

**Learning to Teach-in-Relation: Community Service Learning,
Phenomenology, and the Medicine Wheel**

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Abstract

The focus of this phenomenological research project is to delve into the question of ‘what it is like’ for teacher candidates to experience the phenomenon of learning to teach-in-relation in the context of a community service learning project. A sense of the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation emerges as the five teacher candidates make and play with hula hoops beyond the initial intention of cultivating joyful physical activity on campus. This research is guided by van Manen’s (1997) phenomenological approach to researching lived experience, as well as an Indigenous research framework based on the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the medicine wheel. Within the relational and embodied framework of the medicine wheel, the following six significant themes shifted perceptions of what it means to teach: 1) waiting to learn; 2) shaping community; 3) learning in movement; 4) sitting with students; 5) learning with students; and 6) embodying a flexible practice.

Key words: Learning to teach-in-relation; phenomenology; relational; embodied; community service learning; perception; Indigenous knowledge.

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Prologue – Seeing the Research Circle

Within many Indigenous communities we begin by identifying ourselves: who we are, where we are from, who our ancestors are. This identification allows people to know who we are, which, in turn, helps to establish trust. (Lavallée, 2009, p. 26)

I begin this prologue, essentially this thesis, with a series of dreams that came to me when I began my graduate studies. Before I identify and introduce myself, I share these dreams in hopes to convey the way I began to anchor to the research process. Like other Indigenous researchers (Kovach, 2009; Struthers, 2001), I include these dreams to show another way of knowing, one that includes listening to spiritual knowledge (Lavallée, 2009).

The first dream begins with the sensation of stepping into a place that is just slightly out of focus. I feel like I am looking around, moving my head from side to side trying to figure out where I am but nothing comes into view. I sense and realize that I am walking, feet moving tentatively forward, but to where? I can feel brightness on my skin. A warm light shines on my face before I see it; a warm golden hue that seems to be everywhere. I breathe it in and the warmth permeates my core. As I move in this warm hue, my ears pick up a faint drumming sound. I begin to notice where I am walking now. I am in a tall waist high field of wheat. My fingertips brush along the tops of the grass and I realize I am wandering towards the sound of the drums in the distance. I know I am getting closer because while I still cannot see anything coming into clear focus the drumming grows louder.

A group of people begin to take shape in the distance. They are standing in the direction of the sun and I have to squint to see them. As I approach them the sun seems to intensify, I cannot make out who these people are. The harder I try to see their faces the

stronger the sun seems to obscure my view. What I can make out is that they are standing in a circle. I see they are wearing traditional First Nations regalia; clothes made out of buckskin with beading, moccasins with fur details. Something is drawing me towards the circle; I can feel the pulse of the beat of the drum in my heart. As I step closer to the circle I realize they are performing a ceremony. I want to back away, to flee from this place. I do not feel like I belong here and I feel like I am intruding. Yet, the warmth of the sun hits my face and a welcoming feeling washes over me. I step closer and the people shift, opening a space in the circle for me. No words are spoken, yet I feel this is an invitation being given to me. They are beckoning me to join them. I notice that I have stopped walking. I hesitate. I am worried that I do not have the right to be here. The beat of the drum continues to pull at me, the vibrations growing stronger in my heart, but I resist. I feel myself holding back but the pull is stronger. It is within the sensations of the warm sun, the sound of drum, and the feeling of being near these people that I feel myself move forward. I move towards the circle. The sun takes on a peaceful, serene tone and I have the sensation of finding something. I feel like I have just seen a good friend after years of being apart and we share a long awaited embrace. There is a comfort here. A feeling of finding something you didn't know you'd lost or perhaps how much you'd missed it. I take another step but before I reach the circle, the sensation slips away.

I wake up, pulled from this place, back into my body. I lay in bed trying to hold onto that feeling of belonging and wishing I had stepped into the circle to join them. A few months later another dream comes to me that is similar. The dream has the same quality of light, warmth and feeling. The message is that I am welcome in the circle. However, like the first, I wake up before I get the chance to join the circle of people.

This series of dreams, where I am walking in a field, took a long time to understand and process. They came to me in the beginning of my Master of Arts in Education (M.A.Ed.) program when I was unsure of how to proceed and whether or not I belonged in academia. Looking back, the timing does not seem coincidental. Even though I was accepted to do my M.A.Ed., I was unsure my new role as researcher. I was not accustomed to this identity, to this relationship. I was also unsure of my sense of place. I found myself in a new city, Ottawa, which resides on un-ceded Algonquin territory. I struggled to find connection and community both on campus and in the place I now called home.

Professor Lloyd, my thesis supervisor, wanted to make sure I felt welcomed in my new place of study. I was introduced to her by a previous teacher and mentor from the University of Manitoba, Joannie Halas. She is an advocate for inclusive Aboriginal physical education. Joannie offered me the opportunity to work with Aboriginal youth at an after school program promoting physical activity. Knowing this aspect of my background in physical education, Professor Lloyd invited me to become part of a health-promoting community service learning (CSL) project. Professor Lloyd had initiated this CSL project within the Developing a Global Perspective for Educators (DGPE) cohort situated with the teacher education program (Lloyd, 2012a; Lloyd, 2012b). Her proposed hooping project's goal was to promote joyful physical activity on campus and in local schools through the making of and playing with hoops. This CSL project was aligned with the University of Ottawa's CSL program which offers a form of experiential learning that allows students to engage in their community "by participating in professor-approved community service placements related to course learning objectives and then produce corresponding reflective assignments" ("Michaëlle Jean Center for Global and Community Engagement", n.d.). I accepted the invitation to become involved as a mentor. Yet, at the time this opportunity was

presented to me, I did not realize it was the beginning of my research journey. I simply saw it as a way to become part of a community of individuals who shared a similar interest in physical activity. I could not have anticipated what would unfold as the year progressed. From the CSL project emerged a strong sense of community and from this sense of connection I did not anticipate the many other lessons revealed to me by the simple act of hula hooping.

I am nearing the end of writing up my research into the lived experiences of teacher candidates engaged in a CSL project. My understanding of their lived experiences is deepening, which is to say “the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize or reflect up on it” (van Manen, 1997, p.9). I am also coming to a deeper understanding of the dreams that appeared to me as I began this research journey. The first message that has revealed itself is that I was searching for a sense of belonging. I was also searching for a place within academia where I could feel a sense of connection. I was working through the feelings of trying to allow myself to incorporate the words researcher and graduate student into my sense of self. I was unsure of my place in the research circle, and was searching for a way to join this circle.

Secondly, I have come to see this dream as a message from my ancestors, telling me I am on the right path. Shawn Wilson (2008), from his book “Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods” writes,

Indigenous research is a ceremony and must be respected as such...It is the knowing and respectful reinforcement that all things are related and connected. It is the voice from our ancestors that tell us when it is right and when it is not. Indigenous research is a life changing ceremony. (p.61)

I feel that that within this dream my ancestors were sending me a message that I belonged with them and also in this research process. They were telling me to keep going and to keep looking for them as well. They were reaching out to me to say I did belong even if I could not enter the circle yet. With this, I have come to understand this journey is more than an academic exercise, it is a ceremony.

Locating Myself. Who is this woman who dreams of walking in fields? Who is this person who has chosen to study at a Master's level but seems so uncertain of her place in what she has come to know as a research circle? I knew this woman once. While she has changed, she comes from the same place that I come from as I sit here reflecting on the beginnings of my research journey. I need to share where I come from with you because the process of locating oneself within an Indigenous research framework creates a respectful relationship and is "about being congruent with a knowledge system that tells us that we can only interpret the world from the place of our experience" (Kovach, 2009, p.3). My place of experience comes from the feeling of searching for a connection. I have always been searching for a sense of community wherever I am. This stems from not knowing my Aboriginal heritage for much of my life.

I grew up in The Pas, a small town on the Saskatchewan River. My father's parents, father Swiss and mother French, carved out an existence in this small Northern Manitoba town and raised their seven children here. My dad has always called The Pas his home. My mother was born in Kenora, Ontario. At a very young age she was taken from her Métis and Ojibwe family and placed in foster care in Southern Manitoba. The Pas became her home when she was four and she has lived there ever since.

The Pas has strong Métis roots, and is located across the Saskatchewan River from the First Nation reserve of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Even though I grew up surrounded

by Métis culture and also in close relation to First Nations people, I struggled to come to terms with my Aboriginal identity and heritage. I struggled to feel like I could belong to a community because I was so uncertain of where my mom's people came from. Even when my son was born I could not say with confidence, as I do now, that I am Métis and Ojibwe. Only recently has this information come to my family and me. I share this with you now because I am incorporating a relational, embodied framework through an Indigenous perspective in this research and locating oneself within an Indigenous framework builds trusting relationships (Johnson, 2008; Kovach, 2009). A prologue is a useful tool because it “encompasses essential information for the reader to make sense of the story to follow” (Kovach, 2009).

Utilizing the format of a prologue allows me to create the space to introduce myself to the reader, to allow the reader to locate me in context to this research. I feel it is integral the reader understands where I come from, giving the choices for my research the necessary context required as I embark on this research endeavour. Having this space to introduce myself is also quite significant considering everything that lead up to creating the disconnect between my family and our Métis/Ojibwe culture. This is what I think about in the wake of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) final report. My grand parents and great grand parents, aunties and uncles are all part of the legacy of residential schools. The reverberations of their experiences have been felt through the generations, from my mother and on to myself and siblings. That I can find space in academia to locate my self and also include an Indigenous research framework, is a testament to the change that is happening in Canada.

This research will also attend to the call made by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) and many Canadian institutions such as the University of Ottawa's

Student Academic Success Service (SASS), who are working towards a more inclusive, supportive, and comprehensive space for Indigenous students to flourish along with Indigenous research, methodologies, and knowledge. Moving forward, including an Indigenous research framework falls in line with the vision put forward by the ACDE in hopes “that Indigenous identities, cultures, languages, values, ways of knowing, and knowledge systems will flourish in all Canadian learning settings” (Archibald, Lundy, Reynolds, & Williams, 2010, p.4).

Moving towards the research circle. My son, now two, who wasn’t even conceived when I began this project calls to me, “Atayookee!” which means “tell a story” in the Métis language of Michif. I hear his voice as I sit in front of my computer writing up this research project. I want to tell you the story of teacher candidates, myself and the CSL project. However, I worry that I will not tell it properly. I realize that when I think about my busy toddler, he adds another dynamic dimension to the list of words I now use to describe myself; educator, researcher, wife, and now mother. While some of the words I use to describe myself come naturally, wife, mother, I have struggled to include researcher and educator into my identity. In this research I wonder what to include, what to leave out and what to highlight. These are the negotiations I have with myself as I step into yet another descriptor I am trying to incorporate into my life; writer.

Being in graduate school has pushed me in ways I did not think possible. From the confidence I have in my abilities as a researcher, to my comfort levels in reading and understanding new philosophies and concepts about teaching and learning. Now writing up the project to tell the story is adding yet another challenging layer to this journey. But I hear my son’s voice, and the words he speaks in Michif fall on my ears as such a wonder. That he

knows this part of himself from the beginning of his life warms my heart. His voice encourages me to tell a story. This story. And so I will.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Imagine a group of students gathering on a beautiful fall afternoon, hula hoops spinning around their waists and smiles permeating their faces. What would be your reaction to seeing bodies moving, torqueing, arms up in the air, and hips moving back and forth? If you were walking by what would you think was going on with this group? Would you wonder who they are? Are they a performance for you to stop and observe? Or are they a club of hula hooping enthusiasts? Most likely you would not think these students are in fact teacher candidates just beginning their teacher education program, engaged in a Community Service Learning (CSL) project. I certainly did not imagine that in graduate school I would be out on campus hula hooping with a group of teacher candidates. Nor, as I feel the hula hoop spinning around my own torso, does this resemble my own experiences in teacher education. Yet this is what I find myself doing on a sunny afternoon, Hula hooping on my new campus with an enthusiastic group of students learning to be teachers.

The Story of the CSL Hooping Project

The story of the CSL hooping project does not start with us, myself and the teacher candidates, hula hooping on a campus lawn together. Our journey began in the small “Interdisciplinary Research on Comprehensive School Health” Education Research Unit (ERU) office of Professor Lloyd. There are no windows in this office. There is one too many desks and a few too many chairs within the florescent-lit walls of our new workspace. The five teacher candidates, Carla, Ella, Emma, Yvonne, and Nadia (pseudonyms), were all members of the DGPE cohort. In their PED 3151 course, teacher candidates were offered the choice to volunteer between 11 CSL projects put forward by various professors.

“Jumping through hoops: An interdisciplinary CSL project” was designed by Professor Lloyd to encourage teacher candidates to cultivate positive physical activity in their teacher education program. At the onset of the project, the requirements were simple – the teacher candidates were asked to make hula hoops on a modest budget, take the hula hoops out to the community and encourage people to experience physical activity in a positive way. The teacher candidates were required to complete 30 hours of volunteer work in this CSL to receive a certificate and it was up to them to track and organize how they wanted to complete these volunteer hours. The teacher candidates were also encouraged to write up a resource guide for teachers who might also want to make and use hula hoops in their classrooms (“Developing a Global Perspective for Educators”, 2014).

Meeting the teacher candidates. My first impression of this group was that they seemed like such confident, intelligent and enthusiastic teacher candidates. Over the course of the CSL hooping project I would come to know each indeed had these qualities and more.

I learned that Ella is a self-proclaimed perfectionist. She pushes herself and admits to being an overachiever. She appreciated the movement hula hooping brought to her as an active student who found it challenging to continue with her extracurricular activities during her time completing her Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program.

In contrast to Ella, Emma is a relaxed person in general. Not much seems to shake her. She laughs easily and her curiosity and enthusiasm for learning shone through with the CSL hooping project. She leads by example and was the student who was the most experimental at teaching herself the more challenging hula hooping moves. She was also really good at teaching the rest of us how to do these moves once she had learned them.

I came to know that Nadia’s confidence emanates naturally from within her in everything she does. She is an athletic woman and with this she is able to lead by example,

especially when showing us new hula hooping moves she had taught herself. Like Emma, she was very keen to push herself with hula hooping. She shared her hula hooping with her roommates and boyfriend, admitting they would often play games and compete to see who could keep the hula hoop around their waist the longest.

Carla is a laid back confident woman. She has a natural self-assurance that comes from her life experiences as she has done some travelling around the world. This quality emanated throughout the project and brought a sense of worldliness to the group. Carla is very thoughtful and introspective. While she is not necessarily quiet, she tends to speak once she has thought through what she wants to express. This skill added to many interesting and thoughtful conversations amongst the group of teacher candidates.

Yvonne always brought a burst of high energy to the CSL project. Of the group of teacher candidates, she could enter a room and shift the energy from flat to excited instantly. She is bubbly and friendly and her energy motivates those around her. When she speaks she is very animated and her hands move with her to express herself. She admits she is not the most physically active person. She did not like physical education when she was in school. She was not proficient in sports and because of this she often felt left out or relegated to the sidelines. She worked harder than the rest of us to learn the basics of hula hooping and was happy with her abilities. One of the interesting aspects of why she volunteered to do this CSL hooping project is that she wanted to challenge herself with hula hooping and learn how she might integrate physical activity with her future students.

Gaining a sense of the whole. I remember the first few CSL meetings very clearly. Professor Lloyd and I had discussed that I would support the teacher candidates and act as a mentor. My direct experience from being in teacher education paired with my background in physical education also seemed a natural fit. Especially as these particular teacher candidates

did not necessarily have a physical education background. With this feeling of understanding my role in this CSL project, I went into our first meeting with the expectation that I would be a support person in case the teacher candidates needed help along the way. However, our first few meetings did not unfold as I thought they would.

In my mind, I imagined the teacher candidates would arrive with a rough idea of how to gather the materials needed to make the hula hoops. I expected there would be a plan in place or that one would be made in this first meeting. However, this did not occur. After a few weeks of struggling we had managed to amass the materials needed in order to make the hula hoops. From the moment we began making the hula hoops we could feel the momentum of the project picking up. The feeling in the small office space shifted from one that was stagnant to one that was full of energy. We were finally producing something. And soon we could get out onto campus and share our hula hoops with the community.

Our first time hula hooping together was in the main entrance of the education building. We also went out onto the more spacious grassy lawns of campus. Being out on campus was such a nice change from being in classrooms, behind desks and sitting in chairs.

Moving, hula hooping, in public spaces on campus was something new to all of us. We noticed that we all thought of physical activity as something to be done in specific places in the community such as a gym or specific playing field. The feeling of being out in other spaces added to the growing intrigue the CSL project was creating for us.

An unexpected turn in the CSL project. After a few more weeks of taking the CSL project out into the community and sharing our hula hoops with people, the teacher candidates left for their first practicum placement. They would spend six weeks in an elementary school teaching students under the guidance of an associate teacher. Leading up to their departure, the teacher candidates were all very excited to leave the theoretical aspects

of their time on campus behind. They were excited to get to try real hands on learning on practicum. They were also anxious to meet their associate teachers, their students, and to get to know their school environment. During the time they were away on practicum we were no longer able to meet once a week. I realized then how much I had begun to value our weekly meetings and how much I missed this connection to this group of teacher candidates.

Needless to say, I was excited for our first meeting together when they returned from their practicum. Having completed my own teacher education program, in which I also did practicum placements, I was genuinely interested in hearing about all of their teaching experiences. They were all in different schools and all had varied experiences working with their associate teachers and their students.

During our first CSL meeting back on campus together, I was surprised to hear that they all chose to do the CSL hooping project with the students they were teaching. I could not believe it. They took the skill set they had learned together on campus and applied it, on their own volition, to their practicum. What struck me was that they each did this and that this was not required of them to complete their CSL project and receive their certificates. So instead of hearing about what lessons they prepared for what subjects, and how these went for them, each teacher candidate was explaining to me how they had applied the CSL project to their class.

They were so enthusiastic about how the CSL hooping project was received in their school. They were excited to share how the experience added to their understanding of the power of experiential, hands on learning for their students. They explained how being outside in the playground hula hooping really changed how they perceived their students. They described a sense of seeing the students in a different way. They also shared how happy it made them to share the joy of moving that hula hooping provides.

I left this meeting with my head swirling with ideas. I was amazed at how each teacher candidate articulated how powerful the impact of doing this kind of activity with their students was for them. The CSL experience changed what they had expected to be doing and learning during their practicum. The feeling and energy of this meeting stayed with me as I walked home. Something was beginning to emerge that I could not quite articulate.

Orienting to a research phenomenon. Soon after this meeting with the teacher candidates I found myself waking up from a stress filled nights' sleep remembering one image. Slowly, three letters appear in front of me that spelled 'W-h-y' in bold time's new roman font. The full body sensation of a text - imprinted in my wakeful state – stayed with me as I hurried to leave the house. The feeling of the dream did not dissipate as I walked across the city landscape on my way to campus. The feeling waited patiently. It continued to resonate with me and circle back into my consciousness with each step I took. As I crossed the bridge that separates where I live from where I am currently studying, I sense a tugging feeling that would not wane. I began to ponder the meaning behind this dream, this “why” question that figuratively and literally crossed my mind. The image was not imposing or judgemental. The image did not demand an answer. Rather it was there 'as is' and poignant. It was almost as if my subconscious spoke up. Clearing its' throat as if to say, “You have not considered me; you have not considered the meaning in furthering your studies in education.”

As I reflect on the dream I cannot help but think to my former life as a student in a teacher education program. Memories begin to surface of a time when a sense of 'why', a sense of connection, was notably absent between my campus-based course work and my practicum placement in my local community. My attention shifts to the timing of this dream

and the many activities I am juggling between my current coursework. Volunteering time to mentor teacher candidates in the teacher education program and teaching Indigenous students in a nearby high school. I think back to the meeting and conversations that I just had with the teacher candidates upon their return from their own practicum placements. Why does their description of what it was like to do the CSL hooping project on their practicum seem so significant? The feelings and emotions they use to convey what they experienced during their practicum experiences resonates with me and the feeling of wanting to know more is ever present, like the feeling of this dream.

As I near the university I realize it is no coincidence I am meeting my thesis supervisor later this same day to discuss what the focus of my thesis will be. On this day as I near the university I sensed that I would step out of the flux of productivity and into a space where something meaningful would be discussed. Thus, this sense of “W-h-y” play a significant part the phenomenological process of having a strong orientation to the phenomena of interest (van Manen, 1997). Had I dismissed this dream and its message I would have missed what was standing right in front of me and what would become my phenomena of interest; learning to teach-in-relation.

As the second semester unfolded I did not anticipate what would further emerge as Ella, Emma, Nadia, Carla, and Nadia’s sense of connection to the CSL project grew. What became apparent was that their connection to the CSL hooping project was strong and this was indicative in the way they did not let it end when they completed their 30 hours of service and received their CSL certificates.

What began to emerge from the teacher candidates was a sense that they could continue to incorporate the CSL into their B.Ed. program and beyond. They integrated the CSL hooping project into their PED 3102 course, taught by Professor Ng-A-Fook. This

integration connected them with the First Nations community of Kitigan Zibi, 90 minutes north of Ottawa. They also presented their CSL hooping project to their peers on campus at the Winter Institute, an in-house conference for educators in the Faculty of Education. Along with the continued support of Professor Lloyd, they also put together a daylong workshop for students at a local intermediate school, teaching these students hula hooping skills.

The teacher candidates took the CSL hooping project and made it their own over the course of the year. I knew this was something that needed to be investigated, that something special was happening as the teacher candidates were learning to teach-in-relation.

Chapter 2: Shaping the Research Questions through a Relational Literature Review

In his book, *Research is Ceremony*, Wilson (2008) questions if Indigenous research can include a literature review. While this particular research is not solely based within an Indigenous worldview as Wilson's (2008) book is proposing, as it is embedded both in an Indigenous framework and phenomenology, none the less, this inquiry is being viewed from a relational perspective. Thus, building upon the prologue and continuing to work towards building trusting relationships (Johnson, 2008; Kovach, 2009), can this literature review be done within a relational framework? Wilson (2008) proposes that "by doing the review in a style that is not critical, but builds upon the work of others, it can also form the context for relational accountability" (p.44).

Thus, while looking at what other researchers have done in the field of teacher education, specifically learning to teach, previous ways of viewing learning will be taken into account in this literature review. Building on this, I look to CSL in a broad sense within the university setting to even more specific examples of CSL and teacher education. By moving towards more specific examples that include a phenomenological perspective, this literature review will show the context of which the phenomenon of learning to teach-in-relation resides, or as Wilson (2008) reiterates, "that everything needs to be seen within the context of the relationships it represents" (p. 43). From this literature review, the research questions will also emerge pointing us in the right direction to explore why this CSL project was a powerful teaching tool for the Emma, Ella, Carla, Yvonne and Nadia.

Learning to Teach

Experiential research in the area of learning to teach began to emerge in the mid 1980's (Carter, 1990; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998; Zeichner, 1999). The focus

began to shift from what teacher needs to know in order to teach to wanting to looking at the teacher candidates themselves and their experiences in learning to teach (Carter, 1990). Thus, instead of focusing on what teacher candidates should know and learn, research into learning to teach looks to “illuminate the nature of the process of learning to teach in different settings” (Zeichner, 1999, p.11). In his literature review, Zeichner (1999) emphasizes that the emerging research into the process of learning to teach has shown “how difficult it is to change the tacit beliefs, understandings and worldviews that students bring to teacher education programs” (p.11). This realization, of the challenges B.Ed. programs are faced with, makes one wonder the ways in which B.Ed. programs can help teacher candidates in their process of learning to teach.

Research in the area of learning to teach challenges the simplistic notion of what it means to learn, as it pushes academia to look at learning not just as the acquisition of knowledge (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Even though research into learning to teach has been growing for 30 years, there still resides the vision of teacher education as a linear progression where “the university provides theory, methods, and skills; the schools provide the setting in which that knowledge is practiced” (Wideen, Mayor-Smith, & Moon, 1998, p.167). The implicit theory behind this dynamic resides in the Cartesian, rational model of learning (Davis, 2004). Within this way of envisioning constructs of learning, Davis (2004) explains that from philosophers such as Descartes, thinking and processing thought became equated to mechanistic devices that worked “to illustrate the manner in which logical inferences might be chained together to churn out reliable conclusions” (p.77). The relationship compared the brain to mechanisms such as computers where knowledge could be input and processed only in the mind, by the sole individual.

A mechanistic notion of thinking and learning also influences the way we position students and teachers. The students are viewed as passive recipients, as empty vessels, that can be filled with knowledge from the teacher. This is a critique that Freire (1970) coined as the banking model of education. In this model, the individual student is in a passive relationship with learning in the sense that they are considered and treated as an empty vessel that receives knowledge from the teacher. This is also referred to as the transmission model in education (Britzman, 1991; Korthagan, 2004; Higgins, 2008). Conceptions of learning to teach that reside in this model focuses on the student learning content knowledge rather than emphasizing the relational work involved in teaching and learning to teach (Grossman, Hammerness, & McDonald, 2009). Descartes influenced the notion of teaching as residing in constructs such as explaining and telling, both of which posit learning as residing in the form of information that can be laid out in “clear, unambiguous, straightforward ways...that is most concerned with logical, carefully planned movements through topics” (Davis, 2004, p.78). Richardson (2004) expands this idea to teacher education:

Many students have an understanding of teaching that suggests that the role of the teacher is to place knowledge in the heads of their students. Further, they view teaching from the standpoint of an individual student – that student being themselves. (p. 2)

This quote highlights the perceptions that are tied up in the transmission model, and how this conception of learning places students in a passive relationship to learning. Even when teacher candidates resist this way of thinking they many find it challenging to resist recreating or perpetuating this image of the teacher. In most cases it is what prevails as a method of teaching when the theory teacher candidates learn in their courses does not work when applying in the classroom (Wubbels, 1992).

How did we get here? Why the sender-receiver model that places the student in a passive relationship with their learning? Davis (2004) reminds us, “The modernist assertions—turned—assumptions that humans are rational and radically individuated have been embodied in four centuries of prescriptive technique-driven models of teaching” (p.182). The models of teaching that we have been most influenced by reside in the behaviorist and cognitivist theories of learning. Understanding the long held tradition of where these conceptions of learning come from helps to see why there are inherent challenges within B.Ed. programs.

As a learning theory, the behaviorist perspective posits the student’s “mind as a black box, in the sense that a response to a stimulus can be observed quantitatively, thereby ignoring the effect of thought processes occurring in the mind” (Ally, 2008, p.20). In terms of what we were experiencing together at the beginning of the CSL project, the behaviour of the teacher candidates was indicative of growing up being conditioned to enter a room, sit and wait to be told what to do. As we move up from grade to grade, we are conditioned to the rules of learning, consciously or unconsciously by the teacher (Lloyd, Garcia Bengoechea & Smith, 2010). In the classroom “bodily movement happens when sanctioned by the teacher. She is generally the one who stands and performs ‘thinking’ and it’s expressed by writing on the chalkboard, talking and moving around the room” (Ross, 2004, p.173). Through the tenets of a behaviourist teaching model, the students learn to quiet the moving body as they enter the classroom.

Moving to a cognitivist approach, learning is seen as a mental process that is severed from the subjective person, with the predominant metaphor being that of the mind as a computer (Thompson, 2007). Here, all the processes of learning occur in the mind, through inputting what the teacher is telling, and outputting what you have learned through this

process. The corporeal perceiving body is not considered necessary to learning. The physical, perceiving body must be still in order to learn. Perhaps a moving body is a distraction when one is trying to keep an active mind. Although seemingly different from behaviourism, both approaches are similar as they perpetuate “the Cartesian assumption that the mind is separate in substance and function from the physical body” (Lloyd et al., 2010, p. 192).

Understanding these two approaches helps to understand the reason behind the perceptions, conceptions and behaviours of the teacher candidates and our inability to begin the CSL project.

Inherent challenges in teacher education programs. In her book, ‘Practice makes practice; A critical study of learning to teach’ Deborah Britzman (1991) asks the question ‘what is it like to learn to teach?’ While she takes this question up from an ethnographic perspective, she nonetheless delves into the lived experiences of teacher candidates attempting to ‘learn to teach.’ She writes that teacher candidates are stuck within a dichotomy that posits theory separate from practice. This dichotomy is played out between university-based courses and the practicum placements, and is often termed the theory-practice disconnect (Brouwer & Korthagan, 2005; Eilam & Poyas, 2011; Serebrin, 2004).

The challenge inherent in B.Ed. programs is that teacher candidates place more value in the hands on learning experience (Watson, Crandall, Hueglin, & Eisenman, 2002) found on their practicum placements over their university course work, a place where students perceive learning to happen (Smith & Hodson, 2010). One might question, however, the nature of this learning. Studies show that during this time, on practicum, teacher candidates are bogged down with classroom routines, time management, and behaviour management (Britzman, 1991; Moore, 2003). While theories are introduced to help students make sense and critically question what it is they are learning during campus-based courses, Goodlad

(1991) explains that teacher candidates have little time or space to integrate such learned methods and theories into their classroom praxis. Thus, instead of applying theories they know, they imitate their cooperating teachers and perpetuate the status quo within the school system (Schmidt, 2010) and separate what they are learning on campus from their practicum placement.

Britzman (1991) highlights that there exists an argument surrounding a theory-practice disconnect, however, in her book she challenges this notion and reframes this dichotomy instead as a didactic relation, in which teacher candidates “are shaped as they shape each other in the process of coming to know” (p.2). Much like Britzman (1991), who challenges the didactic arguments within theory and practice, Schramm-Pate (2011) argues that it is impossible to separate the theory and practice within the process of learning to teach. To reshape the didactic argument of the theory-practice disconnect, scholars are beginning to turn towards Indigenous philosophy based on a relational, non-dualistic approach (Thayer-Bacon, 2004; Riley-Taylor, 2002) to education. Such studies are based on questioning how teacher candidates negotiate the relational complexities of learning to teach (Latta & Field, 2005) even when they are placed in a model of education that tends to separate theory and practice. The challenge in teacher education is to shift how teacher candidates conceptualize learning to teach-in-relation, so they begin to understand the importance theory and practice are not separate but work together.

Negotiating identities. Following this idea of what teacher candidates bring with them to their B.Ed. programs, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1996) and Horn, Nolen, Ward, and Campbell (2008) investigated the role of identity in learning to teach. These researchers found that, in both studies, a considerable amount of negotiation had to occur in order for teacher candidates to begin to understand themselves and what learning to teach involved. In

Sumara and Luce-Kapler's (1996) research, they asked teacher candidates, in their general instruction and curriculum course, to respond critically to a written text they had pieced together of various scholars and research pertaining to learning to teach. Their goal was to have the teacher candidates examine, interrupt and transpose their developing identities within the text in order to investigate their identities in learning to teach. What they found was in responding critically to the text they had pieced together; teacher candidates came to see that "learning to teach meant learning about oneself, and, for many, it meant learning how to become someone else" (p.79). Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1996) term this as "(un)becoming a teacher" (p.81) and that in doing this kind of work with their teacher candidates, they were able to make more explicit the cultural myths that are reproduced in the process of learning to teach that often go un-challenged. Finally, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1996) explain that the curriculum they engaged these teacher candidates with disrupted and caused tension by being ambiguous. This ambiguity disrupted commonplace notions of what occurs in learning to teach, and perhaps it is these disruptions, which cause tension, that are necessary in B.Ed. programs.

Horn et al. (2008) followed eight secondary teachers, in a person-centered ethnography, from their B.Ed. program to their eventual practice to understand the role of teacher education in learning to teach. What they found is that a certain level of tension needed in order for the teacher candidates to show the most growth in learning to teach. As they state, "this tension helped the interns develop their pedagogical reasoning while, at the same time honing their ability to adapt and coordinate different practices" (p.71). This study reiterates what Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1996) found in their research that tension and disruption created moments for teacher candidates to examine themselves and their process of learning to teach.

Learning to teach is relational and complex. Research into learning and thus, learning to teach-in-relation, is bringing into view the complexities associated with the ways in which teacher candidates learn (Latta & Field, 2005). Schulz (2005) maintains, that “teaching is not a series of routine, habitual, technical acts to be learning, perfected, and repeated year after year. Rather, teaching is a complex and multifaceted intellectual, creative, decision-making activity” (p.149).

One of the areas surrounding the complexities of learning to teach are the inherent tensions that arise when teacher candidates are faced with looking at and dealing with what they bring to their B.Ed. programs. As Britzman (2007) explains, “our sense of self and our sense of the world is profoundly affected by having to grow up in school” (p.2). Teacher candidates enter their B.Ed. programs with all of their lived histories, yet, they are treated as individuals without a previous history to examine (Britzman, 2007). In his narrative inquiry, Kissling (2014) also recognizes that “what pre-service teachers *have* learned in their lives – and how, when, and where they have learned it –is often positioned to the side of what they *will* learn in a teacher education program” (p.82). What teacher candidates bring with them, their identity, where they are from, and their prior experiences; all play into the relationship they will form with who they become as a teacher.

Kissling (2014) followed three teacher candidates during their B.Ed. program to their first year teaching and focused “on the fundamental relationship between a teacher's living and teaching” (p. 82). He found that “while the course work and field experiences of formal teacher education are important to teacher learning, so, too, are the many lived experiences outside of the classroom” (p.90). With this he includes those lived experiences from outside school experiences that teacher candidates bring with them to their B.Ed. program, “that relationships are essential to the experience of education whether they are recognised or not.

While the relationship matters to the experience, the relationship lies out of sight and is largely taken for granted” (Giles, 2011, p. 80).

This is significant as I examined the lived experiences of Emma, Ella, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia in the CSL hooping project. That is to say, as teacher candidates learn to teach they are coming into a new relationship with themselves and their learning and it is with this that the ‘in-relation’ is seen a way to address the gap in the literature surrounding the complexities of learning to teach.

Community Service Learning: Broad Overview

When surveying the literature pertaining to CSL it quickly becomes clear that a universal, shared definition does not exist (Umana, 2006). For example, the University of Ottawa’s defines CSL as “an academic program and form of experiential learning where students contribute to their community by participating in professor-approved community service placements related to course learning objectives and then produce corresponding reflective assignments.” (“Michaëlle Jean Centre for Global and Community Engagement”, n.d.). While researchers such as Bringle and Hatcher (1995) define service learning as a “credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflect on the service activity as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (p.112).

In her study, Umana (2006) examines how “the pedagogy of service-learning can best contribute to the process of long term social change” (p.6), suggesting there are comparable themes that thread the various definitions of service-learning together. The first is the CSL teaching model is classified under experiential education thereby placing students in ‘real-life’ experiences that connect to their course work. The second theme describes CSL as

providing service to the community while earning an academic credit. The third theme highlights that through defined and structured learning objectives; service-learning promotes partnership and infuses a commitment to civil engagement. Much like the themes Umana (2006) puts forward, Chambers (2009) suggests that institutions and decision makers regard service-learning as a series of approaches that move in and between a philanthropic, social justice, and social transformative continuum. This continuum resists valuing one over another while offering more opportunity to engage in learning and service (Chambers, 2009). This overview of the broad definitions of CSL and the continuum in which it resides is important to understanding the diverse way in which CSL can be taken up by universities.

Engaging in CSL at the university level. Several studies show how service-learning helps shift the beliefs of students in regards to understanding social issues in their community (Hollis, 2002; Levesque-Bristol, Knapp & Fisher, 2010; Mobley, 2007). Two such studies found that the level of engagement in CSL plays a role in the how student's beliefs shift (Hollis, 2002; Mobley, 2007). Hollis (2002) and Mobley (2007) compared two different groups of students engaged in service-learning and found the students who were involved in the structured service learning, meaning course and assignment supported, had a better understanding of course material versus students who participated in community service. Students in the service-learning were better able to master the principles of sociology. Hollis (2002) showed that students in the structured course were better able to distinguish between social issues and personal problems, thus moving away from a 'blame the victim' mentality as opposed to the unstructured group. Yet in contrast, Mobley (2007) found the group of students who spent more hands on time in their CSL project viewed the people they were in contact with as individuals. I am curious to analyze the experience of the teacher candidates in my study to see if indeed they had the opportunity to reflect on their

experience, if having graded course work would have affected their experience. Even though teacher education has a practical component built into their program, the practicum placement, I am interested in the experiential aspect of CSL and the ‘hands-on’ description it offers students as they engage in this pedagogy.

Levesque-Bristol, Knapp and Fisher (2010) found that the type of involvement, the amount of in-class discussion and reflections are important factors that dictate the effectiveness of the service-learning environment. However, they suggest that offering more choices and options creates a sense of ownership and fosters autonomy. They also note that increasing dialogue with the professor and community partners during the participant’s projects increases a sense of relatedness. While this study is quantitative, I am drawn to the discussion surrounding relatedness, that CSL creates a sense of ownership and autonomy. There are few reports within teacher education that connect to the way autonomy, relatedness, and a sense of ownership could help teacher candidates in learning to teach-in-relation. However, Schmidt (2010) found that when pre-service teachers were given opportunities to foster their own learning experiences the sense of autonomy stood out and they were able to better “experience the effects of their own teaching than in their mandated placements” (p. 136). The CSL hooping project was acted as a “self-arranged” (Schmidt, 2010, p. 131) experience for Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia, and as such I forecast creating a sense of autonomy, relatedness and ownership as emergent themes that will arise from the analysis of the experiences of teacher candidates.

vanWynsberghe and Andruske (2007) argue that CSL can foster community engagement and this “offers a space for interaction with a multiplicity of publics, and in doing so; it provides a pathway between the community, students, classroom, and university” (p.371). Their findings also reveal the way CSL promotes information exchange by

facilitating the production of student-created resources. What stood out in this study was that while most students surveyed found the CSL experience positive, one student identified the notion of being forced by the teacher into CSL, and that it would have been a more positive experience had it “been done out of good will” (p.363). While a project such as CSL offers students field experience and community engagement, if it is contextualized as another assignment to be completed for credit it loses meaning. This study is of interest because the act of prescribing CSL defeats the essence of doing the service in the first place. Knowing that this CSL project in my research is not directly connected to the coursework or theory, I continue to wonder if this will affect the way this CSL may shift their perceptions in learning to teach-in-relation.

In a qualitative study, Deeley (2010) focused on whether an increase in the intellectual and personal development of students occurred as a result of service-learning. The results support an increase in both areas, with students experiencing “a holistic dimension of the experiential learning process” (p.47). Meaning, through critical reflection the students were able to develop their emotional and intellectual selves through CSL. Within the model of experiential learning, the students also experienced “the ‘downside’ of service-learning, and its’ unpredictability” (Deeley, 2010, p.48) as they processed the discomfort of confronting their assumptions, values and beliefs. Butin (2010) and Himley (2004) describe this discomfort as a disruptive force that needs to be better reconciled in service-learning. Service-learning open ups a space of uncertainty, or as Himley states “community service is an embodied encounter, noisy...that often does and should agitate us” (p.434). Butin (2010) pulls from the writings of Himley (2004) and reiterates that service learning “provides a space where students are confronted with the ambiguity, noise and disruption of their way of thinking about and engaging in the world” (p.179). Ng, Nicholas,

and Williams (2010) found that in their research, which looked at beliefs and perceptions of 37 pre-service teachers have prior to and after their practicum placements, that they could better learn about themselves by “experiencing slightly risky pedagogies, for example, in pursuing more self-directed learning” (p. 287). I look to this study because perhaps CSL can offer this risky pedagogy within teacher education, giving them the space to examine beliefs and understandings of learning to teach-in-relation.

Deeley (2010) notes the “thorny issue of the unpredictability” (p.50) is relatively absent or omitted from service-learning literature. Within this discussion, Butin (2010) cautions institutions to “avoid an all too easily achieved end goal, such as the closing off of an idea or discussion” (p.180) because “the service-learning offers (if we open ourselves to it) an ambiguous and open-ended situation” (p.181). Entering into spaces of uncertainty and unpredictability are of interest to my research, and by describing the lived experience, the embodied sense, is what one way this phenomenological research study will add to the literature pertaining to learning to teach-in-relation.

CSL in the Context of Teacher Education

What does CSL look like in the context of teacher education programs? In the previous studies we could see some of the benefits of CSL in courses that did not already offer practicum placements. I wonder what does CSL offer a program with a practical component already built in? Donnison and Itter (2010) note that CSL is a relatively new concept to teacher education and more importantly, CSL has “the capacity to help student teachers appreciate the links between their learning and their experience and develop their identity as both student and future teaching professionals” (p.62). What is intriguing, and worth investigating in terms of CSL being adopted by teacher education programs, is the way CSL broadens and adds to the experiences of teacher candidates. Butin (2010) explains that

service-learning is “a strategy of disturbances...it challenges and decenters our static and singular notions of teaching, learning, and research by moving against the grain of traditional practice in higher education: that is, it is a deeply engaging, local, and impactful practice” (p. 19). In the context of teacher education, service learning could be better thought of as “a vehicle that provides teacher candidates with an opportunity to construct meaning while engaging in a service activity that emerges from and informs classroom context” (Hudson-Baker & Murray, 2011, p.114). Also, Swick (2001) adds that, “perhaps the most challenging facet of becoming a teacher involves understanding and acting on the power one has to influence the lives of others. Learning to care transforms teachers, and service-learning promotes that” (p. 261).

In a two-year qualitative study, Abourezk and Patterson (2003) followed 52 Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) pre-service teachers in a service-learning project that looked to increase awareness about physical activity and nutrition in low income neighborhoods. The investigation looked at the perceptions of the usefulness of service-learning in teacher education. They found that by having the opportunity to collaborate, design and implement workshops on fitness and nutrition, the pre-service teachers were able to experience “an environment whereby the students actively practiced their teaching, leadership, and communication skills thus bridging the gap between theory and practice” (Abourezk & Patterson, 2003, p. 125). They note that by creating an environment where collaboration is emphasized, pre-service teachers “move from a passive receptor of information to an active, contributing member of a larger community” (Abourezk & Patterson, 2003, p.124). Similarly, in a service-learning course designed to give teacher candidates and students they tutor a mutually beneficial experience, Smagorinsky (2011) found that “the innovative component of this project was a direct result of the cultural

exchange and the opportunities for the teacher candidates to take charge over their own learning” (p. 73). Boyle-Baise (2005), in their case study on multicultural service learning and teacher candidates’ perceptions of diversity, found that in order for teacher candidates to invest in service-learning, they must be part of the development of the project as well, and not just be “inserted into them” (p.454). In these examples, teacher candidates had control and thus a sense of autonomy within their CSL projects. Teacher candidates were placed at the center of their learning in these examples and perhaps this is what CSL offers in comparison to a practicum placement. Perhaps this is the ‘real hands on’ that teacher candidates hope they will find in their practicum placements but often find they instead must follow an existing set of rules, routines and practices that often differ from what they are learning on campus (Britzman, 1991).

Seeing teacher-student relationships differently. In the teacher education context, research indicates that participating in CSL helps shift the perception teacher candidates hold in regards to the traditional teacher-student relationship (Coffey, 2010; Connor, 2010). Coffey’s (2010) findings indicate pre-service teachers were engaged in critical pedagogy. The central tenet of critical pedagogy is that “teachers can be learners and learners can be teachers (Coffey, 2010, p.340). Similarly, Connor (2010) found that CSL experience helped teacher candidates “to learn *about* as well as *from* students and communities” (p. 1176). The views of the teacher candidates shifted as a result of working with students. In their study, Buchanan, Baldwin, and Rudisill (2002) purposefully emphasized the relationship between teacher candidates and the students they tutored in their CSL project by calling them “partners in learning” throughout the project. Understanding the role of cultivating reciprocal relationships between teacher and student in the learning context is important as learning is a relational activity but is approached from an instrumental, transmission model point of view

(Stengel, 2004). The studies that honed in on a shift in relationships between teacher and student are of interest to me, as these show an adjustment in the way teacher candidates are identifying with themselves as well as the students they are working with in their CSL project. While my interest is in relationality and the way teacher candidates conceptualize their learning in relation to CSL, these studies highlight the important shift teacher candidates experience because of CSL.

I wonder at this point, in terms of what makes a CSL behave differently than a practicum placement in terms of allowing this kind of relationship to be experienced? Why is there a space within CSL that allows for the feeling that “they taught me” (Coffey, 2010, p.335) to emerge, and why is this more difficult for teacher candidates to experience within their practicum placements? One way to understand this could be explained by Riley-Taylor (2002), who writes “a teacher walks a space between curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived-experience, the latter being a poetic, phenomenological, and hermeneutic discourse in which life is embodied in the very stories and languages people speak and live” (pp.136-137). Perhaps CSL offers a space where teacher candidates can let go of a feeling of teaching a curriculum-as-planned. Perhaps teacher candidates can reside in a space of curriculum-as-lived-experience, thus more fully experience an embodied sense of learning to teach-in-relation. By residing in a space that opens up to the stories of their students, for example, perhaps teacher candidates can get to a place where they identify relationally with their students, and can see, sense, and experience reciprocal relationships more fully. Swick (2001) points out that “service-learning in teacher education can strengthen the entire community of learners by promoting mutually rewarding learning relationships among teacher educators, education students, and the children they serve” (Swick, 2001, p.261).

Working with diversity and the unknown. Can a CSL project help teacher candidates delve into the work needed to deal with their conceptions of teacher education, and learning to teach-in-relation? In a three-year study Ball and Gelata (2005) learned there were significant unintended outcomes that arose for teacher candidates as they engaged in service-learning. One lesson, as noted by a professor during his final report, was that teacher candidates began to “reconceptualize their understandings of the work of teaching” (p.12). In this service-learning course, the teacher candidates were working with a diverse population of students, Ball and Gelata (2005) noted that “teacher candidates are learning about diversity from interactions with the unknown (but not the unknowable)” (p.13). What stands out in Ball and Gelata’s (2005) research is this sense of not knowing. Many studies look at how CSL helps teacher candidates have a deeper understanding of populations of students who are diverse from them (Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill, 2007; Domangue & Carson, 2008; Wade, 1997).

Klappa (2010) researched the phenomena of ‘not-knowing’ in an International Service-Learning (ISL) project looking at the experience of physical therapists giving treatment abroad. While her participants were not teacher candidates, the concept of ‘not-knowing’ is relevant here because Klappa (2010) investigated it from a phenomenological perspective and found “moments of not-knowing may actually provide a rich learning opportunity, one in which, despite uncertainty, people gain a sense of knowing or confidence in themselves” (p.27). Thus, this feeling of not knowing is also imbedded in the way the CSL project pushes the teacher candidates to enter uncertain and unpredictable pedagogy, the unknown, as they work with students with diverse backgrounds from themselves.

In learning to teach-in-relation, dealing with notions of unpredictability (Deeley, 2010), not knowing (Klappa, 2010), and perhaps what is even considered a ‘risky’ pedagogy

(Ng, Nicholas, & Williams 2010), I wonder if Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia indeed confront the unknown? These concepts are intriguing because perhaps what it being suggested is that teacher candidates are not only confronting their students, the unknown, but also a different version of what they thought learning to teach-in-relation would be like. Or perhaps what themselves as teachers would be like. This could tie into the way teacher candidates confront their learning histories and preconceptions, beliefs and understandings of learning to teach-in-relation as well.

Cajete (1994) explains that in an Indigenous worldview education is viewed as a relational orientation that it is “an art of process, participation, and making connections” (p.24). In this literature review, I include a section on teacher candidates working with Indigenous communities because of the involvement Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia had with a First Nations community as they engaged their CSL hooping project as it relates to the process of understanding differing worldviews (Baldwin, Buchanan, and Rudisill, 2007).

In her dissertation, Desrochers (2006) examines how service-learning can shift the identities of teacher candidates who work with a population of students that differ from their own background. Her study is grounded in “a belief that learning about diversity is a relational process” (p.64). Through reflection and retelling of personal narratives, one student in this study came to understand how the negative stories she had internalized about Aboriginal people affected her, that she had been “living beside Aboriginal people, constructing stories based on outsider interpretation” (p.114). The shift this teacher candidate experienced happened because of direct experiences working with an Aboriginal community that made her confront her own biases. This “shows the strength service-learning can have on pre-service teachers” (Mitton-Kukner, Nelson, and Desrochers, 2010) to transform their

perceptions of the way they are as teachers, thus enhancing their experience in learning to teach-in-relation.

Similarly, Ng-A-Fook (2011) created a partnership between the university CSL program and his Schooling and Society course in the Faculty of Education. Ng-A-Fook suggests that “engaging a social action curriculum as an aesthetic form of narrative métissage provides a generative opportunity for students and Indigenous communities to work through their curricular and pedagogical encounters with the remnants of colonial historic violence” (p.12). Besides Desrochers and Ng-A-Fook, there are few studies looking at the experiences of teacher candidates working with First Nation people in CSL projects. Therefore, the research project that I wish to highlight will contribute to and lessen this gap in the literature.

CSL and phenomenology. CSL projects have the potential to transform perspectives on what it means to teach (Butin, 2010; Swick, 2001), yet there are few, if any, experiential and phenomenological accounts that detail ‘what it is like’ to experience learning to teach-in-relation in the context of a CSL project. In one rare case, Donahue, Bower, and Rosenberg (2003) used phenomenology to investigate the lived experiences of how teacher candidates learned with and from high school students. Their goal was to “shed light on how teacher educators might help pre-service teachers experience and value reciprocal service learning between individuals in a blurred giving-receiving relationship” (p. 18). The results of their study are interesting as they indicate that teacher candidates were able to see the traditional hierarchical relationship designated between student and teacher break down, and in its wake, open the space for a reciprocal relationship to form. Phenomenology offered this study a way to “explore what learning from service means for those involved” (Donahue, Bower,

& Rosenberg, 2003, p.18) by not just looking at the outcomes but by looking at the lived experiences of teacher candidates and students.

Another study investigated how CSL might help teacher candidates develop emotional intelligence, combined with a reflective practice. Byrne (2009) looked at the experiences of 12 teacher candidates as they engaged with local youth at a boys and girls club. Byrne (2009) argues that “becoming a teacher is a learning process that may need to include a focus not only on teaching strategies but also personal awareness and development of an individual’s emotional intelligence” (p. 2). The results, garnered from thematic analysis of interviews and reflective writings, showed an increase in empathy and patience in teacher candidates. The teacher candidates in this study were involved in a service-learning project that was not connected to a specific course in their teacher education program, much like the CSL hooping project. Yet like Emma, Ella, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia, the teacher candidates in this study connected what they learned through service-learning with learning to teach. Byrne (2009) notes that teacher candidates “described some alterations in their perceptions regarding their participation in the service-learning experiences” (p.96). By not being in a traditional classroom setting, the teacher candidates had the opportunity to let go of their conceptions of teacher as authority. With this letting go, the teacher candidates began to realize the importance of building connections, i.e. relationships, with the youth they are working with (Byrne, 2009). Hence, the way learning to teach within a CSL project is felt more in terms of learning to teach-in-relation.

Wilkinson (2011) studied the lived experience of six physical education teacher educators (PETE) students who participated in a 10-week service-learning project for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The service-learning project was highly structured in that the course required them to plan eight two-hour lesson plans for

the youth as well as attend debrief sessions with nurses and psychiatrists who worked with the youth along with the parents. Wilkinson (2011) found that the PETE students began applying what they were learning in their service-learning project, to their current teaching jobs. They were also beginning to "reframe their experiences and contribute to a greater understanding of the complexities of teaching" (p.104). The PETE students also noted that before beginning their service-learning, they were concerned with behaviour management as they worked with the students with ADHD. However, they soon began to let go of their assumptions surrounding students with ADHD, as they worked with them, and as an added benefit "as their preconceptions decreased, their confidence increased" (p.105).

Even though both Byrne (2009) and Wilkinson (2011) used phenomenology as their research methodology, both lacked an integrated approach to looking at the lived experiences of teacher candidates from a phenomenological perspective. Finding studies that included phenomenology, service-learning and teacher education was challenging. While there was an emphasis on looking at the lived experiences of the PETE students (Wilkinson, 2011), and an identified phenomena connected to service-learning and reflection (Byrne, 2009), there was a lack of phenomenological perspective, meaning, the way the teacher candidates experiences were described did not include corporeality, temporality, spatiality, or relationality (van Manen, 1997).

What emerges from this literature review are significant gaps in research connected to learning to teach, CSL, teacher education from a phenomenological perspective. Even when a phenomenological study is undertaken, a phenomenological perspective surrounding learning to teach and CSL is lacking. Phenomenological studies are an important contribution to the literature as they are inherently pedagogical (van Manen, 1997). A phenomenological account offers, in rich detail, what it is like to experience a particular

phenomenon. As such, the knowledge that emerges relates more to enhancing one's practice, in this case, the practice of teaching. The anticipated outcome of this study in relation to what exists in the literature, is that it will provide a detailed example that may inspire other teacher educators to offer CSL in ways that are transformative, specifically what it means to teach in a way that is embodied (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1945; Ross, 2004) and relational (Cajete, 1994).

The Research Questions

Based on the literature review, I want to know 'what it is like' to learn to teach from a relational perspective. If learning cannot be reduced to a linear process but should be understood as an "ongoing structural dance" (Davis, Sumara, & Kieren, 1996, p.153), through this phenomenological study the research questions will tap into what CSL project offers teacher candidates in terms of the process and conceptualization of what it means to learn to teach-in-relation. Thayer-Bacon (2004) writes that "relations are transactional in that we affect each other, dynamically and functionally, and each is changed as a result" (p. 76). Hence, instead of only looking at the phenomenon of learning to teach, the addition of '-in-relation' has been added to recognize this relational aspect within this research. Also, in order to understand the phenomenon more completely, the perceptions that emerge from being involved in a CSL hooping project will be investigated. Specifically, I question:

- 1) What is it like to experience the phenomenon of 'learning to teach-in-relation'?
- 2) What perceptions of 'learning to teach-in-relation' emerge as a result of experiencing a co-c/re(l)ational community service learning?

The two research questions continually ask 'what is it like' instead of a 'how to'. In phenomenology, a question is less interested in the "factual status of particular instances"

(van Manen, 1997, p.10) and more interested in “the meaning and significance of certain phenomena” (van Manen, 1997, p.23).

The idea that learning to teach-in-relation resists the linear, does experiencing a CSL project bring teacher candidates closer to the complexities and the relational component of learning to teach-in-relation? A co-c/re(l)ational experience takes into account the transformative and disruptive moments that occur in learning, expressed here by the backslash. At the same time, the backslash does not sever the ties nor disconnect completely. Instead, by adding the ‘l’ in brackets denotes the relational and connectivity also inherent in CSL and thus learning to teach-in-relation.

And finally, van Manen (1997) states that,

to truly question something is to interrogate something from the heart of our existence, from the center of our being. Even minor phenomenological research projects require that we not simply raise a question and possibly soon drop it again, but rather that we “live” this question, that we “become” this question. (p.43)

I have had to reflect on the ways in which I live this research question, or wonder if in fact I do live and have become this research question. To say I participated in the lived experience of engaging in a CSL hooping project is not enough. Instead, I think to the sense of community, the sense of belonging, and thus the relationships created, that has resulted from the CSL hooping project and studying it. Once the CSL hooping project was over, did I continue to live and become the research question? The answer is yes. Interrogating this research question from the center of my being and from my heart (van Manen, 1997) feels like a deeply personal and powerful place that before I connected my dreams to this research, I was not sure if I was indeed living my research question. Yet, what my dreams have shown me is that I have always and will always search for connection. Relationships are important

in creating community and feeling like I belong to a community. This is where my center is. This is the way I live my research question and where my heart can be found.

Chapter 3: A Methodological Approach: Intertwining Research Circles

I came upon this research subject, *investigating the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation through the lived experiences of teacher candidates engaged in a CSL project*, in a seemingly indirect and meandering way. In this section, I will describe my methodological approaches by essentially intertwining two research circles. To study in a phenomenological sense is to study the essence of something (van Manen, 1997). I intend to uncover the essence of learning to teach-in-relation in the context of a CSL project with the help of a relational and embodied framework, within a teacher education program. In doing so, I will “uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experiences” (van Manen, 1997, p.10).

A Relational, Embodied Framework

Putting ideas in a circle or wheel indicates that they are interrelated and that each blends into the next. It also implies that the ideas flow from one to the next in a cyclical fashion. (Wilson, 2008, p.70)

Sitting and pondering the shape this research needs to take, the visceral memory of seeing the circle of people comes back to me. The image of the circle of people dominates my memory, and it occurs to me that they represent the relational and embodied framework I have been searching for. I thus, turn towards an Indigenous research framework that maintains an interconnected and relational perspective to help digest this study and I realized this perspective lies within the philosophical underpinnings of the medicine wheel (Graveline, 1998; Lavallée, 2009). As Wilson (2008) cautions against a “dogmatic approach to the understanding of the modern medicine wheel” (p.70) in that there are many interpretations and not one is better than another. Thus, as I explain this theoretic framework, I do not want to put forward my interpretation as superior either.

Incorporating the medicine wheel into this research is an integral way to see learning to teach from the relational perspective that is missing from the literature pertaining to learning to teach in general. In order to better understand the medicine wheel, J. Bopp, M. Bopp, Brown, and Lee (1984) describe how the medicine wheel may be used as a way to conceptualize and understand the world:

There are many different ways that this basic concept is expressed: the four grandfathers, the four winds, the four cardinal directions, and many other relationships that can be expressed in sets of four. Just like a mirror can be used to see things not normally visible to us (e.g. behind us or around a corner), the medicine wheel can be used to help us see or understand things we can't quite see or understand because they are ideas and not physical objects. (p.9)

Thus, the circular framework of the medicine wheel expresses the interrelatedness between the parts that make up the whole (Little Bear, 2000; Haig-Brown, 2010; Wilson, 2008), and is a powerful tool used to convey the "holistic character of aboriginal knowledge and experience. The circle, representing the circle of life, contains all experience" (Castellano, 2000, p.30). The cyclical nature of the medicine wheel, has no beginning and no end (Archibald, 2008; Graveline, 1998).

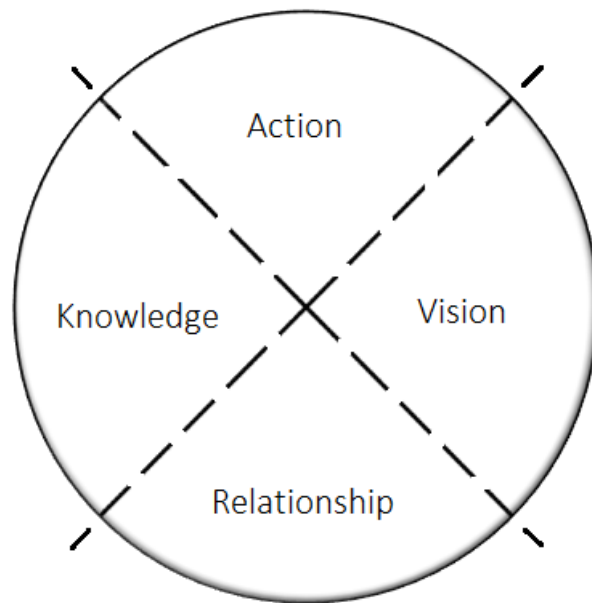


Figure 1 – The Medicine Wheel (with four components outlining the thematic structure).

Incorporating the theoretical underpinnings of the medicine wheel within this research project will support the investigation of the phenomenon (Lavallée, 2009) of learning to teach-in-relation because it does not separate experience into compartments but looks at the relationships between the parts that make up the whole. The teachings from the medicine wheel offer an alternative lens with which to view the current state of education. The circular shape juxtaposes the Cartesian, linear model of education (Bingham, 2004). The circular shape challenges what Davis (2004) describes as teaching being seen “mainly a matter of explanation - of flattening things out” (p.183), instead of seeing the multitude of connections that make learning complex. A conceptual framework based on Indigenous teachings of the medicine wheel is part of an Indigenous research framework (Kovach, 2009). This framework gives the emergent themes that reveal themselves in this study a balanced and intricate way of being seen.

In her book, *Circle works*, Graveline (1998) uses the medicine wheel as a holistic teaching tool, a Model-in-use, to “challenge the forms of Western education that currently

privilege the objective/rationale/linear approach to knowing” (p.17). Incorporating the medicine wheel within this phenomenological study, will allow me to view learning from an Indigenous perspective, honouring this way of knowing, which is “sacred and holistic, as well as experiential, purposeful, relational, and a lifelong responsibility” (Battiste & Youngblood, 2009, p. 5).

A Phenomenological Approach to Learning to Teach-in-Relation

Phenomenological researchers generally agree that our central concern is to return to embodied, experiential meanings. We aim for fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived. (Finlay, 2012)

Merleau-Ponty (1962/1945) explains that “phenomenology is the study of essences” (vii). From a phenomenological approach, “an essence could be understood as a structure of essential meanings that explicates a phenomenon of interest” (Dahlberg, p.11, 2006).

Phenomenology aims to illuminate the essence of everyday phenomena which in the context of this research study is ‘learning to teach-in-relation’. Throughout this research, the written descriptions show the particular aspects of the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation which carry a sense of the universal; hence the essences of this phenomenon (Dahlberg, 2006) will be revealed.

In phenomenology, van Manen (1997) reminds us that relationality is a concept described as “the lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them” (p.104). In terms of the CSL hooping project, the relational aspect of phenomenology allowed for the intersubjective space experienced by the researcher, participants, and their surroundings to be seen. The ‘in-relation’ component of the phenomena in this research resides in the way relationality is understood in phenomenology. The teacher candidates experienced relational encounters through the CSL hooping project

and these aspects of 'being-in' relation that were co-created (Finlay, 2009). This aspect also tied to the 'in-relation' that is found within the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation.

Laverty (2003) writes that minor, taken for granted aspects of our everyday life are what phenomenology attempts to illuminate. In a very comprehensive program such as teacher education, shedding light on learning to teach-in-relation from a phenomenological perspective is important to the development of teacher candidates. Phenomenology embodies many of the qualities found in the philosophical underpinnings of the medicine wheel. The most prominent connection being the holistic aspect the medicine wheel embodies. A phenomenological approach allows the phenomena, learning to teach-in-relation, to be investigated with an "openness and awe...the attitude fundamental to this method" (Finlay, 2003, p.110).

As I investigated the lived experiences of the teacher candidates, an understanding of perception from a phenomenological perspective needs to be made explicit. From a phenomenological perspective, perception is an immediate sensorial experience that we have with the world. This sensorial experience involves all the aspects of a sensing body, highlighting "the way things first arise in our direct, sensorial experience" (Abrams, 1996, p.35). I turn to phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (1962/1945) to help guide me as I look at perception from a phenomenological perspective. He places the body central to our consciousness, and writes, "we can only think the world because we have already experienced it; it is through this experience that we have the idea of being" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1945, p.17). Asking what our perception of learning to teach-in-relation encompasses does not mean what we think of this phenomenon, but how we perceive with our whole selves. This is what Merleau-Ponty (1962/1945) describes as our self-in-relation with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1945). As Merleau-Ponty suggests, it is our sensing self that

experiences the world first, and we are able to think about it secondly. Gallagher (2010) explains Merleau-Ponty “is concerned with showing that an explication of the facticity of the body, the medium that we are, and that puts us in-the-world, is central for understanding human existence” (p. 183). In a phenomenological sense, understanding what puts us in the world and thus ‘in-relation’ brings out the essence of learning to teach-in-relation. Being ‘in-relation’ includes our whole sensing self, our seeing, tasting, hearing, smelling and touching selves. All of these senses are what allow us to understand and perceive the world.

The significance of delving into this sensing self, and the way we experience the world, is particularly important to teacher candidates that are in the midst of their B.Ed. program. As Abrams (1996) explains, perception is “the ongoing interchange between my body and the entities that surround it. A sort of silent conversation that I carry on with things, a continuous dialogue that unfolds far below my verbal awareness – and often, even, independent of my verbal awareness” (p.52). I will utilize this understanding of phenomenology as I analyze and investigate the lived experiences of the teacher candidates. Looking to what they are saying but also what they are not saying during our interactions. Margonis (2004) describes how “Merleau-Ponty portrays a world of human activity in which human bodies relate to one another at a level of which we are not consciously aware” (p.46). Generally, we think of perception as a cognitive thinking about what is perceived in the world. This is because our conception of learning is tied to the assumption that the mind is disconnected from the body. We conceptualize that learning occurs only above the neck (Ross, 2004). This disconnect is based on what is described as ‘Cartesian dualism’ (Stolz, 2013). Philosophers in phenomenology suggest the need to reverse the notions connected to Cartesian dualism, and see there are no disconnects between mind and body (Grumet, 2004).

Our perception, from a phenomenological standpoint, is the only way in which we are situated in the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1945).

The flesh of the world. A phenomenological perspective of our engagement with the world positions us as always ‘being-in’ direct contact with our surroundings. To illustrate what this means, Merleau-Ponty (1968/1948) uses an example of one of our hands touching the other. One hand is the object, under the pressure of the other, making it the subject. However, this relationship does not stay as such and it is possible to reverse the pressure of the touching, making the hand that was touching the one being touched (Evans, 2008). This concept, of one hand touching the other, is the way Merleau-Ponty explains the folding over of the ‘flesh’ of the world. Evan (2008) further describes Merleau-Ponty’s concept as, “our bodies and the world are two aspects of a single reality: ‘flesh’” (p.187). Merleau-Ponty began using the term ‘flesh’ to explain our connection to everything in world we are engaged with, and also the way we are distinct and separate from them as well. The elemental concept of flesh is what affords Merleau-Ponty to make this interconnection:

The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term “element,” in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a general thing, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being. The flesh in this sense [is] an “element” of Being. (1968/1948, p.139)

Also, insofar as the flesh of the world connects everything, the concept of essences in phenomenology can be further understood as belonging “to the in-between world, that “single fabric” that connects us with everything else in the world, with other

subjects or objects. Essences belong to the ‘flesh of the world’” (Dahlberg, 2006, p.12).

To expand the idea of the ‘flesh’ further, Merleau-Ponty utilizes the example of one hand touching the other to explain there is reversibility in the touched and touching. This reversibility denotes the way in which “our embodied subjectivity is never located purely in either our tangibility or in our touching, but is located in the intertwining of these two aspects, and in an awareness that is predicated on our body’s reversible differentiation with itself” (Reynolds, 2004, p.13). This reversibility is also referred to as an intertwining, where the touch and the touched come close to one another but maintain their separate entity. Thus, reversing the sensation and intertwining with each other (Merleau-Ponty, 1968/1948). The notion of reversibility will be used to delve into the ways the CSL hooping project helped to awaken this sensuous way of perceiving the world (Abrams, 2010).

As an added layer to the way phenomenology conceptualizes perception, an Indigenous perspective surrounding perception is also considered integral to the way we experience the world. Indigenous scholar Fyre Jean Graveline (1998) describes the way perception plays a part in our learning as “the more of our senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch- that we use in learning/teaching something, the more likely we are to understand and remember it” (p.77). Indigenous knowledge is holistic (Battiste, 2002) and learning acknowledges the whole self, the mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and with this all of our senses. For this reason, the lessons found within the medicine wheel are powerful for looking at the state of education today, especially teacher education programs. Battiste (2011) also an Indigenous academic, reminds us that “the medicine wheel illustrates symbolically that all things are interconnected and related, spiritual, complex, and powerful” (p. xxii). Perhaps this is why I am drawn to the medicine wheel to view this research, as the

circular symbolism does not discount the relational, spiritual, or complex aspects of teaching or being in the world (Ermine, 1995).

The challenge with phenomenological perception is that it asks us to remember, to come back to the essence of being in the world (Heidegger, 1962). In this study, understanding perception from a phenomenological and Indigenous perspective is integral as we delve into the lived experiences of the teacher candidates. Understanding that perception is the whole self and that there is no separation between mind and body will be the way the ‘self’ will be referred to as the rest of the lived experiences of the teacher candidates are investigated within the CSL project.

Research Activities: A Winding, Spiralling Road Map

The process of a phenomenological hermeneutic inquiry has been described as circular understanding reached through dialogue and co-creation that has no set procedure, allowing for a moving back and forth between parts and the whole (Heidegger, 1962). van Manen (1997) suggests six research activities to use as an interactive road map, and not a chronologic or mechanistic set of procedures. Here, I describe the ways in which I engage in these six research activities. This set of activities allowed me to see emergent themes and to analyze the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation. Paired with the hermeneutic circle, the medicine wheel helped me as a researcher to further conceptualize the way in which each of van Manen’s six research steps worked together.

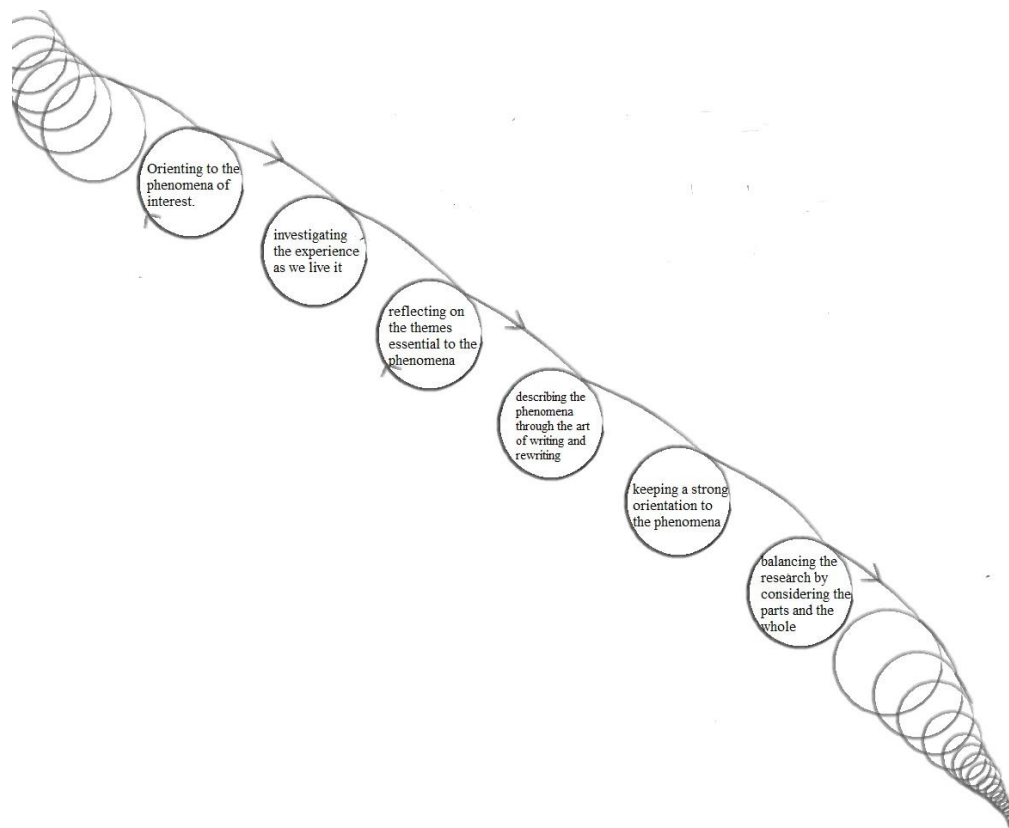


Figure 2 – Research Activities. This is the concept of the medicine wheel stretched apart to show each activity spiralling in time. This image, of circling back and moving in between the research steps, helped me work within the six research activities throughout this research process.

Orienting to the phenomena. van Manen’s (1997) first research activity advises that one turns toward a phenomenon that has serious significance to the researcher, and continuously commits us to the world. From the moment this thesis began I have been showing the ways in which I turn to the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation and why. Through journaling and writing, I have spent significant time reflecting on my experiences as a teacher candidate as well as my lived experience in the present as a Master’s student and high school teacher. These reflections have reminded me of my commitment to

understanding what it means to be a teacher. Yet, doing this research has also pushed me to re-orient to the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation from a new perspective that is bolstered by the experience of also participating in the CSL hooping project with Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia. I am inspired by what van Manen (1997) explains,

phenomenological research does not start or proceed in a disembodied fashion. It is always a project of someone: a real person, who, in the context of particular individual, social and historical life circumstances, sets out to make sense of a certain aspect of human existence. (p.31)

Seeing the process of learning to teach-in-relation from a phenomenological perspective has shown me an embodied sense of researching lived experience, I have come to have a deeper understanding of learning which has recommitted me to the world as well.

Collecting sources of information. The second research activity that van Manen (1997) outlines is closely linked to the first, wherein the researcher investigates the experience as he/she lives it. In phenomenology the concept of gathering ‘data’ is not used, as it is tied too closely to a quantitative positivistic stance. Instead, a human science perspective discusses “gathering” or “collecting” to describe the journal entries, interviews transcripts, and lived-experiential material forms (van Manen, 1997). In this section, I will outline the sources of information that were collected in order to study the lived-experiences of the teacher candidates. In brief, these sources were: my notes, journal entries and observations; the reflections of the teacher candidates through course work; individual interviews, and a group interview.

Using personal experience as a starting point. In order to use my own personal experience as a starting point, I began to journal my experiences with Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia during our weekly meetings. I tried not to explain away what I was

feeling, but instead tried to produce lived experiences that would become material to be later worked on (van Manen, 1997). In writing out my own experiences, aspects of my own experiences in school surfaced and I was able to later use these writings as material in my analysis. I began to see how these writings are significant, as van Manen (1997) explains, “The phenomenologist knows that one’s own experiences are also the possible experiences of others” (p.54).

Interviewing as Ceremony. Near the end of the school year, right before the teacher candidates graduated from their B.Ed. programs, we were all invited to Professor Lloyd’s home for a potluck. Opening up her home to us, the relational connection being harnessed throughout the year was maintained. Because of this, the location facilitated an open and shared sense of being (Packer-Muti, 2010). What could be called a focus group interview, felt instead like a gathering between people to discuss important significant moments within learning to teach-in-relation. Our time together and also the relationships we had formed as a group were celebrated and honoured, what Wilson (2008) describes as maintain a strong relational connection in research.

We spent the better part of three hours together, eating, discussing, and even hula hooping in Professor Lloyd’s front yard. We entered into a “conversational relation” (van Manen, 1997, p.66) that allowed a deeper connection to each other and to the phenomenon of learning to teach-in-relation. A feeling of sharing and listening permeated our conversation. Even with the prepared set of questions (see Appendix B) I brought to the participants, there was a sense of openness within our dialogue. Wilson (2008) describes this subjective relationship found within his own research, and he explains, “As I was listening I was learning, and as I was learning I was sharing” (p. 131). This method of interviewing went beyond the participant providing answers to questions; it became an interaction between the

teacher candidates and me which includes them in the process of interpretation and reflexivity (Fernsqvist, 2010).

Other sources of information. Thinking back to the various ways in which material was collected for this research project, what comes to mind is once again the circular, related and interconnectedness found within the framework of the medicine wheel. Along with the group interview I was able to facilitate, I incorporated the individual interviews Professor Lloyd conducted for her own research. I see all the various methods employed to gain insight into the phenomenon of learning to teach-in-relation as working together.

Phenomenological reflection: ‘seeing’ meaning. The third guideline, reflecting on essential themes which characterize the phenomenon, requires us to bring into view the things that are obscure (van Manen, 1997). In phenomenology, van Manen (1997) explains that “grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of ‘seeing’ meaning” (p.86). That being said, van Manen describes this as a “selective or highlighted approach” (p.93). Wherein, once I had transcribed the recorded interview, I read the text several times and look for statements that seem to be particularly revealing and insightful about the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation. The themes that emerged from their words did not reveal themselves right away. I needed to read and re-read the transcripts many times in order to digest their perspectives of the CSL hooping project. I realized I was hearing their side in a new and different way, different from the way I experienced the CSL hooping project myself. In these first readings I worked hard at suspending my own opinions and perspective.

I used the theme structure from the medicine wheel (see figure 1) to organize what stood out and what I wanted to work with to create my phenomenological text. Bruyere (2007) conceptualizes the learning process in the medicine wheel as having four components,

vision, time, knowledge, and action. He explains it is through four components that make up the wisdom-making process. I incorporated this theme structure to help me see what the teacher candidates were saying, with one change, time being conceptualized as relationship. While there is “no one universal version of the wheel” (Calliou, 1995, p.50), symbolically its teachings begin in the East with the rising sun, and denotes the spiritual characteristic of our being.

Vision. In the model I am using, vision is located in the East which represents transformation, beginnings, spring, and enlightenment (Calliou, 1995). Vision is an important theme in the context of learning to teach-in-relation because it is at this stage, as Bruyere (2007) writes, “we recognize a learning opportunity and make the choice to begin” (p.264). Specifically, in this research, the teacher candidates recognized a learning opportunity when they signed up for the CSL project. Yet over and over again as we move to each significant moment, we see new learning opportunities arise with each experience. In this theme, vision is synonymous with the perceptions the teacher candidates have surrounding their experiences in the CSL hooping project.

Relationship. Moving clockwise around the wheel, relationship resides in the Southern quadrant which represents the emotional aspect of our being. In this model, ‘relationship’ considers the relationships the teacher candidates continually negotiate between their student identity and their teacher identity. This negotiation is a process of becoming, one that pushes back against a didactic argument between student and teacher identities, but posits both are ‘in-relation’ to learning. The theme considers the relationships between their peers, professors, associate teachers and the students they work with. Relationship is an all-encompassing theme because relationships are woven throughout all aspects of the other themes. Everything is a relationship. Wilson (2008) further explains that,

“rather than viewing ourselves as being *in* relationship with other people or things, we *are* the relationships what we hold and are part of” (Wilson, 2008, p.80). Pulling and teasing out the themes within this section by no means disregard this aspect. I placed much of what they were saying about how they felt, the way they bonded with each other, and the relationships they described, in this theme.

Knowledge. The Western quadrant signifies the intellectual self, which is described as ‘knowledge’ in this context. Bruyere conceptualizes knowledge as “the development of awareness, skills, and understanding within ourselves individually and collectively” (p. 264). Their conceptions of knowledge and learning are looked at through this lens. The way knowledge might reshape their perceptions of the teacher candidates, about learning to teach-in-relation, is examined in this framework.

Action. To complete the circle, the Northern quadrant signifies the physical aspect of our being, and is represented by ‘action’ in this model. In terms of this research project, the teacher candidates took actions within the CSL project but more importantly, it was here that they began to embody lessons from the CSL project that shifted their perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation. Action is very much a cumulative aspect within the wheel, the theme that shows the results of the other three components and how this moves us forward into the next significant moment, the next learning experience (Bruyere, 2007).

I decided, in order to see the relationships between the themes and what the teacher candidates were saying, to physically draw a large medicine wheel on poster paper and place it on my office wall. I then cut out significant phrases and sentiments that I had highlighted in the transcripts and placed them on the wheel, within the four sections, where I thought they might fit. I then had a large visual with which to work. This step allowed me to see, in a connected way, the themes emerging and the ever connectedness between them. This step in

my analysis of the group interview helped me see and to create a more cohesive text to work with.

The work of suspending. In phenomenology, the concept of phenomenological reduction, or bracketing, is seen as “an attempt to hold prior knowledge or belief about the phenomena under study in suspension” (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 409). There lacks a uniform definition of the philosophical concept behind bracketing (Geary, 2004). This makes it a somewhat controversial and debated concept in phenomenology (LeVasseur, 2003).

van Manen (1997) writes that “to come to an understanding of the essential structure of something we need to reflect on it by practising a certain reduction” (p.185). We cannot separate ourselves fully from this world, just as I cannot separate myself from this research. That being said, I worked hard to practice ‘a certain reduction’ as van Manen (1997) describes. I worked at suspending my own preconceived notions about learning to teach and how the CSL project should be done. When reading the transcripts, I had to work at letting go of my own memories, feeling, and assumptions connected to my direct experience with the CSL hooping project. To do this kind of bracketing, I continually asked myself ‘what I am seeing, not remembering? What are the teacher candidates saying in their own words? What is going on as they describe their experiences?’ (van Manen, 1997), in an attempt to not bring in my own recollections and feelings.

Life-world existential as a guide to reflection. Once I began organizing my interviews, I began to write up the CSL hooping project based on what the teacher candidates were saying about their lived experiences. Moments they highlighted as significant were emerging as I began to write. To add another layer to my analysis, I began to read the transcripts (including the text that was now on the medicine wheel on my wall) using the four following existential concepts as described by van Manen (1997): “*lived space*

(spatiality), *lived body* (corporeality), *lived time* (temporality), and *lived human relations* (relationality)” (p.101). These four existential concepts are vital to the way all human being experiences the world (van Manen, 1997) and as such, help in a phenomenological text to reflect, pose questions and write about the lived experiences of a phenomena. In the case of this research, these four existentials are important as they also help me to reflect and analyze what the teacher candidates say in the interviews, and also when paired with my own experiences of entering a room, or hula hooping with them, or watching them interact with students.

I intentionally focused on ‘corporeality’ and ‘relationality’ in my analysis, as these two concepts highlight aspects I am most interested when looking at lived experiences. These concepts help to see the relationships between things, as well as how movement plays into their perception of learning to teach-in-relation. Corporeality refers to the fact that we are always bodily first in the world. As I analyzed my text, and searched for hints as to what was going on in the CSL hooping project, I kept this concept at the forefront of my analysis as an aid to remember learning does not occur only with our mind, but that our whole selves, our embodied selves, learn. Relationality plays an important role in my analysis because, “as we meet the other, we approach the other in a corporeal way” (van Manen, 1997, p.104). Relationality is that space in which we inhabit and connect with the world, and we do this first in a corporeal and embodied way.

Writing to see, to show, to re-write. The fourth of van Manen’s (1997) research activities; describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting, encompassed the breadth of what it means to create a phenomenological text. In phenomenology, writing is the method (van Manen, 1997), while, “creating a phenomenological text is the object of the research process” (p.111). At this point in my research, I had already been writing.

Through this writing I was analyzing, describing, and figuring out the way the themes were showing themselves. I did not understand the way ‘writing is a method’ until I began writing up this research project. This method is truly an emergent process, one that cannot be understood by simply thinking about themes, or memories. This method needs to be written out in order to work out and reveal an essence of a phenomenon. As I wrote I felt memories surface from my own learning history. My own experiences with learning to teach-in-relation were brought to the forefront of my consciousness. These memories played with the direct experiences I had with Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia as I sat and wrote the story of the CSL hooping project.

Writing to see. My first attempt at writing through the experiences of what it was like for Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia to experience the CSL hooping project from a relational, embodied perspective created a text that did not feel phenomenological. I had structure to what happened, but not a sense of what it was like. Yet this first write through captured some glimpses of moments that stood out, that would become significant moments that would help me to structure a stronger phenomenological text. I continued to write, and as I wrote I began to see (van Manen, 1997). I wrote out stories from my childhood, stories from my own experiences in learning to teach-in-relation. I wrote about feelings, sensations, frustrations, triumphs that took me away from the teacher candidates and their lived experiences. Yet, somehow I was always brought back to their experiences again. I engaged in a process of writing that van Manen (1997) says “separates us from what we know and yet it unites us more closely with what we know...not until we had written this down did we quite know what we know” (p.127). With this sense of moving away from what I thought I knew, to, in the end coming right back to pieces I knew, I tried to delve deeper into what Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia were saying.

Writing to show. Thus, through writing, through ‘seeing’, I was able to begin to show what was obscuring itself (van Manen, 1997). In phenomenological writing, “certain meaning is better expressed through *how* one writes than in *what* one writes” (van Manen, 1997, p.131). At one point in these early moments of writing, I found myself feeling stuck within the structure, the theme, of the medicine wheel. I felt like I was not showing what I was trying to express. I was trying to place the significant moments that were emerging into one of the four themes, vision, relationship, knowledge, and action, but felt this was not conveying the text in a phenomenological way. With the guidance of my thesis supervisor, Professor Lloyd, I decided to flip the way I was writing and structuring my text. I could see six emerging, significant moments that I wanted to show, through writing, each experience in a fuller, more encapsulating way. I thus chose to write up each experience as a vignette.

A vignette is a type of story. While there is no consensus on its definition, it is being used more frequently in the social sciences to see complex topics and focus the reader by bringing them into the experience (Jeffries & Maeder, 2005). The story telling aspect of understanding the themes through writing them up in vignettes was an integral way to bring the reader into the lived experiences of the teacher candidates. In van Manen’s (2002) ‘Writing the Dark’, he explains that writing in the first person is a linguistic style that “increase the vividness of an account...using the first person style increases the sense of involvement for the reader” (p.50).

Writing to re-write. I found myself, once I change the style and structure of how I would write up this research project, re-writing each significant moment to bring the reader into the first person, to express the lived existentials, to bring the reader into a sense of what it was like in the moment before reflecting on the moment. Re-writing with this new sense of wonder and curiosity also required me to delve into what was experienced in these moments,

by both my and the teacher candidates accounts. These sensations were then weaved into the text. The more I wrote, the more I realized I was indeed immersed in a “complex process of rewriting (re-thinking, re-flecting, re-cognizing)” (van Manen, 1997, p. 131).

Re-writing the text into a vignette format allowed for me to play with a movement between bringing the reader into a significant moment, in the first person, and then back into the third person to analyze their experiences. Stylistically, I begin each section highlighting a significant moment as written in the form of a vignette. What follows is a tour around the medicine wheel, using vision, relationship, knowledge, and action to analyze and create a discussion about the significant moment as it pertains to the teacher candidates and the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation. Thus, it is the significant moment that is at the heart of the medicine wheel, and moves through each theme; vision, relationship, knowledge, and action respectively.

Sustaining a strong and oriented relation. In van Manen’s (1997) fifth research activity, he challenges the researcher to maintain a strong and oriented relation to the phenomena being investigated. This is an important aspect to one’s methodology as it keeps us on track and ensures we do not wander too far from the original questions, from the phenomena being studied. This research activity required me to stay connected to the community while researching the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation. Writing and researching feels isolating at times, and having real connection to students and community is one way I maintained a strong and oriented relation with the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation. Specifically, I worked at orienting to my research question by engaging in/with the Indigenous community here in Ottawa. I have learned by doing, from listening to the stories of Elders, and continuing to listen to my dreams (Simpson, 2000). Through living relationally, i.e. engaged with community, I have continued to learn about my Indigenous

culture. Knowing about my culture has broadened my understanding of myself and strengthened my relationships with the Indigenous students I work with at a local high school. For example, I have learned about the power of sharing circles, about how they heal and open up spaces for learning. I did this work, this learning for myself first, and can take it with confidence back to the school where I teach. By continuing to search out connection and belonging, I am strengthening my own understanding of the process required to learn to teach from a relational perspective.

I have participated in numerous conferences, which has connected me to teachers as well as other Indigenous researchers which have in turn helped me sustain this strong orientation to learning to teach-in-relation. I also work as a facilitator for an Indigenous workshop about the history of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people in Canada. This work has brought me into classrooms with elementary and high school students, teacher candidates, and current teachers doing professional development to strengthen their understanding of Indigenous knowledge in school. Staying connected to the school community through these workshops has also deepened my orientation to learning to teach-in-relation.

Seeing the parts and the whole. In this sixth and final research activity; van Manen (1997) suggests the researcher balance the research context by considering both the parts and whole. Once I had a grasp of the thematic structure, I began to see the significant moments as they began to reveal themselves. As I began to write them up in a vignette form, I was able to see the all the parts of this research project begin to make up a whole picture of the research project. This aspect was important because up until I had these six vignettes written up, it was challenging to see the whole beyond the sum of its parts.

Textually organizing this phenomenological research was an emergent, pieced together process. There are several ways van Manen (1997) suggests on can organize the

text, whether it be thematically, analytically, or existentially. Or van Manen (1997) suggests, it can be a one or more of these approaches, or what he describes as “inventing an approach” (p.173). I open each major section with a vignette. This style of writing is intended to bring the reader into the feeling of ‘what it was like’ through descriptive writing. The following sections that move around the medicine wheel and through the thematic structure of vision, relationship, knowledge, and action, are meant to discuss and portray the experiences of the teacher candidates in a more analytical way.

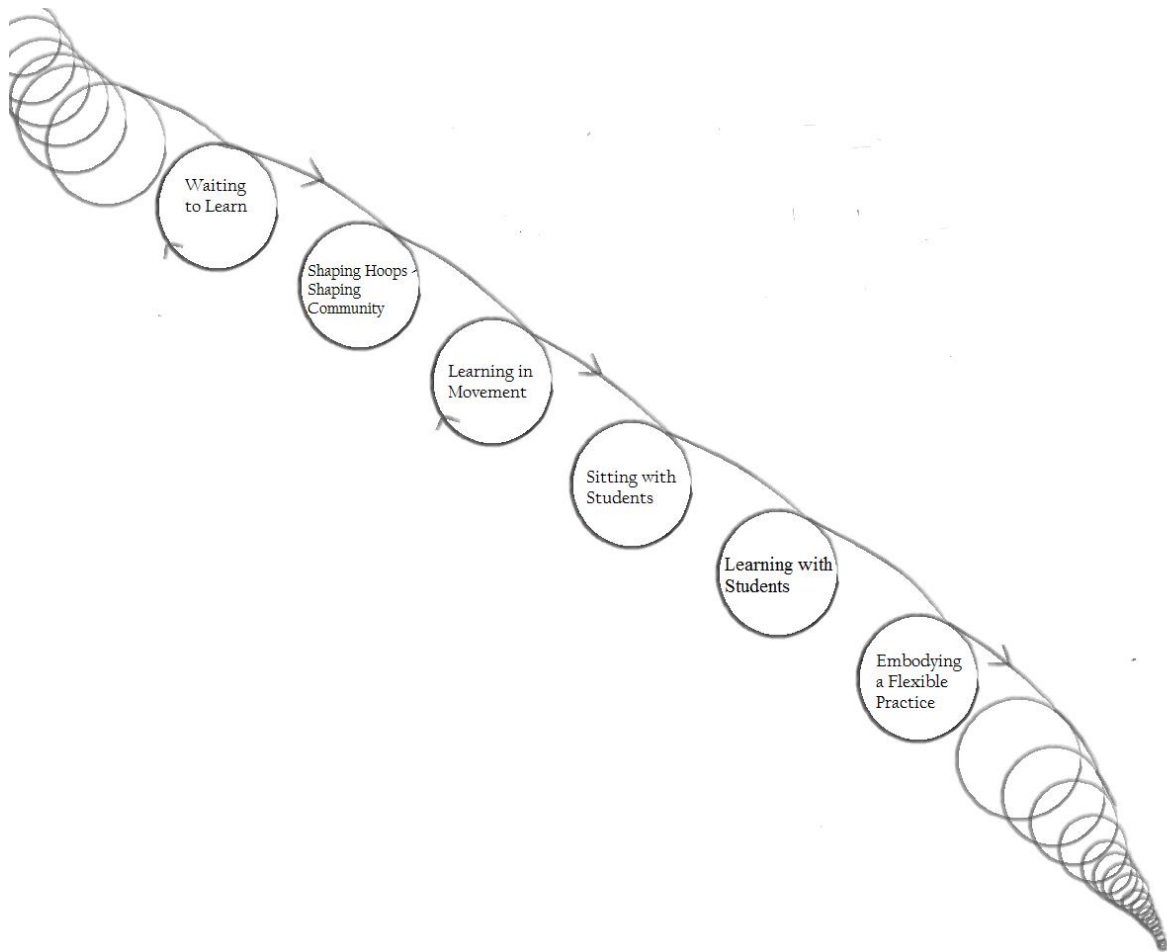


Figure 3 – Significant Moments. Once again, the concept of the medicine wheel is stretched apart to show each moment spiraling in time. There are six significant moments in the main

body of this research. Each significant moment moves through the theme structure of vision, relationship, knowledge and action. This diagram is based on the image and concept from Bopp et al. (1984, p.15), from *The Sacred Tree*.

As the significant moments revealed themselves, I began to see them each within their own medicine wheel, but wanted to maintain the connection of these experiences. The generative, spiralling imagery of the medicine wheel, as envisioned by Bopp et al. (1984) in *The Sacred Tree*, was used as way to see the connection between these experiences. Essentially, the image (Figure 3) is a medicine wheel that has been stretched out like a never ending coil. Folding and unfolding. Even as I developed this framework to represent the significant moments, I began to see a connection between the folding over of the significant moments with Merleau-Ponty's (1968/1948) notion of intertwining and flesh of the world. While each experience exists on its own, it works on the other and is always in relation to the other.

From the process of writing to create a phenomenological text, six significant moments emerged, these are: 1) waiting to learn; 2) shaping hoops, shaping community; 3) learning in movement; 4) sitting with students; 5) learning with students; 6) embodying a flexible practice. Each of these significant moments plays a part in the whole picture of what the experience of learning to teach-in-relation was like for Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia in this CSL hooping project. By telling the story of the CSL hooping project through the vignettes and viewing these significant moments through a relational framework, the reader is invited to experience what it was like to learn to teach in a relational, embodied way.

Chapter 4: Waiting to Learn

Vignette – Beginning the CSL Hooping Project

I am sitting in a small office, taking in my surroundings as I adjust to the florescent lights that shine on the walls. With no windows, the dull greyness of each wall is magnified by the brightness of the light. I have come to the office, designated for our use, early to unlock the door. I shift uncomfortably in the hard plastic chair, and take in the mess left by the previous tenant. I had to search for this space, which is tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the building, in a corner of the building on the third floor. I am lost in thought when I hear the sound of footsteps coming down the long hallway, echoing through the long corridor, getting louder as they approach. My ears perk up and my attention turns to the doorway. As soon as the teacher candidate's begin to enter the room, I feel the mood of the room shift. The quiet is replaced with chatter; the dull energy is replaced with an invigorating, animated liveliness. My perception of the office is instantly transformed. The dusty, musty feeling of the office dissipates and is replaced with a spark of energy. The time that was moving slowly, while waiting, shifts and speeds up as the high energy spills into the office with them. This wave brings me out of my thoughts and fully to the present moment.

Entering the room are five cheerful, young, enthusiastic teacher candidates. I can tell they are excited about their courses, as they discuss lessons and group assignments that have already been handed out. They express this enthusiasm with animated gestures, with a bounce in their step they manoeuvre their way into the small office, looking for a place to sit, for a spot to set their school bags. They seem very comfortable as they enter the room. There is a purposeful and even automatic movement as they find a place to sit. I am happy to see this comfort, and I am also excited to see what will unfold as we start the CSL project.

Sitting in and around the room, we spend some time in polite conversation, introducing ourselves (again). I inquire about what their B.Ed. program is like so far, where they are from and the like. The liveliness that preceded them into the room is still present, yet as the polite conversation continues the spark of energy that came in with them begins to settle, just as we settle into our chairs. Our bodily movements become stationary, slouching into the hard plastic seats, leaning into the back support. The movement that was once in the room, in our bodies, seems to be quieting. As we converse, I can feel their attention shifting towards me ever so slightly, towards what I am doing. Yet all I am doing is also sitting, also settling into our conversation, and waiting for them to start.

While we sit together in polite conversation, I begin to feel a tension building within our discussion. The conversation and our attention do not truly shift to the CSL project. I feel like we are all aware that we are not really discussing or planning the CSL project, and as the lunch hour draws to a close, I begin to worry we are not going to get much done today. I take a moment to look at the teacher candidates, to watch them. Something is not adding up and I cannot put my finger on it. As I watch them I begin to see a different picture emerging. I see a group of students sitting in their chairs, waiting like I am, for the CSL project to start. The tension in this waiting is masked by the conversations, but under the surface it is there. It is exposed, ever so slightly by a glance and the occasional shifting of a body in a chair.

I leave our first meeting with a nagging sense that I was expected to lead the meeting, the feeling that I was the one unprepared. I am unsure about how to handle this situation. I agreed to help support the teacher candidate with their CSL project, so I do not want to be the one dictating any aspect of it. I had this idea that they would come in with a plan, with their ideas and I could help facilitate it if they hit any snags along the way. However, even with this uneasy feeling, I am relieved to have something concrete to do on campus, to meet

with these teacher candidates once a week and help where I can with their CSL project. The sense of not knowing my surroundings, my bearings, or people for that matter, is beginning to be anchored in knowing I have this weekly meeting time and project to work on.

A week has passed and I am unlocking the door to our office once again. This feeling of uncertainty, of not knowing what will happen is unnerving, unsettling. There is vulnerability in not-knowing and for us coming together in this office to do this CSL project, we are at the mercy of this feeling and we must move through it together. The feeling of not knowing what will happen with this CSL project feels like a disruption and a departure from the scripted lectures and lessons that even I am accustomed to.

Yet, within these same feelings of uncertainty and the uncomfortableness that goes along with this, there is also a feeling of excitement. I am hopeful and curious about our second meeting; to see what kind of information they have found out for the CSL project. Assuring myself the reason they were not prepared last week was because they were just beginning the B.Ed. program and were overwhelmed.

Their chatter about school is even livelier today and it appears that since our last meeting they have accumulated even more assignments and group work. They are still energetic and enthusiastic, but something else has entered the room with them today, a weightiness that expresses itself in their posture. The sense, the weight, of being overwhelmed with the amount of work they have to do in their program is being translated in their bodies. This heavy feeling spills into our meeting and I can feel, in a more tangible way, a growing tension. The tension makes me wonder why there is this feeling of waiting within the room.

The feeling of optimism that came with us into this space is replaced with a stagnant feeling that is beginning to permeate the walls of the office. I continue to sense this stagnant

feeling and cannot quite understand why this energy is being created. I perceive a dance happening in this space between us. We are at the same time positioned together yet this tension is beginning to make me feel separate as well. The tense quality that is felt in this dance is being negotiated as we enter the office space together. What I could not figure out from our first encounter, the feeling of waiting, is present again. I thought perhaps my perception of our first meeting was wrong, maybe I was reading too much into their lack of a plan. Maybe I was reading too much into the way they came in and sat in the chairs and were essentially waiting for me to start.

Yet it occurs again, the same sequence of events. They enter the room, seemingly with confidence but then sit down and do not proceed with any kind of action plan for the CSL project. I thought for sure this week we would be jumping right into working on gathering materials, figuring out how to make the hula hoops. The energy that comes with them into the room dissipates as we seat ourselves. The lack of movement that precedes us sitting down feels as though it transfers onto the CSL project. The feeling of not moving forward and sitting in our chairs is one in the same. This underlying tension, just below the surface, feels like a silent negotiation happening between us over who will take the lead and move this project forward.

Vision – Learned Ways of Perceiving

I am continually drawn back to the moments shared and experienced between myself and the teacher candidates as we tried to start the CSL project. Something was going on, but what was it? On a deeper level, that ‘something’ needed to be investigated and understood further. Why this strong feeling that we were all waiting? Why this struggle to get started?

The moment of waiting is at the crux of figuring out what was going on as we tried to start the CSL hooping project. I keep reading and re-reading the interview transcripts that

describe what they were experiencing and trying to unlock what this feeling of waiting meant. “Why were we doing this?” a statement made by Emma which caught my attention from the beginning. In describing the moment of waiting and what it felt like she said, “we'd all sit back and wait for someone to take that first step; we didn't know where things were going. We were just starting out. We didn't know what to expect, what to do with ourselves” (personal communication, June 12, 2011). Emma was describing what it felt like to be sitting and waiting for this project to start. This concept of waiting, of sitting and waiting, and the uncomfortable feeling of not know where the project was going was not pleasant. In not knowing what to literally do with her corporeal-self she describes the way teacher candidate’s view learning when they enter their B.Ed. degree.

In this chapter, we will further investigate this moment of waiting. Through relationship, knowledge, and action we will delve into what these initial feelings meant to the teacher candidates and their learning, as well as seeing how this feeling of waiting and subsequent tension sets up the rest of the project. In terms of their vision of learning to teach-in-relation, the teacher candidates entered this learning environment with certain expectations, with certain assumptions about learning (Light, 2001).

Encountering the CSL project. What became evident from the moment the teacher candidates entered the office space was that they did not anticipate, nor did I, that there would be challenges as we began this CSL project. The teacher candidates volunteered themselves to participate in this project, to create it themselves. Yet what became very clear from the beginning was that their expectations seemingly fell into line with the notion this would be akin to attending another course in their B.Ed. program. Thus they entered the space with a preconceived notion of what would occur, in what order, and they acted accordingly. But instead of being met with what they knew, they encountered a different

situation. The office space was perceived as a place they were comfortable with, a classroom, even if was a bit messy. As such, what they envisioned was disrupted and instead became an encounter that engaged their perceptions, their sensing perceiving selves, in a different way.

The reason this initial experience is being discussed as an encounter is that an encounter denotes something that happens unexpectedly. I would argue the unexpected aspect of this seemingly routine experience turned into an encounter because the script the teacher candidates expected to follow did not happen. Within the moment of waiting, when the teacher should have begun the lesson, begun to tell them what the day would hold, did not happen. The implication here is that they were acting out their understanding of what a student does; entering a classroom, sitting, and waiting to be told what to do. This is a very passive way of orienting to the learning process (Higgins, 2008). The ‘being told what to do’, which is connected to the transmission model of learning (Korthagan, 2004) did not occur, and within the encounter began a disruption of their conception of learning as the tension within the moment of waiting was drawn out.

Jarvis (2012) writes that “all human learning begins with disjuncture – with either an overt question or with a sense of unknowing” (pp.9-10). In her book, *Education Reconfigured*, Martin (2011) describes “the theory of education as encounter recognizes that large-scale changes can have small beginnings” (p.16). This one moment of waiting, for Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia was indeed small, or subtle, but in it was the sense of disruption between what they expected and what occurred. This moment of waiting was the beginning of the shift that would resonate throughout the rest of the CSL hooping project.

This encounter that occurred in this moment of waiting provided a disjuncture that prompted the teacher candidates to really ask what was going on, as Ella describes:

And I think initially, even the first couple of months when it was like, ‘you need to make hoops’. Okay, how do we do that? We were kind of overwhelmed. And wondering; aren't you going to help us with this? Aren't you going to you know, show us? (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Following what Jarvis (2012) explains about learning, Klappa (2010) writes that moments that create a sense of not-knowing “provide a rich learning opportunity, one in which, despite uncertainty, people gain a sense of knowing or confidence in themselves” (p.27). The teacher candidates’ initial perceptions of what the CSL project would look and be like seemingly fell in line with their perceptions of learning in general. This encounter created a sense of not knowing, and from this place of not knowing the teacher candidates began to reconceptualise and examine what it is like to learn to teach. The disjuncture, or disruption, is felt in their sensing selves in this moment of waiting, within what really became an encounter, and is the crux of what the teacher candidates confronted between their conceptions of learning and their perceptions of learning.

The crux of what was going on between us as we sat in that dim office sheds light on teacher candidate’s vision of learning to teach-in-relation. This sensing, this perception of the whole self, has a direct impact on their conceptions of what a teacher looks like. I am intrigued by this particular encounter because a connection is becoming evident as their story unfolds, between what was happening when the teacher candidates entered the office and in the way they view what teaching and learning are supposed to look like.

Relationship – Tension in Learning to Teach-in-Relation

We have forgotten that education is primarily about human beings who are in relation with one another. (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004, p.4)

This quote by Bingham and Sidorkin, taken from the book ‘No Education without Relation’ highlights one of the main, if not the main, challenge education faces today; that we need to get back to a relational approach to education. In this section I hope to build on what has been discussed in terms of teacher candidates’ perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation. How do we shift to a relational approach to learning, and in this context, of learning to teach-in-relation? What does a relational approach to education look like? What does it feel like? Reflecting on the moment of waiting to start, what stands out is the feeling of tension that began to build in the room as we sat together. The feeling of not knowing created this tension and within this we were pushed as a group to change the way we were relating to one another. My own developing sense of identity as a teacher was ready to jump in and take over, even though I knew this was not my role. This moment of waiting, and the feeling of tension challenged my own conceptions of learning to teach-in-relation as well.

Describing the moment of waiting as a tension filled encounter denotes a certain amount of conflict. Even though not a positive relationship, an encounter such as this none the less describes a relationship (Heidegger, 1962; as cited by Moustakas, 1995). A pedagogy of relation posits the relation as primary, transitional, and as complex (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004). For the teacher candidates, encountering a relationship that was not what they were used to, that was tense, was an abrupt way to enter into pedagogy based more on relation than an individual endeavor, which is the tendency in education (Bingham, 2004).

Perhaps this space was exactly what the teacher candidates needed to begin to negotiate their identities as teachers. The encounter became ambiguous and uncertain when the waiting lasted stretched out over minutes and over consecutive meetings. In these moments the tension began to build. The disruption and the tension made Emma, Ella, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia begin to see and feel learning to teach-in-relation in a different way

(Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996). This was the beginning of the unravelling of what they thought they knew about becoming a teacher, and that it takes a certain amount of “(un)becoming a teacher” (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996, p.81), meaning letting go of what you thought you envisioned and knew. We had to negotiate this new territory within the CSL project first before we were able to move on. The feeling of not knowing was uncomfortable for us, as Emma and Ella stated, and they would have rather just been told what to do than enter this new relationship.

What the teacher candidates were demonstrating in the subtle, small moment, was the way learning is entrenched in an individualistic (Martin, 2011) and transmissive relationship (Zeichner, 2010). The way each teacher candidate entered the space, took their own seat and each waited, indicates the way their relationship to learning is set as an individual endeavor. More specifically, what they were simply doing what they were accustomed to doing when learning.

Negotiating all of their identities, new and old, is what began moving the teacher candidates from the individualistic way of learning to the relational. The challenge for teacher candidates is that within teacher education, the training model continues to posit the student (teacher candidate) as an individual component in an equation (Wideen et al., 1998). Britzman (1986) explains,

the dominant model of teacher education is organized on this implicit theory of immediate integration: the university provides the theories, methods, and skills; schools provide the classroom, curriculum, and students; and the student teacher provides the individual effort; all of which combine to produce the finished product of professional teacher. (p. 442)

In the tension felt as we sat together in the moment of waiting, this encounter required us, as a group, to begin to see ourselves differently, to feel ourselves in relation differently in this moment. The tension created the disruption needed to begin to understand that “learning to teach is a process, not a product” (Merseth, Sommer, & Dickstein, 2008, p.108). The teacher candidates began to feel the push to enter the active process of learning to teach, and not simply reside in the equation of what Britzman (1986) calls the dominant model of learning in teacher education. I would argue here they were pushed to be ‘in-relation’ to learning as well.

At the level of teacher education is it possible to shift from a passive to active relationship in learning to teach-in-relation? Bingham (2004) wonders if the challenge educators’ face when working towards relational education is even possible. The reason, he writes, is “there are so many entrenched discourses, entrenched practices, entrenched ontological suppositions, entrenched philosophies of education, all of which are highly individualistic” (Bingham, 2004, p.23). This notion of the entrenched discourses, practices and philosophies leads us to the next section and understanding perhaps where these preconceived notions come from, where these entrenched practices come from.

Knowledge – Learned Ways of Knowing

Identity exists in the remembered, the lived, and the projected relations of our daily experience. As our relations change, our sense of identity shifts. (Sumara, 1998, p.205)

In the previous sections, vision and relationship, we began to look at the way the moment of waiting created disruption for the teacher candidates, by placing them in a tension filled relationship. Beginning to negotiate their identities, beginning with their student identity, was at the crux of the tension felt. I wondered where this feeling of tension came

from, why it existed beyond them feeling uncomfortable in this first encounter with the CSL hooping project. Sumara's (1998) quote points to the way we exist, our identity, in the remembered. Meaning, our lived experiences from education, our daily experiences, would come with us as we enter teacher education programs.

Our perception of our learning environments and our vision of teaching is connected to our learning histories, as we all grew up in schools (Britzman, 2007). Coming back to the beginning of the CSL project has revealed the way teacher candidates initially perceived their learning and how they approached it. During their initial encounter the teacher candidates started to perceive another way of learning. Schussler, Stooksberry & Bercaw (2010) explain that, "teacher's perceptions are shaped, though not entirely determined, by the individual's prior experience, beliefs, culture, values, and cognitive abilities" (p.351). What is important in this research is not how we did the CSL project but what was revealed below the surface of our interactions and perceptions. In our first encounters with each other we began to see that the actions of the teacher candidates were an entrenched perception of learning connected to their previous experiences. The way they entered the office space, came in and comfortably sat down and waited, points to their beliefs about teaching and learning from their past. What is revealed here is in part the way they also view their teacher education (Blake & Haines, 2009).

A dominate image and feeling brought to teacher education is the image of the teacher as expert. The transmissive relationship posits the teacher as the givers of knowledge to their students who passively receive this knowledge. These images come from our entrenched conception that lies within behaviourist and cognitivist models of learning (Bingham, 2004). Thinking back to the feeling of sitting and waiting in our office space, there was a feeling of negotiation happening in the moment of waiting. This negotiation was

between the teacher candidates understanding of learning from when they were students. This understanding was being pushed back against now being both a student and soon to be teacher. I argue that it was because of these models of learning, influencing our learning histories, that we all know in some way the normal feeling of entering a learning environment and knowing exactly what to do with ourselves. We sit and wait to see what the teacher will teach.

‘What are we doing?’ We began to move past just sitting and waiting, yet the tension from wondering where this CSL project was headed is still present as we figure out what needed to be done. They are beginning to figure out how to get the materials needed. Once again, I continue to negotiate my role in this CSL project and do not want to dominate the conversation. Through their conversation, I can see them renegotiating their conceptions of learning, moving past waiting to be told what to do. Yet I catch myself one day automatically taking charge. I know teacher candidates take notice. Caring shares her feelings of this encounter:

I think I remember, the day where we were supposed to meet, well, we met and were supposed to be like starting to make the hoops and we were all in the little room, we're like, 'well maybe we can go to Rona, or Home Depot' and we're not really sure what to do and we're just having this long, drawn out and not particularly productive conversation. And Desiree just like picked up the phone and called Home Depot, and was like, 'oh, okay you have them, well we'll be there' and we were like 'oh' (laughing). We could do it that way too! (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

I was frustrated that I did not suggest they call the hardware store themselves. Yet, when I read and hear Carla's perspective, I see what they see. They needed some form

leadership and they saw my role as leading by example rather than directing them in the way to gather materials.

Once again, they are in a situation they are uncertain of, they do not know what to do with themselves. As we continued on in this tension filled encounter, this negotiation, we were beginning to see each other in different ways. The teacher candidates began to see me not as an authority figure as I was resisting the feeling to tell them what to do. I was not their teacher but regardless they did see me as a leader. Ella shares a reflection on my role in the beginning stages of the CSL project, and it is interesting to see how I am perceived:

I was going to say, initially I think it was really good because she [Desiree] kind of took a leadership role and really helped us form a cohesive group and it was really nice to have somebody working with us who wasn't you know, not the initiator, not a supervisor, not a professor but someone who was starting it up with us. And us little B.Ed. students looking up to Desiree, like 'what are we doing?' (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

The questioning from Ella shows a very confident and hardworking student beginning to question what was going on in the CSL hooping project. The questioning, however, is still directed towards me. This indicates that they still inhabited their student identity and they needed support in figuring out what they were doing.

When I listened to her words, Ella describes herself as 'little' and me as someone to look up to. This is another indicator of the negotiation happening between student and teacher. This description adds to the concept of what teacher candidates bring with them into their teacher education program. Growing up in school and being accustomed to hierarchical relationship between student and teacher shines through in her description of our relationship. However, she does not describe me as the one in charge and perhaps this is the

moment her perception is shifting as she engages in learning to teach-in-relation. Perhaps she and the other teacher candidates are coming to the realization they will be doing the learning and not being told what to do. She is beginning to see and beginning to feel different ways of learning.

Action- Remembering We Are Always Bodily in the World

This chapter centers on the moment of waiting that Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, Nadia & I shared at the beginning of this CSL hooping project. The feelings associated with entering this space highlight some of the ways learning to teach-in-relation is connected to our preconceived notions of learning. Part of our perception is connected to the ever evolving identities surrounding learning to teach-in-relation. In this section, we will look at the way we need to remember that we are always bodily in the world (van Manen, 1997). We need to continually remember we are embodied and that we need to resist viewing, feeling, and thinking about learning in a way that separates the mind from our body.

The teacher candidates revealed, when they sat and waited, an embodied way of learning that has been habituated since grade school. We have embodied the automatic way of coming into a classroom and waiting for our teacher to begin. This can also be characterized as a disembodied way of being. We are conditioned to sit and listen, to restrict our bodily movements for learning to happen. Stolz (2013) explains that phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty “does not view the body as a special kind of object separate from the mind, but views the body as ‘being-in-the-world’ in the sense that our embodiment precedes reflective thought” (p.953). We have taken in the messages of what a good classroom looks like, how good students behave, and this is in most cases because we are embodying these messages that bodily sensation and movement is separate from the mind.

In terms of learning to teach-in-relation, embodiment is not a notion that is often looked to in order to understand how teacher candidates might learn to teach. Latta and Buck (2008) investigate the body's role in learning and teaching and "wonder why there is so much distrust of the body in relation to teaching and learning and only the rare deliberate interstice between embodied knowledge with teacher education programs" (p.316). Being in schools for so much of our youth we have learned the spaces that allow for movement are relegated to specific places in the school. Ross (2004) further explains what occurs as we grow up in schools, "the student body's presence in the classroom from Kindergarten to 12th grade gets quieter and quieter until it is effectively mute" (p. 173). We are continually taught to quiet the body as we grow up in school. I argue that teacher candidates learn this way of being disembodied in the world and in classrooms and bring this feeling with them to their teacher education programs without being conscious of how prevalent it is.

Learning to sit still. Thinking of the way the teacher candidates would enter our office space, sit and then wait, brought up a strong feeling within myself as I tried to write up this chapter. As I tried to figure out what was going on in this moment of waiting I could sense a feeling rising up I myself sat in my own chair for long periods of time. This sensation of sitting and feeling restless as I worked brought back a long forgotten memory in a very real and visceral way. The almost constant struggle I had in my early schooling to sit still in my desk. There is no other memory that comes back as strong as the feeling of walking into my classroom, approaching my desk and knowing I would be required to sit still. The knowing was not a cognisant one, not until it was learned that this was not acceptable. The knowing was in my senses, in my body first. Sitting down in my desk made me feel trapped. I tried listening to the teacher while trying to keep my body still. However, this became a moment to moment battle. The visceral and emotional memory of how it felt to literally be

vibrating in my chair continues to resonate within me in the present moment with this recollection.

I would sit on my hands, shake my legs back and forth, pop my feet up and down. Twist my shoulders in opposite directions. Tap my fingers on the desk. Rub my chin on my shoulder. The harder I tried to focus on the lesson, being dictated by the teacher at the front of the class, the more I moved. My need to move hindered being able to listen, I battled to sit my body still and keep an active mind. My need to move kept my report cards full of descriptive words recounting the various ways I was distracting the class. There still linger many signs of the body that use to move almost constantly in my desk such as the uncontrolled shaking of my legs back and forth. I have essentially learned through my schooling to be able to sit still for long periods of time without fidgeting.

I argue that we learn, from a very young age, to enter our learning environment in a specific way. We learn, through implicit and explicit reminders, about what to do with our bodies as we enter a classroom. Coming back to what I am experiencing with the teacher candidates in the first few meetings we have had together, I understand that this is what was going on between us. In our early schooling, the teacher is always present in the classroom when we arrive. The teacher is usually at the front of the room, waiting behind their large desk for the students to enter, to take their seats. There is an expectation that we will calm ourselves down, take our seat and wait for the teacher to give the lesson. This is surely the model we find at the university level as well.

If we think back to our formal education, we would more or less all describe a similar learning environment. Rows of desks with the teacher's large desk placed at the front. We would have a common understanding that when the bell rang we were to be quiet, to sit still in our desks and wait for the teacher to begin. There was a feeling of coming into the

classroom and seeing the teacher but feeling a distinct separation from her. It was as if an invisible barrier resided between us, which kept student and teacher apart. We have all gone through this experience in school. As I reflect on this aspect of my own learning history, I am not saying that Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia had the same experience, or that they bring this to their teacher education program. What I am saying is that they exhibit a common, shared experience of learning that resides in a transmissive model of education.

The CSL project provided a new experience for the teacher candidates. We engaged in a way of learning that departed from our long held perception of learning. In teaching, do we perpetuate how we have been taught? But more importantly, how do we view the teacher in a learning space? Once again, it comes back to the disembodied way we view learning as only happening in the mind. In his article on how we can learn through game play, Hopper (2011) writes, “learning is more than information processing; learning the skill to then play the game is embodied adaptation of the learner where cognition extends beyond the mind as a separate entity to include the body and all its senses” (p.4). Yet this embodied adaptation Hopper (2011) speaks of needs to extend into all places of the school, and not just where the body is allowed to move, in the dance studio or the gymnasium.

The medicine wheel offers a relational and embodied framework from which to counter the disembodied transmissive model of education. The holistic view of the medicine wheel expresses the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the person (Hampton, 1995). In education, we often only focus on the mental, and leave out the other parts that make up the whole (Battiste, 2002). The whole person, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, is educated in an Indigenous framework. This is the reason many scholars are coming back to the knowledge found within the medicine wheel and Indigenous knowledge to reconceptualise education (Thayor-Bacon, 2004). When I use the medicine

wheel to view our CSL hooping experience, I begin to see how my own perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation are informed by a disembodied way of learning. I am intentionally shifting my view to look at the whole self, and specifically I am beginning to look at the relational, embodied self of the teacher candidates.

There is an important aspect to recognizing the importance of our corporeality in learning, as “an experiential and embodied approach to teaching and learning can help students re-awaken the knowledge that their bodies are continuously giving them feedback” (Graveline, 1998, p.183). The sensing self, this corporeal way of being and knowing the world, outlines how important our perception is to learning. That learning processes are not only relegated within the mind, the still body. Another way to describe perception is in relation to somatic knowing (Mathews, 1998). Like Graveline, Mathews (1998) describes somatic knowing as “an experiential knowing that involves sense, precept, and mind/body action and reaction” (p.236). Our somatic self is always present, connected to the way we perceive the world both consciously and subconsciously. Just because we quiet the body to sit and listen does not mean the body goes away. The body still listens, senses what is going on. Yet, we have learned to disregard our corporeal selves in education.

The following chapters articulate the ways Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia’s emerging conceptions and perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation shift. The moment of waiting created a space for the teacher candidates to begin to feel and sense learning to teach-in-relation in a different way. To come back to, to remember we are always first bodily in the world and that the thinking mind and the moving body are one in the same. Since how we experience the world is reliant on our perceptions, which include our feeling, seeing, hearing, tasting, and intuitive sensing, Stinson (2004) reminds us that “we can think only

with what we know ‘in our bones’ and that attending to the sensory, followed by reflection, is a valuable source of such knowledge” (p.162).

Implications of Waiting

The sensation of waiting to learn encapsulated the sentiment of ‘what it was like’ learning to teach-in-relation. The implications of this feeling in terms of knowing what transformative CSL projects can do for teacher candidates is that a considerable amount of tension may be felt. Teacher candidates that are accustomed to being told what to do, and then experience a different kind of pedagogy, maybe experience anxiety. However, this indicates a disruption within their perceptions of what learning to teach means, and thus perhaps will bring them into a new and different relation with their learning.

Chapter 5: Shaping Community – Shaping Community

Learning is a complex phenomenon, it resists the linear, causal reductions...it should not be understood in terms of a sequence of actions, but in terms of an ongoing structural dance, a complex choreography. (Davis, Sumara, and Kieran, 1996, p.153)

Vignette – Shaping Hoops: Shaping Community

Walking into the room today felt different. Instead of unlocking the door and opening the space for the teacher candidates, they are already here. I walk into to find them up and moving around the room. Ella is piling some of the PVC piping they bought into the corner of the room. While some of the pieces are tied together which keeps them relatively easy to organize, others are slipping and uncoiling all over the place. Emma gives me a smile as she swishes past me in the doorway, informing me she is going to fill up a kettle for boiling water. A sense of relief hits me as I feel the space has transformed from a passive place of sitting and waiting to one that is animated and active.

The teacher candidates organize the room so that we can work and assemble the hula hoops with more ease. And so we begin. I take a length of PVC piping into my hands, noticing how solid this plastic is. The material is thick, and when I squeeze it in my hands it does not collapse. There is also a weight to this plastic that is much different from the cheap plastic hula hoops I remember playing with in my childhood. I try to wrangle a long piece of the piping but the long tensile piece moves awkwardly. The piece I am not using flips and flops as it uncoils onto the floor. I try to take a measurement but I feel like I am wrestling a fish. I try to hold the end of the length of PVC piping while looping the rest of what I need to form the shape of a hula hoop. I need to be sure of the size before I make the cut. As I jostle with this material, Nadia steps in and holds the part of the PVC piping that is causing me

problems. With her help I can shape the PVC pipe into a circle, the bottom resting on the floor, the top at waist height.

With Nadia's help I mark my PVC piping and she hands me the ratchet bought specifically to cut this tough plastic. I realize I have never used a tool like this nor has any of the others. There is a feeling that someone should be stepping in to tell us or show us how to use this it. So while I increase the pressure to cut the PVC pipe, we all wait together in a collective holding of our breath to see what will happen. Time slows for moment, a pulse. The mechanism in this tool makes the cutting of this PVC piping easier than expected and in a final snip the PVC pipe falls to the floor. Cutting the hula hoop feels very satisfying. I feel like I am a young child being allowed to use my father's tools to make something. Holding the tool in one's hand feels good, it feels like the crux of what it means to do a 'hands on project'. There is a finite feeling of cutting up the materials and moving forward. There is a primal feeling that reverberates within my hands. I can tell, especially with the feeling of using this tool myself being so fresh in my hands, that through our glances and laughter an unspoken consensus emerges that we would all like the chance to use this tool ourselves.

Our next task is to connect the two ends of the PVC pipe together, which will transform this random piece of plastic into our hula hoop. The ends need to be placed in boiling hot water to soften them. The plastic needs to be pliable in order for the 'connector' to be fit into the end of the PVC piping. I wait for my turn and watch as Emma places one end of the PVC pipe into the hot water. Only a small part of the pipe is in the bowl of water. The rest of the PVC pipe swings loosely as Emma tries to hold the one end in the water without tipping the bowl over or burning her hands. Seeing this moment of struggle, it is Ella who anticipates the need to step forward and help Emma. She leaves the length of PVC pipe she was measuring and takes hold of the swaying, swinging end of Emma's PVC pipe. There

is a temporal shift as Emma relaxes her hold, while Ella holds up the rest of her PVC pipe. There is a stillness and calmness found within this minute of waiting for the end of the pipe to soften. This waiting together softens the interpersonal connection between two people just getting to know one another. Was there a ‘thank you’ uttered, or was it acknowledged through a gesture? Once the minute is up, the end is dried off and the small grey connector is placed in the now flexible, heated end. Without saying so, without asking, Emma flips the length of PVC piping over and places the other end in the hot water, Ella helps by handling the other loose end. There is seamlessness to their cooperation, even though the PVC piping is awkward to handle.

Emma takes the end of the PVC pipe out of the hot water and with Ella’s help, bends the ends together, joining them with the connector. This takes the most effort, fitting the loose end of the PVC piping onto the small grey connector. The plastic pipe has become malleable but there is a force that is required to join them. Once the PVC piping ends have cooled, they harden once more, and the connection is very strong. There are excited glances as we look at the first hula hoop that Emma now holds in her hands.

Vision – Beginning to (re)Shape Conceptions: Becoming Teacher

In this chapter the significant aspects about making hula hoops together for the CSL hooping project will emerge. I argue that making the hula hoops are important in the way the teacher candidates began to embody, or re-embody, a relational approach to learning to teach. The focus of this chapter is on the moment we began to form the hula hoops, the moment that we moved from waiting to doing. This moment of doing is described as ‘hands on’, and it is what moves us from passive to active agents in learning to teach-in-relation. This chapter intends to look at the way the shift from waiting to doing began to shift the way the teacher candidates viewed themselves as students becoming teachers. More importantly,

we look at why ‘hands on’ learning is significant to their transformation, from a phenomenological perspective.

Once we got ourselves organized, meaning we got the materials to make the hula hoops, we needed to actually begin making them. Upon entering the office space, almost immediately, the tension that was present in our initial encounter felt as though it was gone. The immediate difference now in the moment of shaping the hula hoops was seeing the teacher candidates up and moving around, in clear juxtaposition of sitting and waiting. The space CSL has opened up for us is what we are now engaged in. Sameshima (2008) challenges us to remember that “most teachers know that hands-on-learning and active participation increases learning. That notion must be extended to the teaching self—to embody learning, researching, and teaching that way” (p.32). With this sentiment we will delve into why the making of the hula hoops is integral to their development as students transitioning into teachers.

The theoretical underpinnings of CSL reside in experiential learning (Chambers, 2009), where projects and experiences are often referred to as being ‘hands on’ (Griffin & Zhang, 2013). The teacher candidates began making the hula hoops with their own two hands, bending and flexing the PVC piping, cutting, molding and re-shaping what felt like an ambiguous piece of material into a functional and usable object. Often, the concept of ‘hands on’ learning is taken for granted, dismissed quickly as experiential learning. A phenomenological perspective of ‘hands on’ learning lends a different philosophical lens to help us understand this concept on a deeper level. Thus, when we look more closely at what is implied by ‘hands on’ learning, we see that we are discussing the way we touch and engage with the world. Maclaren (2014) writes that often,

our emphasis tends to be on the way in which two people come to share a world of objects, values, and ideas, or, conversely, on the ways in which we can miss each other and fail to share our worlds. We remain concerned, in other words, with the meeting or non-meeting of the minds. (p.95)

What Maclaren is suggesting is that touch does not receive enough emphasis in understanding the philosophy of interpersonal relations. He suggests we do not think of the ways touching and being touched, in regular everyday interactions, affects our perception of the world. We need to consider “that touch plays a much more powerful and foundational role in our relations with others and our very having of the world” (Maclaren, 2014, p.96). In terms of the CSL hooping project, it was not until later on that an understanding emerged around the impact of making the hula hoops. For the teacher candidates, there was a sense that having to make the hula hoops was more like a step that got in the way of administering the CSL project. What could be learned from making hula hoops? There was little value placed on taking the time to use their hands to make the hula hoops, to figure out the steps and do these steps together. In other words, the teacher candidates were more concerned with the meeting of the minds, instead of seeing or understanding the ways in which this hands on learning was affecting them.

Experiencing hands on learning means experiencing the bending and shaping and pressure needed to make hoops with the PVC piping. Merleau-Ponty’s (1968/1948) notion of the flesh of the world helps to understand our connection to everything we are engaged with in the world and that there is no separation. If we take the idea of our hands touching the PVC piping, putting pressure on it to bend it, we must also begin to realize the PVC piping is also touching us. There is a reversibility in this relationship of touch and being touched (Merleau-Ponty, 1968/1948).

The example of hands touching and the way the hand that touches becomes the touched lends a way to view the teacher candidates' interaction with the hula hoops. The hula hoop is not merely an object when we touch it, it becomes "another fleshy substance that is capable of reversing the present situation" (Reynolds, 2004, p.13). As we manipulate, bend and shape the PVC plastic into a hula hoop, it is doing the same to us. Bending, shaping and manipulating our perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation through 'hands on' learning. More importantly, from this phenomenological perspective, we can see how we are shaped and affected within this back and forth exchange; intertwining.

Relationship – Shaping Community

Communities of learning are typically addressed in terms of their conceptual and affective aspects, rather than the physical. The role of the body in creating a community through movement is an uncharted territory. The body is personal. At the same time, it has tremendous capacity to connect with others. (Bresler, 2004, p. 128)

I chose to open the section themed 'relationship' with this quote by Bresler because it is an important reminder that we are always first bodily in the world. The vignette offers the reader a glimpse into the feeling of coming together as a group of learners in relation to one another. Bresler (2004) challenges us to view the role our sensing selves play in shaping community and actually connecting with one another. The actual physicality of being together is often taken for granted in the context of learning and creating communities of learners (Stolz, 2014). That we can shape and create community through being together and moving together is also a departure from what we have become accustomed to in education.

As has been discussed in terms of our perceptual selves, our senses connect and ground us to our experiences. Instead of coming in a sitting down and waiting, as we did in the beginning, we are now moving in and around the office space. What does this movement

do to our perceptions when stillness is replaced with a different modality? What stands out and what needs to be noted is the subtle shift in the relationship that begins to emerge as we get up from our seated stationary positions in the office and begin to move around the room. In a different way, we began to read each other's gestures as we manoeuvred around the room to make the hula hoops. The way this revealed itself can be seen in the way Nadia noticed my struggle and stepped in to help me without asking or being told what to do. She read the situation and responded. Bergum (2003) describes the ways in which we can become responsive to one another, our gestures, our relationship to one another as, "responding in ways that are fitting to the rhythm of the other person and what is needed in the moment – unexpected, exciting" (p.125). In terms of verbal communication, we did not exchange words in this moment. Yet, Nadia responded to my needs in a way that fit with the rhythm of making hula hoops together.

The experience of making the hula hoops moved us beyond the relationship we were accustomed to, the one which posits the learner as passive and the teacher as the active agent. Making the hula hoops with our hands was a signal that this CSL project was going to be a relational experience. Bergum (2003) delineates that "embodiment, the lived reality of *who* teachers are, is what opens the possibilities of relations between teacher and student where teaching is understood as a watchfulness, trust of the student, letting the student learn, with the goal of opening the space for the student to "come into one's own" (Bergum, 2003, p.122). This act of letting learn and letting the teacher candidates come into one's own is exactly what the CSL hooping project offered the teacher candidates. In this space, the teacher candidates could begin to conceptualize who they are as teachers, which involves re-negotiating themselves as students as well.

Together, we were forming a relational learning space. Emma describes the feeling of this space, and what it felt like to be part of the CSL hooping project: “I think it gave us another way to connect. It brought us together. It gave us a mutual ground to get to know each other” (personal communication, June 12, 2011). The words used to describe her feeling of being part of this project sheds light on the relational aspect experienced with the project. This space in the office, working together began to show the way collective, relational ways of being together resists the individualistic tendencies of education to isolate students in their learning.

Taping the hula hoops. Making the hula hoops was a highly active energetic task with small short moments of quiet in between attaching the ends together. We experience a significant shift in momentum as we finalized the last step in completing the hula hoops, taping them. Taping the hula hoops is not just about decorating them to make them aesthetically pleasing. The tape offers grip which makes it easier for the hula hooper to do tricks and keep the hoop spinning. The energy we gained while assembling the hula hoops, which was picking up steam as we saw our pile of hula hoops grow, began to slowly wind down as we adjusted to the pace of applying the tape to the hoop. The application took much longer than expected. We learned the rhythm of making the hoops, and slowing down to tape the hoops felt jarring. Now that we had hula hoops with which to use, we wanted to use them! Yet, the anticipation of getting out there to see if we could still manage to keep the hula hoop spinning around our waists was becoming more tangible as we wound and wound the tape meticulously around our hula hoops.

Instead of the jostling and manipulating of PVC piping, we found slower, quieter moments sitting together while taping our hoops and conversing. Literature surrounding the social interaction of knitting circles suggests that this activity develops social meaning.

Simultaneously being a site for the craft but also for conversing, and for the development of relationships (Prigoda & McKenzie, 2007). The significance of coming together and taking the time to tape the hula hoops cannot be overlooked. There was still a sense of urgency to get out on campus and ‘do’ the CSL project. What was going on within the walls of the office as we sat together is the crux of many of the lessons learned from this CSL project. As Nadia reinforces, “the bonding beforehand was very important. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know my classmates on a more personal level” (personal communication, June 12, 2011). What would have occurred if the CSL project did not take the steps to make the hula hoops and instead just bought them? This crucial time of bonding would not have occurred. The sense of a deeper connection to each other and to the hula hoops would have been absent. We would have fallen into old patterns of learning and not experienced the social aspect of learning in the same way. Nadia explains the connection to the hula hoop, and how it is developed:

I did have my own hoop, um, it was the first hoop that I actually sat down and decorated with the group. Like I think that’s why it was special to me, because I actually took the time to decorate it properly. I think that over the course of the year I kind of just gravitated to using that hoop every time we came together. When you decorate it yourself, it definitely becomes yours. And along with that it's all about the experiences you have with it. So you might remember learning a new trick with it or um, like the first time you use that hoop around your waist or whatever, you remember all the experiences. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Even the bonding beforehand, it is easy to see that the group dynamics would have been cordial. The exchanges would have been cordial but the closeness that was created as we interacted and shared our stories would have been absent. Just as women for generations

would come together in knitting circles, this was the feeling as we sat and tapped the hoops. Taping the hula hoops was the kind of task that is easy enough to do, but one that cannot be hurried. And so, it was in these moments of taping that we were able to get to know one another. The building blocks of the project were created as we sat together every Wednesday, as Yvonne points out:

It's a good way of becoming close with people too. Just from that we have become really close. So, just the social aspect of it too. It's great. Like, I think all of us really got along from the get-go but we wouldn't have become so close had we not spent every Wednesday together, it's true! (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Ella echo's this sentiment as she describes how she feels about the CSL experience and her fellow CSL hula hoopers: "it was really enjoyable, it really added to my experience at the university – particularly in terms of meeting people, making friends, really amazing people, I love them all" (personal communication, June 12, 2011). This level of connection is brought back once again to the way in which the CSL project was literally shaped with their hands in a shared learning space. The aspect of learning how to making the hula hoops together through problem solving together laid the foundations for the project to be used and incorporated as they wished.

The collaborative aspect of the CSL hooping project departed from what they were used to in their learning. They co-created the curriculum of the CSL project as they went. This played into the disruption they felt in the beginning stages of the project, and how they began to feel empowered as they made the hula hoops themselves. Yet, it was the aspect of working together throughout the course of the project that was significant to them as well, as Ella states:

It was such a fun experience, and unique and being able to do it as a group – your peers providing that support – different people doing more or less work at certain times than others – community aspect to it with your peers [rather] than one person going and doing or tutoring - it wasn't isolating, we are going to do it as a group.

When one of us had something going on that was more time consuming, others took the reins. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

The collective, social aspect of learning in a relational way is highlighted in what Ella is saying in terms of them supporting one another at different times throughout the project. Their community was growing as they made hula hoops, and this allowed for them to share responsibility as a collective. Jarvis (2009) offers us his understanding, after years of research on the topic of learning, that it “is the whole person who learns and that the person learns in a social situation” (p. 25). Within the walls of a busy B.Ed. program, to find a sense of community was important, as Ella further describes her experience,

I get bogged down with everything – obviously taking the time to keep the collectivity is very important. This year it's been hard for me to keep a connection, to find the time to do an activity, to move and enjoy it was really big! (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

The support that the CSL hooping project offered, through the community they were shaping is yet another way to show how integral their role was in making this project happen. Had the CSL hooping project been handed to them they would not have developed this connection to each other or their learning.

Knowledge – Intertwining Theory and Practice

Many times we tend to think that theory follows practice and vice versa, but the truth is that theory and practice are inextricably linked. (Schramm-Pate, 2011, p.180)

Just as Schramm-Pate writes in the above quote, theory and practice are often thought of as being quite separate. Yet, as he suggests they are indeed linked together. The literature pertaining to CSL within teacher education programs points to the way CSL can act as a bridge to help teacher candidates make connections between their learning and their experiences (Donnison & Itter, 2010). However, I would argue that in the case of the CSL hooping project theory and practice have a relationship that is more akin to the idea of being intertwined (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/1945). They work on each other and closely together, and need to be (re)conceptualized as such if we are to fully develop teacher candidate's perception as such.

Beginning to make the hula hoops was another way for us to begin shifting away from being told what to do and shifting towards doing the learning together. To take it one step further, the teacher candidates continue to unravel their perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation as they shape the project literally from their own hands. In a sense, the CSL project offered the teacher candidates an experience that did not separate theory and practice but showed how theory and practice are intertwined. We were not talking about the benefits of experiential learning; collaborative learning or that learning is inherently social. We were instead diving into the theory together while the practice emerged in the CSL hooping project.

The intertwining of theory and practice occurred as the structure of the CSL hooping project began to reveal to us that we would be learning how to make hula hoops together, instead of being told how to do it by someone else. There is a comfort in working through this process as a collective. There is not one expert watching over us, making sure the steps are done right or dictating them to us. Nadia recalls; "I enjoyed the fact that it was a learning process for all the hoopers, especially learning how to create the hoops" (personal

communication, June 12, 2011). There is a relief within her statement that shows the impact of a collaborative sense of learning. The teacher candidates were actively involved in the process of making the hula hoops, instead of skipping this step and buying them at a store. The integral piece Nadia highlights in her statement is the notion of being in process. In this process the teacher candidates engaged in the tenets of experiential learning.

Ella offers a poignant account of the power of experiential learning, and why moving past the hypothetical is important:

A lot of the B.Ed. program is very theoretical, very like, 'in your classroom we will do this'. But we are not actually in a classroom. So making a lot of plans for an imaginary class that does not exist. That is fine, you have to practice making lesson plans because there is a time and a place for everything. But being able to do something that was hands-on, being able to make the hoops and practice with them. That was huge. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

This account resonates within the notions of theory and practice intertwining because it outlines the feeling of disconnect that can occur in the B.Ed. program for students. Ella understands that knowing how to make a lesson plan is important. However, she expresses that making lesson plans for imaginary classes decontextualizes the experience. This is significant as it highlights the frustration felt by teacher candidates as they try to learn to become teachers. She sees the way the CSL hooping project does not further distance theory from practice but brings it closer together for her. Again, Ella reiterates why the CSL hooping project was so important to her,

actually having that hand on experience. At the end of the 2nd practicum you are a teacher and you are expected to be able to go into the classroom and teach students.

That is so scary if you have no tangible, real situations to connect to your learning/theory. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Another aspect that intertwined theory and practice for the teacher candidates was that instead of us talking about the positive effects of what it is like to make the hula hoops, we were experiencing it first-hand. We could all sense it as we worked with the material, that we made something out of nothing, and this is a powerful feeling. A sentiment they easily expressed through their descriptions of what it is like to make their own hula hoops; “I think it is a really meaningful experience for the person who made the hoop. It is so personalized, ‘this is my hoop, and I made it with my own two hands!’” (Ella, personal communication, June 12, 2011). Carla explains that,

it was just kind of neat to know that you could make the hula hoop. The thought had never really occurred to me that you can make a hula hoop! You definitely feel more connected to the hoop if you made it than if you bought it. They are just better than the dollar store ones. It made me look at other things that I could do or have the sense that I don’t have to buy or use something that someone else has made. It is possible that I could do that myself. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Making the hula hoop for the CSL project gave the teacher candidates an empowered feeling connected to the ‘doing’ of the project. The teacher candidates could take this first-hand experience and know what their students would experience as a result. This is what moves the experience beyond just talking about the possibilities of experiential learning. The importance connected to making the hula hoop is not lost on the teacher candidate either. As Nadia explains, “I think making it in particular is important because you become attached to the hoop and the experiences you do have with it” (Personal communication, June 12, 2011).

Finding autonomy and ownership. Through experiencing the intertwining of theory and practice in this CSL hooping project, the teacher candidates were also intertwining their understanding of their role in learning. Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia began to feel a strong sense of responsibility to the project as they literally built it with their own two hands. As Yvonne recalls, making the hula hoops “puts more ownership on you, makes you more responsible for what you are doing” (personal communication, June 12, 2011). Through making the CSL hooping project themselves, the teacher candidates were beginning to take ownership over their learning (Levesque-Bristol & Fisher, 2010).

It was a unique and enjoyable experience – we put a lot of effort into it buying and making the hoops. The fact that we made these and we don’t want them staying in the storage room doing nothing – like I said when you make the hoop, you are going to go back to it. It is personalized, that’s partially why. I think having something that you personally made makes you want to play more with it. (Ella, personal communication, June 12, 2011)

As the teacher candidates began to feel a connection to the CSL hooping project, they began to internalize this connection. They were gaining a sense of knowing that once again shifted them from passive receptor (as student) to active learner (as teacher). Jardine (2005) describes how this kind of learning is “a deeply pedagogical, deeply epistemological activity - the act of ‘doing,’ knowing-what’s-going-on; the act of bodily participating in the construction of paying attention, understanding and knowing” (p.81). The teacher candidates are now feeling like they ‘know what’s going on’ and this is through their active participation in ‘doing’ and not ‘waiting to do’ their learning. The feeling of autonomy the CSL hooping project was beginning to foster in Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia

began to reveal a shift in their perception as they were learning to teach-in-relation (Levesque-Bristol & Fisher, 2010).

Action – (re)Embodying Learning; Shifting from Waiting to Doing

When you are teaching young children and near the back of the class, one child starts swaying back and forth or stands up when you begin to speak, it may be that the child is trying to understand what you are saying by attempting to “do” understanding in a bodily and motoric way. (Jardine, 2005, pp. 80-81)

What is it like to begin to change the way you experience learning? For these teacher candidates, it was beginning to do more than re-imagine, it was to re-embody what learning is like. What could be felt is that they were beginning to ‘do’ their own understanding of the CSL hooping project as they shaped the linear pieces of PVC piping into circular hula hoops. Instead of entering the office space and automatically taking a seat and waiting to be told what to do, the teacher candidates started to see, feel, and know in a different way. The feeling of working together with our hands was the subtle shift that began to help us with these realizations.

A different feeling began to emerge in the office as we made the hula hoops. There was a distinct shift in energy as the tension first felt was replaced with a comfortable feeling. The way we interacted and communicated changed. The moment of waiting that held the tension was replaced by movement and action. The teacher candidates experienced communication in a relational way as they were not one person telling everyone else how to do something. We found a pace to work together to figure out the steps as there was not one expert in the room. This kind of relational learning required us to pay closer attention to one another. Shaping the hoops meant reading instructions together, copying and modeling one another’s actions as well as being responsive to each other.

Instead of sitting and quieting the body, as we saw when we began the CSL hooping project, there are now bodies moving in the office. Our perceptual selves were communicating with each other as we moved to cut the PVC pipe, bend it, and shape it, instead of sitting distantly from one another. Desmond and Jowitt (2012) explain that, embodied knowing suggests that learning emerges in the between of persons interacting within psychosocial contexts that are inclusive of thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations. Embodied knowing includes the past made present, the here and now, and the unfolding future in the present sense making that is yet to be embodied. (p.224)

Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia were learning through interaction together through perception that was felt beyond thinking about something, but doing something. Their learning began to emerge in the subtle interactions of stepping in to help one another when needed, like when Nadia helped me hold the PVS piping steady. Merleau-Ponty, in reference to perception, explains that “embodiment refers to how we experience ourselves, rather than contemplate it from some position outside it, but as something we ‘inhabit’ as a being necessarily ‘in the world’ through the vehicle of one’s own body” (Stolz, 2014, p.5).

We were collaborating on a level beyond telling, but reading each other’s gestures and being responsive to one another as group making hula hoops, and not as individuals. Graveline (1998), explains that “nothing we do, we do by ourselves; together we form a circle” (p.56). With simple phrasing and mental image, this highlights what the teacher candidates were learning as they came together to make the hula hoops. Graveline (1998) acknowledges a simple yet powerful reality that resides within learning; we do not learn in isolation but in a social context. This is what the teacher candidates were beginning to embody as learners. That we ‘form the circle’ together speaks to the collective aspect of

learning. The social part of learning is often relegated to the side and not recognized. In making the hoops together, we literally ‘formed the circle’. This action, of connecting the ends of a linear piece of piping and shaping a circle with which to play with, the teacher candidates were already beginning to embody the lessons of the CSL hooping project.

Implications of Collaboration

The feeling of collaboration within this chapter captures the complexity of learning to teach-in-relation. A co-c/re(l)ational space was what the CSL hooping project offered Emma, Ella, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia. In a co-c/re(l)ational space, teacher candidates can learn to work together to create curricula that is not prescribed to them. This shared, relational space pulls in all feelings, not just the positive ones; to give teacher candidates a sense of what truly being ‘in-relation’ looks and feels like. Learning in this regard cannot be hurried nor shaped in the way everyone might imagine. Learning to let go and to be present in a collaborative space may be challenging for teacher candidates and teacher educators alike, but is an important part of experiencing the transformative aspects of a CSL project.

Chapter 6: Learning in Movement

Vignette – Hula Hooping in the Community

I take the stiff plastic hula hoop in my hands. The hoop feels sturdy and I step inside. I hold the hoop with both hands, arms out to my sides waist high. The hoop seems too big, too heavy for me to be able to keep it up, rotating around my waist. I swing the hula hoop over to my right side, my left arm crossing over my body. My right arm stays long a straight, extending back while keeping the hoop on a horizontal plane. I hold the hoop only for a moment in this position. My torso is torquing to the right as well, and I feel a slight tension building in my back and shoulder muscles. The next instant I swing my arms back across to the left side of my body, throwing the hula hoop to my right hip with the momentum it has gained from the force of my grip letting go.

The hula hoop feels as though it's wobbling, losing momentum, swaying and rotating its' way around my waist. I repeat the instructions to myself, 'you only need two points of contact with the hoop to keep it moving, so move your hips either side to side or front to back'. I repeat the mantra 'back and forth' to myself, logically thinking about the instructions given to me, all the while trying to get my stiff spine and hips to keep the hula hoop from falling to the floor. Where do I put my arms? They hover above the rotating hoop, unsure of where to go. My shoulders are tense, raised up towards my ears. This tense feeling does not help as I struggle to remember how to move my body this way. One sway of my hips to the left throws the hoop to the left, I rock back to my right foot, right hip jutting out now. The hoops momentum swings back to my right hip. Back and forth, back and forth. My feet feel like they are planted into the ground, unable to move as I concentrate on keeping up the momentum of the hoop. The heavy PVC piping that is rocking against my waist awakens a memory of hula hooping from long ago, but this memory is different. The dense plastic feels

heavy as it rotates around my waist. The weight of the plastic almost hurts as it rolls over my hip bones, too low, a signal I have slowed down too much and must pick up the pace. The jarring feel of the hula hoop against my body begins to settle down. The rhythm of the hula hoop swinging from side to side, front to back, begins to feel like a rolling massage on my back, stomach and the sides of my body. I feel the rolling sensation of the hula hoop as it travels around and around my waist. The sensation is that of the hula hoop always moving away from me yet always coming back to me. The feeling of it flinging away is juxtaposed with the feeling that it is always in contact with one point on my body. Without this one point the hoop would fail to spin and I would not feel that it is continually moving around me, away from me but with me.

My concentration breaks for a moment and the hula hoop slams to the floor. The bang I hear seems so loud in the mezzanine of the education building. I quickly bend down to retrieve the hoop, my awareness coming back to the whole space I am in. I am concentrating so hard on keeping the hula hoop up that I forget about the teacher candidates also hula hooping in this space with me. I stop my arms from throwing the hula hoop against my body again. I see five hula hoopers, the teacher candidates, all moving their bodies in a similar yet different ways. They are all swaying their hips back and forth but some are moving at a quicker rate than others. On some, the hula hoop is rotating at a very high speed, their motions seem so fast. Another looks at ease with her hula hoop, almost like it is relaxing to move this way. One teacher candidate has a rhythmical and graceful demeanor about her as she shifts her weight from foot to foot in a fluid dance. She can keep the motion going in her hula hoop as she moves her body with a grace that I do not yet possess in my own body. The view of the mezzanine that I have is striking: five swooping, rotating hula hoops gyrating around the bodies of these teacher candidates. They appear like circling,

spheres of movement set in juxtaposition to the linear pathways of the students walking to their next class.

As I watch the teacher candidates with the hula hoops, I notice we are also being watched by people passing by. I feel self-conscious, not wanting to be on display. The extra hula hoops we have made for people still lie in a heap on the floor. No one has taken us up on our invite to join in and try this physical activity. I notice eyes darting down to avoid our gestures that surely suggest they join in with us. Instead shoulders hunch up a little higher and their pace quickens. I watch students dart in and around their hula hooping peers. The space of the entry way, the mezzanine, seems to shrink with this new and different kind of movement. I feel not only my presence as being somewhat larger because of this hula hoop spinning around my waist. I also can sense and feel the energy of the other hula hoops as they move and take up, disrupt, and change this space. The hula hoops are not generating wind per say, but my ears are picking up a quiet sound – whoosh whoosh – with each rotation. We are taking up space but we are taking it up not as still standing bodies that might fill up a room. It is as though we are inhabiting this space with such a different motion that we make the space feel as though it has not clear pathways and thus some chaos is added to what is usually a straight forward space that everyone knows how to occupy.

The weight of the plastic in my palms brings my awareness back to my own hula hoop. I try to remember how long has it been since I last held one in my hands. The stiffness in the plastic that I feel reminds me of how my body feels while hooping, stiff and not particularly fluid. I step back into this sphere and the space adjusts once again. I feel different standing inside the confines of the hula hoop than when it is next to me. This attempt feels different. I can tell I feel less worried about whether it might drop to the floor. I try to feel the directives of ‘back and forth’ in my body instead of saying the mantra to

myself this time. My upper spine and shoulders feel rigid as I try to relax my shoulders into the movement that is centered near my waist and torso rather than up around my ears. The more I rotate and move my body, the more I feel the circular shape of the hula hoop inviting a fluid motion. I feel the motion required to hula hoop is beckoning me to relax into the movement and not fight it. The circular fluid motion is trying to remind the stiffness in my spine and hips of the more flexible expression I am capable of, coaxing subtle motions out of me.

As I settle into this new movement, one that my younger self could remember but seems new to my older self, I shift my gaze to the teacher candidates once again. The feeling of uncertainty when we began is not present anymore. I see smiling and laughing faces as hula hoops rotate around bodies. I can feel lightness and a clearer vision forming as I watch the teacher candidates' move in this undulating, circular way. They are moving in a way that is not usual or normal for neither student to do nor teacher candidates to learn.

Vision – (re)Imagining the Self through Hooping

This vignette is set within the moment that we first leave our office and go out onto campus. The description I have included outlines what it felt like to begin hula hooping together, and what it felt like to hula hoop for the first time in a long time. This moment, out in the mezzanine, is significant because it highlights a subtle departure the teacher candidates experience in leaving the confines of our office space. Also, the act of stepping out onto campus to hula hoop challenged and disrupted what teacher candidate's and thus a teacher should look like in the minds of the teacher candidates participating in the CSL hooping project. By taking the hula hoops into various spaces around campus the teacher candidates literally and figuratively disrupted those spaces. These spaces are not typically used for physical activity nor inhabited by teacher candidates in such a manner.

Out in the mezzanine, there was a feeling of being exposed and also the feeling of being on display. At first students took notice of us to see if we were putting on a show. Groups of students stopped to see what was going on. However, it became apparent to them that we were not there to showcase our talents. The slight pause in movement within the mezzanine offered us a moment to spread out and begin hula hooping. The feeling of being watched certainly did not go away, but students and other people walking by or sitting at tables were more reserved in their glances. I was grateful not to be on my own in this moment, and watching the teacher candidates with hula hoops in their hands was reassuring. Simply coming out to hula hoop in this space is not as neat or simple as it seems.

We had made enough hula hoops to have extras and one of our goals was to invite people walking by to join in. The invite was rarely reciprocated, but students on campus definitely took notice. As we began to hula hoop what became apparent was how important it was for us to be out in a shared space in the education building. In other spaces on campus we were just a group of student's hula hooping, but within the space of the education building we were faced with peers, professors and even administrative staff that knew us. The significant aspect of being visible within the education building was that this act began to instill in the teacher candidates the importance of not just talking about best practices in education but once again getting to the important lessons of doing them. Being out and visible in the space they usually reserve just for going to and from class allowed the teacher candidates involved in the CSL hooping project's fellow peers to see what they were doing, and not only hear about it. Nadia explains,

I think that the students that weren't included in our project were able to see what we are doing, and were able to see, 'hey I can do this in my practicum placement'. So I think, I don't know, it was a nice way to shed some light onto what are some

possibilities. So yeah, it was always a talking point. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

What Nadia describes here is the importance of not only sharing the CSL hooping project with their peers but being visible while they were engaged in it. Once again, seeing and being seen is described by Merleau-Ponty (1968/1948) as a reversible relationship. The sensation of seeing their peers in the mezzanine was reciprocated as they were being seen as well.

This feeling of being seen differently is paired with seeing our surroundings and fellow students differently as well. However, even if they had talked up their CSL project in their classes, the real impact came when other teacher candidates were able to see them hula hooping as a group. They were able to hold a hula hoop, and even try hula hooping themselves, and see the way they could perhaps do this for themselves too. Yvonne recalls what it was like to be seen by her peers, but also what it was like to see her peers in a different way as well,

It was neat to see the engagement with other people – see people’s reactions when we were hooping in the lobby downstairs, it was one of those either like: ‘you are crazy’, or ‘what are you doing?’, or ‘you are not going to raise the money’ – it was nice it was just like ‘I don’t care what you think!’ - It was timeless. It was nice to feel liberated. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

In many ways, Yvonne’s description captures the way in which the CSL hooping project was creating a space for these teacher candidates to let go of the preconceived notions teacher candidates hold surrounding what they are supposed to look like and behave. Yvonne describes letting go of what she thought learning to teach-in-relation was like, and embrace the feeling of liberation in this moment of seeing. On another level, Yvonne was also able to

start seeing the value in doing projects versus talking about them in the context of her B.Ed. program.

Part of what Yvonne is describing, the feeling of being liberated, is connected to the actual sensation of hula hooping that was experienced within the halls of the education building. Hula hooping requires that you give in to moving your body in a more flexible way. The circular way one has to move in order to keep up a hula hoop around the waist is, for most, a substantial departure from the way we are used to moving. Even when exercising we are walking, running, jumping, skipping, or squatting in a very linear manner. As adults we are not accustomed to moving our hips, swaying our bodies, lifting our hands above our waists as we try to get our bodies to move in this rhythmical way. Being out on campus and moving in this manner was in part a way we disrupted our perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation. We disrupted what teacher candidates are supposed to look like. We were out for our peers to see, and this, as Ella describes below, offered the teacher candidates a unique perspective from which to work from:

Not having so many strict rules for how you have to move and how you have to be, being able to move your body in ways you wouldn't normally move and not being so rigid, being able to relax and enjoy. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Ella describes, through movement, that being out in the education building challenged us to let go and enjoy moving in this different way. In the education building there was the feeling of tension between the hula hoopers and their circular spinning movements, and the movements between the students walking by and around us. The normal way students are supposed to move in this setting was disrupted as they now had to manoeuver themselves in and around the hula hoopers. The juxtaposition between the circular movements of the hula hoopers and the linear pathways of the students was a shared

experience and one that emphasized supposed normal ways of moving in contrast with the movements of hula hooping. Thus, letting go of what is considered normal was a way the teacher candidates began to shift their perceptions in learning to teach-in-relation.

The CSL hooping project began to push the teacher candidates outside of their comfort zones. In doing so the teacher candidates were able gain confidence in themselves. This allowed them to create change in their program that went beyond just inviting their peers to be more physically active, as Nadia explains:

Especially with the fund-raising, we were able to get so many people to come out and do the United Way campaign. We were able to get people to come and try it. It's a way to get people to step outside of their comfort zone. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Inviting people to step out of their comfort zone is not easy. The teacher candidates in this CSL hooping project were able to achieve this through the hula hooping practice they created for themselves. In the next section, the idea of gaining confidence with be further investigated. As gaining confidence shows itself to be key to the progression of the CSL hooping project and the teacher candidate's perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation.

Relationship – Building Confidence through Movement

Through their hooping practice, a relationship was beginning to emerge that was unforeseen. As we hula hooped together on campus we all began to gain a confidence in ourselves and a comfort with each other. Even as we stepped into the mezzanine of the education building that first day, there was a feeling that we were on our own. Yet, as we began to move together this feeling began to dissipate. We began to form a connection and this feeling of being on our own shifted to feeling like we had a community with which to learn to hula hoop again. The two, confidence and comfort, were building simultaneously as

we hooped together. Yvonne describes how her relationship evolved with her hooping practice,

I put it on the floor, I step in it - it looks pretty beaten up. I have taken it out, developed a kinship. I can make another one but I like that one- it's like an old blanket – it is comfortable – you develop a comfort with it. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

In the first weeks were relearning the skill of keeping the hoop up on our hips. We were learning to move it from one arm to the other and as we did so we developed confidence together. This confidence was created as a result of the time we put in together forming relationship and a comfort hula hooping together. As Nadia explains,

I think it makes you comfortable in front of an audience. Um, I think it makes you comfortable with the hoop. I wouldn't have been able to go into my practicum and have the gym full of 40 kids and been able to do it with confidence. So I think that's a good part of it. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

I often wonder what this experience would have been like if we had not taken the time to make the hula hoops, or put in the time to hula hooping together on campus. The feedback showed that this too was an integral part of the CSL hooping project. Had we not worked on hula hooping together, the confidence to go out and do this CSL project would not have presented itself. By hula hooping we learned that we could enjoy movement but that we did not have to be the best hula hooper either. This is an important lesson for teacher candidates that will be entering the field of teaching. Britzman (1991) discusses the cultural myth of teacher as expert that plagues teacher candidates. Through the CSL hooping project, the teacher candidates were able to experience a letting go of this expectation of them

through experiencing the CSL first hand. Ella describes the connection between learning to hula hoop and her aspirations for her students:

Recognizing that we all have different ability levels and its okay if you're not the greatest hula hooper in the world because it's the same thing with your students.

Everyone is at a different level and you know, you get to see what everybody can do.

Emma had her little flip over the head move which I think all of us have tried to do the entire year. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Hula hooping together every week gave us the opportunity to see that we all have our strengths and weaknesses. These are important lessons, ones that are more powerfully felt if experienced first-hand than being discussed in a course or read in a book. However, we were able to experience this important lesson in a contextualized manner, together. Ella is then able to make a direct link between her lived experiences and how she views the students she teaches. Had it not been for the relationship built on campus this link may not have been so readily made.

The way in which the CSL hooping project increased the confidence of the teacher candidates was not just in them becoming better at hula hooping, or learning new skills. The CSL project became an outlet that gave them a way to connect that was not anticipated, as Yvonne describes,

And it helped just like, mentally, like from our personal standpoint. Like if you're not relaxed and you're not confident, you're not going to be a good teacher. So I think by our second practicum I felt more confident. Not just through teaching but having hooping as an outlet all year and having different experiences with it. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

What is significant here is that as an added layer, the CSL hooping project became an additional way to deal with the stresses of a busy B.Ed. program. Yvonne describes a connection between feeling confident and relaxed in order to be a good teacher. In terms of a relational context, this point of view indicates an openness to learning that may also not have been experienced had it not been for their experiences actually hula hooping all year.

With this newly found confidence, the teacher candidates began to tap into this feeling as they hula hooped together. The foundations of this project once again shifted when they began to expand their learning community to include many other components. The project began to have an infectious quality as the hula hoopers worked on campus, building their practice. As Nadia describes;

I loved um, I loved the fact that it was something that we could not only share with each other and the students in our practicum and the students that we touched upon over the year but also bringing it back to the other people in our class. Everyone wanted to know how to get, get involved in their school and stuff, so it's really really contagious. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Near the end of the first term, the CSL aspect of the project had more or less been accomplished. We had made hoops and shared them on campus. The teacher candidates even fundraised for the United Way. Yet the confidence they discovered began to drive the project above and beyond the initial goal of the CSL hooping project. The parameters of the project widened as they saw the possibilities develop on campus, from the feedback they were receiving from peers and professors alike. Nadia describes her experience out in the community:

I think that it was definitely always a talking point, to and from campus, definitely on the bus and the bus driver, everyone on the bus. I think it particular, I think it allowed

other students to see us as a hooping group and our project in a different light. And even the students in our class, outside of the class time, they well, actually even during class time, because we always talked about it. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

By developing relationships through the CSL project, with themselves, each other and with the hula hoops themselves, they began to feel ownership over the entire CSL project. Even though it was theirs from the beginning, they still saw me and Professor Lloyd as the authority over the CSL project. Nothing we did or did not do could change this until they created their community through building the hoops and subsequent hula hooping practice together.

Just getting more involved, and I think we always talk about getting involved and you know like, changing the path of teachers and how are you going to change the world and change education and it gave us a platform to start. To go with it and I know like, I imagine that all of us are going to keep it up in some way. Even if we're not in a classroom for a while we're going to be doing it. (Yvonne, personal communication, June 12, 2011)

The sense of a community that they created by hooping together is one that Yvonne feels will be long lasting. She connects it to the sentiment of wanting to be involved, engaged in learning, and finding a way to do so in a concrete way during their B.Ed. program.

Knowledge – Learning to be in the Moment

So you pick a hoop up, and as you start -I personally begin to feel a little flutter in my heart- and as you speed up and it starts to move, on your waist, your hips start to rock back and forth and you pick up momentum. I feel like I can do anything in that moment. (Nadia, personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Through the act of coming together as a group, a collective grew as well. They experienced the feeling of what it is like to build a hooping practice, which requires one to put in the time and effort. In a world on campus that resides much of the time in the hypothetical and theoretical the teacher candidates' experience of learning to teach-in-relation was shifted by hula hooping together.

As we hula hooped together, something special began to happen. Something tangible was building up in us and the feeling of hula hooping reverberated and resonated long after we are done moving with the actual hula hoop. The feelings of hooping, of moving together, shifted the notions behind what the CSL hooping project was going to be for the teacher candidates. A change could be felt in the administering of the CSL hooping project. Instead of it being something that would be delivered to other people, it was beginning to resonate and be felt as something important for the teacher candidates themselves. They were realizing they could learn from the movement of hula hooping and from being together.

Unexpected moments came about in this embodied, relational way of learning together. Moments of joy were felt as we spun and twirled the hula hoops around our waist, arms and legs. The teacher candidates were experiencing joy in movement and in letting go. Thus, the joy they were beginning to find in being in the moment and learning to stay in the process of learning. Ella begins to hint at this as she says,

I think that just being able to experience the joy in movement and not thinking so much about every little detail of how you move and how each movement works but being able to just find the flow, just being able to experience it, and enjoy the moment for what it is. I tend to be 10 steps ahead of myself - really nice to be in that moment – the joy in movement. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Once again, had we not taken the time to hula hoop together, would the experience have been as powerful? Would the lesson of learning to be in the moment been achieved? The project was not without its tensions as it was not always easy to take the time out of their busy schedules to hula hoop. Yet, as they built up a practice, they began to feel the effects of nurturing themselves. They felt what it was like to carve out time to hula hoop. These teacher candidates came into the project wanting something, but what they thought would happen did not, as we can see in the first chapter. Taking it one step further, what emerged that was not foreseen was the way they found joy in moving and being together. They rediscovered that feelings of being young. The feeling you get when you just 'are' and you do not overthink movement as an adult might.

Carla also talks about the joy of hula hooping in terms of being in the moment, and adds that,

the actual physical aspect of it and realizing how much I enjoyed having a hoop and playing with the hoop even as whenever we'd have meetings we'd bring hoops and we'd be talking, hooping while we were talking or like, hoop breaks when we were doing the video. It really helped me, even though I was moving around, to be more focused. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

To let go of the notion of being an expert, and to be okay with our varied levels of hula hooping was a learning experience in itself. This notion translated directly to how the teacher candidates view themselves and their students. In a very honest and open dialogue, Ella explains what it felt like to hula hoop:

I get really frustrated, I am a perfectionist and hate not being able to do things perfectly and to know with the hula hooping there are certain things I can do physically and some things I can't do physically and its ok – we all have our

expertise's and different movements and we can move in different ways and being able to let that go! (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

There is a sense of realness to what Ella is describing. She learned something very important through hula hooping that pushed her to understand herself on a different level. Having spent time with Ella from the beginning of the year to the end, I can see she gained a quality in herself that is a touch softer. At the beginning of the year she was not happy when people were not on time. She pointed this out to me on numerous occasions, perhaps still assuming I was the one who was keeping track of such things. The CSL hooping project challenged her perfectionist tendencies. She was supported by the relationships we made together as we hula hooped and she embodied the qualities of letting go. She embodied the feeling of being in the moment and of softening.

Nadia also explains the way hula hooping impacted her learning throughout the year, Well I think that, um, I think that I was just, I tried to have a balance. And that's one thing that hooping gave me. When I did it, I didn't think about school work. Whereas every other time of the day I probably did think about school work. But I didn't think um, I didn't think 'okay get through this, move on, get through this move on' um, it's kind of like, I guess it kind of helped me with my own school work in that, you kind of have to be present in the moment when you're doing your school work just as much as you have to be when you're hooping. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

There is an important point that Nadia is bringing up as she reflects on being present with hula hooping, and transferring that to her school work. What she learned is that it okay to stay in the process of learning rather than rushing to the perceived outcome. She learned that rushing to the end goal might mean missing being present during the moments where

learning might actually be occurring. Through accessing hula hooping as a way to create balance in her life, Nadia began to internalize ‘being in the moment’ and how learning can be thought of in a different light.

Action – Embodying the Movement of Hula Hooping

This final section of this chapter intends to look at the aspects of our movement and the implications embodying the movement of hula hooping and learning to teach-in-relation. As our bodies shifted, opened up, twirled, swirled in the vortex of the hula hoop, our sensing selves moved and became more fluid. This fluidity seemed to somehow transfix and permeate into our perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation.

The physical act of hooping imparted an embodied wisdom that once again falls into the aspect of learning from ‘doing’. From the first time we stepped out of the office space and onto campus the teacher candidates began experiencing the real and tangible aspects of experiential learning. What this means is they began to embody the movements of hula hooping and from that began to transfer the lessons their sensing selves inhabited within their teaching.

Grumet (2004) offers a way to view the experience of the teacher candidates, describing the way their hooping practice reverberated within them to instill the lessons of hooping. She writes:

As our figure/ground perception develops, offering us a meaningful world, what was once completely distant from us, perhaps not even perceived, becomes an object that receives our attention. And then if attention leads to interest, we become engaged with this object. We may handle it, push it away, take it home, eat it, or dream about it. (Grumet, 2004, p.251)

This quote shows the actions of hooping are not left in our office with the hula hoops. Grumet is describing how handling the object, in our case the hula hoop, stays with us even when we are no longer physically in contact with it. We digest the movements. Play with them, forget about them, remember them, and even dream about them. This is how we were embodying the movements of hula hooping together. In a very literal sense, the teacher candidate's perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation were transformed as we hula hooped. The feeling within our sensing selves of the rotating hula hoop on our bodies resonates on many levels.

The way it feels, like a circular massage on the waist and lower back, awakens sensations in the body. The hula hoop acts on the body as we move our hips. Our stiff spines begin to loosen with each turn of the hula hoop. The slower cadence of the hula hoop spinning around the waist feels much different as it is shifted to the wrist. The hoops rotation speeds up and a noticeable change can be felt as the hard plastic hits the bones of the wrist. Reacting to this new position, the shoulder adjusts to support the weight of the spinning hula hoop. These feelings within the body stay long after our hula hooping session are over. Within this resonating action, the new movement cultivates the teacher candidate's perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation.

The hula hoop and its many teachings became that object Grumet (2004) discusses, and their teaching selves the subject as well. Teachers are not supposed to move as hula hoopers move. If asked to conjure up a picture of a teacher, the image of a teacher is gyrating, pulsing, and swinging their hips. Chest moving in and out fast and slow, contracting and relaxing as the hula hoop swirls around their body - arms up in the air, smiles across their faces. This picture of a teacher is a departure from what one is accustomed to seeing (Ross, 2004). More importantly, this picture of a teacher is not what teacher

candidates would tend to envision as they set forth on their teacher education journey. Yet, this is what the teacher candidates involved in the CSL hooping project experienced for themselves. For the teacher candidates, the object that shifted their sensing selves created movement, created action. The simple act of being together in relation, with the added action of hula hooping, unlocked lessons held within our sensing selves that pertain to learning, and learning in an embodied way.

As we hula hooped together, we were doing more than increasing our heart rate. We were doing more than keeping the hula hoop from hitting the ground. The actions of hula hooping, as we handled it, twirled it, were saturated with our “situation and feelings” (Grumet, 2004, p. 251) of learning to teach-in-relation. Our actions with the hula hoop began to move us to “enlarge our consciousness of the world and make other actions – poking, stroking, giving, and speaking-possible” (Grumet, 2004, p.251). Through the spinning hula hoop we could feel ourselves loosening from the rigid forgotten flexibility into a malleable and softer shape of learning to teach-in-relation. As Nadia recalls,

I think it lets you appreciate what you're doing in that moment too, so much more. I found, for me, I kept surprising myself; ‘oh the hoop dropped here; let’s see what I can do with it’. I just appreciated it so much more. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Nadia captures the essence of what moving with a hula hoop can teach us. She is not thinking of an outcome. She is working with where the hula hoop is going, and how it is moving on her body as she hoops. She is being receptive to where the hoop may be going while she manipulates her body to also move the hula hoop to where she wants it to be. She is taking in her sensing self and the way she feels the hoop to encompass visually where it is moving. Listening to and reacting to it dropping ever so slightly off her waist or her wrist.

Perhaps her sense of smell begins to pick up earthy tones rising from the dirt which has been kicked up from the ground as the hoop falls. All of actions and feelings are informing her about her surroundings, about what is going on. This experiential feeling, as she describes, the playful way she investigates this moment of the hoop shifting, allows for her not to criticize that she has let the hoop drop. Instead, she is curious and open to seeing what else could happen in this moment. What is significant is the way she might also transfer this openness to the way she will teach. This is a testament to the way hula hooping works as you concentrate to do different moves, or try different motions with your body.

What was loosening in their movement can be attributed perhaps to the influence of proprioception in our sensing selves. Even though it is a physiological perspective, proprioception tells us where we are in the world (Slepian, Rule & Ambady, 2012). This is because proprioception is the sensorimotor system comprised of the nerves that run throughout our whole body. Proprioception acts as a feedback loop that, for example, adjusts our ankle to keep our balance on an uneven sidewalk. Through this physical way of being in the world we are able to maneuver within our environment without constantly tripping or slipping or falling over. Thinking of the movements hula hooping produces in our bodies we can picture all sorts of nerves that run through our body being activated in this way of moving. To add to this, if we have not hula hooped in some time, as we began to move there would be a resurgence of sensations being invigorated that are usually quiet in our body.

In their study, Slepian, Rule, and Ambady (2012) “sought to comprehensively evaluate the hypothesis that person perception is embodied in sensorimotor states” (p.1626). For example, they found that when their participants manipulated a hard ball they categorized more faces shown to them in photographs as physicists, than their counter parts who manipulated a softer ball (Slepian, Rule, & Ambady, 2012). Perhaps sitting in stiff

desks has affected our perceptions of learning. Perhaps this feeling paired with watching our teacher at the front of the classroom has affected us over the years we have grown up in school. If we have embodied this feeling as we learn and it is part of what the teacher candidates bring with them as they enter their B.Ed. program. The first few weeks in the B.Ed. program might confirm what has been embodied. The teacher candidates continue to see a teacher at the front of the class with students sitting in stiff chairs waiting to be taught. The CSL hooping project helped to move the teacher candidates past this relationship to learning. Their perception was disrupted by taking the teacher candidate and giving them space to move and learn in a different way.

Implications of Learning in Movement

The sense of learning in movement highlights the experiential nature of being ‘in-relation’. Learning to teach-in-relation means, as Kissling (2014) theorizes, “moving beyond Aoki's focus on the classroom, curriculum is living in that it is both in constant development and flux (“alive”) and embodied experience by a person (“lived”). Curriculum, then, is “living curriculum.”” (p.83). In the context of the CSL hooping project, teacher candidates, by ‘living curriculum’, and creating their own hooping practice, gained confidence in their teaching abilities. They too have experienced and lived what they wish their students to experience. In order for this to occur, teacher candidates must have the opportunity to design and create and live their curricula, this shifts it from a noun to a verb (Kissling, 2014). That we can learn from ourselves, within the context of the body, is a powerful lesson and one teacher candidates need to experience first hand. The transformative component of learning to teach-in-relation cannot be told but must be performed by the teacher candidate.

Chapter 7: Sitting with Students

Vignette – Learning to be with Students

On a sunny winter's morning I find myself walking up a snowy path to a beautiful cultural center. As with most newly built First Nation community centers, the design of the building is in a circular shape. A scent of sweet grass and sage permeates this place. The light earthy sweet smell awakens my senses and I feel comfortable here. The scent invokes a sense of sacredness in this place and I am happy to be in a First Nation community.

As I walk through the main entrance I feel the circular shape of the building immediately attract something in my awareness. There are no abrupt lines at the end of a hallway turning at a 90-degree angle. The circular design makes this building very inviting and comfortable. When I look to my left and to my right, the hallway going in either direction disappears into a bend. What strikes me is the gentleness found in the design of this building.

Watching the teacher candidates organize the students and get them ready to start their social action project, I realize this is the first time I have seen them in this light, as teachers. They are no longer just teacher candidates on campus. My role today allows for me to sit back and observe. I decide to take a seat on the floor of the hallway with the elementary students, to see the teacher candidates from their perspective. Watching, I am struck by the gentle authority and confidence they display in their posture and body language as teachers. The students have brought their hoop dancing hoops with them today, and it is obvious, by their gestures and expressions, that they are excited to have them nearby. The first activity does not require the hoops, and the teacher candidates seamlessly ask the fidgety and excited students to put them aside in order to work on their poster project.

I watch the teacher candidates, my neck craned slightly upwards, legs crossed on the hallway floor. They move in and around the poster paper that has been laid out in front of us. I take in and notice the feeling of having to look up to them as I listen to their instructions. I am surprised at the feeling this brings up in me, seeing them in this different light. I hear their voices, they sound calm, clear, and gentle but with a definite firmness. There is a noticeable difference between the way they are talking to these students and the way I hear them talking with each other. I realize this is their teaching voice that I am hearing for the first time. I know I have a different tone when I am working with students but I am still surprised to hear the sounds of a teacher coming from the teacher candidates I have come to know.

The fact that we are all spread out in a hallway, one that curves away and this shifting line that does not go straight affects the way we are seated. The effect this gives is the sense of sitting on a path that meanders and spread us in and around the hallway. Had we been in a long straight corridor, I imagine we would have the room to all be clumped together, possibly in a straight line. The perspective of sitting on the floor instead of in a desk creates a different sensation. Looking up at the teacher candidates, I feel smaller. This sensation paired with the different tone in their voice, one that sound much more authoritative even if it is gentle really makes me feel like a young student again.

As the students get out the markers and scoot closer to the poster board laid out in front of them I notice a feeling of hesitation within the group. It is like the students are not quite sure what they are supposed to do, or rather what they are supposed to produce. Standing over one of the students, Emma encourages him again to draw on the poster board. To use images and even words to describe what hoop dancing means to him. I see nervous glances between the teacher candidates. Then in a moment that breaks the tension, Emma

moves and sits next to this student and asks again, what does it feel like when you hoop dance? She is now at the students' level, sitting next to him, with him. The student thoughtfully replies that it makes him feel good, it makes him happy. The other students are watching and listening. I see this student take a moment to think about this question again, and in a swift movement he begins to draw on the poster board. Following his cue, the other students begin drawing on their poster board. The feeling of being watched by the teacher candidates disappears. The feeling that we are on our own dissipates as well.

As I sit, watch and listen, I begin to hear conversations between the teacher candidates and the elementary students. One student describes hoop dancing as the feeling of being home. There are pictures of houses and also tipis. One young student draws a bright yellow sun above the image of a little girl holding her hoops to the sky. Another student tells Yvonne with pride that "hoop dancing is in my family. My grandma used to hoop dance. We are losing our language, our heritage. When I hoop dance for my grandma she is so happy." Yvonne's expression indicates this young student has said something that resonates with her, which has moved her.

I hear Nadia ask one young girl why she has drawn a circle on her poster. She asks the student if it is a hoop. The student explains, "This is a medicine wheel. It is an important symbol in my culture." She further explains to Nadia that, "it is like the circle of life." I notice that Nadia nods her head up and down with a sense that she is connecting the image of the circle to what she has just heard and making a deeper connection to this response.

As I sit and talk with one of the students about her hoops, I over hear Carla asking a student about an eagle he has drawn on his poster. He explains that the eagle is one of the animal shapes they make with the hoops as they dance, and the eagle is one of his favorites. Carla continues on, asking why he likes the eagle and why it is important to him. Instead of

an answer, there is a flutter of movement and suddenly he is up on his feet. He takes his hoops in his hands. He is manipulating them, shuffling them around with precision. With a few more quick movements, he extends his arms out and displays the hoops seemingly woven in and around his torso and arms. He spreads his chest up and out. He begins to twirl around slowly, dipping one wing down towards the ground while the other tips up towards the sky. He looks like an eagle that is sailing on a gust of wind. He lightly bounces on his feet rhythmically, doing a small dance for us as he turns and shows us the shape of his eagle. The joy and happiness can be felt, and as everyone watches we are all smiling.

The wiggling bodies that were beginning to fidget are all up and moving now. We, the adults, are now on the floor watching an explosion of movement in front of us. Before us is a wonderful show and tell of all the other favorite moves and shapes the hoop dancers are able to do. An archer, the world, a butterfly. Declarations of ‘this is my favorite’ mix in with the enthusiasm of a young student trying to get their hoops to do what they want while they hold our attention. They enthusiastically show us movements we have not yet learned that seem so complicated and difficult. The energy in their bodies cannot be contained. They bend and shape shift their bodies to manipulate the hoops and dance around the small hallway.

The poster project is derailed with this burst of energy. I notice glances between the teacher candidates, communicating with each other about what to do as this show and tell is not part of their plan. Looking around I notice everyone is still smiling and it is evident that this deviation from the plan is okay.

Vision – Seeing Students; Seeing Themselves

The vignette in this chapter highlights some of the lessons the teacher candidates are now learning as they begin to take the CSL hooping project out into the community together.

In this chapter we see the teacher candidate moving off campus and travelling to a First Nation community. This chapter highlights the interplay between the lived experiences of the teacher candidates in a CSL project and the way it continues to inform their perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation as the year progressed.

In the second semester of their B.Ed. program, the teacher candidates had the opportunity to integrate their CSL hooping project within a course they were taking. In this course, there was an option to do a social action project (SAP) with the First Nations community of Kitigan Zibi (KZ). Kitigan Zibi is an Algonquin community located approximately one-hour north of Ottawa. The SAP project invited teacher candidates to create a public service announcement (PSA) with First Nation students at their local elementary school. The teacher candidates decided they would work with a small group of hoop dancers. They wanted to have the KZ students to explore why hoop dancing was important to them. They would then film a short PSA about the importance of hoop dancing within First Nations communities. The idea was to also share their hula hoops with the students and learn how to hoop dance as well.

Standing to deliver. Seeing the teacher candidates in a community setting working with children was an interesting shift in perception versus seeing them on campus. What I see is the difference in the way they compose themselves. There is a slight straightening of the back, shoulders down. Their chins are held a bit higher as they explain the PSA project. Their stance is gentle and confident. Their voices full of confidence, speaking clearly and concisely. This does not sound like the same set of students in casual conversation on campus. I know I speak differently to students at times, also wanting to sound more professional or in charge. Seeing and hearing this shift is fascinating.

The teacher candidates exude an image of a teacher who is organized and knows exactly what is going on. From my vantage point it feels like there is no questioning what we are about to do. This is an odd feeling, but one that emerges from their confident gestures and the tone in which they speak. They have laid out the posters in front of us. What I see is them standing over us, in and around the posters and the students. Even though I know them, I can feel a sense of separation from them as they take the time to explain the poster making process. The feeling of them standing up over us was not something I could ignore. I felt small on the floor. I know they were not intending this in any way, but it was something that stood out as I listened to them. In this moment I felt distanced from them. Set apart.

Sitting to listen. Once the instructions were given there was a definite silence and hesitation on the part of the students to begin putting their thoughts and images on the poster board. Instead of repeating the instructions, perhaps in a gentler tone with a slower cadence, there was a crucial moment where Emma took this silence as a cue that something else needed to be done. In this moment she moved from standing up and over us to sitting down and joining us on the floor. Immediately a shift could be felt in terms of how she was perceived as a teacher.

Seeing the teacher sitting cross legged on the floor, the same as us, was significant. This bodily movement communicated a softer version of the image of a teacher. We could view the teacher at our eye level. The feeling of being small melted away. Their posture was no longer stiff and upright, but more comfortable, more rounded. In the next section we will continue to look at this important shift, but in terms of the shifting dynamic of relationship between teacher and student. We will further delve into how the teacher candidates also began to see the KZ students as the relationship shifted and changed.

Relationship – Learning Through Relations

In order for the partnership between the university and the community of Kitigan Zibi to be based in a respectful relationship the teacher candidates were invited to visit the community prior to working with the elementary students directly. We visited the community center and local school we would be working at. In addition, we watched the documentary *The Invisible Nation* (Loumède, Desjardins & Monderie, 2007) which looks at the relationship between the First Nation community of Kitigan Zibi and the colonial history that resides in Canada. Watching this film was very helpful in establishing a better sense of connection to the surrounding area, and the history surrounding the First Nation reserve of Kitigan Zibi. Having this background was integral for the teacher candidates in understanding the complex history between First Nation people and the settler society that came to this land. Building upon the existing relationship Professor Ng-A-Fook had established already with this community, the teacher candidates were able to come into their SAP with respectful relationship. Having a respectful relationship is essential when working with First Nation communities.

As the second trip to Kitigan Zibi approached, the teacher candidates were anxious about sharing the CSL hooping project with the hoop dancers in a respectful way. In First Nation culture “dance is a way to express their beliefs and traditions” (Johnston, Hixon & Anton, 2009, p.21). The teacher candidates wanted to be sure they were being culturally sensitive and respectful to the students from Kitigan Zibi. To remedy this and further prepare the teacher candidates, Professor Lloyd invited the teacher candidates to meet with Stephanie, their hoop dance teacher. They met at a coffee shop a few days before the trip. Stephanie explained the significance of hoop dancing to the teacher candidates. The way the hoops are respected and how the students are encouraged to conduct themselves in a positive

way if they decide to hoop dance. Upon hearing about the CSL hooping project, Stephanie said, “why not try it?” Stephanie reiterated that if they came into the relationship with respect, their background and experience should not hinder them.

Getting this approval from a member of the Kitigan Zibi community was integral to the teacher candidates moving forward and feeling like they were doing so in the most respectful way. Through the process of meeting Stephanie, they also gained a relational understanding of respectful protocol. The teacher candidates, along with Professor Lloyd, were participating in creating relational accountability (Wilson, 2008). This ensures relationships are created, maintained and respected.

Sitting with students. Coming back to the moment Emma moved from standing over us to sitting with us, why does this seemingly simple moment stand out? This moment seems to put the students at ease almost immediately. Emma is now sitting side by side one of the students. She asks again, ‘what does it feel like when you hoop dance?’ This time, the student looks at her and quietly shares that it makes him feel happy. This shy hesitant voice may not have spoken up had Emma not moved down to the floor next to him. The other students are watching this exchange closely. Almost at once there is an ‘aha’ moment of what is expected of them to produce, and they all begin drawing and working on their poster.

What did it mean for Emma to initiate sitting next to this student? From a relational perspective, the shift this bodily gesture communicated was an agreement that they are joining us on this journey instead of sending us on it alone. By sitting with this student, Emma changed the relationship to be more open and also relaxed. Changing from standing to sitting allowed for Emma to lean in to hear and listen to her student. For a teacher candidate, learning to listen, thus shifting from telling to listening, enacts a relational way of approaching a learning situation (Noddings, 2003). This gesture, of leaning in, is also a

subtle but powerful way to communicate a more relational way of teaching and learning. Perhaps this student was too intimidated to speak up in front of his peers, and in front of this group of new teachers. So by sitting with him, he felt more confident to share what hoop dancing means to him.

What was so powerful was witnessing the emergent quality of the unfolding conversation between the students and the teacher candidates. What stood out was when one student explained her feelings to Yvonne. This student shared the feeling hoop dancing creates for her, that it feels like home. Hoop dancing keeps them connected to their First Nation culture. And, in not so many words, when they share their hoop dancing with other people in the community they are connecting them with their culture too. This student explained that they are losing their language, their heritage, and this is why hoop dancing is important to her as it keeps her connected to her beliefs and her culture. This young girl shows such a strong connection to family, heritage, culture and spirituality. Listening to this student, it is apparent that she is in tune with something more than just the physical aspect of hoop dancing. Yvonne looks truly inspired as she listens to this student. She later describes:

They were teaching us about their beliefs and their background and how it comes into play in more than a physical way. You couldn't help but had to make that connection – it was necessary to make that connection between their culture and the physical aspect of hooping, otherwise you would not understand hoop dancing at all. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Yvonne and the other teacher candidates are beginning to relate to a culture they knew very little about despite being on Algonquin territory, and living in close proximity to this First Nation community. The teacher candidates are engaging in a more relational process of coming to know a culture that differs from their own (Desrochers, 2006). By sitting with and

not standing over these students, the teacher candidates are engaged in a relational way of learning. This relational way of learning being “an art of process, participation, and making connections” (Cajete, 1994, p.24).

Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia are not just confronting a culture they do not know, they are confronting and negotiating the unknown teacher within themselves. Standing represents what they know, and what they have brought with them from their previous conceptions of learning and being in school. The move to the floor, to the sitting, is the unknown but not unknowable (Ball & Gelata, 2005). The shift to the floor shows they are in the process of coming to know in relation to their students. This transition provided them the space to experience a different way of teaching which results in a shift from unknowing to knowing themselves as teachers. In the following section, we will continue to look at the way Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia learn from these First Nations students and the effects of this on their perceptions in learning to teach-in-relation.

Knowledge – Listening and Learning with Students

Learning is the combination of processes whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (meaning, knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) – experiences a social situation, the content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the person’s individual biography resulting in a changed (or more experienced) person. (Jarvis, 2012, p.161)

The definition put forward by Jarvis (2012) is one that resonates with this research specifically because it encompasses the person’s whole self. Once again, we need only to look at cognitive and behavioral learning theories to see how the whole self, body, mind, and spirit are not taken into account when defining what it feels like to learn. In education, the

perception is that it is the teacher who holds the knowledge. The teacher is the gate keeper to knowledge and thus to learning. The teacher is one who transmits this knowledge to the student, who, often is viewed as being a passive recipient of the knowledge (Freire, 1962).

In terms of viewing this research, what began to emerge was the way the teacher candidates were experiencing a shift away from the transmission model found in education. Through our interactions, what began to show itself was a letting go of the teacher as knowledge holder. This occurred in a few subtle ways. The first was that once the teachers were sitting with the students, they began listening in a different way. As mentioned in the previous section, by sitting with the students they were able to better interact and engage with the students. Once the students began to draw on their poster board, the teacher candidates were right there at their level. Being in close proximity allowed them to inquire about the pictures and words the students were using to describe what hoop dancing means to them. This closeness gave a different perspective and a different experience in administering the SAP.

Right up until the teacher candidates sat and really began listening there was still the sense that the teacher candidates would be imparting knowledge to the KZ students. That by doing this poster project the KZ students would learn something important about themselves. However, as the teacher candidates did begin to listen to the students, the realization that perhaps they were the ones learning began to settle into the teacher candidate's consciousness. As I sat and listened to the conversations between student and teacher candidates, it became difficult to see who indeed was doing the teaching and the learning.

When one young student explained the concept of the medicine wheel to Nadia, I am amazed to hear such a clear explanation of this significant Indigenous concept. The look on Nadia's face tells me she did not know the hoops represented the medicine wheel. Nor that

the hoop was more than a physical implement used to express dance movements. This young student makes it clear that the hoop is an expression of the philosophy of First Nation culture. Nadia reflects that “what I learned about was the circle symbolism. We learned that from the kids in Kitigan Zibi. So what, uh, we learned that it represented a medicine wheel. The circle of life” (Personal communication, June 12, 2011).

The philosophy of the First Nation culture is being expressed to the teacher candidates by these students in a holistic and gentle way. As the students share their stories they convey the elements of their culture to the teacher candidates. The students have expressed that learning is more than a cognitive endeavor. The students display how they bring their whole selves, emotional, spiritual, physical and cognitive into learning. This is an important lesson for the teacher candidates, as much of what we understand as learning does not include our spiritual or emotional selves.

By being able to articulate the importance of their culture, the teacher candidates began to realize they were the ones learning in this experience. This realization disrupted their conceptions of the role of teachers in learning that it is possible to learn from students. This shifting of knowledge from a transmission model to a reciprocal relationship is what the teacher candidates began to see, as Yvonne explains, “I learned more – I mean, they were teaching me – instead of me teaching them. It was not just physical either, we were actually learning something culturally from them” (personal communication, June 12, 2011). A reciprocal relationship to learning, one that allows teachers to learn from students and students to teach teachers, is one way CSL helps teacher candidates break down hierarchical and transmission based models of learning (Coffey, 2010).

Action – Embodying Reciprocal Ways of Knowing

Whenever we touch an entity, we are also ourselves being touched *by* that entity...such reciprocity is the very structure of perception. We experience the sensuous world only rendering ourselves vulnerable to that world. Sensory perception is this ongoing interweavement. (Abrams, 2010, p. 58)

The notion that there is reciprocity in perception is beginning to emerge as the teacher candidates continue to engage in the CSL hooping project. Or rather, that they themselves are beginning to open up to this reciprocity. What I feel they are experiencing as teacher candidates is a letting go of their previous selves. This letting go creates what Abrams (2010) describes as “rendering ourselves vulnerable to that world” (p.58). This world of perception that is reciprocal, or as Merleau-Ponty (1968/1948) describes as the flesh of the world, is beginning to create moments where the teacher candidates see themselves and their students in a new light.

This chapter focuses in on the moment of transition from the teacher candidates standing to sitting with the KZ students. This action denotes a shift in the way the teacher candidates began to see and feel learning in a different way. The difference is seen in the way they could now listen and be with the students as they did the PSA project. The teacher candidates could feel, because of this transition and listening, that they were the ones learning, thus shifting their perceptions of their relationship to learning as well.

Now we will look at the final part of the vignette, the last part that has not been discussed. There is a point in the morning when we have settled into working on the posters. The teacher candidates look comfortable sitting next to the students, and continue to ask questions about what each one is drawing and writing about. The moment occurs when Emma asks a young boy what the meaning is behind the eagle he has drawn on his poster

board. Instead of answering with a verbal response, the boy jumps up and shows us what this eagle means to him in a very physical and energetic way by creating an eagle with his hoops.

The moment this student pops up and begins to hoop dance for us on the spot is magical. We have been all sitting for a while, so the flutter of activity awakens our senses. Seeing the smile on his face, the way he elegantly moves his arms through the hoops to make the eagle wings; words are not needed to express what he is feeling. In this moment we can see and feel why the eagle is a powerful symbol to him. He shines with pride and moves with grace. The feeling we get from watching him move could not be described properly with words. We all understand by his facial expression and the expression of his body what hoop dancing means to him. This is not to say the discussion and the poster project are not being enjoyed by the hoop dancers. However, when he shows us his interpretation of an eagle the message is translated and emitted to us on a deeper level. He radiates with joy as he slowly spins in a circle. This is the physical manifestation of what the teacher candidates were trying to get this student to express on the poster, with their words and images, and it is profound.

The rest of the students' watch this and in an instant they too are up and sharing their hoop dancing moves. The teacher candidates are now the ones sitting and watching their students from the floor. The students are the ones up and moving around. In this moment we can feel the possibility of reciprocal learning. The teacher candidates and I can see and feel this interweavement of our selves seeing and being seen. Even though they are the ones standing, and we the ones sitting, we have not gone backwards into a transmissive way of learning.

What stands out as the teacher candidates work with these young students is the subtle way they have been influencing them as they learn to teach-in-relation. The students shared their stories with the teacher candidates, and in turn the teacher candidates found the

space to listen and sit with them. They also had a decent amount of time in the morning to work with the students. While we were not located in a classroom, the teacher candidates were able to work with these students on their own terms. The teacher candidates were not being observed by cooperating teachers. These factors provided the teacher candidates with the opportunity to let the PSA project go where it may. So when the students began hoop dancing and showing us what hoop dancing means to them with their movements, the teacher candidates were able to let this moment happen. In the next chapter, the notion of perception being reciprocal (Abrams, 2010) will continue to permeates as we learn to hoop dance from the KZ students.

Implications of Sitting and Listening

What the CSL hooping project highlights is the need for teacher candidates to have the opportunity to enter into a different relationship with their students. The sense of sitting and listening is another way teacher candidates can shift their perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation. There is a responsiveness that is required in sitting and listening. One that is not always apparent when standing and delivering a lesson, one that could be missed if the teacher is at a distance while giving the lesson. Teacher candidates need help to find these moments in order to challenge what they think learning to teach-in-relation is like. CSL offers these moments of being ‘in-relation’ to teacher candidates and their students.

Chapter 8: Learning with Students

Vignette – Hoop Dancing with Students

After lunch we go to the gymnasium to learn how to hoop dance with the elementary students. The vastness of the tall ceilings and the grand scale of the surface area in the gymnasium is welcoming and invites a sense of movement and freedom. Compared to the morning's activities there is a chaotic feeling in a gymnasium, this is a space where students are encouraged to run, tumble, and even yell. There is room for everyone in this large space to move with ease.

We are arranged in front of Stephanie, the students hoop dance teacher. I notice odd glances between the teacher candidates, and wonder why they seem concerned. We circle our hips, knees, elbows, shoulders and torso. We swing our arms forwards and backwards. We pull one arm across our bodies, holding a stretch that lengthens our triceps. These simple movements feel taken for granted in my body at the moment. They feel too easy yet when you actually do them they feel good and really open up the body. The bit of tightness built up in my body, after a morning of sitting on the floor, releases. This movement has brought me back into my bodily awareness and back to the moment. This change in tempo, from the slower movements of the morning to the more exuberant movements we are beginning to do, as we warm up adds to the feeling of growing anticipation to learn how to hoop dance.

To be taught how to hoop dance, we are all paired with one or two students. I am paired with a very sweet and enthusiastic young girl. She has long brown hair and an easy going demeanor. I stand across from her I feel as though I tower over her. I wonder how this is going to go, her teaching me hoop dancing moves. I quickly assess that she is a natural. She begins by showing me some of the different moves she likes to do, her favorites. She hops with such a lightness in her feet, the ball of her foot coming down to the wood floor and

just as it touches and the heel is about to come down too it bounces back up and down again. Two beats, da-da, emanate from her movements, the ripple effect can be seen of the beat moving up the rest of her body. Seamlessly the other foot comes down and does the same, da- da. The rhythm of her feet, her bodily movements, reminds me of what I know of jigging, a Métis dance done to fiddle music. And yet, there is a difference in the tempo of hoop dancing. I can feel myself holding my breath as I watch her. As I watch I wonder how I will do these same movements. She effortlessly spins around now on one foot, hopping in that steady rhythm, da-da, the other foot tapping in and out, across her body and then out to the side. She shows me a sequence of moves that contorts her body in wonderful ways. Spinning the small hoop around her wrists, she shifts it to her palm and from there in one quick movement she somehow jumps through the hoop. Almost as if to swoop through it, my eyes unable to process what I have just seen. The fluidity of her movements baffles me for a moment. In reaction to her movements I feel myself wanting to back away from her, unsure I will be able to do this.

She continues to move around me, balancing the hoops and manipulating them in her hands as she dances around me. I notice her upper body now; the motions suggest an upward beat within her chest as her feet tap the ground. Her torso and shoulders follow the rhythm of her feet, sometimes moving side to side with each pulse rippling up her body. The foot that is not in contact with the floor seems to bounce upwards with weightlessness like it is suspended in the air. All the while her hands are shifting the hoops around, placing them around her body, linking them. She forms her body into different shapes, shouting ‘this is a butterfly!’ Once in the hoops, she twirls around, contracting her body in and out to flap and show off her wings. This is too complicated for me to simply imitate. She notices I am not able to follow her lead and slows down her movements. She stops to show me how she has

linked the hoops together, how she weaves her arms through the hoops. I am amazed at how easy she makes it look, how smooth her transitions are.

When I try I feel clunky, fumbling with my hoops as I try to bounce in the same rhythmical way she does. She is very encouraging, and even when I take an extra moment to get into my butterfly wings, she encourages me. She is already in 'butterfly', and has been for a few seconds as I concentrate to get my hoops organized. I try to get the same movements as she has, the same rhythm. I sense that she is pausing so I can catch up. When she sees me open up my arms to finally show her my butterfly wings, she beams at me with pride. In a gesture of approval, she explodes into her dance. Her shift in energy, the way she spins around in such an enlivened state, conveys to me her happiness at my accomplishment. I feel a sense of joy in the movement, and her bodily expression exudes this joy as well.

We dance in circles, fluttering about as butterflies, bouncing from one foot to the other in rhythm with one another. I do my best to mimic her, to see what else she is going to do. We work through other shapes and animals together, following the same kind of wonderful pattern: she shows me, I observe her, and try to mimic her movements. She slows down in certain parts if she sees I am struggling, watching my movements for queues as much as I am watching her. As she looks at me, I have this sense that she is tuning into my needs as a beginner.

I lose track of time as I concentrate to shift between the different shapes we have been practicing. I am unaware of what is going on in and around us as I am immersed in this way of learning how to hoop dance from this young girl. I have moved through many different shapes and have a beginners understanding of the basics. So with this skill set, we string some of the movements together to form a hoop dance to show the other groups. What I am noticing is that while I do not feel as graceful as she is, I am having so much fun it does

not matter. I love the feeling of holding the hoop in one hand, threading my body through the hoop, coming out of it in a lunge, extending my arm out and taking the shape of an archer shooting a bow and arrow.

In no time, what feels like only moments, we are called in to gather and show what we have been learning to the whole group. I am amazed by what I see, teacher candidates and students in movement together. There is a kinship in their movements. More than ever I can see them communicating with each other, eyes making contact, following, mimicking each other's movements, remember the sequence of hoop dance moves they have strung together. We are all gathered in a large informal circle and in the middle is where each group shows their routine. We show what we have been working on, and I feel a bit intimidated to be hoop dancing for the first time in front of an audience, yet my partner reassures me with a smile that we will just do our best. Once we start moving together, I forget my insecurities and once again am immersed in the movement, in the rhythmic beats of our feet, feeling the hoops moving in and around my body as best as I can manage. Her fluidity is much more masterful than my own, but I am having fun and enjoying how I feel as I move. Once our routines have all been shared we are almost out of time. The hula hoops are offered to the students and they begin to play with them on their own.

Vision – Embracing Change: Letting go of the Planned

In this chapter, a few moments stand out that are significant to seeing the shift that is occurring in the teacher candidate's perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation. The first, and perhaps less obvious from the vignette, is the how the activity in the afternoon unfolded. The second is the way the teacher candidates adjusted themselves as a group to let go of what they had planned and go with what was instead developing. The teacher candidates had intended to record video of the hoop dancers actually doing their hoop dancing. Also, they

were going to record them saying what hoop dancing means to them on camera. The plan was to then learn some hoop dancing from the students and then have the students learn hula hooping moves from the teacher candidates as well. However, when we got to the gymnasium that afternoon, the group of hoop dancers were not the only ones there. Other groups of students doing PSA projects of different were now all in the gymnasium as well.

I noticed there were looks of uncertainty being exchanged between the teacher candidates. They were working out how their plan would have to be revised. Watching them work through the process of dealing with a teaching situation that does not go as planned was interesting. With each other's support, they quickly shifted their plans and moved on. This is not to say they did not experience frustration in dealing with their plans changing. They were able to work through this unpredictable situation quickly and efficiently because they had experience working together.

In many cases, the way an activity unfolds usually does not follow the script of a lesson plan. When things do not go as planned it is difficult for new teachers and teacher candidates to adjust and to go with the flow. What the teacher candidates were experiencing first hand as their plans shifted was a curriculum-as-lived-experience rather than the curriculum-as-planned (Riley-Taylor, 2002). The teacher candidates wrestled with letting go of their initial plan for the afternoon and as they did so they were entering into the uncertainty that often comes with teaching. However, within this uncertainty the teacher candidates were given an opportunity to re-imagine another way of teaching (Helsing, 2007). The feeling of letting go of lesson plans and changing it up is not always an easy skill to acquire.

Another aspect that stood out from this afternoon was seeing the teacher candidates separated and working one on one with the students. The image from the morning was of

them teaching as a team, together, highly organized and with a set lesson plan. The difference this afternoon is that they are now separated, busy with just a few students. Perhaps unable to confer over details, but also as immersed as I was in learning to hoop dance. This is perhaps why we all lost track of time. How we actually did not end up having much time to show them any hula hooping moves. We ended up just letting them play with the larger hula hoops.

Relationship – Bonding through Movement

In the morning the students began to show the teacher candidates, and myself, just how much they could teach us. This was discussed in terms of entering into a reciprocal relationship and how this relationship added to the shifting perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation. The aspects within a reciprocal relationship followed us into the afternoon's activity of hoop dancing as well. However, this time it was felt more in terms of the relationship we were making as we moved than when we had been more sedentary. In her description, Ella explains the connection they were able to make between the elements of bonding and how this helped them learn together:

For me the most meaningful experience in the whole thing was going to Kitigan Zibi and doing the workshops with the children there. Bonding so quickly, through movement and from the morning of sharing. The mutual joy and experience and have them teach us their experience and show us their movements. Them teaching us and us teaching them. For me that really stands out. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Ella highlights the way the project felt in the morning. A strong bond was created by being with the students and listening to them. The bond was amplified and deepened when the students became the hoop dance teachers in the afternoon. Within the bond that was

forming was also trust. The teacher candidates were letting go of what they perceived as teaching. They began to move away from understanding the relationship as the student receiving knowledge from them towards seeing they could learn from their students.

Being out of one's comfort zone and being asked to learn a new activity is taken for granted much of the time in teaching. In learning hoop dancing from these young students, the teacher candidates were now the ones placed in a new and unknown learning situation. As teachers, we often forget we are asking our students to do new things all the time, which pushes them and takes them out of their comfort zones. We need to recognize what it feels like to be asked to do something new, and remember that feeling. This is what the experience of learning to hoop dance also gave us and might not have been possible had trust not been in place.

Connecting in movement. Reflecting on the time spent with my hoop dancing partner, I am brought back to the feeling of being in the moment with her as she taught me the movements and rhythms of hoop dancing. What stands out is the way our relationship grew as we danced together. When we began, I was timid and shy to try moving the way she was. In the beginning I could not imagine I would be able to do some of the moves she was showing me. Like folding myself in half at the waist and moving through the small hoop. However, with her patience and guidance I started to learn and through our shared experience of moving together we began to connect and trust one another.

As we danced together, a relational space was being created between student and teacher. Van Manen (1997) discusses the interpersonal space between two people as being approached and experienced in a corporeal way. There was a feeling that our exchanges were being guided more by our corporeal selves to communicate than on our verbal language (Stolz, 2013). Our bodies were moving together and in this interpersonal space we were

relating. Our exchanges transcended verbal communication. The movement and thus the communication between us sheds light on the intangible essence of what we try to comprehend as the relationship that resides between people, between things (Sidorkin, 2004).

Through our time together, in the movements of hoop dancing, we were continuing to build a trusting relationship. I felt safe to make mistakes and I could tell she had the confidence to teach me to hoop dance. In this relationship I was learning about myself and also about her. This link is crucial to understanding that relational knowing is integral in teaching and learning with children (Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, Turner-Minarik, 1993).

Knowledge – Indigenous Ways of Knowing

The concept of knowing and knowledge was shifting for the teacher candidates in the moments of listening to the students, observing them hoop dance and then participating in hoop dancing. The concept of listening, observing, and participating is an aspect of an Indigenous pedagogy (Battiste, 2002; Stiffarm, 2003). As the teacher candidates were pulled down to the floor to listen in the morning, they began learning from the students rather than being the teacher who knows all, who has all the answers. Along with entering into a reciprocal relationship in terms of learning together, in and from each other, the teacher candidates were engaging in a pedagogy that was based on Indigenous values. This flips the idea, the vision, of what teaching looks and feels like. Indigenous scholar Marie Battiste (2002) writes that,

knowledge is not what some possess and others do not; it is a resourceful capacity of being that creates the context and texture of life. Thus, knowledge is not a commodity that can be possessed but is a living process to be absorbed and understood. (p.15)

Through working with the First Nation students from Kitigan Zibi, the teacher candidates had the opportunity to experience this notion of knowledge as a living process instead of a

commodity that some possess and others do not. By dancing together and learning from the hoop dancers, we were able to experience this first hand. They began to absorb and understand a different way of knowing, one that is relational and also embodied. We were able to listen to the students describe what hoop dancing means to them. This is important as it was the piece that helped us to understand hoop dancing as being something more than a physical activity. For these students' hoop dancing incorporated the emotional and spiritual as well. Understanding this, we were able to engage in learning to hoop dance with a deeper sense of reverence. We were given a space to observe the students hoop dance. In this environment we were able to begin participating when we felt comfortable. This is how we were engaging in an Indigenous pedagogy. We were learning by doing, imitating, and mimicking. Thus, in this exchange we could feel a subtle shift in knowledge as commodity and knowledge as something that can be absorbed and understood.

When I was observing my partner hoop dance what stood out was that her guidance was not a step by step 'how-to' of hoop dancing. We did not read about it. Or look at a power point or have to sit still while she demonstrated the right way to do hoop dancing. She was showing different moves while I observed. She let me try the move and then worked through it with me. I was allowed to make mistakes and try the movements at my own pace. She was proficient, for such a young student, to pick up on the moments where I was not getting a move. She was responsive in her observations of my skill level, and able to slow it down or demonstrate it again for me. Unlike many of the memories I have of learning a new skill or movement, there was not a set of instructions or repetition connected to this way of learning (Carlson, 1995). She was not saying 'now do this move ten times' or practice until you are good at this one specific skill. This process of observing, listening, participating felt

organic and holistic. This process was all in the way the student intuitively taught me these hoop dancing movements.

Action – Embodying Spaces and New Movement

The time we spent with the students from Kitigan Zibi was very significant because we began to embody an understanding that we can learn from our students. Two aspects contributed to this: the first being that we were in different learning environments that did not feel like a regular classroom. The second was that hoop dancing required us to move our bodies in different and unexpected ways. The new movements were a departure from what we knew, even different from the movements of hula hooping.

What does a learning environment have to do with shifting the perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation? In this case, the teacher candidates tried to inhabit the image of the teacher when they began their PSA project. They were standing up, delivering the instructions as their students sitting and listening. Perhaps their perception of the space allowed them to feel like they could move down to the floor to sit with us. Perhaps it was the smell of the sweet grass and sage that coaxed them to move into a different relationship with the students. The hallway we worked in in the morning and then the gymnasium in the afternoon offered different spaces in which to learn to teach-in-relation. In this space they had the ability to let go of their perceptions of what teacher should look like. Through being in the community centre and the gymnasium, they began to embody other possibilities of what teaching can look and feel like. They had the space within these parameters to do what they wanted with the students. In terms of teaching and learning they were able to adjust and be responsive to the students they were working with without a cooperating teacher or supervision looking over their shoulder as well. This freedom enabled them to try a different

style of being with students. They were able to move into a space that brought them down to the floor and also that allowed them to listen to the students.

Having different spaces of learning give teacher candidates a different way of learning to teach-in-relation, one that invites them to “imagine pedagogy not as the effective delivery of knowledge, content and skills but instead as a series of particular encounters in relational, affective and embodied space” (Gannon, 2010, p.27). I feel the teacher candidates were beginning to inhabit this relational, embodied space as they experienced hoop dancing in the community of Kitigan Zibi. In this space they were able to let go of the perception that they were delivering knowledge to the students. They began to experience this relational interplay between themselves and the students. The space of being together was being taken in by the teacher candidates, in the way teaching can be experienced, as Ella explains:

This is why hoop dancing together, with the students, was so important. We were together, experiencing it together and not just, as a teacher saying, ‘listen to me and now you go and do the activity and I’ll watch you from over here’. It was watching them, but having them watch me too, and then hooping together. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Ella makes a strong case in her statement about the importance of experiencing moments such as hoop dancing with students. Ella is challenging a clear perception of what many teachers do when giving a lesson to their students. They explain it and then send students off on their own to do it. Ella describes a relationship she is embodying as she participates with her students instead of just watching them hoop dance. Ella shows that being with students is required in order to embody learning to teach-in-relation.

Embodying new ways of moving. We were required to move our bodies in ways that went beyond what we knew, even from hula hooping. We were hopping on one foot,

bending in half, stretching out. Looping our arms through hoops and dancing as we were intertwined within them. These movements pushed our knowledge of moving and in many ways it continued to push our comfort levels. We were learning to let go of being the teacher and stepping into the role of learner. As we moved and danced we were experiencing that reversibility, the reciprocity, in the relationship between teacher and students.

Teacher candidates were experiencing an approach to learning that was experiential and embodied in nature. By engaging in these different movements, the teacher candidates were “re-awaken the knowledge that their bodies are continuously giving them feedback” (Graveline, 1998, p.183). In terms of learning to teach-in-relation, this is an important distinction and one that is not often acknowledged when thinking about how teacher candidates learn to teach (Stolz, 2013).

Implications of Learning with Students

The sense of sitting and listening is closely connected to the feeling of learning with students in this CSL hooping project. The feeling of ‘they taught me’ and ‘I can learn from them and they can learn from me’ is a lesson that can be learned through engaging in CSL projects. Teacher candidates will experience a blurring of lines between who the teacher is and who the learner is in kind of pedagogy. Learning to teach-in-relation places the teacher candidate in a reciprocal relationship with their student and many lessons can be taken from this exchange.

Chapter 9: Embodying a Flexible Practice

Vignette – Practicum

I am standing, holding a hula hoop in my hands, watching my class of students run around the playground. I am out of breath, having just hula hooped with a group of students for a few minutes. Standing back, I am trying to take in what I am seeing and also what I am feeling in this moment. Every student has a hula hoop, the one they each made and taped together, inside the walls of the school where I am doing my practicum placement. All last night I was anxiously waiting for today. I was not sure how my students would do with this activity. I was not sure if they would enjoy it, or think it was silly. This anxiety rested mostly with the thought of the boys in my class. I try to shrug off this feeling, and now that I am watching all of my students, boys and girls, I am seeing everyone smiling, moving and enjoying themselves.

I let out my breath which I feel like I have been holding it in since last night, and feel my shoulders relax a little more. Now that I see them, it feels silly to have been worried at all. Yet, this is my activity. No one asked me to do this, no one required it of me nor will I get marked on it. This will not go toward whether or not I pass or fail my practicum. The feeling of this activity being my initiative gives me both a heavy sense of responsibility and also a lighter sense of excitement. There is a freedom in knowing this is my activity that no supervisor or cooperating teacher is there to dictate or say what might work or what will not.

As I take my hula hoop in my hands again, a student excitedly runs over to me and exclaims that he is a spaceship! He races away, zooming in and around his fellow classmates. I have never seen this student so enthusiastic. He moves in close to another student who has gathered a group around him. Curious, I crane my neck and step closer to see what he is doing. To my amazement, the student at the center of a large circle of students is doing what

can only be described as a hybrid between hip hop dance and hula hooping. The way he is moving is unbelievable! In one move he is dropping down somehow, while still keeping the hula hoop rotating on his body. He pops back up again and maintains a rhythm in his body that I have never seen before. I feel a sense of surprise. I never expected to see this kind of movement or interaction when I decided to do this activity with my students. I feel like I am seeing them in a new way and now they are somehow different students to me than they once were. This is a strange sensation but at the same time it feels like a deepening of sorts, I feel like I understand them more somehow.

I throw the hula hoop around my waist and begin hula hooping with another group of students. I am trying to keep up to what a student is showing me, spinning my hula hoop around my wrist and moving it up my arm. As I move I sense a parallel to what I am now feeling as I teach these students in the classroom. I feel a more natural sense of movement in this practicum that was not present in my first practicum. I shift and move between desks to answer questions, kneel down to the level of students to listen to what they are saying. I can feel a sense of flexibility in being in the classroom, a confidence that has replaced hesitation and rigidity. Much like we are doing now, experiencing different ways of moving and staying in this process, I feel this when I am teaching. I do not hold onto my lesson plans as tightly as before, I relax into the process of learning instead of worrying about the outcome or following my lesson plan to the letter. I sense a flow in my teaching practice that seems to match my hula hooping. These feelings resonate with me as I hula hoop with my students today in the playground. I feel like a graceful and fluid teacher, an image I never imagined; hula hooping and moving this way with my students.

This reflection comes up unexpectedly, and as I come back into the present moment, I scan the area once again. I can see that students are all playing and sharing their hula hoops

with one another. This is also new, seeing them all getting along. The lines between who usually does and does not get along - who bullies the other, who is left out - are blurred as I see the hula hoops moving and twirling. They are showing each other what they can do, mimicking and copying different moves that each are doing. Some of the students that seemed introverted are leading students and showing them what they can do with the hula hoop. I can see a sense of pride emanating from them as they play together.

Vision – Seeing Students: Being Seen by Students

In this vignette, Emma describes what it is like to bring the CSL hooping project to her practicum in two ways. The first, which will be the focus of this section on vision, is the moment she realizes she is seeing her students in a new way on the playground. This glimpse draws us into the feelings and sensations of what it is like for a teacher candidate in the midst of her practicum placement to try something new with her students. This moment is significant because Emma describes many realizations that could be interpreted through the notion of reversibility as outlined by Merleau-Ponty (1968/1948). Evans (2008) reminds us that “the notion of reversibility allows Merleau-Ponty to characterize flesh in a manner more precise than the inability to know where seeing ends and seen begins” (p.188). The experiences of teacher and student are grounded in this reversibility. This reciprocal exchange resides in the distinction between seeing and the seen that can be reversed. The interplay between seeing and being seen is so intertwined that it is challenging to distinguish who is the seeing and who is being seen.

In many ways we have come full circle in terms of seeing how the CSL hooping project shifted the perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation within the teacher candidates. Up until now, Emma has had experiences with her students on practicum that confirmed what teachers should look like and what students look like. Within her classroom, they are

sitting in desks and she is up at the front of the room dictating and providing the lesson.

What she has seen in her students is herself as a student. Even at the university level wherein she partakes in her learning by entering her classroom, sitting and waiting to be taught. If we look to the first chapter and the vignette ‘waiting to start’, we also saw this relationship recreated in the office where the CSL hooping project was created. The teacher candidates initially expected the CSL project to be a re-creation of what they knew of learning and teaching. We had to negotiate an ingrained perception of learning in those first few meetings, and it was challenging to move past them.

The CSL hooping project disrupted the way Emma saw her students and the way they saw her. Instead of seeing her students as separate from her, the CSL hooping project connected the teacher candidates to the relational aspect of learning. This shift pushed Emma to maintain this relational way of learning in her practicum. Viewing perception from a phenomenological perspective pushes us to understand the chiasm that exists between student and teacher. The teacher candidates were beginning to see that their students were not separate from themselves, and that their experiences are intertwined with theirs as teachers (Mottern, 2013).

Emma describes the feeling that the CSL hooping project gave to her when she brought it to her practicum. The CSL hooping project gave her a platform to be seen, but in return she was seeing her students:

I think it offered something unique, something different to bring into our own classroom as students and also as educators. I could see the pride in the students when we made hula hoops, they used them and seeing them outside, sharing them with other people it gave them that feeling as well. That they were different, that they had something that made them happy, like it made all of us when we did it. We

always say that you can't not smile while you're hooping so it gave them something that they not only enjoyed but made them unique and had, gave them the opportunity to engage with others and teach others. Like, they weren't supposed to bring them out for recess. But we let them anyways. Um, and seeing the students, they were all playing together. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Within this passage we begin to see the concept of reversibility (Merleau-Ponty, 1968/1948) that is emerging within Emma's experience outside with the hula hoops and her students. Emma is seeing her students move and she is able to relate directly to their experiences because she also has felt it. Their happiness links directly to her own feeling when she is hula hooping. This feeling merges with how she is beginning to see herself as a teacher, who moves with her students at their level. In turn she is seeing herself in her students, and her students can see their teacher in themselves at the same time because she too is moving and smiling. Both of their experiences in the moment of hula hooping, feeling unique, standing out, being seen, and feeling happiness, are coming closer together. This shared experience is drawing them in and intertwining them together. As an added level, Emma knows the students are not really supposed to bring the hula hoops outside. So in this action of pushing against what is considered the norm in this school, she is seen differently by her students. Her perception about what it is like to learn to teach-in-relation continues to shift as a result.

Seeing and experiencing assumptions. Coming back to the playground, Emma observed aspects in her students that she had never seen before. She saw students attempting hula hooping for the first time while others seeming to have a natural proficiency for this movement. More surprising was the innovation in the movements of some students that did not resemble just hula hooping around the waist.

Seeing all of these actions and interactions was the moment she was able to loosen the tension in her shoulders, to release her held breath. Emma realizes just how she was holding onto assumptions when she is able to relax and enjoy hula hooping with her students. She thought about whether her students would engage in the CSL hooping project, and worried about it. However, she held this tension in her body as well. The letting go of her assumptions was reflected back to her from her students as they hula hooped and experimented with movements. This back and forth, the reversibility of seeing and being seen, continued to challenge her perceptions about her students. Once again it comes back to letting go of assumptions and previously held perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation.

Emma describes what it felt like to incorporate a CSL hooping project into her practicum:

Bringing it [CSL hooping project] to my practicum, I didn't expect some students to like it as much as they did. We learn everyday not to have assumptions about students, and not to go into the classroom with them. But I was nervous to use it because I thought that the kids might not enjoy it, maybe they weren't those kinds of students. Or the boys especially, would they like it? Doing the CSL hooping project with them really opened up my mind. It showed me that you can't have those assumptions. Though sometime you don't think you have these assumptions but you're still holding them. So it opened my mind more to try different things that you might not think will be received well in a classroom when really they will. So you need to just try it and see. So I think yeah, now I would try new things in my classroom that I might not have done before. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Emma admits to being nervous about bringing the CSL hooping project to her school. Even so, she had the confidence to do so because of the foundation that existed from her time hula hooping on campus. From this foundation she was able to negotiate her feelings of anxiety and nervousness, but only to a degree. What she did not fully comprehend was the feelings she was having resided in the fact that she was holding onto assumptions about her students that she did not realize existed until this moment. She was anxious because she did not think her students would be enthusiastic to hula hoop. With the added worry that it would be the boys in particular who would not like this activity.

CSL projects can help teacher candidates let go of their assumptions about students. Perhaps even make them realize they have assumptions in the first place. The understanding Emma came to about her assumptions was through an embodied experience rather than one she read about or discussed in a course (Schussler, Bercaw, & Stooksberry, 2008). The hands on, experiential nature of CSL projects gave Emma the opportunity to bring an authentic, real-life experience with her to her practicum (Ryan & Healey, 2009). Emma further unpacks the reversible sensation of seeing and being seen as she describes what it means to not stand by and watch students, but to be part of the activity:

To stand back and watch the teacher watching the student doing their activity – the teacher would show them how to do something, they would go back and she would be standing – very rigid and not engaged in the process. The act of doing something like hula hooping, you get to see the enjoyment in the movement. There is an appreciation for the movement. And as a student, you get to see the instructor enjoying the movement - not just you doing it and instructor watching you. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Here Emma describes the act of hula hooping and the way this makes her visible to her students and how her students become more visible to her in turn. Emma describes the feeling of what her students are experiencing because she knows the same feeling. She sees the connection between her students and herself as they reflect the joy she feels when hula hooping. She also draws our attention to the way teachers do not connect with students when they do not participate but simply watch over you. When teachers do this, there is still a person seeing and another being seen, but the seeing is done in a different way. A disconnect can be felt between student and teacher. This intertwining of seeing and being seen is again emerging from this quote, and once again it is revealing the closeness the teacher candidates are feeling by moving with their students.

Relationship – Students Connecting through Hooping

Emma strikes an interesting note when discussing the CSL project. She is beginning to see a transition from being a student doing a CSL project and that of an educator implementing this activity in her class. She saw the joy hula hooping brought her spread to her students. Had she not built a practice would she acknowledge the feeling of joy she saw in her students in the same way? Would she have that bodily understanding of what was going on when they moved the hula hoop around their bodies? Another aspect she noticed right away was the connection the CSL project created in her class. Yet, here it is magnified to show her how useful a tool it can be to combat various challenges inherent in all classrooms:

It was just seeing how the hoops brought the class together. Ones that would never even talk together in class, or didn't get along, or students that bullied others. They were all playing together and it was honestly the most heartwarming thing I've seen.

And they were all sharing, giving each other the hoops to see how many they could do. (Emma, personal communication, June 12, 2011)

In this reflection, Emma is seeing and feeling what it is like to engage in a relational pedagogy (Bingham, 2004). The connection that she sees being created in her students was one more aspect she was not anticipating, but one that became quite clear as she saw them out on the playground together. The students in her class who were hula hooping were so engaged that common issues such as bullying became non-issues in that moment.

To further delve into the concept of reversibility in this context, what Emma is also describing is seeing her students seeing each other in a new way as well. The fact they are not bullying each other but instead getting along lends itself to the notion of reversibility. They can see themselves in their peers and their peers also see themselves when they are hula hooping. This once again brings them closer, being able to relate and see one another on this mutual ground.

Emma saw students sharing hula hoops. She saw students sharing what they knew with one another by showing, watching and listening to one another. In a scan over the grounds she saw cooperation between students who normally would usually not speak to one another or have poor interactions that would lead to bullying.

Coming back to the notion of learning to teach-in-relation, the CSL hooping project offered the teacher candidates another way to relate with their students on their practicum. A unique aspect of this experience is the fact that the teacher candidates are not specialized in Physical Education per say. The CSL hooping project got them out and into the playground and the gymnasium to experience a different way of being with their students. For a teacher candidate to be able to see their students and the students seeing one another in new way translated to creating a new relationship. Reflecting on my own experience working with

youth and teaching physical education, I know the times when I participated with students in an activity created the most meaningful relationships between us. In these moments I grew to know them and they also got to know me as well. This was achieved through movement and participation in an activity together. Even in the moments where I felt vulnerable and less skilled, or perhaps more skilled, regardless the student could see it and vice versa. Fumbling the ball or not being as proficient as they are in soccer skills reveals a flaw and makes you, the teacher, be seen as person to your students.

Standing on the sidelines as a teacher makes it challenging to get to know students. Movement, play and being together in more than a proximal way is central in building relationships with students (Bosco, 2013). As the year progressed, the relational aspect the CSL hooping project kept revealing itself to the teacher candidates in this way. During their practicum this was even more significant because this is the place they identified themselves most as teachers. So the experience of being with students and how this relational aspect of teaching manifests in movement was integral to the shifting of their perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation.

Nadia also took the CSL hooping project to her practicum placement. She builds on the feeling of connecting with students and the relational aspect of hands on learning. Here she explains:

The kids really enjoyed it. Um, I think that they were shocked at how easy it was, but they really enjoyed it. Picking out all the colours of the tape, and they could really make it their own with their own designs. Afterwards we went outside and used them around the school yard and they absolutely loved it. The other kids in the school were a little bit jealous but that's okay [Laughing]. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Here again the aspect of how powerful hands on learning is comes back into play. Just as the teacher candidates experienced this feeling of empowerment when they made their hula hoops on campus, they now get to share that same feeling with their students. They shared in that same feeling of empowerment when they made their own hula hooped and personalized it with tape.

What is even more significant was the follow up Nadia was able to do at her school when she went back in December. She felt the impact of the CSL hooping project, by the students' feedback as well as the other teachers in the school:

Yeah and when I went back in December they were telling me all the things that they were doing with the hoops and how they keep bringing them back to school so everyone can get a chance to use them. So it's nice. And the teachers responded so positively too. I had so many comments about how it was, how it was such an uplifting experience for them. Um, yeah, the teachers just said they never had someone come in the school and do something like that. Like they, I think every other Friday they had Zumba Fridays at the school. So they, the school did recognize the kids need, like, an extra outlet for physical education. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

In terms of building relationships and learning to teach-in-relation, the CSL hooping project opened up dialogue between Nadia and teachers at her school. She was able to see the positive effects the CSL hooping project brought to the school and the teachers took notice too. Being able to discuss the positive effects the CSL hooping project has had on Nadia's students, and also on the school in general, is a concrete indicator of the importance of building relationships. This is important for teacher candidates to experience as it shows how relationships can build community in schools.

Knowledge – Staying in the Process of Learning to Teach-in-Relation

What is becoming more evident is the way the teacher candidates took the CSL hooping project and began to use it in a variety of different contexts within their B.Ed. program. Before their first practicum placement we did not speak about the possibilities of bringing the CSL hooping project to their practicum. Nor was it part of the requirements to get their CSL certificate. Yet, when they returned to campus from their practicum that same semester, they each revealed they had brought the CSL project to their classes. They were each motivated by their first experience on practicum that they all brought it again to their second practicum placement.

Thinking back to the first moments of the CSL hooping project, there was confusion surrounding who was leading and driving this project forward. However, once the teacher candidates came back from their first practicum they were feeling much more confident in their abilities. This is because of the time they had put into developing and doing the project themselves. What was revealing itself through their growing confidence was also a growing sense of autonomy. When they branched out and took an initiative to do the CSL hooping project on their practicum, they began to feel the ownership of the CSL hooping project growing. Emma explains, “I think the biggest thing was that we started taking ownership of it more, as opposed to it being like, Rebecca's project, or Desiree's project. It started becoming our project” (personal communication, June 12, 2011). This was achieved in part by them doing the CSL hooping project on their own during practicum and understanding that no one was going to tell them what they can do with this project. Ella explains:

...and no one ever said you know, ‘you should integrate your community service learning into your social action project’, no one ever said ‘oh hula hoopers, you should do this’, we just decided on our own like, ‘oh you know what would be really

awesome, if we could you know do it, do two things at the same time and make it that much better'. So instead of just going to Kitigan Zibi and doing the hooping, like, the hoop dancing workshops with the youth there, we also did the video and then the curriculum documents. This made it that much bigger and better than it could have been if it had been one or the other. So I think at that point that's where it really started becoming a lot more, a lot of what we wanted to do with it. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

With this final vignette, we begin to see the shift that occurred in the teacher candidates' perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation. They have shifted from waiting to be told what to do, to being active agents in their learning. As Yvonne shares, "we began to hold the reigns, and steer where it is going" (personal communication, June 12, 2011).

The feeling of ownership was shared with their students as well. They could feel the same sense of pride and accomplishment emanating from their students when they made their own hoops and began experiencing all the possibilities that come with hula hooping. This is one more layer of the way seeing and feeling were exchanged and reversed, which continued to bring them together and deepen the teacher candidates understanding of learning as relational. Ella describes one such moment:

For children too, it is so exciting for them, they can take ownership of it too— kind of exciting 'I made that and I decorated that, some of them were not as beautiful as others, but that's ok, it's unique.' They were so excited about it: 'I get to make my own hoop, awesome! How exciting!' (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

The un-prescribed. What is becoming apparent is the freedom the teacher candidates began to feel as they took ownership of the CSL hooping project. A deeper

connection to the actual process of learning was unfolding and this had to do with it not being connected to a course or grade directly. Ella explains the feeling as such:

I think of, um, sorry going back and speaking of the significance of the community service learning in general. It's that it makes your end goal more tangible. It's working with the students and working on an actual project that's going somewhere. It's not just you know, going to your professor to get some random mark. It's something that's um, is actually going into the community and even us working with the students and being able to see them in their experiences made it, made you remember why you wanted to be a teacher and made me remember why I wanted to be a teacher. And why you're going through what you're going through. It just reminded me of seeing, working with the students and actually having the opportunity to be in the community and doing what you're actually going to be doing as opposed to writing a paper. The CSL made it more tangible and reminded you why you were there. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

There is a strong connection between the feeling of autonomy and the fact that the CSL hooping project was not part of a course or program requirement. The way the teacher candidates could stay in the process of learning to teach-in-relation and not worry about a final mark for this project was also significant. In many when Ella states that the CSL is different than getting 'some random mark' from a professor, she highlights the disconnect felt between the course work they have to do and what they will be teaching in their practicums (Britzman, 1991).

The CSL hooping project gave the teacher candidates many instances to experience the concrete aspects of teaching and working with students that was not connected to an assignment or under the supervision of a cooperating teacher. They realized they were not

going to be told what to do and these moments connected them with what it is like to be a teacher. They experienced real-life moments that did not “view classroom teaching simply as a matter of executing lesson plans through a series of prescribed schemes” (Lee & Takahari, 2011, p.210). The teacher candidates created the curriculum for the CSL hooping project and had a feeling of ownership because of their role in co-creating with their peers. Creating the CSL hooping project added a sense of responsibility to the teacher candidates to “make it good, because no one else was going to do that for us” (Nadia, personal communication, June 12, 2011).

Action – Embodying a Flexible Teaching Practice

In this section we look at the way the teacher candidates begin to embody what they describe as a ‘rigid to a more flexible’ teaching practice. Emma began to see her students differently when she hula hooped with them. I argue the movement of hula hooping helped her embody a more flexible teaching practice as the hoop moved around her waist. The hula hoop swooped around their waist and spine, massaging her torso. There was gentle pressure being placed on her spine, muscles and organs as the hula hoop spun around and around her body. With each turn of the hula hoop she could feel the tension surrounding her assumptions and her preconceived notions of her students, loosening. Her breath, which she had been holding in as she waited to see how the CSL hooping project would be received, released as she moved with her students and saw how much they enjoyed the activity. The physical manifestation of tension could be worked out in the movement of hula hooping, and paired with what she was seeing, she understood on a deeper level the assumptions she was holding onto.

The feeling of holding onto tension is nearly impossible as the hula hoop begins to twirl around the body. The action causes the release. Emma and the other teacher candidates

said throughout the year that even for them the action of hula hooping was an outlet where they could de-stress and recharge their energy (personal communication, June 12, 2011). This is also expressed when Emma notes that ‘you can’t hoop and not smile’ (personal communication, June 12, 2011). You might come into the activity holding onto the stress of assignments, group meetings and deadlines, but once you start hooping tension dissolves.

From rigid to flexible. The significance of hula hooping needs to be understood in terms of what it felt like for the teacher candidates to embody the lessons the CSL hooping project taught them. At the surface, perhaps the thought of hula hooping seems superficial and insignificant to how it could shift perceptions of learning to teach-in-relation. Yet, as the project unfolded, what became apparent was how essential movement was in shifting the teacher candidate’s perceptions. What became evident was that the teacher candidates were not thinking specifically about how their perceptions were shifting as they learned to teach-in-relation. They embodied learning to teach-in-relation.

Taken from a phenomenological perspective, Stolz (2013) reiterates that “human movement is the place where we can both find meaning and express our own particular identity because the body is actively involved in the world and is also the locus of expression and meaning producing acts” (p. 954). In terms of becoming a teacher, the CSL hooping project brought the body back into the forefront of the teacher candidates’ consciousness. Through movement, the teacher candidates found a place where they could explore learning to teach-in-relation. Below, the way the teacher candidates have begun to embody the CSL hooping project is revealed in the way they describe their practicum experiences. The CSL hooping project shows the way movement resonated well beyond just the moments when they were physically engaged in the CSL hooping project.

What began to emerge out of the CSL hooping project was the way the teacher candidates began to express their experience in physical terms. They described feeling rigid in their first practicum placement and how this feeling changed to a feeling of fluidity and flexibility as the year progressed. For example, Ella describes herself as being very rigid during her first experience on her practicum placement. Her honest description of herself shifts to one that is much more fluid. She explains,

I was much more flexible in my second practicum in terms of just going with the flow and where the students were taking the lesson. Like my first practicum was like, this lesson has to go timed to the minute, like five minutes for the intro. And I was so rigid with it and my associate teacher never, in practicum as well as the B.Ed. courses it was never like, 'let the students experience it, let it go where it may etc.' Whereas with the hooping project, that's what really brought it home. I was much more flexible in my second practicum. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Ella describes a clear connection between how she feels during her practicum and the CSL hooping project impacted her experience. This reflection is significant because of the way she describes her experience through feeling rigid to feeling flexible. This shift would not have been occurred had it not been for the CSL hooping project. From her own hula hooping practice, Ella embodied a flexibility within herself that transferred to her teaching practice.

Flexibility is gained in the body as the hula hoop rolls over our waist and spine. The hula hoop moving us, shaking us up, requiring us to let go of what we think teachers and students should be and becoming open to other possibilities. Perhaps as we hula hoop together with our students, the feeling resonating in our bodies is (re)forming our understanding of what it is like to be with students. That this feeling of teaching does not

have to be rigid, that it can be flexible, like the feeling emanating from the legs, waist, spine, arms, shoulders, and face muscles. We experienced a different way of being with and viewing students. The actions of hula hooping manifested the shift from rigidity to fluidity.

In a conversation about what each practicum placement felt like, both Ella and Emma give words to their feelings of moving into a more fluid teaching practice:

I think my associate teacher appreciated it, like she actually mentioned it on numerous occasions 'it's very good that you're so flexible and you go where the lesson is going and you don't force the lesson' but I feel like she never would have said otherwise, like had I done it in a different way I don't think she would've ever said, 'you need to be more flexible, you need to work with the students, go with the lesson', I don't think she would do that because her lessons are very rigid too. She has her intro etc. etc., her lessons don't really go off the course so she mentioned it was good that I did it but I don't think, had I not done it myself I don't think it would have happened. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Emma also explains:

I did experience a similar flexibility in my second practicum. The teacher didn't receive it quite as well because she was a very structured person and she admitted that many times. She had anxiety about that. So she preferred it to be very structured where, that's how I used to be, and then I realized that learning emerges and it's not...you can't have that end goal all the time because you're just not going to need it and not everyone can even get there. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

In both instances, Ella and Emma highlight the shift that occurred in their second practicum. They each describe their experiences in terms of an increase in fluidity. They were able to go with the flow of a lesson and they felt more flexible. In each experience, their associate

teacher noticed and commented on their ability to go with the flow. This shows how the teacher candidates were no longer just following their cooperating teacher's lead but were coming into their own understanding of learning to teach-in-relation. In Emma's experience, teaching in a way that is more flexible cause anxiety for her associate teacher. In Ella's case, the flexibility she brought was appreciated but she knows this would not have been modeled by her associate teacher.

Yvonne's associate teacher also noticed the way she moved in the classroom. She describes her experience in her second practicum:

I noticed the change right at this practicum from the last practicum –they always tell you to not just stand but to move around the room – before I have consciously thought of moving around. This time I just moved, I just moved – day 3 the teacher asked me why I was moving. I can't stay still when I feel teaching is getting stagnant – when I am giving instructions or directions instead of sitting near the overhead, I explain to them with my hands, walk around the front of the room – when they are doing their class work – I guess a lot of teachers walk around to see how their student are doing - now it is just instinctive - I walk around the room. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

In Yvonne's case, she felt a shift in the first days of being back in her practicum placement. She was beginning to feel a freedom in herself to move around the room, something she was not comfortable with before. Again, her associate teacher noticed and actually brought it up with her. She has embodied a way of teaching that incorporates a more relational closeness with her students. She moves consciously moves around the room and closer to her students to create a connection.

Yvonne makes a clear distinction between being told about a good teaching technique in her courses versus what she has actually done with students during the CSL hooping project. Being told about a technique is much different than the experience she was able to have through the CSL hooping project where she learned to teach-in-relation by moving with students. This feeling of moving and learning with and from students when we were hula hooping transferred to her teaching practice. She was embodying the feeling of moving with the hula hoop and with students, and making it part of the way she teaches.

Nadia recounts the way the CSL hooping project shifted her perceptions of how she teaches in the classroom,

Rebecca [Professor Lloyd] actually came to my practicum school. It was an awesome experience. I think because I didn't get a chance to teach physical education, being in the gym with them kind of opened my eyes to how I teach in the classroom. Um, I am so used to getting down at the same level with kids, I notice that even my associate teachers, they're so rigid in that they won't get down to the kids' levels. They won't spread the desks out, let them like be comfortable. I think that becoming more comfortable in the gym. That kind of translated into the classroom for me. So yeah, I think that influenced my teaching, my own practice. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Nadia's insight into the feeling of being in a classroom with her associate teacher did not stem from the leadership of her associate teacher. Nadia did not find a space to create the movement she wanted to have in her classroom until she had the experience of hula hooping with her students in the gymnasium. The leadership she found came from her own peers in the CSL hooping project and Professor Lloyd. Paired with the movement of hula hooping with her students, she was able to take this confidence and bring it to her classroom.

Embodying the process of learning. Closely connected to the feelings being rigid at the beginning of their practicum to feeling a fluidity emerge is the process of learning. The realization that they could let go of what they thought teaching was about in order to stay in the moment with students emerged from the increased sensation of feeling more flexible in their teaching practice. Ella explains again how this feeling of flexibility is connected to the hands on experience of the CSL hooping project:

A lived experience means so much more than somebody telling you about something. So okay, hypothetically this is how a classroom could be, this is how learning could be. Um, and so I think having the opportunity to live that experience and have that experiential learning was what really drove those lessons home for me. And I'm sure for a lot of other people. And again, speaking to lessons for teaching, you know you want to give students those opportunities to experience the lesson and to really explore so that it's not just somebody telling them, it's them seeing it and hearing it and touching it and tasting it and you know, living that moment. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Ella, embodying the process of learning was described as 'living that moment', and because of this experience she wants her students to have it as well. An experience they can manipulate themselves and not just be told about. 'Living that moment' to her means staying in the process of learning and not rushing to an end result. There is a significant amount of letting go that needs to be done in order to do this with students. Ella learned to let go because of the CSL hooping project. To see her transform throughout the various experiences she had with the CSL hooping project was powerful.

Carla also adds to the sentiment of being in the process of learning, as she shares her feelings about the CSL hooping project and her own teaching practice:

I felt more comfortable letting the experience happen. And I think the idea of being okay with not getting to the end goal of your lesson would not, is not something that I think would have come up in practicum. Because we have a lesson plan and we have to hand that lesson plan in and we know that our practicum teacher has our lesson plan and is making sure that we're following like, 'okay yeah, that expectation was met, that expectation was met, that one is met'. And there's, on our lesson plan there's an end goal 'students will be able to, students will be able to, and students will do this', and experience of hooping gave me a little bit more confidence in those lesson plans in my second practicum to not worry as much about if that end product was the same. And to be more concerned with the process and um, making sure that students are going through learning the skills they need versus the outcome. I don't think I would have been comfortable with that if it hadn't been sort of the basis of the community service learning project. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Carla found the confidence to stay in the process of learning with her students through the CSL hooping project. She was able to move past worrying about whether or not each student achieved the outcomes in her lesson plan, and could stay in the process of learning with her students. The foundation of the CSL hooping project gave her this confidence. She experienced what it was like to stay in the process of learning to make hula hoops herself instead of being rushed to the end goal. This project was set up in such a way that they were required to go through the steps of creating the hula hoops and experimenting with the hula hoops. Had it not been for this time, getting to know one another, these lessons would not have emerged or transferred to their teaching practice.

Moving deeper into what going with the flow means the teacher candidates share what began to occur once this space opened up to them. Carla explains the way the CSL hooping project opened her to ways of teaching:

I think there's a lot of different sort of approaches to teaching that I learned from the community service learning project, in terms of how you go about building up towards a skill with students and sort of letting them explore the skill. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Carla connects to the way hula hooping allowed her to explore learning in a different way. Learning to let her students stay in the process of learning was one way Carla embodied this way of teaching. The connection she has to her own hooping practice connects to the confidence she now has in letting her students stay in the process of learning to explore their own learning as well. She goes on to explain how actual movement has opened her to possibilities in her classroom:

And I just, I know that moving helped me be more focused. So, to be more open to that in the classroom and to encourage students to find the ways that help them to focus. Find ways that help them to think through an idea and realize that it might be through movement. I know a lot of times in the classroom you associate a student moving around with them not being focused on a task or not paying attention but sometimes it's the opposite. They're moving because they're engaged in the idea. And I think being um, more open and more encouraging in a classroom and letting students learn with their body is important. (Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

This insight comes from the experiences Carla had with her own learning and feeling the effects of movement can bring to help her focus on her course work. She described how she would take a hula hoop in her hands while studying at home and play with it while thinking

through an idea (personal communication, June 12, 2011). She experienced first-hand the effects of movement and learning, and makes the connection that they work together in learning (Blakemore, 2003). Having experienced the feeling of movement to stay focused, Carla wants this feeling of learning with the body to be accessible to her students as well.

Ella reflects that the CSL hooping project offered her insight into different ways of knowing that showed her students will learn something in their own way if given the chance.

Not being so rigid in my teaching – being more co-experiential – more fluid, I guess, not having such strict boundaries for what they have to be learning and how they have to be learning it. Being able to understand that you have to be more flexible and fluid and that sometime students won't understand it in a certain way. It is the same thing with the hooping. I explain it in a certain way but for them a certain movement feels better in a different way. You cannot say it's wrong if it works for them.

(Personal communication, June 12, 2011)

Weaved into this reflection is the way Ella opens up to the possibilities of learning and continues to loosen her grip on what she previously thought needed to happen for learning to occur. Ella has learned what can happen if students are given the time and space to experience what works for them. She once again makes a strong connection between hula hooping with her students, and seeing what works for them, and her own developing pedagogy.

While hula hooping can be seen as a physical activity this is not where the effects of the CSL hooping project stop. The teacher candidates deepened their understanding of learning to teach-in-relation through being engaged in the experiential and embodied aspects surrounding the CSL hooping project. Yvonne explains another way the CSL hooping project shifted her perceptions in learning to teach-in-relation when she recalls “Hula

hooping gave me an outlet. Something to, I don't know, look forward to. Something to de-stress with, and this made me more experimental as a teacher I think” (personal communication, June 12, 2011). This is a powerful statement made by Yvonne that connects her hooping practice directly to the way she now views herself as a teacher.

Implications of Embodying a Flexible Practice

The sense of embodying a flexible practice would not have occurred had the teacher candidates not experienced the moments of waiting to learn, shaping community, learning in movement, sitting with students or learning with students. They all are interrelated and connected. This aspect of CSL, the connection, can give teacher candidates an embodied sense of being ‘in-relation’ to their learning. The sense of embodiment in learning to teach-in-relation means they have moved past what they think of learning to teach and instead sense and feel learning to teach-in-relation. In a sense, as teacher candidates embody the feelings of being ‘in-relation’ they will be able to stay ‘in-relation’ with the process of learning.

Chapter 10: Conclusion: Coming Full Circle

As with the generative nature of the medicine wheel, the feeling of moving in and around the circular framework has been ever present throughout this research. Thinking back to figure 3, there is a feeling within each vignette that each experience is interconnected. Each experience is part of the “flesh” of the world as described by Merleau-Ponty. The folding over, intertwining aspect of the medicine wheel as expressed in figure 3 shows how each significant moment is working in conjunction with the other. The intertwining of all the significant moments created the transformative experience of learning to teach-in-relation. Turning again to the research questions that guided this study; *1) What is it like to experience the phenomenon of ‘learning to teach-in-relation’?* *2) What perceptions of ‘learning to teach-in-relation’ emerge as a result of experiencing a co-c/re(l)ational community service learning?* Simply answering ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to these questions in a rational way is not what a phenomenological study aims to do (van Manen, 1997). Instead, delving into the lived experiences of ‘what it is like’ from a phenomenological approach is what has brought the essence of the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation into view.

In this concluding chapter, we move past the particular aspects found in the CSL hooping project and look at the universal sense of the essences in the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation. Seeing the universal thread in the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation has implications for teacher candidates, teachers and teacher educators who are interested in CSL as pedagogy and also implementing a more relational approach to learning to teach. As Dahlberg (2006) reminds us, an essence is a “structure of essential meanings that explicates a phenomenon of interest” (p. 11). The significant moments that emerged, 1) waiting to learn; 2) shaping community; 3) learning in movement; 4) sitting with students; 5)

learning with students; and 6) embodying a flexible practice, all brought into view the essence of the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation.

Essences of Learning to Teach-in-Relation

What are the implications of the essences that arose from this research? Lifting a universal essence from the particulars of this research, CSL is described and understood as a lived space that allowed teacher candidates to come into being ‘in-relation’ to their learning. In this space they learned what it was like to be ‘in-relation’ to themselves and in a co-c/re(l)ational space with each other. The universal essences that can be gleaned from this research offer stake holders, i.e. teacher education programs, new teachers, teacher candidates, and Ministers of Education, an idea of what makes a transformative experience when learning to teach-in-relation. Below are the recommendations that can be gleaned from each significant moment, that all play a part in learning to teach-in-relation.

Waiting to learn. The essence that was revealed from the particular aspect of waiting to learn was that teacher candidates may need to experience tension in order to begin to learn to teach-in-relation. Disrupting the taken for granted, such as our relationship to learning, brings teacher candidates into this space where tension resides. Tension may also be the result of challenging teacher candidates to fully experience what it is like to learn to teach-in-relation. Meaning, their perceptions are challenged within the experiential nature of CSL. Uncertainty (Klappa, 2010) in the direction of a CSL project may cause tension as well, but if supported teacher candidates have much to learn in these encounters (Martin, 2011) and are what make CSL a transformative experience.

Tension can be mediated and supported by crafting CSL project to have enabling constraints within them. An enabling constraint restricts certain parts of a project while “opening the door to endless possibility by permitting everything else” (Davis, 2010, p.859).

Enabling constraints do not dictate what to do in specific, step by step detail but offers support to teacher candidates by having parameters. This style of support that CSL can offer teacher candidates creates a space where teacher candidates can figure out how to do the CSL in a supportive co-c/re(l)ational space.

Shaping community. The second essence characterizing the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation is the need for teacher candidates to experience collaboration. However, it is the nature of the type of collaboration that is essential to learning to teach-in-relation. CSL allows teacher candidates to co-create the curriculum in a supportive space. Collaborating on a project that has all the steps laid out is not the same as figuring out the steps together. The space CSL offers teacher candidates' relational way of learning that challenges the common transmissive way of learning (Higgins, 2008). Time and space are needed to experience what it is like to collaborate on a project and to build relationships. Being inserted into CSL projects and having no say in their development (Boyle-Baise, 2005) does not allow teacher candidates to experience being 'in-relation'.

Learning in movement. The universality, within the essence of learning in movement, shows that learning to teach-in-relation means not just creating curriculum for course content but what is equally important is participating in the curriculum, i.e. living it. Teacher candidates need moments to live their curriculum and understand it extends beyond these walls into the thread of every aspect of our lives (Kissling, 2014). The relational aspect of learning in movement can show teacher candidates that a CSL project is as much for their personal benefit in learning than an activity to be delivered to their students. Perhaps most CSL will not have the same degree of movement as hula hooping, however, the essence lies in the 'doing' of the project nonetheless. The teacher candidates committed themselves to living the CSL hooping project.

By living the curriculum, a space opens up for teacher candidates to experience what it is like to learn from the experiential nature that CSL. In turn, this offers another way to challenge the transmission model prevalent in education. Becoming a teacher is as much an exercise of (un)becoming a teacher (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996). Meaning, CSL is one way to help teacher candidates unlearn what they thought they knew about learning to teach (Connor, 2010).

Sitting with students. The essence of sitting and listening in terms of the phenomena of learning to teach-in-relation is characterized by the shifting of the relationship that occurs when taking the time to sit and listen. For a teacher candidate this is a much different relationship, from one that stands apart from students to one that is more responsive to students. Taking the time to sit and listen to students' means letting go of the delivery model of teaching. In a CSL project, teacher candidates need to have the opportunity to experience a relational approach to teaching that gives the time and space to experience being responsive to their students.

Learning with students. The essence of learning with students captures the relational aspect of learning and how transformative CSL can be when learning to teach-in-relation. Once again this essence illuminates the shift that can occur through CSL if teacher candidates have opportunities to learn from their students. CSL sheds light on the reciprocal nature of teachers becoming learners and students becoming the teacher (Coffey, 2010) that helps teacher candidates experience what it is like learning to teach-in-relation. Reciprocal relationships bring teacher candidates ever closer to the reversible interplay (Merleau-Ponty, 1968/1948) of not knowing who the teacher is or who the student is. For teacher candidates, being in this kind of relationship may also cause tension in the experience because there is a level of vulnerability in attending to the perceptions of reciprocity (Abrams, 2010).

Embodying a flexible practice. Finally, the essence of embodying a flexible practice captures the way the teacher candidates' whole selves are engaged in CSL as pedagogy. Meaning, when engaged in an experiential pedagogy such as CSL, the body and mind are included, not just the thinking self. Learning to teach-in-relation places the teacher candidate actively 'in-relation', meaning they are engaged fully in the process of learning. Sitting and waiting to be told what to do does not engage the teacher candidate fully in the process of learning. The essence of embodying learning to teach-in-relation cannot negate the corporeal, sensing self.

Learning to teach-in-relation means taking the time to stay in the process of learning. This requires teacher candidates to let go and slow down so as not rush towards an end goal. What this CSL hooping project showed is that being in the process of learning was closely connected to the feeling of autonomy (Leveque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010). Not having to worry about final marks or graded papers opens up the space for teacher candidates to stay in the process of learning to teach-in-relation. Yet, this connection counters what much of the literature surrounding CSL suggests for best practices. The research suggests there needs to be a direct link to course work in order for teacher candidates to make clear connections between CSL and the theory they are learning (Mobley, 2007). However, as it has been shown, the teacher candidates appreciated the autonomy of the un-prescribed nature of the CSL hooping project. This enabled them to learn to stay in the process of learning to teach-in-relation and thus embody its lessons.

Reflections for the Future

While there is no shortage of research and literature on the notion of 'learning to teach', more attention needs to be focused on this area of study from a relational and phenomenological perspective. This is because, as has been laid out while examining the

lived experiences of these five teacher candidates, we have forgotten what it is like to be ‘in-relation’ to our learning. Learning incorporates the whole self; this research calls on teacher educators need to engage teacher candidates in an embodied, relational pedagogy, in order to awaken the sensing perceiving self that teacher candidates have learned to quiet (Ross, 2004).

Wilson (2008) challenges our notion of being engaged in the world when he writes, “rather than viewing ourselves as being *in* relationship with other people or things, we *are* the relationships that we hold and are part of” (p. 80). How do teacher candidates come to understand being ‘in-relation’ to their learning if they do not feel in relation to the world beyond seeing learning as something delivered to their students? The need to examine and figure out ways of teaching teacher candidates to learn in a relational way is more important than ever, but it needs to be done in a way that does not solely rely on what teacher candidates think about learning. An important consideration for teacher educators is to develop pedagogies that place teacher candidates in tension to the way they conceptualize learning. Teacher education programs need to remember that learning to teach-in-relation requires learning with the whole self. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge, respectfully while being relationally accountable (Wilson, 2008), is one way of achieving this.

In their final report, the TRC (2015) made 94 recommendations for reconciliation, one of them asking for “the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms” (TRC, 2015). This research offers one way to begin to create spaces for including Indigenous knowledge in teacher education programs. I hope that in reading this thesis, teacher education programs can see there is a valid space for different ways of learning, different

ways of knowing. Teacher educators, in reading this work, may see ways they can let go of what they thought they knew, and also create co-c/re(l)ational spaces for their students.

This research adds a presence in the academy in terms of offering an Indigenous research framework to scholarship, and bringing this Indigenous worldview into the sphere of research will help to accomplish much of what the ACDE calls for. Specifically, “to value the study of Indigenous knowledge as scholarly activity” (Archibald et al., 2010, p.6) and “to challenge existing curriculum frameworks and structures in order that they may engage learners in experiencing the Indigenous world and Indigenous knowledge in a wholistic way” (p.5). This research specifically attends to the ACDE’s call to build capacity in regards to having “culturally respectful Indigenous research: to create and mobilize research knowledge, including Indigenous epistemologies, in order to transform Aboriginal education, teacher education, continuing professional education, and graduate programs” (Archibald et al., 2010, p.8). Ministries of Education can follow the lead of organizations such as the ACDE and TRC to further implement their recommendations. And based on the research I have also put forward, see it’s pertinence and value both to teacher education programs as well as the training of teacher candidates.

The University of Ottawa has also laid out principles it wishes to mandate, which this particular research advances, which are to: “recognize the importance of indigenization of curricula through responsive academic programming, support programs, orientations, and pedagogies” (“SASS”, n.d.). This research supports these principles specifically as I have highlighted responsive curricula, orientations and pedagogies throughout the exploration of learning to teach-in-relation. I hope that by creating a space to locate oneself, as well as

working from an Indigenous research framework, universities will be able to retain and encourage other Indigenous students to feel like they have a place in the research circle.

Epilogue – Stepping into the Circle

I feel pavement under my feet as I step into this dream. As I walk I see I am on a busy city street with many storefronts, some boarded up, others with dusty windows and paint chipping from the siding. Cold metal lampposts line the streets. The scenery does not feel welcoming. Much like in the field, as I walk I hear drumming. I sense a space open up to my left where a building should be but instead there is an abandoned lot. I slow my pace a little. The sun is once again setting, and the quality of light adds a serene tone to the grey and dusty surroundings. I see a group of people standing at the far end of the lot. Once again, when I try to focus my eyes to them, the sun obstructs my view.

They too are standing in a circle. I can make out that this time they are not wearing traditional regalia, but what looks like plain street clothes, worn blue jeans, black t-shirts and jean jackets. Again I feel as if I am intruding on a ceremony. The panicked feeling that I do not belong here takes hold of me again. But without a word they step aside and a space in the circle opens. I feel it is an invitation to join them once more. I move further into the vacant lot, where they are standing, and this time, without hesitation, I step into the circle. I can feel the smiles of the people in this circle, happy that I joined them... finally. The sensation of standing with these people is overwhelming and very powerful. Yet there is calmness, a feeling of belonging that is natural, normal. In many ways I feel like I have arrived home.

I wake up from this dream abruptly, and even though I had been working out what these dreams meant before having this one, the clarity in the feeling of joining them is overwhelming. I understand on a deeper level that they have always been there, but it was I who had to learn and take that step forward to join them. I rush to tell my partner about this dream and as I do I begin to cry. The sense of relief feels so good in my body. I did not understand the other two dreams in the same way as this one, as I did not join them and the

feelings of wondering if I belonged lingered. It took me some time to listen to these dreams, to believe in their message. Now I have a better understanding of where I come from. I know where my mothers grandfather lived, where she is from. Knowing where they lived and the land my family is connected to has made me more confident. This is so important.

Connecting this dream to the final parts of my thesis, I can feel the impact and power of the message in this dream. Beyond feeling a connection to my ancestors, I understand that I am also stepping more fully into my researcher/writer identity. I am beginning to understand the work that I have done in exploring my own teacher identity through my involvement in this CSL hooping project. How seeing learning from a relational and embodied way has influenced all aspects of my own life, both personal and professional.

I hear my son's voice clearly in my mind as I sit and write out these last few paragraphs. I realize he naturally embodies many of the lessons learned from this CSL hooping project. As I worked to write and analyze the many significant moments experienced by Ella, Emma, Carla, Yvonne, and Nadia, I could see these similar moments expressing themselves in his daily, moment-to-moment life. He reminds me to stay in the process of learning instead of rushing to the end product. He reminds me to slow down but not to quiet and forget the body. He reminds me to move, especially to move in the world to learn about it in a fully embodied way. I realize I am always learning from him, as much as I think I am teaching him about the world. As I listen to his stories, I realize he is beginning to do more of the telling, that it is me who calls to him 'Atayooke!' I want him to tell me what he learned today, what he did. I want him to tell me stories of his learning, that he was allowed to express himself, to move and learn and experience joy in learning. And I hope he will.

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Appendix A

Letter of Consent

Professors supervising research project

Principle Investigator

Dr. Rebecca Lloyd

Faculty of Education

University of Ottawa

Tel: 613-562-5800 x 4152

Email: rlloyd@uottawa.ca

Co-investigator

Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook

Faculty of Education

University of Ottawa

Tel: 613-562-5800 x 2239

Email: nngafook@uottawa.ca

Free and Informed Consent

I have read the Letter of Information describing the research study. I understand the purpose of the study and what is required of me, and I agree to participate. I have been assured that my participation is voluntary and that my identity will remain confidential, but not anonymous, as my name may be known. I agree to participate, and I am aware that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. I am aware that I may decline to answer any questions during the study without any negative consequence. I am aware that my decision to participate in the study is completely independent of all matters related to being a member of the PED 3101 or PED 3102 (I) courses, and that absolutely no positive or negative consequence will ensue based on my choice to participate in the study or not. I am also aware that the researchers may use any picture I take and submit with my journal reflections.

I am aware that any inquiries about the research study should be addressed to: Dr. Rebecca Lloyd at (613) 562-5800, ext. 4152, or by email at rlloyd@uottawa.ca

I am aware that any concerns about the ethical conduct of this project may be addressed to the Protocol Officer of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa, (613) 562-5800, ext. 5841 and ethics@uottawa.ca.

Participant's signature:

_____ Date: _____

Supervising Professor's signature:

_____ Date: _____

Co-supervising Professor's signature:

_____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Interview Questions:

1. What prompted you to participate in a community service learning project?
2. Can you describe your expectations surrounding the project you signed up for?
3. What were your perceptions of the program at the beginning?
4. What did it feel like to participate in the community service learning project?
5. Can you describe any particular experiences that made you feel more connected within your community?
6. How did you feel about your overall experience?
7. What, if any, moments created more meaningful connections to your education degree?
8. Did any of the experiences you had with the community service learning project transfer to your practicum?
9. As you reflect on this community service learning project, how do you see it influencing or impacting you as a future educator?
10. Were there any moments that enhanced your learning as a teacher candidate, and if so, can you describe them?
11. Did you incorporate your community service learning project into your practicum experience?
If so, can you describe what it was like to bring this project into the school setting?
12. Is there anything else you wish to tell me about your CSL experience?

Appendix C

File Number: 02-10-06B

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 04/11/2011



Université d'Ottawa **University of Ottawa**
 Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice Social Science and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Rebecca	Lloyd	Education / Education	Principal Investigator
Nicholas	Ng-A-Fook	Education / Education	Co-investigator
Desiree	Streit	Education / Education	Student Researcher

File Number: 02-10-06B

Type of Project: Professor

Title: Exploring Experiences of the Bachelor of Education Program through Somatic and Aesthetic References to Physical Literacy

<u>Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</u>	<u>Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</u>	<u>Approval Type</u>
07/30/2010	07/29/2011	Ia

(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)

Special Conditions / Comments:

N/A