In Search of the Butterfly Effect: An Intersection of Critical Discourse, Instructional Design and Teaching Practice.

by

Ashley Terell House

B.A., University of British Columbia, 2000
B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 2002

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

( Curriculum Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

March 2008

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Abstract

In this study I explored the research questions, how do students understand membership in a community and the responsibilities of our various locations and what pedagogical rationales and practices move students from awareness of social injustice towards acting to transform the societal structures that reinforce injustice? This project engaged in a critical and classroom action research using ethnographic tools with a class of Grade 7 students from a Vancouver elementary school. The purpose was to create spaces in curriculum for student initiated social justice oriented actions while testing a pedagogy founded in student inquiry, criticality and praxis. This was an experiment in applying critical discourse to instructional design. While teaching about social justice issues, the teacher-researcher sought to employ the principles of social justice in the pedagogy as well as the methodology of this study. The methodology sought to be consistent with the principles of social justice through attempting to create a collaborative critical research cohort with students through using data collection to foster a dialogic relationship between teacher-researcher and students. The data collection was in the forms of teacher and student generated fieldnotes, a communal research log, photography, questionnaires, interviews and written reflections. The findings from this research were analyzed through the themes of teacher tensions, constructs of student and teachers, and resistance. The analysis of the data provided opportunities for identifying power dynamics within the concepts being critiqued, exploring the makings of the cognitive unconscious and entering into a dialogic relationship with students about official and hidden curricula. Conclusions drawn from this research included that the experiment of teaching and researching for social justice in a socially just manner requires not only a grounding in theory and an awareness of the normative discourse, but an investigation of and critical reflection on those social constructions of teacher and student that are deeply embedded in the collective cognitive unconscious of the classroom. Teacher tensions and student resistance are productive as they provoke awareness of these constructions and their effects on the classroom.
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I would like to extend my appreciation and thanks to everyone who supported me in this work. In this work I have had the privilege of working with master teachers who have shared their time and energy helping me to make meaning and to be challenged to think and rethink as I seek to bridge my learning with my practice. It has been an enormous pleasure to work with educators who are so caring, thoughtful and intentional in their practice.

To Dr. E. Wayne Ross thank you for your encouragement, for sharing your insight and for inspiring and challenging me to extend my thinking and practice.

To Dr. Hartej Gill thank you for your support in piloting this work, for your compassionate guidance and thought provoking feedback.

To Cheryl Douglas thank you for your caring leadership and for engaging me in conversations grounded in practice and the world.

To Lisa Loutzenheiser thank you for your warm critical and practical contributions this process.

To Shannon Moore and Melanie Janzen thank you for your laughter, friendship and brilliance.

To J. Pearson Terell and Liisa House thank you for your confidence in me and help with everything from the broad strokes to the minutiae.

To Cam, thank you for everything.

To the students with whom I feel so privileged to have worked, thank you for sharing your amazing compassion and vision, you are inspiring.
Chapter 1: In Search of the Butterfly Effect

The root of my research questions is demonstrated by the comments of a ten year old student in my intermediate classroom. We were studying the cycle of poverty and she was saddened by the reality of poverty for people in developing countries as well as here in Vancouver. She asked two questions that day. The first was “Are we going to study depressing topics all year?” and the second was “If we know that this is going on, why isn’t anyone doing anything to stop it?” In my experience these are the questions that are consistently asked when the intermediate elementary students with whom I have worked have been faced with the realities of social injustice. These questions indicate a deeply rooted social justice orientation that exists among intermediate aged students. I understand this to be an interest in developing not only an awareness of injustice but ultimately in “doing something to stop it”. This work begins in my classroom with student questions and actions. These experiences initiated my experimentation with and study of the intersection of critical discourse, instructional design and teaching practice.

The extent of the social justice orientation among students that I have observed in my teaching practice is most salient in the stories that have emerged over the years. Those thoughts, questions and actions that emerge from the classroom underscore how adeptly students interrogate and resist the official curriculum through generating opportunities for injecting what they find personally and socially relevant into the classroom. These students demonstrate not only the ability to critically consider the world but also a willingness and capacity to act in ways that seek to address issues they find meaningful. The following story was co-written by myself and the students who initiated a social justice action that spanned two school years and affected multiple classes at our school. “The Legend of the Mystery Kid” epitomizes the reality that students are willing and brilliant agents for social justice.
The Legend of the Mystery Kid

This legend begins on a day like the rest, not unusual in any particular way. It might have been grey, damp and drizzly or one of those few bluebird days when the world becomes technicolor with blossoms and sunshine. The story starts in a classroom. A dusty portable classroom next to an ordinary school surrounded by those gravel and grass fields that all schools seem to have.

Some meteorologists believe in what is known as the Butterfly Effect. It’s the theory that the flap of a butterfly’s wings in Brazil can cause a tornado in Texas. Basically, one small seemingly unimportant action can cause a chain of reactions that lead to large-scale change. This is the story of how a small group of students unleashed the Butterfly Effect. It began with the Mystery Kid continued with the Mystery Kid II and was revived by the Ever Changing Identities.

She doesn’t really remember what the weather was like or even which day specifically she decided to become the Mystery Kid. All we know is that as the students and teachers of Trafalgar Elementary school yawned their way out of bed, padded into their kitchens for breakfast and began their day, she decided that today was the day to begin the Legend of the Mystery Kid.

Why did she do it? What made him pick up where she left off? How did they decide to continue it a year later? She believes that when you become aware of a problem you need to try and solve it. He says he continued it because it he loved nature and wanted to see the challenge realized. They say that they tried to think of problems the class could solve as a community. All four of them agree that it was thrilling to be anonymous and watch everyone get excited about their ideas. Mostly, they agree it feels good to make a difference.

On this unremarkable day, the muddled students and teacher entered portable 2 and sank into their seats. The bell screeched and in the routines that consumed the morning, we didn’t notice the carefully folded lined piece of paper rustle its way under the door. It sat there on the
threshold until after recess, patiently waiting to be discovered. Its message, type written and framed in red crayon, read:

Are you Division 7[the class] ready to take a challenge?

The Mystery Kid

When the note was discovered and read aloud to the class, the students became livelier. Eyes blinked away bleariness, minds shifted into overdrive and mouths began chit chatting. Gone were the absent stares out the window. Interest was peaked and curiosity was kindled. They wondered, “Who is the Mystery Kid? What is the challenge?”

After reading the note, and deciding that they wanted to know more, the class decided to put up signs in an effort to communicate with the Mystery Kid. They wanted the Mystery Kid to know that they were in and they wanted to know more. The next day, a second note appeared on the teacher’s desk….the challenge was revealed. It was so simple, so perfect. The Mystery Kid offered seeds to plant. With the note was a small round brown box and nestled inside sat 14 seeds. The class decided to have a meeting at the end of the week and figure out how to divide up the seeds between the 30 students.

The Mystery Kid’s inspiration came from a field of sun bleached grasses, a tough old tree and of course snakes. This field had a special history. When she was young, her aunties and mom would take her walking to their place, a beautiful little fort nestled in a massive mushroom shaped tree. They told her stories about their childhood summer days spent with other kids from the neighbourhood in the tall grasses and tree fort. It wasn’t perfect—there were snakes that you had to stay away from and wild animals—but it was a special place. The previous summer, the Mystery Kid had walked to the field and found it ravaged. All that was left of the tree and fort was a charred stump. The grasses were gone and the empty field was dirt. That day she decided that she wanted everyone to plant trees everywhere. She wanted beautiful trees to grow up in all spaces, to lift people’s spirits and clean the air. So she sent the note as a plea for help.
Projects came and went and assignments completed. There was a long weekend, then basketball season and spirit days. One week a third of the class was home with the flu. The seeds sat on the table at the front of the class and collected dust. Life was busy and time flew. All but one of the students had become too busy. This student decided it was time to remind Division 7 about the challenge from the Mystery Kid.

The Mystery Kid II sat at home and composed a clever, hilarious and touching letter. He wrote puns and tales about the teacher and her dog and reminded the class of their commitment to the Mystery Kid. With the letter came 20 more seeds and a second challenge to the students in the class next door to join in the planting.

The Mystery Kid II’s inspiration came from his life. He took every possible chance to go to remote forest places, whether it was in Japan, Scotland or North Vancouver. Of late he had started to notice that the rich green of the forest was being invaded by brown patches of turned earth where forestry had taken over. He had become more aware of places where the city inched its way up the mountains. He knew about climate change and the devastation of urbanization. He had protested to protect a species of red legged frog from extinction. He had observed the spark of interest that the first note had ignited among the students and he wanted the fun—and activist response—to be spurred on.

Twenty-five more seedlings were donated by friends of friends. And now there sat 79 seedlings on 60 desks. The seedlings were confined to little paper cups on desk corners. They were named, watered and spoken to every day. On the last day of school, students went home with massive portfolios of work, stinky gym strips, random school supplies and their seedlings. And so together and on their own, they planted a forest of seedlings, each traveling to a special piece of the earth to complete the challenge of the Mystery Kids.

Summer was filled with blue skies and sun burns, popsicles and barbeques, family and friends, flip flops and swimsuits and sleeping in and staying up late. September brought a new school year. The students returned with a bounce in their step and groove in their stride. Some moved on to Grade 7 and the rest melded into one crazy Grade 6 class. The Mystery Kids were
in their last year of school. Grade 7 was even busier than Grade 6, more academic and more social. The Mystery Kids kept up the pace and worked long hours on schoolwork. Little did they know that the series of events they set in motion the year before had developed momentum. Unbeknownst to them, two students had taken up what had become the mystery kid project.

This time the notes came on crisp white paper, carefully type written, neatly folded and placed in a sealed envelope delivered to their teacher’s mailbox in the office. They were signed Ever Changing Identity. The notes were different again; they shared riddles and housed puzzles. They arrived every couple of days for months. These notes dared the students to build community and to save the planet. The classroom buzzed with excitement. In the cloakroom, hushed voices exclaimed ‘How cool! The Mystery Kid was back! Who is Ever Changing Identity?’ Through the notes, the Mystery Kid challenged the students to share their personal stories, pack litterless lunches, write compliments to each other and provoked a week long enviro-challenge. The classroom students eagerly took up the challenges, through bonding with each other and environmental actions. To this day, we can only imagine the power and far reaching effect those first actions of the Mystery Kid have had.

And some of you may be thinking...Wow! Who are these kids! What commitment! How did they do it? The truth is they are not the only ones. As you read this, there are kids all across the city and the world acting to make the world a better place. They are inviting friends to join their organizations to help fight poverty, supporting organizations that protect animals, planting trees to clean the air, volunteering at senior’s home just to make people happy, asking people to think and talk about issues, making a place for the new kid at the table, sitting down to eat their litterless lunches, writing letters on recycled paper to the newspaper and committing great acts of kindness. They could be sitting quietly next to you in the classroom, or they could be inconspicuously strolling down the hallway, or maybe they are in your shoes. Seemingly ordinary people are taking extraordinary actions everywhere.

My understanding and interpretations of the importance of these student questions and comments has developed through my graduate studies and was the impetus for this research project. These experiences initiated my experimentation with and study of the intersection of
critical discourse, instructional design and teaching practice. The students’ commitment to social justice that I have observed has informed my research questions: how do students understand membership in a community and the responsibilities of our various locations and what pedagogical rationales and practices move students from awareness of social injustice towards acting to transform the societal structures that reinforce injustice? In this research, I work from of a critical discourse that has formed my pedagogical rationale and practice. I understand critical pedagogy to be founded in “social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic or oppressive institutions and social relations” (Burbules & Berk, 1999). In this research, I employed a social justice pedagogy rooted in student inquiry, criticality and praxis that sought to foster not only a social justice orientation among students but also a classroom setting that practiced a collaborative, dialogic and democratic curriculum. I understand curriculum to be “the planning of the course, the course itself and the running; that is, the envisioned educational program and the experiences of enacting that program” (Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. 211). Therefore curriculum includes not only the intended official curriculum but the unintended outcomes of the curriculum and the experience of living the curriculum. My aim was to teach and research so as to create a classroom experience where social justice issues were at the center. Further, I aimed to disrupt the normative discourse of positioning the teacher as neutral and omniscient and the student as a passive receiver of knowledge.

The literature reviewed through the course of my studies and in preparation for my research provided a theoretical frame for this study. In Chapter 2: Deliberating on social justice, democracy and the role of schooling, I describe my understandings of social justice, democracy and the role of schools. In this work I drew on Bigelow (1994), Kohli (2000), Henderson and Kesson (2004), Kumashiro (2004), Case and Clark (1999), Kahne and Westheimer (2004), Hébert and Sears (2001), Kelly and Minnes Brandes (2001), Ross (2006) and Hursh and Ross (2000). Based on these theorists, I understand social justice to be grounded in a community of caring and critical inquiry that values student knowledge and lived experience, fosters reflection on positionality, is aware of injustice and seeks to transform those systems that support injustice. I define democracy as a way of being in the world that promotes reflective, relevant and critical conversation with the intention of promoting social justice. I work from the premise that the role of schools is to provide an arena for interrogating, practicing and experimenting with these
conceptions of social justice and democracy. Following the interrogation of these concepts, I critique the application of the Social Responsibility Performance Standards as a tool of assessment and its position in the broader realm of citizenship education and social justice. This section is followed by a description and discussion of models, purposes and rationale of citizenship education detailed by Vinson (1998), Vinson and Ross (2001), Hébert and Sears (2001), Case and Clark (1999), O’Neill (2001) and Westheimer (2005). The social justice pedagogy from which I teach is based in the concepts of reflective student inquiry, criticality and praxis. Farr-Darling and Wright (2004), Hursh and Ross (2000) and Denzin (2003) informed my working definition of reflective student inquiry. Reflective student inquiry is based in seeking to challenge the student teacher binary through placing students as co-creators of a curriculum that focuses on questions and issues relevant to the personal and socio-political contexts that frame the classroom and world. I drew on Kumashiro (2004), Henderson and Kesson (2004) and Ross (2000) in creating a caring, collaborative criticality. This criticality values the disruption of a valuing of neutrality, the exploration of personal location, the deconstruction of meaning-making and the critical reading of the world from within a collaborative community founded in caring. Together, Freire (2000) and Henderson and Kesson (2004) shaped my understanding of praxis. I understand praxis to include reflection and action with the intention of addressing social injustice. Praxis is a cycle of reflection and action wherein the intention is not a fixed end but a continual learning. Researching and developing understandings of these concepts was essential to this research in teaching citizenship education through a social justice model because as Vinson (2006) states “citizenship education is essential to democratic education and ... democratic education is essential to a democratic society.” Further, I suggest that a democratic society founded in principles of social justice may result in transformative change.

The research methodology applied to this research project was chosen for its coherence with my pedagogical rationale. In Chapter 3: Meshing epistemology with methodology, I interrogate my epistemology by presenting my location within the context of social justice and the classroom. I trouble my proposed social justice pedagogy as it relates to research and I present my research methodology founded in critical and classroom action research using ethnographic tools. I propose to work from within a research and pedagogical framework that
seeks to disrupt the positioning of teacher as expert and authority through a critical dialogical relationship between myself and the students.

This research project took place in a Grade Seven classroom with 23 participants in a west side Vancouver school. Over the 25 sessions, the student participants explored concepts of positionality, identity and criticality. In the final component of the research project the student participants developed consensus on a social justice issue relevant to them and planned, initiated and reflected upon an action that addressed the issue they chose. The teacher-researcher and student participants generated data through written reflections, an anonymous collaborative research log, whole class discussion, interview and photography. The curriculum was dynamic and altered in response to student feedback. The intention was for both students and teacher to work towards new, unimagined understandings of social issues and teaching for social justice. The themes that emerged through this research were an exploration of the foundational concepts of social justice and citizenship education, the development of a pedagogical rationale and practice founded in the principles of social justice and an analysis of teacher tensions, student and teacher constructs and resistance in the classroom.

The intention of this project was to generate spaces in the curriculum where students might, through seemingly small actions, seek to transform injustice and create large scale change in the school community. I sought to do this through modelling a social justice pedagogy framed in critical discourse. In short, I aimed to provoke an unleashing of the Butterfly Effect.

As I expected, the student actions during this project were impressive, inspiring and greatly affected the school community. To my surprise, the realization of this experiment in seeking to teach for social justice in a manner consistent with the principles of social justice led to the morphing of my research questions, the challenging of the teacher student binary, the analysis of the social constructs in the classroom and the realization of student resistance. Together these formed the site for my greatest learning and unlearning as a teacher-researcher. Through a series of seemingly small actions of reflection, critique, collaboration and dialogue,
the student participants in this research generated large scale changes in my pedagogical practice and epistemology.
Chapter 2: Deliberating on Social Justice, Democracy and the Role of Schooling

The literature reviewed in this chapter seeks to interrogate concepts that are fundamental to citizenship education with the aim of developing a rationale and model for a social justice pedagogy. The purpose, content and pedagogy of citizenship education have been a site of contestation since the formation of social studies as a subject area (Vinson, 1998). These debates have resulted in traditions, definitions and approaches to teaching that reflect efforts at establishing “coherence out of curricular chaos” (Ross, 2004, p.249). These debates have centered on conceptions of democracy, the role of schooling and models of citizenship education, all of which inform my social justice pedagogy. This chapter begins with the definitions that frame this study with regard to social justice, democracy and the role of schooling. Next is an analysis of a local approach to citizenship education and social justice in the Vancouver School Board which is informed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education’s Social Responsibility Performance Standards. Following is a description of the approaches to citizenship education most prevalent in Canada and the United States. Finally, a rationale for and a description of a social justice pedagogy is detailed. This review of literature is a deliberation on the traditions and theories that have informed teaching citizenship education and my own understanding of teaching for social justice.

Publications selected were written in the last ten years in order to ensure that the most current and relevant realities, definitions and practices were represented. Exceptions to this rule were made in the case of publications that are considered to have been foundational in the creation of the theory that frames this research. The authors I have selected are from academic backgrounds or inform British Columbia Ministry of Education initiatives. The authors are largely Canadian or North American working in or for Canadian institutions. While Canada has a different political democracy than the United States, the goals and approaches to the teaching of citizenship hold similar historical and contemporary foundations therefore I have chosen to include authors from across North America.
Defining Social Justice, Democracy and the Role of Schools

The meaning I attribute to social justice and democracy and the role I suggest for schools informs the rationale for this study and my practice as a teacher. The rationale for my teaching and researching is based in the belief that education is a tool for promoting a reconstruction of society that is more democratic and socially just. Case (1999) states that adopting a particular approach to teaching citizenship reflects the influence of "deep rooted assumptions about the role of schooling, the perceived nature of challenges facing society and students..." (p. 24). My assumption regarding the meaning social justice, democracy and the role of schooling are defined in the following sections.

Social Justice

For the purpose of this study, my understanding of social justice in the classroom will be defined in the following section. The social justice classroom values students' lived histories, experiences and knowledges. Teaching for social justice is academically rigorous, meaning it seeks the academic and social success of every student. The social justice classroom is hopeful, kind and visionary and has as a priority the development of skills for meaningful interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions within a community of caring. This learning space demonstrates active redress of intolerance, prejudice and discrimination. The social justice curriculum has as a goal of nurturing students' ability to talk back to the world through a justice orientation with personal, local and/or global foci. Teaching through social justice creates a community of inquiry and is activist oriented. Finally a social justice curriculum entails realizing the complexity of issues while ensuring an awareness of possibilities for transformative action directed at the social, economic and political systems that support injustice (Bigelow, 1994; Kumashiro, 2004; Meyers, 1993; Westheimer, 2005).

In education there is an abundance of understandings and definitions related to the term social justice e.g. democracy, citizenship, social responsibility, justice orientation, and so on. The social justice classroom as described here is not intended to become fossilized but remain living and responsive to the discourse that surrounds social justice. Social justice classrooms and citizenship education share a common goal of teaching for participation in society. Whereas citizenship education is "the preparation of individuals to participate as active and responsible
citizens in a democracy” (Hebert & Sears, 2001, p. 1), teaching for social justice differs in that it describes an approach to learning and being in the classroom, the community and the world that does not center on participation in existing systems but instead seeks to rethink and challenge those systems that foster injustice.

**Democracy**

Democracy is the political system through which we organize our North American society. Kohli (2000) explains that many educators understand the discourses of democracy and education to be irretrievably linked. She states “it is through education that we create democratic culture and ... it is within a democratic culture that education may flourish...” (p. 23-4). Democracy is exceedingly relevant not only to social justice teaching but also to members of society for it is the societal structure through which social, political, economic systems are reproduced or reconstructed. Despite the significance of the term democracy on a political, educational and personal level consensus as to the meaning of the democracy is exceptionally difficult to achieve.

Kahne and Westheimer (2004) describe political perspectives on democracy as ranging from respecting the law and voting, to warring in the name of freedom and peace, to oppressed groups developing political determination and emancipation. Kelly and Minnes Brandes' (2001) and Ross' (2006) work detail perspectives on this spectrum of the conceptions of democracy that relate to pedagogical practice. Three current understandings of democracy are evident in teaching practice in Canada (Kelly & Minnes Brandes, 2001). The first suggests that the teacher’s role is as a “public servant” and to “carry out the decisions made elsewhere” and that she/he should teach children the rule of law and respect for authority (p. 437). As opposed to the second that is characterized as a liberal/pluralist democracy. Within this understanding of democracy, the teacher seeks to address diverse values and multiple perspectives while maintaining political neutrality. This reflects Ross’ (2006) description of a current and specific model of democracy that is politically and pedagogically employed called a spectator democracy. The spectator democracy is realized through a participatory processes designed to protect the public from itself through promoting the management of our economic, political and ideological systems by a specialized elite. Within this system citizens vote, lobby, speak and
assemble but are relegated to observing actual governing. According to Ross, the spectator democracy is demonstrated in education through teacher delivery of a prescribed pre-packaged curriculum to passive learners. This approach represents and models a democracy that relies on neutrality. Ross explains that a spectator democracy results in the passive receiving of the inequalities of society as opposed to actively questioning, understanding and testing the social injustices that form the status quo.

Definitions that inform my use of the term democracy frame it as participative, deliberate and as a way of living. Kelly and Minnes Brandes (2001) describe a third role of teaching which values a participative deliberate democracy meaning 'a process of communication across differences that aims to solve collective problems' (p. 452). A participatory deliberative democracy requires teaching for collective problem solving, analytic, communicative and strategic skills that create opportunities for debate, reflection and discussion. Further, Dewey (1916) argues for a curriculum that nurtures democratic living which in turn denotes “a meaningful life journey” (as cited in Hursh & Ross, 2000, p.28). He proposed an active learning that is experimental, sees multiple perspectives on the world and its problems, all of which, instead of being dispelled, may result in doubt and uncertainty which generate possibilities for further inquiry (Ross, 2000, p. 52-54). Henderson and Kesson (2004) draw on Dewey’s work to frame democracy as standing for “good living” and they assert that while democracy is often understood as “a way of government”, it should be approached as “a way of life” (p. 9). In essence, according to these authors democracy is politically, pedagogically and personally relevant. My understanding of democracy, as informed by the authors presented here, is a way of being in the classroom and the world that promotes a reflective, relevant and critical conversation and meaningful inquiry with the intent of building community, seeking greater understanding and actively pursuing and redressing issues of social justice.

The Role of Schools

This research is founded in my presupposition about the role of schools. I understand the role of schools as having the potential to provide an education with the capacity to be a vehicle for injecting vitality into our democracies. A vitality that banishes apathy and neutrality and builds community through critically engaging with social justice issues in transformative,
hopeful and meaningful ways. In short, I propose a dynamism that promotes a democracy so that schools and classrooms might become ‘laboratories for a more just society’ (Bigelow, 1994, p. 4).

Schools represent a microcosm of those elements of society upon which democracy is built. Henderson and Kesson (2004) frame schools as “a part of the interconnected social network of values, ideals, beliefs and practices” that composes our societies. Therefore they provide a space for and possibility of engaging in public dialogue on schooling and society. Kohli (2000) argues that reconstructing schools to be more democratic entails more than rethinking the processes of decision making that define democracy or reimagining the focus on individual rights as the defining virtues of democracy but a challenging of the received liberal democratic traditions that form our world views. Kohli asserts that a critical questioning of the current democratic system needs to be promoted. Further she states that “it is time that we, along with our students, examine the underside of our democracy and look at the effects of oppression on and within it” for a democracy without social justice and cultural diversity is “empty and meaningless” (2000, p.36). The role of schools is therefore to develop a criticality that is not only reconstructionist but also considers the position from which the learner, including teacher, is viewing the world.

Schools are a site of community building and connection and therefore hold the possibility of fostering dialogue between citizens about the local and global communities they would like to occupy and the kinds of citizenship they value. Schools do not only reproduce but produce the social and cultural relations in society and therefore can serve to foster change in society. The nature of this production and reproduction of social and cultural relations prohibits an end point for “there will always be new problems-to-be-solved and emergent horizons to explore…in the Socratic spirit…the journey is every bit as important, if not more important than the destination” (Henderson & Kesson, 2004, p. 210). The role of schools is to generate dynamic spaces where citizens engage in imagining, realizing and rethinking society.
Social Responsibility or Mindless Rule Following?

Teaching for citizenship is a priority on a local provincial and municipal level where curricula are enacted to teach 'social responsibility'. The British Columbia Ministry of Education has adopted a program entitled “Social Responsibility: A Framework” (2001) to meet this end. The Vancouver School Board (VSB, 2006) describes the goal of social responsibility as fostering students’ “sense of belonging and connectedness to school, engagement in leadership, citizenship and the development of the community and feelings of safety at school” (p. 21). The VSB “District Plan 2006-7” (2006) outlines for educators and the public the school board’s goals regarding teaching citizenship education. The VSB (2006) has stated that one of its three district goals is social responsibility. Specifically the goal is that “All students will feel safe, demonstrate growth in social responsibility and will participate actively in the development of socially responsible school learning” (p. 23). Social responsibility is defined by the British Columbia Ministry of Education Performance Standards for Social Responsibility. The performance standards are intended for optional use by teachers and are formatted into an assessment rubric organized into four categories:

- Contributing to the classroom and school community
- Solving problems in peaceful ways
- Valuing diversity and defending human rights
- Exercising democratic rights and responsibility

The standards for social responsibility recognized by the BC Ministry of Education are the result of two years of discussion and research. Teachers, administrators and students collaborated with researchers to compose the performance standards. Evidence was collected through direct observation of teachers in uncontrolled and controlled settings, student products, student reflections and self reports. The Performance Standards are “intended to provide a framework that schools and families can use to focus and monitor their efforts to enhance social responsibility among students and to improve the social climate of their schools” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 1).

The values represented in the social responsibility framework include promoting a sense of belonging, feelings of safety, engagement in leadership, and citizenship skills. Social
responsibility is founded in positive character traits, promotes community building and inspires teaching that is focused on empathy, respect, caring and self control. While these foci are representative of traits our communities value, the stated goal of and the rubrics describing the Social Responsibility Performance Standards do not reflect all of the ideals of a democratic social justice classroom.

The Social Responsibility Performance Standards (SRPS) promote a version of active participatory citizenship. To be a participatory citizen according to Kahne and Westheimer means “to participate in the civic affairs and social life of the community at local, state and national levels” (2004, p. 3). According to Hébert and Sears (2001) an active citizen is defined as a person who is” knowledgeable about local, national and global issues, sensitive to worldviews other than their own and has a goal of making the world a better place” (p. 3). Within this view of citizenship that has informed the performance standards, social responsibility is being a kind community-minded problem solver who peacefully defends human rights and exercises democratic rights and responsibility through acting to make the world a better place. In and of themselves these attributes are positive and hopeful, what is troubling about the SRPS is its employ as an evaluation tool.

Social Responsibility: A Framework (2001) concludes with an assertion that use of the Performance Standards for Social Responsibility as an assessment tool for community membership is to be voluntary, ongoing and intended for multiple subject areas. The standards are to be used multiple times in order to limit subjectivity. Observations and samples are to be accumulated over time, in a variety of contexts with self evaluation incorporated. It is stated that the framework represents a broad set of values that can be demonstrated in ways that may vary from culture to culture and that this is a “living document” that should evolve. In addressing the diversity of our society, the framework states that “appropriate ways of demonstrating these qualities may vary from one cultural context to another.”(2001, p. 1).

In practical application the SRPS are neither a tool for community membership nor democracy. The question of the standards being a tool for community membership is challenged through their limited consideration of the diversity that exists in schools and therefore fails to
promote a democratic practice among the stakeholders in education. The SRPS acknowledge the pluralism in the classroom through stating its intention to be a “living document. The intention of having this document as a “living document” is an excellent way of informing stakeholders of the potential applications of the document with participants from diverse backgrounds and realities. However, while the Ministry of Education states that it will continue to invite feedback and suggestions, the standards have not been altered in the last six years and it is not indicated in the document how a stakeholder (community member, parent, student or educator) would provide feedback. Therefore, this application of standards to social responsibility is undemocratic as it fails to foster ongoing deliberation among the stakeholders of education, most notably students. Mathison (2000) states “…deliberation becomes the heart of democracy because it is the means by which a democratic community maintains its intent and identity, given an indeterminate future” (p. 237). Ironically, SRPS describe exercising democratic rights and responsibilities as an ideal of social responsibility however, in reality the deliberation necessary to ensure the “living” and democratic nature of the standards is absent. Instead the SRPS have become an evaluative rubric that is intended to be applied across elementary and secondary age groups in the province of British Columbia.

An additional demonstration of the problematic application of the SRPS is its employ as summative assessment intended to quantify students’ socially responsible behaviours. The Social Responsibility Framework (2001) states that use of the standards is voluntary; however, in the Vancouver School Board, educators are required to formulate a comment in report cards reflecting the student’s social responsibility. This requirement has ensured that the use of the standards is not voluntary and in addition that social responsibility be measurable. As a result educators rely on measurable behaviours such as collecting litter on the school ground, arriving on time to class, running in the hallways and referrals to the office. Case (1999) and Clark (2006) argue that socially just behaviours such as: students taking responsibility for their actions, problem solving in realistic situations and developing into reflective individuals are seldom measured in standards. Similarly, Fragnoli and Mathison (2006) argue that good assessment engages students in self assessment resulting in self motivation and skills relating to metacognition and reflection. The skills described by Case (1999), Clark (2006) and Fragnoli and Mathison (2006) are not easily quantifiable and therefore do not figure in the reporting
process. The requirement to generate a summative evaluative statement of a student’s social responsibility results in assessments of rule-following and measurable behaviours. In reframing social responsibility as rule following, these assessments discourage students’ critical considerations of the institutions and systems of their community (Clark, 2006). This promotion of mindless rule-following creates an education system where the intended and unintended reproduction of ways of being, assumptions and unjust practices are not uncovered and challenged by students. This results in a failure of the educational system to teach students the creative critical thinking that we require of them as citizens who will seek to transform society and improve its systems.

Models and Purposes for Citizenship Education

Models of Citizenship in Social Studies Education

Vinson (1998) in his article “The ‘Traditions’ Revisited” details models of citizenship education that have their origins in the debates around the purpose, content and pedagogy of social studies. His research question focussed on determining the traditions that high school teachers in the U.S. adhered to when teaching citizenship education. This work provides a conceptual framework and background to the various views on the purpose of citizenship education. Vinson refers to Martorella’s five alternative views of how citizenship education should be delivered: citizenship or cultural transmission, social science, reflective inquiry, informed social criticism and personal development. He argues that the instructional approach educators apply to social studies demonstrates the normative beliefs of the educational system. The five views described by Vinson, represent positions in the debates on the purpose of citizenship education be it reproductive or reconstructive.

Citizenship or cultural transmission teaches information and knowledge drawn from the canon of Western culture represented as truth and seeks to promote a view that “information is consistent over time and best determined by a consensus of authorities or experts” (p. 56). This view promotes homogeneity and unity and as a result disregards or challenges conceptions of diversity or critical multiculturalism. The instructional method relies on students learning ‘facts’ without critical thinking. Placing Western culture at the center of social studies not only
disregards diversity but also results in a model of citizenship education that teaches for the reproduction of society.

Social science is an approach that is drawn from social scientists giving input into the design and implementation of the social studies curriculum for elementary and secondary schools. In this view, citizenship education is used to introduce multiple social disciplines each with its own framework. This model is intended to improve decision making. Mastery of these social science methodologies and theories is expected to lead to a better understanding of and action upon human systems. There are no spaces in this approach for interrogating the status quo.

Reflective inquiry is a concept first introduced by John Dewey (1916/1966) as cited in Vinson & Ross, 2001) who placed citizenship at the core of social studies. Ross and Vinson interpret Dewey’s promotion of the development of problem solving and decision making skills within specific socio-political contexts, as seeking issues that are meaningful to and influence individual students. Reflective thinking is framed as a main purpose of democratic education. The assumption embedded in this view is that within the American, and I would argue Canadian, socio-political system “significant problems seldom have one, overt correct solution and therefore reflective inquiry nurtures necessary problem solving citizenship skills” (Vinson, 1998, p.60).

Informed social criticism is a view born of the social reconstructionists such as Willis, Bowles and Gintis and Freire founded in challenging social injustice (Vinson & Ross, 2001). This tradition is grounded in “the examination of social problems, independent thinking, responsible social criticism, valuing diverse and multiple perspectives and encourages participation in actively improving society” (Ross, 2004, p.250). Informed social criticism in the classroom fosters a valuing of teacher and student knowledge and agency, subject matter is framed as incomplete and teacher and student are partners in curricular decision making. Further, student or teacher individual and cultural differences are valued. This view seeks to disrupt the reproduction of social, political and economic systems that are not just or oppressive (Vinson & Ross, 2001).
Personal Development is based in a conception of democratic citizenship that prioritizes student and teacher collaboration with a focus on the development of a positive self image. Through student selected content and student driven instruction, individuals are to develop an understanding of their freedom to make choices and the obligation and responsibilities that exist as a consequence.

Vinson's research determined that informed social criticism followed by reflective inquiry and personal development were the traditions most commonly employed in social studies by the teachers studied. Additionally, he found that teachers did not generally adhere to a single tradition but shared attributes and beliefs from multiple approaches. Although these traditions and this research is generated from the U.S. and do not represent the whole of teaching practice in citizenship education, they do inform and relate to Canadian citizenship teaching models. This is demonstrated in Hébert and Sears' (2001) and Case and Clarke's (1999) literature reviewed in the following pages. These five views on citizenship education and the frameworks offered in the following pages characterize the arguments responding to the on-going debate on the purpose of citizenship education.

Active Citizenship in Canada

Hébert and Sears (2001) in their article “Citizenship Education” present an account of teaching for citizenship in Canada. This study has been instrumental in the development of my understanding of the practice of citizenship education in Canada. The authors define citizenship education as “the preparation of individuals to participate as active and responsible citizens in a democracy” and citizenship as “the relationship between the individual and the state, and among individuals within a state” (p. 1). In understanding models of citizenship that have been taught in Canada, future directions can be established for teaching for social justice.

Hébert and Sears present multiple perspectives in the debate on what constitutes a good citizen as being demonstrated through the range of citizenship models within differing historical periods, cultures, genders and political philosophies. They affirm that a citizen’s sense of belonging exists on multiple levels. These levels include: participation and the potential to
participate in society, multicultural and multicitizenship, and the contested relationship between
the State and personal culture. The authors assert that today in Canada there is an explicit activist
focus in citizenship education. An active citizen is defined as a person who is” knowledgeable
about local, national and global issues, sensitive to worldviews other than their own and has a
goal of making the world a better place” (p. 3).

In their findings, Hébert and Sears identify four main areas in developing models of
citizenship. They are described as “dynamic and interconnected” in a global context (p. 1). The
first is the civil domain which refers to common societal values, the rights of the individual and
the State. The second is the political domain which refers to the political rights and
responsibilities of the citizen. The third is the socio-economic domain which addresses the
relationships between members of a society and the right to economic well-being. The final
domain is the cultural or collective domain and reflects how societies take into account
increasing cultural diversity and the need for the recognition of collective rights for marginalized
groups. The authors state that all four forms of citizenship require knowledge and skills in order
to sustain a democratic society.

Hébert and Sears conclude with a prediction of the possible future directions for
citizenship education. They speculate that there will be four major themes: knowledge-building
around social issues; a redefinition of citizenship and citizenship education; conversations
surrounding the debate which include more stakeholders and publications in a variety of formats
of the findings of research on citizenship education.

Hébert and Sears’ work is relevant to my research because they provide a Canadian
context for the development of civic education. The authors’ discussion of civic education goes
well beyond the concept of the participatory voting citizen and extends to a more activist
community member. Their conception of citizenship education parallels Vinson’s (1998)
description of the traditions of “reflective inquiry”, “informed social criticism” and “personal
development” that are employed most prevalently in the United States.
In this article, they outline many of the past and current social injustices occurring in Canada. Their study describes the reality of citizenship education in Canada today by framing it around the question “What kind of education is necessary to uphold our diverse and democratic country?” The authors define citizenship education as “the preparation of individuals to participate as active and responsible citizens in a democracy” (p. 1). These concepts represent the debate and discussion around the area of citizenship education based in determining not only the meaning of those foundational concepts of social justice, democracy and the role of schools for education but also and including the purpose of citizenship education.

**Purposes of Citizenship Education**

Case and Clark’s (1999) article “Four Purposes of Citizenship Education” provides further insight into citizenship education in Canada. The authors begin by acknowledging a lack of consensus on definitions of citizenship and propose approaches teachers may take to teach in this area. They propose that this lack of consensus has made the term “citizenship” meaningless. The authors identify four types of citizenship education that have been applied over the last 90 years since the term was first created in social studies. They range from citizenship education as social initiation, social reformation, personal development and academic understanding.

Citizenship education as social initiation entails teaching students to fit in and to become productive members of society. They state that the defining premise of social initiation is “namely to get students to internalize a perspective – to learn about and believe the “received” conception or image of our society, our history and the model citizen” (p. 18). The social reformation form of citizenship education is defined as developing the understanding, skills and values needed to critically consider society and initiate change. The two key elements of this approach are critical thinking and social action. Personal development strategies include a child centered approach in which the goal is to help students develop socially and personally. The priorities are to support students pursuing of their own interests, in developing their confidence and in recognizing their beliefs and positions on issues. Finally citizenship education for academic understanding focuses on teaching the skills associated with the social sciences intended to help students to make sense of the global village. This approach places value on developing academically sound arguments not developing personal conclusions.
The authors’ recommendations for approaches that teachers may take in teaching citizenship education have been valuable in my practice. Case and Clark (1999) propose that teachers consciously introduce social issues, multiple perspectives and narratives into their classroom. They state that critical analysis of resources, questioning facts, recognizing that knowledge is not impartial and incorporating projects that seek social action are all necessary ingredients for teaching social studies. They advise that teachers consider carefully their definitions of a good citizen because hidden curricula, limited resources, media and tradition can impose concepts of citizenship.

This direction provides useful starting points for practice that reflect the traditions of teaching citizenship education in social studies. Case and Clark’s framework demonstrates Hébert and Sears (2001) conception of active citizen and reflects Vinson’s (1998) description of Martorella’s traditions of social studies. The influence that citizenship education traditions from the United States and Canada have had on each other is clearly demonstrated in Table 1.
Table 1. A Comparison of Current Citizenship Education Models

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<tr>
<td>Student Inquiry</td>
<td>Academic Understanding</td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>Reflective Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student created project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Issues and actions are student chosen/generated</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Student’s critical analysis of assessment rubric and collaboration on creation of criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative Group Work</td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>Civil Domain of Citizenship</td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modelling active citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td>Political Domain of Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Supporting students when challenged</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Collaborating with students on action plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiating change around a social justice issue.</td>
<td>Social Reformation Academic Understanding</td>
<td>Political Domain of Citizenship Socio-economic Domain Cultural Domain (depending on issues selected by students)</td>
<td>Informed Social Criticism Reflective Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Critically considering our global society and perspectives on social justice issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Research and planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Initiating the action plan</td>
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<td>• Reflecting on outcomes</td>
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<td>• Self evaluation of action plan</td>
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The interconnectedness of the models and purposes of citizenship education in Table 1 demonstrate a uniformity of citizenship education that values personal, academic, social and political aspects. Despite the tradition of these models of citizenship education, issues of social justice are present throughout the systems and structures of society and consequently curriculum design and delivery (Vinson, 2006; Kumashiro, 2004). Vinson and Ross (2001) argue "Educators must advance the field and take seriously new understandings, experiences and needs" (p. 59). The world is dynamic and so social studies cannot remain static but requires critical consideration of new discourses in relation to the lived classroom experience, democratic citizenship and social justice issues.

**Canadian Youth and Politics: Apathy and Political Disaffection**

O’Neill’s (2001) work studying the generational patterns in the political opinions and behaviours of Canadians provides insight into the immediate need for social justice teaching that engages youth in citizenship. The purpose of her report was to investigate the generational differences among Canadians in their political attitudes and behaviours. The instrument that was used to collect data was a public opinion survey completed by 1,278 Canadians in 2000. The survey was intended to provide data indicating generational patterns in Canadians’ level of trust in political institutions and participation in the democratic process. The level of trust was determined by political attitudes and beliefs, perception of the Federal government, trust and confidence in the government performance and systems. Participation is understood as political knowledge, political engagement, voting, party membership, membership in an interest group. The report seeks to determine whether the patterns that emerge from the survey are due to generational groupings, change in attitudes and behaviours over a lifetime or reflective of shared experiences of events common to all Canadians.

O’Neill’s findings indicate that young Canadians, ages 18-27 in 2000, had lower participation rates in the political system than previous generations did at the same age. While there is an identified trend among all generations of increased interest and participation in politics over a lifetime, the use of life cycle comparisons indicates that the youngest cohort is unlikely to change as they age. In addition there is an increased sense of cynicism and a lower satisfaction with democracy, elections and the electoral system among all cohorts. O’Neill’s
study specifies that the youngest generational cohort is less likely to be politically knowledgeable or to participate in voting or to be a member of a political party. This generation reports that they are more satisfied with many of the political institutions and are more likely to see the government as fair and effective than other generations. Conversely, they are more willing to reform traditional institutions and practices in Canadian democracy, such as supporting changes including fixed election dates and measures to ensure more diverse representation. In addition, younger generations are more likely to be involved in non-economic issues such as human rights and the environment, and grassroots social movements and protest behaviour, what O’Neill terms the new politics.

The conclusions drawn from this study are a cause for both concern and hope. The youngest generation’s political attitudes and behaviour inform my study and practice as a teacher in the arena of social justice. The increased withdrawal from politics and political apathy is of concern as it could have dire consequences for Canada’s democracy. Democracy requires participation, while withdrawal and apathy can only limit its potential. The hope presented in O’Neill’s research lives in the findings that the younger generations are more likely to be involved in grassroots social movements and protest behaviours for example “APEC, World Trade Organization and FTAA demonstrations” (p.25). This is what I understand to be social justice actions because it suggests that there is an interest in making the current social, historical, political and economic systems more meaningful to the younger generation. Through this interest and action, democracy is revitalized. Be it a cause for hope or concern, O’Neill’s work underscores the importance of teaching for social justice. I understand teaching for social justice as teaching for the critical consideration and transformation of the social, economic and political systems of our societies. As educators we have an opportunity to enter into dialogue with our students through questioning, understanding and testing our democracy (Ross, 2000). In doing so, the cause for apathy and that which is inauthentic, not meaningful or disengaging about participation in our democracies may be uncovered. Through these revelations insight might be achieved regarding new and better directions to take society. I suggest that as public institutions that teach a majority of youth, schools are the arenas with a great capacity for reaching the leaders of tomorrow and generating a revitalization of democracy. This revitalization can be
achieved through teaching with the goal of helping students to transform the current political system through critical examination of the discourses and normative structures of the status quo.

A Social Justice Oriented Citizen

Westheimer (2005) provides a discussion of definitions of citizenship relevant to this study. In his article “Democratic dogma: There is no one-size-fits-all approach to schooling for democracy” he begins by stating that in the 2004 General Election in Canada voting statistics indicated that there was growing concern in three main areas: trust in government, the growing national debt and a call for democratic reform. He interprets this data as a sign of a healthy democracy because of the critical nature of these areas. However he does acknowledge the “growing democratic deficit” among youth and young adults. Citing O’Neill’s report (2001) on her study of youth participation, he states that it is evident that there is a decline in the participation and knowledge of politics among youth of this generation in Canada. Westheimer observes that educators, policymakers and citizens agree that education for citizens who are committed to and able to effectively participate in a democracy is a priority for society. He explains that the challenge is coming to consensus on how to educate for democratic citizens.

Approaches to teaching democracy described by Westheimer (2005) range from developing factual knowledge of government and history, activism linked to social and community projects and restructuring traditional schools into democratic institutions. Westheimer introduces the three types of citizenship that he has observed being taught during his years of research; the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen and the social justice oriented citizen. The personally responsible citizen reflects a focus on the development of character or personality traits. Compassion, honesty, integrity and self-discipline are emphasized. This results in a person who participates in society through volunteerism, contributions and obeying the law. The participatory citizen actively participates on a local, provincial and federal level not only participating in but also organizing efforts to care for other members of society. Finally the social justice oriented citizen has an acute awareness of injustice, considers the relationship of economic, social and political structures of society to the propagation of the injustice in addition to seeking to address and initiate systemic change around social injustice.
Westheimer’s main purpose in writing the article is to address two myths that surround educating for democracy: First, the only way to teach democracy is to fully model it in the classroom and the school and second, knowledge does not always precede action. In regard to the first myth, Westheimer argues that there is no pedagogy that results in developing democratic citizenship hence there is no one-size-fits all answer to teaching for democracy. In addressing the second myth, he argues that knowledge does not necessarily lead to participatory citizenship while participation can be the hook that leads the students to develop probing questions and to seek knowledge. He concludes by asserting that the goal of democracy is not mindless rule-following but a ‘healthy outrage’ (pp. 37). Westheimer concludes by advising that we define our democratic goals and apply as wide a range of strategies as possible to achieve them.

Westheimer’s discussion of educating for democracy and citizenship represents a truly democratic theory. The rejection of a “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching for democracy is an acknowledgment of the importance of authentically and meaningfully teaching to and with the individual students with whom we work.

I draw on Westheimer to inform my practice as a classroom teacher and for his conception of the social justice oriented student. In my practice as a classroom teacher, I struggle with teaching for social justice. The struggle centers on the fact that not all the students come to class with an acute sense of justice, while many have an interest in transformative action. Westheimer’s premise that knowledge does not always precede action allows for students to be motivated for multiple reasons to engage with social justice issues, while positing that the end result be an increased interest in learning more about the issue in question. The conception of fostering a ‘healthy outrage’ serves to remind teachers that resistance, criticality and challenging the system are in fact a desirable outcome. I understand fostering a ‘healthy outrage’ to be teaching criticality with a focus on uncovering social injustices, whether they be occurring in another country or in the immediate community of the students. This can serve to challenge us to critically consider our social realities and be inspired to act to transform the causes of injustice. This ‘healthy outrage’ has the potential to benefit all members of society as it seeks to challenge us to seek to generate a more just local and global community.
Westheimer bases his definitions of citizenship on ten years of research in the United States and Canada. Kahne and Westheimer (2004) describe how they observed these concepts of citizenship being taught in citizenship education. They examined ten programs in the Surdna Foundation’s Democratic Values Initiative. This was a multi-year study of school-based programs that aimed to teach democratic citizenship. However, in considering the diversity found in North America and the reality that the Surdna Foundation study targeted five states in the US (Kahne and Westheimer, 2004, p. 1), Westheimer (2005) claims to not be advocating for one form of citizenship as supreme, but instead he encourages valuing, fostering, questioning, and critical analysis in citizenship education. This approach creates opportunities to seek students’ conceptions of citizenship. Students are a source of authentic and diverse world views. By not choosing to prioritize one form of citizenship over another while valuing questioning and critical analysis, opportunities are created for students and teachers to learn from each other. Westheimer’s proposal respects students as knowledgeable and able to offer insight into models for social justice in the classroom.

The literature reviewed in this chapter serves to provide a local, provincial and national context to teaching for citizenship, a reflection on the purposes of citizenship education, a rationale for social justice pedagogy and establishes an alternative to our current practices. The discussion of social responsibility and Hebert and Sears’ models of citizenship education describe an approach to teaching for community membership founded in participation. Case and Clark provide cause for reflection on the purpose of citizenship education and recommend new directions for teachers. O’Neill highlights Canadian youth’s relationship with politics and provides insight into how they are most engaged. Kahne and Westheimer describe citizenship models that range from rule oriented to social justice oriented and in so doing detail an approach to citizenship which moves beyond participatory. The writings of these authors provide context and a rationale for an alternative to citizenship education in the form of social justice pedagogy.
A Social Justice Pedagogy

A Rationale for Social Justice Pedagogy

Discourses around social inequalities, environmental issues and the prospects for future generations are increasing. Robert F. McChesney (1998) frames the importance of education as a vehicle towards improving our current reality. He states

The quality of life in the developed nations ...is fragile and the societies are in considerable turmoil. Tremendous upheaval is in the cards for the coming decades. There is considerable doubt about the outcome of that upheaval, however, and little reason to think it will automatically lead to a democratic and humane resolution. That will be determined by how we, the people, organize, respond and act. As Chomsky says, if you act like there is no possibility of change for the better, you guarantee that there will be no change for the better. The choice is ours, the choice is yours. (p.16)

McChesney wrote this piece almost ten years ago and I argue that the ‘tremendous upheaval’ he predicted is upon us. I propose that the global community needs a generation of citizens who critique and reinvent our current governmental, economical and social systems. The literature reviewed in this work elaborates on the forms and purposes of citizenship and citizenship education models, and political participation among Canadian youth. Vinson (2006) argues that current approaches to citizenship education “lack any clear interest in the circumstances of oppression, the contexts of their creation, their effects on people’s lives and the means by which they might be overthrown” (p.64). He presents the possibilities for an anti-oppressive citizenship education that engages counter narratives and aims to challenge, disrupt and transform the many realizations of oppression. I propose that the current state of citizenship education provides a context and rationale for a social justice pedagogy founded in inquiry, criticality and praxis.

Defining a Social Justice Pedagogy

The social justice pedagogy proposed in the following section is a means to create a social justice classroom that practices democracy as a way of life (Henderson & Kesson 2004; Ross 2006). In the following paragraphs I will present a social justice pedagogy founded in the methods of inquiry, criticality and praxis. Following the presentation of a social justice
pedagogy, I will examine the role that assessment plays in fostering or limiting teaching for democracy and therefore social justice in the classroom.

An inquiry-based approach promotes meaningful student direction into curriculum design while positioning learning as critical and occurring within the greater context of social justice. The inquiry-based approach is student directed as it is a teaching technique where students are challenged to generate questions they choose to investigate. Lessons are designed so that students make connections to previous knowledge and experience, bring their own questions to learning, investigate to satisfy their own questions through all subject areas and design ways to try out their ideas and possible solutions (International Baccalaureate Program, 2006). Farr-Darling and Wright’s (2004) description of a community of inquiry is founded in accepting that knowledge is subject to change, any question can be asked, an awareness of and empathy for alternative points of view, a tolerance for ambiguity and scepticism of text demonstrate the critical component of a reflective inquiry based approach. Here I interpret text to include the discourse of social justice and education. The objective of an inquiry approach is to seek to challenge the traditional power paradigm in the classroom by generating what Denzin (2003) describes as “a participant-driven nature of inquiry” which provides students control and options within the bounds of the curriculum (p. 272). Vinson and Ross’ (2001) description of Dewey’s conception of “reflective inquiry” further supports learning that is meaningful to students. It is described as a pedagogy wherein students and teachers strive to solve socially and/or individually relevant problems within specific socio-political contexts. Hursh and Ross (2000) suggest that education “where students and teachers together raise questions about issues important to their lives – such as questions about student racial, gender and class identities or about local community issues – the larger historical and political questions gain significance” (p.10). Through a reflective inquiry-based approach, a curriculum will be set that is always relevant and appropriate for the unique identities and realities of the students and the worlds within which they live.

A criticality component ensures that educational institutions move beyond a passive prescribed learning towards thinking strategies founded in crisis, collaboration and caring. Kumashiro’s (2004) concept of crisis and Henderson and Kesson’s (2004) concepts of
collaboration and caring are central to understanding the role of criticality in a social justice pedagogy. Ross (2000) argues that traditional social studies, through which citizenship education has been delivered, has promoted an ideology of neutrality wherein “activities that critique or challenge the status quo are ‘political’ and many times inappropriate” (p.43). The author elaborates that this rationale is problematic as it limits the possibilities of students seeking to transform issues of social justice. This prioritizing of neutrality ensures that students are passive learners and spectators of democracy thereby ensuring that social inequities are maintained (Ross, 2000). Similarly Kumashiro’s (2004) notion of crisis calls an abandonment of neutrality and argues that knowledge must be made problematic, disrupted and acknowledged as partial. Kumashiro states that only through discomfort or resistance, we will grow and learn. Henderson and Kesson define the two additional elements that contribute to the understanding of criticality applied in this research: collaboration and caring. Collaboration represents the need for whole schools and communities to dialogue and encounter differences meaningfully. This provides arenas where the voices of all stakeholders can be included in decision making. Finally, caring means rebuilding classes to be inclusive and non-competitive. Collaboration and caring are essential components of building communities that can work together to initiate the change they require for their worlds. A framework for criticality composed of troubling the priority of neutrality, fostering crisis, nurturing collaboration and caring provides students and teachers with a framework for addressing the hurdles of the learner as passive, democracy as a spectator activity and schools as driven through competition and individualism.

The final component of social justice pedagogy is praxis. Freire (1977/2000) defines praxis as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (p. 51). Reflection entails inquiry and criticality to determine what is meaningful to us, how we are positioned relative to social justice issues and how we understand the discourses that surround them. The conception of action opposed the framing of learner and citizen as passive and calls for engagement in social justice issues. Transformation involves imagined and yet to be imagined processes that may not be recognizable today but universally have as an end point change. Henderson and Kesson (2004) state that praxis,

...is almost always identified in the doing. ... In education the word praxis is usually used to signify the integration of critical inquiry into teacher’s reflective practice. Critical
inquiry involves looking at the big picture, the social, economic and political context of issues. (p. 52)

Praxis moves us from the initial step of reflection toward the essential component of action in order to achieve transformation. There is always a return to reflection post action.

Freire (1977/2000) asserts in his central argument in “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” that education should be “co-intentional,” meaning that all members of the classroom, both teachers and students, should engage as active subjects in the examination and critique of knowledge, thereby engaging also in the re-creation of knowledge in a non-oppressive model. It is in dialogue that change is made possible and that knowledge is made to be non-oppressive. Vinson (2006) argues that an anti-oppressive citizenship education must have an “orientation that is divergent not convergent, open and not closed, emancipatory and not conforming” (p.67). The practice of a social justice pedagogy through inquiry, critical thinking and praxis means that the pedagogy be continually critiqued and transformed by its students and teachers and in so doing they practice a social justice pedagogy that is anti-oppressive.

An Alternative: Assessing In a Socially Just Manner

The nature of a social justice approach to teaching requires just assessment practices. Assessment is a site of contest in the work of social justice. The contest is born of a movement towards standardized evaluation. As Henderson and Kesson (2004) remind us “Just because a student tests well on standardized measures does not means they are becoming good human beings” (p.93). In their works addressing assessment, Fragnoli and Mathison (2006), Case (1999) and Singer (1997) concur that assessment in general must be reconsidered. They argue for a move away from standardized testing towards authentic and performance assessment. Fragnoli and Mathison frame evaluation within the greater context of promoting democracy through assessment. They describe the nature of participatory, collaborative evaluation as a means to introduce deliberation, democracy and a transformation of classroom practices. Case and Singer’s works comment on standardized testing, principles for assessment and reflective practice.
Fragnoli and Mathison (2006), Case (1999) and Singer (1997) all argue for authentic performance based assessments as a means for "reflecting multiple domains of knowledge and skills" and "demonstrating varied forms of representation" (Fragnoli & Mathison, 2006, p.210). Authentic performance based assessment is defined as student demonstrations of their learning process directly related to the goals of instruction and reflecting the students' lived experience.

Fragnoli and Mathison found their theory of assessment on understanding assessment as including measurement but also performance based and authentic assessment. The authors assert that the accuracy of measurement and testing is contested and therefore suggest assessments that "involve the students in substantive ways, and are not solitary acts performed by them" (p. 200). Performance assessment is defined as seeking to extend student thinking beyond representing the right answer towards a more complex relating of skills and knowledge that demonstrates the learning process. Authentic assessment is defined by its fostering of a connection to the students' lived experience. They argue that good assessment includes both performance and authentic forms and engages students in self-assessment, develops motivation and meta-cognitive strategies that foster self-reflection and decision making. These goals are framed as being essential to the goal of preparing students for participation in a democracy.

Case (1999) argues for four principles of assessment; focussing on what really matters, providing valid indications, using assessment to support learning and using teacher time efficiently. Case defines authentic assessment as measuring the real, actual or genuine thing. He, like Singer, argues that educators should seek:

- To achieve greater authenticity ~ assessment should measure the educational goals that are most valued (critical thinking, problem solving) as opposed to what is easiest to measure.
- To support learning ~ assessment should be used to determine how to best support student learning. For example student generated criteria, self and peer evaluation.
- To ensure fairness to all students ~ provide students with an opportunity to show what they know as opposed to what they are expected to recall.
- To use teacher time efficiently ~ assessment should be efficient and take a reasonable amount of time.
In a similar vein, Singer’s (1997) work discusses the question: “How should teachers assess student learning?” He provides an examination of reasons for assessing, ways of integrating assessment into learning and alternative assessment strategies towards the ultimate goal of social studies which he defines as supporting active citizenship and critical thinking skills.

Singer (1997) and Case (1999) both describe approaches to assessment that seek to disrupt standardization. The authors see assessment as a means to discourage competition, to encourage personal success and to promote intrinsic motivation. Singer and Case argue for assessment and reflection to inform teaching practice and student learning, this disrupts the more traditional hierarchies in the school system, where the teacher is positioned as all knowing.

Fragnoli and Mathison’s (2006) proposal of teaching democracy through assessment is fully developed through Mathison’s (2000) conception of the participative, collaborative evaluation. She defines this form of evaluation as reflective of an understanding of democracy as “not actions such as voting but rather an obligation to engage in careful, public consideration of alternatives for the purpose of creating a better life” (p. 230). Mathison defines participative, collaborative evaluation as differing from general understandings of evaluation that seek to determine the degree to which predetermined criteria are met. She states that participative, collaborative evaluation is committed to participation through including stakeholders, as sources of information in the evaluation process and collaboration through including stakeholders as participants in “shaping the purpose, substance and form of the evaluation process and product” (p. 231). Mathison proposes that this be achieved through a process of deliberation wherein stakeholders seek new understandings through genuine and empathetic engagement with one another. Such a deliberation is inherently democratic for it does not seek to coerce or take immutable definitive action but it is a continuous project intending to achieve a better situation with “the implicit expectation that an ideal state does not exist” (p. 237). The participative, collaborative evaluation does not intend final consensus but instead a dialogue reflecting the value of a democracy founded in community building and a sharing of beliefs and world views.
Fragnoli and Mathison's (2006), Case's (1999), Singer's (1997) and Mathison's (2000) work are very relevant to the work of teaching for social justice in the context of British Columbia. All authors argue for assessment or evaluation that values processes that practice democracy in the forms of a teaching model where stakeholders, including students, are invited to genuinely engage with each other, critically consider and participate in the creation of the assessment tools intended to motivate and promote their personal success and the betterment of society. These forms of authentic performance based assessment and participative, collaborative evaluation hold the promise of a practice that fosters and models social justice actions in the forms of democracy.

In Conclusion: Fostering a Healthy Outrage

This literature review has represented, expanded upon and generated understandings of social justice, democracy, the role of schools all of which informed understandings of citizenship education and teaching for social justice. The BC Ministry of Education Performance Standards for Social Responsibility was critically reviewed and therefore the ideal that it be a "living" document by providing feedback on its content was realized in this chapter. The traditions and models of citizenship education were reviewed and related to the context of North America. Teaching citizenship education as participatory was expanded towards a social justice oriented model that provides opportunities for students to initiate action plans to challenge systems that promote injustice and create change in the world. This literature review informed the rationale for and description of a social justice pedagogy. Finally, an ultimately democratic model of assessment that fosters an authentic participatory collaboration was detailed.

The purpose of teaching a social justice pedagogy composed of an inquiry-based approach, criticality and praxis is to teach a generation of students who are living in a time of social injustices and political apathy. As Zinn writes: “In a world where justice is maldistributed there is no such thing as a neutral or representative recapitulation of facts” (as cited in Bigelow and Peterson, 2002, p. 5). Our current reality necessitates that students not only participate in our political, social and economical systems but feel a “healthy outrage” regarding injustice and act to transform its root causes (Westheimer, 2005).
Chapter 3: Meshing Epistemology and Methodology

This methodology chapter seeks to establish a relationship between the epistemologies I draw on as a teacher-researcher and the methods I employ in performing research in the realm of social justice. First, I will present the locations I occupy as a person, teacher and researcher. Second, I will interrogate my pedagogical and research rationales, and throughout, I will explore the meshing of my epistemology with a critical action method of research.

As a teacher-researcher, I am located within the limitations of my experiences, the ongoing development of my learnings and the parameters of the public education system. As Alcoff (1991) maintains, “To say that location bears on meaning and truth is not the same as saying that location determines meaning and truth. And location is not a fixed essence... What it means, then, to speak from or within a group and/or a location is immensely complex” (p. 16). Consequently applying methods of research to speak from and within these locations is necessarily messy.

As a speaker of Canada’s two official languages, university educated, a heterosexual white woman, a member of the middle class and a person who is able-bodied, I am currently located in many/most circles of privilege. There are a limited number of contexts wherein I am excluded or discriminated against. These positions carry with them privilege. Depending on the context, privileges such as these may be useful and problematic. Privilege has helped me to gain access to opportunities for education, employment, travel, safety and well being. Privilege is problematic in the work of social justice for it serves to limit my access to genuine understandings of the realities of injustice. In addition the locations of teacher and researcher which I occupy in the classroom hold their own forms of power and capital (Bourdieu, 1973). I have yet to identify many of the outcomes of my locations and identities. Further my perception of my privilege and location is limited as ‘any way of making sense of the world is partial’ (Kumashiro, 2004, p. 25). Location and identity affect the meaning and truth of what I say and therefore it cannot be assumed that an ability to transcend location is realizable (Alcoff, p. 7). It is as a result essential that the locations I occupy as person, teacher and researcher and the effects they have on the research be considered in my choice of research method.
My locations vary with context; however, the consistency of my privilege throughout the spaces in which I dwell is considerable. The contexts I choose to address here are life, classroom and research. I identify with McIntosh’s (1990) assertion: “I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to be oblivious” (p. 80). The privileges that I have ‘cashed in’ over my lifetime do not exist solely in the domain of skin colour. I read the use of ‘white privilege’ here as representing my multiple locations. I am also positioned in privileged groups in the realms of socio-economic status, health, sexuality and physical ability. These positions have capital within our society’s social, political and economical structures, they have eased a path towards work, education, wellness, travel and recreation. They have worked in ways that are evident and unrecognized to ensure the quality of my life.

The teacher and the researcher are in constant play in the classroom and inseparable from the personal. They also provide a privileged position where I am constructed as having expertise and academic capital. As a person who attempts to live, teach and research through a social justice orientation, my interest lies in challenging myself to question my privilege and its trappings. The questions I pose become not only where does my privilege exist, but how can I recognize privilege and legitimately act to trouble/question/redistribute this privilege within my life? Within my classroom? Within my research? In turn, this querying has generated the questions I have as a researcher. My research and personal foci have influenced my practice as a teacher. The questions founded in my dilemmas of privilege which influence my interest in social justice have led to my posing the following research questions:

- How do students understand their role as members of local and global communities?
- What pedagogical rationales and practices move students from awareness of social injustice towards acting to transform the societal structures that reinforce injustice?

As a Teacher-researcher: Neutral and Omniscient

As a teacher-researcher, I struggle with the tensions generated by my position as a person teaching about issues of social justice for which I have limited experience and understanding. My challenge lies in working outside of the constructions of teacher as neutral and omniscient yet within the context of the education system. I work within the parameters of
the public education system and its curriculum with intermediate elementary students. This is relevant because I occupy a contradictory space wherein I am teaching students inquiry, criticality and praxis, while concurrently representing one of the systems to be challenged. I grapple with this paradox. The constructs of teacher as neutral and omniscient limit the potential for students to develop the criticality required for challenging injustice, imagining alternatives and transforming society—in essence the act of challenging the systems which the teacher-researcher embodies. While the means to bring about change remains undefined for me at this time, I propose that challenging the construction of teacher as neutral and omniscient may open spaces wherein the students invent unimagined tools which may allow them to dismantle and reconstruct those systems that sustain social injustice.

Neutrality

The social construction of teacher as neutral requires that teachers be objective, unbiased and not display support for a side in an issue, in short not have political opinions. This valuing of teacher neutrality exists on the level of the individual teacher and the greater arena of society. Ross states “It is widely believed among educators that neutrality, objectivity and absence of bias are largely the same thing and always good when it comes to teaching social studies” (2000, p.44). Kelly and Minnes Brandes (2001) link the value of teacher neutrality as reflecting competing models of the roles of schools and visions of democracy. They argue that proponents of teacher neutrality frame teachers as public servant or non partisan referee. The first frame, that of public servant, values the teacher who does not question social institutions, builds patriotism and national unity through their pedagogical practice. The second frame, as non partisan referee, positions the teacher as providing an “arena where diverse values can be shared”, as appreciative of multiple perspectives, but always as an objective referee (p. 438). Neutrality is an unrealistic and undesirable role for teachers to occupy as it reifies the norm and masks it as neutral. Neutrality is not a realistic or an ideal construction of teachers because neutrality is not objective (Ross, 2000). Scriven (1991) argues that being neutral is in actual fact a political category because it does not represent objectivity but more likely ignorance of the issues. He states that absence of bias does not equate an absence of conviction. Bigelow and Peterson (2002) concur and when they argue:
Neutrality is neither possible nor desirable. Teaching – regardless of grade level or discipline – always takes place against the backdrop of certain realities. In a world where the very idea of 'public' is being threatened, for educators to feign neutrality is irresponsible... The teacher who takes pride in never revealing his or her 'opinions' to students models for them moral apathy. (p. 5)

Moral apathy and neutrality are dangerous because they avoid acting on the injustices within our societies. In the contemporary context democratic public life is under siege and “a culture of fear has spread around the world” (Denzin, 2003, p. 257). Denzin argues that the means to combat this fear is ‘a genuine democracy’. He states that “a genuine democracy requires hope, dissent and criticism” (p. 259). This concept of democracy is supported by Kahne and Westheimer (2004) who state the goal of democracy is not mindless rule-following but that “healthy outrage—a critical element of democratic improvement—needs to be nurtured rather than stifled in school” (p. 37). In feigning neutrality and modeling moral apathy, teachers fail to generate opportunities for ‘healthy outrage’ and a ‘genuine democracy’ (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). In my pedagogical practice, I seek to trouble the construction of teacher as neutral through presenting knowledge and opinions as partial and in need of deconstruction (Kumashiro, 2004). This models reflection and criticality for the students.

I understand democracy as a concept whose application and theoretical underpinnings have been varied and inconsistent; however it is a term that I applied in my discussion of our work. The meaning of ‘genuine democracy’ that I apply in the classroom context has been borrowed from Henderson and Kesson (2004). They present a critical democratic pedagogy based in soliciting student voice, providing individualized options within the curriculum, regarding the classroom as a community, promoting a critical consciousness, promoting activism and engaging in authentic work. A democracy in the classroom, as it was understood for this project was inspired by the critical democratic pedagogy. In the context of this study, a democratic classroom meant opportunities for students and teachers to work as a community of inquiry, to learn and act on what was meaningful to them while challenging each other to interrogate their actions and thinking.
Omniscience

I teach within a system where the teacher is constructed as “the master of truth and justice” (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 323). There exists the pretence of omniscience in my position as teacher which limits the potential for social justice in the classroom. This metaphor reflects Paolo Freire’s concept of the banking model of education wherein the student is passively filled up with knowledge by the all knowing educator (1977/2000). Freire argues that only knowledge generated from the student point of view can encourage transformative critical consciousness. This requires that the teacher not be the all knowing bank clerk but a facilitator of engagement in criticality and reflection.

Mouffe (2000) describes social relations as never absent of hegemony and she argues that we require adversarial opinions or conflict to further our understandings and opinions. While Mouffe is working within a political context, I suggest that her claim is relevant to educational contexts as well. Educational contexts are composed of those same social relations as are found in all arenas of society and are entrenched in hegemony. Ellsworth (1989) proposes addressing the construction of teacher as master of truth and justice through the task “of constructing classroom practices that engage with the discursive and material spaces that generate a removal of master of truth and justice” (p. 323). In order to mediate between my location as a privileged individual and my purpose in teaching and researching in a socially just way, my worldview which influences my teaching requires challenging and disruption. As a teacher-researcher, I seek to create spaces where my students may help to uncover my and their assumptions and the lenses through which we make sense of the world, thereby disrupting the concept of teacher as omniscient.

A Social Justice Pedagogy

The problem of how to live, teach and research for social justice is relevant to our educational systems because the choices we make as educators ultimately determine the kind of society we will help to create. Boler (1999) states that education provides the space for resisting authority and therefore disrupting the status quo. Here the status quo is understood as those potentially unjust social realities that are left unchallenged. The disruption of the status quo may lead to the interrogation and transformation of root causes of injustice. School systems serve a
majority of future citizens and should generate spaces where Boler’s notion of education can be performed. I understand transform to incorporate imagined and yet to be imagined processes that may not be recognizable to teachers today. Transform does not seek a fixed end point but a dialogue that seeks change towards frames of equity. Without this disruption and transformation, we are destined to propagate the injustices that exist in our world. My pedagogical rationale and resulting research explore the creation of spaces wherein students may be engaged in transforming the historical, social, political and economic systems that generate the injustices.

I propose to perform my research within a pedagogical framework where students are invited to ask troubling questions and analyze their locations and the societal structures relevant to them through a social justice framework. I argue that this requires a pedagogy and research practice that is founded in what Kahne and Westheimer (2004) describe as a social justice orientation. A social justice oriented person critically considers and challenges social, political and economic institutions, and initiates actions to address the root causes of injustice. To this end, I attempt to teach according to a social justice pedagogy founded on the methods of inquiry, criticality and praxis as defined in Chapter 1.

The social justice pedagogy is at heart a critical pedagogy. The critical pedagogy as described by Burbules and Berk (1999) is preoccupied with “social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic or oppressive institutions and social relations” (p. 47). The overlying emphasis is on change and collective action. Criticisms of this approach question the extent to which learners will be encouraged to question the authority of the teachers and posits that critical pedagogy may result in coercing students toward predetermined conclusions (p. 53). Given the validity of these criticisms, the pedagogy and the research I am proposing will require critical reflection on the teacher and students’ practice by all participants. The teacher occupies a leadership role that is defined by facilitation of the curriculum and collaboration with the students. Therefore, the maintenance of a classroom atmosphere where knowledge is always subject to change, any question may be asked and scepticism is sought, may foster the invention of new and transformative conclusions. The adoption of criticality as “a practice, as a way of being as well as a way of thinking” (p. 62) by teacher and students may enable the classroom community to rethink and question not only the world but critical pedagogy itself.
As a Researcher-Teacher: Research Design and Data Collection

The research is grounded in critical and classroom action research using ethnographic tools. This critical approach meshed with my epistemological framework recognizes the value in practicing reflection, critically considering the structures that make up our society and acting to seek to transform the conditions that promote injustice. This approach meets my desire to live, teach and research in a manner that is consistent with a social justice orientation. These methodologies and tools are not without tensions and so I am resigned to always bearing in mind that “research – like life – is a contradictory, messy affair” (Plummer, 2005, p. 357) and so as Plummer advises, while awareness of the tensions within our methodologies is important for the self-reflexive researcher, we do have to live with them (2005).

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2003) critical action research is a self-reflective and collective self-study of practice, the study of how language is used, a deconstruction of the organization and power in a local situations and action to improve the situations. Classroom action research inquires into teachers’ making judgements about how to improve their practice. The processes that will be borrowed from these methodologies for this research project are self-reflection, observation of practice, the study of how language is used, deconstruction of organization and power, and action to address injustice. As we navigate our way through our unit of study, the student participants and teacher-researcher will undertake the same processes using ethnographic tools, which will in turn serve as sources of data.

As a teacher-researcher, I struggle with the meeting of my epistemological leanings and the research methods I am applying to my work. Critical action research is criticized as a “‘dangerous’ vehicle for importing ‘radical’ ideology into social settings” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003, p. 339) and as not recognizing that the participants alone without the theorists are a source for criticality and emancipation. Kemmis and McTaggart explain that criticisms of critical action research state not only that it may be “another vehicle for the imperialism of academic discourse over participants’ own ways of describing and engaging their experience” but also that it could be considered an unrealistic and idealistic aspiration which results in overemphasizing participant engagement in research (2003, p. 339). Criticisms of classroom
action research state that there is a privileging of teachers’ knowledge and a lack of acknowledging the importance of community support in realizing social change (p. 341). I choose to live within these tensions and criticisms because these methodologies provide opportunities for reflection and action within the school system and with the participants with whom I work. I understand reflection to mean deliberately interrogating my practice and epistemology. Action entails responding to this interrogation and seeking to improve practice and deepen epistemology. Critical action research provides for reflection through the dialogue I enter into with my action research cohort composed of my advisory committee, peers and students. The use of reflection and action are not intended to produce a fixed conclusion, the cycle of action research is intended to situate me as a learner who continually reflects on her action. I endeavoured to critically contemplate the contradictions and messiness that is research by drawing on critical and classroom action research.

The ethnographic tools my students and I utilized served to introduce, as Eisenhart (2001) suggests, more collaborative models of the relationship between researcher and other participants, thus seeking to include multiple voices in the data collection and final writing. In addition, I sought to provide a range of means for students to participate with the intention of honouring the diversity of learning styles in the classroom. The ethnographic tools included student-generated field notes, researcher-generated field notes, artifacts, interviews, questionnaires and photography. The student field notes and lesson plans were housed in a notebook kept in class and accessible to students. Students were reminded that anything that they write in the class notebook will be accessible to all class members and that participation in this writing piece is optional. The research field notes in the class notebook represented my lesson plans. In addition, artifacts in the form of photos, worksheets and student work were posted in the notebook in an attempt to provide opportunities for those not writing to contribute. The notebook was open and available in the class throughout our work and when I was not present. The margins in the notebook and the blank pages provided spaces for students to comment after reflection and digestion to past field notes, lesson plans or artifacts. Other data sources were in the form of questionnaires, interviews and written reflections (Appendix A, B, C, D and E). They were completed throughout the unit and following the completion of the final student actions. The questionnaires explicitly ask the students to consider and respond to the research questions.
The interviews sought to determine student input on teaching for and understandings of social justice. The written reflections were a means for emerging questions to be explored with the students. The notebook, questionnaires, interviews and written reflections were the main sources of data in our study and served as a venue for researcher and other participants’ findings to enter into dialogue.

My objective was to collect data in a manner consistent with my epistemological leanings. The majority of our data used writing as a method of discovery and analysis (Richardson, 2000). The writing served to create a text that was vital and evolving where students and researcher could enter into dialogue about the experiences in the classroom. The pages in the notebook were intended to create a space where student, researcher and teacher would hold equivalent influence and knowledge of the classroom project. This reflected my belief in, as much as possible, challenging the power paradigm that exists within the classroom between teacher-researcher and student. Further, it represented the teacher-researcher as taking the final step in the justice oriented pedagogy, which is acting, in this case in a concrete way, to address the power dynamics in the classroom.

I drew from these methodologies and used these tools in an attempt to work through my discomfort with what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe as the triple crisis. The authors detail how the elements in the triple crisis facing a qualitative researcher's authority are the representational crisis, the legitimation crisis and the praxis crisis. The crisis of representation makes problematic the relationship between text written by the researcher and the lived experience. Gonick and Hladki (2005) describe this crisis as calling for a questioning of engagement in relations with and representation of participants in ethical ways while recognizing the influences of power and motivation within research. In addition, they assert that research understandings are partial. The legitimation crisis calls into question concepts of validity, generalizability and reliability and poses the question if meaning is constructed then how can ethnographers analyze data in an attempt to make meaning of the research experience? The final crisis is born of the first two, the crisis of praxis. This crisis is centered on the question of action; it questions how action is possible in the world if society is always an interpreted experience (p. 19). I attempt to mitigate the effects of the inescapable partiality of my research conclusions, the
inevitable construction of the meaning I attribute to my analysis and the coercive nature of transformative action as an end point, through fostering criticality in my classroom while collaborating with and including students in the collection and analysis of the research data.

Research Site

The research site is the home school of the Grade 7 participants, Shaughnessy Elementary. The school is located in the neighbourhood of Shaughnessy, one of the wealthiest in Vancouver. The 2001 Census on this community describes it as one of Vancouver's most prosperous and stable communities. The population as of 2001 was 9,020 residents approximately 1.6% of Vancouver's total population. The majority of residents are between 20 and 39 years of age. In 2001 there were 2,315 families and 3,055 children living at home. Of these families 8.4% were single parent families. The average household income was $136,252. This income is approximately $80,000 more than the Vancouver City average of $57,916. The number of families in 2001 was 2,315 and the number of private households was 2,970. The same statistics tell us that linguistically, the largest first language groupings in the population are 59.4% Anglophone and 27% Chinese. The remaining language groups that made up the census were French, Tagalog, Spanish, Greek and Japanese (Community Webpages, 2007).

The Vancouver School Board notes that the school population is 478 students from Kindergarten to Grade Seven. The majority of the students speak English as their prime language and 18 other languages are present in the school population. The school also has an active parent population who serve on 18 parent committees (Shaughnessy School Profile, 2007). Given these statistics, it would be natural to draw the conclusion that the student population with which I am working would be 60% Anglophone and 27% Chinese speaking, relatively affluent and have parents who were actively involved in their children's education. In the class 24 out of 29 students are of Asian ancestry and 25 are multilingual. I do not have information that corroborates or dispels these assumptions regarding affluence and parent involvement.
Research Participants

The research participants are 27 Grade 7 students. The research participants self-identified for the purposes of this study. The activities undertaken to collect this data are as follows: independent creative writing assignments exploring conceptions of self, the modeling of self identification by myself, the critical reading of the identities and positions of characters in short stories, and finally the completion of a mind map representing the identities and positions of the students in relation to the issue they have chosen to study. The assignments were framed around the concept that our identities are multiple, complex and form lenses through which we make sense of the world. The students self identify as follows:

- Canadian Asian Cantonese
- Serious but fun loving, an artist who has lived in Canada for 8 years, Protestant
- Eccentric South Korean Christian, Me the guy with the black half rimmed glasses
- Has 2 dogs, Middle child, Jewish, loves literature and the environment
- Quiet but hardworking
- Christian South Korean
- Brace face, can't laugh no more
- Energetic Participant
- I am from Shanghai, China
- Happy, hyper Canadian Asian
- Peace Person
- Girl Canadian, 13 years old
- Chinese
- Chinese Canadian, loves helping people, sports, reading and writing
- Asian, Taiwanese, Male, 12 years old
- Buddhist Computer-Lover, hates hockey
- Canucks, basketball, Chinese, Friend
- Female Chinese
- Short, black haired, Asian
- Girl, kind loving Canadian, 12 years old
- Short (but jumps higher than most) Asian, Good Friend
- Friend, A guy
- Chinese boy student
- Canadian born here, Asian
- 1 with symbols – A stick man, a T on its side, a hammer, an anvil, a T on its side, a bicycle, a T on its side, a pencil and a heart
- 1 blank
- ?

The characteristics used for selecting the participant group were age, school community and Social Studies curriculum. This class was in an intermediate elementary age cohort as were the participants of the pilot study. This met my goal of performing the research outside of my own class yet with a group that was also working at an intermediate elementary level. The school community was willing to participate in the study and the classroom teacher had an interest in the research questions. Without this school-community’s interest in and willingness to participate, the research would not have been possible. Finally, the Social Studies curriculum for this age has a focus on citizenship and identifying global issues.

While all students are required by the Ministry of Education to complete their Social Studies curriculum, it was made clear through the letters of consent and assent, a classroom meeting with the Vice Principal and verbal confirmation from myself and the classroom teacher that contribution or non-contribution to the data for this study would in no way affect their grades. Further, as a teacher-researcher in their classroom, I did not evaluate or assess their work.

My goal as a researcher was to investigate my research questions. They are:

- How do students understand their role as members of local and global communities?
- What pedagogical rationales and practices move students from awareness of social injustice towards acting to transform the societal structures that reinforce injustice?
Additionally, I wished to complete my thesis as a Masters of Arts student and to inform my practice as an Intermediate Elementary teacher whose focus is social justice.

Research Procedure

The description of the research procedure is chronological and organized into the following subheadings: preparation, collaboration and action. I complete this section with a listing of my understanding of the assumptions and limitations to the study and a discussion of my conception of collaborative teaching and researching.

In preparation for this research a pilot study took place at a Vancouver westside elementary school and was entitled “Does participating in an Active Citizenship Project with Peers and Mentors Help Students to Develop a Personal Concept of Citizenship?” The research was conducted by myself, Ashley House as part of a group inquiry course with Dr. Hartej Gill at the University of British Columbia between January and May in 2007. The project consisted of Gr. 10 TREK student volunteers collaborating with a Grade 5/6 class at this elementary school. Together the students came to consensus on a social justice issue that they found meaningful and planned, initiated and reflected upon an active citizenship initiative that addressed the issue they had chosen. Active citizenship was understood as a person who is knowledgeable about local, national and global issues, sensitive to worldviews other than their own and has a goal of making the world a better place (Hebert & Sears, 2001, p.3).

The research site was determined through discussions with the classroom teacher and the administration of the elementary school. The year prior to submitting the ethics reviews to the VSB, I sought a classroom teacher who would be amenable to my performing research in his/her class. Upon finding an interested teacher, we discussed the research proposal and negotiated the timeline. Following, receiving the teacher’s consent, she and I sought the consent of the school’s administrators. Ten weeks prior to the start of the project, I met with the administrators and classroom teacher prior to submitting the ethics review to the UBC and VSB to confirm their ongoing interest. We discussed timelines, curriculum, school involvement and student participation. The week prior to starting the research, I presented the school administration with a letter outlining the approved project description and my contact information.
The ethics reviews were submitted to the University of British Columbia and the Vancouver School Board three months prior to the start date of the research project. Data collection began following the approval of the ethics review. The research project was conducted at Shaughnessy Elementary School from April 2007 to June 2007. The project was conducted with 27 Grade 7s for two 80 minutes periods and one 40 minute period per week for 11 weeks, additionally we worked together for a week at a camp. The pedagogy was founded in inquiry, criticality and praxis. The unit was comprised of four components: community building, identities and positionality, criticality and justice oriented actions. The community building component explored working in teams, building consensus and the power of positive relations. The identities and positionality component included ethnographic training, creative writing, critical reading and personal reflection. The criticality section involved learning about types of witnessing, persuasive discussions and reflection. Finally the justice oriented actions comprised of individual students and student groups identifying a social justice issue they found meaningful, researching the issues, planning an action to address the issue and initiating the actions. Each lesson began with a check-in and quote, story or news relating to our understanding of social justice. The check-in entailed teacher and students sharing how they were and how this may challenge or help in their work together for the session. The quote, story or news began with students sharing pieces that they found inspirational and continued with my suggestion that it become a daily routine and that the pieces be pasted in the research log.

The social justice oriented actions undertaken by the students during the actual research project were:

- **Health in Sub Saharan Africa** - Face painting to raise awareness about children’s health in Sub Saharan Africa specifically malaria. Proceeds were used to buy mosquito netting for 12 children in Sub Saharan Africa. Students painted faces by donation in their schoolyard over three lunch hours; with each face painting the participant was given a tag with information regarding the issue and a candy. They were asked to tell one other person about the cause.

- **The Peace Campaign** - A bake, jewellery, knitted bag and bubble tea sale on the school grounds to raise money for the Red Cross and to buy copies of the book ‘Sadako’ telling
the story of a girl from Hiroshima who contracts leukemia from the radiation from the atomic bomb dropped in World War II and a series of announcements and flyers detailing facts about current wars. The group named themselves the Kid's Red Cross. For three afternoons after school the students sold their home made goods to students, parents and neighbours of the school.

- The Media Awareness Campaign - A challenge and survey to raise media awareness among students at Shaughnessy Elementary. This group raised awareness about the impact of television on youth by challenging students to not watch TV over a period of four days. The group also raised awareness through flyers to classroom teachers and through interviewing fellow students. The students were then asked to complete a survey and the final results were published in the school newsletter accompanied by a letter to parents and students.

- End Starvation — A raising awareness of child starvation in Africa. This group posted 100 posters in community centers, libraries and the school neighbourhood. They interviewed patrons of Safeway and Starbucks to foster discussions on starvation and they generated a petition signed by 500 people to Stephen Harper asking that ‘Canada work to end starvation in other parts of the world’.

- Cruelty to Animals — A bookmark campaign to raise awareness about cruelty to animals. This group created 120 bookmarks detailing personal stories of abused animals, facts regarding cruelty to animals and suggestions for addressing the issue. The bookmarks were donated to the school library and to Vancouver Kids Books.

- Don’t be an Ant — An awareness campaign about reducing pollution. This person crafted a 4 x 5 foot poster detailing statistics on local production of garbage and suggesting means to reduce waste. The poster was placed in the main hall of the school above a recycling center.

- Free Tibet — An awareness campaign about the current occupation of Tibet. This group generated posters and wrote an article for the school newsletter raising awareness about Tibet.

The outcomes of the project are described in the words of a student participant:

Everybody worked very hard on this project, and those who have already completed it have been very successful. It was good to learn about new subjects
and global issues. I think everybody that participated in the class has learned to look at the world in a different way. I like this project because it showed us that there are lots of problems in the world and that even, thirteen and twelve year olds can make a difference. It’s interesting to see how we could use our imagination to try and solve our problems in creative and critical ways. (House, 2007)

This quote demonstrates the commitment, hope and thinking that existed in the student actions. This was further reflected in the hours spent in and out of school on the project, the energy and optimism students brought to class and the reflective critical questions and comments shared throughout the process. Much like the participants in the pilot project, the Mystery Kids and Ever Changing Identities, these students were inspiring in their genuine interest in, strong commitment to and boundless energy for making change in the world.

Assumptions and Limitations

In conducting a collaborative and social justice oriented research study I carried with me assumptions and limitations. The teacher-researcher’s position and assumptions are elements that can lead to challenges in collaborative critical research and pedagogy. Orner warns of the unjust power relations embedded in student teacher interactions (1992). She argues that as educators we must continually examine our assumptions about “our positions, those of our students, the meanings and uses of student voice, our power to call for students to speak, and our often unexamined power to legitimate and perpetuate unjust relations in the name of student empowerment” (p. 77). In attempting to research in a manner consistent with my epistemology, I have compiled the following portraying the assumptions and limitations that I have identified.

The assumptions I presumed to be true prior to beginning the study focused on the students. I assumed that the students in this study would have a similar disposition as the pilot group. I was also expecting to foster a similar relationship with the participant group as I had with the pilot group. I assumed that the students would willingly and enthusiastically embrace an opportunity for social justice activism and that they would realize extensive and effective actions. Finally, I anticipated that the students would complete the project feeling as though they had made a difference and would internalize a concept of citizenship founded in social justice.
The possible limitations to the project are related to positionality, timing and relationships. My position as a teacher and a long time resident of the neighbourhood meant that my observations may have been biased or may not have been as insightful as someone who does not have so much in common with the other participants. As well, my personal experience with the issues chosen by the participants was in certain cases limited to second hand accounts and print or non-print sources, thus hindering any insight I could provide in support of the projects. The shortened length of study did not provide the students with the same opportunities as the six month pilot study. My relationship with the students and my close relationship with their classroom teacher may have influenced the objectiveness of their reflections. Finally, the students' wish to comply and cooperate may have affected their participation, reflections and critiques.

Collaborative Teaching and Researching

As a researcher-teacher working within this method of research, research design, procedure and site, my aim was to foster critical collaboration with the other participants of this study. My rationale for this critical collaboration was an attempt to create spaces where assumptions were challenged and multiple ways of studying and seeing the world emerged and were voiced. Terry Eagleton's statement recognizes the importance of collaboration in the construction of understanding with student participants in research.

Children make the best theorists, since they have not yet been educated into accepting our routine social practices as "natural", and so insist on posing to those practices the most embarrassingly general and fundamental questions, regarding them with a wondering estrangement which we adults have long forgotten. Since they do not yet grasp our social practices as inevitable, they do not see why we might not do things differently. (Cited in hooks, 1994, p. 59)

Eagleton's assertion that students bring essential and unimagined points of view to our research has implications for teachers who undertake this type of collaborative approach. It points to the value of collaborative inquiry. For me, this entailed having the students act as members of the action research cohort through providing feedback and conversation in written reflections, class discussion, informal conversation and anonymous assessment. As well, I applied conceptions of
triangulation in my data collection and reflected on the power relations within the classroom setting.

The action research cohort was comprised of my advisory committee, educators and the students with whom I researched. The committee was formed through formal and informal processes at the university and elementary school level. Multiple perspectives occupying very different positions in the classroom enabled me to develop a more accurate understanding of the study. The roles of my advisory committee were to play the role of critical friend in reviewing my proposed study, in discussing my reflections on the study as it progressed and in reading the actual writing of my thesis chapters. The educators who contributed to my action research cohort were a Masters and one Doctorate student working in the Department of Curriculum Studies at UBC. They provided an arena for reflecting on the theoretical underpinnings of my practice in the classroom and challenging me to maintain a consistency between my practice and my epistemology. These members of my committee and educators communicated with me through meetings and email correspondence. The students with whom I researched provided verbal, written and anonymous feedback on our social justice project and on the research study. The tools they used are casual conversation, interview, in class written reflections and the research log.

In accessing responses, reflections and feedback from the action research cohort and utilizing multiple ethnographic tools, I intended to position myself as learner and to foster collaborative teaching and researching. Mathison’s (1998) understanding of triangulation and Richardson’s conception of crystallisation are relevant to my use of varied and multiple sources to meet this end. Triangulation is understood as a strategy for increasing the validity of evaluation and research findings through accessing multiple data sources and methods which lead to conclusions about what is being studied (Mathison, 1998). Richardson argues that in this era of postmodernity where the assumption that there exists a fixed object of study or unbiased research is challenged, the concept of triangulation and validity are contested. Richardson argues for crystallisation as an approach where the researcher applies a concept of research validation that assumes that there is no single truth and that what we know is partial because the information in the text is never independent of the author (2000). Correspondingly, Mathison
posits that most researcher and evaluators concur that seeking a fixed conclusion in research is unrealistic and so proposes an alternative perspective on triangulation. She proposes that researchers challenge the assumption that triangulation provides a fixed conclusion through recognizing when data converges on a single conclusion, underscoring inconsistencies and identifying contradictions among data. She argues that triangulation is simply a strategy and that in fact it is the researcher who draws the conclusions. Her alternative view of triangulation calls on researchers to attempt to explain the convergences, inconsistencies, and contradictions by applying the various levels of knowledge developed through data, context and understanding of the larger social world (1998). The intended critical and collaborative nature of this research project resulted from Richardson (2000) and Mathison’s (1998) understandings of the value of maintaining a wariness of a single fixed conclusion. I endeavoured to apply multiple methods and data sources to the research while fostering collaboration with the co-participants as a means of practicing Mathison’s understanding of triangulation and Richardson’s conception of the partiality of findings.

Despite the value in collaborative teaching and researching in the area of social justice, the hegemony in the classroom discourages student voice and participation in decision-making. However, the possibility of disrupting these power dynamics and creating a space where students and teachers critically inquire and act to address social justice issues is hopeful and necessary. I turn to Denzin’s (2003) description of critical pedagogy as direction in addressing these concerns of assumptions, positions and power. He states:

A commitment to critical pedagogy in the classroom can be an empowering, dialogical experience. The instructional spaces become sacred spaces. In them students take risks and speak from the heart. The critical discourse created in this public sphere is then taken into other classrooms, into other pedagogical spaces. (p. 273)

In this quote, Denzin represents the ideal of students not being limited by the existence of an intended outcome and of critical discourses being fostered and expanding into other spaces. My hope is that the critical discourse applied in challenging the immediate realities of the classroom and larger communities may generate unimagined possibilities and knowledge. While I draw on a critical pedagogy framework, a varied action research cohort and alternative conceptions of
triangulation, I am also cognizant of the fact that these are, as all theories are, imperfect. Therefore collaborative classroom research and critical pedagogy that is absent of power relations and without an end point may be unfeasible. Despite this, as a teacher-researcher I choose to continue to investigate my research questions. I do so critically, collaboratively and within the ever developing lived experience of the classroom, seeking to avoid tidy conclusions.

Data Analysis

The procedure followed in analyzing the data collected from the student questionnaires, interviews, teacher fieldnotes, research log and student reflections was based in an ethnographic approach. This work informed my construction and analysis of themes and codes. Following rereading the data, I open coded the student questionnaires and interviews. Open coding is a close reading of data wherein any and all ideas, themes and issues are identified through the construction of codes. A close reading of the research log and student reflections enabled me to collate codes into major concepts and ideas. In turn these major concepts and ideas informed my initial memos and the beginnings of relating the data to theory.

Initial memos are described as ‘a wide variety of ideas about what is going on in the data’ (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, p.155). The initial memos provided a foundation for the construction of a code book detailing titles for and definitions of major codes and sub codes (Glesne, 1999). The code book developed through four versions that were elaborated upon and adapted throughout the coding process.

The focused coding, a “top down line by line analysis on the basis of topics that have been identified” (Emerson et al., p.160) of the interviews, questionnaires and teacher fieldnotes followed. Throughout this process notes were kept clarifying and linking themes and categories. Additionally the definitions and titles of the codes and sub-codes were further developed and adapted as informed by the reading of the data. Finally, the codes were collated into themes and explored for convergence, inconsistency and contradictions (Mathison, 1998).
Research Findings

The major codes comprised of concepts representing social justice pedagogy. These included notions of inquiry, criticality and praxis. In addition codes addressed compliance, resistance, constructs and binaries. Influences, transformations, surprises, bias and assumptions identified the final codes. The major categories that emerged through the data analysis were identified as: compliance and resistance, teacher tensions, helping and hindering, constructs and surprises. The category of compliance and resistance focused on student demonstrations of compliance to the school and classroom systems, student resistance to language, rules, structures and systems established by teachers and student demonstrations of criticality. All were informed by observation, student reflections and responses to questionnaires. Teacher Tensions included tensions between the enactment of my role as teacher and the epistemology from which I was working. My reflections and fieldnotes recorded throughout the research informed this theme. The Helping and Hindering categories represented student descriptions of teacher actions and attitudes that helped and hindered their work. Constructs framed the constructs applied by students when discussing teachers and students and by myself when discussing students and teachers. Finally the category surprises included incidences when my assumptions or biases were revealed through analysing the data and the unexpected discourses that emerged through the data. Finally, the categories were reorganized into the larger themes of teacher tension born of working from within a social justice curriculum, constructs of students by teacher and student, (mis) understandings of resistance and redefining activism and student reflections on a social justice.

In Conclusion: Just Getting on With it

"In an era of rampant reflexivity, just getting on with it may be the most radical action one can make". (Martin Luther King cited in Lather, 1991, p.20)

Reflection on the locations I occupy as a person, teacher and researcher inform my life way, pedagogy and research practice. The questions with which I began, “How can I recognize privilege and legitimately act to share this privilege within my life? Within my classroom? Within my research?” are necessarily impossible to answer. These are the questions that have
served as springboards for my research, teaching and living. The practices of criticality and inquiry require a continued messiness as I mesh my developing epistemological leanings with my methodological practice. Praxis will always be given primacy in the contexts of my locations for it is a means to ensure that the more pressing realities of social injustice are addressed. As Denzin (2003) urges, "It is not enough to just do ethnography, or qualitative inquiry. Of course we seek to understand the world, but we demand a performative politics that leads the way to radical social change" (p. 259). In conclusion as King and Lather reminds us, we must just get on with it, while maintaining and fostering the struggle with the messiness that is research, teaching and living.
Chapter 4: Social Justice Theory and Pedagogy

Pedagogies founded in ideas of social justice have existed possibly as long as education itself. Plato describes an education based in a curriculum that has as its goal the formation of leaders, philosopher kings, who are not only knowledgeable in the arts, sciences and mathematics but also develop an understanding of goodness (Waterfield, 1993). Thousands of years later, Paulo Freire (1997) prescribes a pedagogy that seeks "...the realization of a land where loving may be less difficult and where the popular classes may have a voice, rather than becoming frightened shadows before the arrogance of the powerful" (p. 50). Plato was not the first and Freire not the last to discuss these notions. While citizenship education and social justice have been defined and applied in diverse and multiple manners, they have consistently maintained a presence in schools and contemporarily figure prominently in educational discourses.

In British Columbia (BC), we are now teaching in an era where social responsibility and social justice are embedded in the discourse of school districts and schools. Its presence is visible in report cards, codes of conduct, growth plans, district goals and Ministry of Education documents. The BC Ministry of Education document, "Social justice 12: Integrated resource package draft" (2007) describes the rationale for a social justice program as raising "students’ awareness of social injustice, to encourage them to analyse situations from a social justice perspective and to provide them with the knowledge, skills and an ethical framework to advocate for a socially just world" (p. 9). Provincial initiatives include not only Social Justice 12, a course, currently being piloted, which provides an opportunity for high school students to elect to study social issues, but also Social Responsibility Performance Standards which provide an evaluation rubric that defines the Ministry of Education’s expectations. Vancouver School District includes the Roots of Empathy program and the Nurturing Compassion curriculum which are both founded in conceptions of social responsibility. The private sector is replete with organizations and projects for students to undertake in the name of kindness, global citizenship and community membership. As educators, we are mandated through Ministry of Education initiatives to teach for social responsibility. Yet, little in these initiatives considers the role that the principles of social justice play in the implementation of such a curriculum. In navigating our way through the school system from our position as teachers and citizens of a democratic society, I am compelled...
to ask how might teaching practice reflect the priorities of social justice? In short, how might we teach about social justice in a socially just manner? This chapter is a discussion of the research that occurred at the intersection between a critical discourse and pedagogical practice in the realm of social justice education.

**The Morphing of a Research Question**

My initial research questions were: How do students understand their role as members of local and global communities and what pedagogical rationales and practices move students from awareness of social injustice towards acting to transform the societal structures that reinforce injustice? Through the process of data collection and reflection throughout the research project, these questions became unrecognizable to me. My original queries and intentions encountered the setting and participants of the research and were infinitely altered. The purpose and meaning of the questions became blurred as new questions emerged from the research experience and the data.

**Student Understandings of Membership in a Community**

The first question, How do students understand their role as members of local and global communities? was constructed for the purpose of exploring how student understandings of membership in a community reflected or disrupted the BC Ministry of Education’s Social Responsibility Performance Standards. An example of an intermediate rubric for the performance standards is as follows:
Table 2. Social Responsibility Performance Standards Rubric

This material has been removed because of copyright restrictions.

The information removed is a rubric generated by the BC Ministry of Education for use in classroom evaluation of social responsibility. These rubrics are available online.

The research tool used to explore this first question was a series of four webs depicting student behaviours with regard to social responsibility. The webs were intended to depict a modified form of the Social Responsibility Performance Standards applied in the Vancouver School District. The social responsibility descriptors housed in the webs had been modified by the grade 5 and 6 participants of the pilot study from the previous year. The intention of this modification was to make the Social Responsibility Performance Standards more accessible and recognizable to intermediate elementary age students. The outcome used in the questionnaire was a synthesis of the changes and recommendations the grade 5 and 6 pilot study participants made to the original Social Responsibility Performance Standards.

The modifications made by the participants of the pilot study were relating to language and evaluation. The participants in the pilot study removed what they did not find meaningful and translated language they found useful into more accessible terms. They also altered the original format which was a rubric consisting of a series of columns progressing from the titles Not yet within expectations, Meets expectations, Fully meets expectations to Exceeds expectations. The format they chose instead was a web of descriptors with no title indicating their value or location on a continuum of meeting expectations. The web had at its center the title of the strand. Branching from the center were five rectangles, four with descriptions of behaviours relating to the strand and one blank rectangle reserved for any comments the user wished to make. The descriptors represented behaviours that ranged from self interest to a social justice orientation. The participants in this research project were asked to use the pages to assess themselves and delete or add to the descriptors of social responsibility.

In the current research project, the web, figure 1 on the following page, composed the first section of the student questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by the Grade 7 participants in the initial days of the current research project. The web was intended to generate data for addressing the research question: How do students understand their role as members of local and global communities? Following the analysis of this section of the questionnaire, I drew conclusions regarding student interest and student understandings of social responsibility. Of the 27 questionnaires that were completed with the current study’s participant group only four
participants added descriptors and no descriptors were deleted. Prior to distributing the questionnaire, it was stated that responding to the questions was optional. Interestingly, while there was a limited participation in the web section of the questionnaire, the remaining questions addressing the student initiated social justice actions were completed with detailed responses in all but three cases. This led me to assume that this section of the questionnaire was not engaging for the majority of the participants. The format of the pages, the descriptions themselves or the topic of social responsibility may not have been as meaningful for the students as I expected.
The modified social responsibility descriptors created in the pilot study were organized into four strands: Contributing to Classroom and School Community, Solving Problems in Peaceful Ways, Getting Along and Defending Others and Making the World a Better Place.

Those four participants who did add to the descriptions of socially responsible behaviour did not greatly alter the webs. The descriptors that they added in the four questionnaires focussed...
on kindness and participation. These are two concepts that are in the original four strands of the web: Contributing to Classroom and School Community, Solving Problems in Peaceful Ways, Getting Along and Defending Others and Making the World a Better Place. Examples of comments describing kindness, which I interpreted as comments focused on fostering interpersonal relationships included:

- I say nice comments to my friends, family and classmates.
- I am kind and friendly to certain people.
- I like to talk to other people about our problems.
- I am kind and friendly to certain people and rude to others.

Examples of the notion of participation, which I interpreted as descriptors that reflected participation in school protocol or established organizations included:

- I let each person say their 'side' of the problem and then try to fix it, if that doesn’t work then we go and see an adult.
- I do small acts to help, like donating money and picking up garbage.

I interpret the lack of deletion, the limited number of added descriptors and the compliance of the added descriptors to the existing notions of kindness and participation as suggesting that either the web accurately reflected student conceptions of social responsibility or that there was a lack of interest, specifically critical interest, in this element of the questionnaire.

In their use of the questionnaire for self evaluation, the students chose multiple categories within a strand. My expectation was that the students would highlight one rectangle for each strand, this highlighting would represent how the students act with regard to the strands: Contributing to Classroom and School Community, Solving Problems in Peaceful Ways, Getting Along and Defending Others and Making the World a Better Place. Further the addition of the blank rectangle would provide a space where students could describe for themselves their actions in relation to the strand.

In practice, the majority of participants highlighted multiple rectangles for one strand. For example, “I’ll work with others if an adult asks me to”, “I’m kind friendly and include others
and I am rude to others” were highlighted by one participant describing their behaviours in the Contributing to the Classroom and School Community strand. In the original Social Responsibility Performance Standards these descriptors represented a range of behaviours from Not yet within Expectations to Exceeds Expectations. This use of the web suggests that students consider an individual’s socially responsible behaviour to be variable in different contexts. The students’ use of multiple categories within a strand is an acknowledgement that the same individual may behave in ways that are understood as socially responsible and not socially responsible in different times and places.

The lack of input from this section of the questionnaire, the commonality between the notions of kindness and participation in the existing strands and the added descriptors and the selection of multiple descriptions of behaviours for one strand led me to two possible conclusions. First, this web was less relevant or interesting to the participants than the sections that followed in the questionnaire. Second, determining how students understand membership in a global or local community is beyond the scope of the Social Responsibility Performance Standards, be they modified or not. This realization underscored the complexity of student understandings of community and led me to rethink my research question. I wondered what discourses do students use to communicate community when the construct of social responsibility is absent? Pursuing this question in future research will provide opportunities to explore student understandings of and the influence of social construction on conceptions of social responsibility.

**Pedagogical Rationales, Practice and Social Justice: The Juicy Parts**

The research question, what pedagogical rationales and practices move students from awareness of social injustice towards acting to transform the societal structures that reinforce injustice? began to take precedence over explorations of understandings of community soon after our first classes. As the research project progressed, the students demonstrated a greater interest in the social justice actions or what they began to term “the juicy parts”. In constructing this second research question my purpose was to pilot what I call the social justice pedagogy, founded in teaching for inquiry, criticality and praxis within a frame of social justice. The social justice pedagogy is described in more detail in Chapter 2: The literature review. I was interested
in soliciting feedback from the students and observing the outcomes of this curriculum. In our work together new related questions emerged. Questions fell into multiple themes. The first theme emerged as teacher tensions representing those tensions between my role as a teacher, my role as a teacher-researcher and my theoretical leanings. I wondered how do I resolve my goals as a teacher-researcher with the reality of my position as teacher? How is the control I exercise as teacher proliferated and mitigated within this project? The second theme became constructs. This included the constructs the students and I applied to each other and the implications for working within and without these constructs. The question that emerged was, in what ways do constructs of students and teacher influence our reading of the experience of working together on a social justice initiative? Concurrently, I reflected on the value of the social justice pedagogy for fostering inquiry, criticality and praxis. I was compelled to ask, does social justice pedagogy create spaces for resistance?

**Discourse, Transformation and Language**

The morphing of the research questions was an integral part of my research project. The original questions were composed in the planning stages of the research project and therefore were not reflective of the epistemological foundations of the research. The research project was founded in inquiry, criticality and praxis for the student participants and the teacher-researcher. The language of the research questions reflected a purpose and meaning that were formulated without influence from the participants thereby they did not reflect the collaborative intent of the study. The morphing that ensued represented a critical reflection on the research and praxis through the act of reconstructing the questions in response to the reflection. The critical discourse embedded in the social justice pedagogy was not aimed at a fixed point but at fostering a transformative conversation within and among the structures and stakeholders of the classroom. Acknowledging and incorporating the morphing of the research questions is consistent with the social justice pedagogy and research design that seeks to challenge the teacher student binary and is collaborative in nature (Eisenhart, 2001; Farr Darling & Wright, 2004; Denzin, 2003).

In discussing and representing the data, I will refer to the participants as participant or student, myself as teacher-researcher and both myself and the student participants as all.
participants. The terms student and teacher represent specific roles in the classroom, essentially those of the teacher as knower and the student as learner. I acknowledge that this binary positions the teacher as dominant however I use these terms because they allow a distinction between the adult and the youth and are relevant to the context of the classroom and school. My intention is not to frame the student as the learner and the teacher-researcher as the learned, but instead to disrupt the hegemony found in teacher-student binaries.

Teacher Tensions

In rereading and analyzing my fieldnotes and reflections, the tensions between my role as classroom teacher and my theoretical underpinnings in critical pedagogy were palpable. Each were distinct with different priorities but embodied in my teacher-self. My position in the classroom and my identity as privileged guarantee my complicity within the systems that oppress. My intention to identify and disrupt this complicity led to endless tensions. As a teacher-researcher experimenting with critical discourse I was compelled to challenge, disrupt and trouble the school system of which I was a student product and a teacher participant. In researching collaboratively, it was necessary to maintain a dialogic relationship with the participants and to co-construct the classroom experience. The tensions I experienced within my roles as teacher and researcher were a symptom of the impossibility of teaching and researching without an agenda. The questions that troubled me were how do I resolve my goals as teacher-researcher with the reality of my position as teacher? How is the control I exercise as teacher propagated and mitigated within this project?

My leanings in critical pedagogy, my role as dominant in the classroom and my conception of a "good" teacher were in continuous interaction throughout this study. A critical theory with a transformative end point is my agenda as a teacher-researcher. Conversely my role as a teacher in the classroom automatically positioned me as dominant. My conception of a "good" teacher contributed a further layer of complexity to the tensions in my practice.

My application of critical theory was intended to provide opportunities for students to explore issues that they found meaningful and to enter into the co-construction of our curriculum. As stated by Felding (2001) I believed, "The nature of teaching in schools is such
that, in the 21st century we must incorporate a more overt openness and reciprocity indicative of a more flexible, dialogic for democratic practice” (p. 130). Further, I attempted to mitigate my power within the classroom through social justice pedagogy. I addressed the potential for critical theory to coerce students towards predetermined conclusions by creating within the curriculum and research design spaces for critique, collaboration, reflection and transformation with and by the student participants. “Good” teachers are ever present in our daily lives; they are represented in film, TV, books, school courtyards and teacher education programs. George Lakoff’s (2004) frame of the nurturant parent accurately depicts the conception of a “good” teacher. The nurturant parents or “good” teachers value empathy, fairness, honesty and community mindedness. They seek to provide equal opportunity for success for all students. As a good teacher I was a collaborator, critical friend and counsellor, whereas as the bad teacher I sought to control the outcomes of the project. The research site represented a physical space where my agenda for a critical discourse, my dominant role of teacher within the classroom and the conception of a “good” teacher intersected. The tensions emerging from this intersection were productive in generating a means to critically consider and possibly trouble the hegemony in the classroom.

The classroom setting and the curriculum of this research project were intended to facilitate a non hierarchical relationship between myself and the students. The priority was to generate spaces for student inquiry, criticality and praxis. However, the classroom is a site where the teacher is positioned as the expert and dominant. This is realized through teacher control of the planning, implementation and enactment of the curriculum. Dahlberg, Pence and Moss (1999) state, “Everyone is not only affected by power, but also to some extent exercises it; we are governed, but also govern ourselves and may govern others, to a greater or lesser extent” (p. 29). The tensions expressed in my reflections critique my governing of the students and explore my governing of myself. The transformations that occurred in my practice developed in unforeseen ways. My experience in attempting to trouble and disrupt my role as dominant in the classroom was marked by a cycle of perceived success and relapse.
The Best Laid Plans

Althusser argues that the material practices with which teachers and students experience school secures domination in schools and is embodied in what is termed the ‘hidden curriculum’ (as cited in Giroux, 1983, p.264). The hidden curriculum in our classroom included the physical organization, the resources utilized and the daily routines. In our classroom, the original daily routines positioned the teacher as in control. Initially, our classes began with me in front of the room seated or standing and students seated at large rectangular tables in two rows. During this time, I was mobile and vocal. The unstated but overt expectation was that the students were seated and facing me without speaking unless called upon. At the start of the class, I would begin with a story, quote or news item of my choosing relevant to the student actions or social justice. At this time, in my reflections I began to refer to myself as the “dictator” and wrote in my fieldnotes “How I want to limit and control define parameters...old habits die hard... I should let that go...” and “Every day I am reminding myself to let them do as they will, let them succeed, maybe not. Just sit and simply see what happens, be on call.” My fieldnotes describe the students as compliant and cooperative. Conversations with the classroom teacher framed the students as obedient and quiet. Student compliance to the curriculum, rituals and routines in another context may be interpreted as successful teaching, however in the context of the social justice pedagogy founded in inquiry, criticality and praxis, the lack of overt resistance or critique was troubling. At this time in the research, I wrote:

Quiet, low energy from me and them, slow beginnings but ready participation. There is a contradiction in my feelings, I want the happy energy and borderline chaos, because I see it as reflecting co-construction and student engagement but I also struggle through moments when I seek to control the situation and foster quiet compliance. Why? Because as the teacher it is a more complex task to seek input and collaboration, it takes more listening, more reflection and more flexibility. It takes more criticality and praxis. (House, 2007)

The tensions between my conscious theoretical leanings and my unconscious performance in the role of teacher informed my practice as a teacher-researcher. It became evident that the cornerstones of the social justice pedagogy: inquiry, criticality and praxis not
only described an approach for working with students but were also essential for my unlearning and development as a teacher.

As I began to identify some of the ways that I was exercising control and attempting to manage my “dictator” tendencies, the students’ manner of participating shifted. This shift resulted in a greater collaboration between myself and the students. This was reflected in the co-construction of the curriculum which took the form of soliciting and acting on student feedback about my teaching researching and curriculum development as well as students performing their curriculum under their own initiatives. Feedback was sought through written check-ins, reflections, class discussions and casual conversations. Time spent outside of the classroom on fieldtrips and at camp also contributed to the ease with which the students and I communicated. In receiving feedback from and communicating with the students, I was being taught to unlearn the constructs of student that lived in my cognitive unconscious. In turn, the students were taught that their input was valued and acted upon.

The shift became evident when, students began to offer to start the classes with their own stories and quotes. Student groups began to set their own agendas in their project work. Sitting immobile in chairs at tables was no longer the norm. Students worked on the floor, tables were rearranged and projects spilled into spaces outside of the classroom. Parents, students from other divisions, administrators and other teachers were recruited by students to support their work. These acts are evidence of a shifting of power differentials. I was no longer positioned as the authority who dictated the curriculum instead I occupied a role of facilitator. Although this seemingly would be recognized as a marked success instead it elicited a relapse into my wanting control. At the time, I wrote in my fieldnotes:

They are always jumping ahead. I have the time crunch problem. I want them to be successful. Do I want this for their sake or for my ego? How am I defining success? Am I committed to success being unfixed and this process being transformative or am I identifying success as what the greater school community would celebrate? The projects risk having too much input and control from me. They are keen to begin and I am always slowing them down. What would happen if I let them go? They have everything they need, a structure to draw on if they choose, inspiration, energy and ideas. (House, 2007)
Despite having the best laid plans to teach in a socially just manner, it was evident from my reflections that I was working from and battling against my position of teacher as dominant. I was not the “good” teacher, I aspired to be. The reality that “we are all inscribed in modernist discourses. We have all been brought up in this tradition, which means that it has got a strong hold on us. We are always inside the concepts we wish to critique” (Dahlberg et al, 1999, p.28) was blatant. Teaching in a socially just manner requires not only a theoretical grounding but a constant rethinking of practice and critical reflection on positional power.

**Practice makes Praxis**

In considering the questions ‘How do I resolve my goals as teacher-researcher with the reality of my position as teacher? And ‘How is the control I exercise as a teacher propagated and mitigated within this project? I suggest that practice makes praxis. The goals of critical discourse will always be challenged by the power paradigms in schools and the two may not be reconciled. Teaching for social justice must constantly be rethought and challenged because what is anti-oppressive in one context may be oppressive in another (Kumashiro, 2004). The practice of teaching for social justice is never fully realized but always dialogic, in the process of being co-constructed by its participants and in response to the context of the individual learning communities. Tensions are useful in recognizing the ways in which power in the form of teacher control are propagated and mitigated. As a teacher-researcher who is working from a critical pedagogy, the contradiction between my practice and my theoretical leaning was productive as it created an opportunity to interrogate and seek to transform the power paradigm in the classroom.

**A Classroom Under Construction**

Lakoff’s (2004) notion of the “cognitive unconscious” describes the mental structures that shape the way we frame the world. He argues that to change our frames is to change the way we act and what we count as the good or bad outcomes of our actions. Lakoff believes that reframing is social change. In this research, I found that the frames or constructs of student that were most prevalent were shared by myself and the students. In the context of this research the contradictory constructs of student as empty vessel and knower pervaded the cognitive unconscious of all participants. Furthermore, the student constructs of teacher as collaborator,
critical friend and counsellor demonstrated student insight into teaching practices and upheld the frame of student as knower. The data led me to posit, how do constructs of student and teacher influence the experience of collaborating on this research project?

**Student as Empty Vessel**

The construction of the child as empty vessel and spectator gives rise to an understanding of education as a means of transmitting to or depositing within the student a predetermined body of information and skills. The student is perceived as without relevant knowledge or experience and in need of being equipped with ways of knowing (Freire, 2000). Ross (2000) extends his discussion of spectator democracy to a conception of student as spectator. He describes the situating of “students outside the knowledge construction process as passive recipients of pre-packaged information” (p.55). Further, he argues that traditional social studies instruction has failed to engage students in interrogating conceptions of democracy and therefore has fostered a maintenance of the status quo. The construct of the empty vessel spectator not only dismisses the knowledge, skills and experience the students bring to the classroom but also threatens the creation of a dynamic democracy that generates spaces where citizens enter into dialogue and action that seek to transform the world.

The empty vessel or student spectator was a living construct within my and the students’ frames for understanding pedagogical practices. Despite having studied, reflected on and identified critical education as having value and interrogating conceptions of power and democracy, I found in my fieldnotes and in student quotes, examples of the construct of student as empty vessel. Student quotes depicted student minds as needing help developing through adult instruction. My fieldnotes center on feelings of needing to ensure student success and on troubling the empty vessel spectator construct. This leads me to conclude that such constructs were deeply embedded in the cognitive unconscious of all participants in the study.

Comments reflecting the construct of the empty vessel spectator were manifest in descriptions of how to develop the mind and students requiring adult instruction to learn what is valued. The first quotes were generated by the students and focused on the development of the mind. For example:
• Minds need to be guided in order to work properly.
• Minds need to be directed.
• Schools should tell children and plant the idea of it in the students’ mind first in order for the students to get the idea.

The following student quotes reflect the perception that students require adult instruction to ensure that they learn what is valued by the school system or community. Students explained in the first quotes the role of schools and adults in education. The language of “social responsibility”, “instructions” and “giving ideas and opinions” reflected an acceptance of students as without knowing -- in short empty vessels. For example:
• Schools are expected to prod them [students] into social responsibility.
• Adults need to teach kids to make the world a better place.
• The students need the adults to teach them social responsibility.
• Students won’t learn those actions if teachers don’t give them instructions.
• Teachers should give students some ideas. (4 comments reflecting this belief)
• Teachers need to give opinions and ideas to students. (3 comments reflecting this belief)

My reflections demonstrating the construct of student as empty vessel spectator discuss the teaching strategies I applied in an attempt to secure what I conceived of as student success within the parameters of the research and the school system. Student success in this context was based in student messages reaching and impressing an audience outside of the classroom and the completion of the project within the designated timeline. For example:
• I think we need to make sure the message they want to send out into the community is received, they [the students] may not realize how to get the word out.
• Students need examples and inspiration to understand the project. Do the examples limit their potential to generate a project of their imagining? Is it possible /desirable to work in isolation of examples? Some students request it and others are not interested.
• I intervened with S’s group and we came up with a new plan. They were falling behind on their projects, they seemed stumped, I realize the value in allowing them to struggle but I am concerned with the loss of momentum and the coming of the end of the school year.
Additionally, my reflections demonstrate the ongoing tension between my predilection for guaranteeing student success and my conscious intention of disrupting the teacher student binary. The anxiety provoked by feelings of loss of control reveal a construct of students as without ability. This is demonstrated through the following quote:

With every new idea I explain which parts need attention and then leave them to it. But today Free Tibet is not finished and has changed their plan, SPCA switched their plan midway, Starvation has started a petition, I can’t keep up. I don’t want to stop them but how do I make sure they are successful without intervening? (House, 2007)

The frame of student as an empty vessel needing guidance and control or as spectator who perpetuates the status quo exists in the cognitive unconscious of both teacher participant and student participants. The existence of this construct from multiple participants demonstrates a common socialization. This common socialization supports the constructivist theory that frames of students are socially constructed (Canella, 2002). Because the construction of students as empty vessel spectators interferes with a critical democratic pedagogy a teacher cannot implement social justice pedagogy without interrogating and having students interrogate the frames through which they make meaning of roles in the classroom. In undertaking this experiment, students and teacher act to transform the power relations in the classroom that are obstacles to democratic teaching.

**Student as Knower**

The construction of student as knower, specifically as a “child as co-constructor of knowledge, identity and culture”, challenges the assumption that students are empty vessels to be filled by an educator (Dahlberg et al, 1999, p. 48). Ironically, the constructs demonstrated in this data not only frame students as empty vessels but also framed the student as knower. The coexistence of these constructs within the learning community exhibits the paradoxical nature of teaching and learning for social justice within the normative discourse of our society. The construct of student as knower is manifest in the data as students having insight, having knowledge and as having agency. The first quotes are from my fieldnotes and reflections. In
theory, I was cognizant of the fact that student knowledge and experience was significant and essential to the creation of meaningful and authentic learning, however my expectations of the students were not equal to their abilities. The quotes demonstrate the realization that students have greater knowledge and agency than I had assumed. These reflect a disruption to my framing of the students as programmed by schools to be uncritical and compliant and sparked an unlearning of my assumptions. For example:

- They understood the truth activity right away. Have they studied criticality before or do they just get it?
- They are moving more quickly than I expected, do they already know this or are they more interested in the next stages of the project?
- The answers come to them so quickly, it makes me wonder if they have talked about this before, it’s because they are older than the students I have been working with or do they know the ‘right’ answers or perhaps they are more critical than I expected.
- I think their thinking is beyond what we are working on and that is why they are restless.

The second quotes demonstrate the established belief in the student as having insight and agency. The quotes are from both my fieldnotes and student quotes from the research log. The following are quotes from my fieldnotes.

- I need to question the group regularly and do member checking with the students, otherwise I have no idea whether I am understanding their comments, actions or reactions.
- I should try to speak with everyone more often and find out if I am reading their energy accurately, more written reflections.

The following are comments from the student research log.

- I always thought kids could make a difference, now I know they can.
- I know that it takes immense preparations and planning but it is very possible to help take the one step forward to solve global issues.
- Children continue their actions because one person can affect millions.
• Not only grown-ups can change the world, but also students and kids like us.
• I don’t think we should learn from textbooks, I think we ourselves, should change the world and then we can be in the textbooks.

The frames of student as empty vessel and as knower are contradictory and competing; they represented a site for contesting oppressive notions of student as empty vessel. The empty vessel construct is representative of an undervaluing of student voice and experience while the knower construct regards student voice and experience as vital and students as agents. This research project is founded in the theory that student knowledge and agency can inform teaching practices, it is essentially founded on a view of student as knower. Paradoxically, the framing of student as empty vessel is present in my reflections and fieldnotes. The constructs explored here do not represent a progression of reframing but concepts that co-existed demonstrating a cycle of learning where framing and reframing are not acts that can be completed but require a continual reflection and action in order to be transformed.

Constructs of students are not limited to the binary of empty vessel and knower and are not sufficient to explain the complexity of meaning making in the classroom. As Lather (1991) notes “Philosophically speaking, the essence of the post-modern argument is that the dualisms which continue to dominate Western thought are inadequate for understanding a world of multiple cases and effects interacting in complex and nonlinear ways, all of which are rooted in a limitless array of historical and cultural specificities.” (p.21). These opposing constructs demonstrate that meanings are constantly being renegotiated, are continuously overlapping and ripe with the potential for oppression. While the interpretation of student as empty vessel and knower is contradictory, this contradiction is useful as it acknowledges the disordered, constructed and inconsistent nature of meaning making in the classroom.

Teacher Constructs

Constructs of teachers demonstrated through student descriptions of helping actions from teachers are organized into the categories of collaborator, critical friend and counsellor. Collaborator frames the teacher as co-constructing the curriculum with students and as
generating an atmosphere in the classroom where student ideas, knowledge and skills are valued. The following quotes demonstrate these concepts, the accompanying parentheses representing the number of similar comments is intended to demonstrate the prevalence of the understandings represented in the quotes. In describing actions that help and hinder students in the classroom, the participants drew on their multiple years of schooling and the teaching styles of a variety of educators to respond to a questionnaire posing the question “What do you think a teacher’s role should be in a social justice project? How might they help?” as demonstrated by the following quotes:

- Let students decide what they want to do. (9 comments reflecting this belief).
- Be flexible, set or postpone dates if needed. (5 comments reflecting this belief).
- Value students’ opinions and leadership skills. (4 comments reflecting this).
- I believe this should be in schools, but people should not be forced into doing it if they do not want to. (3 comments reflecting this belief).
- Make it free and open to new ideas. (3 comments reflecting this belief).
- Discuss and brainstorm with the class.
- Make activities along with us.
- Let students be free during the project.
- Keep doing things like research logs where we can add more input, fun and memories.

These quotes focus on the importance of teacher flexibility and recognition of student voice. In noting this importance, students are demonstrating a knowing and capacity for reflection and contribution to the curriculum that reflects critical theory’s priority of exploring hegemony in the classroom.

The teacher construct of critical friend demonstrates a valuing of the skills and knowledge that teachers have to offer in the context of the classroom. The quotes reflect a willingness to access the teacher as a support for the academic challenges present in the curriculum while expecting teachers to foster spaces for student independence. For example:
• Teachers should proofread and double check our work. (8 comments reflecting this belief).
• Give planning sheets to help us think deeply. (4 comments reflecting this belief).
• Give guidance or advice. (3 comments reflecting this belief).
• Get us started thinking.
• Help us to solve problems and be organized.
• Make some of their work more understandable.
• Sit back and let us do our thing but be there when we need adult help.

These quotes demonstrate a valuing of both teacher and student knowledge, skills and abilities. They demonstrated that while students are to be valued as capable knowers, teachers offer knowledge, skills and abilities that are different from what students offer and they support student work.

The final teacher construct evident in this research is that of counsellor. The construct of counsellor characterizes the social and interpersonal challenges of the classroom and the role the teacher may play in supporting the students’ negotiation of these challenges. The quotes denote a concept of the teacher as a manager of cooperative activities, as a motivator and as a supporter. For example:
• Encourage the student; tell them they can do it. (10 comments reflect this belief).
• Provide us with support and always be available to help. (5 comments reflect this belief).
• They should make sure we are having fun. (3 comments reflecting this belief).
• Teachers should be inspiring. (4 comments reflect this belief).
• Teachers who help sit down and talk with us.
• To help students resolve conflict if needed.
• They should be nice and respectful, because we have feelings too.
• Make sure that the students are trusting the other students.

The student comments regarding helping and hindering actions signify a critical and rich conception of what students need from teachers. The data quotes address issues and themes
addressed in a critical democratic pedagogy, as discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, such as soliciting student voice, providing individualized options within the curriculum, regarding the classroom as a community, promoting a critical consciousness and engaging in authentic work (Henderson & Kesson, 2004). These quotes represent student insight into teaching for social justice. They reveal not only the knowing of students in the realm of curriculum but also establish students as a ready source of feedback for reflective practitioners.

Descriptions of hindering actions demonstrate a criticality that juxtaposes conceptions of helpful teaching with those that oppress. This juxtaposition illustrates lived experiences and a deep understanding of student teacher relationships. The following quotes are in response to the question “What do you think a teacher’s role should be in a social justice project? How might they hinder?” The hindering comments depict teachers who do not foster student input, are domineering and who manage the class through overt discipline. According to student participants, teachers who hinder student success, do so by:

- Stressing students out with too much work. (7 comments reflecting this belief).
- Not listening to student suggestions. (5 comments reflecting this belief).
- Not letting students learn about what they are interested in. (4 comments reflecting this belief).
- Teacher’s nagging or yelling at students. (4 comments reflecting this belief).
- Not understanding at times. (4 comments reflecting this belief).
- Teaching us stuff we won’t use when we could be changing the world. (3 comments reflecting this belief).
- Make fun of students. (2 comments reflecting this belief).
- Teachers’ forcing their thinking on students. (2 comments reflecting this belief).
- Spazzing at students for small things because they are in a bad mood.
- Not having time for us.
- Teachers who get mad when a student doesn’t understand.
- Giving the silent treatment.
- Disissing students.
- Not willing to see the students’ side of the story.
In discussions that followed the completion of the questionnaire, students indicated that the comments reflecting how teachers help and hinder are not representative of a single teacher but of the students' whole schooling experience. As teachers, we spend our professional lives studying how to best educate students. As students, they spend their academic lives considering how to negotiate their realities in the school system. This data establishes that “Students — even elementary school children - do not need doctorates in cultural ideology to uncover the meta-messages of the larger society” (Lincoln, 1995, p. 92). The student responses underscore the importance of teachers framing students as knower while providing them with academic and social support for the challenges they face in the classroom. There is no purely oppressive ‘bad’ teacher nor is there a seamlessly collaborative counsellor and critical friend in the classroom, however through collaboration and conversation teachers and students might reflect on and share what each requires of the other to learn and unlearn in the social justice classroom.

Not only are students stakeholders in their learning but teachers can be too. Adults underestimate the ability of children to be shrewd observers, to possess insight and wisdom about what they see and hear and to possess internal resources we routinely underestimate. Children and adults combine power and create new forms of wisdom when they explore learning together. (Lincoln, 1995, p.89)

Exploring the question, how do constructs of students and teacher influence our reading of the experience of working together on a social justice initiative? through the data collected in this research leads me to conclude that constructs not only influence our reading of experience but they describe the experiences and forces of socialization that have formed our world views. While the root of these constructs is beyond the scope of this paper, my interest is in how these constructs play out in schools. Schools are relatively undemocratic for both teachers and students and represent a force of socialization that seeks to reinforce normative discourse (Kohli, 2000). As micro societies, schools share in those social injustices that occur in the greater public sphere including a limited substantive democratic participation for teachers and students. Surveillance, top down decision making, limited regard for diversity and the construction of teacher and student all serve to limit the vitality of democracy in the schools and therefore in society (Kohli, 2000; Ross, 2000; Bigelow & Peterson, 2002).
The constructs of student as empty vessel spectator and knower and teacher as collaborator, critical friend and counsellor were not produced through this research but were brought to, challenged by and reinforced by the experience. The contradiction between student as empty vessel and student as knower characterized the tensions between critical discourse and the normative discourse positioning the teacher as dominant. The construct of teacher as collaborator, critical friend and counsellor represent values and understandings that are prevalent among the student participants. Times and spaces that provide opportunities for reflexivity are an avenue for developing an awareness of where we, as teacher and students, sit within these frames and our complicity in ensuring their endurance. These conversations might take the form of student led class meetings, written reflections, creative writing and discussions with small groups or individuals. Meaning making occurs through framing the world, therefore entering into dialogue regarding constructs is an opportunity for the teacher as well as students to be challenged to understand the implications of their frames, to reframe their views and ways of being in the classroom. Moving beyond reflection of experience towards an on going consideration of the frames through which we make meaning of experience may provide insight into those constructs that are embedded in our cognitive unconscious and promote the discourses we are challenging.

**Pigeonholing Resistance**

This project was informed and drawn from a perceived need to generate spaces in the curriculum for the social justice oriented student. Apathy and neutrality were depicted as dangerous, whereas hope, dissent, criticism, crisis and a healthy outrage were framed as ideal outcomes of a curriculum (Denzin 2003; Wesheimer & Kahne 2004; Kumashiro 2004). My intention was to foster criticality through a vital democratic classroom. Analysis of the resistance in the classroom demonstrated that my understanding of teaching for a social justice oriented student was limited. While it is unquestionable that “teachers’ efforts in the classroom are inextricably tied to broader endeavors to transform society” (Ross, 2000, p. 59) the outcomes of the project demonstrated that both myself and the students required the practice of not only acting to transform those conditions that promoted injustice in the world but also acting to resist and transform those power dynamics that are embedded in the classroom and curriculum.
In considering the elements of hope, crisis, dissent, criticism and a healthy outrage prior to beginning the research, I assumed that resistance was overt and occurring through conflict and contest. In reality, resistance was prevalent in the research and formed in response to my assumptions. In this research it became evident that resistance cannot be pigeonholed, its forms are oppositional and active as well as silent and subtle (Boler, 1999). Resistance may reify the dominant and reconstruct the system. The context of the research further complicated identifying forms of resistance, as it was steeped in a critical discourse in which resistance is fundamental. The research design was not born of a will to empower students; conversely it sought to recognize the power that students have and to generate spaces where it could be exhibited. Nonetheless, Orner's question “How can we understand ‘resistance’ by students to education which is designed to empower them?” (1992, p.75) reflects the challenge in analyzing a social justice curriculum. In as much as the following section seeks a better understanding of resistance in the classroom, the nature of resistance is that it cannot be contained in an explicit definition. Therefore I wondered can a social justice pedagogy create spaces for resistance?

Constructing the Activist

Activism was central to the discourse of the teaching and researching in this project. I believe being a social justice teacher means teaching for activism. As “uncertainties and disagreements over words, definitions, concepts and themes are always with us, especially in research that explores issues of power and dominance.” (Canella & Viruru, 2002, p.198), clarity is required with regard to the definition I apply to activist. The term activist may, in some contexts, carry with it connotations of militant protest, protest for the sake of protest or civil disobedience. My understanding of activism is centered on the active. I understand active as specifically actions addressing social injustice, this may take the form of raising awareness, or acting to transform the conditions that promote the injustice. Upon analysis of the data, it became evident that activism takes the form of resistance demonstrated in the overt and the covert as well as the voiced and the silent. While the resistance in the classroom may not demonstrate a grassroots revolutionary activism, it does represent the practice of exercising criticality. The data demonstrates student resistance in the forms of students as compliant agents, oppositional reproducer, and non-compliant actors. Students also resisted through fostering unlearning, disrupting the curriculum and using silence. Multiple forms of resistance were
identified throughout the research. Although much behaviour was similarly identified as resistance, the foundation of this resistance varied. While some of the behaviours identified as resistance worked to challenge current structures in society, other acts of resistance fought to uphold societal norms.

**Student as compliant agent**

Agency is considered to be the capacity of a person to act in and on the world (Cannella, 2002). In the context of this research I understand agents to have the capacity to act on and generate change in the world, be it global social realities or the local systems that make up daily existence in schools. Activism in this form became the normative discourse of the classroom and therefore a visible expectation. Working within the social justice curriculum, the students resisted the frame of youth as powerless when they chose social justice actions that extended beyond the expectations of the adults in the school community. The students were agents in their resistance to the frame that views youth as powerless. Additionally, in generating change in the world the students were compliant with the classroom curriculum.

The social justice pedagogy sought to create spaces where students identified an issue that was meaningful to them, developed a critical understanding of the issue and their positionality as it related to the issue, planned and initiated an action that sought to transform the causes of the issue. The social justice actions undertaken by the students represented resistance to many social realities, for example: groups fostered awareness regarding the influence of media on the school community; the safety, health and oppressive realities of living as a child in war torn countries; and the possibilities for children to help combat cruelty to animals. The majority of the student participants, all respondents except two, embraced the project. Their reflections present a discourse of the world needing help from kids, of valuing independence in school work, positive feelings upon completing the action and of the importance of fun. As this was the dominant discourse of the curriculum and myself, the work the students completed represented compliance to the curriculum and complicity with the school system. Conversely, the actions challenged the construct of youth as powerless to make change. The following student reflections on the project demonstrate compliance with the curriculum. For example:
• Yes! Yes! I would LOVE to do this project again because it isn’t a normal school project where everything you do counts for your own benefit, this project is a tool we can use to save people’s lives.

• I would actually like to do this again, even if it was a school project. It’s still something you do to help, school work or no school work. (2 comments reflecting this belief).

• Yes, I thought it was fun, the way you get to supervise your own organization and be a leader. (5 comments reflecting this belief).

• Yes, I would like to try to better share responsibilities and make more money and raise more awareness next time.

• Yes, because I want to collect more results. (3 comments reflecting this belief).

• Yes, now that I know what to do, I could do it better. (5 comments reflecting this belief).

• Yes, I would do it again, this project gave me a chance to help others, and if there wasn’t this project to begin with, it would never have crossed my mind. I never thought of starting an organization myself. (3 comments reflecting this belief).

• Yes, I TOTALLY want to do this project again. Frankly, over and over. Why? Because I have accomplished great things and have been proud of it. (4 comments reflecting this belief).

• Yes, because 1) it is for a good cause and is helping humanity climb to a healthy peak. 2) It is fun and less stressful and mind pressuring than other subjects. 3) The whole idea of doing this activity, it gives a good warm feeling inside. The idea that the world is depending on kids like us to make a difference is enough to make me want to work on this project in all of my free time.

Power operates visibly and invisibly through expectations and norms (Foucault cited in Cherryholmes, 1988). Therefore, compliance in this context is activism as prescribed by the normative critical discourse of the curriculum. The students performed the curriculum as expected on a classroom level and resisted through raising awareness within the larger school and local community. The intention of the critical discourse was to foster resistance therefore the resistance that occurred through enacting the curriculum was expected. Unanticipated examples of resistance were realized as reifying dominance through opposition, disrupting the curriculum through non compliance and fostering unlearning through challenging assumptions.
Student as oppositional reproducer

Oppositional behaviour in this context recentered the teacher as dominant and therefore reproduced the hegemony of the classroom (Applebaum, 2004). The oppositional behaviours included: not listening to peers in group discussions, not participating in group activities and disrupting through interruption of conversations. These behaviours resulted in reifying the power relations born of the teacher student binary. Regardless of the intent or cause of the student resistance, my response was to return to the normative student teacher binary. For example when these behaviours were exhibited I reacted by requiring that the students come into the hallway and engage in a conversation regarding respect, empathy and responsibility. All of these reactions recentered the teacher as the rule enforcer and as dominant. “Oppositional behaviour may not be simply a reaction to powerlessness, but might be an expression of power that is fuelled by and reproduces the most powerful grammar of domination.” (Giroux, 1983, p. 285). In this case their expression of power caused my reaction as rule enforcer thus reifying the grammar of domination which is the teacher student binary. Oppositional behaviour provides opportunities for the teacher to dialogue with students regarding the reasons for their actions, the end result may be a conversation that provides insight into the workings of the classroom and uncovers the normative discourses of the hidden curriculum. Conversely, these behaviours may result in the reproduction of hegemony and therefore provide an opportunity to teach resistance that may disrupt and transform the teacher student binary.

Student as non-compliant actors

The visible normative discourse of the classroom framed and celebrated activism and the student participants demonstrated an interest in and willingness to be a part of social change. This was demonstrated through their reflections on their project detailed in the student as compliant agent section and in their use of the student research log. The student research log was a blank book that resided in the classroom or at the homes of students. During class periods it circulated around the room, occasionally it was taken home overnight and otherwise it was housed on a central shelf in the classroom.

The research log was a living record of the student experience in the research project. The cover page was a student led collaborative art project. Its pages were composed of lesson
plans and student materials. The lesson plans were included to provide an opportunity for the students to comment anonymously on the curriculum. As the project progressed lesson plans became fewer and less structured. While students did not elect to comment in the research log on the curriculum, they glued photographs, generated fieldnotes, posted artifacts, shared essays and wrote in its pages. The photographs, artifacts and essays depicted the social issues the students acted on and the actions themselves. The fieldnotes were voluntary and structured through a series of lessons on descriptive writing and a worksheet that asked the students to define a question and compose fieldnotes and headnotes addressing the question throughout a class period as shown in Figure 2. The student fieldnotes were completed for the first three of twenty five sessions. The students opted to record the classes through photography for multiple classes. Midway through the project the camera and fieldnotes were no longer used. Students explained that they preferred spending the class time working on their actions.

The focus of the photographs and quotes demonstrate the students as actors that value activism. The photographs and fieldnotes depicted the participation of students throughout the class periods and actions as engaged in the project. Photos were taken of students participating in brainstorming activities, discussions and organizing social justice initiatives. The student writings fell into three categories. There were inspirational quotes, constructive feedback on the actions and artifacts representing personal activism. The inspirational quotes focussed on the themes of celebrating the student actions, quotes from world leaders regarding issues of social justice and motivational phrases regarding the potential to change the world. The research log became a space for celebrating and encouraging all participants in their social justice actions within and outside of school. I suggest that this demonstrates an enthusiasm for activism.

Additionally, the research log provided an opportunity to realize the paradoxical construct of student as non-compliant actor. Among the artifacts glued on the pages of the research log were not only depictions of the student actions that were born of the curriculum but also evidence of student social justice initiatives that took place outside of school. One student gave manicures and pedicures weekly at an old age home, another rescued birds, a third had initiated an anti-pollution campaign in her community and a fourth started an organization called “Saving the World One Step at a Time” which included many of the students from the
classroom. Despite the classroom discourse of activism being valued, these actions did not feature in the projects and were not mentioned in the classroom meetings or activities. In spite of my enthusiasm for their action and desire to incorporate them into the student projects, the students were non-compliant actors for social justice. During the interviews with the students, they explained their reasons for not including descriptions of their activism. They reasoned that their actions did not relate to school and were a result of a way of being in the world that was not activism. The following student quotes demonstrate students as non-compliant actors. Non compliance with the curriculum and language I brought to the class are actions of resistance.

- It made more sense to do it outside of school, because that’s how it started, it is life, not school.
- I don’t think this is the job of schools because for it [the social justice project] to have effect, it has to come from the heart and not be for the grades.

Additionally, they resisted the label of activism for their actions. Some framed their actions as being less than activist and or not activism. As demonstrated in the following quotes:

- G explained the reason for recording the action was that. “I put this down because Ashley said it is activism but I don’t think I changed anyone’s mind.”
- J didn’t include the actions because she says, “Ummm outside of school I have been raising just a little bit of awareness, just around my community, doing little things.”
- K stated, “Yeah, I haven’t really had a chance to be an activist since the Mystery Kid.” I replied, “That’s interesting because I know that since then, you were part of the protest at Eagle Ridge.” K responded, “Yeah, I was.” He explained that he camped out over the weekends with his parents and grandparents. He talks about the wind, almost being arrested, the species of red legged frog and ancient Arbutus trees that will be wiped out by the highway. He talks about feeling “terrible and devastated by seeing the destruction” caused by the building of the highway.

Finally, students also resisted the framing of their social justice orientation as resulting from the curriculum. For example:

- I have always been trying my best to do all of the above [social justice actions] now I will keep doing it in a more educated outlook.
• I have already made a pact to do this, so my thinking has not changed.
• I always had these ideas and the project gave me a chance to show them.

Although I named and celebrated these student activists and labelled their actions as activism they did not comply with the use of this construct. They used their own language and frames to define their actions as not relating to school, less than activist and as originating outside of the curriculum. They resisted using the language and frames I had applied in the classroom and thereby they resisted the dominance of the teacher position, despite the reality that compliance with these frames and constructs would have been celebrated as success in the context of the social justice pedagogy.

**Fostering unlearning**

Kumashiro (2004) argues that developing a critical consciousness requires unlearning what we have been taught is normal. Only through unlearning our assumptions, biases and world views can we begin to partially understand the contexts and realities wherein we find ourselves. A final form of resistance identified in the research fostered unlearning. This resistance positioned the student as an agent who effectively disrupted or transformed the classroom experience. The students demonstrated resistance on two notable fronts the first occurred in the pilot research project and the final in working from within the curriculum in order to disrupt it.

In the pilot project for this research, I began by describing to the participants the critical discourse behind the social justice pedagogy. My intention was to name the hegemony in the classroom as a means to empower students. I believed that by naming the power paradigm, “we displace its centrality, we reveal its invisible position and thereby render it powerless” (Applebaum, 2004, p.59). I explained to them that I wanted to give them opportunities to have input into how and what we learned and that I felt that this had been lacking in our program. I announced that we were going to create a classroom where students had power. Ironically, the most immediate demonstration of this agency led me to an unlearning.

In response to my declaration, many students smiled in a patient and obliging way, others cheered and many looked pensive or confused. E raised his hand and asked, “So what you are saying is that we don’t have enough power in the class?” I nodded encouragingly, “I think
that kids have tons of power”, he countered. “We could whoop it up and run around the room, never listen or just decide to leave. In a way, teachers are lucky that we let them teach us”. There it was, the reality that power is not for the teacher to distribute and therefore the conceptions of empowering or rendering powerless are not within the realm of possibilities for teachers in the classroom.

E’s comment led us to class discussion of power in the classroom. The discussion focussed on certain students agreeing with E and appearing to delight in the voicing of their agency. Others reacted to E’s comment by defending my role as a teacher. They understood the comment as relevant to their personal relationship with me as opposed to the more general student teacher binary. That day, E guided me to unlearn my assumptions about power in the classroom and provided me with a living example of student agency. A year later, when the same group of students were collecting quotes to represent their school year, his quote was included in the presentation. The nature of E’s comment was in response to the ideology that was being imposed on the student body. E’s resistance was effective because he delivered his comment in a context that was founded in criticality and in a manner that was seeking conversation not opposition. This leads me to believe that his intention was to maintain positive relations with me while critically challenging my assumptions and demonstrating agency. This places his actions within the realm of resistance that challenges the teacher-student binary as opposed to oppositional behaviour, which would recenter teacher dominance. The endurance of his comment demonstrates the success of his resistance. The classroom community (teacher and students) occasionally referred to the quote throughout the year as we negotiated our relationships and curriculum. In initiating the conversation, he created a discursive space wherein unlearning was promoted, dialogue was encouraged and the teacher student binary was not recentered.

An equally notable space for resistance emerged as a curriculum initiative by anonymous students who named themselves: The Mystery Kid, The Mystery Kid II and Ever Changing Identities. Through this initiative the students successfully introduced curricula for the split grade level class that I taught. The Mystery Kid’s action was in the form of a carefully folded lined piece of paper accompanied by seeds challenging the class to plant trees to combat climate
change. The Mystery Kid II’s action was to remind the class of their commitment and infuse the tree planting challenge with humour and added seeds. That year, many curriculum hours were spent learning how to care for seedlings, understanding the impact of climate change and planning on how, when and where to plant the trees. The following year, half of the students who had worked with the Mystery Kids remained in the same classroom. The disruption and introduction of curriculum continued and was initiated by two new students who named themselves, Ever Changing Identities. In this classroom, Ever Changing Identities presented their challenges in the forms of riddles, puzzles and math problems. Their challenges were multiple and lasted many months. They initiated actions that addressed environmental issues and classroom community building. They also successfully commandeered hours of classroom learning.

The success of these initiatives resulted from their consistent delivery of challenges that were meaningful, inspiring and fun to their classmates and teacher. Their challenges were undertaken despite time constraints and curriculum requirements because they generated an energy and momentum that could not be disregarded. These students adeptly disrupted the curriculum while providing meaningful learning opportunities for their peers. Both the example of E’s teachings and the Mystery Kids and Ever Changing Identities disruption of the curriculum represent effective resistance. These students aptly utilized their power to demonstrate agency in constructing their schooling experience. Their methods exhibit a possible awareness that “overt rebelliousness may result in powerlessness now and in the future.” (Giroux, 1983, p.288). While these students may not have had a choice in the formation of the norms and conventions that formed their schooling experience, they aptly utilized them to disrupt the discourses that frame the student as oppressed and the curriculum as non negotiable.

**Silence as resistance**

Boler states that “Silence is interpreted as submission” (1999, p.12). Reflections throughout the project led me to the realization that my attention was drawn to the overt forms of resistance at the expense of what was being communicated through silence. Although I was troubled by the silence of the classroom, its meaning was not evident until multiple means of communication were enlisted. In relying on the active, overt and dominant voices I risked failing
to acknowledge or explore the structures that generate the silence (Loutzenheiser, 2005). The first reflections in my field notes describe a classroom that is silent, obedient and low energy. For example:

- They seem so different from my rowdy class; the classroom teacher says they are obedient.
- What accounts for this low energy? Is it because I have done this research project once before or that I am tired? Are they tired? Is it because we don’t know each other so there is less energy exchange... Why no flow?
- I have no energy for them today and they don’t seem into it. There is a lack of interest and participation in the discussions.
- There is energy around the inspirational quotes that I haven’t seen elsewhere.
- Their actions have less energy and so do I.
- I feel like it is too much me... they were not engaged. Were they tired today? Was I?
- I should try to speak with people more often maybe do some written reflections...

Reading of the student research log and eliciting feedback from the students in the form of oral and written check-ins following those days when I reflected on their low energy led to insight regarding the significance of their silence. Silence is inherently complex and may signal participation, resistance and a multitude of meanings. The structures of the check-ins created opportunities for those who were silent to share. Contrary to my assumption that silence and low energy signified obedience, in this context, they were a form of resistance to the curriculum. Student participants explained in their check-ins and research log that they were not interested in the criticality activities that formed the first weeks of our curriculum and wanted to have more time to work on their social justice actions. They felt limited by the amount of paperwork I was requiring from them and wanted to be allowed to plan according to their needs. The students used the check-ins and research logs to attempt to influence the curriculum and their learning experience. In responding to their feedback through altering the curriculum, I found that more students began to orally check in with me throughout our work together. Silent resistance is effective in that it signals a need to communicate in alternate or multiple forms; however
reliance on the overt and active may result in a discounting of the depth of meaning held in the silence of the student body.

The question, can social justice pedagogy create spaces for resistance? assumes that resistance may not occur without space being created for it within the curriculum. The demonstrations of student resistance: as compliance, as opposition, as non-compliance, as unlearning, as disruption and as silence represent forms that are overt, covert, reproductive and effective. A social justice pedagogy inevitably constructs the student as an agent acting to transform social injustice. Naming and constructing the activist, entering into dialogue with the student participants and seeking to trouble a fixed definition of resistance provided opportunities for unlearning. However, resistance did not only occur in those spaces created by the social justice pedagogy but were exhibited in unanticipated ways, times and places demonstrating that resistance cannot be pigeonholed but must be explored. Therefore it is not a question of creating space for resistance but in heeding the resistance, seeking the resistance and promoting effective resistance that transforms instead of reproduces the power paradigms wherein teachers and students are acting. Resistance is not only an opportunity for unlearning the social norms that reify oppressive structures in classrooms but a life skill that may foster a greater criticality and transformative activism in coming generations.

**In Conclusion: Stumbling and Faltering**

The research project and experiment of teaching in a manner consistent with social justice theory produced tensions, revealed constructs and uncovered various forms of resistance. The tensions, constructs and resistances revealed at this intersection of theory and practice were productive and inevitable. They were productive because they provided opportunities for identifying positionality within the concepts being critiqued, exploring the makings of the cognitive unconscious and entering into a dialogic relationship with students about official and hidden curricula. Additionally, they were inevitable because despite research questions or data analysis, meaning is made through constructs, resistance occurs where there are power relationships and tensions exist where theory meets practice.
As a teacher-researcher, my attempt at teaching and researching in a manner that is consistent with my epistemology was an exercise in stumbling. The stumbling incurred through teacher tensions and student resistance providing opportunities for me to better understand how to navigate the terrain of social justice with the students in my classroom. Kohli (2000, p.39) states that teachers “are not neutral or neutered dispensers of knowledge and information. We have been on the receiving end of oppression ourselves... And it shows in our teaching.” Therefore as teachers who are of this world, we have much to learn and unlearn in the ways of power and social justice. In my imaginings, this project was to be a graceful repetitive coordination and sophisticated speaking whereas the outcomes of this research demonstrate stumbling and faltering. This less graceful approach provides for a messiness that generates productive unimagined outcomes and reflective practices where critical consideration and action to change internalized oppressive practice may occur.
Chapter 5: Conclusions: Offerings from the field / Offerings to the field

The original intent of this research project was to pilot a social justice pedagogy and to seek opportunities for fostering a social justice orientation among students, instead it transformed into an undertaking that led me to question my practice as a teacher, uncover my assumptions, explore the constructs and resistance within the classroom and generate offerings to the field of education. In attempting to answer the research questions—how do students understand their role as members of local and global communities? and what pedagogical rationales and practices move students from awareness of injustice towards acting to transform the conditions that promote injustice?—new learning, questions and conclusions emerged. These new realizations were born at the intersection of theory and practice.

Seeking Answers, Finding Questions

The impetus for this research project was seeking answers to the questions that emerged from my experiences as a classroom teacher. The outcome of this research was such that instead of discovering answers, the research generated additional productive questions. The first research question studying student understandings of membership in a community revealed the unfeasibility of developing a universal definition of social responsibility that accurately reflects student conceptions of community. The lack of student interest in this question and the data drawn from the responses suggest that the richness of student understandings and experiences with regard to community cannot be captured by the Social Responsibility Performance Standards. An answer to the research question was not evident, however the data generated through the question introduced new considerations. Consequently the question, what discourses do students use to communicate community when the construct of social responsibility is absent? became pertinent and represents a possible future direction for research.

The second research question, what pedagogical rationales and practices move students from awareness of social injustice towards acting to transform the societal structures that reinforce injustice? was equally problematic. The nature of the methodology of this research project was critical action research. The second research question’s intention of producing
“pedagogical rationales and practices” that “move students” fails to reflect this research design as it does not acknowledge student agency nor the collaborative, reflective and critical foci of the research design and teacher epistemology. As a result, new questions emerged from the research and focussed on the teacher tensions, the constructs and the forms of resistance that structured the experience of working from within social justice pedagogy.

This research project demonstrates that analysis of the constructs, tensions and acts of resistance that form the classroom community reveal spaces where agency is fostered or recognized. While the tensions between theory and practice, as experienced by the teacher, were sought for their productivity, the constructs and forms of resistance identified a student agency that exists despite pedagogical rationales or practices. As teachers for social justice our responsibility is to be open to recognizing those unimagined ways that students demonstrate their resistance, agency and world views while fostering inquiry, criticality and praxis with the intention of continually promoting unlearning in all participants. However, a cautionary tale abides within this theory, a teacher cannot simply implement a social justice pedagogy without fostering a personal and student interrogation of perceived roles and positions within the classroom context. The teacher’s role is not to ‘move students towards’ a social justice orientation but to authentically recognize and teach with student participants. It is not simply a question of generating a social justice orientation among students but of valuing students as already formed, experienced and knowledgeable. Ideally, the social justice pedagogy is a site where all participants come with different formations, experiences and knowledge and collaboratively learn and unlearn from one another. In practice, teaching in a socially just manner has no predetermined endpoint, but instead it is often a continual experiment in unlearning, reframing and resistance.

Assumptions, Misguided Expectations and Quandaries
The assumptions entrenched in this research study are most evident in student participation, my expectations for resistance, my misguided intentions and my theoretical quandaries. These assumptions were uncovered throughout the research project. This uncovering provided opportunities for me to consider my teaching practice and my performance of the
research project. These assumptions move beyond theoretical and practical analysis but represent the lenses and influences that I personally brought to the research project.

Firstly, the impetus for this research project was born of my basic assumption that students are seeking opportunities to study and act for social justice and therefore the research questions are relevant and necessary. While it is true that students were provided with the option of not participating in the research aspect of the project, the curricular aspect of the project was a part the program for all students in the classroom. This is limiting to the research as not participating in the actual assignments was not an option thereby reifying the teacher student power relationship. I sought to address this issue by entering into dialogue with the students regarding the curriculum and generating opportunities for the students to transform the curriculum and their projects.

Secondly, I assumed that a ‘healthy outrage’ included active, vocal resistance to the school experience in addition to the social injustices the students encountered outside of school. This was a productive site for my unlearning. Upon analysis, it became evident that students were resisting in not only overt and covert but vocal and silent manners. It was revealed that resistance is not the result of a pedagogy, but occurs inevitably in human relations. My understanding of a ‘healthy outrage’ is now founded in conceptions of student resistance that transforms hidden or official curricula without reifying the power paradigm that positions teachers as dominant.

Finally, an additional assumption that was demonstrated in this research was in the form of my initial intention of generating a unit reflecting my understandings of social justice teaching practice that would contribute to the Vancouver School Board’s delivery of a social responsibility curriculum. My assumption was that providing a post packaged teaching unit, a unit packaged following piloting, was an ideal outcome of the research. Instead, I realize that a blueprint for practice limits opportunities for meaningful dialogue, critical consideration and transformation of curriculum with students. As Kumashiro (2004) states that the practice of anti-oppressive teaching must constantly be rethought and challenged because what is anti-oppressive
in one context can oppress in another. Vinson (2006) elaborates in his work on the anti-oppressive and oppressive possibilities in citizenship education. He encourages teachers to:

...challenge the implications of their own instruction, to envision an education that is democratic to the core, and to interrogate and uncover their own well-intentioned complicity in the conditions within which various cultural texts and practices appear, especially to the extent that oppressive conditions create oppressive cultural practices and vice-versa. (p.73)

A practice of teaching about and for social justice cannot be clearly delineated into a progression of steps that are universally applicable to all classrooms. A post packaged unit on teaching for social justice suggests a static homogeneity of learning communities and fails to acknowledge not only the oppressive possibilities of the teacher role in the curriculum but the continual nature of learning and unlearning wherein teacher and student collaborate through inquiry and criticality to interrogate the construction of meaning in the classroom and the world. It does not value the action, reflection and transformation that praxis offers, instead it suggests definite conclusions. Therefore, I have framed the outcomes of this research as suggestions for practice and a framework to draw upon that are intended to be re-imagined and disrupted.

**Offerings to the Theoretical Conversation**

In considering the tensions generated between my theoretical leanings and my position as teacher, the constructs that live within the classroom and the resistance demonstrated by the students, I realize that while teaching in a socially just way intends to disrupt hegemonic structures in the classroom it is in fact the new discourse. Such discourse is prevalent and recognized as valuable within the context of the school boards and occupies a central role in the prescribed official curriculum and in individual schools and classrooms.

If teaching for social justice is the new discourse of the social, political and economical systems that have been at the root of injustice, then the challenge lies in determining how to engage in and function within the discourse in a way that does not reinforce the status quo. I suggest that as teachers invested in a social justice pedagogy we might achieve this through seeking to apply the principles of critical discourse that promote transformation of hidden and
official curricula through inquiry, criticality and praxis. An inquiry approach places student and teacher in a democratic collaboration as priority thereby challenging the teacher student binary. Criticality as a practice, promotes awareness of positionality, critical questioning and unlearning. Praxis serves to foster transformation through action and reflection. If teachers and students strive to engage with the dynamic messiness of this experiment in critical pedagogy within the public school system, a social justice pedagogy founded in inquiry, criticality and praxis has the potential to become a site for a discourse that challenges the status quo.

Offerings to the Classroom

This research demonstrates that when teaching for social justice in a socially just manner the teacher and students must continually consider resistance, constructs and tensions. These three elements are ever present in the classroom. Considering the means through which these elements are performed, understood and reflected upon in the classroom and curriculum has the potential to lead to transformative understandings of the power dynamics and social justice issues within which and about which we teach and learn.

Resistance that reifies the dominant and is oppositional is less effective in contributing to the dialogic relationship between teacher and students than resistance that transforms. Therefore a pedagogy founded in reflecting on theses elements of resistance, tensions and constructs will foster a classroom experience wherein students and teachers critically consider their power relationship as well as the social justice issues of the local and global communities. Heeding and seeking to foster resistance in the classroom means practicing transformative critical communication and actions that do not reinforce the teacher student binary. The challenge lies in moving beyond the binaries while also supporting an educational space that is productive for all students.

Locating and reframing those deeply held frames that construct the learning experience is a process that is never complete. Unlearning does not occur in a one time final flash, but is an ongoing process wherein ideally our frames are rethought, rediscovered, reconsidered and always in the process of becoming. Equally unlearning does not occur in a specific space but throughout the language, resources, stakeholders and places that are the official and hidden
curriculum in addition to the lived experiences of the students and teachers. The implications of this approach for the teacher and students relationship to the official curriculum are considerable. As Kohli states “a large body of research supports the position that schooling is needed to reproduce the values and beliefs of the dominant culture” (2000, p.29) therefore it follows that as social constructs are housed within the values and beliefs of the dominant culture then this unlearning includes a critical consideration of the official curriculum of schools. A challenging of social constructs in schools requires a fostering of activism and critical dialogue among and between teachers and students. This entails that stakeholders in education including teachers, students, administrators and curriculum workers take greater risks in continually challenging and transforming the official curriculum and the manner in which it shapes world views and meaning making (Vinson & Ross, 2001; Kohli, 2000).

Analysis of the tensions that become apparent through reflection represents an opportunity for teacher unlearning. The tensions born of those negotiations between practice and theory that occur daily in the social justice classroom within the parameter of the prescribed curriculum are hopeful and productive. They provide a site where teachers might employ social justice as the vehicle for addressing the prescribed curriculum. I am arguing that social justice is not an addition to curriculum but rather a foundation from which curriculum is read and taught. They are hopeful because they demonstrate a desire to walk the talk and they are productive as they generate opportunities for attempting to teach in accordance with the principles of social justice.

**Offerings from Practice: All Things Considered**

My agenda of teaching a social justice pedagogy resulted in my replacing the discourse of the teacher-student binary with a discourse that places a social justice orientation and activism as the priority. I believe that the intention of leading students towards seeking to transform the structures that foster injustice remains relevant and valuable to today’s classroom. In order to have a healthy democracy and a social justice classroom we require participants who question, challenge and transform injustice as well the systems that sustain injustice.
This project has underscored for me the importance of employing a social justice pedagogy. Choosing to not teach social justice issues is not possible. The question is not whether schools should address issues of oppression “Schools are always and already addressing oppression, often by reinforcing it or at least allowing it to go on unchallenged, and often without realizing that they are doing so” (Kumashiro, p. xxiv, 2004). Vinson (2006) argues that while oppression exists in the classroom, schools and society, citizenship education has the potential to challenge or disrupt as well as maintain and strengthen oppression. According to Vinson, citizenship education that oppresses does so through failing to engage with the concepts of power, culture and the contexts within which students live. In part, it is the unmeaningful and inauthentic understandings of the realities of society that are promoted that contribute to oppression in schools and society (Vinson, 2006). Issues of social justice live in schools consequently teaching about them is not a choice educators can make but a requirement for a just world. Therefore a classroom practice that centers on social justice is essential and unavoidable; the priority is striving to render it anti-oppressive.

This research demonstrated the embedded nature of constructs in meaning making, the inevitability of resistance to the power paradigm in the classroom and the productivity of teacher tensions. Additionally, it created a site for the practice of a social justice pedagogy founded in inquiry, criticality and praxis. Exploration and analysis of the constructs, resistance and teacher tensions in reifying the power paradigm in the classroom provide possibilities for working to trouble the hegemonic structure of the classroom. I suggest that, although teaching for social justice is the new discourse in education, it is a foundation for a hopeful and productive dialogue. In proposing a social justice pedagogy, I am suggesting an approach to teaching, suggestions for starting points in teaching and a theoretical framework as opposed to a prescribed predetermined sequence of lesson plans composing a unit of study. The distinction being that within the social justice pedagogy the expectation of collaboration with students through an inquiry approach, disruption through criticality and transformation through praxis fosters a rethinking, reimagining and unlearning of social issues, teaching and learning practices.
Future Directions for Research

Future directions for research include interrogating the current roles of teachers and students in the public conversation on education and exploring how teachers for and of social justice avoid the pitfall of being lulled into compliance by those unjust systems and discourses within which we are immersed. Both directions draw on the tensions and constructs that emerged from this research.

Entering into dialogue with the stakeholders in education regarding teacher and student roles in the public conversation on education is a site where the construct of student and teacher may be critically analyzed. If we are to understand the student as having voice, agency and as a knower then they must be included in the public dialogue regarding education. The inclusion of students in this conversation would generate a deeper discernment of the frames and meaning-making that occurs within the school experience. In addition it would generate an opportunity for transforming those constructs that limit the possibilities of a democratic social justice pedagogy.

A current example representing these questions includes a recent debate around the Foundation Skills Assessment (FSA). The FSA is a standardized test delivered to Grade 4 and Grade 7 students in British Columbia. At the time of this writing, parents are allowed to opt their child out of the test. The British Columbia Teacher’s Federation (BCTF) has composed a standard letter that teachers can elect to send to parents alerting them to the fact that they may opt out and argue against the test. Last spring, Erin Airton, a parent and journalist, published an article entitled “Don’t use the Kids”. She states:

We do not want them [her kids] to be caught up in the middle of a political fight between the union and the government, it is just not appropriate to insert children into policy discussion of this nature. (Report on Education, 2007)

While Airton expresses her support of the FSA, she argues that her main complaint is that “it is just not appropriate to insert children into a policy discussion of this nature”. She states that the BCTF is using a “bullying tactic” in placing students in the center of this debate. Airton’s piece ignores the reality that the student is unquestionably at the center of the issue. In addition it
contributes the following questions to the conversation addressing teacher and student roles within the curriculum:

- What roles do teachers occupy and further what roles might teachers occupy in the public conversation on education?
- What are the consequences of student exclusion from the public conversations on education?

What roles do teachers occupy and further what roles might teachers occupy in the public conversation on education?

Despite this conversation addressing teacher and student roles within the official and hidden curricula that form the learning experience, as teachers we are employed to deliver a curriculum. Moreover, we are the public and therefore must enter into the public dialogue with the other stakeholders in education. Demonstrating neutrality through not entering into the dialogue can only suggest that the current state of education is without flaws, which represents an absence of criticality and hope. In suggesting that the education requires no further transformation, the social injustices in schools that represent the issues of the larger society are ignored. This stance limits the potential for future generations to develop the criticality required to re-imagine the social, political and economic systems that promote injustice. The generation of spaces within the curriculum wherein transformation may occur requires recognizing students as knowers who may provide rich insight into the workings of the schools and society as opposed to attempting to not include them in the debates around educational policy.

What are the consequences of student exclusion from the public conversation on education?

The suggestion that students should not be ‘inserted into policy discussion’ ignores the reality that policy discussions in education purportedly have students at their heart. Supposing that this is the case, inserting students into the discussion is not an option but a given. How student voice is included or excluded from the discussion demonstrates how students are framed by those bodies who determine policy. Choosing to frame students as with voice and agency helps to generate educational experiences wherein students might practice challenging injustice.
Rejecting notions of student voice and agency limits the potential for students to transform the school experience.

In order to explore questions of teacher and student roles in the public conversation on education approaches might include a community based action research or an analysis of public discourse. Undertaking a community based action research project that sought to form a group of parents, teachers, students and administrators interested in discussing contemporary issues in education may produce opportunities for exploring these roles. Analysis of the public discourse demonstrated in media on teacher and student roles in conversation on educational issues may also generate data that deepens current understandings.

A second future direction for research is exploring how teachers for and of social justice avoid the pitfall of being lulled into compliance by those undemocratic and therefore socially unjust systems and discourses within which we are immersed. This research would be founded on the presupposition that teaching for social justice positions teachers in a contradictory space wherein we are seeking to build a learning community through critically engaging with social justice issues in a transformative, reflective and meaningful way, while concurrently representing and being immersed in one of the systems to be challenged. In my experience, teaching for social justice in a socially just manner requires not only a practice of teaching grounded in theory and an awareness of the normative discourse, but an investigation of and critical reflection on those social constructions of teacher and student that are deeply embedded in the collective cognitive unconscious of the classroom. Not only does teaching for social justice entail “...rethinking and reforming what and how we teach in ways that are neither easy nor predictable” (Ross, 2000, p.10) but also requires taking a dose of the medicine of social justice pedagogy. I suggest medicine in the form of reframing the conception of teacher practice and learning to be understood as “always in the position of beginning again” (Foucault in Lather 1991, p.47). This requires generating spaces where critical friends consistently challenge us to identify and deconstruct those lenses through which we make meaning of the classroom experience with the end goal of fostering a more democratic and socially just pedagogy. I posit that this medicine will challenge educators to identify and mitigate the influence that the normative discourse has on pedagogical practice, in short help in avoiding the pitfalls of being
lulled into compliance with those modernist frames wherein which we are immersed (Dahlberg et al., 1999).

In my research and as a teacher working from a social justice philosophy, I have been struck by two realities that are barriers to this work. Firstly, it has become apparent social justice pedagogues are challenged by the interface of the nature of their work and their formation by the normative discourse. Secondly, schools are relatively undemocratic for both teachers and students and represent a force of socialization that seeks to reinforce normative discourse (Kohli, 2000; Ross 2000; Bigelow & Peterson 2002). As Vinson (2006) asserts that not only are schools a site for exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence as “a mirror for the oppressive contingencies of society” (p.56) but are also oppressive in the realm of curriculum construction. He states that examples of powerlessness in schools include students’ limited influence over curriculum, instruction and assessment and teachers’ deprofessionalization which limit the possibilities of teacher reflection on, participation in and critique of pedagogical decision making. My research and practice has been drawn from and structured through social justice theory, however, my habitual performance as a teacher has demonstrated social constructs of teacher and student that are counter productive to the work of social justice (Lakoff, 2004). The intersection between the theory of social justice pedagogy and the performance of the teacher generates productive tensions that uncover these barriers and realities that the system within which we work has oppressive as well as anti-oppressive possibilities (Vinson, 2006). A direction for this research might be forming a participatory action research cohort with teachers who are working from a social justice orientation. This cohort may provide a site for developing understandings of the struggle with the tensions born of teaching for social justice from within the parameters of the public school system.

In Conclusion

This research has led me to posit that perhaps it is not the flap of the butterfly wings that form the tornado. I have unlearned the theory that local actions are the best way to introduce changes into larger structures of power instead I suggest that there is no best way. As a student in my class suggests “Do what you think is right, even if it’s not right”. The priority being to participate in the project of seeking to understand and promote social justice with the expectation
that the project is endless. I do not cite this quote as a means to promote a relativistic approach to social justice that suggests that there is no wrong way to act. I interpret this quote instead, as focussing on the “doing” as opposed to occupying a place of apathy, disinterest and disengagement. In a place of dialogic action and reflection there are yet to be imagined possibilities for a social justice pedagogy. In so doing perhaps we might uncover other purposes for butterfly wings, causes for tornadoes or challenge the tornado itself.

Reflection on and analysis of constructs, tensions and resistance in seeking an intersection of critical discourse, instructional design and teaching practice has been productive. It has informed my practice and deepened my understanding of the complexities of social justice pedagogy. However, the most stunning and rich outcome of this research remains the students’ work. This research project emerged from the questions and comments of the students with whom I continue to work. The issues the students researched and acted upon were complex and meaningful. The student social justice initiatives that emerged from the pilot and research project have created connections with the classroom, school and neighbourhood communities, fostered a strong sense of accomplishment among the students and brought to light an enduring belief in the power of acting for change. The contagiousness of their energy, their absolute acceptance of a social justice orientation as logical and the depth of their continued criticality and compassion are difficult to accurately represent in writing and so I leave with a collection of quotes from the students’ final reflections that hint at the power of their energy, logic, criticality and compassion.

- My earliest memory is of this problem.
- I thought, yes, finally we can do something in the world about racism.
- Pollution can kill you, having a bake sale is easy and donating money to a cause isn’t the only think you can do to help.
- There are a lot of problems that we can change; we can plan anything if we put our minds to it.
- You cannot do what you want when you are working alone.
- It does not matter how old you are, anyone can change the world!
- I am a global citizen, like those that are suffering; we are connected because we live in the same world, even if we don’t know each other.
- Life is short, fix the problem, do what you can... HELP!
References


Appendices

Appendix A

Secret Identity: ____________

Initial Questionnaire 2007

Instructions: Please highlight the circle that best describes you as a member of your community.

Please remember this is not a test, that your identity is kept secret and that your honesty is much appreciated.
Contributing to the Classroom and School Community
How do you contribute in class and in school?

I'm always kind and friendly and will help others if asked.
I contribute and work cooperatively most of the time.

I'm kind, friendly and include others.
I am a good group leader who always contributes to the classroom and school.

Other comments you would like to include describing how you contribute to the classroom or school or any community....

I'll work with others if an adult asks me to.
I need help to contribute to the class and to work cooperatively.

I am rude to others.
I don't work well with others.
I am logical and do not take sides.
I can break down a problem into smaller parts, and discuss possible outcomes and solutions.

I am calm. I can see the other person's point of view.
I can see the cause of the problem and have suggestions of how to solve it before it becomes a bigger problem.

I am often rude and sometimes hit people or throw things when I have a problem.
I have a hard time seeing the problem from the other person's view.

Solving Problems in Peaceful Ways
When you are faced with a conflict between you and another person, how do you solve it?

Other comments you would like to include describing how you solve problems...

I need help seeing how other people feel.
I can become frustrated and blame others.
I often get mixed up when I try to solve a problem.
I get along with others and I try to help when someone is treated unfairly.

I try not to judge others.

I get along with others but generally I mind my own business.

I don't get involved when someone is treated unfairly.

I get along with others and take action to help when someone is treated unfairly.

I try to get people to help me to stick up for others and to understand why the person being unfair needs help too.

Getting Along and Defending Others

When you meet or work with people who are different from you, how do you get along?

Other comments you would like to include describing how you get along with others....

I try to avoid people who are different from me because I don't usually get along with them.
Making the World a Better Place
How do you see your role in making the world a better place?

I believe that to make the world a better place, you must be honest, responsible and follow the school rules and community laws.

I have some ideas about what would make the world better, but don't know what to do about it.

For example - I recycle at school.

I don't feel that it is my responsibility right now to make the world a better place.

Other comments you would like to include about how you see your roles in making the world a better place....

I believe to make the world a better place; you must actively participate in and show leadership in school and in the community.

I have a lot of ideas about what would make the world better and I make some of them happen.

I believe that to make the world a better place you must find out what has gone wrong and act towards changing causes of the problems.

I am an active participant at school and help to organize activities that help to make the world a better place.
Comment: Please respond to the following questions:

1. Overall how would you rate your social responsibility this school year 2006-7?
Social responsibility is defined by the categories on the previous pages:
   - Contributing to the Classroom and School Community
   - Solving Problems
   - Getting Along and Defending Others
   - Making the World a Better Place

☐ EXCELLENT - I have made a huge effort to always be socially responsible.
☐ VERY GOOD - I try to be socially responsible all of the time.
☐ GOOD - I have been socially responsible part of the time.
☐ STILL WORKING ON IT - What can I say? I've been working on other things.

2. Please list anything you have done this school year that demonstrates your social responsibility....don't forget everything counts....

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3. Overall how would you have rated yourself last school year 2005-6?

Social responsibility is defined by the categories on the previous pages:

- Contributing to the Classroom and School Community
- Solving Problems
- Getting Along and Defending Others
- Making the World a Better Place

☐ EXCELLENT - I have made a huge effort to always be socially responsible.
☐ VERY GOOD - I try to be socially responsible all of the time.
☐ GOOD - I have been socially responsible part of the time.
☐ STILL WORKING ON IT - What can I say? I've been working on other things.

4. Is there any information or comments regarding your experience with social responsibility that you would like to add to this evaluation?

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Appendix B

Secret Identity: ____________

Questionnaire 2007: Final Meeting

SHAUGNESSY

Please remember this is not a test, that your identity is kept secret and that your honesty is much appreciated.

Please respond to the following questions:

1. Overall how would you rate your social responsibility this school year 2006-7?

Social responsibility is defined by the categories on the previous pages:

- Contributing to the Classroom and School Community
- Solving Problems
- Getting Along and Defending Others
- Making the World a Better Place

☐ EXCELLENT - I have made a huge effort to always be socially responsible.
☐ VERY GOOD - I try to be socially responsible all of the time.
☐ GOOD - I have been socially responsible part of the time.
☐ STILL WORKING ON IT - What can I say? I've been working on other things.

2. Please list anything you have done this school year that demonstrates your social responsibility.

________________________________________________________________________
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3. a) Do you feel that your ideas and actions around Social Responsibility have changed during the Butterfly Effect Project? Social Responsibility refers to
   
   o Contributing to the Classroom and School Community
   o Solving Problems
   o Getting Along and Defending Others
   o Making the World a Better Place

e) If your answer is no, please explain how they have stayed the same.

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5. Do you think that it is the job of schools to have projects that focus on social justice actions? Why or Why not?

6. What do you think a teacher's role should be in a social justice project? How can they help? How might they hinder?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW TEACHERS' COULD HELP STUDENTS</th>
<th>HOW TEACHERS HINDER STUDENTS</th>
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7. Is there any information or comments regarding your experience with social responsibility that you would like to add to this evaluation?
Appendix C

CHECK IN -
This is just a check in to try and answer some questions I have....Remember there are no right answers and this is not for marks so feel free to be brutally honest 😊

1. How are you feeling about your project?

2. What work have you done outside of the class on this project? If anything...😊

3. Do you feel like you know what the root causes of the issue you have chosen to act on are? If yes, what are they?

4. Do you feel that your actions will address the root causes of this issue?

5. Would you be working on this if it wasn't a school project?
6. Do you think it is the job of schools to have projects like this one? Why or why not?

7. What could I do or what could I have done to make this project easier or more successful?

If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn’t thinking
~ George S. Patton
Appendix D

HOME WORK ~ Reflection for Monday, April 23rd

THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT PROJECT
Our goal is to determine a social justice issue that you find meaningful, to research the issue, to imagine how to transform the injustice and to act to transform the injustice.

Please write a response to the following questions....Remember there is no right answer, it's all just perspective 😊

- What do you think of/ How do you feel about this project that focuses on social justice?
- Do you have any concerns about the project?
- Do you have any suggestions about how you would like it to be?
- Do you think your multiple identities will affect how to do the project?
Appendix E

Reflection

How does who you are and your life relate to this problem?

How are you, your community and the world affected by this problem?

Why did you choose this problem?

What are some assumptions you bring to this problem study?

A POSITION STATEMENT
Please write a reflection that answers the questions above.
Appendix F

Research Ethics Certificate of Approval: University of British Columbia
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</th>
<th>INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT:</th>
<th>UBC BREB NUMBER:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wayne Ross</td>
<td>UBC/Education/Curriculum Studies</td>
<td>H07-00941</td>
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INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:

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Other locations where the research will be conducted:

Vancouver School Board Trafalgar Elementary School

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):

N/A

SPONSORING AGENCIES:

N/A

PROJECT TITLE:

Reflections on the Butterfly Effect: Exploring Social Justice Orientations among Intermediate Elementary Students

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: July 20, 2008

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL: DATE APPROVED:

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<th>DATE APPROVED:</th>
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<tr>
<td>July 20, 2007</td>
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The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
The University of British Columbia  
Office of Research Services  
**Behavioural Research Ethics Board**  
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK**

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<td>Wayne Ross</td>
<td>UBC/Education/Curriculum Studies</td>
<td>H07-00185</td>
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**INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:**

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**Other locations where the research will be conducted:**

Shaughnessy Elementary School

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<th>SPONSORING AGENCIES:</th>
<th>PROJECT TITLE:</th>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>In search of the Butterfly Effect: Exploring Social Justice Orientations among Intermediate Elementary Students</td>
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**CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE:** April 11, 2008

**DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:**

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<td>April 11, 2007</td>
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</table>
The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:

Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
Appendix G

Research Ethics Letter of Approval: Vancouver School Board
February 22, 2007

Ashley House
Intermediate French Immersion Teacher
c/o Trafalgar Elementary

Dear Ashley,

Thank you for your research proposal on “In Search of the Butterfly Effect: Exploring Social Justice Orientations among Intermediate Elementary Students”. On behalf of the VSB Research Committee, please accept this letter as approval for you to complete your research in Vancouver schools. You have permission to contact teachers, parents and students in Vancouver schools. We request that you make your initial contact with the principal of the school to inform them of your study. Please note that teachers and administrators are very busy with many obligations and that schools have the right of refusal to participate in any research studies. Also, the Vancouver School District does not find subjects for researchers. The VSB Research Committee would be very interested in learning of your results and its implications for students. When your research is completed please send us an abstract of the results.

Thank you for focusing your work within the Vancouver School District. I wish you the best of luck as you proceed with your inquiry.

Sincerely,

Dr. Valerie Overgaard, Associate Superintendent
Learning Services