Learning to Teach for Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Initial Teacher Education in Ontario, Canada

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education

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Abstract

Drawing on critical race theory, culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, and ecological systems theory, this mixed methods case study explored the integration of equity, diversity, and social justice across one initial teacher education program in Ontario, Canada. Survey data (n=272) provided insight into prospective teachers’ endorsement of social-justice-related beliefs at program entry and exit. Demographic data were collected to obtain a current snapshot of initial teacher education representation rates, addressing a dearth of such data in the Ontario context. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teacher candidates (n=15) and key stakeholders (n=4) to gain an understanding of how equity was conceptualized and operationalized (or not) within the program and how structures, policies, and practices enabled or constrained teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about teaching for transformation.

Findings revealed significant underrepresentation of Ontario’s broader racial, cultural, linguistic, and gender diversity, indicating a predominantly white, Canadian-born, cisgender, monolingual preservice cohort that stands in contrast to increasingly heterogeneous K-12 classrooms across the province. Results from the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs scale (Ludlow et al., 2008) showed a stronger endorsement of social-justice-related beliefs by exiting teacher candidates than their entering counterparts, suggesting that impacting prospective teachers’ beliefs related to teaching for social justice can and should be a legitimate goal and targeted outcome of initial teacher education. Finally, participants reported varying experiences and levels of preparedness to orchestrate equity-centered practice. Program fragmentation, theory to practice gaps, a lack of purposeful practicum placement, and chronic underrepresentation emerged as significant constraints to the integration of a coherent and comprehensive vision for equity and diversity. Positive relationships, including those forged with peers and in-service teacher role models, emerged as enablers, as did prospective teachers’ individual agency and openness to new ways of thinking and doing.
Given the gaps in knowledge with regards to how emerging anti-racism and pro-diversity policy priorities are being implemented ‘on the ground’, teacher educators, administrators, and policymakers aiming to actualize their goals in concrete ways within initial teacher education programs can draw on this research for insight—to build on successes and find innovative and equity-focused ways to overcome persistent challenges.

Keywords

Initial teacher education, preservice teacher education, teacher preparation, equity, social justice, diversity, antiracism, culturally sustaining pedagogy, critical race theory, underrepresentation
Summary for Lay Audience

A research study examined issues of equity and diversity in one initial teacher education program in Ontario, Canada. A total of 272 teacher candidates were surveyed on their backgrounds to ascertain representation of various groups in the cohort (e.g., age, gender, racial/ethnic background, language, etc.) and on their social-justice-related beliefs using a quantitative scale called the Learning to Teach for Social Justice – Beliefs scale (Ludlow et al., 2008). Additionally, 15 teacher candidates and four key stakeholders (e.g., program administrators, coordinators) were interviewed.

Findings revealed significant underrepresentation of Ontario’s broader racial, cultural, linguistic, and gender diversity, indicating a predominantly white, Canadian-born, cisgender, monolingual preservice cohort that stands in contrast to increasingly heterogeneous K-12 classrooms across the province. Results from the Learning to Teach for Social Justice–Beliefs scale (Ludlow et al., 2008) showed a stronger endorsement of social-justice-related beliefs by exiting teacher candidates than their entering counterparts, suggesting that impacting prospective teachers’ beliefs related to teaching for social justice can and should be a legitimate goal and targeted outcome of initial teacher education. Finally, participants reported varying experiences and levels of preparedness to center equity in their teaching. This study highlights the need to establish a shared and cohesive vision for equity across teacher preparation, adopt innovative approaches to diversify cohorts, and work to close theory to practice gaps that arise from practicum and coursework disconnections.

Given the gaps in knowledge with regards to how emerging anti-racism and pro-diversity policy priorities are being implemented ‘on the ground’, teacher educators, administrators, and policymakers aiming to actualize their goals in concrete ways within initial teacher education programs can draw on this research for insight—to build on successes and find innovative and equity-focused ways to overcome persistent challenges.
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This work is dedicated, wholeheartedly, to Jack, Liv, and Bronwyn. Thank you for sustaining me with love and laughter. You teach me every single day.
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Chapter 1

1 Introduction

There is no doubt that events in recent years (e.g., the murder of George Floyd in the United States, the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on marginalized communities, the discovery of unmarked graves at former Canadian residential schools) have evolved the discourse about systemic inequity and structural racism in Canada and around the world. Schools and key stakeholders in education have been compelled to re-evaluate how they serve marginalized students and communities. Anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches to teaching and learning have begun to shift from the margins of professional development and teacher preparation to their center.

The impact of racism and societal power relations on the educational experiences of marginalized students in Canada is evident, both historically (e.g., the experiences of Indigenous children in Canadian residential schools) and currently (Cummins et al., 2014). Recent statistics show that racialized and Indigenous students are disproportionally suspended from school, overrepresented in special education programs and lower academic streams, have higher dropout rates, and are less likely to enroll in tertiary education when compared to their white counterparts (Deller et al., 2019; James & Turner, 2017; Parekh & Brown, 2019). Refugees and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds also experience barriers to success in Canadian schools (Cummins, 2021; McAndrew, 2009; Taylor et al., 2022).
All of Ontario’s initial teacher education (ITE)\(^1\) programs have articulated commitments to equity, diversity, and social justice through various mission statements and policy initiatives; however, we know little about their efforts ‘on the ground’. While these programs promise to advance the preparation of teachers to work with students from diverse backgrounds, little is known about how equity and social justice are conceptualized in the context of teacher education, how individual programs incorporate this vision, and how it influences teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn. Additionally, there is a dearth of data on the composition of ITE cohorts in Ontario. The limited data we have indicate that, despite initiatives aimed at increasing diversity in teacher candidate pools, homogeneity persists—in contrast with rapidly increasing racial, cultural, and linguistic heterogeneity in schools (Holden & Kitchen, 2018; Turner, 2014). What this means is that racialized and otherwise marginalized students rarely have teachers that look like them or share their experiences. Therefore, not only must ITE programs support the development of teacher candidates in being effective educators of highly diverse students, but also take action to diversify their cohorts. Although enduring change will need to involve multiple levels of the educational system, teacher preparation programs have a unique opportunity to both impact the diversity of the teaching force and to shape future teachers for equity-centered practice.

This research addresses the aforementioned gaps by way of an in-depth, mixed methods case study of one ITE program in Ontario. The aim is to contribute to an emerging body of research on how local (experiences within ITE) and contextual (broader institutional and societal forces) influence the developing beliefs and perspectives of preservice teachers in

\(^1\) The term “initial teacher education (ITE)” is used most frequently in this thesis due to it being most globally recognized; however, “preservice” is most common in Ontario and is used interchangeably throughout.
relation to teaching for equity and social justice in the Canadian context. The following three research questions provide the central frame for this study:

(1) What are the current representation rates of racialized, Indigenous, gender diverse, immigrant, and linguistically diverse groups at the research site and how does this compare to other publicly available data on initial teacher education representation rates and Ontario’s broader diversity?

(2) What are preservice teachers’ beliefs and understandings of teaching for equity and social justice?

(3) What policies and practices enable or constrain teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about teaching for equity, diversity, and social justice? How?

In this introductory chapter, I describe the research contexts for my study (i.e., demographic and educational contexts), my own positionality, and the theoretical underpinnings that frame this study.

1.1 A Note on Terms and Scope of this Study

Before proceeding, I want to acknowledge a frequent oversight with regards to the term “diversity/diverse” which is used throughout this thesis but is inherently problematic. I chose to use this term for my study because it is still the most recognizable and prevalent term circulated in the field of education, both in research and practice, to describe students who diverge from the dominant (i.e., white, monolingual English, able-bodied, cis-hetero, middle class) group. Because this research involved those in the field of education (e.g., teacher candidates and teacher educators), for the sake of clarity and expediency, I used this term in my research design, interview and survey protocol and, now, dissemination of results. However, as Entigar (2017) points out, the term ‘diverse’
“subsumes varied non-dominant cultural ways of being under one generic term” thereby homogenizing individuals’ “truly fluid, recursive identity” and “the iterative existential dynamism of their cultural lived experiences” (p. 348). Individuals’ unique and evolving identities and cultural ways of knowing, relating, being, and becoming are abstracted and even invisible-ized by terms like ‘diverse’ that arise from a monoculturalist ideological tradition (Entigar, 2017). Additionally, white/able-bodied/cis-hetero/middle class attributes are not included as part of the ‘diversity’ but rather constitute the unspoken norm by which others are judged divergent from (i.e., the dominant group is the norm by which ‘others’ are classified). I felt it was important to problematize the term ‘diverse’ and acknowledge how it contributes to perpetuating a normalized, un-examined Standard that pervades education and props up the claim to meritocracy—all the more pervasive and powerful for going unrecognized (Olssen, 2006). It is my hope that terms like ‘diversity’ are more openly problematized and challenged in both research and practice and new terms that reflect a transformation and liberation in schooling that is yet to materialize are adopted.

Additionally, it is important to note from the outset that my study focuses primarily on social justice and equity related to students from diverse racial/ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (and peripherally socioeconomic status) rather than those marginalized due to gender, sexual orientation, or (dis)ability. This is because of my specialization in applied linguistics, my background as a teacher of multilingual learners (MLs; aka English language learners or ESL students), as well as the need to narrow the focus of the project to make it manageable within the time constraints of my PhD.
program. I do recognize that teaching and learning for social justice extends beyond racial, cultural, and linguistic considerations.

1.2 Situating the Research

The following section situates my study within equity in education in Canada, the history of ITE in Ontario, underrepresentation in ITE and Ontario schools, ITE admissions and access, goals of ITE for social justice, Ontario’s demographic landscape, including racialized, immigrant-background, and MLs in schools, and the role of societal power relations in Canadian schooling. I then describe my own positionality in relation to the research and end with a discussion of my theoretical framework.

1.2.1 Research Context: Educational Equity in Ontario, Canada

There is no national education system or federal department of education in Canada. Education is presided over by each of the ten provincial and three territorial governments. All resident children of school age have access to free, publicly funded education in Canada in either English- or French-language schools. The federal government is, however, responsible for funding First Nations students who attend on-reserve, band-operated schools—approximately 60% attend these schools (AANDC, 2015). This responsibility was officially recognized in 1956 as part of the duty to uphold the Constitution and signed treaties dating back to the 18th century (CFS/FCEE, 2017). No funding is provided directly to the nine Indigenous post-secondary institutions in Ontario, which rely on partnerships with colleges and universities to grant diplomas or degrees. Funding programs for eligible First Nations and Inuit students are provided through grants from the federal office of Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAC).

In contrast to the United States, which is typically associated with the metaphor of a “melting pot”—implying assimilation, Canada’s most oft-used metaphor referring to its
diversity is the “cultural mosaic”—implying integration into Canadian society while sustaining culture, traditions, beliefs, and identities. Such an approach is laid out in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1971) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1988). However, despite taking pride in its multiculturalism and its status as both high performing and equitable in terms of educational outcomes (OECD, 2015), the history of educational equity in Canada is a fraught one. The legacy of residential schools and the impact of colonialism on systems of education, from policy to practice, is ongoing. Neeganagwedgin (2012) points out that Indigenous peoples had highly developed education systems prior to European settler dominations, and since then “education has been a major vehicle through which the implementation and maintenance of colonialism has been pursued” (p. 14). From the legacy of residential schooling intent on the erasure of Indigenous cultural identities and languages to current Eurocentrism within educational structures and curricula that excludes and devalues Indigenous knowledges, Hampton’s (1995) assertion remains true today:

The contemporary North American school is a political, social and cultural institution that embodies and transmits the values, knowledge and behaviours of white culture. The structure…is hostile to Native cultures in ways that seem unavoidable to white educators, [with] age-segregated classrooms, Natives as janitors and teacher aids, role authority rather than kin and personal authority, learning by telling and questioning instead of observation and example, clock time instead of observation. All these and more are structural features that undermine the Native child’s culture. (p. 37)

In addition to undermining cultural ways of learning, Haque (2012) speaks specifically to the role of government in Indigenous language loss, asserting that although Canada is frequently lauded for its multiculturalism and inclusivity, its language policies remain
rooted in a national identity binary—bilingual, bicultural, binational—that relies on the marginalization of minoritized groups and the ongoing erasure of Indigenous languages and culture. Significantly, in contrast to the robust set of rights and protections for Canada’s two official (colonial) languages, English and French, Indigenous languages hold no official status in Canada, nor are they protected at the federal level. Moreover, children in Ontario, the site of this study and Canada’s most diverse province, are restricted to either English or French as the language of instruction at public school. If one of the over 4.3 million Ontarians with a mother tongue other than English or French want their child to receive instruction in that language, they must do so outside of official school hours (Ontario Education Act, s.298; Statistics Canada, 2022d).

Equity and anti-racism policies in Ontario education, in tandem with broader efforts initiated by the federal government (i.e., a three-year plan aimed at increasing access to and participation in Canada’s economic, cultural, social, and political domains in 2019; Government of Canada, 2019) and its own provincial government (i.e., the legislation of the Anti-Racism Act in 2017; Government of Ontario, 2017), have become more widespread in recent years. Building on the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME)’s 2009 strategy, outlined in Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the Education Equity Action Plan was announced in 2017 and was purported to serve as a road map for the province’s efforts to “identify and eliminate discriminatory practices, systemic barriers and bias from schools and classrooms” (Government of Ontario, 2022, para. 1). The three-year action plan outlines four key initiatives aimed at enhancing (1) school and classroom practices; (2) leadership, governance, and human resources practices; (3) data collection, integration, and reporting; and (4) organizational culture change. The plan’s objectives are to increase diversity in leadership and educator pools, so that “students see themselves reflected in their learning environment” and apply an “equity, inclusion and human rights perspective
to internal organizational structures—including the Ministry of Education itself” (Government of Ontario, 2022, para. 3).

It is important to note that there is virtually no mention of the role of language or linguistic background in the provision of educational equity in this document. It delineates French language minorities in its list of certain student populations that may be “unintentionally disadvantaged [by]…existing policies, programs and practices” (p. 13); however, it mentions neither language minority students in general or any specific language minority group other than French language minorities. This lack of attention paid to language and its role in providing just and equitable educational opportunities (e.g., by affirming multilingual and multiliterate identities or by validating home language as a vital resource for learning) is not aberrant in Ontario education policy (for more on this, see pp. 33-39) or, as study findings later suggest, in teacher preparation (see discussion of study results on pp. 164-169).

In addition to the aforementioned objectives, the Equity Action Plan sets out objectives to improve data collection (making it mandatory for school boards to collect identity-based data) and implement specific school and classroom practices to strengthen inclusive and culturally responsive and relevant teaching, curriculum, assessment, and resources. It also endeavours to better support student pathway choices, address suspension, expulsion, and exclusion rates, and increase parent engagement. Various forms of data have begun to be collected at the school board level in Ontario, which are then supposed to be analyzed by the Ministry and examined for links. Although many individual school boards in Ontario had collected and published identity-based data at the time of this writing, the OME had
not yet published any documents summarizing or connecting those data. Moreover, a recent report from People for Education (PFE; 2023) reveals significant gaps and inconsistencies in the execution of anti-racism policies across Canada, including in the objectives set out by Ontario’s Equity Action Plan (OME, 2017) and the subsequent Board Improvement and Equity Plan (OME, 2021), designed to be a planning tool to aid school boards in achieving equity goals.

By September of 2022, all Ontario school boards were expected to be in the process of collecting voluntary student demographic data. PFE (2023) scanned the websites of all 72 of Ontario’s school boards to determine whether schools had conducted a student census, staff census, and parent survey. They also looked for the presence of an anti-racism strategy or equity policies that included reference to anti-racism. Results showed that 74% of school board websites discussed racism in their equity and inclusion policies, 40% of schools included an anti-racism statement on their website, and 28% had an online anti-racism strategy (PFE, 2023). It is pertinent to note here that, although it is important for schools to provide written attestations of their vision and goals for equity and anti-racism, the effectiveness of such commitments is contingent upon operationalizing these intentions in concrete ways (Ahmed, 2006; Aveling, 2007). The emergence of anti-racism as a policy priority does not in and of itself constitute progress. Inclusion of racism in equity policy and/or the existence of an anti-racism statement does not equate to good performance with regards to race equality. Such conflation can be harmful and work to conceal the inequity that such statements are designed to reveal – e.g., by being taken as evidence that inequity has been overcome just by virtue of

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2 The Progressive Conservatives’ return to a majority government in Ontario in 2018 may partially account for this lack of follow-up.
committing to it (Ahmed, 2006). However, naming injustice is an important part of anti-racism work. Creating policies and action plans turns race equality into “a positive duty; something that organizations must do” (Ahmed, 2006, p. 108). It is crucial, however, to follow-up these written attestations with concrete implementation; to critically examine what such documents commit institutions to *doing* and not allow policy statements to serve as proof of redress, thereby absolving institutions of any further action. As Ahmed (2006) articulates “our task must be to refuse to read such documents as performatives, as if they bring into effect what they name” (p. 124).

With regards to data collection, 67% of school boards were found to have conducted or be in the process of conducting a student census, 54% had conducted a student climate survey, and 28% had carried out a staff census. In the 2021-2022 Annual Ontario School Survey conducted by PFE, 64% of Ontario principals stated that their school boards collected race-based data and/or demographic student data, 29% were uncertain, and 7% reported no collection of such data. Notably, the Greater Toronto Area had the highest proportion of race-based data collection (76%) while all other regions reported a proportion of less than 60%.

As PFE (2023) points out, these data are crucial to advancing equity and anti-racism in education because it allows for connections to be made between demographic variables and individual schooling experiences—yielding “valuable insights about how different groups experience the same institutions, systems, and processes” (p. 6). Also concerning in the PFE report was the limited community engagement claimed to have been undertaken by most schools. Partnering with community-based organizations was the least utilized anti-racism/equity strategy reported by principals (37%), despite research indicating the significant benefits of such partnerships for underserved students and communities (Munroe, 2022; PFE, 2023).
It is clear that there is much work to be done in advancing equity in Ontario schools despite the increased policy focus. Next, I discuss equity and access in the context of Ontario ITE, providing an historical context and then focusing on stated intentions and admissions processes.

1.2.2 Research Context: A Brief History of Initial Teacher Education in Ontario

In any investigation of teacher preparation, it is helpful to situate the current iteration of programming in the larger history of teacher preparation in the province. This history begins in the 19th century as Ontario adapted its system to meet rising demand for public elementary and secondary education. This adaptation involved increasing professionalism and competing authority over education. With the implementation of the Common School Act of 1846 by Egerton Ryerson, initial teacher education was born. This gave rise to the Ontario Normal School, focused on subject-specific and methods training with a high degree of provincial oversight. The 20th century ushered in an era of provincial control over teacher education, which would persist until the mid- to late 1900s. In 1953, the Teacher’s College replaced the Normal School. However, this change represented only modest reforms as control was still centralized under the province. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that significant change took place, first incited by the Patten Report (1962), also known as the Minister’s Committee on the Training of Secondary School Teachers and then the McLeod Report (1966), also known as the Report of the Minister’s Committee on the Training of Elementary School Teachers. Rather than merely transmitters of knowledge, these reports reconceptualized the role of the teacher as “a participating, creative, responsible person who must be skilled in the complexities and subtleties of the educational process in a democratic society” (Kitchen & Petrarca, 2014, p. 17). The McLeod Report recommended a one-year ITE program embedded within the university as a way to shift from the more rigid and uniform Teacher’s College training to
the greater flexibility and scholarship of university-based education (Kitchen & Petrarca, 2014). In 1968, the Hall-Dennis Report, *Living and Learning* (Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario [PCAOESO], 1968) posited that the focus in Ontario Schools should be “more on how to learn and think, and less on what we know and remember”, arguing that “education is becoming a process, rather than a thing” (p. 123). Among its recommendations was that, in light of the transfer of ITE from Teacher’s Colleges to universities, the responsibility for certification should be shared by the university and teachers’ professional organizations through a proposed Ontario College of Teachers (OCT).

In 1974, *Regulation 269* was introduced, which defined teacher qualifications, divided qualification into Primary/Junior, Junior/Intermediate/Senior, and Technological Studies, prescribed curriculum, and defined additional qualifications, specialist courses, and principalship courses. Teacher education was largely decentralized by this point—although the province still technically controlled teacher certification, in practice it deferred to the universities, which underwent cyclic program reviews. This broader decentralization saw the elimination of provincial examinations and the replacement of rigidly prescribed provincial courses of study with more flexible curriculum guidelines.

Although universities largely won control of teacher education, the field remained steeped in controversy contested by competing interests. There was a struggle for control of professionalization between universities, which focused on the relationship between research and practice, and teacher unions, which prioritized working conditions and teacher autonomy (Gannon, 2005). The province also continued to weigh in, criticizing faculties of education for holding too closely to university autonomy and thus unbeholden to any interests but their own (Royal Commission on Learning in Ontario, 1995, v. 3, p. 13). While Teacher’s Colleges were viewed as too technician-based and practical,
university-based teacher education came under fire for being “an irrelevant or hopeless player in educational reform” and faculties of education criticized as “places where theory and research appear more important than practice” (Sheehan & Fullan, 1995, pp. 89-90).

1.2.2.1 Introducing the Ontario College of Teachers

As a result of recommendations from the Royal Commission (1995), the OCT was created, 30 years after the Hall-Dennis Report first proposed it. Oversight and accreditation for the teaching profession shifted to the self-regulating body of the OCT, which sought to become more accountable to the public (Kitchen & Petrarca, 2014). Notably, the establishment of the OCT did not eliminate government involvement in the regulation of the teaching profession. In fact, as Gannon (2005) reports, they viewed the OCT “as merely another bureaucratic structure, which provides no assurance of improved quality of teaching” (p. 130). The recent switch to a two-year ITE program in the province is a significant reminder that authority over teacher education ultimately rests with the Ontario government. Although the OCT reviews and accredits ITE programs, it does not determine regulations or dictate how individual faculties of education should structure and deliver their courses and programming. Kitchen and Petrarca (2013) observe that although faculties of education are “receptive to reform, [they] are unwilling to sacrifice their autonomy to develop their own distinct programs” (p. 67). They further state that because teacher education is deeply embedded within the university governance structure, both the OME and the OCT are limited in their capacity to reform teacher education.
1.2.2.2 Enhanced Teacher Education and Key Changes to Accreditation Requirements

Schedule 1 of Ontario Regulation 347/02 under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* delineates the knowledge and skills prospective teachers enrolled in Ontario ITE programs must have acquired upon completion of their program. These new required elements are categorized into three broad areas: curriculum knowledge, pedagogical and instructional strategies, and knowledge of the teaching context. The OCT’s companion guide to Regulation 347/02, *Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs* (Ontario College of Teachers, 2014) lists the following new core content requirements that ITE programs in Ontario must contain:

- Ontario curriculum;
- Use of educational research and data analysis;
- Inquiry-based research, data and assessment to address student learning;
- Use of technology as a teaching and learning tool;
- Theories of learning and teaching and differentiated instruction;
- Classroom management and organization;
- Child and adolescent development and student transitions;
- Student observation, assessment and evaluation;
- Supporting English language learners;
- Supporting French language learners;
- Pedagogy, assessment and evaluation for specific curriculum areas;
- Special education;
- Mental health, addictions and well-being;
- Education law and Standards of Practice;
- Professional relationships with colleagues;
• Knowledge of the Ontario context;
• First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives, cultures, histories and ways of knowing;
• Politique d’aménagement linguistique (PAL) de l’Ontario;
• Safe and accepting schools / creation of a positive school climate; and
• Parent engagement and communication.

This extensive list of core content came out of consultations with several key stakeholders, including Ontario teacher education program providers, and reflect broader literature on the learning to teach process, inclusive of existing knowledge on how teacher candidates learn in a professional context and within school and community settings (Petrarca & Kitchen, 2014).

Comparing the 2013 version of the Registration Guide Requirements for Becoming a Teacher of General Education in Ontario Including Multi-Session Programs to the current one provides additional insight into the changes to accreditation requirements ushered in by the enhanced (four-semester) teacher education program in Ontario. Before September 2015, ITE programs included:

• 40 percent of one year focused on teaching methods—how to teach students in particular grades or subjects;
• 20 percent of one year focused on education foundations—history, philosophy, and psychology of education;
• 20 per cent in any other area of education; and
• a minimum of 40 days of practicum supervised by the program provider (Ontario College of Teachers, 2013, p. 2)
As of September 2015, the four-semester ITE programs includes:

- 10 percent focused on education foundations (i.e., the history, philosophy and psychology of education);
- 20 percent focused on teaching methods suitable for two teaching qualifications in Ontario (i.e., how to teach students in particular grades or subjects);
- 20 percent in practice teaching – a minimum of 80 days of practice teaching supervised by the program provider; and
- 50 percent in any other areas of education to support methodology coursework, such as classroom management, how to use research data and new technology, supporting students with special learning needs and those from diverse communities. (Ontario College of Teachers, n.d., p.1)

Both the 2013 and current versions stipulate that the ITE program must be an academic program as opposed to employment-based and completed at the postsecondary level. Teacher candidates must hold an undergraduate degree to gain entry to an ITE program (consecutive programs) or be in the process of obtaining an undergraduate degree at the same time they are pursuing their Bachelor of Education (concurrent programs). There are alternative certification requirements for First Nations, Inuit, or Métis applicants, as well as those applying to become a teacher of a native language or of technological education in Ontario. For a discussion on how the current structure and requirements of teacher education in Ontario present access and equity concerns, see pp. 24-27.

The three key stakeholders – the OCT, the provincial government, and individual faculties of education – are, as Petrarca & Kitchen (2014) point out, “intimately involved in teacher education, but interdependence is not the same as collaboration” (p. 67). Although the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2011) notes
that teacher development and overall educational attainment in Ontario are positive, more needs to be done to spur collaboration, ensure innovation, and maximize responsiveness to changing educational needs.

1.2.3 Research Context: Underrepresentation in Ontario Initial Teacher Education and K-12 Schools

Despite increasing numbers of teacher education programs pronouncing a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, there is ongoing concern about ITE programs in Canada continuing to admit mostly white, middle class, cisgendered, able-bodied cohorts (DeLuca, 2015; Holden & Kitchen, 2019; Solomon et al., 2005). To my knowledge, there are no current public data on rates of representation in Ontario ITE with Holden and Kitchen (2018) providing a notable (albeit five-year-old) exception (discussed following). The Ontario Teacher Education Application Service (TEAS, 2023) provides statistics on the number of applications and confirmed applicant acceptances for ITE programs at Ontario universities, including program groupings (i.e., primary, junior, intermediate, senior), but does not provide these data disaggregated by (under)represented groups. The OCT identifies the gender, age, English/French proficiency, and teaching sector (i.e., English Public Board, French Catholic Board, Independent Schools, etc.) of its members, but does not report on demographics (i.e., how well the teaching population represents the student population).

This dearth of data is antithetical to program goals articulated by all Ontario teacher education programs related to equity and access (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). As Holden and Kitchen (2018) contend “if [equity and access] are core program goals, then presumably teacher educators and other stakeholders should be able to draw on relevant data to support their decision-making processes” (p. 48). To this end, Holden and Kitchen (2018) collected descriptive statistics from 13 ITE programs in Ontario for the years
2012-2016 to provide baseline data on the state of equitable representation in Ontario. All OCT-recognized institutions participated, with the exception of the University of Windsor and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Results showed that not a single ITE program had reported a representation rate for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit teacher candidates above 4.51% in the five years prior, with most universities reporting proportions lower than the Indigenous share of the population in Ontario and some reporting proportions lower than the Indigenous share of Ontario’s teaching force. What this means is that many ITE programs are not admitting enough Indigenous teacher candidates to keep up with the Indigenous population, or to improve rates of representation among the teaching force (Holden & Kitchen, 2018).

Holden and Kitchen (2018) also report the only publicly available data on ITE representation rates of racialized groups in Ontario. Three teacher education programs collected such data at the time of their study with only one of the three actively tracking racialized entrants (York University) while the other two tracked for “visible minorities” (University of Ottawa and Nipissing University). There were marked differences between the rates of representation for York and Ottawa (i.e., ranging from 16-30% of the overall cohort) and Nipissing (i.e., ranging from 1.2% - 0.0%). Geography can provide a partial explanation for these results—York and Ottawa are located within what Statistics Canada (2022j) call significant centres for diversity—however, Holden and Kitchen (2018) caution that there is no reason to believe that such proportions are the norm. Based on participant accounts from an additional part of their study, they suggest that some ITE programs may be closer to Nipissing’s significantly lower representation (see Holden & Kitchen, 2017).

Of additional concern was data indicating that, since Ontario’s ITE programs have doubled in length and are admitting half as many students, there has been a reduction in
the diversity of applicants (Holden & Kitchen, 2017, 2018). Longer programs mean increases in tuition, as well as opportunity costs that may disproportionately impact underrepresented groups (e.g., those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and/or family structures that may not be well-positioned to delay entry into the job market) (Holden & Kitchen, 2018).

The few other publications reporting data on the composition of the teaching force accord with what Holden and Kitchen (2018) found with regard to preservice cohorts, namely, that various groups are significantly underrepresented in the teaching profession in Ontario, including racialized, Indigenous, disabled, low-income, and first-generation students (Falkenberg, 2015; Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators [ONABSE], 2015). This troubling underrepresentation exists not only in teacher education (and, as a byproduct, in classrooms across the province), but also among university and college populations (Childs et al., 2011; Childs & Ferguson, 2016). Considering that admissions requirements for all ITE programs in Ontario include the completion of a minimum three-year postsecondary degree from an acceptable postsecondary institution (OCT, 2023a), the underrepresentation of equity-seeking groups in postsecondary education, generally, has implications for the pool of applicants eligible for admission to ITE.

Literature in the field indicates that the “overwhelming presence of whiteness” influences teacher candidates’ learning and development in several ways (Sleeter, 2001). To achieve equitable, inclusive teacher education, we must consider more than just gaps in participation and examine how teacher candidates experience ITE programs, particularly those from underrepresented groups. Currently, little is known about how racialized and Indigenous teacher candidates experience equity issues in ITE. James and Taylor (2008) note that minoritized students who attend university typically do so at a significant cost since they are likely to experience racism, classism, sexism, marginalization, and
discrimination. The preponderance of whiteness in teacher candidate pools has been shown to result in the centering of majoritarian perspectives and experiences and the silencing of underrepresented voices (e.g., racialized teacher candidates have attested to feeling isolated, staying quiet in class to avoid being singled out as a “minority expert” or out of fear of having their experiences disregarded (Sleeter, 2017, p. 162)), the avoidance of social justice frameworks, and the exclusion of marginalized narratives and experiences in the classroom (Bower-Phipps et al., 2013; Gomez et al., 2008; Irizarry, 2011, Kitchen & Brown, 2022). The notion that white teacher candidates are the blueprint upon which ITE is designed, patterned, and normed means that racialized students “have to adjust, assimilate, and learn from curricula and related experiences tailored to meet their white counterparts’ needs” (Milner IV, 2008, p. 339). The theory of interest convergence (discussed later in this chapter) claims that the focus on what white students can learn from Black and Brown students is rarely reciprocal in nature (Milner IV, 2008, p. 338). He points out:

All teachers need and deserve preparation that can meet the challenges that they will face in the P-12 classroom. Clearly, students of color would learn also from their white counterparts (and vice versa), yet the intentionality and interests are sometimes one-sided. (p. 338).

It is important to remember that racialized teachers are not inherently prepared to teach highly diverse students (Jackson, 2015; Milner IV, 2008). It is critical for teachers of all colours to reject deficit narratives and critically examine biases. Tatum (2001) describes:

In a race-conscious society, the development of a positive sense of racial/ethnic identity not based on assumed superiority or inferiority is an important task for both white people and people of color. The development of this positive identity is a lifelong process that often requires unlearning the misinformation and
stereotypes we have internalized not only about others, but also about ourselves. (p. 53)

In the context of teacher education, Milner IV (2008) contends that it is often assumed that racialized students will simply learn “by default”, be exempt from concentrating on students’ negative attributes, or enter the program with what they already need to be successful (p. 338).

In addition to the centering of white teacher candidates’ needs, the lack of diversity in ITE can have significant ramifications for course content and delivery, curriculum design, student recruitment, instructor recruitment and support, and how urgently a program works to implement and realize equity and diversity goals (Sleeter, 2017). Lin et al. (2008) found that greater diversity in the teacher educator pool meant greater focus in the coursework on working with children and families from culturally diverse backgrounds. Conversely, the less diversity, the less likely that coursework would have such a focus. Although there exists limited data on the racial background of teacher educators in Canada, research carried out in other contexts suggests predominantly white teacher education faculty. Milner et al.’s (2013) study found that teacher education faculty, including adjunct, were 78% white and my interview data (see chapter five) suggests a similar homogeneity in the Canadian context. Additionally, a recent report by People for Education (2023) reports that the vast majority (86.7%) of Ontario principals identify as white.

As aforementioned, this lack of representation can result in curriculum and classroom discussion being delivered through a white lens that often fails to account for the experiences of racialized teacher candidates and provide opportunities to critically examine biases and school structures that maintain white hegemony (Milner IV, 2008; Sleeter, 2017). Scholars have contended that white preservice teachers often have limited
awareness of themselves as cultural beings (Schmidt, 1999) and assume that their own ways of knowing and being are “the norm to which others should aspire” (Valli, 1995, p. 127). They may not be adept at recognizing that what is presented as neutral (e.g., curriculum, discussion, stories from the field) is actually derived and delivered from a majoritarian perspective. Individuals’ experiences of school and classroom life throughout their own lives, all the way from kindergarten to grade 12, through university, and subsequently, as a teacher or teacher educator, “solidifies taken-for-granted conceptions of how schooling should go and what teaching should look like, making it difficult to envision alternatives” (Sleeter, 2008, p. 562).

Clearly, if ITE cohorts are persistently underrepresented, so too is the in-service teaching force. This has implications for increasingly diverse students in classrooms. Multiple studies have emphasized the critical role that teachers play in students’ cognitive and behavioural development (Jackson, 2018; Kraft, 2019; Kunter et al., 2013; Rockoff, 2004). Kraft (2019) demonstrated how teachers can impact academic achievement (e.g., standardized test scores) and competencies such as perseverance, effort, and growth mindset. For racialized students, having a teacher of the same race or ethnicity may improve their opportunities to learn; racial/ethnic matching between teacher and student can mean a more supportive student-teacher relationship, higher expectations, culturally relevant instruction, and role-modelling, all of which have been shown to enhance academic and non-academic performance at school (Kunter et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Luke, 2017; Milner IV, 2011). Given teachers’ evaluative role, teacher biases held by a majority white teaching force (discussed in more detail later in this chapter) negatively impact minoritized students (Gershenson & Papageorge, 2018; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2016; Parekh et al., 2018). Moreover, Holden and Kitchen (2018) reference the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s assertion that “the lack of representativeness as a possible contributing factor to the disproportionate suspension and expulsion of
racialized students and students with disabilities” (Childs et al., 2011, p. 4). Although, as ONABSE (2015) point out, diversity in the teaching force is not a panacea for inequity in education; it is undoubtedly a benefit for students and the teaching profession, supporting both student experiences and outcomes in the classroom.

Beyond the benefits of a more racially representative teaching force, there exist benefits for more linguistically diverse representation as well. Immigrants and linguistically diverse teachers have been shown to have increased empathy toward multilingual learners due to shared backgrounds and personal experiences, as well as increased self-efficacy for delivering culturally responsive pedagogy (Faez, 2012; Vidwans & Faez, 2019).

To summarize, the whiteness of both teacher educator and teacher candidate pools exert significant influence over what happens in ITE, including how new faculty and instructors are recruited, hired, and supported (and who those new faculty or instructors are), how curriculum is designed and delivered, how teacher candidates are recruited and selected, and how urgently a program works to initiate and implement meaningful change toward greater representation and equity (Sleeter, 2017). These influences have ramifications for what teacher candidates experience while in teacher preparation programs and the opportunities they have to learn about teaching for equity, diversity, and social justice. Moreover, a homogeneous teaching force has implications for increasingly diverse student bodies on Ontario schools.

Admissions processes at teacher education programs do not constitute the singular barrier to a more representative teaching force, but in order to enact articulated goals of equity, access, and diversity, we must examine gaps and barriers to representation and identify admissions practices that that may be disproportionately affecting underrepresented groups (Stead, 2015). This is discussed in greater detail next.
1.2.4 Research Context: Admissions and Access in Initial Teacher Education

As mentioned previously, Ontario ITE programs have relative autonomy and vary in their design and delivery of policy and programming. This is true in terms of the nuances of their admissions policies and procedures, as well; however, all Ontario’s teacher candidates gain entry through processes rooted in traditional academic standards (i.e., based on academic averages and competitive admissions) (Holden & Kitchen, 2019). Despite the emphasis on equity, diversity, and inclusion, these practices have remained relatively unchanged even though the use of grade point averages has been criticized for creating barriers to access for marginalized groups (Archibald et al., 2002). There have been “add-ons” – for example, equity admissions pathways, personality/dispositions testing (e.g., CASPAR) – but every Ontario university uses academic averages to determine the threshold for admission.

As aforementioned, all consecutive ITE programs in Ontario require that applicants hold an undergraduate degree from a university (although there are alternative pathways leading to certification within the fields of technological, indigenous education, and native languages education). The prerequisite of a university degree and the use of competitive admissions to gain access to ITE is significant in light of research showing that racialized students in Ontario schools experience significant barriers to academic achievement and have higher drop-out rates and lower postsecondary enrollment (Deller et al., 2019; James & Turner, 2017; Parekh & Brown, 2019). Studies also suggest that structural inequity and teacher bias contribute to more racialized students being streamed into the applied/college pathway in secondary school (James & Turner, 2017; Parekh & Brown, 2019). Although statistics show that students who take mostly applied courses do not pursue a college education (Khoramshahi, 2019; Queiser & de Araujo, 2017), even
those who did would still not be eligible to apply to ITE in Ontario, which requires a university degree.

Sleeter (2017) references ITE in the United States where there exists both university-based teacher preparation programs and non-university-based programs. She notes that programs embedded within the university enroll a higher proportion of white teacher candidates than non-university-based programs and contends that, although university-based programs are presented as neutral, they are actually structured in ways that work to produce homogeneity in their cohorts. Sleeter’s (2017) contention that seemingly neutral policies and procedures in ITE contribute to maintaining a majority white teacher candidate pool was made in an American context; however, the same argument can be made in the Canadian context and perhaps even more fervently. Ontario offers only university-based programs and lacks the alternative licensure programs that enroll greater numbers of racialized teacher candidates into ITE in the United States.

To reiterate, although competitive admissions and the university-embedded structure of teacher education are presented as neutral, they actually work in ways that produce persistently homogeneous cohorts. This brings to mind systems analyst Paul Batalden’s assertion that “every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets” (Institute for Healthcare Improvement, 2015). Underrepresentation in ITE should be viewed as the result of a system that is perfectly designed to produce precisely that outcome. It is useful to view it in this way because it positions the status quo as the result of action (or a series of actions) rather than as the consequence of omission (or a series of omissions). Inequity cannot be viewed solely as the result of systems that are missing some key component(s) and in need of additive remediation. Inequity results from systems that are intrinsically flawed in their design and in need of dismantling. As Ahmed (2006) urges, we must reframe what we view as evidence of institutional racism from a form of passive
omission or failure to “a form of doing or even a field of positive action, rather than as a form of inaction” (p. 106). She explains:

For instance, we might wish to examine how institutions become white through the positing of some bodies rather than others as the subjects of the institution (querying, for example, who the institution is shaped for and who it is shaped by). (p. 106)

This shift in thinking can help to orient focus away from using additive approaches alone to forward social justice goals in ITE to identifying and disassembling the existing mechanisms that are embedded in structures, purposes, and practices that work to (re)produce underrepresentation (Milner IV, 2008).

One of those mechanisms is discussed by Sleeter (2017), who notes that university-based programs typically schedule courses during the day from Monday through Friday. Ontario ITE programs are all university-based, housed within faculties of education, and generally follow this same programmatic structure. The vast majority of teacher preparation programs in Ontario offer only full-time studies (including field experiences that are similarly designed for full-time students who do not hold a job), which restricts access for older students and those from marginalized populations, including those with families and those from lower SES backgrounds, who often need to work full-time. Access and equity concerns face additional challenges since Ontario’s teacher education programs doubled in length and began admitting half as many students. As aforementioned, although this decrease in enrollment numbers does not necessarily mean a decrease in cohort diversity, some ITE programs in Ontario have reported reduced diversity since the change to a two-year program (Holden & Kitchen, 2017, 2018, 2019). Longer programs mean increased tuition costs and increased opportunity costs for people with families and/or lower SES students needing to enter the job market. Few of
Ontario’s faculties of education revised their equity policies during the 2013 transition. Institutional policies and procedures like these, typically presented as neutral, actually act as gatekeeping mechanisms that work to produce the homogeneity ITE programs across the province claim to be committed to changing.

1.2.5 Research Context: The Demographic Landscape

The most recent census shows that the persistent homogeneity of the teaching force stands in stark contrast to the increasing diversity of Canada’s broader population. Statistics Canada (2022b) reports that one in four Canadians is part of a racialized group, with three racialized groups representing 16.1% of Canada’s total population—South Asians (2.6 million; 7.1%), Chinese (1.7 million; 4.7%), and Black people (1.5 million; 4.3%). By 2041, the proportion of the Canadian population belonging to a racialized group is projected to be between 42.1 and 47.3% and even higher among youth. Those aged 0-14 are projected to make up between 44.0 and 49.7% of Canada’s population in two decades’ time (Statistics Canada, 2022h). In large urban centres, like Toronto and Vancouver, the proportion of racialized peoples is projected at 71.5% and 66.8% by 2041, respectively (Statistics Canada, 2022i).

Ontario is Canada’s most populous province with over 15 million people representing 38.5% of the country’s total population (Statistics Canada, 2022a). Ontario has the largest Indigenous population of all provinces and territories at 2.9% of total inhabitants (406,590 people), visible minorities\(^3\) make up 33.9% (4.8 million people) of the

\(^3\) The term “visible minorities” is used by Statistics Canada and defined as per The Employment Equity Act as persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. This term has been criticized for obscuring intra- and inter-group differences by lumping racialized individuals into one indistinguishable group (James, 2022). This failure to disaggregate racial groups prevents
province’s total population, and 30.8% (4.3 million people) of Ontarians have a mother tongue that is not English or French (Statistics Canada, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d). Currently, in large urban school boards in Ontario like the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), more than half of the student population speaks a language other than English at home, racialized students constitute 71% of the total student population, and 40% of students are of lower SES background (TDSB, 2018). In smaller, less urban school boards, like those served by the current case, racialized students are reported as making up close to 27% of the student population and students who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit constitute 5% of all students (Thames Valley District School Board [TVDSB], 2022). In contrast, the limited data on representation rates in Ontario ITE indicate significantly less diversity (see pp. 17-19 for statistics derived from Holden & Kitchen, 2018).

It is salient to point out that generally, racialized groups in Canada are highly educated; however, this overall average masks stark differences among racialized groups and among specific populations within these groups who face significant barriers to higher education and below-average educational attainment. Among every racialized group except the Japanese population, 75% of the working-age population (i.e., aged 25-64) were first generation Canadians and most of the remainder were second generation (i.e., born in Canada with at least one parent born elsewhere). Because education is part of the selection criteria of Canada’s immigration system, immigrants tend to be highly educated, and one of the highest determinants of educational attainment for youth is the educational attainment of their parents. The overall share of the Black population with a bachelor’s degree or higher was 32.4%, nearly identical to the national average of 32.9%.

stakeholders from knowing what gaps and disparities exist among different populations of people, which prevents systems from effectively combatting inequities (PFE, 2023). I use the terms ‘racialized’ and ‘minoritized’ throughout this thesis.
However, this figure conceals high variations within the population group. Although, among the Black population, the attainment of a bachelor’s degree ranged from over 40% (i.e., among those born in Africa and their children) to 19.4% for first-generation Caribbean immigrants and 28.5% for their children, the share of the third-generation-or-more Black population with a bachelor’s degree was significantly lower than that of the other two groups, at only 15.8%. This is less than half the national average. Over half of this group had no postsecondary credentials at all. Moreover, overqualification in the workplace was much more prevalent within the Black population than other racialized groups in Canada with 16.0% of Black employees with a bachelor’s degree from a Canadian institution working in occupations that required a high school diploma or less. This is the highest overqualification rate of any Canadian-educated racialized group (Statistics Canada, 2023). These data are extremely problematic in that they indicate significant systemic disadvantage (e.g., educational and economic) for third-generation-or-more Black Canadians.

As demographic data reported thus far shows, Ontario ITE programs are tasked with preparing a persistently homogenous pool of teacher candidates to orchestrate equitable and socially just practice in settings of great and growing heterogeneity. As I discuss next, recent studies on teacher bias and student achievement suggest they are falling short.

1.2.6 Research Context: Racialized Students

Prior literature documents that biased perceptions, policies, and practices work to further marginalize and harm diverse students in schools. Gershenson and Papageorge (2018) found that white teachers are much more likely to hold higher expectations for academic success (as defined by post-secondary attainment) for white students than Black students and the disparities in their expectations were far more pronounced than their Black
colleagues. These findings are supported by data from the Toronto District School Board (2018) indicating that many minoritized students (including but not limited to those of lower SES, those with identified learning needs, and racialized students) feel that teachers have lower expectations for them and stream them into an applied pathway when they feel that, with the right support, they would be capable of the academic pathway and would prefer it. Low expectations significantly affect academic achievement (Rubie-Davies, 2008; Tavani & Losh, 2003). Moreover, research shows that minoritized students and students from low-income families are disproportionately affected by negatively biased teacher expectations (Hinnant et al., 2009; Sorhagen, 2013).

Similar teacher bias was noted by Nicholson-Crotty et al. (2016) who examined teachers’ referrals of students to gifted services and found that Black students were much more likely to be referred to gifted services when taught by a Black teacher. A recent study by Parekh et al. (2018) also found implicit bias among teachers in their analysis of learning skills on Ontario report cards. The study showed that certain groups of students, irrespective of how well they performed academically, were not perceived to possess the core learning characteristics valued by the education system. Male, racialized, and lower SES students were all perceived to fare “worse” than their white, female, middle to higher SES peers in learning approaches. The implications are deeply problematic given that teachers and guidance counsellors use learning skills indicators as a key measure of academic potential. These measures often inform their recommendations on which program pathways (applied versus academic) students should pursue (Parekh et al., 2018). While academic streaming in Ontario secondary schools is presented as a neutral and practical way of aligning secondary studies with a student’s identity, skills, work habits, and future aspirations, the reality is that due to bias and discrimination, it functions to marginalize and restrict access to post-secondary education for

As aforementioned, students who take most of their courses within the applied/college pathway do not end up attending college at all, instead facing significant barriers to access (Khoramshahi, 2019). It is notable that, in response to the push for greater equity and the objectives laid out in Ontario’s Equity Action Plan (2017), grade nine was de-streamed starting in this 2022-2023 academic year in Ontario. Plans to de-stream grade ten for next year have recently been reversed. It is unclear whether de-streaming will contribute to greater equity in Ontario education or if it is a band-aid solution to broader equity issues with the potential of having its own detrimental effects on classroom culture, teacher capacity, and academic outcomes. For example, the pressure on school administrators to reduce expulsions and suspensions (a stated objective of the Equity Action Plan), may be seen as a similar band-aid solution. Rather than addressing the underlying reasons for higher suspension and expulsion rates among racialized and Indigenous students (e.g., teacher bias, unsupportive/discriminatory institutional arrangements, systemic harm), administrators are under pressure to lower the number of suspensions and expulsions overall, which can lead to unsafe school environments (Zandbergen, 2022). Although there is clear need to address disproportionate representation in incidents of suspension and expulsion, a blanket approach that replaces discipline with restorative practices rather than in complement with them can result in counter-effects that are detrimental to learning for all students.

The implications of Parekh et al.’s (2018) study and others are far-reaching because they “highlight critical points of juncture between the moralization of ability; the influence of racial, class, and gender bias; and the positionality of the teacher” (p. 19). The reporting of learning skills by teachers based solely on their individual judgement of students’
work habits and degree of mastery over certain skills is a process which invariably treats
ability as an objective entity that exists outside of contextual or broader structural factors.
It assumes that teachers can both know and quantify the various ways that diverse
students express their competencies and undertake learning. Teachers’ subjective
evaluations of students’ abilities (narrowly defined within a Eurocentric, neoliberal frame
that values individualism and independence) is operationalized as neutral and can be
utilized to delimit students’ potential.

The results of these studies are also particularly significant in light of the vast diversity
gap between teachers and students in Ontario. These and other studies on teacher bias and
structural barriers to equitable education (e.g., Gershenson et al., 2016; James, 2012;
Mahatmya et al., 2016; Meissel et al., 2017) highlight the importance of gaining a better
understanding of the ways in which teaching for equity, diversity, and social justice are
integrated into ITE and professional development for in-service educators. Teacher biases
and the interrelated expectations for students affect instruction, classroom interactions,
and assessment which can impact students’ academic performance (De Boer et al., 2018;
Eccles et al., 2006; Rubie-Davies, 2008; Sorhagen, 2013; Tavani & Losh, 2003).
Furthermore, underrepresentation in ITE programs mean that the diversity gap is
growing. Next, I further situate the current study by examining immigrant-background
students and multilingual learners (MLs) in Canadian classrooms.

1.2.7 Research Context: Immigrant-Background Students and
Multilingual Learners

Canada continues to be a nation of immigrants. The latest census reports that immigrants
make up the largest share of the Canadian population in over 150 years with almost one
in four (23%) of the population being a landed immigrant or permanent resident—the
highest proportion among G7 countries (Statistics Canada, 2022f). It is projected that, if
current trends continue, half of the Canadian population will be made up of immigrants and their Canadian-born children by 2041 (Statistics Canada, 2022b). In tandem with rising numbers of immigrants, linguistic diversity is on the rise with a record number of Canadians reporting a mother tongue other than English or French (Statistics Canada, 2022d). In 2021, one in four individuals had at least one mother tongue other than English or French, and one in eight predominantly spoke a non-official language (i.e., not English or French) at home, with that proportion being higher in major urban centres. In Toronto and Vancouver, for example, more than one in four Canadians predominantly speak a language other than English or French at home (Statistics Canada, 2022d). Moreover, the number of people who report being proficient in more than one language rose to over 41% in 2021, with Mandarin and Punjabi being the most commonly spoken non-official languages (Statistics Canada, 2022d). Local public school board data (i.e., English-medium schools within the current ITE case’s catchment areas) indicate that 16% of K-12 students have a first language other than English, 21% speak more than one language, and more than 100 different languages in total are spoken by students in surrounding schools (TVDSB, 2022).

Despite a comprehensive body of literature expounding the complexity of multilingual practices, performance, and identities (Cummins, 2021; García et al., 2017; Stille et al., 2016; Toohey, 2018), schools throughout Canada continue to adhere to binary concepts of English-speaking and non-English speaking (Toohey & Smythe, 2022). Further, they continue to use pedagogy and assessment practices that exclude languages other than English or French (e.g., OME, 2015). In the STEP: Steps to English Proficiency document published by the OME and used by schools across the province to assess and track progress toward English language proficiency and literacy development for MLs, students are monitored along a STEP continuum that culminates in “mastery”. Observable language and literacy behaviours are tracked over time and in various
learning contexts and are used to “assess a student’s English proficiency and literacy development” (OME, 2015, p. 12). These observable language and literacy behaviours are assessed in English only, precluding acknowledgement and validation of the language and literacy skills that students already possess in languages other than English. Moreover, assessment practices and the goal of “mastery” places no value on partial competences, achievements in navigating life and academics in multiple languages, and curriculum learning that takes place across languages. Furthermore, setting a culminating goal of “mastery” sets many MLs up for failure—only viewed as successful once they’ve gained mastery over skills that may be out of reach (e.g., for older learners). As Toohey and Smythe (2022) point out, in these tracking and assessment guidelines, as well as other policies and curriculum documents, little attention or value is afforded to the languages, cultural practices, experiences, and other funds of knowledge these students bring to school. Instead, they emphasize supporting students to learn English so that targeted language support can be withdrawn and they can be mainstreamed into the (Eurocentric, English-only) school curriculum. Not only do these attitudes and practices disadvantage MLs in schools, they fail to recognize the shifts taking place in an increasingly globalized society where multicompetence (i.e., proficiency in more than one language and culture) is needed and valued.

Deficit narratives persist in schools. Practices and policies focus on MLs presumed limitations rather than their achievements in navigating “monolingual, ‘standard’ English-centric educational spaces and for the powerful contributions they make to their communities and families as cultural brokers” (Pérez & Saavedra, 2017, p. 2). This focus on deficits or limitations is apparent in Ontario educational policy and curriculum documents that frequently refer to the ‘challenges’ these students bring to the classroom or their status as “at risk” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, 2008a, 2008b). Nieto (2017) attributes this kind of deficit orientation among teachers to a lack of adequate
preparation to teach newcomers, “having neither the academic preparation nor the resources with which to teach them” resulting in “educators [who] are unaware of the tremendous assets these students bring to their education, including bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as numerous life skills and strengths such as resilience, courage, and grit” (p. 5). Further, Toohey and Smythe (2022) note that “even though we have had almost 35 years of official celebrations of multiculturalism in Canada, and despite the broad and favourable statements many schools make about their diverse linguistic and cultural student bodies…inequities with respect to some newcomers’ educational achievements persist” (p. 126). They further point out the dearth of data on the academic progress of MLs in Canadian schools. The relatively strong performance of immigrant-background students in Canadian schools (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2019) should not obscure the fact that subgroups of MLs (e.g., refugees, lower SES students) do experience academic difficulties (James & Turner, 2017; McAndrew, 2009; Taylor et al., 2022; Volante et al., 2017; Watt & Roessingh, 1994, 2001). Drawing from several Canadian studies, Lee (2018) showed that subgroups of MLs have higher dropout rates, lower completion rates, and lower scores on standardized tests than their native English-speaking peers. Toohey and Derwing (2008), for example, found that secondary graduation rates among MLs were positively associated with higher socioeconomic status, and that in low socioeconomic communities, graduation rates fell dramatically of students from lower socioeconomic communities.

A lack of appropriate data, in part, stems from the problem of disaggregating Ministry of Education-generated statistics on international students’ graduation rates between groups; for example, those students who often bring strong academic backgrounds from their home countries and who are able to hire tutors to support their academic progress in Canadian schools and those with less privileged backgrounds. Toohey and Smythe (2022) describe how although many racialized youth in Canadian schools report experiencing
discrimination and racism at school, those who came to Canada through family
reunification programs and as refugee claimants especially describe racism as affecting
their academic progress (The Vancouver Foundation and the BC Representative for
Children and Youth, 2013). They argue that the failure to collect data on school
completion and education pathways to post-secondary education according to race,
language background, education and immigration experiences make the development of
appropriate pedagogical policy difficult. George et al. (2020) and Robson (2021) further
point out the lack of race-based or linguistic background data on students in Canadian
schools and the Canadian teaching force with which to inform research, policy, or
decision-making.

As discussed earlier, one of the four key initiatives of the Ministry of Education’s Equity
Action Plan (2017) is to enhance data collection, integration, and reporting. For the first
time, Ontario school boards are required to begin collecting identity-based data (i.e., race,
ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, socioeconomic status).
For more discussion on this, including statistics on data collected thus far, see pages 8-10.
It is hoped that this data is comprehensively, reliably, and regularly collected and that the
emergence of these data over the coming months and years provides greater insight and
oversight for equity and anti-racism policies and training programs. However, there still
exists a need to connect this data to other key statistics such as student success, post-
secondary attainment, and academic pathways—a responsibility claimed by the Ontario
Ministry of Education but, at the time of this writing, one that has yet to materialize. As it
stands, this lack of data contributes to significant gaps at all levels of the education
system in Canada in the extent to which coherent policies have been formulated to
address the implications of cultural and linguistic diversity for instruction, institutions,
and systems of education (Volante et al., 2020). This includes but is not limited to teacher
education.
Limited data can contribute to limited preparation for preservice teachers and professional development for in-service teachers. With regards to MLs, Cummins et al. (2012) point out:

Many educators who work with bilingual students and English language learners (henceforth bilingual/ELL students) have had little preparation either in teacher education or through professional development to equip them to teach effectively in contexts where linguistic and cultural diversity is the norm. Similarly, there is little expectation or requirement that educators who assume positions of responsibility (e.g., school principals or vice-principals) are familiar with the knowledge base relating to effective instruction for bilingual/ELL students. (p. 27)

One area in which this is starkly evident is the persistence of English-only policy and instructional practice in schools and classrooms across Ontario. As touched on earlier, the pervasiveness of English-only instruction contradicts an extensive and growing body of research that demonstrates a vital role for students’ home language (L1) in facilitating access to the curriculum, helping students grapple with cognitively challenging content, supporting English language and literacy development, and affirming biliterate and bilingual identities of competence (Cummins, 2007a, 2007b; Cummins et al., 2019; García et al., 2017; Lindholm-Leary, 2014; Thomas & Collier, 2002, 2004). These monolingual classroom practices are officially codified in Ontario’s Education Act which bans instruction in any language other than English or French during the school day (R.S.O 1990, “District School Boards”, Part II.2, Section 58.1(2)). As previously discussed, if one of the 3.7 million Ontarians with an L1 other than English or French wants their child to receive education in their L1, they must do so outside of the regular curriculum in after school or weekend programs. The parochial emphasis on English and
French in a province of immense linguistic diversity sends a powerful message about what is valued and what is not.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and others (see, for examples, Phillipson, 1998; Rojas & Reagan, 2003; Tollefson, 2002) are strong advocates for linguistic human rights, which combine human rights with language rights. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1995) have raised the issue of linguistic genocide, citing schools as direct agents in the potential disappearance of 90% of languages currently in use within the next generation. Beyond the empirical evidence suggesting cognitive and academic benefits to the inclusion of L1 in learning, there are broader implications around the right to have access to human and material resources (e.g., properly prepared teachers, appropriate teaching methods, dual language or L1 texts) necessary to be able level the playing field for linguistically diverse students. Monolingual instruction and the restriction of bilingual instruction to the two colonial languages of English and French disadvantage students from language minoritized backgrounds whose languages, cultures, and identities are delegitimized and often neglected as vital resources for learning at school. These policies go largely unacknowledged and unchallenged in Ontario’s educational system.

A responsibility of ITE programs is not only to diversify their cohorts but also to cultivate in prospective teachers a critical consciousness of their role in either reinforcing or disrupting these types of structural barriers that work to marginalize and exclude certain groups of students from rigorous programming opportunities and greater choices for their future. As Dewey (1916) proclaimed: “It is the aim of progressive education to take part in correcting unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate them” (as cited in Nieto, 2017, pp. 119-120). Over a century later, it is clear that we have yet to realize Dewey’s greatest hope for public education in a democratic society.
Next, I will further situate the current study in the context of power relations and their role in historical and contemporary education in Canada.

### 1.2.8 Research Context: The Role of Societal Power Relations in Canadian Schooling

Research illustrates the centrality of societal power relations in educational experience and in explaining patterns of marginalized student achievement (Dustmann et al., 2010; McCarty, 2005; Ogbu, 1978, 1992). As Cummins et al. (2012) observe:

> Groups that experience long-term educational underachievement tend to have experienced material and symbolic violence over generations at the hands of the dominant societal group…[and] despite the fact that the influence of societal power relations on the educational experiences of marginalized group students is clearly evident in the historical record (e.g., the educational experiences of First Nations students in Canadian residential schools), current educational policies in Canada and elsewhere make virtually no mention of power relations as a relevant variable affecting bilingual/ELL students’ academic achievement. (pp. 31-32)

In Canadian education, there is a claim to meritocracy (education is available equally to all), however, if we look closer, we see that schools orchestrate a process of social selection – one that legitimates and reproduces the dominant groups within the broader social hierarchy. Since, as Olssen (2006) points out, this selection function goes “unacknowledged, and therefore unrecognized, it is all the more powerful and pervasive” (p. 49-50). The cultural capital that is expected from all students at school is not explicitly available to all. Olssen (2006) explains:

> The definitions of success the school embraces, the kinds of knowledge it imparts, the nature of the teaching processes it uses, and its forms of evaluation and school
organization all embody the habitus of the dominant group. Hence the school curriculum is the primary reflection of a society’s dominant knowledge code. This enables the children of the middle class to progress through the system using their family-based “know-how” in a way that they do not recognize as enabling or any different from other groups. Likewise, working class and lower middle-class children ‘do their best’ with the cultural and symbolic resources available to them. However, these are not homologous with those offered by and expected within the system. Likewise, the system and its symbolic messages ensure such groups believe that if they fail their failure is their own fault. (p. 15-16)

Although Olssen refers specifically to class distinctions, I would add that the habitus institutionalized by schools in Canada is also Eurocentric and native English- or French-speaking. Schools generally operate with “a narrow monolingual, monocultural model of what it means to be ‘literate’” (Grant & Wong, 2010, p. 166). This inevitably produces and perpetuates barriers to literacy for culturally and linguistically diverse children and youth as well as those from lower SES backgrounds. The illusion of an equal educational system is propped up by curriculum reform policy, teaching practices, and high-stakes testing measures that sustain singular and English-only conceptions of literacy (Grant & Wong, 2010). This is actualized in classrooms when a multilingual student is handed yet another worksheet while her classmates write stories or engage in dramatic play. Or when a refugee youth who is regularly left out of cognitively challenging work fails another standardized test and concludes that he is “just no good at school”. These are invariably perceived as individual failings and not problematized as symptoms of teacher bias, low expectations, and broader educational and societal inequities.

It is crucial that we gain insight into the “why” behind persistent underrepresentation of marginalized groups in teacher education. We must also examine the opportunities that
teacher candidates are afforded in their ITE programs to learn about teaching for equity, diversity, and social justice. This knowledge can inform policy and practices that, first, achieve more representative cohorts and, second, prepare future generations of educators to interrogate their own teacher expectation biases and critically examine how systems of education are constructed. To orchestrate instruction that is socially just, critical, and culturally and linguistically sustaining, future teachers must be compelled to consider of the curriculum, their approaches to teaching it, and their evaluation of student learning: What counts as school knowledge? Who selected it? Why is it organized and taught in this way? To this particular group? How is access to such knowledge determined? (Apple, 2004; Giroux, 1988) in addition to Paulo Freire’s (1970) enduring questions: Who benefits? Who loses?

1.2.9 Research Context: Three Goals of Equity-Centered Initial Teacher Education

For the purposes of the current study, I characterize teacher education for equity and social justice as being aimed at three central goals. The first two are what Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) call the twin goals of “preparing teacher candidates who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to enhance the learning of students historically not well served by the system and, at the same time, to recognize and challenge the intersecting systems of inequality in schools and society that reproduce inequity” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016, p. 70). These goals for ITE go beyond the assumption that “teachers and school factors are the primary source of educational inequality, and thus, the primary solution” (Cochran-Smith, 2016, p. 70). Such assumptions risk disregarding the impactful role of social factors, such as poverty and structural racism in (re)producing educational inequality. Conceptualizing an equity-centered ITE involves making generative the tension between recognizing that “equity can never be achieved solely by increasing the access of marginalized students to good teachers” (Cochran-Smith et al.,
2016, p. 70) and the conviction that teachers exert great influence on students’ knowledge, skills, and life chances, particularly those traditionally underserved by the system. Conceptualizing equity for ITE means understanding that teachers and teacher educators play a pivotal role in developing practice explicitly intended to improve opportunities, experiences, and outcomes for marginalized students and that equity cannot be achieved through this means alone. Although ITE programs need to be working to actively change institutional inequities within its own structures, they also must operate in a space that acknowledges both the limitations and potential of their programming. The goals for ITE that are envisioned here involve not just a focus on equity at the individual level but a broader understanding of structural and systemic injustice and its impact on schooling.

The third goal for the project of teacher education for equity and diversity that this dissertation proceeds from is a commitment to the work of “reconfiguring teacher education in a way that invites and supports a population of candidates that mirrors the demographics of children and youth in schools” (Sleeter, 2016, p. 1067). Not only must ITE programs support the development of teacher candidates in being effective educators of highly diverse students, but also take action to diversify their cohorts. Homogeneity persists, despite recent focus on diversity and equity in education (Holden & Kitchen, 2017, 2018; Turner, 2014). Underrepresentation in ITE means underrepresentation in Ontario classrooms. As discussed earlier, this means that racially and linguistically diverse students seldom have teachers that look like them and/or can relate to their lived experiences. Although change in the retention and recruitment of equity seeking groups in education will need to involve multiple levels of the educational system, teacher preparation programs have a unique opportunity to both impact the diversity of their cohorts and to prepare all prospective teachers for equity-centered practice.
1.3 Researcher Positionality

The data collection tool in qualitative research is the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Springer, 2010). How a researcher self-identifies, including their existing beliefs around their research topic, assumptions and biases, professional and personal experiences, gender, level of education, socioeconomic status, and cultural and linguistic background must be clearly stated in acknowledgement that these factors may influence all aspects of a qualitative study (England, 1994; Merriam et al., 2001).

I self-identify as a white, cis female who has lived in Canada for most of her life. I grew up in a lower-middle class single-parent household. I am continually developing an understanding of the various ways I have benefited from my privilege. I am a single mother to three young children and currently work as a secondary school teacher within my local school board. I am plurilingual and have proficiency in English, Spanish, and French. I am registered with the Ontario College of Teachers and hold primary-junior and intermediate-senior teaching qualifications. I am also a TESL Ontario certified English language teacher (OCELT). Although in recent years, I have been teaching at the elementary and secondary levels, I have predominantly taught English as a second language (ESL) and English for academic purposes (EAP) to adults over the course of my 13-year career in education. I have a strong commitment to social justice and equity and a passion to see my convictions actualized in schools.

My interest in social justice and equity in education evolved out of my experiences as an ESL/EAP teacher and manifested in my scholarly work as a focus on the use of students’ home language in instruction. Research shows that home language use in the classroom is vital in leveling the playing field for MLs by enabling them to grapple with curricular content and engage in creative and cognitively challenging work to the same full extent as their monolingual English peers. It pushes back against coercive relations of power.
(Cummins, 2000) and cultivates identities of competence (Manyak, 2004). Where monolingual English children are permitted unrestricted access to all of their linguistic resources for learning, MLs are constrained by what they can accomplish with partial access. They have fewer resources to draw on for learning purposes and a large portion of their voice is silenced; their cultural and linguistic ways of being and knowing are devalued and delegitimized. These school-based policies and instructional practices are inextricably linked to social justice.

As a student in an ITE program in Ontario more than a decade ago, I never learned about the comprehensive base of research documenting the crucial role for students’ home language in learning even though I was one of a small group of teacher candidates in my cohort who opted to take the elective course on Supporting English Language Learners. While that course is now mandatory across most teacher education programs in Ontario, I enter this research with a skepticism about whether much has changed in regard to the lack of critical, social justice-oriented content.

Further, as a current teacher within an Ontario public school board, I have attended professional development sessions focused on equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and anti-oppressive approaches to teaching. My colleagues routinely express a desire and passion to be more culturally responsive and relevant in their classrooms; however, they consistently describe feeling ill-equipped to enact these desires in concrete ways. They point to a lack of practical tools being provided by leadership and have asked for materials and specific strategies to use in the classroom that do not seem to exist. Knowledge mobilization is one thing. Having the skills and resources to effect positive change is another. As an educator currently working in the classroom, I see the disconnect between intentions and action and, in my academic and professional life, I am committed to and passionate about finding ways to bridge that gap.
I will have a mix of insider/outside status in view of the participants. I am both a teacher and an academic. Being involved in research and study in education at the university-level may allow me access to potential participants, however, there may be trepidation on the part of faculty or administration about the possibility of critique. As a teacher, teacher candidates may view me as an insider, but I may also have outsider status because of my position as an academic researcher. These insider/outside issues can affect whether I have access to participants, as well as the kinds of stories they tell me (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016)

My positionality will inevitably influence my data collection and analysis. It was incumbent upon me to be reflexive – defined here as having “awareness of the influence the researcher has on what is being studied and, simultaneously, of how the research process affects the researcher. It is both a state of mind and a set of actions” (Probst & Berenson, 2014, p. 814). As I progressed through this research, I continuously worked to be cognizant and transparent about how my position, assumptions, and background may be informing my interpretations of the data and critically consider what I ultimately chose to include and exclude. Reflexive journaling was used to track interpretations and note potential biases which informed my analysis (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009).

Next, I delve into the theoretical underpinnings of this study. I discuss how critical race theory, culturally (and linguistically) sustaining pedagogy, and ecological systems theory provide the structure for the reporting and interpretation of results.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

For this study, I draw primarily upon critical race theory (CRT) and culturally (and linguistically) sustaining pedagogy (CLSP) to elucidate the ways in which equity, diversity, and social justice are conceptualized and operationalized within ITE. I
supplement these theories with ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to highlight the various, intersecting, and bi-directional environmental influences that shape teacher candidates’ development as they progress through teacher preparation. In the following section, I discuss CRT and CLSP and justify their suitability as frameworks for this research. Following this, I delineate ecological systems theory and discuss how it contributes to my analysis.

1.4.1 Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory was originally conceived within the field of critical legal studies (CLS) as a way to account for the intersections of race, racism, critical theory, and the law (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xxvii). In CLS, CRT formed a movement that sought to address the “effects of race and racism in U.S. jurisprudence” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 26). Specifically, critical race theorists examined “contemporary legal thought and doctrine from the viewpoint of law’s role in the construction and maintenance of social domination and subordination” (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xi). Central to CRT is the notion that racism is normal, not aberrant, in society; involute in the social fabric and thus appearing both normal and natural to those within the culture (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Racism is seen as the underlying cause of the racial inequalities that pervade multiple spheres (e.g., law, employment, education, health care, housing). Critical race theorists reject a solely individual view of racism (i.e., as exercised by an individual tyrant) and designate it a systemic phenomenon that is permanent and pervasively rooted in the ideology of the masses (Young, 2011). This notion of justice, which foregrounds institutionalized forms of domination, provides a framework for understanding how ITE programs might help teacher candidates to recognize that the experience of oppression varies by individual and by groups and acknowledge that some individuals affiliated with multiple groups are subject to multiple forms of oppression. It also challenges ITE
programs to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to reexamine a ‘disembodied’ view of social justice that focuses narrowly on individuals divorced from their affiliations with broader social groups. The emphasis on oppression at the institutional and systemic levels and the marginalization of categories of people based on race/ethnicity, class, and language makes this perspective suitable for framing the work of ITE programs that goes beyond a liberal or multicultural education approach.

Young (1990) offers several other notions that are relevant to an examination of social justice and equity in teacher education. These include a view that justice:

- Involves, but is not exclusively focused on, the distribution of goods;
- comprises social relations and processes;
- includes a view of individuals as members of social groups, whose opportunities and experiences are informed but not determined by their affiliations, and;
- demands attending to social group differences, rather than negating them.

An analysis of social justice and equity in teacher education benefits from using a notion of justice “in which individuals are members of social groups, opportunities are informed but not determined by an individual’s group membership, and social groups’ differences are acknowledged rather than denied” to consider the opportunities prospective teachers have within the program to endorse such ideas (McDonald, 2005, p. 422).

Limited literature on CRT in the Canadian context draws on diverse perspectives and examines the intersection of race, law, and power in the settler colonial context (Senthe & Xavier, 2013). In the field of education, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define CRT as “a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom” (p. 25).
Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) further argue that CRT is a useful frame for empirical and conceptual research on the role of race in educational inequity, contending that race, unlike gender or class, is undertheorized in education. They argue that the inequities that exist between white, middle-class students and African American and Latinx students is “a logical and predictable result of a racialized society in which discussions of race and racism continue to be muted and marginalized” (p. 47). Critical race theorists argue that class discrimination alone cannot account for racial oppression (Barnes, 1990). Racialized subordination and harm lie at intersections of race, gender, class, language, accent, immigrant status, surname, phenotype, and sexuality (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

In this thesis, I draw from three tenets of CRT which are particularly helpful in my analysis: experiential knowledge (i.e., counter-storytelling), interest convergence, and challenges to claims of neutrality (i.e., critique of liberalism). I explicate each of these tenets following.

1.4.1.1 Counter-Storytelling

Haddix (2017) argues that a meaningful critique of racial diversity in teacher education “can only happen when teacher education programs leverage the voices and experiences of current teachers of color and students of color” (p. 147). Counter-storytelling values the experiential knowledge of racialized people as legitimate and critical to countering majoritarian stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Racialized, gendered, and classed experiences are deemed sources of strength (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). Counter-storytelling can deepen understandings of systemic and structural racism in ITE through the perspectives and experiences of racialized preservice teachers (Bell & Busey, 2021). These counternarratives underscore how being racialized in predominantly white institutions factors into the experiences, retention, and recruitment of racialized teacher candidates.
Counter-stories are important because “they add necessary contextual contours to the seeming ‘objectivity’ of positivist perspectives” (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 19). Moreover, “naming-one’s-own-reality” or telling one’s own story can be “a kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression” (p. 57). It can also rattle others out of denial and complacency. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explain:

Most oppression does not seem like oppression to the perpetrator. Delgado⁴ argues that the dominant group justifies its power with stories—stock explanations—that construct reality in ways to maintain their privilege. Thus, oppression is rationalized, causing little self-examination by the oppressor. Stories by people of color can catalyze the necessary cognitive conflict to jar dysconscious racism. (p. 58)

According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and others (see Bell & Busey, 2021; Sleeter, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), counternarratives can be an act of liberation for racialized people and a jolt to propel critical consciousness for white people.

I draw from counternarratives in this study to elucidate the ways in which institutional structures and processes in ITE (e.g., claims to neutrality and interest convergence) work to maintain whiteness, act to “invisibilize” racialized experiences, and constrain opportunities to learn for both white and racialized teacher candidates. Next, I discuss the CRT tenet of interest convergence in greater detail.

⁴ Delgado et al., “Symposium” as cited in Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995)
1.4.1.2 Interest Convergence

First theorized by Bell (1980) in his critique of the Brown v. Board of Education decision, interest convergence is constitutive of two main ideas: (1) the interests of people of colour in achieving equality will only be advanced when they converge with the interests of whites and (2) even when interests converge, any redress that “threatens the superior societal status of middle and upper class whites” (p. 523), at any point, will be revoked. Interest convergence in the context of education theorizes that any policy or practice that promotes racial justice in the classroom or in broader institutional or systemic educational realms must also serve the interests of whites (Han & Laughter, 2019). Milner IV (2008) argues that interest convergence offers additional language and tools “to discuss race, its presence, its pervasiveness, and its consequence in the field [of teacher education]”. Milner IV refers to the “permeating pace imperative” that typifies efforts for equity within institutions of teacher education (p. 333) and argues that change, when it is designed and operationalized by those in power, is often “purposefully and skillfully slow” (p. 334, emphasis in original). As Gordon (1990) asserted, it is difficult for those in power to critique and work for change when the world, as it is, works for them.

Under this tenet, commitments and policy initiatives in ITE programs aimed at enrolling more diverse pools of teacher candidates would be viewed by critical race theorists not as solely motivated by equity and social justice but also because such initiatives converge with the interests of white teacher candidates who those in power feel can learn from their diverse peers (Milner IV, 2008). Milner IV (2008) contends that interest convergence can be used as “an analytic, explanatory, and conceptual tool in the study and analyses of policies and practices” (p. 332) in the field of teacher education because
issues of race and racism are deeply embedded in society, so they are also deeply engrained in institutions of teacher education.

1.4.1.3 Claims to Neutrality

The third tenet of CRT that I draw from is challenges to claims of neutrality (i.e., critique of liberalism), which rejects the dominant ideology’s claims to meritocracy, colourblindness, and objectivity in education. Sleeter (2017) suggests three areas specifically in the context of ITE that this tenet helps to elucidate: colourblind notions of teachers and effective teaching, teacher certification requirements, and the university-based structure of teacher education. She contends that programmatic structures and processes that appear neutral maintain the whiteness of the teacher candidate pool. Sleeter (2017) references the aforementioned two pathways to teacher licensure that exist in the United States (i.e., university-based and non-university-based) and points out that ITE programs embedded within universities enroll fewer racialized teacher candidates than alternative licensure programs. She contends that although university-based initial teacher education model is presented as a neutral pathway to teacher certification, its structure and design is such that it produces inequitable representation. As discussed earlier, Ontario’s teacher education programs are all embedded within universities. Although presented as a neutral pathway to teacher certification, rates of representation suggest that there exist persistent barriers to access for marginalized groups (for a more detailed discussion on this, see pp. 24-27).

This CRT tenet designates the official school curriculum as “a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a white supremacist master script” (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 60); one which “silences multiple voices and perspectives, primarily by legitimizing dominant, White, upper class, male voicings as the ‘standard’ knowledge students need to know” (Swartz, 1992, p. 341). When something is described neutrally – with no
indication of colour or ethnicity – it is typically from a white perspective. Whiteness, and the privilege that accompanies it, is the norm; “all other accounts and perspectives are omitted from the master script unless they can be disempowered through misrepresentation” (Swartz, 1992, p. 341). Swartz (1992) positions it as a struggle between emancipatory versus hegemonic scholarship and, accordingly, “the maintenance or disruption of the Eurocentrically bound ‘master script’ that public schools currently impart to their students” (p. 341). This master script applies not only to instructional materials, pedagogy, and practice but also to the theoretical paradigms on which they are constructed (i.e., grounded in Eurocentric and white supremacist ideologies).

Educators must be able to recognize claims to neutrality and support their students in deconstructing them and examining the power relations inherent in the social fabric. New curriculum requirements in Texas in the United States requiring teachers to “present opposing views on controversial subjects” illustrates the dangers of false equivalences and the importance of identifying and critically examining them. When teachers asked for guidance on these new curriculum requirements, the curriculum director stated: “Just try to remember the concepts of [House Bill] 3979. Make sure that if you have a book on the Holocaust, that you have one that has an opposing, that has other perspectives” (Richardson, 2021). Educators have a duty to make power dynamics visible and support students in doing the same. As Collins (2019) articulates, “students are capable of processing complex narratives; we just need to give them the tools”. Examining the historical and contemporary impacts of systemic racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, and so on and learning about settler-colonialism and white privilege can help students to see how power imbalances happened and how they continue to shape narratives, institutions, and society today. Collins (2019) offers critical questions students can use to analyze news stories and event through a social justice lens:
Preservice teachers should be supported in developing this critical consciousness in their programs (and ideally throughout their K-12 and undergraduate education), so that they can cultivate these critical skills in their own students.

### 1.4.2 Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Pedagogy

Transforming education requires an interrogation of the endemic racism, enduring coloniality, and structural inequities replete in Canadian society and systems of education, not only personally in terms of beliefs, biases, and attitudes held by educators and other key stakeholders in education, but also in the related ways that materialize in schools and classrooms—structures, policies, instruction, and interactions that take place on an everyday basis among teachers, administrators, students, families, and communities. As Dei (2006) contends: “Inclusion is not about bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone”. To address this, I draw from Paris’ (2012) culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) as both a “concept and practice…[which] seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the demographic project of schooling and as a needed response to demographic and social change…in ways that previous iterations of asset pedagogies did not” (p. 88). I provide a brief background to help elucidate the suitability of this theoretical frame to my research.
Asset pedagogies emerged in response to predominantly deficit approaches that viewed the languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being of racialized and other marginalized groups as deficiencies to be overcome on the road to academic success. Ladson-Billings’ (1995) landmark paper Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy was a pivotal part of this movement but many have since critiqued the ways in which culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) has been taken up in practice. Paris and Alim (2014) allege that the term ‘culturally relevant’ has “too often been enacted by teachers and researchers in static ways that focus solely on the important ways racial and ethnic difference was enacted in the past without attending to the dynamic enactments of our equally important present or future” (pp. 91-92). They contend that the term relevant does little to support the goals of maintaining students’ heritage ways of knowing and becoming and critiquing existing power structures, noting that “it is quite possible to be relevant to something without ensuring its continuing presence in students’ ‘repertoires of practice’ (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003) and in our classrooms and communities” (p. 88). Others have labelled CRP as “a ubiquitous buzz-word…leveraged as a smoke-screen against substantial pedagogical realignment, or truly decolonial and liberatory transformation of outcomes and intentions” (Dominguez, 2015, p. 134).

Paris’ (2012) conceptualization of CSP draws from and is an update of Ladson-Billings’ (1995) notion of CRP. Paris differentiates by stating that “culturally sustaining requires that our pedagogies be more than responsive…it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (p. 95). This echoes Delpit’s (1988) cogent assertion:

I suggest that students must be taught the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane,
decontextualized subskills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavors; that they must be allowed the resource of the teacher’s expert knowledge, while being helped to acknowledge their own ‘expertness’ as well; and that even while students are assisted in learning the culture of power, they must also be helped to learn about the arbitrariness of those codes and about the power relationships they represent. (Delpit, 1988, p. 296)

Paris (2012) posits that CRP has failed to recognize and value students’ ‘expertness’ and the “linguistic and cultural dexterity and plurality (Paris, 2009, 2012) necessary for success and access in our demographically changing U.S. and global schools and communities” (p. 94). Further, Paris claims that CRP has been co-opted by policies and practices that continue to reinforce the dominant ideology and require no more than a superficial celebration of difference rather than authentic engagement and subsequent work to maintain students’ cultural and linguistic ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll & González, 2004). Referencing Toni Morrison’s famous rebuttal to misguided critiques of her books: “As though our lives have no meaning and no depth without the white gaze and I have spent my entire writing life trying to make sure that the white gaze was not the dominant one in any of my books” (Morrison, 1998), Paris and Alim (2014) contemplate what our pedagogies would look like without this white gaze and what such liberation would mean for envisioning new forms of teaching and learning. Contrary to forwarding these goals, Paris alleges that misinterpretation and oversimplification of CRP has resulted in lengthy scholarship on ‘access’ and ‘equity’ that “has centered implicitly or explicitly around the question of how to get working-class students of color to speak and write more like middle-class white ones”. Instead, Alim (2017) argues, the cultural and linguistic practices of youth should be recognized as having inherent value in and of themselves and not solely viewed as resources to be harnessed as a means to advance assimilationist and anti-democratic (i.e., monolingual/monocultural) policies. Paris’
theorization of CSP “attempts to shift the term, stance, and practice of asset pedagogies toward more explicitly pluralist outcomes” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 87)—ones that reflect a broader, global demographic shift toward multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Paris and Alim (2014) contend that CSP is increasingly needed at a time of changing demographics and accumulating evidence that the white, middle class, monolingual cultural and linguistic norms that, in the past, have acted as sole gatekeepers to opportunity and success, constitute an outdated philosophy. Access to power is shifting to include the ability to communicate in more than one language and be conversant in multiple ways of doing and being. As Paris and Alim (2014) allege: “CSP, then, is necessary to honor and value the rich and varied practices of communities of color and is a necessary pedagogy for supporting access to power in a changing nation” (p. 90, emphasis in original).

I take up CSP as a frame for this study and contend it should be adopted as a driving force in the critical project of education. In addition to its critical and contemporary approaches to education, it also foregrounds “increasingly fluid understandings of evolving relations between language, culture, race, and ethnicity” (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 92) and calls for pedagogies that ‘go with the flow’ (Pennycook, 2007). A crucial part of CSP is its attunement to the worlds that the youth of today inhabit—worlds where “cultural and linguistic recombinations flow with purpose” (p. 92). Importantly, CSP goes beyond conceptualizing heritage ways of knowing and being as static and fixed, instead attending to the fluid and recursive identities and flexible and evolving cultural and linguistic practices of today’s youth.

Prior literature indicates that the predominantly white, middle-class individuals who make up the majority of the teaching force continue to struggle with understanding the racial, cultural, and linguistic identities of the increasingly diverse student bodies they
teach (Leonardo, 2009; Sleeter, 2001, 2008, 2017). Dominguez (2015) notes that frequently these educators view racial and cultural identity in static and shallow ways. CSP undertakes conceptualizing pedagogy in a way that hopefully helps to move beyond the surface level, ‘foods and festivals’ approach to multicultural education and contributes to growing praxis that is authentically activist and intentional in its liberatory approach.

As a final note, the term culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy (CLSP) that I adopt in this thesis is because, although Paris frequently refers to both the cultural and linguistic competence of students, the role of language in both CRP and CSP is often subsumed under “culture” and as such, I contend, is rarely afforded sufficient consideration. I add the term “linguistically” to CSP (i.e., culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy) in an attempt to bring explicit attention to the role of language in this approach to teaching and learning—to center it alongside culture to signal both its distinctness and centrality.

1.4.3 Ecological Systems Theory

Although CRT and CLSP comprise the central theoretical frameworks for this study, aligning them with ecological systems theory allows me to frame my data in a way that accounts for a teacher candidate’s various and interconnected social and environmental influences in order to capture a comprehensive understanding of their development. Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) was developed to explain how a child, their environment, and the evolving and bi-directional interactions between the two shape their growth. This theory emphasizes the importance of studying an individual in the context of multiple environmental influences. The ecological environment is conceived as “a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3). In Bronfenbrenner’s model, the child is nested within the
microsystem, which constitutes her immediate environment (e.g., home, school, neighbourhood, place of worship). The microsystem includes direct interactions (e.g., with family members, peers, teachers) within her immediate setting. The mesosystem looks beyond single settings to the relations between them. This level contains the combined bi-directional and overlapping interrelations of individual microsystems. Bronfenbrenner posits that these linkages can be as consequential for development as the influence of a single setting. He explains: “A child’s ability to learn to read in the primary grades may depend no less on how he is taught than on the existence and nature of ties between the school and the home” (p. 3). For example, the interrelations between home-based knowledge and school-based knowledge have the potential to impact a child in either harmful or empowering ways (e.g., a child’s language/language variety or ways of doing literacy can be legitimized and lauded or alternatively disregarded or stigmatized by in/exclusionary pedagogies or interactions with peers or teachers).

These mesosystemic relations are, in turn, more broadly shaped by exosystemic forces. The exosystem accounts for influences that extend beyond a child’s immediate environment. Although the child may never come into direct contact with this environment, they are nonetheless affected by it. In the context of education, this might include institutional or broader governmental bodies that determine curriculum and assessment standards or funding policies that affect class sizes. Although the child does not interact with these environments directly, her development is shaped by the effects of the policies and procedures taking place in these indirect environments.

The macrosystem is the overarching sphere of culture, polity, and economy; the arena where social and political policy takes shape. The ways in which a state addresses (i.e., ameliorates or (re)produces) inequality has significant ramifications for individuals living in that society. As Houston (2017) points out, social policy has a tangible influence on an
individual’s “life options, choices, and outcomes” (p. 57). Specific to education, the macrosystem encompasses large scale processes that hold the power to define education for others. These processes, along with exosystemic forces, are ones which work to determine and reinforce the intentions and desired outcomes of formal education in the state (e.g., reproducing the dominant groups and maintaining capitalism), what knowledge is legitimate (e.g., colonial/Eurocentric ontologies and epistemologies as formalized and operationalized into curricula and educational policy), and what competences matter (e.g., what counts as literacy, what languages and language varieties are valid, what assessment standards are used). It is important to note that the macrosystem is the dominant cultural and political sphere wherein the individual is immersed and may not match the specific social and cultural identity(ies), histories, or allegiances of the individual. There may be conflicts and dissonances between the dispositions, norms, and ideologies of the person that affects their microsystem in profound ways, including in their experiences and outcomes at school.

I adapt Bronfenbrenner’s theory by replacing the child at the center with the prospective teacher, nested in the within the various and interconnected spheres of influence that interact to influence their development as teachers. Viewing a teacher candidate’s development within Bronfenbrenner’s nested structure of direct and indirect influences accounts for the various complex, interrelated components involved in their development and learning over the course of their time in ITE. This theory can account for the complexity of teaching and learning and its situatedness. Specifically, the microsystem encapsulates a teacher candidate’s immediate setting (e.g., faculty of education, practicum schools) where they come into direct contact with peers, instructors, associate teachers, and students. Although crucial in their development, their microsystems and interactions within them do not operate in a vacuum. As aforementioned, Bronfenbrenner (1979) believed that the relations between an individual’s various microsystems (i.e., the
mesosystem) can be as decisive for development as events taking place within a single setting.

The exosystem includes indirect influences that occur outside of a teacher candidate’s immediate setting (e.g., administrative, regulatory, or governmental bodies and their policies and procedures). Teacher candidates may never come into direct contact with these forces but they nonetheless influence development. For example, the decision by the Ontario Ministry of Education to move from the one-year initial teacher education to a two-year program resulted in significant modifications to Ontario ITE programs (e.g., increased range of course delivery modes, more limited duties instructors, addition of new courses, increased practicum length, etc.) that directly impacted teacher candidates at the micro- and meso-systemic levels.

Finally, the macrosystem includes the dominant culture and society that the prospective teacher is immersed in (e.g., norms, ideologies, customs, systems of governance; i.e., Canadian society). In the context of the preservice teacher, this encompasses the ways in which Canada’s colonial legacy continues to infiltrate education, as well as the impacts of a neoliberal hetero-patriarchal society. This overarching domain of social, cultural, and political influence includes large-scale mechanisms that determine things such as funding, curriculum, and assessment measures in schools and the norms and ideologies present in both K-12 and ITE formal learning environments (e.g., the Eurocentric curricula prospective teachers are learning to deliver or on the receiving end of in ITE). As with exosystemic forces, these influences are indirect yet still profoundly influential to development. The macrosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner, is about the status quo but, he caveats, it is not only about the status quo. He clarifies: “The macrosystem encompasses the blueprint of the ecological environment not only as it is but also as it might become if the present social order were altered” (p. 289). I analyze my data not
only as commentary on the present state of ITE in Ontario but also to envision possible futures that involve disrupting the status quo through participating in teaching and learning in new ways.

1.4.4 Summary of Theoretical Framework

Critics of incorporating issues of social justice into programs of teacher education and assessing preservice teachers’ dispositions related to social justice principles argue that it is a form of “thought control” (Leo, 2005) or “tantamount to political indoctrination that serves the cultural left and detracts from the real work of providing future teachers with the knowledge and skills they will really need to teach effectively” (Villegas, 2007, p. 370). However, such criticisms are based upon what Cochran-Smith (2010) refers to as twin assumptions that a) academic knowledge, professional education, and educational policy can and should be neutral, and b) teacher education programs (and schooling more generally) do not produce or reproduce structures of power and privilege. The understanding of teaching for social justice and equity that underlies this research recognizes that neutrality is impossible and that systems of education are inherently political and ideological. A social justice perspective does not politicize education; education has always been politicized.

Thus, I draw on CRT and CLSP to consider what it might mean to “de-centre whiteness, ‘native speakerism’ and the white gaze around which concepts of difference and diversity have been assembled” (Toohey & Smythe, 2022, p. 122). Importantly, I do not attempt to synthesize Bronfenbrenner’s model with these critical theories but rather adopt “a pragmatic alignment” (Houston, 2017) to allow for a broader and more encompassing picture to emerge on how the complex interrelationships and influences across a teacher candidate’s ecology affect their development as prospective teachers. By pairing an ecological approach with a critical orientation, I can elucidate both the ecological
influences involved in a teacher candidates’ development and how power functions in a neoliberal society to harm and oppress racialized and otherwise marginalized students in schools and reproduce broader social inequities. This approach allowed me to focus on both the process of integration of equity, diversity, and social justice and critically analyze data in the context of an understanding of injustice as normalized and embedded in institutionalized practices, policies, and standards. It provides a frame for analyzing data, understanding that prospective teachers’ endorsement of social justice-related concepts about teaching is informed by who they are, prior experiences, motivations, and existing beliefs as they interact with the concepts, values, practices, and structures they encounter in the program. It accounts for constraints and enablers to students’ opportunities to learn and appropriate key principles of teaching for social justice. Finally, it locates teacher education programs and the beliefs and practices of the teachers who progress through them into a broader social context that either reinforces or disrupts the status quo.

1.5 Chapter Summary

This first chapter introduced the research questions which provide the central frame for analysis across this study. In this chapter, I provided a rationale for my study by situating it within the context of equity in Ontario education broadly, the history and current iteration of Ontario initial teacher education, the demographic landscape, data on outcomes and experiences of racialized, immigrant-background, and multilingual students in schools, the seldom acknowledged role of societal power relations in Canadian education, and my own positionality as the researcher. Further, this chapter described the theoretical underpinnings of my study. I draw primarily from critical race theory and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy and from ecological systems theory as a supplement to help me analyze the programmatic structures and processes that
may work to either enable or constrain teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about teaching for equity, diversity, and social justice.
Chapter 2

2 Literature Review

This literature review discusses research on equity, diversity, and social justice in the context of initial teacher education (ITE). I begin with an overview of the various ways social justice and equity are conceptualized in the field. I then embark on a comprehensive review of empirical literature from the past 20 years to situate my own research in the current context. This review includes prior research on teacher candidates’ understandings and beliefs, changes in beliefs over time, and ITE coursework and field experiences related to equity and social justice. Finally, I discuss cohesion and fragmentation in teacher education with a focus on how this influences the integration of equity and social justice throughout ITE.

2.1 Conceptualizing Equity and Social Justice in Teaching and Teacher Education

A range of conceptual ideas have been posited to address social justice in the context of teaching and teacher education, including critical pedagogy (Smyth, 2011), anti-racism education (Lund, 1998), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014), culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014) teaching against the grain (Cochran-Smith, 1991), teaching for diversity (Nieto, 2000; Zeichner, 1993), (critical) multicultural education (Banks, 1993, 2010; Nieto, 1999; May & Sleeter, 2010), border pedagogies (Romo & Chavez, 2006), pedagogies of discomfort and inquiry (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015); critical race theory (Milner IV, 2008; Sleeter, 2017), critical complex teacher education (Kincheloe, 2004), and democratic teaching (Guyton, 2000), among others. This is not to say that these approaches are equal and the same, although there is overlap,
but rather to highlight the lack of conceptual clarity in this field of inquiry. Indeed, a central critique of social justice in teacher education is its ambiguity that, although widespread, is vague and undertheorized (North, 2006; Zeichner, 2006). This increases the likelihood that it is used as a “buzzword” that exists in name only (Grant & Agosto, 2008). Despite these limitations, social justice has been forwarded as a major theme in ITE over the last three decades and it is possible to identify some common themes behind the notion of social justice in teacher education as it is generally portrayed, which I do following.

A distributive notion of justice (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) is either explicitly or implicitly found in most of the key literature on this topic (Cochran-Smith, 2010; North, 2006). From this perspective, it is assumed that, at its foundation, teaching is intended to foster student’s learning and improve their life chances by challenging the social and institutional inequities that are endemic to society (see, for examples, Cochran-Smith, 1999; Cochran-Smith et al., 2004, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Kincheloe, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2014; McDonald, 2005; Nieto, 2017; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zeichner, 2003, 2009). This perspective recognizes the disparities in the resources, achievement, and outcomes of minoritized, Indigenous, and/or lower-SES students when compared to their white, middle-class counterparts. That recognition is coupled with a stance that teachers should be both educators and advocates for change; they have a responsibility to work toward diminishing the uneven distribution of educational opportunities and challenge broader societal inequities (Cochran-Smith and Reagan, 2022; Enterline et al., 2008).

From the perspective of social justice, teaching is not simply a technical, transmission-oriented act wherein immediate practicality takes precedence over the moral, ethical, and normative dimensions of professional practice. Kincheloe (2004) contends that when ITE
programs adopt these more technicist orientations and fail to cultivate personas among candidates as ethical agents, new graduates enter the classroom unequipped to perceive the connections between social context and educational setting or the forces that shape student consciousness, identity, and relation to the school. The result, he argues, is that they become comfortable with decontextualized, individualistic notions of student behavior: “Maria’s so lazy”; “Jack has a bad attitude”; “Donnie is just not capable of doing well in school”; “The students in this class just can’t learn” (p. 20). Kincheloe further states:

Such perspectives result from a consistent lack of exposure to the ways human beings are shaped by specific historical, social, economic, and cultural forces. Many teachers learn to see only the immediacy of school and student experience. They have not encountered ways of seeing the power of forces not immediately visible in everyday interactions. (p. 20)

Other literature echoes Kincheloe’s concerns, arguing that transmission-oriented approaches to teaching, particularly in a time of rapidly increasing racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity, privilege those in possession of dominant cultural and linguistic understandings and harm those who are not conversant in this valued capital (Strom, 2015; Strom & Viesca, 2020; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Indeed, Strom and Martin (2022) point out that “transmission models typically exclude the funds of knowledge that diverse students possess, ultimately diminishing the possibility for learner-centered, culturally responsive/sustaining educative experiences.” (p. 1). Teaching for social justice includes pedagogical strategies and methods, but also involves teachers’ beliefs, how they conceptualize their work and its broader connections, the lens through which they interpret what is happening in schools and classrooms, and how they recognize and push back against inequities. Enterline et al. (2008) adds that this includes what teachers
expect of various learners, how they utilize the knowledge traditions and experiences of marginalized groups in teaching curriculum, and what they consider to be the purposes of teaching and schooling.

2.2 Empirical Research on Learning to Teach for Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice

A close look at the literature on preparing prospective teachers for diversity reveals a number of promising insights and approaches, but also several gaps and limitations in knowledge. The majority of scholarship on social justice in teacher education focuses on developing conceptual approaches to understanding social justice in teacher education (see, for examples, Apple, 2011; Au, 2017; Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Cho, 2017; Cochran-Smith, 2010; Dyches & Boyd, 2017; Edwards et al., 2018; Gérin-Lajoie, 2011; Goodwin & Darity, 2019; Gorski, 2006, Keiser, 2005; May & Sleeter, 2010; Nieto, 2017; Pugach et al., 2019; Rao, 2005; Sleeter, 2017; Valentín 2006). There is also an abundance of literature that offers reflections or suggestions related to the challenges associated with preparing future teachers to teach for social justice and equity (see, for examples, Aveling, 2006; Bruna, 2007; Carson, 2005; Case & Hemmings, 2005; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2010; Gorski & Dalton, 2020; Pantić & Carr, 2017; Pennington, 2007; Raible & Irizarry, 2007, Sleeter, 2017; Trent et al., 2008). Empirical research in the field is more limited. What does exist generally involves small-scale, qualitative data collected over a short time frame—often the duration of a single course.

Sleeter (2001) surmised that the research base on preparing teachers to teach historically underserved and oppressed student groups was insufficient based on the prevalence of small-scale action-based self-studies and little emphasis on results. Hollins and Guzman (2005) came to a similar conclusion, finding that empirical work in the field tended to assess prospective teachers’ beliefs and attitudes using instructor-created questionnaires.
within very limited time frames and failed to account for classroom practice. In their systematic review, Mills and Ballantyne (2016) concurred that much of the empirical research base on social justice and teacher education centers on a brief snapshot of teacher candidates’ and/or teacher educators’ beliefs, with limited exploration into what ITE programs that adequately prepare future teachers “to engage with student diversity in socially just ways might look like in practice” (p. 264).

The current study contributes to filling this gap by way of an in-depth, multi-method investigation across one academic year of an ITE program in Ontario. To situate my study within the current research base, this review will focus on empirical studies that have been conducted in the last 20 years. The discussion that follows will address four key areas of empirical research in the field of equity, diversity, and social justice in teacher education: (1) understandings of social justice and attitudes toward diversity; (2) changing beliefs and attitudes; (3) pedagogy of teacher education courses and field placements; and (4) cohesion and fragmentation.

2.2.1 Prospective Teachers’ Understandings and Attitudes Towards Teaching for Social Justice

The ways in which prospective teachers and/or teacher educators conceptualize and understand social justice and their attitudes towards diversity constitute a major research theme in the field (see, for examples, Ballantyne & Mills, 2008; Daniel, 2016; Hyland, 2010; McDonald, 2007; Mills, 2013; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Mills & Ballantyne, 2016; Silverman, 2010; Yang & Montgomery, 2013). Teacher beliefs and attitudes inevitably influence their teaching and interactions with students. As Pajares (1992) asserted: “Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which in turn, affect their behaviour in the classroom” (p. 307). If equipping teacher candidates with beliefs and dispositions oriented towards transformative, equity-
centered practice is to be a central aim and targeted outcome of ITE, as the current study and others contend it should be (e.g., Enterline et al., 2008; Sleeter, 2014), then research into teacher candidates’ beliefs is crucial. Greater insight into these beliefs and conceptions of teaching for social justice would provide ITE programs with important information to draw from in planning curricula and program direction (Pajares, 1992). Following, I review several studies that investigated social-justice-related beliefs in preservice teachers, with varying results, and subsequently discuss literature on changing prospective teachers’ beliefs over time.

Ballantyne and Mills’ (2008) found that teachers held narrow understandings of what constitute inclusive practices, however, inclusive practices that are aligned with recognitive social justice (Gale & Densmore, 2000) were also uncovered. In their study, six preservice music teachers from three different Australian teacher education programs were interviewed prior to graduating and again six months into their first year of teaching to examine their perspectives on inclusiveness in the music classroom. A need was identified for teacher education courses on inclusive practices to be more contextualized to the classroom in order for teachers to see their relevance. Daniel (2016) found a similar dissonance between course knowledge and its perceived relevance to classroom instruction. He investigated how teacher candidates’ perspectives on culturally responsive pedagogy developed over the duration of a 13-month teacher education program in the mid-Atlantic U.S. and the perceived relationships between coursework and student teaching experiences. Data were collected from focus group interviews, interviews with four teacher candidates and observations of their practicum instruction, two surveys administered to the cohort, and interviews with eight teacher educators. In-depth and longitudinal, this study focused on teacher candidates’ learning and found a lack of noticing during student teaching on the part of teacher candidates that demonstrated an inability to transfer learning into practice.
Theory to practice gaps constitute a common theme in the literature. The “practice turn” (Reid, 2011; Zeichner, 2012) emerged amidst just such evidence that university-based teacher preparation programs focused too heavily on theories of teaching and learning at the expense of cultivating practical teaching skills. This long-perceived theory-practice gap is based on the notion that the university model of teacher education “emphasizes theory, values, and beliefs at the expense of actual teaching practice, thus leaving new teachers on their own to implement or translate (university-produced) theory into (classroom-ready) practice” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016, p.72). There are competing manifestations of this “turn”; however all purportedly reject the theory-practice binary. Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) frames this “turn” specifically in relation to learning to teach for diversity and emphasizes that teachers’ understandings and actions are intimately interwoven and that equity-centered practice must involve classroom routines and context-specific practices couched in broader visions of teaching, curriculum, learning, and equity.

Although research documents disconnects between equity coursework and classroom practice, there are studies that report positive experiences in learning to teach for social justice. Hyland (2010), for example, explored the dynamic nature of a diverse group of preservice teachers’ conceptions of social justice over the course of a two-week alternate route teacher education class. She examined how participants’ varied subject positions as African American, white, Christian, agnostic, gay, and straight informed their understandings of teaching for social justice. Data were collected from twice-daily journal entries, class transcriptions, emails from students, and notes on informal conversations. Analysis centered on how the group managed contradictory discourses about social justice in teaching. Hyland concluded that the time-intensive nature of the class created a sense of community that opened spaces for some participants to
Mills and Ballantyne (2010), on the other hand, observed less positive orientations in their study on preservice teachers’ attitudes toward cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity. They analyzed 48 autoethnographies created by teacher candidates as assignments for a course at an Australian teacher education program. Using Garmon’s (2004) three dispositional factors influencing preservice teachers’ likelihood of developing multicultural awareness and sensitivity: “self-reflectiveness”, “openness”, and “commitment to social justice”, they found that only three students (6% of participants) submitted autoethnographies that endorsed what they authors positioned as the highly desirable response: a commitment to social justice.

Mills’ (2009) work similarly explored how teacher education impacted prospective teachers’ dispositions toward social justice. Interview data were collected from 24 teacher candidates: 12 who were entering a one-year program and 12 who were entering the final year of a four-year program within one Australian university. Findings revealed recognitive views and deficit models of social justice in both cohorts, suggesting that teachers who have completed three years of teacher preparation are not necessarily better prepared than those who are beginning their teacher education to successfully teach diverse students. A limited view of diversity and social justice among preservice teacher candidates was also found in Silverman’s (2010) study, which analyzed survey responses from 88 participants in a teacher education program in the U.S. with a strong professed emphasis on diversity. Findings revealed a limited sense of responsibility among teacher candidates to be advocates or change agents and a limited understanding of the construct of diversity.
Yang and Montgomery (2013) reported more ambivalent results in their research on the attitudes of a total of 43 preservice teachers and teacher educators toward student diversity using Q methodology. Data were derived from a large teacher education program in the Midwest. Participants sorted through a stack of Q sort cards with various subjective statements related to teaching for diversity and arranged them into three piles: those that were like me, unlike me, or those about which they were ambivalent or uncertain. The results were split into two array groups: one of consensus on the importance of multicultural education, the teacher’s role as an advocate, and helping all student achieve and another group of wide disparity in attitudes towards how student diversity should be treated, indicating that only some teacher candidates endorsed social-justice-oriented teaching and saw themselves as agents of change.

Prior literature reports varying levels of social justice-centered understandings and attitudes from teacher candidates. Some documented positive orientations while others reported gaps in understanding and more negative dispositions. Next, I discuss literature focused on changes in beliefs as prospective teachers progress through ITE.

2.2.2 Changes in Beliefs About Teaching for Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice

Although it is widely acknowledged that changing teachers’ beliefs is difficult, it is not impossible (Lee, 2011; Mills, 2013; see Wideen et al., 1998 for a review). Research has found that traditional teacher preparation programs do impact preservice teachers’ beliefs about equity and social justice over time, implying that although learning to teach for social justice is undoubtedly complex, it can and should be legitimate goal and targeted outcome of teacher education (Arsal, 2019; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Enterline et al., 2008; Frederick et al., 2010; Lee, 2011; McDonald, 2005; Thompson et al., 2016). Garmon (2004) (as briefly aforementioned) posited two key factors for changing
preservice teachers’ attitudes and beliefs: (1) dispositional factors (e.g., openness, self-awareness/self-reflectiveness, and commitment to social justice) and (2) experiential factors (e.g., intercultural, education, and support group experiences). Examining ITE cases wherein positive change in beliefs has been reported is useful. Program policies and procedures can be examined and help key stakeholders to reflect on their own practices, successes, and challenges and adopt novel approaches to advance change.

Several studies have reported positive changes in teacher candidates’ social justice-related beliefs. Arsal (2019), for example, used a pre- and post-test quasi-experimental research design to examine the effect of a three-month critical multicultural teacher education course on the beliefs and attitudes of 76 preservice teachers in Turkey. The critical multicultural content of the course was designed in accordance with the approach developed by Banks (2006). He found that the experimental group scored significantly better than the control on the post-test, indicating that the integration of critical multicultural content into a ITE program can improve the attitudes and beliefs of preservice teachers on issues of equity and social justice.

Positive change across the course of ITE was also reported by Cochran-Smith et al. (2012) who examined longitudinal survey data derived from prospective teachers’ scores on the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B) scale, which is designed to measure candidates’ endorsement of beliefs consistent with the concept of teaching for social justice. The article focused on three ITE programs—one each in the U.S., New Zealand, and Ireland—and analyzed cross-comparatively: (a) demographic and teacher quality contexts, (b) ITE program goals related to social justice and equity, and (c) the results of pre- and post-surveys. The U.S. data represented a total of 585 entering and 738 exiting teacher candidates; the New Zealand data represents 569 entering and 398 exiting teacher candidates; and Ireland’s data represents 283 entering and 533 exiting teacher
candidates. The study found modest, positive shifts in beliefs about teaching for social justice across each of the three sites. Enterline et al. (2008) also used the LTSJ-B scale to measure changes in entering and exiting student cohorts in an American teacher education program with a social justice agenda. The entering teacher candidates showed moderate endorsement of beliefs consistent with teaching for social justice as defined by the scale. That is, they agreed with the easiest to endorse items. However, they showed uncertainty about many of the more complex items, indicating they had a long way to go in terms of adopting these aspects of the program’s mission. Results from exit surveys showed a dramatic difference in the distribution of belief estimates. Importantly, this study shows that graduates maintained their higher scores after one year of teaching, which suggests that these changes in beliefs were not merely a short-term result of program emphasis on social justice.

A study by Frederick et al. (2010) similarly reported on positive shifts in prospective teachers’ beliefs related to issues of social justice though this research documented those changes over the course of a single sophomore-level Foundations of Education class. Located at a small, private ITE program in the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., Frederick et al. (2010) described in detail the program and the course, including class simulations, school observations, course readings, and class discussions. Through narrative analysis, the researchers identified the emergence of transformative thinking among the predominantly white, middle class teacher candidates as they began to take responsibility for their own learning and started to see themselves as agents for change. This included a recognition of education as embedded in broader societal constructs and a deconstruction of their prior notions of education.

McDonald (2005) undertook a multi-method, longitudinal comparative case study of two teacher education programs in the U.S. She triangulated data from semi-structured
interviews with teacher candidates and faculty members, observed courses and practicum placements, and reviewed relevant documents. The breadth and depth of this study is an aberration in the field. The study found that prospective teachers that were able to articulate how and where they had learned about teaching for social justice left their programs with a greater sense of preparedness. McDonald concluded that students’ opportunities to learn about these issues in concrete ways has implications for the quality of teachers that ITE programs produce.

Other research has found mixed results. Lee’s (2011) participatory action research project, for example, examined how six teacher candidates understood and changed (or did not change) their understandings of teaching for social justice over the course of a five-quarter teacher education program in a Midwestern university in the U.S. with a stated commitment to preparing teachers to teach for social justice. Lee found that three of the focal teacher candidates demonstrated strong understandings of social justice that they were able to implement in their teaching. For others, conceptions of social justice conflicted with their teaching practices. Only two of the participants demonstrated evidence of positive change in their justice orientation over the course of the program. Lee concludes that teacher candidates need to be given opportunities to reflect on how their understandings and beliefs intersect with their prior experiences and the program.

Thompson et al. (2016) carried out a mixed methods investigation into teacher candidates’ views on pupils’ learning, well-being, and educational achievement related to poverty levels that also found limited progress. Data were collected from pre- and post-course questionnaires and a focus group interview. The study found that prospective teachers tended to associate low achievement more strongly with family and cultural factors than socioeconomic or school ones. This study shows limited evidence for
changes in thinking over the course of the program and a failure on the part of teacher candidates to recognize broader institutional and structural barriers to academic success.

This review of empirical research on changes in beliefs related to teaching diverse students equitably demonstrates that ITE can affect the understandings and attitudes that graduates will eventually carry with them into the classroom. Understanding these beliefs, then, is key for ITE programs if they are to influence prospective teachers’ preconceptions about teaching for social justice. The review of research on teacher bias in chapter one of this thesis provides ample evidence of the ways in which teachers’ beliefs can impact marginalized students’ experiences and outcomes at school, highlighting the importance of making teacher education programs accountable for the quality of teachers they prepare.

### 2.3 Pedagogy of Initial Teacher Education Coursework and Field Placements

The final major category under which empirical research on social justice in teacher education falls is work that involves an exploration of field placements and course pedagogy within programs and their relationship to learning to teach for equity, diversity, and social justice (see, for examples, Conklin & Hughes, 2016; Gorski, 2009; Gorski & Dalton, 2020; Gorski & Parekh, 2020; Kelly & Brandes, 2010; McDonald, 2007, 2008; Souto-Manning, 2019; Souto-Manning & Martell, 2019). I begin with an overview of literature that focuses on coursework, followed by discussion of work that investigates field placements and their relation to learning to teach for diversity.

#### 2.3.1 Coursework and Learning to Teach for Social Justice

Here I describe various approaches to multicultural and social justice teacher education (MSJTE) and literature that explores how MSJTE is conceptualized and integrated into
ITE coursework. Jenks et al. (2001) draw from McLaren (1997) to articulate three approaches to MSJTE: conservative, liberal, and critical. The conservative approach is assimilationist, preparing teachers to help marginalized students adopt “American/Eurocentric” values. The liberal approach rejects assimilation in favour of pluralism and attends to individual bias. However, liberal MSJTE overlooks the role of historic and contemporary power, privilege, and oppression, leaving prospective teachers ill-equipped to understand and address racial, economic, and other injustice (Jenks et al., 2001). Critical MSJTE centers issues of power and emphasizes teacher preparation for social transformation (Gorski & Dalton, 2020; Grant & Sleeter, 2012). Gorski (2009) expanded Jenks et al.’s (2001) three approaches into the following five MSJTE approaches:

1. Conservative approach: Teaching the “other”
2. Liberal approach 1: Teaching with cultural sensitivity and tolerance
3. Liberal approach 2: Teaching with multicultural competence
4. Critical approach 1: Teaching in sociopolitical context
5. Critical approach 2: Teaching as resistance and counter-hegemonic practice

MSJTE scholars have broadly criticized the absence of critical approaches in teacher education and warned of the dangers of adopting conservative or liberal approaches alone. As Gorski and Dalton (2020) state:

By focusing on goals such as assimilation or celebrating diversity without attending to more critical goals, these approaches can cultivate in educators a
false sense of preparedness to advocate for equity while obscuring the realities of racism, economic injustice, and other forms of oppression. (p. 359)

The result of this lack of critical framing, they argue, is educators who do not understand and are therefore unprepared to respond to and ameliorate educational and societal injustices. Despite theoretical commitments to equity and social justice, Gorski’s (2009) qualitative content analysis of multicultural teacher education (MTE) coursework syllabi from 45 different courses across the United States revealed that most courses were designed with solely conservative or liberal goals in mind. Using the aforementioned typology of approaches to MSJTE, he found that most of the syllabi were crafted “to prepare teachers with cultural sensitivity, tolerance, and multicultural competence” (p. 316). However, there were limited examples of courses that were designed to prepare teachers to identify and disrupt educational inequities, structural or systemic barriers, or create more equitable learning environments. Only 26.7% of the courses examined incorporated a critical approach. Gorski concluded, in concert with other literature, there is still much to be done in preparing future teachers to orchestrate transformative pedagogies and operationalize anti-oppressive schools.

In an empirical extension of the aforementioned study, Gorski and Parekh (2020) found more concerning evidence in their examination of conceptions and self-reported practices of multicultural teacher education (MTE) instructors. Specifically, they examined the relationship between the criticality of teacher educators’ approaches and their perceptions of institutional support for the values they teach. Analysis was based on a survey of MTE course instructors in Canada and the U.S. (N=186) and revealed a negative relationship between criticality and institutional support (i.e., the more critical the educators’ approaches in the classroom, the less support they perceived). This study indicates that institutional barriers to critically oriented teacher education coursework persist.
McDonald (2007) similarly focused on teacher educators’ conceptions of social justice as they attempted to integrate a social justice agenda into courses in two ITE programs in the United States. Data were collected via multiple methods over the course of the two one-year programs and included interviews with faculty and preservice teachers, observations of university courses and practicum placements, a review of program and course documents, and pre- and post-surveys of student cohorts. McDonald found that teacher educators’ conceptions of social justice tended to focus on meeting the needs of individuals with less recognition of how oppression and structural inequities shape experiences. Her 2008 article was drawn from the same data and focused on assignments as implemented across several courses in the two programs. McDonald (2008) discussed the role of the assignments in teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about social justice. When the assignments focused on field experiences, they emphasized an individualistic notion of social justice and when they dealt with the socio-political aspects of schooling, they focused on technicist views of teaching and were disconnected from field placements. Diversity in practicums played a considerable role in shaping teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about teaching for equity, diversity, and social justice (more on the role of field placements in the following section; see pp. 80-82).

Kelly and Brandes’ (2010) research is of particular interest because it is one of the few empirical studies dealing with ITE and social justice in Canada. It is essentially a self-study of the authors’ own work as teacher educators within an ITE program. They juxtaposed descriptions of their teaching with interview data from program alumni who were their former students. The purpose was to explore how former graduates reported having incorporated the conceptual understandings of anti-oppressive education they gleaned from their coursework into their teaching. Most alumni said that their ideas of what it means to teach for social justice had changed since being in-service. Foremost among the changes was a deepening understanding of the complexities of their social
location and that of their students. Kelly and Brandes (2010) concluded by recommending that social justice and equity be infused through teacher education rather than isolated in a stand-alone course.

In summary, the literature on ITE coursework shows a lack of critical approaches and suggests that future teachers are being underprepared to recognize, challenge, and change social and educational inequity. The importance of infusing critical social justice curriculum across ITE coursework in a coherent way is also indicated. This theme will be explored in greater detail in a subsequent section on cohesion and fragmentation in ITE (see pp. 83-86). Next, I review literature on the role of field experiences in social justice-oriented teacher preparation.

2.3.2 Field Experiences and Learning to Teach for Social Justice

Several studies address social justice issues through student experiences in community or school-based field placements. These studies answer the call from those who have urged for the use of experiential and reflective approaches to learning, claiming this as the most effective way to impact teacher candidates’ understandings of social justice (e.g., Ballantyne & Mills, 2015; Cochran-Smith, 2010). The work reviewed here documents the value of field experiences, under particular conditions, in shifting teacher perspectives and practices towards more social justice-oriented and culturally responsive teaching. Ahmed (2020), Cochran-Smith et al. (2016), Farnsworth (2010), Nguyen and Zeichner (2021), Sharkey et al. (2016), and Spalding et al. (2007) all examined how prospective teachers developed beliefs and understandings about social justice through field experiences. Ahmed (2020) followed the evolution of nine preservice teachers’ conceptions of social justice over their year in a social-justice-oriented teacher education program. Participants’ experiences teaching in high-poverty schools had the greatest influence on their thinking. The tensions they encountered during their student teaching
increased their awareness of inequitable systems and helped them to care for students from a critical standpoint. Participants felt that the development of a social-justice-centered pedagogy and teaching philosophy was a uniquely personal process; one that, for some, produced dispositions and practices that their social-justice-centered teacher education program would endorse (e.g., making their own meaning and understandings of social justice) and, for others, produced dispositions and practices their program would eschew (e.g., viewing social justice as being about ‘tolerance’ rather than embracing its centrality and diversity as an inherent value).

Other studies have also shown the positive potential of field experiences in ITE for social justice. Farnsworth (2010) analyzed stories told by U.S. elementary preservice teachers about their community-based experiences and highlighted how these experiences shifted their social justice identities in transformative ways. Nguyen and Zeichner (2021) reported on increased awareness and shifts in beliefs among preservice English as a foreign language teachers in Vietnam after community field experiences in their teacher education programs. Findings indicated that these experiences helped teacher candidates to discover inequalities among families, ethnic groups, and geographical regions that impacted children’s schooling opportunities and access to English learning. This awareness shifted their perspectives on teaching and their role as teachers. Sharkey et al. (2016) conducted a nine-month qualitative case study examining the effects of community-as-curriculum initiatives. They found benefits including greater recognition and understanding of the ways in which local knowledge could act as a curriculum resource in the classroom. Spalding et al. (2007) reported on U.S.-based teacher candidates’ shifts in knowledge, beliefs, and actions after a nine-day field experience to Poland and the March of Remembrance and Hope during the excursion and then one-year post-exursion. Students exhibited shifts in thinking as a result and a willingness to act against injustice that persisted over time.
These studies all demonstrate the potential of field experiences in the preparation of future teachers for transformative practice. However, Nguyen and Zeichner (2021) point out that there appear to be several conditions that are necessary for field experiences to exert transformative effects (i.e., helping TCs to recognize and disrupt inequities for marginalized students). They contend that for field experiences to be impactful, teacher candidates need to be explicitly prepared for the experiences, the experiences themselves need to be carefully planned and structured, and there needs to be careful mediation of these experiences (e.g., guided reflection). Indeed, research shows that unstructured, unmediated experiences can actually reinforce negative patterns that perpetuate inequity (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Harfitt, 2018; Tinkler et al., 2014; Zeichner, 1996).

Deliberately designed field placements that emphasize forming relationships of equal status between teacher candidates and students and those in the community, mediated by reflection and guidance within ITE programs, can significantly influence teacher candidates’ understandings of social justice and foster a deep grounding in the community to inform their practice (Bieler, 2012; Mills & Ballantyne, 2016; Nguyen & Zeichner, 2021; Tinkler et al., 2014).

It is important to note that several of the studies discussed in this literature review thus far took place prior to 2020 and events that propelled schools and education systems to re-assess how Black students and marginalized communities are served (e.g., George Floyd’s murder in the United States, the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, the discovery of human remains at several former residential schools in Canada). In the past few years, there has been an increased awareness of the role of racism and bias in schooling and commitments to anti-racist and culturally responsive pedagogies have been articulated by ITE programs, school boards, professional bodies, and education ministries alike. Research that examines these issues in contemporary times is much needed.
Next, I discuss literature on coherence in ITE and its effects on the integration of a shared and cohesive vision for programming and delivery.

2.4 Coherence and Fragmentation in Initial Teacher Education

In general, the preparation of future teachers for diversity has constituted program approaches that focus on changing teacher candidates’ beliefs and attitudes, exposing them to content on the histories and experiences of marginalized groups, and supporting them in developing equity-based classroom practices (Banks, 1993; Goodwin, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2001; Cochran Smith et al., 2016). A limitation to the ways in which these approaches are implemented in teacher education is that they often do not occur as a holistic, cohesive endeavour. Instead, they are isolated within the confines of a single course or rely on individual passionate advocates who act independently to help teacher candidates develop understandings, attitudes, and competencies in teaching for social justice (Kitchen & Brown, 2022; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Goodwin, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998). The importance of programs taking an integrated approach is documented in research on structural and conceptual fragmentation in teacher education and related work on program coherence (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 2000).

Goodlad (1990) constitutes a pivotal study, which examined 29 teacher education programs over the course of five years. Though over 40 years old, this research still provides relevant insights into the effects of a lack of coherence across ITE and how isolating particular concepts and practices related to teaching impacts how and what teacher candidates learn. Goodlad reported that few programs provided learning opportunities that involved a cohesive and integrated conception of what teaching requires. In the worst instances, he stated, programs “patch courses together and place
student teachers wherever he or she can find teachers willing, for whatever reason, to take them on” (p. 246). The importance of Goodlad’s study is its analysis of ITE programs as systems that involve multiple and intersecting opportunities to learn and his assertion that the relationships between these multiple and varied opportunities to learn (e.g., across courses and between courses and field placements) are critical to prospective teachers’ understandings and overall development.

Since Goodlad (1990), several other studies have investigated the various ways in which programs of teacher education develop and integrate a specific conception of teaching and learning. A series of studies examined the efforts of seven ITE programs that were engaged in developing coherence around a specific vision (Darling-Hammond et al., 2000; Koppich, 2000; Mereseth & Koppich, 2000; Miller & Silvernail, 2000; Snyder, 2000; Whitford et al., 2000; and Zeichner, 2000). These studies all shared a similar objective, which was to learn about the policies and practices of teacher education programs that had a reputation for being successful in preparing teachers to be learner-centered and learning-centered (Zeichner, 2000). A key feature, as described by Zeichner (2000) about one such ITE program, was an unusual degree of coherence. He attributed this, in part, to “the culture of collaboration among faculty that encourages substantive interaction about teacher education” and noted that as a result of this collaboration, “faculty have detailed knowledge of the whole program curriculum, not just their little piece” (p. 52). Similarly, Snyder (2000), who reported on the Developmental Teacher Education Program at the University of California at Berkeley and its permeating focus on child development, described the ways in which this central focus directed program decisions about field placements, course sequence, and course content across its program. He concluded that the program’s coherence around its primary focus on child development resulted in graduating teacher candidates that shared its overarching goals and corresponding practices.
Research is more limited on how ITE programs integrate a vision for equity and social justice, specifically. Prior literature asserts that coherence is likely one of the most critical aspects of teacher preparation for diversity and social justice (Assaf et al., 2010; Cochran-Smith & Reagan, 2022; McDonald, 2007; Nieto, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Zygmunt & Clark, 2016); yet there is very little research on this topic (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Tato’s (1996) quantitative study of nine teacher education programs found that programs that touted commitments to social justice and equity had a weak impact on the engrained beliefs of prospective teachers whereas Hammerness (2003), in contrast, found that graduating teacher candidates of Stanford’s Teacher Education Program, which had an equity thread that ran throughout its program curriculum, possessed a strong commitment to equity, although this study provided little information on the ways in which issues related to equity and diversity were implemented across the program.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) emphasized the need for coherence, wherein teacher educators build a common vision, demonstrate shared knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning, and use common standards of practice that guide and assess coursework and practica. Tato (1996) aptly pointed out that program coherence does not necessarily entail that all faculty/instructors/key stakeholders think alike, rather building coherence should involve reaching common ground with regards to professional norms and expectations, as well as the ways in which opportunities to learn are conceptualized and organized. Although, as aforementioned, ITE programs in Ontario have articulated written commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion, little to no research exists on how particular programs conceptualize and implement their anti-oppressive or social-justice-oriented vision coherently (or not) across their policies, curriculum, and practices. Additional research in this emergent field in the Canadian context is much needed.
To summarize, this review of the literature demonstrates that there are a very few multi-method empirical studies that explore social justice and equity as it is conceptualized and integrated across ITE. Sleeter (2014) corroborates this in an analysis of 196 papers in four leading international teacher education journals on the topic that found only 1% reported on large-scale mixed-methods studies. The few exceptions include Daniel (2016); McDonald (2005, 2007, 2008), and Cochran-Smith et al. (2009), none of which were undertaken in the Canadian context. There are virtually no in-depth, mixed methods studies that investigate social justice and equity issues as they are conceptualized and operationalized in teacher education in Canada.

2.5 Chapter Summary

Although notions of social justice and equity as they are conceptualized in teaching and teacher education are various and competing, this literature review pinpointed and discussed some common themes, including an understanding of teaching as being constitutive of pedagogical methods but also of an educator’s underlying beliefs, how they conceptualize their role as a teacher, and act (or do not act) to push back against broader inequities. To situate my own study within the current research landscape, the bulk of this review focused on empirical literature published in the last 20 years. I identified four principal areas of study: understandings and attitudes towards social justice and diversity, changes in beliefs and attitudes, pedagogy of teacher education courses and field experiences, and cohesion/fragmentation in ITE. I drew attention to notable gaps, namely that the vast majority of empirical work in this field is small-scale, single method, qualitative data collected over a brief time frame. Research on these issues in the Canadian context is limited and there are virtually no published studies that report on data collected longitudinally using mixed methods in Ontario. Prior research on cohesion and fragmentation in ITE indicates that the most effective programs establish
and disseminate a shared and coherent vision across their programming and delivery. Several scholars argue that this is a key element in teacher development for equity and social justice. When considered in conjunction with the dearth of data on representation rates in Ontario ITE (discussed in chapter one), a lack of information on the ways in which social justice and equity are integrated into ITE programs in Ontario (and even less knowledge about whether teacher candidates are graduating equipped to orchestrate socially just practice), we simply do not have the data needed to make quality improvements.
Chapter 3

3 Methodology

In this chapter, I describe study design and methods. I begin by giving an overview of pragmatism as a research paradigm in order to situate this research. Then, I provide an overview of mixed methods and its suitability to this study. Next, I delineate study design, including site selection and research participants. This is followed by a discussion of data collection methods (i.e., recruitment and procedures). Next, I report on data analysis—divided into a discussion of survey data analysis and interview data analysis. Finally, I describe the steps I have taken to ensure validity, trustworthiness, and credibility.

3.1 Pragmatism as Research Paradigm

It is important for researchers to be aware of the implicit worldviews they bring to their work and acknowledge them as foundational to their inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). As such, I will reflect here on my worldview as it informs and provides legitimacy for my mixed methods research design. This mixed methods study is reflective of my pragmatic worldview. Pragmatism is underpinned by a belief that knowledge and reality are based on socially constructed beliefs and habits (Yefimov, 2004). Knowledge is based on experience, which makes each person’s knowledge unique. However, as Kaushik and Walsh (2019) point out “much of this knowledge is socially shared as it is created from socially shared experiences. Therefore, all knowledge is social knowledge” (p. 4). The epistemology underlying pragmatism does not view knowledge as reality, rather it is socially constructed with a purpose to better manage one’s life and to participate in the world (Rorty, 1980; Goldkuhl, 2012). As a research paradigm, pragmatism is rooted in the conviction that researchers should employ what works best for the research problem.
being investigated; the focus is on the research questions and consequences of the research rather than on the methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

I identify with the branch of pragmatism that asserts “if a philosophical theory does not contribute directly to social progress then it is not worth much” (Legg & Hookway, 2020, para 1). I further align with pragmatism’s refusal to engage with contentious metaphysical concepts such as truth and reality and, instead, accept that there can be single or multiple realities that are open to empirical inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In alignment with critical race theory (CRT), one of the theories I draw on to frame this research, I believe, as Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) articulate:

…political and moral analysis is situational—‘truths only exist for [a] person in this predicament at this time in history’ [Delgado, 1991, p. 11]. For the critical race theorist, social reality is constructed by the formulation and the exchange of stories about individual situations. These stories serve as interpretive structures by which we impose order on experience and it on us (p. 57).

This study is informed by pragmatism’s assertion that the process of knowledge acquisition occurs along a continuum rather than on one or the other end of opposing and mutually exclusive poles (i.e., the objectivity of postpositivism vs. the subjectivity of constructivism) (Goles & Hirschheim, 2000).

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) succinctly summarize the links between pragmatism and mixed methods research, arguing that: (1) both qualitative and quantitative research methods can be used in a single study; (2) the research question is of primary importance and takes precedence over both the method or the philosophical stance that undergirds the method; (3) the dichotomy between postpositivism and constructivism should be abandoned; (4) the use of metaphysical concepts such as ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ should also
be abandoned; and (5) a practical and applied research philosophy should guide methodological choices. It is important to note in relation to my own study that Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) also designate the transformative-emancipatory (also called advocacy-participatory) approach as another “best” philosophical basis of mixed methods research, useful for engaging in research that addresses power differentials.

Morgan (2014) points out that there is a strong fit between pragmatism and the advocacy of social justice. The focus of pragmatism in research is that it is meaningful, rooted in a desire for a better world (Wolfe, 1999). Pragmatism has a normative orientation. John Dewey, whose works are often studied by pragmatists, eschewed the term “epistemology” and instead used the term “theory of inquiry” which, for him, involved an investigation to understand some aspect of reality and to create knowledge to make change to that reality (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Pragmatism is oriented to a prospective world as yet unrealized. Its central objective is the creation of practical knowledge that can be acted upon to make purposeful difference in practice (Goldkuhl, 2012).

I adopt a pragmatic approach to research because it creates the space to choose the appropriate research methods from a range of qualitative and/or quantitative means which has a number of advantages for social justice research. Kaushik and Walsh (2019) argue that pragmatism’s pluralism has the potential to provide strong evidence for micro- to macro-level discourse and, further, it “sets an inclusive framework of inquiry that supports interdisciplinary and cooperative research about social injustices” (p. 12). Pragmatism’s emphasis on an action-oriented, problem-solving process of inquiry that has an ethics-based commitment to progress and democratic values (Koenig et al., 2019) is foundational to my research.
3.2 Study Design

I employed a mixed methods approach defined here as a method that collects, analyzes, and mixes both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies; the central premise of mixed methods is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). For this research, the quantitative component is nested within a predominantly qualitative case study design. The overarching emphasis is not to determine the impact of the focal ITE program on teachers’ conceptions and beliefs, but to better understand how equity and diversity are conceptualized and operationalized across the program and how policies and practices may act to shape prospective teachers’ experiences and beliefs.

Survey data, including the quantitative LTSJ-B scale (Ludlow et al., 2008), provided information on current representation rates and teacher candidates’ beliefs related to key principles of social justice, allowing me to locate interview data within the broader cohort and place participant experiences in context. This offered insight into how teacher candidates acted to mediate the integration of social justice and equity within the program. Disaggregating data on entering and exiting students’ beliefs related to social justice principles, respectively, provided a useful measure of change over time—data that can help to inform policy and program decisions. This study’s mixed methods design fills a substantial gap in the research literature and was chosen because, as Sleeter (2014) points out, “methodologies that include both quantitative and qualitative data enable policymakers to ‘see’ how a program or practice might interface with local realities, while also enabling them to assess its impact in clear terms” (p. 147). The principal goal of the quantitative survey component of this study was to complement the qualitative
design. Because of this focus, an overview of qualitative research, with an emphasis on its use in program evaluation, is discussed next.

The central strength of qualitative research is in its capacity to render “thick description” of phenomena (Geertz, 1973). This research calls for going beyond what Denzin (1989) described as “surface appearances” to “present detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another” (p. 2). Patton (2003) describes why qualitative methods can be particularly useful in program evaluation, noting that this approach can “tell the program’s story by capturing and communicating the participants’ stories”. He details:

Understanding the program’s and participant’s stories is useful to the extent that those stories illuminate the processes and outcomes of the program for those who must make decisions about the program. The methodological implication of this criterion is that the intended users must value the findings and find them credible. They must be interested in the stories, experiences, and perceptions of program participants beyond simply knowing how many came into the program, how many completed it, and how many did what afterwards. Qualitative findings in evaluation can illuminate the people behind the numbers and put faces on the statistics to deepen understanding”. (pp. 2-3)

Patton’s assertion suits this project’s purpose, which is to gather data and generate findings that are useful and will be viewed as credible by those in positions to make change. By illuminating participant stories against the backdrop of process, policy, and outcomes, this study aims to produce results that can be used to inform decision-making and propel positive change. Next, I discuss case study research and justify its suitability to this study.
A case study can be defined as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single, bounded unit” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 222-223). My research questions and theoretical framing led me to identifying a case study approach as being the most appropriate for this research, which demands attention to multiple levels of analysis and allows for a conceptualization of prospective teachers as being inextricable from the component parts of the context in which they are developing. The case or “bounded system” in this study is one Ontario ITE program. Yin (2014) observes that a case study is particularly suited to situations wherein it is impossible to separate the phenomenon’s variables from their context. The focus of case study research is on a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context wherein the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly delineated (Taylor et al., 2015). A case study approach can thus reveal situations that are recognized and apparent but lack a detailed or in-depth understanding (Holstein & Gubrium, 1996). Through prolonged, intensive contact with the site, I was able to gain a richly descriptive account of the experiences of individuals, groups, and organizational structures that make up the dynamic and complex relationships and interactions within the setting (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Sample selection involves decisions about research sites, events, time, and people (Merriam, 1988). In the following section, I explain and justify decisions regarding the selection of the site and research participants.

### 3.3 Site Selection

I used purposeful sampling to select the focal ITE program for this case study. Patton (2015) contends that “the logic and power of qualitative purposeful sampling derives from the emphasis on in-depth understanding of specific cases: information-rich cases. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling” (p.
My goal was to obtain a richly textured account of social justice and equity in Ontario ITE; thus, purposeful sampling is suited to my study. I used a typical purposeful sampling strategy to capture what is typical, normal, or average (Patton, 2003). The site was selected specifically because it is not in any substantial way “atypical, extreme, deviant, or intensely unusual” (Patton, 2015, p. 284) from other ITE programs in Ontario. I chose a program that:

- is located within a census metropolitan area\(^5\) as the majority of ITE programs in Ontario are;
- is publicly funded;
- offers a consecutive program (leads to a Bachelor of Education after students have already completed an undergraduate degree);
- groups teacher candidates into three divisions: primary/junior (kindergarten to Grade 6), junior/intermediate (Grades 4-10), and intermediate/senior (Grades 7-12);
- enrolls teacher candidates on a full-time basis only;
- has a vision/mission statement/conceptual framework that features a commitment to social justice and equity;
- has a student demographic that is overrepresented by white, female teacher candidates;
- has a large and growing proportion of teaching staff that are limited duties/contract faculty.

\(^5\) Census metropolitan areas are considered to be large, densely populated centres made up of adjacent municipalities that are economically and socially integrated. A CMA must have a population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in the population centre or “core” (Statistics Canada, 2022j).
A limitation of site selection for this study was that there is an absence of baseline comparative evidence on the main components of ITE programs in Ontario, which made it challenging to characterize ITE across Ontario and narrowly delineate a “typical” case. The above criteria constitute a broad representation of the ways in which the majority of programs in Ontario are structured and constituted. Thirteen out of the 15 accredited teacher education programs in Ontario are publicly funded institutions. Ten out of the 13 publicly funded programs provide all three divisional offerings, all offer consecutive programs, and all but four are restricted to study on a full-time basis. Twelve programs’ conceptual frameworks feature social justice and equity among its core principles (Kitchen & Petrarca, 2015). Recent studies indicate that more and more ITE programs are being staffed by non-tenured faculty on a contract basis (Robinson, 2006). Finally, on average, ITE programs across Ontario offer roughly equal field experience and coursework.

Convenience sampling was also a factor for site selection. The program I chose needed to be feasible based on time, location, ease of access, and availability.

3.4 Research Participants

This study is based on data collected from a total of 272 teacher candidates enrolled in one Ontario ITE program in the 2020-2021 academic year. In addition, four key stakeholders involved in ITE programming and delivery participated in the study. Inclusion criteria for teacher candidates required all participants to be currently enrolled and all key stakeholders were required to be currently employed at the research site.

Four entering teacher candidates (i.e., entering the first year of the program) and eleven exiting teacher candidates (i.e., graduating from the second year of the program) were randomly selected from two lists—one for each of entering and exiting candidates,
respectively—that included contact information for all those who provided their email addresses on the survey indicating their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. Because my study sought to gain a better understanding of constraints and opportunities to learn about teaching for diversity as prospective teachers progressed through the program, I opted to interview a majority exiting teacher candidates who could provide greater insight into their experiences across their two-year tenure. However, because I also sought to gain insight into teacher candidates’ beliefs both as they entered and exited the program and hoped to use interview data to place survey data in context, I still included entering teacher candidates (albeit significantly fewer) in my interview pool. I limited my interviews to 15 teacher candidates for the purpose of maintaining a manageable amount of data for analysis while still striving for maximum variation. This strategy is based on the view that “any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon” (Patton, 2015, p. 283).

For this study, it was important to understand program goals alongside the perspectives and experiences of individual teacher candidates. To this end, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with four key stakeholders working within the focal ITE case to gain insight into how equity, diversity, and social justice are conceptualized at the program level, what policies and initiatives were aimed at operationalizing those goals, and how participants viewed their experiences and opportunities to learn about teaching for equity and social justice. See Table 1 for profiles of teacher candidate participants and table 2 for key stakeholder participants. All four key stakeholders were employed by the focal ITE program and carried out various roles within it (e.g., administration, coordination, planning); however, to maintain maximum confidentiality, no information other than their pseudonyms is provided.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Teachable/ Specialty</th>
<th>Background/ Self-Identified as:</th>
<th>Prior Education-Related Experience</th>
<th>Goals as a Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rachael</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I/S</td>
<td>French/ Social Studies</td>
<td>Black female, bilingual (English/French)</td>
<td>ECE assistant/piano teacher</td>
<td>To connect classroom learning to the outside world—to help students “become better citizens and better people in the world”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lena</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I/S</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>white cis woman</td>
<td>Summer camp for children with disabilities; Day program for special needs adults</td>
<td>“To have students know that they can make a difference in the world...no matter where they came from or what they've experienced...To have a process-based mindset as opposed to product [based mindset]”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimitra</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>J/I</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>First generation Canadian of Greek Cypriot descent; “white passing” but doesn’t identify as white; Greek first language</td>
<td>Music therapist</td>
<td>To practice “unconditional positive regard” with her students, which she characterized as unconditionally accepting and supporting them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P/J</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Caucasian Canadian, monolingual (English)</td>
<td>Elementary classroom volunteer; Worked with adults with disabilities</td>
<td>To provide a safe and supportive environment for her students and to be someone who “actually”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Subject(s)</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khadija</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I/S</td>
<td>Science, Social Sciences</td>
<td>Muslim woman who wears the headscarf; Arabic first language; Middle Eastern background</td>
<td>To prioritize well-being and create a classroom where students feel “absolutely safe to learn how they learn best, learn things about themselves, and how they want to respond...to things emotionally, physically, and mentally”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I/S</td>
<td>Math, Physics</td>
<td>white, middle-aged, middle-income, heterosexual Christian male</td>
<td>Church youth group mentor</td>
<td>To focus on motivating students to get involved with extracurriculars, engaging students in the subject matter no matter where they are, and making class fun and “actually applicable to the real world”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fern</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P/J</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Catholic and Dutch background, heterosexual, from a small rural community with little to no diversity</td>
<td>Nutritionist, educator in the health care field</td>
<td>To be an impactful teacher, whether it’s “one student every year or...a couple...or maybe it’s only every other year”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I/S</td>
<td>English, Social Sciences</td>
<td>Multilingual (Hindi, Urdu, Tulu, English,</td>
<td>Getting to know his students; where they are and where</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Race/Culture</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasmine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P/J</td>
<td>Female person of colour, immigrated to Canada from the Philippines</td>
<td>Volunteered teaching English in Nicaragua</td>
<td>To allow her students “freedom of self-expression” and encourage them to share their differences and feel represented in what they are learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rishi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I/S</td>
<td>Canadian, first, then Punjabi Indian second, bilingual (Punjabi, English)</td>
<td>Hockey coach</td>
<td>“We grow as people when we’re uncomfortable and we’re put into unfamiliar situations; so, pushing students out of their comfort zone, but doing so in a safe way”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassie</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P/J</td>
<td>white, non-hetero, cis gender female; raised Catholic; grew up in a “well-off community” with little diversity</td>
<td>High school co-op placement in an elementary school</td>
<td>To make sure that her students feel safe, included, and represented in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisele</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P/J</td>
<td>white cis female; grew up in a</td>
<td>To make a difference; to help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P/J</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>white, hetero, cis female; upper middle-class background</td>
<td>Swim instructor, lifeguard</td>
<td>“those light bulbs go off”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alana</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P/J</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>white, Canadian, early 30s, raised in a small town</td>
<td>Educational assistant</td>
<td>To be a positive role model for students and let children know that “they’re heard and can be seen”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>J/I</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>white, bilingual (English/French), disabled</td>
<td></td>
<td>“To help as many students as possible ...leaving students better than when I found them...not making their lives harder than they already are, making their lives easier”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Key Stakeholder Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geneve</td>
<td>Program Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nina</td>
<td>Program Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Program Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Program Personnel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5  Data Collection Methods

This multi-method case study included data from surveys, interviews, and policy documents. These multiple data sources allowed me to triangulate findings and uncover conflicting perspectives on the integration of social justice and equity among different participants, as well as discrepancies in my own interpretations when compared with those of the participants (Yin, 1989). Additionally, the use of multiple methods helped to prevent the bias of any one method from substantially impacting the study’s findings.

3.5.1  Recruitment and Procedures

Three strategies were undertaken to recruit teacher candidate participants for this study: (1) a mass recruitment email was sent out through the director of teacher education in the focal ITE program; (2) recruitment ads were posted on two Facebook pages for the class of 2021 and the class of 2022; and (3) virtual classes were visited (via Zoom) during which time I read a verbal script giving information about the study and posted a recruitment ad and link to the survey in the chat. Class instructors were not present during in-class recruitment and did not know who opted to participate. Via any three of these recruitment methods, teacher candidates could opt to anonymously participate in the survey portion of the study where they had an opportunity to provide their email address to indicate interest in being contacted for an interview.

Key stakeholders were contacted via publicly available email addresses and sent an email containing information about the study. Key stakeholders could opt to indicate interest in participating in an interview by responding to the email or using the contact information provided at the end of the email to contact either myself or my supervisor, Dr. Shelley Taylor.
3.5.2 Surveys

Entry surveys were completed by Year 1 teacher candidates (n=153) upon their entry to the program in Fall of 2020. Exit surveys were completed by Year 2 teacher candidates (n=119) in the Spring of 2021, during the final week of coursework and after they had completed a total of 14 weeks of student teaching but before a final practicum. Collecting exit data prior to the final practicum experience was necessary due to the time constraints of this project as well as a desire to conduct in-class recruitment (remotely via Zoom) to increase chances of obtaining a high response rate. Surveys were completed online via Qualtrics, an online survey platform approved by Western University. After clicking on the survey link, participants were taken to a Letter of Information and Consent. In order to access the survey, participants had to consent to voluntarily participate by checking a box. On the next page, to ascertain eligibility, Year 1 teacher candidates had to confirm that they were in the first year of ITE and Year 2 teacher candidates had to affirm that they were currently in their second year.

Both entry and exit surveys contained: (1) demographic/background items to obtain data on representation rates within categories such as language, racial/ethnic background, gender, age, and immigrant background; (2) the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B) scale developed by Ludlow et al. (2008) to measure teacher candidates’ endorsement of beliefs consistent with the concept of teaching for social justice (more on this following); and (3) one open-ended question on participants’ reasons for becoming a teacher. Exit surveys included four additional questions which queried graduating teacher candidates on the diversity of students in their practicum placements and what (if any) courses, professional development, or alternative experiences related to learning to teach for equity, diversity, and social justice they engaged in during their tenure in the ITE program.
Participants were free to abstain from answering any/all questions in the survey and were free to leave the survey (i.e., by exiting the browser) at any time. At the end of the survey, participants were offered the option to enter their email address if they wished to be entered into a draw for one of two $25 Amazon gift cards and/or if they were interested in being contacted for a follow-up interview. They were advised that they could opt to enter the draw without participating in an interview. Survey responses were anonymous and all identifying information was kept confidential. Only those indicating interest in participating in an interview and those who were the winners of the random draw for the Amazon gift cards were contacted further. No other identifiable information was collected from participants from the surveys.

The pre- and post-program surveys complement this study’s predominantly qualitative approach and are useful for a number of reasons. First, they allow for a current snapshot of representation rates in Ontario ITE across a variety of categories (e.g., racialized, Indigenous, gender diverse, immigrant, and linguistically diverse groups). Second, they provide an opportunity to track meaningful positive changes in the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to the practice of teaching for social justice over time. Third, they situate the interview data within the context of the larger cohort of teacher candidates. As mentioned earlier, beyond contributing to limited data on representation rates in Ontario ITE, the emphasis of this study is on building a stronger understanding of prospective teachers’ developing beliefs and the opportunities they have to learn about teaching for equity and diversity, not on related outcomes. However, the mixed methodology allowed me to triangulate findings and uncover complex crosscurrents in my inquiry. It also addresses the oft-criticized lack of rigorous empirical research that use psychometrically sound instruments to examine teacher education (Enterline et al., 2008; Zeichner, 2005).
3.5.3 Interviews

Online interviews (via Zoom) were conducted with key stakeholders (n=4) and teacher candidates (n=15) (in year one (n=4) and year two (n=11) of the program). Interviews are typically cited as being a crucial source of case study information (Yin, 2014). Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow the researcher the flexibility “to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 111). Interview questions were designed to be open-ended and I endeavoured to be conversational rather than formal. As this study sought to understand how equity and diversity are conceptualized and operationalized within ITE, as well as the ways in which policies, structures, and opportunities to learn may shape prospective teachers’ development as equity-centered practitioners, it was important to elicit key stakeholders’ and teacher candidates’ perspectives on equity and diversity, both conceptually and practically (e.g., in the classroom).

Teacher candidates were selected randomly from those survey participants who indicated interest in participating in an interview (i.e., by providing their email at the end of the survey). Teacher candidate participants were advised that they would receive a $15 e-gift card for either Tim Hortons or Starbucks as compensation for their participation. Four key stakeholders who were involved in administrating, managing, and/or coordinating various aspects of the program were invited to interview and all four consented. All interview participants were required to read and sign a letter of information and consent prior to the interview and given a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality. All interviews were recorded for the purpose of transcription and later data analysis.
3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a complex endeavor that involves continual back and forth between concrete data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, and between interpretation and description (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Case study research often produces a tremendous amount of data, derived from multiple methods including interviews, surveys, and documents. In addition to the volume of data, the range of data sources can reveal disparate, incompatible, even contradictory information, both of which can present a significant challenge for the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In anticipation and recognition of this, I undertook early and ongoing data analysis consisting of informal notes and memos to myself about survey and interview data, prior literature, and related policy documents. I kept a researcher journal and referred to the summaries, reflections, and ideas over the course of the project to assist in developing a coding scheme. Thus, as is typical of qualitative research, data analysis was ongoing and iterative (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I continually moved between the concepts framed by my conceptual frameworks and research questions, and the accumulating data on the program and participants. I focused on what opportunities to learn were afforded to teacher candidates in terms of content (framed by my theories of social justice) and the process of integration (i.e., self-reported experiences in coursework and field experiences, programmatic, institutional, and governmental policies framed by ecological systems theory). Following, I detail survey data analysis before moving on to a discussion of interview data analysis.

3.6.1 Survey Data Analysis

I exported survey results from Qualtrics into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to keep the data organized for ease of analysis. For the purposes of this study and in alignment with my research questions, I focused on demographic data to gain insight into representation
rates and the results of the LTSJ-B scale to ascertain levels of endorsement of social-justice-related beliefs between entering and exiting teacher candidates. Demographic data were aggregated and totaled across cohorts to determine who was represented, at what number, and what percentage of the overall total. The LTSJ-B results were disaggregated by entering (n=142) and exiting (n=113) teacher candidates. For each item on the scale, respondents answered using a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree). Some items were positively worded; other items were negatively worded (i.e., “R” items). Candidates with a stronger commitment to social justice as defined by the LTSJ-B scale would be expected to agree with (or “positively endorse”) items 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8 on the scale and disagree with (or “negatively endorse”) items 3R, 5R, 6R, 9R, 10R, 11R, and 12R (see Appendix A for scale items). The interdisciplinary research team that developed the LTSJ-B scale hypothesized that if the scale was sensitive to measuring differences in levels of beliefs and if the teacher preparation program was effective, then teacher candidates exiting a program should score higher on a scale of social justice beliefs than teacher candidates just entering the program (Enterline et al., 2008; a more detailed discussion of its development and validity follows, see pp. 109-111).

Results were uploaded to R Statistical Software to perform statistical analysis. “R” (reversed) items on the LTSJ-B scale were reversed, so that 5 was the most favoured response and 1 was the least favoured response for all items. A t-test for means was conducted with an equal variance test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in scores between the population mean of the total mean scores for the two (i.e., entering and exiting) cohorts. Individual LTSJ-B items were also analyzed to ascertain any differences between the two cohort’s levels of endorsement of specific
social-justice-related principles (see pp. 123-138 for a detailed presentation of LTSJ-B scale results).\textsuperscript{6}

It is important to emphasize that this scale is not a comprehensive representation of the entire complex idea of teaching for social justice (Enterline et al., 2008). The LTSJ-B scale represents only a limited focus on beliefs and perspectives and is a piece of a larger picture on the effects of ITE on learning to teach for social justice. It is also important to note that the entering and exiting participants for the present study were not the same students measured at beginning and end of their two-year tenure in the program. I did not measure changes in beliefs across the same students. This would require a two-year time frame for data collection, which was beyond what was feasible for this PhD study. However, I employed the same procedures as Enterline et al. (2008) to determine remarkable similarities between the entering and exiting cohorts (i.e., demographic data, stated reasons for becoming a teacher, stable admissions policies). This allowed me to reasonably assume that any disparities between LTSJ-B scale scores of entering and exiting teacher candidates were not due to demographic or other differences between the cohorts and instead provided a general sense of how beliefs related to teaching for equity and social justice changed from ITE program entry to exit. For a detailed comparison of the two cohorts, see Appendix B. I make no claim about causality but differences in beliefs between entering and exiting students may be attributable in part to what teacher candidates learned and experienced in the ITE program. Analyses of changes in beliefs within the same cohort is an area for future research in a study with a more generous time frame.

\textsuperscript{6} I worked with a consultant from Western Data Science Solutions for quantitative data analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability of results.
3.6.2 Interview Data Analysis

All audio recordings were stored on a password-protected electronic storage device and transcribed verbatim using Microsoft Word. Identifiers were scrubbed from the transcript and pseudonyms were assigned to organize the interview files without identifying participants. During the interviews, I restated and paraphrased participants’ responses and asked clarifying questions to double check that I correctly understood their intended meaning. During transcription, I made notes of themes that may be emerging from the data. Interview data were constantly compared against other data, such as memos written during and directly after interviews about emerging themes, concepts of social justice, or potential limiting factors (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also continually considered how interview responses aligned with the key ideas in my theoretical framework and research questions, including the ways in which equity in education was conceptualized, operational enablers or constraints, and teacher candidates’ experiences in learning to teach for equity and diversity. I performed member checks by providing interviewed participants with the transcript of their interview to confirm the credibility of the findings and provide an opportunity for clarification (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A code-and-retrieve approach was used for interview data, which involved thematically coding passages of text according to content and then mining for similarly labelled passages (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I identified segments in my data set that were responsive to my research questions, continually comparing one unit of information with the next, looking for recurrences and regularities. In breaking down the data and then assigning small units to categories or themes to bring them back together again (if in a novel way), I was able to “begin to discriminate more clearly between the criteria for allocating data to one category or another. Then some categories may be subdivided, and others subsumed under more abstract categories” (Dey, 1993, p. 44).
I used NVivo statistical analysis software to assist in my qualitative analysis which aided in a close examination of the data, enhancing what Seale (2008) calls the “rigor” of the study (p. 236). Computer assisted analysis also helped me to visualize the relationship among codes and themes by providing a mapping feature that draws a visual model (Creswell, 2013). I examined codes through axial coding (Saldana, 2009), relating categories to each other and refining the category scheme.

3.7 Validity, Trustworthiness, and Credibility

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) note that while the concept of validity differs in qualitative and quantitative research, in either case, it serves the purpose of checking on the quality of the data and findings. A central assumption of qualitative research is that reality is holistic, dynamic, and multidimensional; it is not a stable, unitary, and objective phenomenon awaiting discovery. As such, “assessing the isomorphism between data collected and the ‘reality’ from which they were derived is thus an inappropriate determinant of validity” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 242-243). Maxwell (2013) concurs that ‘reality’ is not something one can unproblematically capture: “Validity is never something that can be proved or taken for granted. Validity is also relative: It has to be assessed in relationship to the purposes and circumstances of the research, rather than being a context-independent property of methods or conclusions” (p. 121). From this perspective, I acknowledge that as a researcher, I am presenting just one of many possible accounts of a phenomenon. This research and its findings constitute an interpretation of reality accessed through my own observations and interviews; however, I used strategies to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of my work. I outline the steps I took to do this in the following section. I begin by discussing the quantitative study data followed by the qualitative study data.
3.7.1 Quantitative Data

The validity of the quantitative component of my study—the LTSJ-B scale—is drawn from statistical procedures and external experts. Below, I discuss the procedures and past uses of the instrument to establish its validity and reliability. I make no adaptations to the scale other than one change made to reflect the unique context as has been done in versions used in Ireland and New Zealand (see Cochran-Smith et al., 2012). Item SJ5R previously “assimilate into American society” was changed to “assimilate into Canadian society” (see Appendix A). The validity of the scale means that I can draw meaningful inferences from the results to a population (teacher candidates in the focal program) and its reliability allows me to ascertain that participants’ scores are consistent and stable over time.

The LTSJ-B scale was developed over the course of seven years by the Boston College Teachers for a New Era Evidence Team\(^7\) as a psychometrically sound measure “of social justice beliefs that is internally consistent, content- and construct-valid, sensitive to changes in beliefs, and independent of the specific characteristics of any single teacher preparation program” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012, p. 175). The scale assumes that learning to teach for social justice is both a legitimate and measurable outcome of teacher education.

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\(^7\) The Teachers for a New Era (TNE) project began at Boston College in 2003 and is an initiative sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and other funders to change how teacher education is conceptualized and enacted at 11 selected programs across the United States. The inter-disciplinary Evidence Team was created as part of the project to assess the effectiveness of teacher education and study the process of learning to teach. The team includes Boston College faculty members and administrators: Marilyn Cochran-Smith (Chair), Sarah Enterline, Alan Kafka, Fran Loftus, Larry Ludlow, Patrick McQuillan, Joseph Pedulla, and Gerald Pine; TNE Administrators, Jane Carter and Jeff Gilligan; and doctoral students, Joan Barnatt, Robert Baroz, Matt Cannady, Stephanie Chappe, Lisa D’Souza, Ann Marie Gleeson, Jiefang Hu, Cindy Jong, Kara Mitchell, Emilie Mitescu, Aubrey Scheopner, Karen Shakman, Yves Fernandez Solomon, and Diana Terrell (Enterline et al., 2008).
education. The first in a series of studies, Ludlow et al. (2008) established the technical psychometric characteristics of the scale. In addition to standard exploratory factor analyses and reliability analyses, this first study included a Rasch rating scale analysis (Rasch, 1960; Wright & Masters, 1982). These complementary analyses confirmed that the 12 items on the LTSJ-B scale “defined an ordered construct comprised of increasingly more controversial and debatable beliefs and ideas related to teaching for social justice” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012, p. 175). The second and third studies, Enterline et al. (2008) and Cochran-Smith et al. (2012), respectively, focused on the extent to which the LTSJ-B scale maintained the specific ordering of item locations along the continuum for teacher candidates in different ITE programs and was sensitive enough to measure changes in beliefs over time (i.e., “construct invariance”).

The second study by Enterline et al. (2008) undertook three separate analyses examining the extent to which beliefs and perspectives about social justice differed at (1) entry into the program; (2) exit from the program and; (3) one year out of the program. The first analysis established the scale’s construct invariance within multiple cohorts of entering and exiting teacher candidates (i.e., the structure and meaning of the scale remained the same for different candidates at different points in time). The second analysis established the sensitivity and usefulness of the scale as an instrument to measure changes in beliefs over time, finding that exiting students’ scores exceeded the scores of entering students. The third analysis established the strength of the teachers’ belief systems and indicated the durability of their changed beliefs beyond the short term of the ITE program as teachers maintained their higher scores on the LTSJ-B scale one year out.

Cochran-Smith et al. (2012) built on the two earlier investigations and compared LTSJ-B scale results across three contextually distinct ITE programs in the U.S., New Zealand, and Ireland. They found that the structure of the LTSJ-B scale, that is, item order and
location estimates, was remarkably similar for all three institutions. Relatively minor differences in the results at the three sites were attributed to administration and language differences implemented to suit local circumstances. This study established the LTSJ-B scale as “an instrument that captures—across cultures, countries, ages of teacher candidates, and differences in program duration—the general range and variation in teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching for social justice” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012, p. 192). The fact that the scale is able to capture aspects of teacher candidates’ beliefs despite very different contexts is important in claiming its validity and usefulness to my Canadian study.

3.7.2 Qualitative Data

I aimed to be systematic and transparent throughout the process of qualitative data collection and analysis. I adopted a reflexive orientation that recognized the partiality of knowledges and the perspectives from which they are constructed (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013). I acknowledged my positionality (see pp. 43-45) and strove to account for it in my interpretation of data. Triangulation of survey data, interview data, interview feedback, and memos allowed each data source to serve as a check against the others (Maxwell, 2013). These rich sources of data and the respondents’ validations from member checks strengthen the credibility of the findings. Additionally, I kept an audit trail, described as “a detailed account of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 259), to further increase the dependability of this research.

Triangulation was used by collecting data from multiple sources. This study involved (1) a diverse group of participants; (2) prior literature; (3) survey data; and (4) interview data. Drawing from multiple data sources not only strengthens the accuracy and
reliability of the findings, but also allows for multiple perspectives to emerge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

A potential compromise of trustworthiness for the qualitative data collected for this study is the potential for reflexivity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), or reactivity (Maxwell, 2013), caused by researcher influence on the participants. This is an unavoidable part of qualitative work and it is important to understand whether, and in what ways, I might have influenced the participants’ responses (Maxwell, 2013). I was mindful when crafting interview questions to consider any ways in which they might lead participants or reveal my own personal beliefs about the importance of teaching for social justice. By basing my questions on previous research and asking an outside researcher to review them, I hoped to mitigate these potential risks (see Appendices E, F, and G for interview protocol).

3.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the methodology I adopted for this research. I began by situating the research in pragmatism as research design and followed by providing an overview of mixed methods research and its suitability to this study. I described my study design and detailed how the research site and participants were selected before providing participant profiles. I then covered data collection methods, detailing recruitment and procedures followed by a description of data analysis. I discussed how I approached both the quantitative and qualitative analysis for this study. I ended by detailing the steps taken to increase the study’s validity, trustworthiness, and credibility.

In the next two chapters, findings are reported for the survey and interview components of the study, respectively. The following chapter reports survey findings and addresses a paucity of existing literature in two areas related to ITE for social justice: (1) the lack of
current data on the composition of preservice cohorts in Ontario and (2) the limited understanding of teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching for social justice.
Chapter 4

4 Survey Findings

Prior literature has found a persistent and growing diversity gap between teachers and their students. Although data is lacking in the Canadian context, what does exist indicates that initial teacher education (ITE) programs continue to enroll a preponderance of white, middle class, able-bodied, cisgendered teacher candidates (Falkenberg, 2015; Holden & Kitchen, 2019; Ontario College of Teachers [OCT], 2016; Turner, 2014). Research suggests that ITE faculty are also predominantly white (Holden & Kitchen, 2017; Milner et al., 2013). The “overwhelming presence of whiteness” in teacher education (Sleeter, 2001) has been shown to influence ITE curriculum, class discussions, recruitment of teacher candidates and ITE instructors, and how urgently a program works to meet access and diversity goals (Irizarry, 2011; Kitchen & Brown, 2022; Lin et al., 2008; Sleeter, 2017). In addition, the corresponding underrepresentation in the teaching force has ramifications for increasingly diverse classrooms (Kunter et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Luke, 2017; Sleeter & Milner IV, 2011; TDSB, 2018). Thus, the demographic survey data presented in the first section of this chapter has implications for the experiences and opportunities to learn for teacher candidates in Ontario and their future students.

Drawing from Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, it is understood that both the micro-/meso-systemic influences within a teacher candidate’s immediate environment (e.g., those exerted through interactions and experiences within a predominantly white cohort and faculty) and the exo- and macro-systemic influences of structural and societal inequity (e.g., developing a critical awareness of structural and systemic historic and contemporary injustice) are crucial for development. Teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching and learning (including their social justice-related beliefs) and their awareness
of broader systemic inequity will shape their development throughout their ITE journey and in their interactions with students in the classroom. In the second section of this chapter, I report the survey results of the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B) scale to examine teacher candidates’ beliefs about micro/meso-level social justice-oriented practice (e.g., individual beliefs, classroom instruction, and interactions) and exo-/macro-level social justice issues (e.g., institutional and societal arrangements).

4.1 (Under)Representation in Initial Teacher Education: Where Are We Now?

Following, demographic data on participants’ gender, age, racial/ethnic identity, language, and immigration background is reported. These data are from all participating teacher candidates and are not disaggregated by entering and exiting cohorts. Current survey data accord with the few studies in the Ontario context examining representation rates in Ontario ITE, indicating an overrepresentation of white, monolingual, cis-gender females (Falkenberg, 2015; Holden & Kitchen, 2018; OCT, 2016, 2021; Turner, 2014).

4.1.1 Gender

Of the 255 participants who opted to indicate their gender, the overwhelming majority (218; 85.5%) identified as female; close to 15% (35) identified as male; one participant selected “prefer not to say”, and one chose to self-describe as gender fluid (see Table 3). The prevalence of female identifying participants concurs with the latest data released by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) on the gender identity of its members (in-service teachers), although results from the current study show a higher female representation and a lower representation of those choosing to identify outside of the male/female binary. Data reported in the latest OCT Annual Report (2021) indicate that 25.0% of OCT members identify as male, 74.9% as female, and 0.07% as “X”. Current survey results suggest that the teaching force is becoming less representative in terms of gender;
however, it is prudent to remember that this data is taken from just one ITE program across one academic year and relies on participants choosing to self-identify. The OCT data also represents teachers who did not attend Ontario ITE programs (e.g., those educated outside of Canada or Ontario).

The latest census data shows 0.2% (n=24,085) of Ontario’s population identifies as transgender and 0.13% (n=15,360) identifies as non-binary. My findings show no representation of these groups in the preservice cohort, indicating a significant underrepresentation of teacher candidates who identify as non-binary, two spirit, or transgender (0%). Moreover, data collected on K-12 student demographics in schools in the ITE case’s surrounding geographical area for the 2020-2021 school year show that four percent of students identified with one or more of the following: Agender, Gender Fluid, Gender Nonconforming, Genderqueer, Non-Binary, Pangender, Questioning, Transgender Boy or Man, Transgender Girl or Woman, Two-Spirit, gender identity(ies) not listed (TVDSB, 2022). Current survey data indicates a preservice teacher cohort that significantly underrepresents not only the broader provincial gender diversity but also, at an even higher discrepancy, that of the students they will teach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Non-Binary</th>
<th>Two Spirit</th>
<th>Transgender</th>
<th>Prefer not to say</th>
<th>Prefer to self-describe</th>
<th>Total # of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of respondents</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of respondents</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2 Age

Data shows that well over half of all participants indicated that they were under the age of 25, while about one-third fell between the ages of 25-30, and those aged 31 and older comprised less than 10% of the teacher candidate demographic (see Table 4). None of the survey participants selected the “over 45” age category. To my knowledge, there is no public data available on the age of teacher candidate pools in Ontario. The OCT Annual Report (2021) identifies the average age of its members to be 44.6 years; however, this does not provide a baseline for ITE cohorts. Although one key stakeholder in this study described a much greater diversity in age of entrants to the program in recent years, survey data indicates a predominantly young cohort, and there exists no data from previous years to compare.

Table 4: Teacher Candidates' Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>&lt;25</th>
<th>25-30</th>
<th>31-35</th>
<th>36-40</th>
<th>41-45</th>
<th>Total # of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of respondents</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of respondents</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.3 Race/Ethnicity

Survey data revealed that 77% of teacher candidates identified as white, 22% identified as a member of a racialized group (i.e., Black, East Asian, Latina/o/x, Middle Eastern, South Asian, Southeast Asian), and one person or 0.4% of the cohort identified as Indigenous. One percent selected “prefer not to say” and 3% opted to self-describe. Text entries for this selection included responses such as Jewish, Caucasian, European, Mixed, Hispanic, Mediterranean, half Japanese, and half East Asian. Participants were directed to “select all that apply”, so several respondents (n = 13) chose more than one option (e.g.,
one participant selected both Black and white; three selected both East Asian and white; two selected both Southeast Asian and white). Additionally, some respondents opted to select one of the options provided and also select “Prefer to Self-Describe” and enter in a text response (e.g., one respondent selected both East Asian and Prefer to Self-Describe and wrote in “half Japanese”). The proportion of these respondents who identified with at least one racialized group (i.e., four in total constitutive of “half East Asian”, “Canadian-born Chinese”, “Mixed”, and “Hispanic”) were included in the 22% who identified as a member of a racialized group aforementioned. For the reasons described above, the total number of respondents is less than the sum total of the ten options in Table 5 and the percentages provided above total to greater than 100.

My findings related to racial/ethnic representation support concerns raised that the teaching population in Ontario is far less diverse than the student population they teach (Falkenberg, 2015; Holden & Kitchen, 2017, 2018; ONABSE, 2015). As discussed in chapter one, as of 2021, racialized peoples represent almost 34% of Ontario’s total population (Statistics Canada, 2022a). However, they constitute 22% of the preservice cohort surveyed for this study. While Indigenous peoples account for nearly 3% of Ontario’s population, they constitute less than 1% of teacher candidates in this data set (Statistics Canada, 2022c). Demographic data collected from local schools within the ITE case’s catchment areas for the 2020-2021 school year indicate that five percent of students identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit and close to 27% identify as members of a racialized group (TVDSB, 2022). These data on K-12 student demographics show that the proportion of racialized teacher candidates is more closely matched to the proportion of racialized students in nearby schools (than Ontario, more broadly), although still underrepresented—22% of teacher candidates self-identifying as a member of a racialized group versus 27% of K-12 students. The proportion of Indigenous students
more greatly outweighs the proportion of Indigenous teacher candidates—0.4% of teacher candidates versus 5% of students in schools (TVDSB, 2022).

Regional demographics may provide partial explanation for the composition of an ITE program’s cohorts—e.g., Holden and Kitchen (2018) discuss how the relatively high representations rates within ITE programs at York University and the University of Ottawa for the years 2012-2016 may be attributable to their locations within cities designated as significant centres for diversity (Statistics Canada, 2022j). However, it is prudent to consider that not all teacher candidates come from the surrounding area and not all graduates will stay in that area to teach. The fact that the ITE program at York offers a specific focus on diversity and urban education may also account for its relatively high rates of representation.

As discussed in chapter one, the only publicly available race-based data for Ontario ITE cohorts was published by Holden and Kitchen (2018) and reported representation rates for the only three programs (York, Ottawa, and Nipissing) that collected data on racialized and/or visible minority teacher candidates. The present study provides an additional case for establishing baseline data, indicating rates of representation that are closer to that of York and Ottawa (averaging about one quarter of entrants) than that of Nipissing (averaging less than 2% of the total cohort).

This is encouraging; however, the research site for this study is located in what is considered a census metropolitan area (CMA; Statistics Canada, 2022i) which is likely to be more demographically diverse and, as such, may see higher rates of representation than ITE programs in non-CMAs. It is also important to remember that 22% is still far below the 34% proportional representation in Ontario. Moreover, in the seven years since Holden and Kitchen’s data were collected, the number of people identifying as members of a racialized group in Canada has only grown. The projected proportion of the
population belonging to a racialized group by 2041 is around 40% (this proportion was 22% in 2016) and even higher among youth (i.e., close to 50%).

This growing diversity gap between teachers and their students impacts the experiences and outcomes of racialized, Indigenous, and otherwise marginalized students in schools. Research emphasizes the importance of representation (e.g., in providing students with higher expectations, more supportive relationships, positive role modelling) and the dangers of biases (e.g., teachers’ evaluative role means that bias can impact students’ academic pathways and life trajectories; for a more detailed discussion, see pp. 22-23). A continued lack of representation in the teaching force then, as current survey data suggests, means that racialized students continue to be disadvantaged in Ontario schools.

**Table 5: Teacher Candidates’ Racial/Ethnic Identity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>East Asian</th>
<th>Indigenous /o/x</th>
<th>Latina</th>
<th>Middle Eastern</th>
<th>South Asian</th>
<th>SE Asian</th>
<th>white</th>
<th>Prefer Not to Say</th>
<th>Prefer to Self-Describe</th>
<th>Total # of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong># of respondents</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of respondents</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.4 Language and Immigrant Background

Most respondents (over 60%) indicated that they were monolingual (English), as reported in Table 6. Bilinguals comprised close to one-third of the demographic, split relatively evenly between those who spoke official languages (i.e., English and French) and those who spoke English and a language other than French. Nearly 10% of respondents identified as trilingual and 1% as quadrilingual. Languages spoken other than English included Spanish (n=17), Arabic (n=4), Italian (n=9), Cantonese (n=7), Mandarin (n=6), Portuguese (n=5), Punjabi (n=3), and Polish (n=3). Respondents (n=2 for each listed following) also reported speaking Urdu, Croatian, Turkish, Hindi, Bangla, Romanian,
Gujarati, and Hungarian and one respondent reported for each of Estonian, German, Korean, Thai, and Tulu. No respondents indicated proficiency in an Indigenous language.

This relative linguistic homogeneity (i.e., with 23% of the cohort speaking a non-official language – i.e., other than English or French) stands in contrast to the latest data from Statistics Canada (2022d, 2022e, 2022g), which shows that 30.8% of Ontarians (4.3 million people) have a mother tongue that is not English or French, over five million (36%) are proficient (i.e., able to have a conversation) in a non-official language, and 29,850 have proficiency in an Indigenous language. The current survey data indicates that Ontario’s linguistic diversity, like its racial and gender diversity, is underrepresented in ITE. This lack of diversity has implications for growing numbers of multilingual learners (MLs) and linguistically diverse students in classrooms across the province. Literature shows that, although all teachers of MLs require preparation and professional development to provide effective instruction, immigrants and linguistically diverse teachers have higher rates of self-efficacy for orchestrating culturally responsive pedagogy and higher self-perceived empathy towards MLs due to shared experiences and backgrounds (Faez, 2012; Vidwans & Faez, 2019).

The current survey also indicates that Ontario’s large immigrant population is not proportionately represented in ITE. The immigrant population in Canada was reported as 23% in the latest census—the largest proportion among G7 countries and the highest proportion in Canada since Confederation (Statistics Canada, 2022f). Less than 10% of all respondents in the current survey indicated being first-generation Canadians. Within local schools, 15% of K-12 students surveyed were born outside of Canada (TVDSB, 2022); a smaller proportion than the overall immigrant population in Canada but still indicating underrepresentation among preservice teachers.
Of the 23 participants who did identify as immigrants in the current study, the majority (n=11) immigrated to Canada between 10-20 years ago, others immigrated more than 20 years ago (n=9), and a small number immigrated between one to two years ago (n=2). Countries of origin included Germany, China, Egypt, El Salvador, United Arab Emirates, Ireland, Mexico, Bangladesh, Turkey, Thailand, South Korea, India, and the Philippines.

Table 6: Teacher Candidates’ Language Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE BACKGROUND</th>
<th>Monolingual</th>
<th>Bilingual (English-French)</th>
<th>Bilingual (English, Other)</th>
<th>Trilingual</th>
<th>Quadrilingual</th>
<th>Total # of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of respondents</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of respondents</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the data in this section indicates an underrepresentation of Ontario’s broader linguistic, racial, and gender diversity. This underrepresentation has implications not only for the increasingly diverse student bodies in Ontario schools but also for the experiences that teacher candidates have in ITE programs. Literature shows that the preponderance of whiteness in teacher education can result in the centering and normalization of majoritarian perspectives, both covert and overt racism, and the corresponding exclusion of diverse perspectives and marginalized narratives in coursework and class discussions. Homogeneity has also been shown to translate into limited engagement with social justice frameworks (Bower-Phipps et al., 2013; Endo, 2015; Gomez et al., 2008; Irizarry, 2011, Kitchen & Brown, 2022; Kohli, 2009; Sleeter, 2017). Moreover, as Milner IV (2008) points out, the fact that teacher education has been designed and normed for white teacher candidates means that racialized students “have to adjust, assimilate, and learn from curricula and related experiences tailored to meet their white counterparts’ needs” (Milner IV, 2008, p. 339).
Because there exists limited historical data on the gender identity or racial, linguistic, or immigrant background of ITE cohorts or Ontario teachers to use as comparison, it is difficult to ascertain whether things are getting better or worse with regards to the persistent homogeneity of the teaching force. As discussed earlier, this lack of data is antithetical to articulated goals related to access, equity, and diversity pronounced by all Ontario ITE programs (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). Without relevant data to draw on, ITE programs will struggle to make informed, effective, and actionable decisions to forward change.

### 4.2 Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs Scale Results

The following section examines the survey results of the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B) scale (n=255), with scores disaggregated by entering (n=142) and exiting (n=113) cohorts of teacher candidates. These data provide insight into teacher candidates’ level of endorsement of several key principles of teaching for equity and social justice and indicate changes in beliefs between entering and exiting cohorts. As delineated in chapter three, the LTSJ-B scale was developed by the Boston College Teachers for a New Era Evidence Team and was found to be a reliable and psychometrically sound measure of the degree to which prospective teachers endorse key principles related to teaching for social justice from entry to exit of an ITE program (Cochran-Smith et al, 2012; Enterline et al., 2008; Ludlow et al, 2008). The scale was developed based on the assumption that teacher candidates’ beliefs and commitments to principles of equity and social justice develop over time (Enterline et al., 2008).

It is important to reiterate that I am not comparing the scores for the same cohort of teacher candidates upon their entry and exit to and from the focal ITE program (data taken from the same cohort would require two years of survey data which is beyond the
scope of this study) but rather Year 1 teacher candidates entering their first year of the two-year program in Fall of 2020 and Year 2 teacher candidates graduating from the program in Spring 2021. As in Enterline et al. (2008), considerable similarities between the two cohorts (see Appendix B) allow me to reasonably conclude that any differences in LTSJ-B scores are not due to individual differences among cohorts but instead provide a general sense of how beliefs related to teaching for social justice change over teacher candidates’ tenure in the program.

Now I will discuss the survey results of the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B) scale (n=255), with scores disaggregated by entering (n=142) and exiting (n=113) cohorts of teacher candidates. These data provide insight into teacher candidates’ level of endorsement of several key principles of teaching for equity and social justice and indicate changes in beliefs between entering and exiting cohorts. As delineated in chapter three, the LTSJ-B scale was developed by the Boston College Teachers for a New Era Evidence Team and was found to be a reliable and psychometrically sound measure of the degree to which prospective teachers endorse key principles related to teaching for social justice from entry to exit of an ITE program (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Enterline et al., 2008; Ludlow et al., 2008). The scale was developed based on the assumption that teacher candidates’ beliefs and commitments to principles of equity and social justice develop over time (Enterline et al., 2008).

To ascertain if there was a significant difference between the mean of total score of the entering cohort and exiting cohorts, “R” items on the LTSJ-B scale were reverse scored so that higher total scores across all questions corresponded to stronger endorsement of beliefs related to teaching for social justice (out of a highest possible score of 60 and lowest possible score of 12). Using R Statistical Software, a t-test for means was conducted with an equal variance test. The equal variance test determined that the
variances are the same ($F = 0.89329, p = 0.5247936$). Therefore, a pooled t-test was used and found that the mean of total score for the entering cohort ($M=40.62; SD=4.69$) was less than the exiting cohort ($M=42.14; SD=4.96$); $t (-2.4981), p= 0.0065615$ (i.e., significantly smaller than 0.05). This means that there was a small but statistically significant difference between the population mean of the total mean scores for the two cohorts. On average, graduating teacher candidates scored higher on the scale by a numeric difference of 1.5174, indicating greater endorsement of key principles of teaching for social justice (see Table 7).

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for LTSJ-B Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Entering Cohort</th>
<th>Exiting Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>142</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Min.</strong></td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>40.62</td>
<td>42.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max.</strong></td>
<td>52.00</td>
<td>53.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Std</strong></td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual LTSJ-B items were also analyzed to gain insight into any differences in entering and exiting teacher candidates’ levels of endorsement of specific beliefs. As Enterline et al. (2008) note “each higher-response category is associated with a higher level of belief in principles related to social justice” (p. 280) as conceptualized by the LTSJ-B scale. The positively worded items (Q1, Q2, Q4, Q7, and Q8) were easier to endorse, while negatively worded items (Q3R, Q5R, Q6R, Q9R, Q10R, Q11R, and Q12R) were harder to endorse (Enterline et al., 2008; Ludlow et al., 2008). Specifically, higher scores on reverse-coded items represent a stronger understanding of inequities beyond the individual or classroom level to include those that “involve macro-level institutional and societal arrangements that structure advantage and disadvantage for
particular groups” (Enterline et. al, 2008, p. 278). For this analysis, “R” (reversed) items were not reversed (i.e., so that 1 or Strongly Disagree was the most favoured response for “R” items and 5 or Strongly Agree was the most favoured response for non-“R” items). A t-test for proportions was conducted for each item on the scale. These results are displayed in Figures 1-12, representing responses to each of the 12 items on the scale.

Notably, on half of the items, the proportion of exiting teacher candidates who responded in the highest scored Likert response category (i.e., Strongly Agree or Strongly Disagree for reverse-coded items) was statistically greater than the proportion of entering teacher candidates who chose that response, indicating stronger endorsement of those beliefs. For the other six items, there was no statistically significant difference between the proportions of entering and exiting teacher candidates who chose the highest scored Likert response. There were no items on the scale for which the entering cohort chose the highest scored Likert response in greater proportion to the exiting cohort. Overall, teacher candidates at the end of their tenure in the ITE program more frequently endorsed social-justice-related beliefs—both positively worded items—i.e., beliefs the involved teachers at the individual level, referring to their own thinking or their own classrooms—and the negatively worded items—i.e., beliefs that involve broader societal issues and the ways in which structures and institutions historically and systematically disadvantage particular groups. This builds on prior research (e.g., Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Enterline et al., 2008; Frederick et al., 2010) indicating that ITE can and should impact teacher candidates’ beliefs and understandings about teaching for equity and social justice. Next, I will present the results for each individual item on the scale and end this section with a summary of results.

Figure 1 shows that for Q1 (examining one’s own beliefs), close to 6% more exiting teacher candidates selected Strongly Agree than entering teacher candidates; however,
the difference in proportions of entering and exiting teacher candidates who chose that response was not statistically significant.

**Figure 1: Responses to Q1.** This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q1 (examining one’s own beliefs). The proportion of participants choosing Strongly Agree is statistically the same for entering and exiting cohorts ($t = 0.0000; p\text{-value} = 0.5000$).

Figure 2 displays responses for Q2 (openly discussing inequity and racism) where 13% more graduating teacher candidates selected Strongly Agree when compared to entering teacher candidates. The difference in the proportion of the exiting cohort who chose this response was statistically significant, indicating that graduating teacher candidates more strongly endorse openly discussing inequity and racism in the classroom.
Figure 2: Responses to Q2. This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q2 (openly discussing inequity and racism). The proportion of the exiting cohort choosing Strongly Agree is greater than the proportion of the entering cohort \((t = 3.8087; p\text{-value} = 0.0255)\).

Figure 3 illustrates the largest disparity where for Q3R (limiting multicultural topics), one of the harder to endorse reverse-coded items, exiting teacher candidates selected Strongly Disagree 16% more often than their entering counterparts. The proportional difference in responses here was statistically significant, indicating that exiting teacher candidates more strongly reject the belief that multicultural topics are only relevant in certain subject areas (e.g., social studies).
**Figure 3: Responses to Q3R.** This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q3R (limiting multicultural topics). Statistically, the proportion of the exiting cohort choosing Strongly Disagree is greater than the proportion of the entering cohort ($t = 6.2367$; p-value = 0.0063).

Figure 4 displays results for Q4 (incorporating diversity) where exiting teacher candidates selected Strongly Agree 11% more often than entering teacher candidates; the greater proportion of the exiting cohort choosing this response was statistically significant, indicating that exiting teacher candidates more strongly endorse incorporating diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions than their entering counterparts.
**Figure 4: Responses to Q4.** This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q4 (incorporating diversity). The proportion of the exiting cohort choosing Strongly Agree is significantly greater than the proportion of the entering cohort ($t = 3.2655; p$-value = 0.0354).

The proportions of participants selecting the highest scored Likert response (i.e., Strongly Disagree) for Q5R (assimilating English language learners; ELLs) were the same for entering and exiting cohorts (see Figure 5). However, Figure 6 shows that the exiting cohort selected the highest scored Likert response for Q6R (lower expectations for ELLs) 11% more often than the entering cohort. Proportionally, this difference was statistically significant, indicating that exiting teacher candidates more strongly reject the belief that it is reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who do not speak English as their first language.
Figure 5: Responses to Q5R. This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q5R (assimilating ELLs). The proportion of participants choosing Strongly Disagree is the same for entering and exiting cohorts ($t = 0.0660; p$-value = 0.3986).

Figure 6: Responses to Q6R. This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q6R (lower classroom expectations for non-English first language students).
**Figure 6: Responses to Q6R.** This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q6R (lower expectations for ELLs). The proportion of the exiting cohort choosing Strongly Disagree is significantly greater than the proportion of the entering cohort (t = 4.6387; p-value = 0.0156).

For Q7 (challenging social inequities), Q8 (thinking critically about government), and Q9R (lower SES students bring less), the proportions of participants choosing the highest scored Likert response was not statistically different for entering and exiting cohorts (see Figures 7, 8, and 9).

**Figure 7: Responses to Q7.** This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q7 (challenging social inequities). The proportion of participants choosing Strongly Agree is the same for entering and exiting cohorts (t = 0.2176; p-value = 0.3204).
Figure 8: Responses to Q8. This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q8 (thinking critically about government). The proportion of participants choosing Strongly Agree is the same for entering and exiting cohorts ($t = 0.0288; p\text{-value} = 0.4326$).

Q8: Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions.

Q9R: Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less to the classroom.
**Figure 9: Responses to Q9R.** This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q9R (lower SES students bring less). The proportion of participants choosing Strongly Disagree is the same for entering and exiting cohorts ($t = 0.2176; p$-value $= 0.3204$).

For both Q10R (not their job to change society) and Q11R (school success mainly due to effort), exiting teacher candidates selected Strongly Disagree 6% and 11% more often than entering teacher candidates, respectively. The proportion of the exiting cohort choosing this response was significantly greater than the entering cohort for both items, indicating that exiting teacher candidates more strongly rejected the belief that it is not a teacher’s job to effect social change and that success is primarily dependent on how hard a student works (see Figures 10 and 11).

**Figure 10: Responses to Q10R.** This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q10R (not their...
job to change society). The proportion of participants choosing Strongly Disagree is the same for entering and exiting cohorts ($t = 0.9524; p$-value $= 0.1645$).

![Figure 11: Responses to Q11R](image_url)

### Figure 11: Responses to Q11R.
This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q11R (school success mainly due to effort). The proportion of the exiting cohort choosing Strongly Disagree is greater than the proportion of the entering cohort ($t = 3.4942; p$-value $= 0.0308$).

Finally, Figure 12 illustrates more widely distributed responses indicating ambiguity on Q12R (preparing students for likely lives). There was virtually no difference between the entering and exiting cohorts with respect to the frequency with which they selected the highest Likert category - Strongly Disagree (5.3% and 5.6%, respectively); however, the highest percentage of entering teacher candidates (54%) selected Agree with this item and the highest percentage of exiting teacher candidates (33%) selected Disagree. The proportion of the entering cohort that agreed with this statement was significantly greater
than the proportion of the exiting cohort and the proportion of the exiting cohort that disagreed with this statement was significantly greater than the proportion of the entering cohort, indicating that a higher percentage of exiting teacher candidates held a higher level of belief in this social justice-related principle than entering teacher candidates.

Figure 12: Responses to Q12R. This figure shows the percentage of entering and exiting teacher candidates that selected each of the Likert response categories for Q12R (preparing students for likely lives). The proportion of participants choosing Strongly Disagree and Strongly Agree is not significantly different for entering and exiting cohorts (t = 0.0000; p-value = 0.5000 and t = 0.0695; p-value = 0.3960, respectively). However, the proportion of exiting candidates who chose Disagree is significantly greater than the proportion of entering candidates (t = 6.8704, p-value = 0.0044) and the proportion of entering candidates who chose Agree is significantly greater than the proportion of exiting candidates (t = 13.8035; p-value = 0.0001). This indicates that exiting teacher candidates more strongly endorse this principle related to teaching for social justice.
To summarize, the LTSJ-B scale survey results reported in this section suggest that exiting teacher candidates are graduating from the ITE program with stronger beliefs related to teaching for social justice than their entering counterparts. Overall, the exiting cohort more strongly endorsed seven out of the twelve LTSJ-B scale items when compared to their entering counterparts, including four out of the six harder to endorse, reverse-scored items (e.g., Q11R and Q12R). These items require “a major shift in thinking for many teacher candidates to understand the structural and historical aspects of schooling and develop analyses and critiques at the macro-level”; they involve broader societal issues and the “the ways institutions systematically and historically structure advantage and disadvantage for particular groups” (Enterline et al, 2008, p. 279). Such beliefs challenge the claim to meritocracy in education, recognize inequities in broader society, and embrace a teacher’s role as a change agent.

As discussed in greater detail in chapter two, this research and the theoretical frame it adopts proceed from the assumption that teachers’ beliefs and perspectives significantly influence the kind of teacher they become (Reagan et al., 2016). Indeed, this assumption is foregrounded in an almost universal practice in ITE – the formulation of an individual teaching philosophy (Egbo, 2011). The LTSJ-B scale results reported in this study accord with prior research indicating similar positive shifts in teacher candidates’ beliefs related to teaching for social justice, suggesting that teacher education programs can and should impact preservice teachers’ beliefs about equity and social justice (Arsal, 2019; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Enterline et al., 2008; Frederick et al., 2010; Lee, 2011; McDonald, 2005; Thompson et al., 2016).

Thus, advancing equity in education requires an examination of the ways in which teacher candidates conceptualize and endorse key principles of teaching for equity and social justice. This is accomplished in the current study both quantitatively (i.e., LTSJ-B
scale survey data) and qualitatively (i.e., interview data, which will be discussed in the following chapter).

4.3 Chapter Summary

The findings reported in this chapter address a paucity of literature in two areas related to ITE for social justice: (1) data on representation rates in Ontario ITE and (2) an understanding of teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching for social justice at entry and exit from ITE (i.e., as gathered by the LTSJ-B scale results for entering and exiting cohorts). Data revealed underrepresentation of Ontario’s broader linguistic, racial, and gender diversity and of the student diversity represented in nearby schools. With reference to prior literature, I offered insights into how this persistent homogeneity may influence teacher candidates’ experiences and opportunities to learn within the micro-ecologies of their ITE education program and, correspondingly, how it may influence the educational experiences of the increasingly diverse students they will teach. Related implications of these data for ITE admissions policies and practices will be discussed in chapters five and six.

The LTSJ-B scale allowed the present study to produce both a scale score of social justice beliefs and reveal specifically which items individuals endorsed and how this positions them relative to other respondents. As Enterline et al. (2008) point out, the scale allows us to identify differences among groups (e.g., entering and exiting cohorts) and measure change in beliefs over time. LTSJ-B scale results reported in this chapter revealed higher levels of endorsement of social-justice-related beliefs for teacher candidates graduating from the program relative to those entering the program. It is particularly noteworthy that exiting teacher candidates showed stronger endorsement of items dealing with both exo- and macro-level inequities (i.e., institutional and societal disadvantage) as well as micro-level inequities (i.e., referring to their own thinking or
instruction) than the entering cohort, suggesting that experiences and learning within the ITE program had an impact on their beliefs about teaching for social justice. In the next chapter, I report data from semi-structured interviews with both teacher candidates and key stakeholders.
Chapter 5

5 Interview Findings

The previous chapter focused on initial teacher education (ITE) representation rates and teacher candidates’ beliefs related to teaching for social justice. Survey demographic data indicated significant underrepresentation of Ontario’s broader gender, racial/ethnic, and linguistic diversity. Results of the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B) scale (Ludlow et al., 2008) revealed a stronger endorsement of social-justice-related beliefs by exiting teacher candidates than their entering counterparts (by a small but statistically significant margin), suggesting that prospective teachers are graduating from ITE with a modestly better understanding of micro-/meso-level (i.e., instructional and relational) and exo- and macro-level (i.e., structural and societal) issues relating to the role of teachers and social change.

In this chapter, qualitative interview data is presented, providing rich insight into participants’ beliefs, experiences, and perceptions. Framed by Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, teacher candidates’ self-reported experiences within the ITE program—e.g., interactions with course instructors, peers, associate teachers, and students—help to elucidate how equity and diversity are conceptualized and integrated (or not) within ITE, as well as the ways in which policies, structures, and opportunities to learn may shape their development. Aligning an ecological approach with critical race theory (CRT) and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy (CLSP) revealed challenges and opportunities to learn that both racialized and white teacher candidates experienced in coursework at the faculty and in their field placements. Data is reported on how participants conceptualized equity in education, how the homogeneity present at the research site influenced teacher candidates’ experiences and learning within the
program, and how key stakeholders were striving to operationalize articulated goals related to equity and access.

This chapter is divided into two main headings in accordance with my second and third research questions. Each heading is comprised of several sub-headings that constitute emergent themes. The first section following deals with teacher candidates’ beliefs and conceptions of teaching for equity and social justice—organized by three themes: micro-level conceptions of equity, macro-level conceptions of equity, and the perils of ‘both sides’. The second section describes opportunities and constraints to learning about teaching for equity and social justice in ITE organized by emergent themes: program cohesion, theory to practice gaps, practicum disconnections, chronic underrepresentation, and peer learning, role models, and individual agency.

5.1 Prospective Teachers’ Beliefs and Understandings of Teaching for Equity and Social Justice

As discussed earlier, prior research shows that ITE programs can impact preservice teachers’ beliefs about teaching for equity and social justice over time (Arsal, 2019; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Enterline et al., 2008; Frederick et al., 2010; Lee, 2011; McDonald, 2005; Thompson et al., 2016). The present study proceeds from the conviction, shared by others, that equipping teacher candidates with skills, beliefs, and dispositions to orchestrate equity-centered practice can and should be a legitimate aim and outcome of ITE (e.g., Cochran Smith et al., 2016, Egbo, 2010; Enterline et al., 2008). Therefore, if teacher preparation programs hope to influence beliefs and understandings of teaching for social justice, there is a need for more research on the beliefs and conceptions of prospective teachers. The following addresses this need and explores the various ways in which participants conceptualized equity in education. These data, along with other similar research (e.g., Arsal, 2019; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Enterline et al.,
2008; Frederick et al., 2010; Garmon, 2004; Lee, 2011; McDonald, 2005; Thompson et al., 2016) provide teacher educators with important information to help inform program curricula and direction (Pajares, 1992).

5.1.1 Micro- and Meso-systemic Conceptions of Equity

Generally, participants in the current study conceptualized equity on an individual level, specifically in terms of what they considered equity to mean with regards to classroom instruction and their interactions with students. Many teacher candidates focused on the difference between equality (generally conceptualized as “sameness” – i.e., providing the same treatment, resources, and supports for all students) and equity (generally conceptualized as providing differentiated treatment, resources, and support to students based on individual needs). As William simply stated when asked how he defines equity in education “The same way that I define equity with my two children—don’t always get the same thing but you get what you need”. Alex also viewed equity in education on an individual level with a focus on differentiation, stating: “Equity in education would be treating all students with kindness but how you carry out fairness would be different for each student”. Similarly, Rachael asserted that equity centered around asking herself “how can I modify the way that I deliver and the way that I interact with students to ensure that they are all on a level playing field?” Most other participants offered responses that were a variation of William, Alex, and Rachael’s conceptualizations of equity as differentiation based on individual needs.

A few participants articulated an extended view of equity that involved students’ identities and broader mesosystemic influences, for example, their backgrounds, histories, communities, and family microsystems. Fern opined that the first step is “getting to know our students…their background…their history…their interests and family dynamics and how they identify…all of those pieces of being able to see them as a
whole person”. Jay also believed that equity involved getting to know students’ wider spheres of influence stating “it’s really understanding where a student comes from…[and involves]…your understanding of several layers of their identity”. Khadija focused on limitations and representation in the classroom in her discussion of equity, asserting:

We confine ourselves with curriculum quite a lot and…that limitation translates into a lot of how we approach teaching students. Whether that means limitation of expectation that…we’ve lowered our expectations for some people, or whether it’s limiting who’s represented in our classroom, whether we’re limiting the topics that are in the classroom…so, if I had to define it…it would be removing limitations in the classroom because that’s really…what’s stopping us from having conversations, what’s stopping us from evaluating differently based on different learning styles, based on different backgrounds.

Khadija discussed equity within the micro-ecology of the classroom but intimated broader institutional and structural constraints to equity in education—exosystemic influences, such as a limiting curriculum, a lack of representation, and assessment strategies that may disadvantage certain groups. Few other participants made reference to broader institutional or societal factors in describing how they conceptualized equity in education; these are described next.

5.1.2 Exo- and Macro-systemic Conceptions of Equity

Three of the 15 teacher candidates interviewed discussed broader systemic or societal factors in their conceptualizations of equity in education. Lauren focused primarily on the individual, but briefly referenced macro-level inequity, stating:

Students need to be treated the same in regards to love, kindness, compassion, but there needs to be more given to students who are significantly disadvantaged,
either from systemic inequalities, or just from anything…They need to be treated with a little bit more time and respect to…level the playing field for the whole class.

Lauren acknowledged that some students may be disadvantaged due to broader systemic inequity and suggested remedying this by providing more time and respect. While her acknowledgement that some students may be systematically disadvantaged is important, her approach to greater equity for these students lacked depth (e.g., more time and respect). Her response indicated limited understanding of the ways in which systemic injustice disadvantages certain groups at school—i.e., Eurocentric curricula and values, narrow monocultural, monolingual conceptions of literacy and learning, assessment and school organization that embody the dominant habitus (Grant & Wong, 2010; Olssen, 2006; Toohey & Smythe, 2022) and how she, as an educator of marginalized students, can work to counter these disadvantages.

Lena also discussed equity in the context of broader society. She touched on what she saw as the relationship between school and the outside world:

…it’s not a perfect world and I think that schools are just microcosms of what’s going on outside. So if someone says, ‘oh, there is equity in schools’, I would say, ‘no, that’s not the case’. The world isn’t equal yet, so even though schools are hopefully better, I don’t think we’re there yet.

Although Lena referenced wider society and recognized that schools can be microcosms of macro-level injustice, she did not acknowledge the role of schooling in legitimating and reproducing dominant groups within the broader social hierarchy—that educational systems are not simply passive reflections of societal inequity but active perpetrators in reproducing and perpetuating that inequity (Grant & Wong, 2010; Olssen, 2006).
Jamie also brought up exo-systemic factors in her discussion of equity in education, asking “why do we even need to have a conversation about how best to incorporate cultures in our education system? Should that not have just happened automatically already?” She implored:

Why is it still this way? Who does it serve? What groups does it serve to not include those cultures? Why are we not being pushed harder to pursue those cultures in our education system? Whose agenda is that fighting? Because it's definitely someone’s and it's obviously our government’s, but what is behind it? Because it's the same as where residential schools came from. It’s all connected.

Jamie expressed an awareness of the role of societal power relations in the education of marginalized groups and critically questioned the status quo, harkening to Freire’s (1970) question of ‘who benefits?’ Her critical questions are undoubtedly important and signal an awareness of historical and contemporary injustice. However, she struggled to understand why or how the status quo persists. Jamie’s assertion that greater equity and integration “should have happened by now” suggests a lack of awareness of broader historical and societal forces and how power operates in a neoliberal society to persistently disadvantage some and privilege others. A comprehensive understanding would require more extensive knowledge of the historical context, the ways in which current reality is shaped by historical events, and the centrality of societal power relations in explaining generational patterns of student achievement (Cummins et al., 2012; Dustmann et al., 2010; McCarty, 2005; Ogbu, 1978, 1992).

To summarize, most participants conceptualized equity on a mesosystemic or individual level, focusing on the learning needs of their students and providing equitable support – most frequently characterized as differentiated learning based on each student’s unique needs. Only a few participants referenced broader exo- or macro-level factors (i.e.,
structural or systemic barriers) in their responses. Broadly, data indicates the need for a greater emphasis on historical and contemporary injustice, how it manifests in schooling, and ways in which teachers can actively work against it. Next, I discuss participants’ views on neutrality and how to address sensitive topics in the classroom, which provides additional insight into how they conceived of equity in education and their role in advancing it.

5.1.3 The Perils of “Both Sides”

The ways in which participants discussed how they felt about including subjects that are politically, socially, or religiously sensitive into teaching illuminated some aspects of how they understood teaching for social justice. Several responses implicitly responded to critics of incorporating issues of social justice into education as a form of “thought control” (Leo, 2005) or “tantamount to political indoctrination” (Villegas, 2007) wherein teacher candidates emphasized the importance of maintaining neutrality. Gisele stated, “Obviously I am not going to bring my opinions in and force them on the students, but just maybe showing them both sides or showing them…what's happening and why it's happening”. Jay, like Gisele, rejected politicization in the classroom, asking rhetorically, “Do you think it’s your responsibility to transfer your political beliefs onto the students you’re teaching?” He asserted “It’s important not to favor any side…Your responsibility in that setting is to teach the child to look at both sides of the picture”. Dimitra acknowledged that “kids were talking about these things because kids notice and kids do talk about these things” but cautioned “if it could be seen as the teacher imposing their views on impressionable youth, then that could be harmful”.

As discussed in chapter one, the conception of teaching for social justice that underlies this research includes a recognition that neutrality is impossible and that education is inherently political and ideological. This includes not just the lens through which I
undertake analysis but also classroom instruction and teacher candidates’ dispositions. Schooling – teacher education, education policy, and academic learning – is not neutral. A social justice-centered pedagogy does not politicize education; education has always been politicized. The critical orientation that frames this study foregrounds institutionalized forms of domination, recognizing that inequity is embedded in normalized habits, patterns, notions, and assumptions (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; McDonald, 2003; Olssen, 2006). Teachers, therefore, should understand the perils of taking a neutral stance to topics such as classicism, racism, linguicism, and other forms of systemic oppression. “Both sides” of a story aren’t enough, and can be dangerous, if the discussion stops there, as illustrated by the curriculum requirements in Texas, aforementioned in chapter one (see p. 52). It is crucial to deconstruct false equivalences and cultivate criticality in students—as advocated for by some of the teacher candidates interviewed for this study and not others.

Several teacher candidates went beyond attending to “both sides” of an issue and focused on their responsibility to support the development of critical thinking in students. Rishi felt it was his job as a teacher to “help students grow into informed voters…part of that is knowing about these kind of issues - homophobia, racism, the politically driven things - where they can hear about in the news and they’re able to think critically about it”. Rachael expressed a similar sentiment: “I do think it is necessary and it just has to come from a place of where you're encouraging critical thinking. Okay, so you think this, why? And how do you think what you think affects someone else?” Others described the importance of acknowledging and discussing issues that students are aware of and encountering on a regular basis. Cassie described:

I think a lot of the conversations that we’re having about racism in the last twelve months, it’s important to acknowledge it with them…we’ve had a lot of
conversations in the last two years in the program about adjusting what our image of the child is…if young Black kids and students can experience racism, then I think it’s something we need to be talking about because if they can experience it, then they can comprehend…and we can have a conversation about why it’s wrong.

Examining both sides of a story is the first step to understanding but stopping there ignores power imbalances and dangerously simplifies narratives, divorcing them from historical contexts. Several teacher candidates demonstrated an understanding and commitment to cultivating this critical consciousness in their future students. In order to enact critical approaches in the classroom, teachers themselves need to be equipped with this knowledge and understanding. A coherent and permeating critical approach should be infused throughout ITE (and ideally throughout K-12 schooling). As discussed in chapter two, the failure to adopt critical approaches to multicultural education (instead, settling for conservative or liberal approaches) can obscure the realities of racism, linguicism, economic injustice, and other forms of oppression, thereby giving prospective teachers a false sense of preparedness to advocate for equity and social justice (Au, 2017; Gorski & Dalton, 2020). For a more detailed discussion on integrating multicultural and social justice teacher education into coursework, see pp. 76-80.

To summarize, this section described teacher candidates’ conceptualizations of equity in education and what it means to teach for diversity. Data (i.e., responses from the three teacher candidates who touched on exo- and macro-systemic factors in their concepts of equity, as well as other participants who emphasized equity as an individual matter without referencing broader institutional or societal injustice) indicate a strong need for teacher candidates to develop a more comprehensive knowledge base on historical and contemporary injustice if they are to conceive of its ongoing impact on the systems and
structures of education. Watt (2016) described how many teacher candidates are unaware of the role of socialization in influencing their thoughts and behaviours. There undoubtedly needs to be content and preparation for integrating equity-centered practices and differentiated instruction based on individual needs in ITE (as foregrounded by the majority of participants in this study). However, to prevent teachers from adopting decontextualized, individualistic notions of student behaviour divorced from social context (see p. 65-67 for more on this), ITE programs need to expose teacher candidates to the various and intersecting ways that people are shaped by historical, social, cultural, and economic forces. Further, if future teachers are to successfully teach in a pluralistic, heterogenous society, as Egbo (2010) contended, a deep knowledge and understanding of race and diversity – beyond a cursory familiarity—should be an explicit goal and outcome of ITE.

Next, I report data that provide insight into the opportunities and constraints to learning to teach for equity and social justice.

### 5.2 Opportunities to Learn: Constraints and Enablers

Five themes, which constitute constraints or enablers to the preparation of teachers for diversity, emerged from the data: (1) program coherence; (2) theory to practice gaps; (3) practicum (dis)connections; (4) chronic underrepresentation, and (5) peer learning, role models, and the willingness to learn. I begin by presenting data that elucidates how equity was conceptualized by key stakeholders and disseminated (or not) throughout the program. Fiscal constraints, curricular coherence, and program sequence are revealed as challenges to the holistic integration of equity and social justice throughout the program. Theory to practice gaps are identified as corollaries of a lack of program coherence. A significant contributor to theory-practice gaps, namely the lack of organized and purposeful practicum placements is discussed next. Because of its salience, this particular
constraint warranted special attention and was drawn out from under the umbrella of theory to practice gaps as a separate theme. Next, I report on underrepresentation and related constraints to learning. Finally, the role of peer learning, role models, and individual agency in teacher preparation for diversity are reported. I end this section with a summary of findings across the five emergent themes.

5.2.1 Program Coherence

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), program coherence is key to preparing teacher candidates to work with diverse students. A coherent program of teacher education identifies and collectively strives for a central focus for teacher learning. Teacher educators (i.e., instructors, faculty, key stakeholders) share responsibility for infusing a critical approach to equity and social justice and have the opportunity to influence policy and practice (Assaf et al., 2010). Program coherence is initiated and sustained by collective purpose and promotes focused program development (King & Newmann, 2000). Undoubtedly, there are challenges to cultivating and maintaining program cohesion; fragmentation in ITE is well-documented (Cochran-Smith et al., 2003, 2016; Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 2000). Interview data from the current study speaks to this difficulty and reveals constraints in developing program coherence generally and specifically with regards to the integration of equity and social justice.

As mentioned previously, Ontario ITE programs have all publicly articulated a commitment to equity and diversity. What is missing from the literature is information on the ways in which that commitment is operationalized within these programs. Presumably, if it is a central focus, it should be infused throughout a program’s curriculum, policies, and structures. None of the key stakeholders interviewed for the current study expressed that they felt there was a cohesive, shared notion of equity that was explicitly disseminated across the program. Andrea’s view of equity focused on
individuals, specifically on children and their educational needs, mirroring the predominant individual focus and liberal approach described by teacher candidates in the previous section. She described that, although the program did not “set out” a formal definition that she could refer to, she felt that certain Ministry of Education documents (e.g., Growing Success), multiple entry points, and letting students see themselves in the classwork were concepts that “have been pretty well absorbed by most…staff and in the office…also faculty and instructors”.

Similarly, Nina replied that she did not have a program-wide definition of equity “at [her] fingertips” but stated that she felt they tried to “embody what we want [future teachers] to be modeling when they’re out there”. Specifically, Nina described the goal of developing future teachers who are “able to work with all the children in [their] class no matter what race they are, what gender, what socioeconomic background they bring”. She expressed the hope that teacher educators were “walking the talk” and that teacher candidates would “have a model to take with them” in terms of how to teach equitably. Like Andrea, Nina addressed equity at the individual level, however, she also referenced it at the institutional level, stating:

One of the things we would love is to have more diversity in the teacher candidate group in general, right, like it's better than it was ten years ago but it's still very white, if I can say that. Because I think the more diversity there is in the group, the more they, as a group, become aware of the issues and the things that they need to be doing as they move out of the program.

Nina recognized the homogeneity within the program and expressed a strong desire to diversify. Although “the group” Nina referred to might include all teacher candidates in a more diversified cohort (i.e., racialized and white) who can mutually learn from one another, through the lens of critical race theory (CRT), Nina’s contention that greater
diversity would contribute to a greater awareness of (equity and diversity) issues in the group intimates interest convergence, whereby commitments and initiatives aimed at enrolling more diverse pools of teacher candidates are not strictly motivated by equity and social justice goals but also because they benefit the needs and interests of the majority white students (Agee, 2004; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Gay, 2002). As Milner IV (2008) points out “in this line of reasoning, a diverse student population is important because white students can learn from non-white students” (p. 338). This will be explored in greater depth in a following section on chronic underrepresentation but what is pertinent to note here is that, although Nina’s conception of equity extended beyond the mesosystemic level of the individual and their immediate environments to include exosystemic concerns, her stated purpose for diversification could be problematic if it accords with prior literature suggesting that its perceived benefits are rarely reciprocal in nature—racialized students’ developmental and learning needs are not the focus and “the intentionality and interests are sometimes one-sided” (Milner IV, 2008, p. 338).

When asked if she felt there was a coherent understanding of equity across the program, Geneve responded by saying “yes and no”. She pointed out that “academics don't typically agree on how they define things” but felt “that’s okay because it keeps the dialogue going. It keeps us asking questions about why this, not that, and that's what drives learning—that constant pushing and dialogue and questioning and curiosity and debate”. For this reason, she was “not uncomfortable” with the lack of a collective and cohesive understanding of equity. She asserted that “we don't try to get into the weeds of that debate with our instructors or our teacher candidates”. That said, Geneve did express a notion of equity she wanted incorporated into the program—one that included broader, exosystemic commitments:
We want [instructors and teacher candidates] to understand that, as an institution, we have an obligation to be continually looking at the systems and structures that we have in place, the ways that we design our courses, and ask ourselves are we creating barriers for people and privileging some students' abilities to do well in our course versus others?…I would say there's a social justice root in everything that we do, but I would say it's not enough just to think about pedagogy. We have to also think about the systems and structures that we have in place and whether or not they are privileging some and harming others.

Geneve felt that equity was the cornerstone of all administrative efforts within the program in that it informed “everything we do”, not only on a pedagogical (i.e., micro- or individual) level but also in examining systems and structures. She delineated an overarching vision for the program (i.e., “a social justice root”); however, the lack of a coherent understanding of equity across the program acted as a constraint to operationalizing this vision. Program coherence requires that teacher educators possess a shared vision, demonstrate common knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning, and use common standards of practice that guide and assess coursework and field experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). If teacher educators do not share the same vision, knowledge, and beliefs around equity, then it is unlikely that it will be taken up by teacher educators and teacher candidates in a comprehensive or consistent way across the program. In fact, the current study’s findings that both key stakeholders’ and teacher candidates predominantly conceptualized equity on a micro- or individual level suggest that Geneve’s conviction that equity must go beyond pedagogy to account for systemic and structural injustice is not being effectively or sufficiently disseminated and appropriated by those within the program.
5.2.1.1 Coherence and Funding

Key stakeholders spoke to funding challenges as a significant barrier to program coherence. As stated previously, all Ontario ITE programs are housed within faculties of education at Ontario universities. Both Nina and Geneve described how most faculty who teach in the program are limited duties instructors. Although, as Nina stated, “we wish there were more faculty teaching in the program”, she noted it is challenging because faculty are also expected to teach in the graduate programs, which means many simply do not have time to teach in the ITE program. Geneve attributed this preponderance of limited duties instructors to funding issues, stating: “We simply were never funded appropriately for the number of students that we have” and, referring to the Ministry-directed shift to four-semester ITE programs throughout the province in 2015, she explained “they slashed the number of students we could take in in a year but doubled the program, which has left us, essentially, with the same number of students in the building in a year in that program and then cut our operating expenses by 30%. It is difficult to hire full-time people into that kind of a fiscal reality”. She goes on to describe the implications of those fiscal limitations for the program:

What that means is you've got a never-ending cycle of people coming in, teaching a course, and leaving. And there are excellent pros to that, right, they could be people who are coming straight from a classroom; some of them are still working, in fact, in a class, so there's a freshness in terms of their experience that we like. But in terms of getting a holistic, cohesive overview of a program where your instructors are all talking to one another and have a sense of what's going on - that's a bigger challenge.
Geneve pointed to fiscal realities as a pain point at which purposes and practicalities collide in ITE. A coherent program is difficult to realize with high teacher educator turnover.

5.2.1.2 Coherence in Curriculum

The cohesive integration of equity issues into preservice curriculum was touched on by several teacher candidates and key stakeholders in this study. Nina, for example, expressed that “ideally, we feel things like this [equity, diversity, and social justice] should be interwoven in all courses, in all honesty. You know, every course should be dealing with how do you make this equitable? How do you make sure you're including in your own classroom every single kid sitting there, right?” Although she felt that this “is happening, at least to some degree”, interview data from teacher candidates indicated that exposure to preparation for equity and diversity was inconsistent and insufficient. Fern, for example, commented that, in some courses, equity issues were “a big component” but in other courses, attention was “very very minor”. She shared Nina’s desire for equity content to be interwoven in all coursework but felt this did not happen during her time in the program, asserting:

Those topics need to be integrated in every class we take so even if we’re taking math, I think that we need to talk about equity and diversity in math, and what equity looks like and I think that those topics have to be intertwined in everything, regardless, so that you really see how that would apply for different subjects or how that I would apply it in an individual classroom. I don’t think we got as much exposure to it as we probably need.

William argued that because there is no guarantee that a teacher candidate will be exposed to diversity in their student teaching and be mentored by a skilled and caring
associate teacher with a passion for equity and social justice (more on practicum placements and ATs following, see pp. 170-175), those learning opportunities have to be provided “within the courses [at the faculty]…and not just as head knowledge, but as practical, experiential knowledge…and that was very much missing…I don’t know how to fix that but that is very important for teacher success”. Jamie concurred that her ITE course instructors did not model equity-centered pedagogy or materials. She described that “most of our projects were more…reading tasks. [They] didn’t really include incorporating languages, incorporating diversity”. Between coursework and her field placements at the end of her two years in ITE, Jamie stated, “I haven’t seen it in action, which is a shame”.

Gisele, who was in the urban education specialty, stated that although opportunities to learn about teaching for equity and diversity were very much present in the courses she took as part of her specialization, they were addressed “only sparsely in other courses”. She detailed:

There is just not a lot of conversation [in other courses] and, realistically, that should be the basis of every course, right, even if you’re looking at math, you need to make sure that you’re being equitable in your teaching. So I think it's just not really talked about too much and some of the courses do brush by it but it's very surface level. Obviously, I've had the experience in the urban classes where we dive deep into those issues but I feel like if you weren't in the urban stream, you probably aren't getting a lot of information about EDI [equity, diversity, and inclusion].

Participant data on the integration of equity into coursework reported in this study indicate that Nina’s hope that teacher educators were “walking the talk” and modeling
equity-centered pedagogy for teacher candidates was not being realized in a cohesive or comprehensive way.

In addition to surmising that ITE instructors were demonstrating practical approaches to equity and diversity in their classes, Nina also discussed how the infusion of equity issues relied in part on the 70 or so students in the urban education specialty, who are interspersed in other courses, to “bring their knowledge to other courses where they are with other students”. She admitted that this is “not foolproof, obviously, but it is at least something”. In the absence of a common understanding, a cohesive directive, and a vehicle to infuse social justice and equity across the program, key stakeholders were, at least partially, left to hope that more highly informed teacher candidates would disseminate knowledge to lesser informed teacher candidates. This is problematic not only in its relative ineffectiveness (teacher candidate interview data speaks to inconsistent learning related to teaching for diversity) but also in light of the fact that typically urban education streams are more highly populated by racialized teacher candidates. It is not uncommon for racialized peoples to be burdened with the role of tackling race issues in education (Ahmed, 2008; Jacobs & Hai, 2002). Though not specific to teacher candidates, Ahmed (2008) described white faculty members who felt that they could or should not attempt to tackle race issues with students and points out that these lecturers “fall into the trap of not seeing their own ‘whiteness’ as ‘raced’, leading to a failure to interrogate the category of ‘whiteness’ and the privileging and normative effects it can have” (p. 57). Excluding whiteness from practices of racialization is highly problematic in maintaining the prevailing ideology that race is something that involves ‘non-white’ people only (Ahmed, 2004). ITE programs must work to acknowledge whiteness and its normalization (as Khadija did, see pp. 178-179) if they are to destabilize and challenge privileged and dominant discourses (Ahmed, 2008). Relying on teacher candidates in the urban education stream (the majority of whom are likely to be racialized) is neither an
effective nor equitable approach to integrating a coherent understanding of teaching for social justice across ITE.

Although participants who either took the urban education elective or who were in the urban education specialty felt that an equity course should be mandatory for all teacher candidates (e.g., Khadija described feeling that the urban education elective she took should have been mandatory for everyone because it “made a world of difference” in consolidating her understandings of teaching for diversity), programs must take care not to approach social justice goals with additive approaches alone whereby cultural content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its basic structure, purposes, and characteristics (Banks, 2010). Ensuring equity and critical approaches are integrated throughout coursework in a coherent way is key to preparing equity-centered teachers. Geneve spoke to this when she stated, “It’s not just about sticking in a couple of articles. It’s about looking at how you've positioned the course outline that you've developed and whether or not the theories you're drawing on are antithetical to other ways of knowing”. Strong intentions exist; however, data indicate much work is left to be done.

To operationalize good intentions, Geneve referenced the creation of a curriculum innovation framework as one way that the program was working to create greater coherence across ITE courses at the time of this research—to establish what Geneve described as “the guiding principles for our courses in a consistent, cohesive way”. Prior to this initiative, administrators predominantly relied on workshopping (e.g., webinars, print resources) to orientate course instructors who, as Geneve attested, “change all the time”. She contended that the curriculum innovation framework was a different approach that could provide consistency across courses in the face of changing instructors and last-minute hires; although is prudent to remember that the university-based structure of ITE
means that full-time faculty members teaching preservice courses would have the academic freedom to either utilize the curriculum innovation framework in their teaching or not, whereas limited duties instructors will be expected to follow the course as it has been designed.

At the time of data collection for this study, the framework was being actioned by teams made up of faculty members, graduate students, and teacher candidates who gathered to work with various subject area foci and revise courses (e.g., readings, expectations, assessment) to be cohesive and well-thought out in terms of addressing what Geneve termed “all of the things that we say are important to us”. Although these things included equity and social justice, Geneve clarified that the framework was not strictly an equity, diversity, and inclusion initiative, noting that it must also account for “all kinds of layers of mandates that we have to address when we’re developing courses” including accreditation requirements for the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)\(^8\), Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)\(^9\) standards, concerns of teachers’ federations related to accreditation, and other initiatives that periodically come into the fray like the recent Ontario Human Rights Commission’s (OHRC) inquiry called the Right to Read, which was driven by the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario. Education is highly contested and involves multiple and competing interests. In this milieu, equity,

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\(^8\) As described in chapter one, the Ontario College of Teachers was established in 1997 and is the regulatory body for the teaching profession in Ontario. Its mandate is to license, govern, and regulate the practice of teaching in Ontario. It also regulates and accredits initial teacher education programs.

\(^9\) The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, created through the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario Act in 2005, is a provincial agency that evaluates the postsecondary sector and provides policy recommendations to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to improve access, quality, and accountability of colleges and universities in Ontario.
diversity, and social justice can be mistakenly viewed as just yet another special interest rather than the thread that should be woven throughout every component of teacher education. The curriculum innovation framework cannot be considered to be an actioned equity, diversity, and social justice initiative due to its broad scope in striving to satisfy the concerns of multiple interests with equity cited as just one of many mandates—Geneve described equity and diversity priorities as “parts of a whole”—rather than a root system from which all the various concerns related to teacher education extend.

5.2.1.3 Coherence in Course Sequence

One teacher candidate brought up a salient point related to coherence in the provision of program sequence which warrants reporting here. Lamenting a perceived lack of opportunity to apply concepts learned in his coursework to his practice teaching in the classroom, William noted that in the Intermediate-Senior division, content courses are isolated from methods courses, with content courses taken in the first year and methods courses later that year and in second year. He described doing his first placement, which had several students that required modifications and accommodations, before having taken the special education course, which he began when he returned from that placement. He described how, as a result, “I didn’t know any of the information when I was in the classroom, and the teacher expected me to know it”. He then described how in second year, he did a placement in an ESL school before having taken the course on supporting MLs at the faculty. He wished he had the benefit of those courses prior to his placements – in his words “you need as much knowledge as possible before you go into a placement or on the alternative field experience otherwise you end up in exactly the situation I was in”. He expressed what he perceived as a need to reorganize the sequencing of courses and placements and felt he missed out on an opportunity to reflect on his time in the program when he finished his final placement and had no opportunity
to come back to faculty to “debrief”. Field experiences are discussed in greater detail following (see pp. 170-175); however, the notion that program coherence must go beyond a cohesive vision for equity and its integration through preservice curriculum and also be applied to program sequence is salient to consider in organizational decision-making.

To summarize, research suggests that coherence is one of the most important aspects of teacher preparation for diversity and social justice (Assaf et al., 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2003; Cochran-Smith & Reagan, 2022; Nieto, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Prior literature indicates that for ITE programs to be successful, they must possess a high degree of coherence achieved, in part, to a “culture of collaboration among faculty [who]…have detailed knowledge of the whole program curriculum, not just their little piece” (Zeichner, 2000, p. 52). Interview data from the present study suggests that, although strong intention exists, reassessment and improvement in policies and practices are needed to achieve greater coherence. Variability in conceptions of equity and in the attention paid to equity and diversity in coursework translated into variability in the degree to which individual teacher candidates were exposed to equity issues, engaged in social-justice-oriented coursework, and/or had equity-centered practice modelled for them. Critical reflection and structural change at micro-, exo-, and macro-systemic levels (e.g., government funding, admissions, hiring policies and procedures, careful and purposeful integration of equity issues) is needed.

A lack of program coherence can lead to and/or amplify already existent theory-practice gaps in teacher preparation. Next, I turn to another constraint to teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn that emerged from the data, gaps between theory (i.e., coursework) and practice (i.e., field experiences).
5.2.2 Theory to Practice Gaps

In explaining the centrality of equity and diversity program goals, Geneve asserted that there was “a social justice root in everything that we do” (see quote on p. 153) and noted that “in all of the literature surrounding the faculty of education…we are committed to social justice and equity”. As discussed in chapter one of this thesis (see pp. 9-10), although it is important for universities to have literature espousing diversity goals (e.g., equity and anti-racism policy statements), the effectiveness of such commitments is contingent upon actioning that policy in tangible ways (Ahmed, 2006; Aveling, 2007). Anti-racism as a policy priority, for example, does not in and of itself constitute progress or equate to good performance with regards to race equality (Ahmed, 2006). The data presented in this section provides insight into how and whether written commitments and theories of equity and social justice are being taken up in practice in the focal program. Research on implementation can help us to avoid, as Ahmed (2006) cautions, reading policy documents “as performatives, as if they bring into effect what they name” (p. 124).

As described in chapter two, the “practice turn” in ITE emerged in response to a common criticism raised about university-based teacher preparation programs – that of focusing too heavily on theories of teaching and learning at the expense of practical teaching skills (Reid, 2011; Zeichner, 2012). Findings from this study build upon prior literature on perceptions of un(der)preparedness by prospective teachers and suggest such gaps persist. Several teacher candidates described a lack of opportunity to learn about how to practically apply equity and diversity concepts to their teaching. Cassie discussed how teaching diverse students in equitable ways “wasn’t addressed in a practical sense” in the program and contended that she and her peers in the program felt like “a lot of it was vague, theoretical and we wanted more physical, practical in the classroom; this is what it looks like”. She later commented “I’ve heard the word ‘differentiation’ so often, but I just
felt like no one had actually been like, hey, here’s a concrete example of what you can do”.

Alana expressed a similar opinion: “I do think there was a lot of talk about equity and diversity, but I don’t know if it was really taught in a way that helps us, as teachers, know how to now use that information”. She also mentioned that many of the people in her cohort agreed that “we weren’t really given a lot of direction on how to actually implement these things into the classroom” and wished her preservice teachers would “actually go through, explicitly, what the assessments are or how to make your classroom diverse instead of just talking about it”.

Jamie, similarly, discussed how although she had been collecting diverse resources to prepare for teaching for diversity, “I just don’t have too much of a specific answer as to what else I can be doing”. Although she felt that integrating equity and diversity into the classroom was very important, she stated that “it also feels very unobtainable”. She explained:

Yes, languages and different cultures are very important…but I just feel as though the education system - the way that it's set up right now - class sizes are so big and the expectations on teachers are so large with very limited resources… and I just don't see where to fit the cultural diversity in.

Cassie and William also expressed a lack of preparedness—Cassie stated that she felt “generally unprepared in a way that I wasn’t anticipating” and William asserted “I definitely learned a lot of information within my preservice classes but how to apply that within my own teaching, I feel completely unprepared”. By way of explanation, he stated:
Learning how to prepare a lesson for a math course is one thing, but learning how to prepare a lesson for a math course where you have three students with varying IEPs and a student that is violent and another student that only attends half your classes but still able to manage a 60% but they want more and another student that has just come out of the basics of the ESL program, and you need to make sure to account for that.

Lauren, who was in the urban education specialty, asserted that her education on equity and social justice “wasn’t as extensive as I would have hoped” and described feeling “a little bit disappointed” because “it was a lot of us writing research papers, as opposed to us talking about how we can help serve the students in our classrooms”. She stated that “it felt very much like I was back in undergrad again” and expressed frustration in having to write research papers in the program: “why are we doing this?”, she implored, “this isn’t directly related to anything”.

Self-reported participant data from the current study coincides with other research indicating a lack of preparedness and self-efficacy to effectively support diverse students and teach in ways that align with equity and social justice principles expounded by ITE programs, school boards, and broader ministry-stated objectives (Campbell 2020; Kitchen & Petrarca, 2015; Vidwans & Faez, 2019; Webster & Valeo, 2011).

5.2.2.1 Multilingual Learners

Several participant responses to questions on equity and multilingual learners (MLs), which centered on curriculum expectations and the use of home language (L1), revealed significant theory-practice disconnects. These were not explicit attestations of perceived un(der)preparedness, as was reported on in the previous section, but gaps in knowledge or contradictions that emerged, which indicated dissonance between concepts of equity in
education and the ways in which they might be taken up (or not) in practice. These data provide insight into how such theory-practice gaps might manifest in classroom teaching and impact marginalized students’ experiences and academic achievement.

Despite over 30 years of compelling research demonstrating a vital role for home language in supporting language and literacy development across languages, facilitating access to the curriculum, and affirming multiliterate and multilingual identities of competence (Cummins, 2007a, 2007b; Cummins et al., 2019; García et al., 2017; Lindholm-Leary, 2014; Manyak, 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2002, 2004), most teacher candidates interviewed for this study expressed little to no knowledge of the benefits of home language or how to leverage it in the classroom to actualize equity and diversity goals (e.g., valuing prior knowledge, validating diverse identities, leveling the playing field for marginalized students, etc.). Most participants expressed that they were not opposed to home language use but viewed its utility as restricted to either helping MLs feel more comfortable or supporting them in transitioning to English only.

Fern, for example, framed L1 as a useful tool at times when students “get frustrated and feel unheard” but not as a pedagogical resource – “if they can just say it in their first language and then you can try and go back to speaking in English, then I think maybe that would help them to move forward”. Several participants indicated that home language use in the classroom was not something that they had considered. When asked her views on drawing on L1 in the classroom, Gisele responded “Honestly, I’ve never really thought about that” but suggested it could “make [MLs] feel more comfortable and safe…and, I think, as a teacher, you should be welcoming to that but as long as the learning is still getting done”. Gisele’s response intimates that L1 could contribute to a safe and welcoming environment but that it has the potential to distract from or hinder learning rather than support or enrich it.
Lauren also responded by stating “I haven’t really thought about that, actually, I wonder…it’s a really tricky concept, I think”. Like Gisele and Lauren, Jamie’s response suggested that L1 use in the classroom was not something she had thought about over the course of her two years in the ITE program and responded, “I mean, I don’t see any harm in speaking different languages in class” but noted “it would take up more time because the teacher would have to have a device that translates”.

Khadija felt there should be a balance between English and L1 but, like her peers, also prioritized English. She provided the following example:

If they’re all chatting, they’re all doing group work, you’re allowing it [L1] and then when it comes to answering questions, okay, let’s try to focus only on English, right. So having a bit of both probably would make a big difference because you want that comfort in the classroom, and at the same time you want to keep encouraging the learning that they’re trying to achieve.

Like several other participants, Khadija viewed L1 as a way to provide a safe environment for MLs but, similar to Gisele, her comments suggest a view that its use can interfere with “the learning they’re trying to achieve” (e.g., developing English proficiency or content learning) rather than facilitate and support it.

Jay appeared to recognize the value of L1, however, he struggled to make the connection to classroom practice. When discussing expectations for MLs, Jay noted that some of these students, specifically immigrants and refugees, have “experienced so much at such a young age” and that “the natural assumption is to have lower expectations and just get them through”. However, he argued that by doing that “we negate the experiences that they bring into the classroom because we’re making an assumption that the only valuable experiences are the ones that they experience in the English language”. He continued:
[That assumption] is not really true because they’ve experienced life in their own language and they know how to represent the world in that language and it may be a lot more creative and mature because of what they’ve seen at such a young age than somebody in the same context and in this classroom.

Jay spoke passionately about the valuable prior knowledge that MLs have encoded in their L1, however when asked his opinion on whether MLs should be permitted to use their L1 in class, he expressed uncertainty, stating: “That’s a tricky one, Kate, I don’t think I have an answer to that right now”. Jay’s response indicated a disconnect between equity and diversity rhetoric and the practical ways in which these principles can be actioned in the classroom. In fact, none of the participants discussed maintaining or developing students’ L1 as a useful pedagogical endeavour and only Alex indicated an awareness of the benefits of L1 use for content learning and language and literacy development across languages (Cummins, 2007a; Thomas & Collier, 2002, 2004). Alex cited an article she had read that had “really opened my eyes”, which documented how students who were permitted to use their L1 in school experienced much deeper learning overall compared to those students who were restricted to English-only. Although she now understood the potential benefits of its use in the classroom, she still expressed a lack of understanding about how to put that knowledge into practice, stating, “but then again, there’s so many languages [in the classroom] and how do you get to it all?”

Despite all teacher candidates in the current case having to take a mandatory course on teaching MLs, participants generally exhibited a lack of awareness of the ways in which literacy concepts and skills readily transfer from one language to another (Baker, 2011; Cummins, 2005) and how that transfer can be used in practical ways in the classroom to develop language and literacy competences across languages (Cummins & Early, 2011; García et al., 2017; Paterson, 2021).
Participant responses about providing equitable instructions for MLs indicated an absence of culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy (CLSP) – either through modeling in practice or integrating into the coursework. Focusing on transitioning MLs to English only indicates that these teacher candidates may not be prepared to “perpetuate and foster – to sustain – linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 88). It indicates deficit approaches to MLs whose own language is viewed as an obstacle to be overcome on the road to academic success. As Paris (2012) emphasizes, teachers must be more than responsive to students’ languages and cultures, they must enact pedagogies that support those students in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities. For true transformation to take place, youth’s cultural and linguistic practices need to be recognized as having inherent value in and of themselves and not solely as resource to provide a more comfortable classroom environment or to advance toward the ultimate goal of assimilation to monolingual norms.

It is not purported here that this one example (i.e., participant responses related to teaching MLs) can be generalized to all other equity and diversity issues in teacher preparation and schooling; however, it is useful to consider because it illustrates one of the ways in which equity and diversity intentions, when not sufficiently connected to evidence-based, practical approaches to teaching and learning, can fail to be actioned in concrete ways, resulting in disadvantage and harm for marginalized students in classrooms.

To conclude, data reported here suggest that criticisms levied against university-based teacher preparation programs for emphasizing theory over practical teaching skills remain valid. Certainly, ITE programs must not revert to transmission-oriented or technicist approaches to teaching that typically exclude diverse students’ funds of knowledge, limit
culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, and harm those groups not in possession of dominant cultural and linguistic currencies (Strom, 2015; Strom and Martin, 2022; Strom & Viesca, 2020; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). However, it is important that teacher candidates are being provided with opportunities to make crucial connections between theory and practice and have ample opportunity to see and experiment with classroom-based approaches to centering equity. Teacher candidates’ perceptions and self-reported experiences in the present study accord with a long-perceived theory-practice gap wherein the university model of teacher education “purportedly emphasizes theory, values, and beliefs at the expense of actual teaching practice, thus leaving new teachers on their own to implement or translate (university-produced) theory into (classroom-ready) practice” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016, p. 72).

A key component of forging theory to practice connections is through field experiences in ITE. Although some participants described transformative practicum experiences and associate teachers (ATs) who were committed to teaching for equity and social justice; others described disappointing placements that were neither productive nor beneficial to their development as equity-centered teachers. Field experiences and their role in teacher preparation for diversity are discussed next.

### 5.2.3 Practicum (Dis)Connections

Field experiences are often pointed to as the most impactful avenue for shifting beliefs and preparing future teachers for equity-centered practice (Ballantyne & Mills, 2015; Cochran-Smith, 2010). William acknowledged the significance of practicums in providing practical guidance and commented that student teaching experiences can vary greatly. He discussed the “randomness” of practicums and how “some students [i.e., teacher candidates] will and some won’t” have opportunities to learn to teach for equity
and diversity in their placements. When asked about connections between coursework and practicum, he stated:

We learned a lot of content and knowledge about diversity and inclusion, but we don’t actually know how that plays out. It seems with hundreds of students being placed there is not that intentional placement of students within an exposure to different areas. Yes, I got a placement within a classroom with English as a second language but not everyone did. I got one classroom that had a lot of IEPs of a good variety, but the others not so much. And [my] classmates, they didn’t get that same diversity that I got between different placements, so I think that was just the luck of the draw.

Rachael, for example, described being placed in a relatively homogenous classroom in her first practicum as a Year 1 teacher candidate and stated, “I think what was missing was …because of the demographic of the class…the majority of the students were from European background…there were definitely a lot of experiences that I wasn't exposed to”. Jamie reported a lack of exposure to equity-centered practice, stating that she had not experienced a classroom “…that has fully represented or provided opportunities for students that have second languages or cultural backgrounds…I don’t think I’ve ever seen a project that has been differentiated so that they can incorporate their culture within it”.

When asked about the role of the program’s equity and social justice goals in the assignment of practicum placements, Jane stated: “I’ll be honest with you, it’s not a driving force”. She went on to explain: “We have names and we're matching names to divisions and names to geographical locations, so it doesn't come in. It's just we have a job to do, we’ve got to get you a teacher. We've got a bank of teachers that are willing to take people, so I don't really bring that in”. Nina concurred that there is “not as much [of
a concerted effort] as one would like probably” with the priority being “to make sure that they have their teaching subjects, if we can, or their teaching divisions which is mandatory for certification”. Jane stated that more purposeful placement to ensure prospective teachers have varied opportunities to learn is “an area for us to further explore”.

Generally, key stakeholders indicated that equity and social justice goals are not a focal consideration in the provision of practicum experiences. The logistical challenges of placing a large number of teacher candidates into practicums that satisfy their requirements for accreditation constrain the ability of the program to purposefully place students in at least one highly diverse classroom with an AT who has a passion for and expertise in equity-centered practice. The current case employed one full-time practicum and community engagement coordinator who was responsible for working with over 50 school boards to place over 300 teacher candidates across four different placements in addition to coordinating various community engagement initiatives. The limited ability to place students purposefully interferes with the infusion of a cohesive “learning to teach for equity, diversity, and social justice” focus across the practicum component of the program.

Darling-Hammond et al.’s (2010) work at the Stanford Teacher Education Program advocated for overhauling student teaching placements—making them year-long in duration and ensuring candidates are placed with ATs who have a strong background in and commitment to equity-oriented practice with diverse learners. Longer placements could be one way to alleviate staffing and logistical challenges. One teacher candidate’s comments, in particular, support this call for more time in the same placement. Khadija described how the short duration of her practicums acted as a constraint to her learning:
I wish we had more time doing placements just because… it really felt like the second you made a relationship with the kids, you’re gone. And it’s just…such a big important part of teaching anyways, having that relationship with students, and then getting it, and then seeing how that could reflect in your teaching and just have it be completely cut short. It just leaves you with a lot more questions than it does with answers.

In addition to wishing she had more time in placement, Khadija also expressed wanting “a lot more reflecting on that placement”. She referenced the program’s mentor groups as a place for reflection but felt those groups did not provide sufficient opportunity to, in her words, “take…what we went through in placement and really reflect on how do we go from here? What should I have done in this situation? What could have happened differently? Who did this right? Who did this in a way that could have been improved?” She stated that “if we had more of that, we would have been a lot more prepared”.

The mentor group that Khadija referenced was part of a newly introduced mentorship component of the program that, Geneve stated, was implemented as an effort to make the program more cohesive despite limitations such as high ITE instructor turnover. Groups of approximately ten teacher candidates across any division would meet with each other and a mentor twice per month to reflect on what they had learned and how to translate that learning into future practice. Nina mentioned that although learning to teach for equity and diversity was not an explicit objective of the mentor groups, they did provide a space for teacher candidates to critically reflect on their experiences. Some teacher candidates expressed that mentors influenced their learning and supported their growth in very positive ways. Lauren, for example, described her mentor as “a phenomenal person” who “really helped connect all of these things that we were experiencing together”. However, she noted that “a lot of my peers had very different experiences”.

William, like Khadija, was one such teacher candidate who reported having a predominantly negative experience. He noted that his mentors were very rigid in their approach and “[we] didn’t have any opportunity for anything other than what they wanted us to talk about”, noting “we had so much structure that we didn’t get to share any of our experience unless it fit the topic that was for that day”. He acknowledged that the mentor groups were an opportunity for teacher candidates to “consolidate…their knowledge and experiences” but, like Khadija, he felt he missed out on this opportunity.

Participant data reporting varying experiences with ITE mentorship have relevance to prior research indicating that for field experiences to be impactful, teacher candidates need to be explicitly prepared, the experiences themselves need to be carefully planned and structured, and there needs to be careful mediation of these experiences (e.g., guided reflection). In fact, research shows that unstructured, unmediated experiences can actually reinforce negative patterns that perpetuate inequity (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; Harfitt, 2018; Tinkler et al., 2014; Zeichner, 1996). Although the mentor groups were purportedly introduced to provide more program coherence, the lack of a shared vision and collective approach to consolidating learning and reflecting on practice among mentors produced inconsistent results. Data suggests that the mentor groups acted as a constraint to learning for some teacher candidates and an enabler for others. Although the mentorship component was not, as Nina clarified, specifically an equity and diversity initiative, it is an example of a program area that could be utilized to infuse an equity focus. Purposeful selection of mentors who share a commitment to equity and a willingness to use common standards of practice to guide their equity-focused mentorship is an untapped opportunity in this case—an avenue where teacher candidates could be better supported in grappling with equity issues and applying a social justice lens to their various learning experiences across ITE.
Another constraint that emerged from the data was a limited relationship between the university and the ATs. William, for example, noted that ATs often differed in their level of commitment to equity and diversity and the degree to which they integrate it into their teaching. Geneve described how the faculty used to offer ATs “kind of an AQ [additional qualification] course for free” but noted that the school board eventually opted to host AT workshops instead. Those workshops, however, had not been held in recent years due to the supply teacher shortage (i.e., not enough substitute teachers to cover in-service teachers so they could attend). The only thing mentioned by key stakeholders currently in place to facilitate connection with ATs was a website that centered around the transition to virtual teaching (created during the Covid-19 pandemic) developed by the faculty and their partner board. The website was designed to provide resources and connect in-service and preservice teachers to discuss opportunities and challenges of transitioning to remote learning. Though a similar initiative could be harnessed to forge greater collaboration and cohesion between the program and ATs, this particular project was focused specifically on virtual learning and not designed with that objective in mind. As it stands, the absence of a strong relationship between the university and ATs means that administrators would likely be largely unaware of whether the ATs on their roster would have a strong understanding of and passion for equity and social justice. This accords with existing research indicating that the development of a coordinated effort between the university-based aspects of ITE programs and individual school sites is a difficult one (Borko & Mayfield, 1995; Wideen et al., 1998; Zeichner & Hoeft, 1996).

Data reported in this section builds on prior literature which emphasizes the importance of (1) diverse field placements; and (2) finding supervising in-service teachers as well as mentors at the university who both model and support the equity pedagogy that socially just teaching requires (Chubbuck, 2010). A lack of purposeful practicum placements and the absence of an organized and collective commitment to emphasizing, modeling, and
reflecting on teaching approaches for equity and social justice across the program acted as significant constraints to teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about teaching for diversity. As William stated, it was left to “the luck of the draw” as to whether teacher candidates did or did not have the opportunity to see concepts around teaching for diversity implemented in practical ways in the classroom. Varied experiences were also reported with regards to mentorship and program-based opportunities to engage in critical reflection on practice.

Next, I report data on underrepresentation in ITE and the ways in which it influenced teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn.

5.2.4 Chronic Underrepresentation

Despite the increased emphasis on equity, diversity, and social justice in teacher education, concerns continue to be raised about the persistent homogeneity of teacher candidate cohorts in Canada (Falkenberg, 2015, Holden & Kitchen, 2019; Solomon et al., 2005). The dearth of publicly available demographic data in Ontario makes current ITE representation rates difficult to comprehensively ascertain. As mentioned previously, if equity and diversity are core program objectives, a lack of relevant data for teacher educators and other stakeholders to draw on greatly constrains decision-making processes and the operationalization of stated goals (Holden & Kitchen, 2018). The present study builds on limited prior data in providing this crucial baseline information. To implement equity goals, gaps in representation (and related admissions policies and procedures) must be critically examined.

As reported in chapter four, findings from the current study accord with other limited data on representation rates in Ontario, indicating a continued overrepresentation of white, female, cisgendered, monolingual teacher candidates (Falkenberg, 2015, Holden &
Kitchen, 2018, 2019; Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators [ONABSE], 2015; Turner, 2014). The interview findings reported following include racialized teacher candidates’ counternarratives, the ways in which homogeneity exerts influence on teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn, and relevant key stakeholder data on ITE instructor recruitment and admissions policies.

5.2.4.1 Teacher Educators

Scholars describe how a lack of diversity in the teacher educator pool exerts strong influence over ITE curriculum and delivery, student and instructor recruitment and support, and the degree of urgency with which a program works to achieve equity and diversity goals (Lin et al., 2008; Milner IV, 2008; Sleeter, 2017). Although there is little information on the demographic composition of teacher educators in Canada, data derived from the United States suggests a homogeneity that mirrors, or even exceeds, that which is documented in the teacher candidate pool (King & Hampel, 2018; Milner et al., 2013). There is little reason to believe that the situation is any different in the Canadian context. Interview data from the current study supports this assumption and speaks to challenges of diversifying the teacher educator pool (in addition to the aforementioned preponderance of limited duties instructors) and the effects of a homogeneous teacher educator pool on teacher candidates’ experiences and opportunities to learn.

In examining homogeneity in teacher education, it is important to gain insight into key stakeholder perspectives and hiring procedures related to equity and diversity goals. When asked if equity and social justice goals are part of the hiring, Nina replied “They’re not not considered”. She detailed that when hiring for courses that have a particular equity and diversity component (e.g., Foundations courses), they look for people with a background in those areas but caveated that “it’s not necessarily the case that they would be from a [racialized background]”; in fact, she stated that those teaching the Foundations
course are all “white, [city name removed] Ontario people, but one of them has a PhD in an equity social justice framework, another one has been [a key administrator] of the [local] District School Board, so would have had exposure to all manner of things”.

Geneve referenced broader university-wide policy in her response, noting that the university has “a very public statement that they put on all advertising that we have a commitment to this and so it is definitely something that is highlighted”. She described how if Applicant A and Applicant B had equal qualifications and Applicant B opted to self-identify as a member of a minoritized group, then they would hire Applicant B. Geneve opined that “we’ve done pretty well…to develop some diversity amongst faculty”. It is prudent here to refer back to Nina’s previous comment about how faculty often do not teach ITE courses, so increased diversity among tenured/tenure-track faculty does not necessarily translate into greater diversity in the ITE instructor pool; however, it may mean a greater diversity of voices in broader program policy and curriculum decisions. Data suggest that, generally, there is not a purposeful selection of teacher educators with an explicit commitment to social justice and an openness to engaging in collaborative work with colleagues to integrate an equity focus across the program.

The lack of diversity among those teaching in the program is a logical extension of a lack of diversity in the teaching profession, as many ITE instructors are in-service or retired educators (OCT, 2021; Turner, 2014; Falkenberg, 2015). This homogeneity is not solely attributable to policies and procedures within ITE but also reflective of a broader underrepresentation of minoritized and Indigenous groups in post-secondary education, generally, and the teaching profession, specifically.

As discussed earlier, equitable, accessible teacher education can only be achieved if we consider more than just gaps in participation and examine how teacher candidates experience ITE programs, particularly those from underrepresented groups. Currently,
there are limited data to draw from, however, scholars note that a lack of diversity in the teacher educator pool can exert significant influence on what is taught, how it is taught, and, broadly, teacher candidates’ experiences and opportunities to learn as they progress through a ITE program (Lin et al., 2008; Milner, IV, 2007; Sleeter, 2017). Several of Khadija’s comments illuminated ways in which this can transpire. For example, when asked what she felt was missing from her experience in the program over the preceding two years, she stated: “I am not a white teacher. I’m not a white male teacher and a lot of the perspectives that came as an educator [in ITE courses] did come from a white perspective”. She described feeling disconnected from her predominantly homogenous instructors:

   It was really hard to relate to my own educators because it’s like I know my experience is not going to look like yours and I can’t justify why I’d have to sit here for two hours listening to your version of the story when it’s going to look so different for me.

To further explicate, she described a particular class during which a white male preservice instructor told a story about an incident involving police that he experienced at a school. Although Khadija didn’t go into detail about what the story was, she noted that her two Black friends, who were sitting beside her at the time, commented that “if that happened to us, and because the police were involved, I know that that would not have looked the same”. Khadija stated that she always carries that in her mind because “they are one hundred percent right, that would not look the same, but that was not acknowledged by the teacher”. She went on to say that “there was a lot of that missing, you know, this might look different [e.g., depending on who you are] and if it does, what do you do?”
Khadija asserted that preparation for challenges that racialized teachers might encounter in the workplace was broadly missing from her ITE experience, stating:

I didn’t have a lot of educators that did want to approach it from, ‘oh, you know, if you are experiencing so and so in the classroom or if you’re finding that you’re having a hard time with the admin team because maybe there’s biases there, maybe there are some microaggressions, you know, that wasn’t addressed the way I would have wanted it to. Well, actually, it wasn’t really addressed at all.

Khadija gave the example of fielding questions from students about her hijab, noting that “if I had a student ask me about my headscarf or my hijab and then I answer and the parent comes in saying, ‘oh you’re rubbing your religion in my kid’s face’—because I one hundred percent see that as a possibility—what do I do?” She stated, “right now, I wouldn’t know how to act in certain situations, being a teacher who is different”. She described wishing that “it was acknowledged differently” in the ITE program. She asserted that if these kinds of issues were addressed as an integrated part of the curriculum, instead of her having to “go actively search for that answer”, that “it would have made a world of difference for me because now I feel a lot more supported as an educator”.

Khadija’s comments speak to various ways in which a lack of diversity in the teacher educator pool can influence teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn, not only with regards to majoritarian perspectives dominating class discussions but also in the degree to which racialized and otherwise marginalized teacher candidates feel supported and prepared to work in white-dominated workplaces. This accords with literature describing how homogeneity can result in ITE curriculum being delivered through a white lens that often fails to account for the experiences of racialized teacher candidates and provide opportunities to critically examine biases and school structures that maintain white
hegemony (Milner IV, 2008; Sleeter, 2017). It is helpful to again refer to Milner IV’s (2008) assertion that “the intentionality and interests are sometimes one-sided” (p. 338) when it comes to increasing diversity in teacher education. Racialized teacher candidates do not necessarily come into ITE programs fully equipped to meet the needs of highly diverse students nor are they necessarily prepared to manage bias and racism that they may encounter in their future workplaces. As Milner IV (2008) points out, curriculum and program policies in ITE “may imply that policymakers are concerned about the interests and needs of their white students and that students of colour should simply learn ‘by default’ or come into the learning environment with what they already need to succeed” (p. 338). It is critical that teacher educators de-center whiteness to ensure that all teacher candidates receive preparation to meet challenges they will encounter. This should be an integrated part of the program and racialized teacher candidates should not have to take it upon themselves to actively seek out answers, as Khadija reported having to do.

Khadija’s experiences constitute a counternarrative that de-centers whiteness and exposes normalized curriculum and perspectives as being constitutive of as a master script that silences marginalized voices and designates the dominant narrative (i.e., white, upper class, male) as the “standard” knowledge students need to acquire (Swartz, 1992). Khadija’s voice, and others like hers, are required for any meaningful critique of racial diversity in teacher education (Haddix, 2017). Counternarratives underscore how being racialized in predominantly white ITE programs factors into the experiences, retention, and recruitment of racialized teacher candidates and are critical to countering majoritarian stories (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).
Next, I will discuss data that speaks to the ways in which a lack of diversity in the teacher candidate pool influences prospective teachers’ experiences and opportunities to learn to teach for diversity.

5.2.4.2 Teacher Candidates

Data presented in the previous chapter indicates that teacher candidate demographics for the current study are consistent with the limited demographic data on prospective teacher cohorts enrolled in ITE programs in Ontario (Holden & Kitchen, 2018; Turner, 2014) – identifying primarily as white (77%), female (86%), and under the age of 25 (62%). Although Geneve felt that administration had done a good job bringing in diverse faculty members, she stated “we’ve done less well at the teacher education level to bring in students who reflect the same kind of diversity that we might see across the population”. She went on to say that “we see diversity in terms of gender identity, we see diversity in terms of class, religion, but less so in terms of race and ethnicity”. Current study data conflicts with Geneve’s assertion about diversity in terms of gender identity though accords with her statement on a lack of diversity in terms of race and ethnicity. Anecdotal data from the present study speaks to this.

Rachael commented that at the faculty “the majority of the time, I’m the only Black person in the classroom”. She noted that the same was true on practicum, stating “I think I’ve seen like one Black student teacher and I was like oh hi, you know, nice to see you”. She expressed that this was not something that surprised her because “even in undergrad, there were situations where I was the only Black girl or the only Black person in the classroom”. Khadija also brought up the lack of diversity in the program and stated “there was a noticeable feeling that it’s a detriment that it’s such a homogenous group”. Similarly, Rishi acknowledged the homogeneity and expressed that he would feel more prepared to work with diverse students because of his own background and life
experiences than, say, “a white female who grew up in a small town where she hasn’t been exposed to all these different cultures”. He wondered how to level the playing field for the majority white female cohort in preparing them to work with diverse students.

Rishi’s concern is one echoed in prior literature indicating that racial/ethnic matching between students and teacher can translate into more supportive teacher-student relationships, increased empathy, higher expectations, role-modeling, and more culturally relevant teaching (Kunter et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Luke, 2017; Milner, 2011; Vidwans & Faez, 2019). As stated earlier, greater diversity in the teaching profession is not a panacea for inequity but students benefit from having teachers that look like them and have shared experiences. The predominant demographic in ITE is that which Rishi references in his response – white females – and it is a responsibility of ITE to operationalize stated objectives to not only equip all teachers with the dispositions and skills to become effective teachers of highly diverse students, but also take action to diversify their cohorts.

Enrolling a more representative pool of teacher candidates is imperative; however, as aforementioned, the work does not stop there. Programming and delivery (e.g., program culture, curriculum, organization) must be re-configured to ensure that racialized teacher candidates do not enter into a hostile environment whereby their needs, perspectives, and experiences are omitted or devalued or, alternatively, they are burdened with the expectation to do anti-racism work and educate the majority white cohort. Biases and purposes for diversification must be interrogated and deconstructed. Although efforts related to access and equity are often presented as solely benevolent, they are often motivated by interest convergence whereby the majority white teacher candidate pool stands to benefit from a more diverse cohort.
Integral to recruiting a greater diversity of teacher candidates and in endeavouring to admit those who are committed to teaching for equity and open to new ways of thinking and doing is the admissions process. Data related to program admissions is discussed next.

5.2.4.2.1 Admissions

Although Ontario’s ITE programs have varied policies and practices related to admissions, all admit teacher candidates through traditional processes grounded in academics and competitive admissions (Holden & Kitchen, 2019). Despite the growing focus on equity and inclusion, these admissions procedures have remained relatively the same despite criticism that the use of grade point averages creates barriers for marginalized groups who would otherwise contribute to a more representative teaching force (Archibald et al., 2002). The broader underrepresentation by these groups in post-secondary institutions (discussed earlier and related to significant barriers to academic achievement in K-12 schools) contribute to underrepresentation in preservice cohorts. The cyclical, reinforcing nature of underrepresentation in terms of envisioning future pathways may also be partly to blame. Khadija addressed this when she pondered, “what could have contributed to the fact that there is this huge overflow of white female teacher candidates or just white teacher candidates in general?” By way of an answer, she relayed a conversation she had had with several undergraduate students at a recent event who stated that they wished they had had a teacher that looked like her growing up because then they might have considered becoming a teacher themselves. Khadija noted that “it is very accepted to have white teachers…it is expectation. When people imagine the classroom, nine times out of ten, it is a white person” and proposed that if those undergraduate students “had a teacher that looked like [them], maybe [they] would have liked the idea of education better”. These broader forces exert influence over
representation in ITE and speak to the aforementioned limitations of its programming. However, teacher preparation programs must still endeavour to implement actionable steps towards addressing underrepresentation.

In the current ITE case, Geneve described how the program struck an equity committee to look at admissions practices and policies (three years prior to when this study was conducted). She stated that the committee “decided that…practices and policies may be part of the problem but that’s a difficult thing to change quickly”, so instead of tackling that immediately, the committee opted to add an equity admissions application. To apply through this pathway, applicants must provide a sufficient rationale, related to systemic barriers in education and life, as to why they should be considered for admission to the program. Nina delineated that as long as they meet minimum admissions requirements, anyone who applies through this pathway is not put into the general admissions competition and is automatically given an offer of admission. She pointed out that not everyone who applies this way is a racialized person, so “from the point of view of visually being able to look at the crowd of teacher candidates and say it's no more diverse than it ever was, that's probably not looking a whole lot different, unfortunately”.

Holden & Kitchen (2018) note that equity admissions pathways are reliant on applicants’ willingness to self-identify which can be impacted by how equity applications are constructed and perceived. Demographic data from the current study suggest that the provision of an equity admissions pathway is not significantly impacting the homogeneity of teacher candidate cohorts, which persists. The program was in the process of implementing additional measures to their admissions procedures including personality testing to, as Nina explained, measure important “soft skills”, with the aim of “try[ing] to get at the teacher candidates that model or already are predisposed to having the opinions around equity and social justice among other things, [for example],
professionalism and communication skills”. It remains to be seen if these new initiatives will be something that are permanently adopted and/or whether they will have any discernable impact on the composition of their cohorts. It is useful to remember Milner IV’s (2007) caution in addressing equity goals with additive approaches alone. Although these measures aim to advance access to ITE, they constitute add-ons that do not effectively change anything about basic program structure and organization.

Quality and equity are not mutually exclusive. Competitive admissions have been criticized not only because they present barriers to access for marginalized groups but also because research shows that undergraduate grades do not necessarily predict success in professional programs (Benbassat & Baumel, 2007; Eva & Reiter, 2004; Fish & Wilson, 2007). Moreover, the predictive value of admissions criteria remains unexamined due to a lack of data on newly graduated teachers’ classroom teaching performance. While it is important to acknowledge equity efforts and honour advancement, “contemporary times call for new policy efforts to solve persistent problems” (Harper et al., 2009, p. 410). This is especially true of the continued underrepresentation in ITE.

Next, I report on the role of peer learning, role models, and individual agency in supporting teacher development for equity.

5.2.5 Peer Learning, Role Models, and the Willingness to Learn

Several participants referenced the interactions they had with other teacher candidates and/or the supportive friendships they formed with peers in the program as being pivotal in their development. For example, Lauren and Cassie stated that they benefited from their coursework less from the content and more from the spaces provided for peer learning and collaboration. Cassie explained:
Just having those conversations with my peers, even though it wasn’t quite the learning experience I’d hoped, having those conversations helped me…realize some of the misconceptions I was holding on to…and made me realize there’s a different way to look at it…it was less about the course content, it was a lot of just those interactions with other people and hearing other people’s opinions.

Lauren similarly referenced interactions with others in the program as being impactful; specifically, “hearing different perspectives from other teacher candidates” in the urban education specialty who had varied backgrounds and experiences but who “all have a passion for these social issues”.

Similarly, Gisele pointed to peer learning as playing a significant role in her development as a teacher, particularly as she described “not having a diverse background at all growing up…I never had to look at those issues or deal with those issues”. She discussed how the course on equity and social justice “helped just my awareness” and referenced learning from a more diverse group of peers:

We had productive discussions, our class, and that urban class was pretty diverse too, so it was nice to hear experiences from actual people who have gone through those things, and just kind of like bouncing ideas off of each other, I think just really helped me grow as a teacher for sure.

According with Gisele’s account, two racialized teacher candidates described feeling compelled to share their experiences with others. Rachael explained how being “typically the only Black person in the classroom at the ITE program” was not something she “take[s] lightly because it reminds me that I have an experience to share that maybe some people haven’t been exposed to or don’t really know about”. Jasmine expressed a similar sentiment, stating: “Let’s say a Caucasian colleague that doesn’t know how to bring that
topic or harder issues, like racial issues into the classroom, I want to be someone that they can turn to because I have those experiences”. She described still navigating how to “talk about race and diversity from an inclusive perspective” herself but she wanted to be “someone that can help people if they need someone for, like, an Asian perspective or just an immigrant perspective…being a support for people that may not have that experience and need guidance”.

These comments from Rachael and Jasmine diverge from prior literature in which racialized teacher candidates attested to feeling isolated and staying quiet in class to avoid being singled out as a ’minority expert’ or out of fear of having their experiences disregarded (Bower-Phipps et al., 2013; Irizarry, 2011; Kitchen & Brown, 2022; Sleeter, 2017). However, although the aforementioned participants expressed a willingness to share their perspectives with teacher candidates who lack their lived experiences and may possess less knowledge and understanding, it is crucial to recognize that racialized peoples should not be burdened with the role of educating others on race issues (Jacobs & Hai, 2002). Supportive relationships and opportunities for peer learning that do not unduly place the burden on racialized teacher candidates to do anti-racism work can support the development of a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of teaching for equity and social justice. Interactions, like those described by Giselle and Cassie, can help to challenge assumptions and biases about race, ethnicity, gender, and other dimensions of identity. Learning from peers who have perspectives and experiences that differ from one’s own can help prospective teachers to recognize and address blind spots and develop a more critical and reflective approach to teaching for equity and social justice (as study participants attested to). However, to reiterate, this cannot be a one-way street whereby racialized teacher candidates are expected to shoulder the responsibility to teach race issues to white teacher candidates.
In addition to opportunities that arose to participate in peer-to-peer learning, participants described the role of supportive friendships forged over the course of the program. Khadija discussed specifically forming relationships with the few other diverse teacher candidates in the program. She explained:

We did end up obviously being friends because we did have a lot of common thoughts and ideas, me and the diverse group of teacher candidates, and it was a lot of, well I can’t relate to what Mr. So and So said in his lecture because I know that’s not going to apply to me, and oh yeah, when I was in school this and this and this happened so obviously this isn’t going to be the same as this.

Khadija described how she bonded with others in the program who felt excluded from the majoritarian perspectives that she earlier described as being the norm. By building relationships with peers who share similar lived experiences and can help to reveal biases and omissions, preservice teachers can develop a sense of community and belonging that can help sustain them as they navigate the challenges of the teaching profession, particularly for those who are from racialized or otherwise underrepresented groups, as reported by Khadija. Peer relationships can provide preservice teachers with emotional support, encouragement, and validation as they traverse ITE programs that are patterned and normed for white teacher candidates.

Beyond interactions among teacher candidates that were significant, several participants described how individual ATs, courses, instructors, or mentors within the program were influential in inspiring them and/or providing opportunities to learn about teaching for diversity and social justice. Rachael, for example, described how, despite her first placement taking place in a largely homogenous classroom, her AT made a point to normalize talking about “so many different backgrounds and we were always speaking about Indigenous education and Indigenous studies; we spoke about Black Lives Matter
and it was just something that was so normal to them when I entered the classroom”. Rachael noted that these classroom practices were not necessarily part of the curriculum but rather her individual AT “made a point to do that…he would always bridge the connection…of talking about real life social issues and showing students…how can you critically think about what I’m telling you?” Rachael also described impactful courses at the faculty and why she felt they were so beneficial. She described one such class:

Every week we were put in a situation, like a very hands-on situation, it was like what would you do to ensure that your classroom has A, B, and C…I think in moments like that it gives us the opportunity to reflect on how we would create a space, an inclusive space in our classroom and how we would approach certain situations to ensure that it's inclusive and equitable.

She also described learning a lot from the Indigenous Education course, specifically understanding the history but also that, in her words, “it is present and it is current and it is the future and we always have to continuously learn”. This has relevance to Paris and Alim’s (2014) allegation that the term ‘culturally relevant’ has “too often been enacted by teachers and researchers in static ways that focus solely on the important ways racial and ethnic difference was enacted in the past without attending to the dynamic enactments of our equally important present or future” (pp. 91-92). Rachael’s words suggest that this particular course integrated content that was characteristic of culturally sustaining pedagogy. Rather than approach Indigenous ways of knowing and being in static and shallow ways, Rachael noted that her eyes were opened to Indigenous culture as fluid, evolving, and relevant to contemporary schooling.

Rachael went on to describe how she learned about the ways in which Indigenous learning is integrated into classrooms (e.g., Circle Talk) and the connection that was made between the coursework and her practicum was particularly significant for Rachael:
What I really loved was that when I was in that course and when I went into my practicum, seeing how my AT was able to implement all of these Indigenous practices in his classroom was really nice to see because it gave me some ideas of how I would want to create a classroom environment that supported that as well.

The opportunity to learn about something in the classroom at the faculty and then see it actualized in practical ways soon after provided Rachael with a concrete understanding of how to integrate those equity-centered practices in her own future classrooms. However, it is pertinent here to bring up an aforementioned constraint; namely, the limited relationship between ATs and the program and the inconsistency with which some teacher candidates are paired with equity-centered ATs. Rachael’s experience (i.e., seeing classroom learning modeled in practice soon after the learning) should not be random but rather the norm for all prospective teachers, driven by a purposeful, organized, and coherent approach to teacher preparation for equity.

Some participants described other influential figures in their ITE journey, for example, Jamie discussed one particularly impactful teacher educator, who she described as “amazing” and whose investment in and caring modeled for Jamie the kind of educator she wanted to become. She detailed:

She cried sending us off to our placement and it really sent home that this woman cares about us becoming amazing educators. She created such a safe space—much like I described that I would like to create…she gave awesome feedback and I just think …it's the people, really. It’s the educators, the assignments, it’s the people that believe in us, that are providing us these resources.

Gisele expressed generally that there were specific courses and teachers that “really changed my way of thinking or gave me the tools, or even the confidence, or just kind of
the know-how, in terms of taking those things into the classroom”. She noted that a key takeaway from the program, for her, was:

Learning to be the squeaky wheel and that if it’s burning and itching that you need to say something like if you don’t, no one else might. And so I think that I took away from a lot of those courses [was] that you could be that one teacher that says, hey, the way that we’re doing thing isn’t inclusive of these students or isn't supportive and we've got to change.

Gisele’s comments indicate that she appropriated a key component of learning to teach for equity and social justice – that of acknowledging and committing to the role of change agent.

Participants also described feeling that, in the end, ITE is what you make of it. Fern, for example, described encountering a common attitude from both preservice and in-service teachers that ITE was “a waste of time”. She countered by questioning:

I don’t understand why people don’t see value in what we learn. I think part of the problem is our perception and our expectations but you get out what you put in…in every profession, if you want to be an expert in something, you have to study it, and you have to learn, and you have to practice.

Similarly, William suggested that growth in teacher preparation is dependent on individuals’ willingness to be open to change and find opportunities to learn themselves, regardless of whether those opportunities are adequately provided for them in the program:

I could go through, if I was not willing to challenge myself…if I said no, I’ve come in with a mindset and this is how I’m going to teach, I could go through
these courses, I could learn the information about them, and I could go right back…to the old method of teaching that I was taught 20 years ago, and put all of my students at a disadvantage because I didn’t get much feedback and practical experience within that [ITE] classroom. To be able to work with peers and also get feedback from instructors, there’s a lot more opportunity there, I think.

William’s comments bring to mind prior literature claiming that teacher candidates’ experiences of schooling throughout their own lives can solidify “taken-for-granted conceptions of how schooling should go and what teaching should look like, making it difficult to envision alternatives” (Sleeter, 2008, p. 562). This reiterates the importance of admitting preservice teachers who are willing to challenge themselves and be open to learning new ways of thinking and doing. William and Fern both referenced the importance of individual motivation to invest in and seek out opportunities to learn.

To summarize, although data revealed inconsistent opportunities to learn about teaching for diversity due to a lack of program coherence, there were several teacher candidates who described courses or field experiences that were impactful in their development as teachers, often the result of a particularly passionate and caring educator. Individual supervising teachers, teacher educators, and mentors can all play a crucial role in a prospective teacher’s development by providing guidance and role modelling of inclusive, equitable, and caring pedagogy. Furthermore, individual investment in learning and the willingness to be open to new ways of thinking and doing can be impactful in a teacher candidates’ development. The role of individual agency and receptiveness to self-examination, reflection, and change further reinforces the importance of admissions policies and procedures (i.e., admitting teacher candidates that share the program’s commitment to equity and social justice).
5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter reported on participants’ conceptualizations of equity and significant constraints or enablers to teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about teaching for diversity and social justice. Most participants viewed equity in education on an individual level with limited consideration of broader institutional or systemic influences, indicating a need to attend to historical and contemporary injustice to support teacher candidates in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of how and why inequity manifests in schooling and their role in disrupting it.

Constraints to learning included limited integration of a coherent vision and effort to center equity across the program. This led to varied experiences with learning to teach for equity and diversity. Several participants reported feeling underprepared to translate equity and social justice concepts into practical approaches to classroom teaching. Although this was not universal among participants, it does highlight that fragmentation within the program resulted in theory to practice gaps for some and not others (e.g., those who were in the urban education specialty and/or those who got the opportunity to work with a passionate advocate). Differing opportunities to critically reflect on practicum experiences and missing connections between equity rhetoric and evidence-based approaches to teaching for diversity were evident in participant data, particularly with regards to MLs. Participant responses related to how they would approach L1 use in the classroom provided insight into how theory to practice gaps can manifest in instruction in ways that have the potential to negatively influence students’ identity formation and academic success.

A lack of purposeful practicum placements (e.g., to ensure all teacher candidates have at least one placement in a diverse classroom with a highly effective AT who is passionate about equity-centered practice) and the difficulty in forging a coordinated effort between
the university and practicum-based aspects of the program (e.g., strong communication and collaboration with ATs) emerged as additional constraints. Further, participants reported how underrepresentation both in the teacher educator pool and the teacher candidate cohort led to the centering of normalized majoritarian perspectives and a lack of attention to the unique challenges that racialized teachers may encounter in their future workplaces. Admissions policies and procedures at the focal program had undergone changes in an attempt to diversify cohorts; however, these changes constitute add-ons (e.g., equity admission pathways, personality testing) to the traditional academic criteria and competitive admissions that persist despite criticism levied against them as barriers to equitable access. Finally, peer learning, role modelling either in practicum or coursework, and the willingness of individual teacher candidates to learn emerged as potentially influential enablers in teacher preparation for equity.
Chapter 6

6 Summary and Conclusion

This mixed-methods case study was conducted to obtain data on current representation rates in Ontario initial teacher education (ITE), prospective teachers’ beliefs related to key principles of teaching for social justice, and the ways in which ITE programs conceptualize and operationalize equity and diversity goals. A total of 272 teacher candidates from an ITE program in Ontario, Canada were surveyed. Of this group, 15 participants were interviewed. Four key stakeholders also participated in interviews. Aligning critical race theory and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy with Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory allowed for a comprehensive picture to emerge of the complex interrelationships that exert influence on prospective teachers’ development and how power operates in a neoliberal society to reproduce the status quo.

This concluding chapter begins with a summary of the major findings of this study in response to the research questions posed at its inception; policy recommendations will accompany these summaries. Following, I delineate study limitations, contributions of this research to the field, and, finally, provide suggestions for future research.

6.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

The three research questions that provided the central frame for this study were:

1. What are the current representation rates of racialized, Indigenous, gender diverse, immigrant, and linguistically diverse groups at the research site and how does this compare to other publicly available data on initial teacher education representation rates and Ontario’s broader diversity?
2. What are preservice teachers’ beliefs and understandings of teaching for equity and social justice?

3. What policies and practices enable or constrain teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about teaching for equity, diversity, and social justice? How?

6.1.1 (Under)Representation in Initial Teacher Education

Enrolling teacher candidates that better reflect the diversity of the students they will teach is an imperative for Canada’s education system. This research builds upon the scarce public data on representation rates in Ontario ITE, revealing a largely homogenous (i.e., white, cis-female, monolingual) preservice cohort. At the provincial level, the present study shows underrepresentation of Ontario’s broader linguistic, racial, and gender diversity. At the local level, data derived from 35,000 K-12 students who attend schools within the ITE research site’s catchment areas indicate high levels of diversity (TVDSB, 2022), supporting concerns that the teaching population continues to be far less diverse than their student bodies.

This lack of representation has implications for both the experiences and opportunities to learn that are afforded to teacher candidates as they progress through ITE and their future students. As detailed earlier in this paper, studies show that a diversity gap between students and their teachers impacts students’ academic and socioemotional competences, as well as the degree to which they receive culturally inclusive instruction, role modelling, and supportive teacher-student relationships (Kunter et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Luke, 2017; Milner, 2011). A homogeneous teacher educator pool, on the other hand, influences course curriculum, content delivery, recruitment, support, and the exigency with which a program works to achieve equity goals (Lin et al., 2008; Milner IV, 2008; Sleeter, 2017).
Consistent with concerns raised in prior literature, the present data indicate that there remains much work to be done to improve equity and access for underrepresented groups in ITE (Childs & Ferguson, 2016; DeLuca, 2015; Holden & Kitchen, 2018; Toohey & Smythe, 2022). Firstly, the dearth of data on representation rates runs contrary to stated program goals related to equity and diversity and acts as a significant impediment to the ability to operationalize professed commitments and policy initiatives in concrete ways (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008; Holden & Kitchen, 2018). At the exo-systemic level (i.e., within faculties of education), it is recommended that ITE programs across Ontario work to improve the ways they are supporting and measuring equity and access. This would involve collecting demographic and, ideally, psychographic (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, values) data from applicants and entrants (i.e., those who ultimately accept their offer). If not already gathering these data, ITE programs should begin tracking representation rates and making results public. As has been written about elsewhere (see Holden & Kitchen, 2016, 2017, 2018; Petrarca & Kitchen, 2017), openness and collaboration across institutions is central to improving equity across the province. ITE programs should establish and/or utilize existing networks to engage in cross-institutional conversations to share data-informed successes and challenges.

As has begun to be more common to support the recruitment of Black and Indigenous faculty members across disciplines in tertiary education, ITE programs might consider implementing similar cluster hiring initiatives that specifically target the recruitment of underrepresented groups into ITE teaching roles. A version of such an initiative could also be implemented at the admissions level to prioritize diversity goals and support the recruitment of teacher candidates from underrepresented groups. Just as with a cluster hire, a public call for applicants from underrepresented groups has the potential to expand a program’s list of potential candidates and, in doing so, diversify it.
In addition, internal stakeholders should re-evaluate admissions policies and criteria, understanding the ways in which traditional competitive admissions can work to exclude underrepresented groups (Archibald et al., 2002; Holden & Kitchen, 2019). Re-evaluation should also be based on evidence demonstrating that undergraduate performance does not necessarily predict success in professional programs (Benbassat & Baumel, 2007; Eva & Reiter, 2004; Fish & Wilson, 2007). Although ITE programs should be acknowledged for work done thus far and continue the current vital work they are doing, persistent underrepresentation calls for novel approaches.

Data suggesting a reduction in the diversity of applicants since the switch to a two-year program (Holden & Kitchen, 2017, 2018) needs to be met with an active response, both by gathering additional statistics to confirm or repudiate this preliminary data and by examining how this new programmatic structure might act to impede access. As discussed earlier in this thesis, longer programs mean increases in tuition, as well as opportunity costs that may disproportionately impact underrepresented groups (e.g., those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and/or family structures that may not be well-positioned to delay entry into the job market). If not already doing so, ITE programs should aim to provide funding initiatives (i.e., scholarships, bursaries) to attract underrepresented groups. Moreover, administrators would be well advised to critically examine their organizational structures and consider whether their program design and delivery present barriers for certain people. For example, the focal case is not unique in offering entry to its program on a full-time basis only, which can act as a barrier to access for some marginalized populations. Alternate pathways to completion and more flexibility (including remote learning options) must be considered by ITE programs across the province. Data on representation rates both before and after the implementation of such initiatives should be gathered to ascertain positive or negative impacts.
As mentioned several times already, ITE programs have a central role to play in improving access for underrepresented groups; however they must operate within a space that acknowledges both the potential and limitations of their programming. Thus, both in the preparation of their cohorts for equity and diversity (discussed in greater detail following) and in enhancing the diversity of their educator and teacher candidate pools, the role of broader systemic structures and policies must be addressed. University administrations should be tracking participation rates for underrepresented groups across the university and be doing so more comprehensively and accurately; for example, participant responses should not be limited to specific categories but instead track groups that students identify with to produce richer, more accurate data (Sedlacek, 2004; Stead, 2015). University administrators are well-positioned to support faculties of education in tracking participation rates and supports should be in place to facilitate this collaboration. There should be a collective moving forward in reconsidering equity and access goals and actionable ways to achieve them between central administrative offices and faculties of education.

In addition, wider collaboration between ITE programs and professional bodies and government policymakers is needed to address longstanding equity and diversity concerns. While ITE programs can track participation rates within their own institutions and share that data with other programs, it is governmental and professional bodies that have the facility to track representation rates of in-service teachers. The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) currently collects data on the gender, age, English/French proficiency, and teaching sector (i.e., English Public Board, French Catholic Board, Independent Schools, etc.) of its members, but does not report on any other demographics or psychographics. Failing to gather data on how well the teaching population represents the student population as well as gaining insight into attitudes, beliefs, and/or values of the teaching force is antithetical to their organizational commitment to anti-oppression,
equity, diversity, and inclusion (OCT, 2023b). Just as with other key stakeholders, if equity and diversity are ongoing and long-standing commitments, presumably relevant data is needed to inform decisions at all levels.

Neither this study nor the recommendations offered in this section or others to follow are intended as criticisms of ITE programs or key stakeholders. As an emerging but vitally important discussion in the Ontario context, it is crucial to gather baseline data to inform decision-making. From the microsystems of internal stakeholders, classrooms, teacher educators, peers, mentors, associate teachers, and K-12 students to the exosystems of university administrators, government policymakers, professional bodies, and teacher education researchers, it is crucial to align policies and their implementation to the equity goals that are central to their mission.

6.1.2 Beliefs and Understandings of Teaching for Equity and Social Justice

Most participants in this study conceptualized equity on a mesosystemic level that focused on individual students within classrooms and emphasized differentiation. A few made reference to wider spheres of influence in students’ ecologies, including families and communities. Fewer still identified exo- and macro-level institutional, systemic, or societal factors. While some participants alluded to systemic inequality, there was limited understanding of the role of schooling in historical and contemporary oppression in Canada and the power relations implicit in generational patterns of student achievement. A focus on maintaining neutrality in the classroom further indicated a need for teacher candidates to be supported in recognizing and deconstructing claims to neutrality in education. An equity-centered teacher must commit to their role as an agent of change and that involves understanding that neutrality is impossible; systems of education are inherently political. As asserted earlier in this paper, a social justice orientation does not
politicize education; education has always been politicized. Thus, injustice needs to be understood as a structural phenomenon, embedded in normalized curriculum, assessment, and teaching methods, as well as notions, habits, and assumptions underlying institutional standards (McDonald, 2003).

One key stakeholder foregrounded an exosystemic understanding of equity and asserted a strong commitment to ongoing critical reflection in considering whether existing ITE structures and arrangements create barriers for some while privileging others. She expressed a desire for all of those within the program to share this broader view of equity, describing social justice as a root for everything else within the program. The predominant focus on equity at an individual level among participants suggests the conviction that equity must go beyond pedagogy to address historic and contemporary systemic harm is not being comprehensively or coherently disseminated to and/or appropriated by teacher candidates. A common theme that emerged from this study was a lack of coherence, a prevalent finding documented in other research on ITE as well (Cochran-Smith et al., 2003, 2016; Goodlad, 1990; Hammerness, 2006; Zeichner, 2000). Prior literature suggests that a shared vision and collective striving for an equity-centered program is a key element of success in the preparation of teachers for transformation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Hammerness, 2006; Hammerness & Darling-Hammond, 2002). This research indicated several constraints to infusing and sustaining a culture of collaboration and integrated social justice focus across the program; namely, funding challenges, curriculum coherence, course sequence, and a lack of purposeful selection of program stakeholders with an explicit commitment to social justice and a willingness to engage in collaborative work to integrate this commitment across the program.

Although challenges persist, the purposeful selection of teacher educators, mentors, and ATs to teach and model for teacher candidates conceptual and practical approaches to
teaching for equity and diversity is key and must be prioritized. This deliberate effort alongside close and sustained communication and collaboration between various stakeholders (e.g., ITE leadership, ATs, course instructors) to coalesce and integrate a coherent vision of teaching for social justice is much needed.

Despite challenges to integrating a cohesive vision of equity, quantitative data derived from the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs scale revealed that graduating teacher candidates were exiting the program with a greater endorsement of social-justice-related beliefs about teaching than entering teacher candidates by a small but statistically significant margin. It is noteworthy that exiting teacher candidates showed stronger endorsement of both micro- and meso-systemic inequities (e.g., related to personal beliefs and/or classroom instruction) and exo- and macro-level inequities (i.e., structural or societal injustice) suggesting that, despite the absence of a coherent effort to attend to equity issues in the program, learning did impact teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching for social justice on a broader structural level. This supports prior literature indicating that, although changing teachers’ beliefs is a difficult and complex endeavour, it is not impossible (Lee, 2011; Mills, 2013, Wideen et al., 1998). Thus, it can and should be a targeted and reasonable goal and outcome for ITE programs (Arsal, 2019; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012; Enterline et al., 2008; Frederick et al., 2010; McDonald, 2005; Thompson et al., 2016).

The small but significant shift in beliefs indicated in the current study is encouraging and also signifies there is much work to be done to expand on successes and reevaluate pain points. Conceptualizing and applying equity in terms of individual students and classroom interactions is undoubtedly key to being an effective teacher. However, as discussed in an earlier chapter, prospective teachers should be graduating from ITE programs having re-examined ‘disembodied’ views of social justice that narrowly focus
on individuals apart from their identification with broader social groups (Kincheloe, 2004). If we are to equip prospective teachers to perceive the relationship between social context and educational setting and the forces that shape students’ identities and their relation to schooling, there needs to be greater focus on exo- and macro-systemic factors that influence the socialization and biases of teachers and educational outcomes and experiences of students. Teacher candidates should be supported, in a coherent way across the program, to challenge the claim to meritocracy in education, understand the structural and historical aspects of schooling, recognize broader societal inequities and how institutions systematically structure privilege for some groups and harm for others, and, finally, embrace their role as activists and agents of change.

Next, I will discuss findings related to my third and final research question which addresses how opportunities to learn with the focal program worked to constrain or enable prospective teachers’ development as social justice-oriented practitioners.

6.1.3 Opportunities to Learn about Teaching for Diversity

The absence of a coherent and integrated vision across the program constitutes a central constraint to teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn, building upon similar findings in prior literature (Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 2000). The integration of social justice and equity, specifically, throughout the various and intersecting ecosystems of ITE has been shown to be crucial to prospective teachers’ development as transformative, social-justice-oriented educators (Cochran-Smith & Reagan, 2022; Cochran-Smith et al., 2016; King, 2004; Sleeter, 2004, Gerin-Lajoie, 2011). Program fragmentation can contribute to theory to practice gaps, which emerged as another significant constraint to learning in the present study.
Several participants expressed feeling un(der)prepared to practically apply equity and diversity concepts into their classroom teaching. Responses related to multilingual learners (MLs) particularly demonstrated how theory to practice gaps have the potential to manifest in one’s teaching – where equity rhetoric fails to be connected to classroom policies and practices (e.g., permitting MLs access to their home language). Those who indicated an openness to home language use predominantly viewed its potential utility as restricted to making MLs feel more comfortable and/or to help them transition to English only. The vision of equity underlying this research includes embracing culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy (CLSP) (Paris, 2012), which involves fostering and maintaining linguistic and cultural pluralism as an inherent part of the democratic project of schooling. A predominant focus on English and an absence of an awareness of and commitment to the intrinsic value of pluralism indicates that CLSP is not being adequately appropriated by prospective teachers in a consistent or comprehensive way.

These findings build upon prior research indicating a need for ITE coursework on social justice-centered practices to be more contextualized to the classroom in order for teachers to see their relevance (Ballantye & Mills, 2008; Daniel, 2016). A shared vision and commitment to equity in practice among teacher educators, ATs, and mentors would support greater coherence and integration of social justice throughout the program. This would involve the hiring of instructors with both an explicit commitment to social justice and equity and a willingness to work in collaboration with others to implement such a focus. More purposeful practicum placements and selection of ATs and mentors who shared the program’s vision and commitment to equity would also support more congruity between coursework and its perceived relevance to classroom instruction. Finding ways to establish a more coordinated and collaborative effort with ATs and partner school boards is also paramount. Data indicate the difficulties posed by fiscal constraints and logistical challenges; however, the potential impact of effective field
experiences in learning to teach for equity and diversity is too consequential to be disregarded.

Underrepresentation both in the teacher candidate and teacher educator pools (discussed in a prior section of this chapter) acted as an additional constraint to learning in the current study. From the perspective of a racialized teacher candidate at a predominantly white institution, course content and classroom discussions were derived from a normalized, majoritarian perspective whereby the experiences and potential challenges of being a racialized teacher were not addressed. There was a reported lack of support and preparation for dealing with biases and microaggressions that could arise with future students, parents, and/or colleagues. These data builds on other literature that identified a need to de-center whiteness to ensure that racialized teacher candidates’ learning needs are met (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Sleeter, 2017; Toohey & Smythe, 2022).

Counternarratives need to be gathered and amplified to identify omissions and normalized biases. The current case struck an equity committee that could be utilized in this way; other vehicles, such as anonymous surveys, could also be administered.

With regards to access and representation, ITE programs should create new or expand on existing community and school board partnerships in novel ways to attract more applicants from underrepresented groups. There are innovative initiatives aimed at attracting diverse students to the teaching profession to draw from, including one in the United States where a university collaborated with school districts to offer dual enrollment courses and a summer camp for high school students considering teaching careers (Gist et al., 2018). Collaborative work with school districts on “grow-your-own” programs is another promising avenue for recruiting underrepresented students into ITE (Bartow et al., 2015; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gist et al., 2019).

Results from these and other studies on pre collegiate or “educator preparation programs”
(e.g., Goe & Roth, 2019; Goings et al., 2018; Herrera et al., 2012; Sutcher et al., 2016) suggest that early exposure to teaching experiences can positively influence high school students’ perceptions of teaching as career, particularly those from marginalized groups.

Although the present study found several significant constraints to teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about teaching for diversity, there were also notable enablers that emerged from the data. Several participants described how influential role models, mentors, and/or colleagues in the program positively influenced their beliefs, practices, and preparation for equity-focused teaching. Building relationships and working with educators who embodied conceptual and practical approaches to teaching for equity, diversity, and social justice supported teacher candidates’ development as they progressed through the program. Participants described gaining new perspectives by interacting with peers, forging supportive friendships with other racialized teacher candidates in the program, creating spaces to point out and discuss majoritarian perspectives and social justice-oriented pedagogy, and learning from course instructors, associate teachers, and mentors who had a passion for equity-centered education and foregrounded transformative practice. The individual will to learn and openness to changing one’s own beliefs, perspectives, and approaches emerged as another key factor in a teacher candidate’s learning, signaling the importance of admissions processes in determining psychographic characteristics of potential entrants. Not only should ITE programs be working to diversify their cohorts, they should also have policies and procedures in place aimed at deducing potential entrants’ levels of commitment to teaching for equity and social justice and openness to new ways of thinking and doing.

Learning to teach for equity and social justice at a time of rapidly growing racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity must include pedagogical methods but also bring explicit awareness to socialization, beliefs, historical and contemporary contexts, how teacher
candidates conceptualize their role and its broader significance, and concrete ways to actively work toward change. Initial teacher education needs to comprehensively attend to exo- and macro-systemic injustice in their programming to actively work against Kincheloe’s assertion that “many teachers learn to see only the immediacy of school and student experience” due to not having “encountered ways of seeing the power of forces not immediately visible in everyday interactions” (p. 20). The challenge is how to accomplish this in already time constrained programs with competing interests, a multitude of requirements for accreditation, funding challenges, and persistent underrepresentation. Moreover, as Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) articulated, “how can a teacher education program, which is itself intersected by multiple systems of social inequality, help teacher candidates develop an understanding of those systems?” (p. 70).

Findings identified several constraints and enablers to teacher candidates’ learning – i.e., to recognize and address both individual and systemic inequities in their practice. Integrating social justice and equity throughout the various ecosystems of ITE requires programs to build on successes while simultaneously working toward novel solutions. Programs need to adopt a comprehensive approach that dismantles inequitable structures and rebuilds a system that is designed to achieve equity and a more representative cohort. This might include re-imagining not only how individual courses are designed and delivered but also how field placements are organized, how ATs are selected and supported, how mentorship and reflection on practice is structured, and how collaboration among teacher educators (with the aim to integrate a collective and cohesive social justice focus) is facilitated. In addition, programs must scrutinize organizational structures, including the number of practicum placements, course sequence, and the connection between the university-based aspects of the program and field experiences. As has been recommended in prior literature, ITE programs would do well to review and revise course sequence so that courses with a social justice focus come early in a teacher
candidate’s preparation (McDonald, 2003). Taking these courses at the beginning of their ITE journey could help prospective teachers to use that knowledge and perspective to frame the other experiences they have as they progress through the program. Teacher candidates should be encouraged to refer back to those concepts and practices, integrate them into classroom discussion, and apply them in novel contexts (e.g., other methods and subject area courses, mentorship meetings, or in practicum placements). In light of current study data indicating varied experiences with mentorship and opportunities to reflect on practice, the purposeful selection of mentors who are committed to equity and social justice and to adopting a coherent approach to critical reflection is also recommended. In addition, ITE programs need to consider the inclusion of alternative pathways and/or modes of delivery (e.g., remote, part-time) that might mitigate barriers for marginalized groups and improve equity and access.

The re-configuration of several program components would involve external actors, such as schools and school boards (if, for example, practicum hours were spread across longer but fewer placements to increase capacity to work more closely with ATs around social justice and equity and/or to ease logistical challenges that prevent more purposeful placements). Funding and logistical constraints will present ongoing challenges not remediable by individual institutions. However, as aforementioned, ITE programs must operate within the potential and limitations of their programming. This means addressing what is within their control, including the organizational and policy structures in place, as well as carrying out consistent and ongoing data collection and collaborating with other ITE programs to identify successes and find innovative and equity-centered ways to overcome persistent challenges.
6.2 Limitations of the Study

There were several research limitations associated with this study. First and foremost, this research took place amidst the unprecedented backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted educational institutions worldwide. The associated disruptions to traditional learning (e.g., multiple and prolonged pivots to remote learning) posed challenges in terms of access, engagement, and the overall learning experience for preservice teachers and their instructors. Additionally, this research was undertaken during a time of social and political upheaval, increasing polarization, and accelerated social change. As aforementioned, events surrounding this study (e.g., George Floyd’s murder in the United States, the resurgence of Black Lives Matter, the discovery of mass graves on former Canadian residential school sites) mean that study participants (enrolled in the 2020-2021 academic year) were likely experiencing a heightened awareness of race-based issues and systemic injustice. It is therefore difficult to differentiate whether perspectives, attitudes, and social-justice-related beliefs were influenced by prospective teachers’ experiences and learning within focal ITE program or by the social and political events taking place in the world at the time. These circumstances may have influenced the findings and limited the relevance of the results to other academic years.

Another limitation of this study pertains to the collection of self-reported data. While efforts were made to ensure confidentiality and encourage honest responses, self-reporting is subject to social desirability bias, whereby participants may provide responses that they perceive to be more socially acceptable rather than reflecting their true experiences or characteristics. This limitation may affect the accuracy and reliability of the data, potentially impacting the overall analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Although I employed multiple methods to triangulate findings and provide an in-depth and holistic account of the case, a limitation to this study is that I did not conduct
classroom observations. This is mainly due to circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. Most (if not all) ITE programs were being delivered online at the time of data collection for this study. Instead, I relied on participants’ self-reported data. Not observing classrooms first-hand constrained the extent to which I could gain insight into if/how course instructors are providing teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn about social justice and equity.

Furthermore, the qualitative interview data collected in this study may be subject to limitations inherent to qualitative research. While the interviews provided rich and in-depth insights into participants' experiences and perspectives, the findings are not representative of the entire population of preservice teachers. This case study captures a moment in time and is therefore not intended to be a representative unit of analysis that can be used to generalize to other ITE programs. As Patton delineates (2003), sampling must be “aimed at generating insights into key evaluation issues and program effectiveness, not empirical generalization from a sample to a population” (p. 3). Qualitative research emphasizes depth over breadth, and as such, the findings cannot be generalized to the broader population. Moreover, as discussed in chapter three, this study only includes data from one of 13 ITE programs in Ontario. Due to the high degree of autonomy with which teacher education programs in Ontario operate and the significant variability in how programs are organized and delivered, this study was not designed to generalize to other ITE contexts in the province. However, the findings contribute valuable context-specific knowledge and provide a foundation for further exploration and understanding of the research topic. Despite limitations on generalizability, the current case can be used as a baseline comparative to similar research undertaken in other ITE contexts in Ontario, Canada, and abroad. Its unique successes and challenges can be examined by other programs and used to inform their decision-making.
The limited generalizability of the study findings also presents certain advantages. Undertaken during the unique circumstances of the 2020-2021 academic year, including the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and remote learning, the localized and context-specific findings can inform targeted interventions, policy changes, and pedagogical approaches specifically tailored to address equity and diversity in ITE during times of crisis or rapid transformation.

In summary, this mixed methods study on equity and diversity in ITE encountered limitations due to the Covid-19 pandemic, remote learning, reliance on self-reported data, and the inability to generalize findings. Acknowledging these limitations is crucial for interpreting and contextualizing the study's findings and recognizing the opportunities they present for further research and practice in the field of teacher education.

### 6.3 Contributions to the Field

This study makes significant contributions to the field in several areas, addressing gaps in knowledge and providing valuable insights for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. Firstly, this study contributes to addressing a dearth of data on representation rates in ITE programs in Ontario. These findings can inform organizational and policy decisions aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and access in teacher education institutions, contributing to the recruitment and support of teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds and preparing future teachers for equity-centered practice.

Secondly, this study provides current insights into the experiences and perspectives of teacher candidates from underrepresented groups. Through qualitative interviews and counternarratives, data captured the unique voices and experiences of teacher candidates who have traditionally been marginalized or excluded from teacher education research. These counterstories challenge prevailing narratives, highlighting the importance of
addressing systemic barriers, uncovering normalized biases and inequities, and providing supportive and transformative learning environments for all teacher candidates within ITE.

Additionally, this research fills a gap in the literature by examining how equity and diversity are conceptualized within Ontario ITE. Survey data, participant perspectives, and program structures were analyzed to uncover the ways in which equity and diversity are understood and enacted within the focal program. These findings provide valuable insights for program developers, teacher educators, and policymakers, informing the design and implementation of more equitable and accessible teacher education programs in Ontario and beyond.

Finally, this study’s methodology, findings, and recommendations offer a springboard for further investigation of the topic. This research widens avenues for comparative analyses and the exploration of innovative approaches to ITE for equity, diversity, and social justice. Continued research on representation rates over time is necessary to build on this and other limited baseline data that exist in the Ontario context. This study, which presents only one case and does not provide a full picture of participation rates or the integration of equity and diversity across the province, is reflective of an emerging field in both equity admissions research and research on equity, diversity, and social justice across ITE programmatic structures in Ontario. Additional and ongoing research on provincial representation rates and the ways in which equity is conceptualized and infused throughout teacher preparation is needed.

The complexities of learning to teach for equity and social justice mean that sustained attention, effort, and remediation are required. Further research is also needed on understanding teacher candidates’ beliefs as this has been posited as a key component to accomplishing social justice-oriented teacher education and provides crucial information
for teacher educators to draw from in planning curriculum, fieldwork, and program
direction (Pajares, 1992). As mentioned in the previous chapter, we must address more
than just rates of representation if we hope to increase equity and access to ITE. We also
must examine how teacher candidates from underrepresented groups experience ITE
programs. More counter-narratives are needed to expose normalized biases, omitted
perspectives, and underrepresented experiences. Future research should contribute to
filling this conspicuous and consequential gap.

In conclusion, this study makes several contributions to the field by addressing gaps in
representation data, providing nuanced insights into the experiences of teacher
candidates, examining how equity and diversity are conceptualized and operationalized
within ITE programs, and laying the groundwork for future research. These contributions
are instrumental in advancing the understanding and practice of fostering equitable and
accessible ITE and in supporting a future generation of teachers deeply committed to
transformative practice.
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https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487112445789

Appendices

Appendix A: Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs Scale

Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs Scale (LTSJ-B) (Ludlow et al., 2008)

Respond to the following statements regarding your beliefs about teaching:

| SJ1 | An important part of learning to be a teacher is examining one’s own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation. |
| SJ2 | Issues related to racism and inequity should be openly discussed in the classroom. |
| SJ3R | For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas, such as social studies and literature. |
| SJ4 | Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons and discussions. |
| SJ5R | The most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into Canadian society. |
| SJ6R | It’s reasonable for teachers to have lower classroom expectations for students who don’t speak English as their first language. |
| SJ7 | Part of the responsibilities of the teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain social inequities. |
| SJ8 | Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions. |
| SJ9R | Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less to the classroom. |
| SJ10 | Although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it’s not their job to change society. |
| SJ11R | Whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work. |
| SJ12R | Realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead. |

*Likert response categories: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Uncertain=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

**R: denotes the categories are reverse scored

Note: I made one change to the scale to reflect the unique context as has been done in versions used in Ireland and New Zealand (see Cochran-Smith et al., 2012). Item SJ5R previously “assimilate into American society” was changed to “assimilate into Canadian society”.
Appendix B: Detailed Comparison of Entry and Exit Cohorts

Detailed Comparison of Entry and Exit Cohorts Based on Survey Data

Survey Participants’ Gender

ENTRY SURVEY: GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15%</td>
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EXIT SURVEY: GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer Not to Say</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to Self-Describe</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>87%</td>
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Survey Participants’ Age

ENTRY SURVEY: AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXIT SURVEY: AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Participants’ Racial Identity

**ENTRY SURVEY: RACIAL IDENTITY**

- White: 81%
- South Asian: 3%
- East Asian: 3%
- Southeast Asian: 4%
- Latina/o/x: 3%
- Middle Eastern: 4%
- Black: 1%
- Prefer to Self-Describe: 2%

**EXIT SURVEY: RACIAL IDENTITY**

- White: 70%
- South Asian: 2%
- East Asian: 10%
- Southeast Asian: 6%
- Latina/o/x: 2%
- Middle Eastern: 3%
- Black: 1%
- Indigenous: <1%
- Prefer Not to Say: 3%
- Prefer to Self-Describe: 2%

Survey Participants’ Language Background

**ENTRY SURVEY: LANGUAGE BACKGROUND**

- Monolingual: 63%
- Bilingual (Eng, Fr): 16%
- Bilingual (Eng, Other): 10%
- Trilingual: 11%

**EXIT SURVEY: LANGUAGE BACKGROUND**

- Monolingual: 62%
- Bilingual (Eng, Fr): 13%
- Bilingual (Eng, Other): 17%
- Trilingual: 5%
- Quadrilingual: 3%
**Diversity of the Neighbourhood Participants Grew Up In**

**ENTRY SURVEY: THE NEIGHBOURHOOD I GREW UP IN WAS DIVERSE**

- Strongly Agree: 10%
- Agree: 21%
- Uncertain: 4%
- Disagree: 40%

**EXIT SURVEY: THE NEIGHBOURHOOD I GREW UP IN WAS DIVERSE**

- Strongly Agree: 12%
- Agree: 23%
- Uncertain: 3%
- Disagree: 39%

**Diversity of Schools Attended**

**ENTRY SURVEY: THE SCHOOLS I ATTENDED WERE DIVERSE**

- Strongly Agree: 13%
- Agree: 25%
- Uncertain: 4%
- Disagree: 39%

**EXIT SURVEY: THE SCHOOLS I ATTENDED WERE DIVERSE**

- Strongly Agree: 8%
- Agree: 29%
- Uncertain: 5%
- Disagree: 38%
Prior Teaching Experience

**ENTRY SURVEY: TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

- Classroom Teacher: 5%
- Classroom Volunteer: 18%
- Coach: 8%
- Daycare Worker: 13%
- Other: 31%
- Tutor: 17%
- Parent: 1%
- None: 3%

**EXIT SURVEY: TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

- Classroom Teacher: 6%
- Classroom Volunteer: 13%
- Coach: 21%
- Daycare Worker: 6%
- Other: 29%
- Tutor: 19%
- Parent: 2%
- None: 4%
Appendix C: Entry Survey

Background Information and Short-Answer Question Included with the LTSJ-B Scale

1. Are you in the first year of an initial teacher education program (i.e. Bachelor of Education leading to accreditation by the Ontario College of Teachers)?
   Yes/No (if no, excluded from answering any further questions).

2. What program stream are you in? (dropdown menu)
   Primary-Junior
   Junior-Intermediate
   Intermediate-Senior

3. Please check the one response that best describes your undergraduate academic major.
   English
   History
   Social Sciences
   Mathematics
   Sciences
   Other, please specify (text box)

4. Please indicate the one selection that best describes your previous teaching experiences (prior to entering the initial teacher education program).
   Tutor
   Classroom volunteer
   Coach
   Day Care Worker
   Parent
   Classroom teachers
   Other, please specify (text box)
No previous teaching experience

5. Please indicate your gender. (dropdown menu)
   Female
   Male
   Non-Binary
   Two Spirit
   Transgender
   Prefer to self-describe. (text box)
   Prefer not to say.

6. How old were you on September 1, 2020?
   Under 25
   25-30
   31-35
   36-40
   41-45
   Over 45

7. I identify as: (Select all that apply).
   Black
   East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, South Korean, etc.)
   Latin America
   Middle Eastern
   South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
   Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Laotian, Thai, etc.)
   white
   Prefer to self-describe. (text box)
   Prefer not to say.
8. Did you immigrate to Canada from another country?
   Yes
   No (If no is selected, respondent is skipped to Question #11)
9. What country did you immigrate from? (dropdown menu)
10. How long have you lived in Canada?
    Less than one year
    1-2 years
    3-5 years
    5-10 years
    More than 10 years
11. What language(s) are you proficient in? (Select all that apply)
    (dropdown menu)
12. The community/neighbourhood I grew up in was diverse (i.e. comprised of various racial/ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic groups). (5 point Likert Scale Response)
13. The schools I attended were diverse. (5 point Likert Scale Response)
14. Please check the one response that best describes where you would prefer to teach:
    Public school – urban location
    Public school – rural location
    Public school – suburban location
    Private non-secretarian school
    Private religious school
    I would prefer not to teach
    Other (specify)

Short Answer Question:
1. In the space below, briefly talk about your reasons for becoming a teacher.

Future Involvement in this Study

We are interested in hearing more about your beliefs about teaching as well as your experiences in your initial teacher education program. If you participate in a follow-up interview, you will be compensated for your time with a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card. Are you interested in participating in an approximately 30-45 minute follow-up interview at a time and location convenient to you (by phone, online, or in-person)?

Yes

No

THANK YOU FOR THE TIME AND THOUGHT YOU CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SURVEY!
Appendix D: Exit Survey

Background Information and Short-Answer Question Included with the LTSJ-B Scale

1. Are you in your second consecutive year of an initial teacher education program (i.e. Bachelor of Education leading to accreditation by the Ontario College of Teachers)?
   Yes/No (if no, excluded from answering any further questions).

2. What program stream are you in? (dropdown menu)
   - Primary-Junior
   - Junior-Intermediate
   - Intermediate-Senior

3. Please check the one response that best describes your undergraduate academic major.
   - English
   - History
   - Social Sciences
   - Mathematics
   - Sciences
   - Other, please specify (text box)

4. Please indicate the one selection that best describes your previous teaching experience (prior to entering the initial teacher education program).
   - Tutor
   - Classroom volunteer
   - Coach
   - Day Care Worker
   - Parent
Classroom teachers
Other, please specify (text box)
No previous teaching experience

5. Please indicate your gender.
Female
Male
Non-Binary
Two Spirit
Transgender
Prefer to self-describe. (text box)
Prefer not to say.

6. How old were you on September 1, 2020?
   Under 25
   25-30
   31-35
   36-40
   41-45
   Over 45

7. I identify as: (Select all that apply).
   Black
   East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, South Korean, etc.)
   Latin America
   Middle Eastern
   South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
   Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Laotian, Thai, etc.)
   white
Prefer to self-describe. (text box)
Prefer not to say.

8. Did you immigrate to Canada from another country?
   Yes
   No (If no is selected, respondent is skipped to Question #11)

9. What country did you immigrate from? (dropdown menu)

10. How long have you lived in Canada?
    Less than one year
    1-2 years
    3-5 years
    5-10 years
    More than 10 years

11. What language(s) are you proficient in? (Select all that apply)
    (dropdown menu)

12. The community/neighbourhood I grew up in was diverse (i.e. comprised of various racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic groups). (5 point Likert Scale Response)

13. The schools I attended were diverse. (5 point Likert Scale Response)

14. Please check the one response that best describes where you would prefer to teach: (dropdown menu)
    - Public school – urban location
    - Public school – rural location
    - Public school – suburban location
    - Private non-secretarian school
    - Private religious school
    - I would prefer not to teach
15. Please select the one that best describes the level of diversity of the student population in each of your three practicum placements. Diversity is defined here as racial/ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and/or socioeconomic difference:
   Practicum 1: (dropdown menu)
   Highly diverse
   Moderately diverse
   Little to no diversity
   Practicum 2: (dropdown menu)
   Highly diverse
   Moderately diverse
   Little to no diversity
   Practicum 3: (dropdown menu)
   Highly diverse
   Moderately diverse
   Little to no diversity

16. Have you taken any elective courses, workshops, alternative experiences, or other professional development related to teaching for diversity, social justice, or equity during your time in the preservice education program? Please do not include any courses you took that were a required part of your program.
   Yes/No
   If yes, please specify what type. Click all that apply: (dropdown menu)
   EDUC 5477 Urban Schools
   EDUC 5476 Investigating Urban Schools: A Case Study Approach
   EDUC 5424 Teaching for Equity & Social Justice
   Workshop (please specify): (text box)
Seminar (please specify): (text box)
Symposia (please specify): (text box)
Other (please specify): (text box)

Short Answer Question:

1. In the space below, briefly talk about your reasons for becoming a teacher.

Future Involvement in this Study

We are interested in hearing more about your beliefs about teaching as well as your experiences in your initial teacher education program. If you participate in a follow-up interview, you will be compensated for your time with a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card. Are you interested in participating in an approximately 30-45 minute follow-up interview at a time and location convenient to you (by phone, online, or in-person)?

Yes

No

THANK YOU FOR THE TIME AND THOUGHT YOU CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SURVEY!
Appendix E: Teacher Candidate Interview Protocol

Background/Warm-Up Questions (adapted from McDonald, 2003)

1. What brings you to teaching?/Why did you decide to become a teacher?
   
   • When did you first start thinking about becoming a teacher?
   
   • What program stream are you in (e.g. Primary/Junior, Junior/Intermediate, Intermediate/Senior)? Why are you interested in teaching elementary/secondary school students?

Conceptions of Teaching (adapted from McDonald, 2003)

1. Take a couple of minutes to write down what you consider your most important goals as a teacher.
   
   • I notice you mentioned _______. Could you say a bit more about that?
   
   • The goal of having high expectations for all students is a common one, could you talk a little bit more about that in terms of your own goals?
   
   • Some say that students’ experiences outside of school constrain what teachers are able to do, what do you think about this view?

2. All Canadian demographic data points to classrooms becoming increasingly diverse. Describe what it means for you to be working with students from diverse backgrounds.
   
   • Do you think your own racial/cultural/linguistic identity plays a role in teaching? If yes, how so? (adapted from Silverman, 2010)
   
   • In your opinion, should all students be treated the same regardless of their background (i.e. racial, cultural, linguistic, SES, etc.)? (adapted from Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). If yes, ask: Can you explain what you mean by “treated the same”?
   
   • How important do you think it is that students’ culture is incorporated into classroom learning? (adapted from Gay, 2010)
     
     o How can a teacher achieve this?
• Do you feel that bilingual students and English language learners should be permitted to use their first language in class or is an English-only environment best?
  o Why/why not?

• How do you feel about including subjects that are politically, socially, or religiously sensitive into teaching?
  o (For participants in the elementary stream) - Do you believe that primary school-aged children are too young to understand and discuss issues of social justice, such as racism or homophobia? (adapted from Kelly & Brooks, 2009).

3. At this point in your program, how would you define equity in education?

• In what ways do you see this definition reflected in the program? Examples?

• What about in your practicum placement(s)? Examples? (e.g. how have your associate teachers interpreted/applied equity in practice? How have you? Can you give me an example of an experience you have had in your student teaching (either positive or negative) – i.e. lesson or activity you or your associate teacher has done?)

*University Courses* (adapted from McDonald, 2003)

1. In general, do you feel that your coursework is helping you learn how to teach diverse students?

• [prompt – In general, do you feel that course instructors and course content attended to issues of teaching for diversity, equity, and social justice? Have you discussed such concepts of anti-racist education? Or culturally responsive/sustaining pedagogy?]

• If so, in what ways? If not, what content do you feel is missing? Examples?

• Has any coursework changed your attitudes, knowledge, or skills in relation to teaching diverse students? Examples?

*Field Placements*
1. How, if at all, do you see your courses and your practicum placements as connected?

2. Did you find that your practicum placements provided opportunities for you to learn about teaching diverse students? If so, please explain. Examples?

3. Have any of your student teaching experiences changed your attitudes, knowledge, or skills in relation to teaching diverse students? Examples?

Is there anything else you would like to mention about the program, courses, or your practicum experiences? Do you have any questions for me?
Appendix F: Faculty Interview Protocol (Administration)

Administration - Dean/Associate Dean/Director (Adapted from McDonald, 2003)

Defining Social Justice and Integration

1. Many people are interested in this notion of “integrating” social justice and equity across teacher education. To what extent, if at all, would you say this integration happens in your program?
   a. [prompt: What would you point to as examples?]
   b. What enables the integration you described?
   c. Are there examples where social justice and equity are not integrated that you feel they should be? Barriers?

2. To what extent is learning to teach for equity and social justice a priority in your program? Why/why not?

3. What is the program’s definition of social justice and equity as it relates to teaching and learning?
   a. Would most faculty/course instructors be likely to agree or disagree with you?
      i. What makes you say that?
      ii. How do you know?

Faculty Involvement

4. Are you involved in the selection of course instructors? If yes, can you tell me a little about that process?
   a. [prompt: Are most course instructors current or former K-12 teachers? Tenure-track faculty? Graduate students?]

5. To what extent, if at all, are social justice goals a part of the hiring?
   a. In what ways?

Prospective Teachers
Selection

10. Are you involved with the process of selecting teacher candidates?

11. Generally speaking, how many applicants apply to the program each year?
   a. How many students are usually accepted?
   b. Is this year typical in this regard?

12. Is there an explicit effort to admit a diverse cohort of teacher candidates?
   a. Why? Why not?
   b. If yes, how is this effort carried out?

Assessment

13. What is the process for assessing students?
   a. What is the role of coursework in this process?
   b. What about practicums and field placements?

Field Placements

14. Are you involved with students’ field placements? If so, how?

15. How would you characterize the relationship between the university and the field placements?

16. How would you say the placements reflect, if at all, the program’s goals related to social justice and equity?

17. In what ways, if any, are they problematic in this regard?

18. What is the process for selecting associate teachers?

19. Describe the relationship between the associate teachers and the university (e.g., are there particular avenues through which associate teachers are connected to the university?)

Thank you so much for participating in this interview. Do you have any questions or additional comments you would like to add?
Appendix G: Faculty Interview Protocol (Practicum/Field Experience Coordinator)

Background Questions
1. What is involved in your role as <Program Name’s> practicum/advisor/coordinator?

Defining Social Justice and Integration
2. All Canadian demographic data points to increasingly diverse student populations in classrooms across the country and, particularly in Ontario. To what extent, if at all, is learning to teach diverse students effectively a consideration in the selection of practicum/alternative field placements?
   - If it is, how so? [prompts: What would you point to as examples – e.g. what opportunities do teacher candidates have to learn about teaching diverse students?]
   - Are there any barriers to providing teacher candidates with these opportunities in field placements?

3. Learning to teach for social justice and equity are a common theme across initial teacher education programs—what would you say is your program’s definition of social justice and equity as it relates to teaching and learning? (adapted from McDonald, 2003)
   - Would most faculty/course instructors be likely to agree or disagree with you? (e.g. would you say that there is a cohesive vision of what this means across the program?)
   - What makes you say that?
   - How do you know?

Assessment
4. What is the role of practicums and field placements in the assessment of teacher candidates?

*Field Placements* (adapted from McDonald, 2003)

10. How would you characterize the relationship between the university and the field placements?
11. How would you say the placements reflect, if at all, program goals related to teaching for equity and diversity?
12. In what ways, if any, are they problematic in this regard?
13. What is the process for selecting associate teachers?
14. Describe the relationship between the associate teachers and the university (e.g. are there particular avenues through which associate teachers are connected to the university?)

Thank you so much for participating in this interview. Do you have any questions or additional comments you would like to add?
Appendix H: Ethics Documents

Western Research

Date: 17 September 2020
To Dr. Shirley Taylor

Project ID: 116431

Study Title: Learning to Teach for Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Initial Teacher Education in Ontario
Short Title: Initial Teacher Education Study
Application Type: NMEER Initial Application
Review Type: Deligated

Full Board Reporting Date: 02Oct2020
Date Approval Issued: 17Sep2020 21:27
REB Approval Expiry Date: 17Sep2021


Dear Dr. Shirley Taylor,

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMEER) has reviewed and approved the NMEER application form for the above-mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMEER approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMEER Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

Documents Approved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
<th>Document Date</th>
<th>Document Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview Guide - Teacher candidates (10AUG2020)</td>
<td>Interview Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Guide - Practition &amp; Alternative Field Experience Staff (10AUG2020)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Guide - Dean, Associate Dean, Director (10AUG2020)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Survey - Teacher Candidate - Exiting cohort (08SEP2020)</td>
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</table>
No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMIEB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMIEB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPSE), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMIEB who are named as investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMIEB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000041.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Harris, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randall Oram, NMIEB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).
Email Script for Recruitment

**Subject Line:** Invitation to participate in research

Hello,

I obtained your email address from your university website. You are being invited to participate in a study exploring the integration of social justice and equity into initial teacher education. This research is being conducted by Kate Paterson, a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education, and is being supervised by Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University. I have attached the letter of information about this study to this email.

The study is voluntary and involves participating in an individual interview expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview will be conducted on Zoom at a time that is convenient to you.

I will be sending a reminder email about this study two weeks from today.

If you are willing to participate in an interview or would like more information on this study, please contact the researcher at the contact information given below.

Thank you,

Shelley Taylor, PhD
Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University

Research Contact: Kate Paterson
Faculty of Education, Western University
Email Script for Recruitment

Subject Line: Invitation to participate in research

Hello,

I obtained your email address from your university website. The purpose of this email is to seek your approval to conduct research in your faculty. This study explores the integration of social justice and equity in initial teacher education. This research is being conducted by Kate Paterson, a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education, and is being supervised by Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University. I have attached the letters of information about this study to this email.

I would like to recruit teacher candidates and faculty members in your program as participants for the study. The study is voluntary and involves online surveys and individual interviews with teacher candidates as well as individual interviews with key stakeholders (e.g. Dean/Associate Dean, Director of Teacher Education, and practicum and alternative field experience advisor(s)/coordinator(s)). The online student survey takes approximately 10 minutes to fill out. The individual interviews are expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes and will be conducted on Zoom at a time that is convenient to the participant.

Your approval to conduct research in your program does NOT oblige you to participate in an interview.

I will be sending a reminder email about this study two weeks from today.

If you are willing to participate in an interview or would like more information about this study, please contact the researcher at the contact information given below.

Thank you,

Shelley Taylor, PhD
Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University

Research Contact: Kate Paterson
Faculty of Education, Western University
Email Script for Recruitment (Entering cohort)

Subject Line: Mass Email Recruitment

Hello,

You are being invited to participate in a study exploring teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching. This research is being conducted by Kate Paterson, a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education, and is being supervised by Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University.

If you are currently in your first year of the Bachelor of Education program, then you are eligible to participate.

The study is voluntary and involves participating in an approximately 10-minute online survey. At the end of the survey, you will have the option of providing your email address to be contacted for a follow-up interview. The online (Zoom) interview is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes and will take place at a time that is convenient to you. If you choose to participate in the survey, you can be entered into a draw to win one of two $25 Amazon gift cards. If you choose to participate in a follow-up interview, you will be compensated for your time with a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card.

I will be sending a reminder email about this study two weeks from today.

If you would like to participate in this study, please use the following link to access the letter of information and online survey: https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/ife/form/SV_9TyS0Gue8s5yAvz

If you already participated in this survey, please do not participate again.

Thank you,

Shelley Taylor, PhD
Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University

Research Contact: Kate Paterson
Faculty of Education, Western University
Mass Recruitment Email Teacher Candidate – Exiting Student Cohort

Email Script for Recruitment (Exiting cohort)

Subject Line: Mass Email Recruitment

Hello,

You are being invited to participate in a study exploring teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching. This research is being conducted by Kate Peterson and is being supervised by Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University.

If you are currently in your second consecutive year of the Bachelor of Education program, then you are eligible to participate.

The study is voluntary and your participation will be kept confidential. Your choice to participate will in no way affect your relationship with the Director of teacher education or your academic standing in the program. The study involves participating in an approximately 10-minute online survey. At the end of the survey, you will have the option of providing your email address to be contacted for a follow-up interview. The online (Zoom) interview is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes and will take place at a time that is convenient to you. If you choose to participate in the survey, you can be entered into a draw to win one of two $25 Amazon e-gift cards. If you choose to participate in a follow-up interview, you will be compensated for your time with your choice of a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card.

I will be sending a reminder email about this study two weeks from today.

If you would like to participate in this study, please use the following link to access the letter of information and online survey:
https://uwc.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dig1953NwXHwBT

If you already participated in this survey, please do not participate again.

Thank you.

Shelley Taylor, PhD
Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University

Research Contact: Kate Peterson
Faculty of Education, Western University
Recruitment Ad – Entering Student Cohort

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH ON PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Western University researchers that explores teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching and their opportunities to learn while in preservice teacher education. We are looking for participants who meet the following criteria:

- Must be a teacher candidate currently in the first year of their preservice teacher education program

If you are interested and agree to participate, you would be asked to: participate in an approximately 10-minute online survey. You will have the option of providing your email address to be contacted for an online (Zoom) interview that is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes.

In appreciation for your time, you can be entered into a draw for one of two $25 Amazon e-gift cards for your participation in the survey and you will receive a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card if you choose to participate in an interview.

If you would like to participate in this study, please use the following link to access the letter of information and online survey: https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9TyS0Gue8s5yAuz

If you have any questions about this study, please contact:
Kate Paterson
Western University, Faculty of Education
Recruitment Ad – Exiting Student Cohort

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH ON PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Western University researchers that explores teacher candidates’ beliefs about teaching and their opportunities to learn while in preservice teacher education. We are looking for participants who meet the following criteria:

- Must be a teacher candidate currently in the second consecutive year of their preservice teacher education program.

If you are interested and agree to participate, you would be asked to: participate in an approximately 10-minute online survey. You will have the option of providing your email address to be contacted for an online (Zoom) interview that is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes.

In appreciation for your time, you can be entered into a draw for one of two $25 Amazon gift cards for your participation in the survey and you will receive a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card if you choose to participate in an interview.

If you would like to participate in this study, please use the following link to access the letter of information and online survey:
https://uwc.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dic1653NKH5eBT

If you have any questions about this study, please contact:
Kate Paterson
Western University, Faculty of Education
In-class Recruitment Script Teacher Candidates – Entering Student Cohort

In-class recruitment verbal script (Entering student cohort)

Hello,

My name is Kate Paterson and I am a doctoral student at Western University’s Faculty of Education. I am conducting research into prospective teachers’ beliefs about teaching. This study is being supervised by Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University. I am recruiting participants who meet the following criteria:

- Must be a teacher candidate currently in the first year of their preservice teacher education program

This research will hopefully lead to a better understanding about teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn and their developing beliefs about teaching as they progress through initial teacher education. Findings may help to inform teacher education pedagogy, programming, and policy.

The study is voluntary and involves participating in an approximately 10-minute online survey. At the end of the survey, you will have the option of providing your email address to be contacted for a follow-up interview. The interview is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes and will take place using Zoom at a time that is convenient to you. If you choose to participate in the survey, you can be entered into a draw to win one of two $25 Amazon e-gift cards. If you choose to participate in a follow-up interview, you will be compensated with your choice of a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card.

If you already participated in this survey, please do not participate again.

If you would like to participate in this study, please use the following link to access the letter of information and online survey:

https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9TysS0Gue8S5yAvz

Thank you,

Shelley Taylor, PhD
Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University

Research Contact: Kate Paterson
Faculty of Education, Western University
In-class Recruitment Script Teacher Candidates – Exiting Student Cohort

In-class recruitment verbal script (Exiting student cohort)

Hello,

My name is Kate Paterson and I am a doctoral student at Western University’s Faculty of Education. I am conducting research into prospective teachers’ beliefs about teaching. This study is being supervised by Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University. I am recruiting participants who meet the following criteria:

- Must be a teacher candidate who is currently in the second consecutive year of the preservice teacher education program;

This research will hopefully lead to a better understanding about teacher candidates’ opportunities to learn and their developing beliefs about teaching as they progress through initial teacher education. Findings may help to inform teacher education pedagogy, programming, and policy.

The study is voluntary and involves participating in an approximately 10-minute online survey. At the end of the survey, you will have the option of providing your email address to be contacted for a follow-up interview. The interview is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes and will take place online using Zoom at a time that is convenient to you. If you choose to participate in the survey, you can be entered into a draw to win one of two $25 Amazon e-gift cards. If you choose to participate in a follow-up interview, you will be compensated with your choice of a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card.

If you already participated in this survey, please do not participate again.

If you would like to participate in this study, please use the following link to access the letter of information and online survey:
https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_diq1853NtXkHwBT

Thank you,

Shelley Taylor, PhD
Professor, Faculty of Education, Western University

Research Contact: Kate Paterson
Faculty of Education, Western University
LOI/Consent – Interview Key Stakeholders

LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT – Interview - Key Stakeholders

Learning to Teach for Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice: A Mixed Methods Case Study of Initial Teacher Education

Principal Investigator: Dr. Shelley Taylor, Faculty of Education, Western University

Co-Investigator: Kate Paterson, Faculty of Education, Western University

My name is Kate Paterson and I am a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am conducting research into the integration of social justice and equity in initial teacher education. Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University, is supervising this research study. You are being invited to participate because you are currently a key stakeholder at a program of preservice education in Ontario.

The purpose of this study is to better understand how social justice and equity are conceptualized and integrated across one initial teacher education program in Ontario and how teacher candidates act to mediate that integration within the program. The findings are intended to help inform initial teacher education policy, programming and pedagogy.

Study Procedures
If you agree to take part in this research study, you will be invited to participate in an individual interview. The interview is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes and will be conducted online using Zoom at a time that is convenient to you. If you consent, this interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed. If you do not consent to audio-recording, the researcher will take notes during the interview instead (notes will not include identifiable information). Please note that audio-recording is optional. Transcripts or researcher notes (if do not consent to being audio-recorded) will be shared with you using a secure link through OWL, Western's online platform, to review their accuracy. You can send any amendments or corrections to the transcript or notes back to me in the same secure online manner. You must agree to allow the use unidentifiable quotes in the dissemination of the results. Pseudonyms will be provided.

Confidentiality and Security
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor any information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. If you agree to be interviewed, you will be given a pseudonym prior to the interview so your name will not be heard on tape or appear on the transcript. Please be advised that I will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data. To further protect confidentiality, all information collected for the study will be kept in a locked, secure location. Only the principal investigator and co-investigator will have access to audio files, notes, and transcripts. I will keep a list linking your pseudonym
with your name in a secure place, separate from your study file. To further protect confidentiality, all information collected for the study will be kept in a locked, secure location. All collected data will be destroyed after 7 years, as per Western University policy.

Risks and Benefits
There are no known risks to participating in this study. There may be no direct benefits though your insight may help initial teacher education programs understand how to best support prospective teachers in learning about teaching for social justice and equity. The findings stand to inform programming aimed at preparing future teachers for diverse classrooms.

Compensation
You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

Rights of Participants
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no affect on you personally or professionally. If you decide to withdraw from the study and completed an interview, you have the right to request the withdrawal of your interview data. Representatives of Western University’s Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study related records to monitor the conduct of the research, and you do not waive any legal rights by participating in this research. While we do our best to protect your information there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact: Kate Paterson, email: [email protected]. If you have questions or concerns that you would like to direct to the supervisor of this study, please email Dr. Shelley Taylor at [email protected] or phone at [phone number].

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics. This office oversees the ethical conduct of research studies and is not part of the study team. Everything that you discuss will be kept confidential.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.
Consent Form:

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me, and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Please indicate your preference on the following optional component of the study:

Do you consent to be audio-recorded in this interview?  
☐ YES  
☐ NO

Print Name of Participant    Signature    Date (DD-MM-YYYY)

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

Print Name of Person Obtaining Consent    Signature    Date (DD-MM-YYYY)
LETTER OF INFORMATION AND CONSENT – Interview Teacher Candidate
Initial Teacher Education Study: Project ID #16431

Principal Investigator: Dr. Shelley Taylor, Faculty of Education, Western University
Phone
Email

Co-Investigator: Kate Paterson, Faculty of Education, Western University
Email

Dear Prospective Teacher,

My name is Kate Paterson and I am a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am conducting research into initial teacher education in Ontario. Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University, is supervising this research study. You are being invited to participate because you are currently a teacher candidate at a program of initial teacher education in Ontario.

The purpose of this study is to better understand teacher candidates’ developing beliefs about teaching and their opportunities to learn while in the program. Findings are intended to help inform teacher education policy, programming, and pedagogy.

Study Procedures
You provided your email address at the end of the online survey, indicating consent to being invited to participate in an interview. I will obtain your written consent prior to your participation in the interview. To provide written consent, you must sign the consent form at the end of this Letter of Information. In the case where I cannot get your written consent, I will obtain your audio-recorded verbal consent prior to the interview. The interview is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes and will be conducted online using Zoom at a time convenient to you. You must agree to be audio-recorded, to have your interview transcribed, and to allow the use of identifiable quotes in the dissemination of the results. Pseudonyms will be provided. Transcripts will be shared with you using a secure link through OWL, Western’s online platform, to review their accuracy. You can send any amendments or corrections to the transcript back to me in the same secure online manner. The researcher will need to share your email address with Starbucks or Tim Hortons to provide you with your compensation ($15 e-gift card), but no information about your participation in this research will be disclosed.

Confidentiality and Security
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor any information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. If you agree to be interviewed, you will be given a pseudonym prior to the interview so your name will not be heard on tape or appear on the transcript. Please be advised that I will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data. To further protect confidentiality, all information collected for the study will be kept in a locked, secure location. Only the principal investigator and co-investigator will have access to audio files, notes, and transcripts. I will keep a list

Version 08SEP2020 Page 1 of 3
linking your pseudonym with your name in a secure place, separate from your study file. To further protect confidentiality, all information collected for the study will be kept in a locked, secure location. All collected data will be destroyed after 7 years, as per Western University policy.

Risks and Benefits
There are no known risks to participating in this study. There may be no direct benefits though your participation may help preservice teacher education programs to better understand teacher candidates' developing beliefs about teaching and opportunities to learn as they progress through preservice teacher education programs. This insight could help inform the design and delivery of effective programming.

Compensation
If you choose to participate in an interview, you will be compensated for your time with your choice of a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card.

Rights of Participants
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose not to participate in this study, it will not affect you personally, professionally, or academically. If you decide to withdraw from the study and completed an interview, you have the right to request the withdrawal of your interview data. Representatives of Western University’s Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study related records to monitor the conduct of the research, and you do not waive any legal rights by participating in this research. While we do our best to protect your information there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Kate Paterson, email:

If you have any questions or concerns that you would like to direct to the supervisor of this study, please email Dr. Shelley Taylor at or phone at

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Human Research Ethics and his office oversees the ethical conduct of research studies and is not part of the study team. Everything that you discuss will be kept confidential.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Sincerely,

Kate Paterson
Western University, Canada
Consent Form

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me, and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name of Participant</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date (DD-MM-YYYY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

My signature means that I have explained the study to the participant named above. I have answered all questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name of Person Obtaining Consent</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date (DD-MM-YYYY)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
LETTER OF INFORMATION AND IMPLIED CONSENT – Survey Teacher Candidate
Initial Teacher Education Study: Project ID #116431

Principal Investigator: Dr. Shelley Taylor, Faculty of Education, Western University
Ph: Email: 

Co-Investigator: Kate Paterson, Faculty of Education, Western University
Ph: Email: 

Dear Prospective Teacher,

My name is Kate Paterson and I am a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am conducting research into initial teacher education in Ontario. Dr. Shelley Taylor, a professor at Western University, is supervising this research study. You are being invited to participate because you are currently a teacher candidate at a program of initial teacher education in Ontario.

The purpose of this study is to better understand teacher candidates’ developing beliefs about teaching and their opportunities to learn while in the program. Findings are intended to help inform teacher education policy, programming, and pedagogy.

Study Procedures
If you agree to take part in this research study, I will invite you to participate in an online survey to gather information on your beliefs about teaching. Your survey responses will be collected anonymously through a secure online survey platform called Qualtrics. Qualtrics uses encryption technology and restricted access authorizations to protect all data collected. In addition, Western’s Qualtrics server is in Ireland, where privacy standards are maintained under the European Union safe harbour framework. The data will then be exported from Qualtrics and securely stored on Western University’s server. At any point during the survey, if you wish to leave, you may do so by exiting out of the webpage. Your survey responses are automatically saved as you progress to the next page of the survey. There are no identifiers in the survey so I will not be able to withdraw survey data that has been saved. At the end of the survey, you will be asked to provide your email address to be entered into a draw for one of two $25 Amazon e-gift cards and/or to consent to being invited to participate in a follow-up interview. This email address cannot be used to identify your survey as it will be sent anonymously to a separate database. If you choose to enter the draw, and you win the draw, the researcher(s) will need to share your email address with Amazon, but no information about your participation in this research will be disclosed. Participation in the online survey does NOT oblige you to participate in a follow-up interview. Participants who decide to participate in the interview component will be asked to read the letter of information and provide consent for the interview at that time. The online survey is expected to take approximately 10 minutes.

Confidentiality and Security
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor any information which could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. To further protect confidentiality, all information collected for the study will be kept in a locked, secure location. All collected data will be destroyed after 7 years, as per Western University policy.

Risks and Benefits
There are no known risks to participating in this study. There may be no direct benefits though your participation may help preservice teacher education programs to better understand teacher candidates' developing beliefs about teaching and opportunities to learn as they progress through preservice teacher education programs. This insight could help inform the design and delivery of effective programming.

Compensation
If you choose to participate in the survey, you can be entered into a draw to win one of two $25 Amazon e-gift cards. If you choose to participate in a follow-up interview, you will be compensated for your time with a $15 Starbucks or Tim Hortons e-gift card.

Rights of Participants
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you choose not to participate in this study, it will not affect you personally, professionally, or academically. If you decide to withdraw from the study and completed an interview, you have the right to request the withdrawal of your interview data. Representatives of Western University’s Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research, and you do not waive any legal rights by participating in this research. While we do our best to protect your information there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so. By responding to this survey, you are indicating your consent to participate.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact: Kate Pateron, email: [removed]. If you have questions or concerns that you would like to direct to the supervisor of the study, please email Dr. Shelley Taylor at [removed] or phone at [removed].

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics. This office oversees the ethical conduct of research studies and is not part of the study team. Everything that you discuss will be kept confidential.

Please use the link below to retain a copy of this letter for your records:
Do you consent to voluntarily participate in this study?

Yes, I consent.

No, I do not consent.
Verbal Consent Script Interview – Teacher Candidate

Have you read the Letter of Information, had the nature of the study explained to you, and agree to participate? Have all questions been answered to your satisfaction?

Thank you.
Verbal Consent Script Interview – Key Stakeholder

| Verbal Consent Script – Interview – Key Stakeholder |

Please state your preference on the following optional component of the study:

1. Do you agree to be audio-recorded in this interview?
   
   *(NOTE: If participant consents to being audio-recorded, researcher will turn on audio-record to record their verbal consent. If participant does not consent to being audio-recorded, the Yes/No checkboxes will be checked by the researcher on behalf of the participant as a record of verbal consent.)*

2. Have you read the Letter of Information, had the nature of the study explained to you, and agree to participate? Have all questions been answered to your satisfaction?

   ☐ YES ☐ NO

Thank you.
Appendix I: Curriculum Vitae

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Kate Paterson

Post-secondary Education and Degrees:
- Dalhousie University
  Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
  2002-2006, B.A., International Development Studies

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2008-2009 B.Ed

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2014-2016 M.A. Education Studies (Applied Linguistics)

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2018-Present PhD, Faculty of Education, Applied Linguistics

Honours and Awards:
OSSTF/FEESO Research Grant for Emergent Issues and Priorities 2023

Ontario Graduate Scholarship
2020-2021

Canadian Research Centre on Inclusive Education Research Award 2020

Helene Mayo Puskas Award in Education
2006

Related Work Experience:
Teacher (Elementary and Secondary)
Thames Valley District School Board
2021-Present
Research Assistant – Lead
Faculty of Education
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Western University
2022-2023
• Developing foreign language instructor competencies to teach for transfer in the multilingual university as seen in comparative/international perspective

Research Assistant
Faculty of Education
Western University
2019-2022
• Preservice students working with bilingual learners in practicum settings and community-based tutoring
• Language and literacy learning among youth refugees in Canadian classrooms

Professor
Faculty of Access, Language, & Regional Campuses
Fanshawe College
2012-2021

ESL Instructor
Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
2012-2013

ESL Instructor
London Language Institute
2009, 2011-2012

Publications:


**Presentations and Guest Lectures:**


Paterson, K. (2016). Developing educational materials: Challenges of the materials development process. Invited Speaker, Graduate Studies, Faculty of Education, Western University.