she like cut that out, she wouldn’t let her students hear that, but my teacher was like *‘No, that’s important for them to know’*.”

This highlights the sites of dissonance when realizing differing levels of background knowledge and comfort. She explains her experience of two teachers on her second-grade team and notes their opposing curricular decisions of sharing about the death of members of an Indigenous community in a film. She notes,

“I think it can be difficult to make those decisions, are you going to put in did they die or are you not going to put it in. So, I think that can also be hard if you are on two separate sides, to shelter children or not”.

This highlights the site of dissonance of conflicting curricular decisions even within educational communities, as well as the persistent hierarchical structures of knowledge that are currently working to uphold the same curricula. As Kenna explained, it's "hard being under someone" using under' rather than 'with' illustrating a vertical organization of expertise and knowledge. She notes that through her "personal teaching" which she casts in the future, that her influence from the curricular project from the course may be more impactful, when she can have choices and speak "more freely". She describes positive relationships, which illustrates another site of dissonance, of feeling a sense of belonging in an educational space despite a lack of curricular agency.

During these field experiences, collaborations are designed to recognize the various knowledge sources, as one educator, affiliated with the BHO provided resources, guidance, and content, Kenna noted, "she had so much knowledge and . . . her passion for the subject matter definitely helped make me more excited about it". Kenna discussed her need to develop background knowledge "I feel like she really listened to what we wanted to do". She positioned her and her classmate as "creators with support". This structure of having an advisor, while also positioning herself as a creator, able to design, research, adapt, and share, were all examples of her expressions of agency. She notes that their collaboration "really helped to change my thinking". The design of the working groups fostered participation of the local educators and preservice teachers on a smaller scale, focused on one narrative of the documentary. The sharing of resources and exchanging of creative inspiration, although its depth varied by group, became an important site for learning and unlearning.

These field experiences prioritized creative expression through curricular development and conversations about what is engaging for elementary students, and accessible and useful for

teachers in this context. However, about to embark in a full year internship, Amy highlights additional sites of curricular dissonance, “the curriculum looks pretty rigid”, acknowledging the amount of time reimagining curricula takes within the time constraints of public-school teaching. Amy illustrated through this field experience her desire to revise curricula with the pressure to maintain the same curricula as she considers her upcoming second grade placement. You can hear the crashing of her creativity against the rigidity of preplanned curricular days and approaches. This speaks to the constraints of the current educational spaces that may not recognize preservice teacher capabilities in research and planning, as Kenna also describes she was relegated to the “pre-planned kind of curriculum”. This site of curricular dissonance amplifies the need for expressions of agency if she wanted to be a full participant in the educational space, and exercise the skills she had honed, including developing background knowledge, collaborating with peers, and “putting her own spin”. She illustrated what actions it took to navigate access to the curricular decisions to show she was “wasn’t just sitting back”.

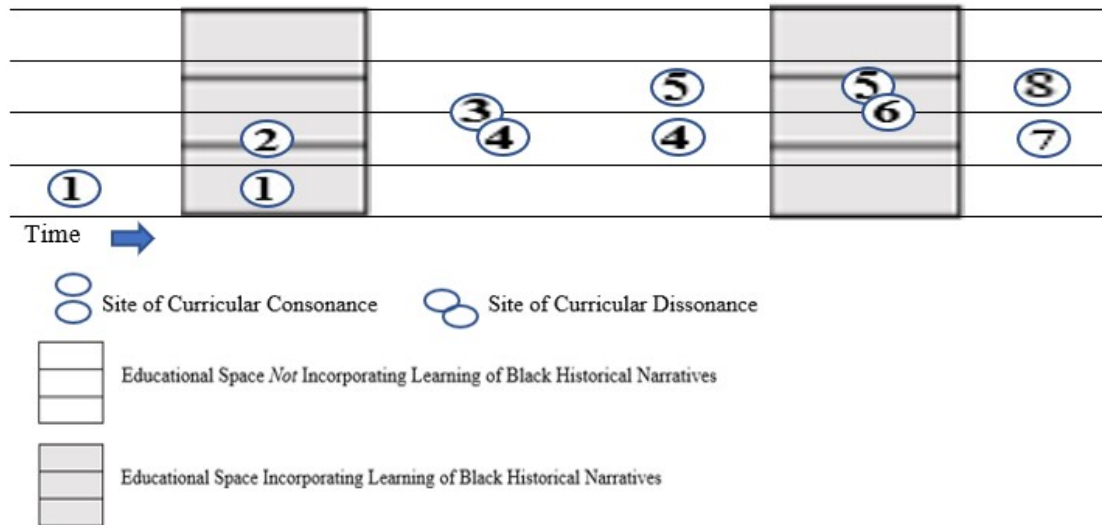
Urgency of Recognizing Curricular Dissonance in Educational Spaces

Looking at Figure 1, I illustrate an example of these competing curricular tensions, sites of curricular dissonance, which will always exist, however deserve to be recognized for the personal and professional conflict they incur. Although this chronology centers data from Kenna’s narratives across two longitudinal interviews, the diagram and chronology of curricular decisions may be used as a tool for teacher education, to help students recognize where they may need affective support, communication, and resources. Kenna did not allow the various sites of dissonance to deter what she perceived as important, beginning with her gap in knowledge about Black history, the first curricular limitation illustrated on the diagram, and further motivated by her discovery of the same gap in the second-grade curriculum. In relation to the content and her

shock at not knowing a lot of Black history in the area during the course, she appears motivated to not be implicated by her students in the future as they reflect on what they have misunderstood or overlooked in their communities. She approached her team to teach a unit around Black history month as she explains that it was not going to be taught any other time of the year, so this was her chance, “I think students should know. . . and wouldn’t necessarily get exposed to otherwise”. She explained, “I don’t think the rest of the team would necessarily change”. This curricular gap or limitation caused a site of dissonance, making curricular decisions that do not align with student need or one’s educational philosophy. Although she had experience designing curricula surrounding Black history, she grappled with having the desire to revise curricula with the pressure to maintain the same curricula. This draws attention to the nature of spaces, as illustrated on Figure 1, which highlights where Black history curriculum development is fostered is grey and where it is not, is clear. Kenna was faced with the challenge of exercising what I perceive as her curricular agency even though it was contradicting the habitus or patterns of her educational space (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). Continuing her enjoyment of the creative design process during this solo week time she notes, “I could kind of do what I wanted”. She found this time to exercise curricular agency through her solo week to design something she is passionate about allowing for a curricular possibility, also illustrated on Figure 1. Kenna shared, “I did advocate for that” referring to her agency, situating a Black History Month unit that she designed and implemented. However, she continued to emphasize the importance of this work, “I just think that exposure was super important”, as “there is not much diversity at all” in the town in which she works. Kenna took this opportunity to navigate through the sites of dissonance inherent in her educational and collaborative setting and felt proud of her work during her solo week. However, during implementation another unanticipated site of dissonance arose.

Figure 1.

Interpretation of Kenna's Dissonant and Consonant Relationships Guiding Curricular Decision- Making Over Time



1. **Curricular Limitation:** Kenna had little to no exposure to local Black history in her public school.
2. **Curricular Possibility:** Field experience provides time to research, collaborate, and create curricular artifacts about local Black history.
3. **Curricular Possibility:** Kenna approaches second grade team about their Black history curricula.
4. **Curricular Limitation:** Members of second grade team share there is no time or space in the curriculum.
5. **Curricular Possibility:** Kenna designs a unit on Black history independently to teach during her first solo week.
6. **Curricular Limitation:** Student responds to text regarding segregation with "When do we celebrate white history month?"
7. **Curricular Limitation:** Kenna does not create any curricular artifacts for her second solo week and keeps the curriculum the same as last year.
8. **Curricular Possibility:** Kenna shared that she saved the curricular artifacts surrounding Black history and will use this in any future grade level or school.

Note: This progression illustrates Kenna's perception of her curricular decisions and experiences which I interpret as curricular possibilities, and limitations, and their interactions as sites of curricular dissonance and consonance.

"They were very empathetic toward it, *'That's not fair, that's not being kind, I would never do that'*. On the other end of the spectrum, one of them was like, *'When are we going to have white history month?'* . . . I was just like, *'Okay, I don't even know how to respond to that really'* . . . that really caught me off guard, I was like *'Ahh, well we are*

learning about Black history right now. ' I feel like that is always inevitable . . . I can't prepare for it all."

The feeling of knowledge and preparedness that inspired her curricular agency had now been challenged in the context of implementation, as the curricular limitation of students' questions or misunderstandings incurred further dissonant feelings. She admits, "second graders aren't really respectful". Kenna shared that after hearing jazz music and exploring abstract art both from Black artists, students "just had more negative things to say I guess, not even about the people". Some of them were like "*Ah what is this?*" and "I think it was less relatable". Although encouraging students to share their opinions, these lessons acted as a form of cultural dissonance (Ybarra, 2001) with students engaging with cultural knowledge that is new to their cultural understandings, and unintentionally became a site of curricular dissonance.

This is Kenna's example however, many preservice teachers of similar backgrounds and experiences that I have observed and worked with over the previous ten semesters, are currently and will be facing these tensions in their educational settings. They may be motivated to create curricular revisions; however, the limitations may become too overwhelming to make the necessary updates. This chronology serves to better visualize and understand the concept and consider how we may integrate and navigate these sites, and ways of overcoming them in our methods courses and field experiences. Although this visual (Figure 1) is a simplification of the relationships and the cognitive, emotional, and environmental complexities involved with each curricular decision, this interpretation illustrates chronologically how Kenna navigated these limitations proliferating the space, by contributing the strengths she had developed through the course, as "The greater the number and importance of the cognitions justifying the behavior, the less the dissonance aroused" (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019). Even as she is confronted

with this second grader's question which caused her to hesitate, she resolved "I can't be prepared for everything" opposed to, I am never doing that again. Following this narrative she concluded,

"I will definitely do a Black history focus, so regardless of if it's planned in or not, I have the plans for that, and I'm definitely going to do that at whatever grade level and school that I'm at. So, I feel confident about that".

Perhaps having experience in navigating these sources of dissonance supported her developing confidence that balanced her curricular agency with the reality of curricular and instructional limitations. Although I do not claim to report a causal relationship, and these studies involved a small number of participants, this visual interpretation (Figure 1) denotes how curricular limitations often persist, and it is what we do as educators with the limitations that enables curricular possibilities. This visual provides a way for educators at various stages in their teaching experience to imagine the curricular possibilities, while acknowledging the limitations that inhibit linear progress toward these goals. I propose this frame of dissonance to familiarize teachers with the shared tensions, as well as this visual to personalize their experience with the unique oscillations that characterize their experiences within their educational settings.

Implications of Recognizing Curricular Dissonance Through Field Experiences

Opportunities to deliberately create are often a luxury in teacher education and elementary teaching. This research suggests that experience with these types of curricular revisions may have implications in subsequent educational settings. When preservice teachers take the time to identify and navigate the many sites of curricular dissonance, they may begin seeing their own potential for exercising curricular agency. Throughout this project, Amy continued her work beyond the scope of the course, a decision she attributed to her love of

research, and her empathy for the Indigenous members of the community, their generosity with their time and efforts, and the opportunity to create something new. Preservice and community teacher educators created something that was incredibly hard to find for all the reasons captured in the sites of curricular dissonance, such as loss of knowledge passed down through the oral tradition, marginalization, and erasure, and purposefully placed curricular gaps. Now, as a source of consonance members of the public may access this information about the local Indigenous community, resolving the initial dissonance raised by a lack of resources.

Experiences inform our decision-making, and the more meaningful our experiences, perhaps the more they resonate when confronted with similar contexts. Kenna found consonance in her curricular decision making despite the confines of the sameness of the curricula, her colleagues' hesitation to teach about Black history due to lack of knowledge and will to 'shelter' children, and the educational space into which she had pry her way, or "get her foot in the door". She shares that it was "nice that I had some experience with that" building upon her experience in the course. She notes that you become proud because you developed it and "you come out with a depth of knowledge that is unmatched" however shares the limitation that she did not get to implement the lesson, which may be an important aspect of the course to adapt. This suggests offering spaces for preservice teachers to teach the lessons and then adapt as another form of the iterative vetting process.

Challenges of Recognizing Curricular Dissonance Through Field Experiences

The BHO and IC are making visible the minoritized histories, in concert with the dominant narratives to welcome conversations, critique, and change. The project with BHO remains on hold due to changes in leadership and dynamics among stakeholders. Although there are many reasons for this, those educators and community members that are willing to accept

truths and discuss these challenges inform the design of spaces for this work. This is where adding the consonant source of partnering with local experts seeks not to eliminate or intensify the decibels of dissonance, rather to pair these sites of dissonance with consonant structures and approaches. Kenna notes that “I definitely felt proud of the work” and that it is “great work”, but she questions whether it is realistic as it took “a whole semester” she wondered if it is something you do in your first year of teaching and then have it for years to come. As is evidenced in her follow-up interview, this position remained true as her teachers were rarely researching and creating curricular artifacts, perhaps by trade or training, or the circumstances of the pandemic. This echoes the need for these types of curricular collaborations both at the preservice and inservice level. These field experience designs may expand into forms of place-based professional development which acknowledge the various forms of curricular dissonance that compound in our public educational settings. If we are speaking the same empathetic language to recognize curricular dissonance, we may be better equipped to navigate these, and provide more time for research and development in practice. Amy noted “I feel good that there’s kind of something new out in the world” as she enjoyed the “curriculum challenge” of creating curricula with Heather and John surrounding their local Indigenous community’s lifeways. Through her participation in the course, design of the project, and position as a teacher educator during the webinar, Amy “felt more comfortable” as she exercised her curricular agency. Amy articulated after class, during course discussions, and in her interview “I like a challenge when it comes to a curriculum project”.

Situated across these field experience settings, and three years of iterative design, this analysis and interpretation are not limited to the narratives of two preservice teachers; however, their actions and discussion provide concrete examples of the sites of dissonance as well as

potential implications of these field experiences. The educators participating across these two curricular collaborations exercised various levels of their curricular agency through researching and designing toward reconciliation of these glaring gaps in elementary social studies curricula. Kenna was able to incur questions, and perhaps challenge prior practice and knowledge with her teacher team and her students during her solo week, while Amy was able to develop public curricula, currently published online and share her contributions through an in-service teacher webinar. To clarify, I use this comparison, not to minimize Kenna's contribution to the BHO project, which is currently on hold due to circumstances beyond her control. Instead, I use this comparison to illustrate the nature of the spaces many of our teacher education candidates are entering, without the support for developing or implementing justice-oriented curricula.

Conclusion

Addressing the first research question I consider, *how might teacher education experiences support educator navigation of social, political, cultural, and environmental sites of curricular dissonance?* These experiences encouraged educators, including me, to consider how they see places, and their roles within them among the various social, political, cultural, and environmental sites of dissonance. Among the oscillations and discussions of dissonance, adapting curricula may heighten the dissonance and therefore incur teachers to eliminate “the dissonant condition” through avoidance (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019, p. 4). Although a unique time for restructuring, perhaps teacher educators and community, preservice, and in-service teachers may take the opportunity to rebuild the climate in which creativity and collaboration can thrive. Learning about what you are teaching, where you are teaching it, and who you are teaching about and to cannot be part of the time squeezed package. Participation within the space

of the course, partnerships, and small groups, alongside local organizations may help envision the ways they employ these actions and curricular decisions in the future.

Following participation in these field experiences, I consider the second research question, *how might place-based, community-engaged experiences foster a sense of belonging and curricular agency with educators toward expanding and diversifying narratives in their local curricula?* “Resistance to change of a behavioral cognitive element depends on the extent of pain or loss that must be endured, and the satisfaction obtained from the behavior” (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019, p. 4). Resistance to change often is a result of fear. Seeking expertise from the community members may help alleviate these fears with understanding, both as an empathetic and cognitive construct “Dissonance should be greater, the greater the unpleasant effort required to obtain the outcome” (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019), therefore, reducing the dissonance requires sources of consonance, which do not remove the dissonance, but rather support our curricular agency to move through it. Redesigning ways of developing these understandings through critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy (McCarty & Lee, 2014) requires learning from our students, colleagues, and community members to shift our positioning. While repositioning ourselves, we are loosening the substrate beneath our students, educators, and community members, to relieve the rigidity of past precedent in educational research and curricular design. Pantić, Galey & Florian et al. (2022) observed, “When teachers act as agents of change, their social networks are bigger, more diverse and more collaborative than in situations in which they act as role implementers” (p. 145). These collaborations do not have the ‘power’ to eliminate ‘power’, but to recognize strengths and differences as powerful catalysts for overcoming the “systematic oppression within our academic community” (Esmonde & Booker, 2017, p. 169). These designs also are not able to erase power dynamics, especially

those exacerbated by political and institutional forces, rather they offer spaces for collaborative work that does not favor one type of positionality or knowledge over another, which fosters affective and cognitive support.

We are all still healing, which influences our curricular decisions. The importance of overcoming curricular gaps, supports navigation through stubborn sites of dissonance. These sites inform both the design of teacher education experiences, and our teachers' navigation through it. It will not go away, as hundreds of years of scholarship shares, from the Cave (Plato) to McCarty and Lee (2014) critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogy, curricular decisions are enacted through a complex relationship of perception, environment, relationships, and knowledge. "We hope that the debate about the differences and controversy about the nature of dissonance will stimulate theoretical development and lead to new insights and findings" (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019, p. 21). Understanding this theme of curricular dissonance requires understanding where and how this is occurring to inform what ways teacher education can support discovery, navigation, and design within and for these dissonant spaces and experiences. This course design prioritizes possibilities for curricular change, through field experiences that center collaboration with experts, peer review, interrogations of place, and research of cultural ways of being, which may have the potential to awaken or motivate curricular possibilities both real and imagined. This highlights the potential for a conceptual framework of curricular dissonance for supporting these types of field experiences, and how they may provide mutual understanding, and fluidity among minoritized and school-based educational communities. Navigating these necessary curricular revisions requires comprehension and recognition of this phenomenon.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Recommendations for Indigenizing, Localizing, and Diversifying Through Place-conscious Teacher Education.

Teaching and learning through an unprecedented pandemic forced adaptability that is often otherwise avoided. These circumstances illustrated teachers can do it, but only through a shared recognition of the tireless complexities of life and learning. As people lost loved ones, financial stability, human interactions, and mental health, settings for formal and informal education endured. Although not all educational outcomes and approaches were favorable, I have learned through these course collaborations that there are fellow educators willing to join the shift. There are educators ready to challenge the habitus of avoidance and silence. There are educators willing to look to our communities for guidance. It is the spaces that identify the sources of conflict, sites of *curricular dissonance*, and allow educators to work within them that is central to my investigations and professional motivations. Beyond the boundaries of Covid and its emotional and behavioral limitations, who is exercising their agency to do something different, rather than the same? How might we foster this necessary vulnerability in a learning stance, knowing what we do not know, and figuring out who are the community experts who can help expand the narratives in elementary social studies curricula?

Practical Implications and Recommendations

Practical Implications of Designing Curricular Collaborations as Field Experience

These experiences are initial steps in decentering or moving the locations of knowledge away from the teacher educator, toward the experts living these experiences. Teacher education programs need to care about the marginalization, minoritization, and minimization. Beyond care, they need to take empathetic action. Awareness of these problems is not new in the institutions

of teacher education, however, designs which move beyond awareness are still being explored. When teacher education spaces do not provide supports for teaching social studies, hard histories, and minoritized perspectives, curricular development in the field becomes an even more formidable challenge. Preservice teachers and educators need opportunities within their teacher education and professional development to exercise curricular agency. However, navigating spaces that are minimizing teacher agency, minoritized histories, and social studies requires affective support in educational spaces for discussing and overcoming tensions, to acknowledge avoidance, and recognize that as a detrimental choice for our students and future teachers. This highlights the importance of expanding these spaces, and for empowering preservice teachers to recognize and hone their abilities in curricular evaluation and design. This also necessitates current and future work collaborators and I are working on to engage inservice teachers in these types of spaces to bring back into their educational environments.

Across the two settings I analyzed curricular decisions which reflect how preservice and community teachers perceive their participation with a) justice-oriented curricula, b) place-consciousness, c) educational spaces, and d) expressions of agency. These investigations illuminated phenomenologically, *what is the experience of designing and implementing teacher education practices toward localizing and diversifying elementary social studies curricula through community collaborations?* Participants oscillated throughout their discussion of what is necessary, with what is limiting, what is nurturing, and what is demoralizing. I deeply related to these oscillations as sites of conflict and was inspired through reflexive thematic analysis to conceptualize an overarching idea that may help me grasp, learn, and teach about these areas of friction. To reflect the noisy and at times ominous tensions, I interpreted these sites of dissonance to illustrate the variation, reflected through these relationships, of what these

curricular initiatives provoke and require. Bringing together the narratives across the two studies broadened my understanding of the multiple sites of dissonance to navigate when moving toward curricular change. Conceptualizing curricular dissonance, differentiating this from other forms of dissonance helped me discern these places which may be unique to the individual or the positionality, or perhaps recognized and shared across contexts.

Recommendations for Designing Curricular Collaborations as Field Experience

Knowing what is necessary may prepare teachers for this work in their subsequent educational settings. If most teachers are avoiding, preservice and inservice teacher education needs to provide preservice teacher experiences, entering the field having collaborated, learned, and expanded their perspectives of place, to navigate the sites of curricular dissonance in their subsequent spaces. If organizations and community teachers can support this work, teachers may be able to effectively revise their social studies curricula. Students benefitted from exchanging local knowledge with educators and community members, and had their chance for inquiry therapy, developing the background knowledge to be able to teach about these contexts. I was fortunate to work in a department that cares about these issues, which became the impetus for the construction of this field experience design. From the start of design in the summer of 2020, to the current spring of 2023, this research offers the following recommendations for field experiences working to address the domineering marginalization, minoritization, and marginalization.

1. Look for curricular gaps in your local elementary social studies, or disciplinary curricula.
2. Encourage students to find and evaluate curricular artifacts in this discipline to understand what is and is not available.

3. Find local organizations that are seeking curricular support, who may have the research and information and are looking to connect with a public or educator audience.
4. Discuss how these inform the design of their curricular artifacts with collaborators on the project.
5. Develop and highlight the potential of preservice teacher expertise, knowing young students, and how to engage, represent, and offer differentiated means of action and expression (CAST, 2020).
6. Value local educator time and knowledge.
7. Develop a collaborative means of sharing and evaluating curricular artifacts, so everyone is sharing in the iterative feedback process.
8. Consider your sharing space, where will this curricular design inform or be useful?

These studies suggest teaching practices such as encouraging challenging conversations, exposing students to lesser-known histories through documentaries, articles, and book chapters, which provide an initiation into this necessary work. As this awareness develops with preservice teachers, it is imperative to inform these curricular gaps by collaborating with local leaders, researchers, and educators, to provide scaffolding for revising curricula, however, with the necessary interdisciplinary knowledge of community members. Although these narratives across two empirical studies illustrate the benefits with the community-engaged field experience, support in their subsequent settings is still lacking. Even within this collaborative structure we are met with sites of dissonance including the political climate, curricular limitations, and a dearth of available resources. Therefore, I also propose a continuation of the recognition,

immersion, and confrontation with these curricular challenges through subsequent professional development. Preservice teachers who participate in these collaborations may then become pivotal educators in their subsequent spaces who model the strength, will, and knowledge required to overcome marginalization of social studies, minoritization of BIPOC narratives, and minimization of teacher agency. I suggest that we design teacher education in our courses and in our communities with the inevitability of sites of curricular dissonance. Bringing awareness to these sites through discussion and resources, paired with the affective support to maintain a compassionate learning stance welcomes creative approaches to curricular problems.

Educational Spaces for Indigenizing, Localizing, and Diversifying

I conclude with a curtain call of the performers and performances that supported these empirical and conceptual investigations. These investigations documented the process of indigenizing, localizing, and diversifying curricular artifacts through a collective exploration of our place consciousness. Through these investigations I explored beyond binaries, why curricular design may look like the first day of elementary school band. Everyone enters with their own perceptions, expectations, and skills, however, with the intention of combining these disparate ideas into a song. Initially riddled with dissonance, the teacher and students see the sites that need attention, and wield sources of consonance through relationship building, practice, and listening. The spring performance reflects this collaborative work, however, the occasional “thwerp” from the trumpets recognizes there is always more work to be done. Dissonance will always be there, whether intentional or not. It is the actions we take when living in these sites that amplify or minimize the discord.

Across both curricular collaborations, and through the education department, course settings, and the Indigenous Collective, I have discovered a sense of belonging, which maintains

and inspires my fascination with curricular change. The mutual optimism I share with leaders of department, members of the collective, and aspiring preservice teachers for overcoming curricular oversights provided the affective support necessary for navigating these dissonant landscapes. Beyond optimism, the empathetic approaches through which people are “allowed to express” their emotions, supported my actions and agency among like-minded “doers”. These projects provided spaces for creating solutions, guided by what is needed for minoritized communities, with minoritized communities. Although I do not want to overstate the impact of these experiences, I continue to reflect upon these critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing approaches toward indigenizing, localizing, and diversifying to inform my relational approaches in current and future curricular collaborations.

The Teaching Elementary Social Studies Course

When first designing these field experiences, many traditionally available learning opportunities were no longer a possibility, due to the pandemic, however paired with the impetus for expanding who is considered a teacher educator, I am grateful to have had these collaborative opportunities. This was a way I could cope. These invitations to design for a public audience, as a public good, which connect students with their communities were effortless RSVPs. As I note in my teaching philosophy statement, (See APPENDIX D), creativity is a coping strategy, a way out of the harsh realities thrust upon teachers. The minimization of creativity in curricular design I was witnessing as an elementary teacher, with the shift in support away from public school educators and glaring and harmful curricular gaps in elementary social studies, welcomed my participation as these projects provided spaces for consonance, to work to collectively resolve these compounding issues. Seeking the sources of consonance that participants perceived as essential for navigating through the sites of curricular dissonance, serves to inform my future

curricular project designs, my teaching practices, and my way of being in the world to support the collective effort toward social and environmental justice.

From my own experience as an elementary educator and teacher educator, the will, and the way to overcome misconceptions in social studies curricula are competing. Therefore, the Teaching Elementary Social Studies Course needed to offer ways for developing our self-awareness through critical place-consciousness and sharing our cultural pathways. This position of discovery that sparks curiosity, and brings awareness to what we do not know, provides opportunities for curricular design and change. Preservice teachers shared experiences when exploring this curiosity and awareness. Although seeing gaps in one's knowledge causes dissonance, it is what you do with that dissonance that may be the difference between avoidance, and creativity. Participants discussed their curricular decisions when immersed within sites of dissonance. Findings from these three studies continue to shape my teacher education practices, community engagement, and research designs.

Preservice teachers currently in the Teaching Elementary Social Studies course are partnering with multiple sustainability organizations, including a Farm to School program sourcing from local immigrant farms, to design curricular artifacts surrounding local cultural practices and foodways. These organizations are working to support access to culturally relevant food in schools and food preparation spaces which reflect the diversity of local immigrant and refugee communities. Each collaboration offers new challenges, sites of dissonance, as well as sites of consonance that support navigation. Although I continue to infuse new ideas and teaching practices each semester, the invitation into this third empirical project provided further validation that this structure may in fact be useful to local organizations. This also offers opportunities to learn more about diverse communities and lifeways, and to support preservice

teachers' inquiry and background knowledge to enhance the potential for curricular agency in their future educational spaces. It may also be interesting to design collaborations with those teachers who participated in these projects as preservice teachers, to see how their perspectives have changed, how they characterize their educational spaces and curricular agency, and how they may envision forms of participatory action research.

Black Historical Organization

Just as we want our students' curricula to be engaging, and motivating, so should our teacher education curricula. Depending on the educational setting teachers may not be exposed to gaps in their knowledge or curricula without self-initiation or application of one's prior knowledge within an ecologically expansive learning environment. Educational settings and policies may be intentionally designed to avoid overcoming these gaps, and in turn create more sites of dissonance for educators as they reflect on their practices. Lily described the dissonance that builds when teachers are "overburdened with schedule" and the "emphasis on testing" and she suggests overcoming these tensions with purposeful integration, "But if they can see it as . . . integral to their classes, and not something extra, it can be incorporated easily". Teachers need to feel supported through this process, riddled with sites of curricular dissonance, reimagining how places are portrayed in curricula. The place-based initiatives of the Black Historical Organization (BHO), welcome situated conversations, and curricular opportunities to engage the broader public in social action toward racial and environmental justice. They recognize the need for educators and community members to share what they do not know and provide the community with place-based experiences to fill the gaps. This learning stance is essential for mutual collaboration and expanding narratives in elementary curricula and beyond. This involves recognizing and utilizing, without misusing community expertise. The sharing of knowledge

ought to be symbiotic, and part of the collaborative agreement at the outset of the project, including what each collaborator will contribute as well as what they may need.

Learning about local historical and contemporary Black narratives of resistance was illuminating and motivating. The documentary illustrates how attention to place welcomes community conversations and actions toward public awareness. Designing curricula surrounding the documentary necessitated a combination of the research from the organization, the abilities of educators, who create curricular approaches and artifacts, and preservice teacher creativity and willingness to learn the important content as well as the components of design. Preservice teachers had the experience of evaluating and creating, rather than just borrowing, and learned to adapt for various settings and age groups. This collaboration with the BHO, local educators, and preservice teachers illustrated that these projects “are not free of tension and contradiction and require ongoing reflection and re-mediation” (Gutiérrez & Vossoughi, 2010, p. 111).

Indigenous Collective

I continue to collaborate with the Indigenous Collective (IC) to share the curricular artifacts created during this collaboration with the public, and preservice and inservice teachers. Across three webinars we shared this work with local educators alongside the Indigenous and non-indigenous members of IC, informing ways to indigenize, localize, and diversify toward overcoming the perpetual gap in Indigenous knowledge shared by educators. This format challenges hierarchical structures in teacher education as Amy, a preservice teacher and as I argue teacher educator, presented about the curricular design with Heather and John, Indigenous leaders. While we could speak to the teachers about the gap in the curricula and some suggested teaching practices, Heather and John could offer specific and illustrative Indigenous practices relevant to the geographical area. At the conclusion of the recent webinar, a teacher asks if we

would be able to work with her and her school through potential social action through community-engaged curriculum development, illustrating the need for professional development. In Lily's home community, Lily and I plan to provide in-person professional development for inservice teachers this spring. In addition to curricular design and professional development, IC has modeled the use of public pedagogy and public spaces through monumentality to encourage critical place-consciousness in our communities. As preservice teachers shared, it was not until they could see the history that they recognized its presence and relevance. Participating in this space provided opportunity for "forging and strengthening equitable relationships between academic researchers and community members" (Johnson, 2017, p. 7). This opportunity to create something new welcomed navigation through these sites of curricular dissonance, such as loss of knowledge passed down through the oral tradition, marginalization, and erasure, and purposefully placed curricular gaps. Now, as a source of consonance, members of the public could access this information about the local Indigenous community, resolving the initial dissonance of a lack of resources.

NEH Summer Institutes

New teachers entering the profession are subject to curricular limitations of time, rigid curriculum, and classroom management as the primary focus. The idealism that once motivated their interest in the profession, and their curricular designs may be overshadowed by the realities of working with elementary students in public school spaces. How might we offer opportunities to move from *fed up*, to *get up*? Districts in the local area tend to rely on boxed programs and wonder why it is not meeting the needs of the students and teachers absent in the development of curriculum. Through a national grant project educators will gather to design creative and flexible curriculum that is ecologically designed. Calderon, Lees, & Waite et al. (2021) write "Crossing

the Bridge’: Land Education Teacher Professional Development” as they observed teachers are not equipped to teach about Indigenous knowledge and practices. As a form of decolonial participatory action research, this summer we will be engaging 72 educators from various contexts and disciplines in two weeklong institutes centering minoritized histories. These collaborative experiences are designed with the priorities of “reflexivity”, “expertise”, “humility”, “dignity”, “action”, and “relationality” (Tuck & Guishard, 2013). Both local organizations, IC and BHO, are collaborating, and members are acting as guest speakers to share their historical and contemporary perspectives for teachers to incorporate through their curricular agency in their unique settings.

This research has been instrumental in informing my contributions to the proposal, institute design, and experiential learning opportunities. Exploring the essential relational aspects across these two projects highlights considerations for supporting educators from multiple positionalities, fostering their curricular agency, and navigating the sites of curricular dissonance inherent in this content and these curricular designs. As the education specialist on the project, I am designing curricula associated with this research and will be supporting teachers as they create K-12 curricula during the institute and throughout the following year. I plan to work with educators to explore their understanding of place, in the context of curriculum as a form of participatory action research, which as Fals Borda (1999) argues is not without challenges. Therefore, I hope to foster a sense of belonging, a source of consonance, throughout these summer institutes. Within a space of experimental inquiry, I plan to foster engagement with teachers’ affective experiences of efficacy and agency (Bandura, 1989), while developing a collaborative of learners. I will consider what spatial elements supported Kenna to design and teach her Black history unit, despite its rejection from colleagues. I will consider how Amy

moved from a place of not knowing, to presenting collaboratively in a webinar alongside Heather and John on indigenizing curricula. I will consider the external dissonant elements such as political climate and legislation through my teaching practices. I will frame my participation to be mutually beneficial to the work of IC and BHO and look forward to learning more through place-based excursions with K-12 educators. I plan to engage educators in conversations about these sites of curricular dissonance and see if and how it may resonate with their educational contexts, and if not, how I may research these teacher experiences to further explicate this phenomenon. I plan to co-create learning experiences in which educators reflect through inquiry journals, participate in discussions, and interrogate social and ecological implications of their curriculum, as they begin to revise and reimagine it. As Tuck and Guishard (2013) emphasize, the focus of DPAR “is not on people, nor on their bodies, but on the relationships between bodies, ideas, and institutions. The gaze is not on people or things, but the spaces between people and things” (p. 21).

Theoretical Implications

Curricular Dissonance as a Space for Educational Change in Teacher Education

These chapters showcase conflicts that arise in these spaces that create curricular limitations, despite visions and aspirations for curricular possibilities. Documenting experiences of navigating through complex relationships and decision-making, educators, of various positionalities, informed my understanding as well as potential future directions for teacher and public education. Teachers recognizing their abilities through place making practices, and awareness of their students’ cultural pathways, integrated with their reflections from this experience, have the potential for realizing a critical culturally sustaining and revitalizing pedagogical environment. This requires opportunities for shedding light on our perceptions of

place and positionality, to make transparent, or at least translucent, our motivations toward curricular decisions. Without experiences for developing our place consciousness we are prone to allow these sites to inhibit our ability to see and enact curricular possibilities. As illustrated through the collaboration with the Indigenous Collective and BHO, these community-engaged experiences may mutually benefit teachers to overcome the uncertainty of teaching about minoritized histories, by learning to unlearn through collaboration, as well as providing a complimentary strength of knowing students, schools, and curricular designs. Although teachers remain suffocated by policy, legislation, and variations in local community support, I hope this research will inform potential designs for university-based, community-based, curricular and instructional designs for teacher education and professional development.

I suggest the theoretical potential of this work, for those who may understand creative curriculum development as a form of healing, a way of restoring, and relearning with the public the truths of our land. Engaging students in recognizing the agency and wonder of the natural world and considering the ways Indigenous and Black communities care for the land, now and historically. Reconceptualizing teacher education requires the reconciliation of human and nature, through reinventing the relationships within colonial nations and minoritized populations. As curriculum scholars emphasize creativity as essential to public education, documenting the way educators exercise their own creative capacities through agentic actions (Laitinen, Sannino & Engeström, 2016), may provide insight and perhaps invigoration of “teachers’ freedom and dignity” (Grumet, 2010, p. 66), as well as expand the concept of who is a teacher educator. Methodology with social purposes, has been criticized historically as having a political or personal aim or benefit, however, Bang and Vossoughi (2016) in their article *Participatory Design Research and Educational Justice: Studying Learning and Relations within Social*

Change Making, distinguish the importance of these frames as mutually motivated; “studying learning in explicit social change-making projects readily affords us opportunities to study participatory design processes that emerge in everyday life . . . toward joint activity across researchers and communities, rather than being led by one or the other” (p. 189). Bringing educators from various positionalities into these community contexts along with us, provides mutual affective and creative support that welcomes new designs for educational spaces.

Although this requires rethinking, reimagining, and challenging prior practices in communities, as I discovered through self-study, these tensions motivate my teaching practices, collaborative approaches, and visions for public education.

Curricular Agency as Movement Toward Social and Environmental Justice

Although powerful work has and is being done to bring awareness to the gaps in elementary teacher education and public education more broadly, there is less evidence about what teachers do with this awareness. Teachers, students, and community members need to inform what is essential to collaborations for making these important changes toward social and environmental justice in their educational environments. The intention of this series of studies is to consider how we do this together if we truly have a localizing, indigenizing, and diversifying vision for public education. Depending on the nature of the educational space, those empowered to make curricular decisions may succumb to curricular limitations and seek safety and consistency, while those driven by curricular possibilities may prioritize creativity and empathy. These studies capture perceptions, experiences, and designs that illustrate the realities of turning awareness into action and creating spaces that foster mutual learning and collective agency toward these goals.

My teaching approaches encourage teachers to recognize their coping strategies while grappling with these structures, policies, and limitations as productive sites for learning. Returning to the societal realities, as this research was conducted throughout a pandemic, the creativity crisis in curricular decisions remains an issue. Echoing Freirean ideals, the purpose of research is to learn, understand, and co-create improvements as the habitus of the research community and the educational or cultural communities with whom they are working. With this as the habitus of spaces of teacher education, perhaps then, the purposeful actions of creativity, flexibility, and collaboration may foster curriculum and instruction that offers communities education as freedom (Freire, 1970/2000). In the same way I introduced this work in my executive summary, I will continue to research who is becoming or considering themselves a teacher educator and consider the following questions.

Who is auditioning for these roles (preservice, community, and teacher educators) in *reconceptualizing teacher education, and curricular revision*?

What acting classes, (teacher education experiences), are necessary to support their breakthrough performances of *curricular agency*?

What plot twists (sites of curricular dissonance) inhibit the journey toward *indigenizing, localizing, and diversifying*?

How does the scenery (sources of curricular consonance) of these *educational spaces* support these agents of curricular change?

Curricular dissonance will always arise, it is how we design our teaching and learning that fosters spaces for navigation toward finding curricular consonance. As teacher education provides experiences for navigating these tensions and sources of conflict, with inservice and preservice teachers alongside community teachers, we may develop these collective strategies for

minimizing the cycle of harm. I honestly believe that “Schools of Education can lead the way by refusing the role of cash cow and embracing agency and answerability” (Gorlewski, & Tuck, 2019, p. 100). Gorlewski and Tuck (2019) argue for centering “the community in our practice” and sustaining “meaningful partnerships with schools and the communities they serve” (p. 104). Developing and sharing local knowledge provides grounded and conceptual places for teachers and students to develop a creative approach to engagement. Teacher education spaces require practices which prioritize self-reflexivity and the iterative nature of curriculum development and implementation. Understanding the importance of this iterative nature, requires teacher education curricula to reflect this process, both through teaching practices, and within the curricula. Through my teaching practices I continue to prioritize the affective and cognitive support as “there is an immense need to emphasise and illustrate the complexity of what teachers do and to reassert the value of teacher education” (Phelan, 2011, p. 217). Providing spaces for positioning ourselves as learners, to discern and navigate discord may address teacher burnout, which stems from the minimization and suppression of curricular agency and professionalism.

Although everyone enters these learning spaces with various understandings and experiences, is there still power in promoting a desire for empathetic change? Perhaps the current caused by the habitus of the spaces educators enter is too strong. Despite the desire and experience, participating in change making, teachers are not afforded the collective strength to swim upstream against the habitus of conformity. I recognize myself as a performer of teacher education, performing to the dissonant soundtrack of the curriculum. Although still entangled with a dominant disposition, what might the future of teacher education look like, with a habitus of compassion, empathy, and truth? With this as the habitus of spaces of teacher education, perhaps then, the purposeful actions of creativity, flexibility, and collaboration may reinvent

curriculum and instruction. I am forever grateful to these players, performances, and audiences for appreciating the dissonant tensions across these studies. These dissonant tensions offered common places to trouble our curricular limitations. The sources of consonance created and fostered through teaching practices and educational spaces will never remove these sites of dissonance yet listening carefully to them may enable curricular agency toward curricular change. Designing for the dissonance embraces these inherent conflicts as learning opportunities. I have become a more effective educator through this dedicated time for inquiry therapy. The ability to mutually enact curricular agency has amplified my motivation and interest in curricular revision as social action.

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Appendix A.**Recruitment Materials****Recruitment Letter Empirical Study #1****University of New Hampshire****INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH****RECRUITMENT INVITATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is Elaine Marhefka, a doctoral student and adjunct instructor in the Education Department at the University of New Hampshire. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study (UNH IRB #FY2022-84). The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Judy Sharkey, Chair of the Education Department at the University of New Hampshire.

I am conducting a research study to find out about community-engaged collaborative educational spaces. I plan to interview approximately 1-4 participants who must be at least 18 years old to

participate and currently be a member of a local organization promoting educational initiatives and curriculum development.

Participants will take part in a one-hour interview, in the fall of this year, in person, via zoom, or if neither form is available, over the phone. Signing this consent form, includes your consent for recordings to be used. When in person, an audio recording device will be used for interview transcription. When on Zoom, both audio and video will be used. Audio and video recordings will be de-identified and be stored in a secure location on UNH OneDrive, with the principal investigator and advisor as the only researchers with access. These files will then be removed from the online platform of UNH OneDrive. Transcripts will also be de-identified prior to long-term storage.

Although this study offers no direct benefit for participation, there are potential indirect benefits. Probable indirect benefits from your participation include an opportunity for reflection on your collaborative educational experiences as part of a community organization, that may inform your current and future educational communities, and their capacity in educational resource and curriculum development. Information from this study may benefit preservice, in-service, teacher educators, and community educators through understanding the experiences of participating in this collective. This study may inform communities of ways to nurture these spaces for community collaboration across disciplines and inform how conceptions of place may relate to educational collaborations.

If you are interested or have any questions pertaining to the research, you may contact Elaine Marhefka at Elaine.Marhefka@unh.edu or at (207) 838-4169.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact Melissa McGee in UNH Research Integrity Services, 603/862-2005 or melissa.mcgee@unh.edu to discuss them.

Thank you in advance and I look forward to hearing of your potential interest or participation!

Best Regards,

Elaine Marhefka

Adjunct Instructor

PhD Candidate

Education Department

University of New Hampshire

Signature

Date

Recruitment Letter Empirical Study #2**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH**

RECRUITMENT INVITATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Prospective Participants,

My name is Elaine Marhefka, a doctoral student and adjunct instructor in the Education Department at the University of New Hampshire. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study (UNH IRB #FY2022-172). The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Judy Sharkey, Chair of the Education Department at the University of New Hampshire.

I am conducting a research study to find out about community-engaged collaborative educational spaces. I plan to interview approximately 1-4 participants who must be at least 18 years old to participate and currently be a member of a local organization promoting educational initiatives and curriculum development.

Participants will take part in one, 90-minute interview, in the fall or early winter of this year, in person, via zoom, or if neither form is available, over the phone. Signing this consent form, includes your consent for recordings to be used. When in person, an audio recording device will be used for interview transcription. When on Zoom, both audio and video will be used. Audio and video recordings as well as transcripts, will be de-identified and stored in a secure location on UNH OneDrive, with the principal investigator and advisor as the only researchers with access. These files will then be removed from the online platform of UNH OneDrive.

Understand that your participation contributes to the context of this self-study, focusing primarily on improvement of teaching practices and the nature of educational spaces. Therefore, your consent for this study also includes consent for including your perspectives from informal observational meeting notes from previous and upcoming group gatherings.

Although this study offers no direct benefit for participation, there are potential indirect benefits. Probable indirect benefits from your participation include an opportunity for reflection on your collaborative educational experiences as part of a community organization, that may inform your current and future communities, and their capacity in educational resource and curriculum development. Information from this study may benefit preservice, in-service, teacher educators, and community educators through understanding your experiences with community collaboration and engagement. This study may inform communities of ways to nurture these spaces for community collaboration across disciplines and inform how conceptions of place may relate to educational collaborations and their associated curricular projects.

If you are interested or have any questions pertaining to the research, you may contact Elaine Marhefka at Elaine.Marhefka@unh.edu or at (207) 838-4169.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact Melissa McGee in UNH Research Integrity Services, 603/862-2005 or melissa.mcgee@unh.edu to discuss them.

Thank you in advance and I look forward to hearing of your potential interest or participation!

Best Regards,

Elaine Marhefka

Adjunct Instructor

PhD Candidate

Education Department

University of New Hampshire

Appendix B.**Informed Consent Forms****Informed Consent Empirical Study #1****University of New Hampshire****INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH****CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY****RESEARCHER AND TITLE OF STUDY**

My name is Elaine Marhefka, a doctoral student and adjunct instructor in the Education Department at the University of New Hampshire. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study (UNH IRB #FY2022-84). The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Judy Sharkey, Chair of the Education Department at the University of New Hampshire.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?

This consent form describes the research study and helps you to decide if you want to participate. It provides important information about what you will be asked to do in the study, about the risks

and benefits of participating in the study, and about your rights as a research participant. You should:

- Read the information in this document carefully, and ask me or the research personnel any questions, particularly if you do not understand something.
- Do not agree to participate until all your questions have been answered, or until you are sure that you want to.
- Understand that your participation in this study involves you to participate in two interviews that will each last about one hour, one in the fall of this year and one in the winter preferably or spring if necessary.
- Understand that the potential risk of participating in this study is a breach of confidentiality. To minimize this risk, all possible identifying information will be removed, and I will store all electronic data on the UNH Box account of the researcher. Following transcription and data analysis, video and audio recordings will be deleted.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

I am conducting a research study to find out about community-engaged field experiences during the course during the spring of 2021, and plan to interview approximately 3-4 participants who must be at least 18 years old to participate and be currently or previously enrolled in the graduate program in the education department.

WHAT DOES YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY INVOLVE?

Participants will ideally be enrolled in an internship placement or in their first-year teaching. Participants will take part in two one-hour interviews, one in the fall, and in the winter of this year, in person, via zoom, or if neither form is available, over the phone. Participants will refer when useful or prompted to their field experience reflection log, an artifact from their collaboration as part of the previous course, during the one-hour interviews. Signing this consent form, includes your consent to refer to this course artifact submitted through myCourses as a culminating assignment. When in person, an audio recording device will be used for interview transcription. When on Zoom, both audio and video will be used. Audio and video recordings will be de-identified and be stored in a secure location on UNH Box, with the principal investigator and advisor as the only researchers with access. These files will then be removed from the online platform of UNH Box. Transcripts will also be de-identified prior to long-term storage.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

The risk associated with this study is no greater than minimal.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Although this is not designed as an intervention or professional development, and therefore offers no direct benefit for participation, there are potential indirect benefits. Probable indirect benefits from your participation include an opportunity for reflection on your educational experiences that may inform your current and future educational communities, and their capacity in curriculum development. Information from this study may benefit other preservice, in-service,

and community educators through understanding the experiences of creating collaborative curriculum that is situated in our communities. This may also inform teacher preparation programs about various types of field experiences.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Participation will not be compensated.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate, you may refuse to answer any question. If you decide not to participate, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you would otherwise qualify.

CAN YOU WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY?

If you agree to participate in this study and you then change your mind, you may stop participating at any time. Any data collected as part of your participation will remain part of the study records. If you decide to stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you would otherwise qualify.

HOW WILL THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF YOUR RECORDS BE PROTECTED?

I plan to maintain the confidentiality of all data and records associated with your participation in this research. As the researcher, I will be transcribing the interviews. To help protect the confidentiality of your information, data will be renamed without identifying characteristics. Further, any communication via the internet poses minimal risk of a breach of confidentiality. Consent forms will be stored on UNH Box, separately from the interview transcriptions, which will use pseudonyms. Attributes such as being a preservice educator and a student at a university may be associated with the data however, without any other identifying information, beyond what interviewees share in the context of the interview. The data will only be accessible on UNH Box to the principal investigator and her advisor. I may share de-identified data as some journals now require researchers to make available their de-identified data to the research community. I will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before files are shared with other researchers to ensure that, by current standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information we share. I will report the data using pseudonyms, and the results may be used in reports, presentations, and publications.

WHOM TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY

If you have any questions pertaining to the research, you can contact Elaine Marhefka at Elaine.Marhefka@unh.edu or at (207) 838-4169 to discuss them.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you can contact Melissa McGee in UNH Research Integrity Services, 603/862-2005 or melissa.mcgee@unh.edu to discuss them.

Yes, I, _____ consent/agree to participate in this research project.

No, I, _____ do not consent/agree to participate in this research project.

Informed Consent Empirical Study #2**University of New Hampshire****INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH****CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY****RESEARCHER AND TITLE OF STUDY**

My name is Elaine Marhefka, a doctoral student and adjunct instructor in the Education Department at the University of New Hampshire. I am writing to invite you to participate in this study (UNH IRB #FY2022-172). The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Judy Sharkey, Chair of the Education Department at the University of New Hampshire.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?

This consent form describes the research study and helps you to decide if you want to participate. It provides important information about what you will be asked to do in the study, about the risks and benefits of participating in the study, and about your rights as a research participant. You should:

- Read the information in this document carefully, and ask me or the research personnel any questions, particularly if you do not understand something.
- Understand that your participation in this study involves you to participate in one interview that will last about 90 minutes and will be video and audio recorded, when possible, in the fall or early winter of this year.
- Do not agree to participate until all your questions have been answered, or until you are sure that you want to.
- Understand that your participation contributes to the context of this self-study, focusing primarily on improvement of teaching practices and the nature of educational spaces.
Therefore, your consent for this study also includes consent for including your perspectives from informal observational meeting notes from previous and upcoming group gatherings.
- Understand that the potential risk of participating in this study is a breach of confidentiality. To minimize this risk, all possible identifying information will be removed, and I will store all electronic data on the UNH OneDrive account of the researcher. Following transcription and data analysis, video and audio recordings will be deleted.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

I am conducting a research study to find out about community-engaged collaborative educational spaces. I plan to interview approximately 1-4 participants who must be at least 18 years old to participate and be currently a member of a local organization promoting educational initiatives and curriculum development.

WHAT DOES YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY INVOLVE?

Participants will take part in one 90-minute interview, in the fall of this year, in person, via zoom, or if neither form is available, over the phone. When in person, an audio recording device will be used for interview transcription. When on Zoom, both audio and video will be used. Audio and video recordings will be de-identified and be stored in a secure location on UNH OneDrive, with the principal investigator and advisor as the only researchers with access. These files will then be removed from the online platform of UNH OneDrive. Transcripts will also be de-identified prior to long-term storage. Signing this consent form, includes your consent for interview recordings to be used, as well as my informal observational notes regarding experiences during previous and upcoming group settings.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

The risk associated with this study is no greater than minimal.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Although this study offers no direct benefit for participation, there are potential indirect benefits. Probable indirect benefits from your participation include an opportunity for reflection on your collaborative educational experiences within a community organization, that may inform your current and future educational communities, and their capacity in educational resource and curriculum development. Information from this study may benefit preservice, in-service, teacher educators, and community educators through understanding the experiences with community

engagement. This study may inform communities of ways to nurture these spaces for community collaboration across disciplines and inform how conceptions of place may relate to educational collaborations. This may also bring further awareness to the issue of the necessary shifts in elementary curriculum toward equity and inclusion.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Participation will not be compensated.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you agree to participate, you may refuse to answer any question. If you decide not to participate, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you would otherwise qualify.

CAN YOU WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY?

If you agree to participate in this study and you then change your mind, you may stop participating at any time. Any data collected as part of your participation will remain part of the study records. If you decide to stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you would otherwise qualify.

HOW WILL THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF YOUR RECORDS BE PROTECTED?

I plan to maintain the confidentiality of all data and records associated with your participation in this research. As the researcher, I will be transcribing the interviews. To help protect the confidentiality of your information, data will be renamed without identifying characteristics. Further, any communication via the internet poses minimal risk of a breach of confidentiality. Consent forms will be stored on UNH OneDrive, separately from the interview transcriptions, which will use pseudonyms. Attributes such as being a member of a local organization may be associated with the data, however without any other identifying information, beyond what interviewees share in the context of the interview. The data will only be accessible on UNH Box to the principal investigator and her advisor. I may share de-identified data as some journals now require researchers to make available their de-identified data to the research community. I will remove or code any personal information that could identify you before files are shared with other researchers to ensure that, by current standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information we share. I will report the data using pseudonyms, and the results may be used in reports, presentations, and publications. The audio and/or video recordings will be destroyed following the study.

WHOM TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY

If you have any questions pertaining to the research, you can contact Elaine Marhefka at Elaine.Marhefka@unh.edu or at (207) 838-4169 to discuss them.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you can contact Melissa McGee in UNH Research Integrity Services, 603/862-2005 or melissa.mcgee@unh.edu to discuss them.

Yes, I, _____ consent/agree to participate in this research project.

No, I, _____ do not consent/agree to participate in this research project.

Signature

Date

Appendix C.

Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol Empirical Study #1

Interview Questions – Marhefka IRB-FY2022-172 Proposal for Educational Research

Orienting Discussion

Interviewer: I am exploring the expansion of the concept of teacher educator, teacher education, and educational spaces more broadly. My goal is to understand your experiences as a member of this community-engaged collective and its emphasis on educational initiatives and projects. I would like to ask about how members of this collective envision concepts of place and how this may be reflected in your collaborative work. With your permission from the consent form I will be recording for future reference. Also, I will be jotting down notes as we go along.

1. To begin, will you please share your name and your position during your participation in this collective?
2. How long and in what capacity have you been participating with this collective?
3. How would you describe your daily work?
4. What did you wonder about when you first began participating with this movement?

- a. *Prompt (4a)*: What did you feel was most motivating?
 - b. *Prompt (4b)*: What did you feel was most challenging?

5. Thinking specifically about any initial meetings, projects, or interactions, what was it like to first engage in this community organization?
 - a. *Prompt (5a)*: Can you describe your feelings or thoughts during your initial experiences?
 - b. *Prompt (5b)*: What interactions did you notice?

6. What did you observe was the experience of colleagues participating in this organization?
 - a. *Prompt (6a)*: What did you observe was the experience of students who participated in this work?

7. What significance (if any) did your understanding of place have in deciding to participate with this collective?

- a. *Prompt (7a)*: How is your understanding of place reflected in your current projects?
 - b. *Prompt (7b)*: How has your understanding of place changed or remained the same through this work?
8. How would you describe the educational space created by this collective?
- a. *Prompt (8a)*: How might you describe your own actions or actions you observe within the collective?
 - b. *Prompt (8b)*: How might you describe your own emotions or emotions you observe within the collective?
9. How do you see yourself or your role in this space?
- a. *Prompt (9a)*: How might you describe the relationships fostered in this space?
 - b. *Prompt (9b)*: How might you describe your disposition or dispositions you observe within the collective?

10. Thinking of a prior initiative, project, or event please describe a time you noticed any changes in your thinking or approach?

a. *Prompt (10a)*: In terms of collaboration?

b. *Prompt (10b)*: In terms of community engagement or education?

11. Thinking of a prior initiative, project, or event, how might you describe your contribution to this work?

a. *Prompt (11a)*: Can you describe a specific contribution that you made to the project?

b. *Prompt (11b)*: Can you give a specific example of your collaboration with your colleagues and/or educators?

12. Can you describe your feelings or thoughts about a recent experience related to your work within this collaboration?

a. *Prompt (12a)*: What do you feel is a highlight of this work?

b. *Prompt (12b)*: What do you feel is most challenging during this work?

13. Are there topics we might explore that I have not asked about?

Additional General Prompts: (probing/follow-up questions, (Roberts, 2020))

Prompt: “You mentioned . . .” Follow up question with interviewee’s words to welcome further description of their referenced experience.

Prompt: Can you provide a specific example?

Prompt: What else stood out to you about your experience participating in this space?

Prompt: What do you feel was the most influential aspect of this experience?

Prompt: How did you characterize the time and space you were able to dedicate to these initiatives?

Prompt: Can you explain that to me in more detail how you understand place, particularly place in educational resources . . .

Prompt: What exactly was going on at the time . . . (As cited by Roberts, 2020, Rubin & Rubin, 2012)

Interview Protocol Empirical Study #2

Interview Questions – Marhefka IRB-FY2022-172 Proposal for Educational Research

Orienting Discussion

Interviewer: I am exploring the expansion of the concept of teacher educator, teacher education, and educational spaces more broadly. My goal is to understand your experiences as a member of this community-engaged collective and its emphasis on educational initiatives and projects. I would like to ask about how members of this collective envision concepts of place and how this may be reflected in your collaborative work. With your permission from the consent form I will be recording for future reference. Also, I will be jotting down notes as we go along.

1. To begin, will you please share your name and your position during your participation in this collective?
2. How long and in what capacity have you been participating with this collective?
3. How would you describe your daily work?
4. What did you wonder about when you first began participating with this movement?
 - a. *Prompt (4a):* What did you feel was most motivating?
 - b. *Prompt (4b):* What did you feel was most challenging?

5. Thinking specifically about any initial meetings, projects, or interactions, what was it like to first engage in this community organization?
 - a. *Prompt (5a)*: Can you describe your feelings or thoughts during your initial experiences?
 - b. *Prompt (5b)*: What interactions did you notice?

6. What did you observe was the experience of colleagues participating in this organization?
 - a. *Prompt (6a)*: What did you observe was the experience of students who participated in this work?

7. What significance (if any) did your understanding of place have in deciding to participate with this collective?
 - a. *Prompt (7a)*: How is your understanding of place reflected in your current projects?
 - b. *Prompt (7b)*: How has your understanding of place changed or remained the same through this work?

8. How would you describe the educational space created by this collective?

- a. *Prompt (8a)*: How might you describe your own actions or actions you observe within the collective?
 - b. *Prompt (8b)*: How might you describe your own emotions or emotions you observe within the collective?

9. How do you see yourself or your role in this space?
 - a. *Prompt (9a)*: How might you describe the relationships fostered in this space?
 - b. *Prompt (9b)*: How might you describe your disposition or dispositions you observe within the collective?

10. Thinking of a prior initiative, project, or event please describe a time you noticed any changes in your thinking or approach?
 - a. *Prompt (10a)*: In terms of collaboration?
 - b. *Prompt (10b)*: In terms of community engagement or education?

11. Thinking of a prior initiative, project, or event, how might you describe your contribution to this work?

- a. *Prompt (11a)*: Can you describe a specific contribution that you made to the project?
 - b. *Prompt (11b)*: Can you give a specific example of your collaboration with your colleagues and/or educators?
12. Can you describe your feelings or thoughts about a recent experience related to your work within this collaboration?
- a. *Prompt (12a)*: What do you feel is a highlight of this work?
 - b. *Prompt (12b)*: What do you feel is most challenging during this work?
13. Are there topics we might explore that I have not asked about?

Additional General Prompts: (probing/follow-up questions, (Roberts, 2020))

Prompt: “You mentioned . . .” Follow up question with interviewee’s words to welcome further description of their referenced experience.

Prompt: Can you provide a specific example?

Prompt: What else stood out to you about your experience participating in this space?

Prompt: What do you feel was the most influential aspect of this experience?

Prompt: How did you characterize the time and space you were able to dedicate to these initiatives?

Prompt: Can you explain that to me in more detail how you understand place, particularly place in educational resources . . .

Prompt: What exactly was going on at the time . . . (As cited by Roberts, 2020, Rubin & Rubin, 2012)

Appendix D.

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Teaching is navigating through the tensions of thinking and learning, the pauses that challenge our assumptions, and the reflections upon the relationships among teachers and learners. These tensions include both the discomfort of new contexts and experiences, as well as the curious tensions present just before your mind resolves your understanding. This requires creativity. Creativity is necessary for recognizing individual and collective tensions inherent in teaching practices and deciding what pedagogical directions, shifts, and adaptations will support students' identification and navigation through these tensions. Teaching involves proposing these challenges with learners in the different educational settings in which we participate, to instigate creative approaches to learning. These challenges are often shared, such as recognizing cultural practices, promoting equity, and seeing our places and environments through and with the perspectives of our diverse community of learners.

My teaching from outdoor preschool settings, public elementary settings, community collaborations, professional development for practitioners, and preservice teacher education courses seeks to provide opportunities for mutual listening. Listening beyond hearing. One may provide the space to vocalize, without the intention or energy to truly listen. Listening is the foundation to developing relationships, which inform our evolving curricular decisions, teaching practices, and intentions for education. Through the courses, Teaching Elementary Social Studies and Introduction to Educational Studies: Social Change and Education in Local and Global Contexts, using an assets-based, community-engaged approach, I encourage students to listen to one another through discourse toward understanding these tensions, however, with the purpose of imagining solutions. Our thinking and learning may not be purely critical. Rather teaching

with critical and creative approaches through these courses, I model curricular and instructional possibilities within the current and future communities in which these students see themselves as educators. This lens of curricular possibilities becomes crucially important when inquiring about the issues relevant to their lives and considering the ways they may design for educational change.

The department of education centers sociocultural and socioecological ways of knowing, which necessitates listening and learning from local perspectives and communities. Through reflexive thematic analysis within my dissertation research, exploring community collaborations as educational spaces, the theme of learning stance remains essential across the various positionalities of participants. Taking a learning stance as a teacher, means knowing what we do not know and recognizing various experts and expertise to collectively construct knowledge. This stance relates to my initial teaching philosophy entering the field 18 years ago as an elementary educator, ‘Students learn best from teachers who are learning from their students’. This remains imperative across the age groups with whom I have had the privilege to teach.

Creativity is my coping strategy, and a way to rationalize the harsh realities thrust upon teachers. My teaching approaches encourage teachers to recognize their coping strategies while grappling with these structures, policies, and tensions as productive sites for learning. Bringing our students into these community contexts along with us, provides mutual affective and creative support that welcomes new designs for educational spaces. Although this requires rethinking, reimagining, and perhaps challenging prior practices in communities, the experiences applying critical and creative thinking for navigating these tensions motivate my teaching practices, collaborative approaches, and visions for public education more broadly. Prioritizing and

documenting self-reflexivity and awareness of positionality may inform my understanding of educator agency toward transformative change.