Does this Feel Empowering?:

A Narrative Self-Study of a Sixth Grade Teacher's Shift to Student-Centered Assessment

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Abstract

This narrative self-study focuses on my experience as a sixth-grade teacher in Quebec, Canada making the pedagogical shift to student-centered assessment. Student-centered assessment is defined as one that decentralizes teacher authority, increases transparency of evaluations, and increases assessment dialogue. Some elements of student-centered assessment are in line with the Quebec Education Plan while others are more diametrically situated. Through a "bricolage" approach to narrative inquiry, I analyzed how the role of the teacher in terms of curriculum and assessment is impacted by political, cultural, and philosophical realities that impact the teaching context. My identity as a teacher, and particularly my ideas on teacher authority, informed my responses to dilemmas during the shift and my approach to introducing student-centered assessment to students at the sixth-grade level.

Résumé

Cette auto-étudie narrative se concentre sur mon expérience en tant qu'enseignante de sixième année au Québec, Canada, faisant le virage pédagogique vers l'évaluation centrée sur l'élève. L'évaluation centrée sur l'élève est définie comme une forme d'évaluation qui décentralise l'autorité des enseignants, augmente la transparence des évaluations et augmente le dialogue d'évaluation. Certains éléments de l'évaluation centrée sur l'élève sont en ligne avec le programme de formation de l'école québécoise tandis que d'autres sont plus diamétralement situés. À travers une approche «bricolage» de l'enquête narrative, j'ai analysé comment le rôle de l'enseignant en termes de curriculum et d'évaluation est influencé par les réalités politiques, culturelles et philosophiques qui ont un impact sur le contexte d'enseignement. Mon identité en tant qu'enseignant ont informé mes réponses aux dilemmes pendant le quart de travail et mon approche de l'introduction de l'évaluation centrée sur l'élève aux élèves de sixième année.

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What does it mean to be a teacher? This is one of those questions that I feel is easy for everyone to answer, unless they are a teacher. I presume someone reading this might answer that a teacher determines the curriculum, decides on the method of its passing to students, and evaluates the success of its passing. And yet, in today's teaching landscape, it feels like the ultimate decisions on curriculum are being made by outsider powers including government mandates, private funding and parent body pressure. As a teacher, I can't help but feel that this dissolution of teachers' professionalism has forced us into a tight position: we are simultaneously to blame for all curricular failures while not given the freedom to make fully formed curricular choices (Pinar, 2011). It is that very crossroads of authority and vulnerability (Alsup, 2018) that I feel each day, and yet I also have the sense that my sixth-grade students experience a similar feeling. At this age, my students are increasingly establishing their independence and showing their potential as partners in their own education, but they are also still developing key executive functions of self-awareness, planning ahead, etc. And so, I seek to understand another crossroads of my teacher identity: that of nurturer crossed with performance evaluator.

Let's go back to that possible definition of teacher and look at the last part specifically: is the role of the teacher to evaluate the success of her teaching or the success of students' learning? In regard to assessment, educational dialogue sometimes over-prioritizes pedagogical methods that focus on test success (Pinar, 2011) without questioning the broader role of assessment in the education of a child. For me, being a teacher is the act of praxis, or currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976): a constant self-reflection and self-discovery in the process of making pedagogical decisions, sometimes towards a dialogic teaching relationship with students. Though

educational reform in the U.S. has resulted in a focus on student test success (Pinar, 2011), in Quebec the curriculum reform has elements that both encourage teachers' currere and complicate it. What happens when we, as teachers, try 'currere' within the restrictions placed upon us? From what sources do we derive a curriculum that is only partially ours? Log into EduTwitter, Teacher-gram, or any teacher blog and you will see edu-celebrities touting best practices for 21st century learning. But how do these measure up to the realities demanded in a classroom?

This being said, it is incorrect to say that teachers are in a powerless position. We, as institutionalized authority figures, have the power to press upon students an inequity that mirrors the inequity displayed within our particularized socio-historical contexts (Bain, 2010; Fasching-Varner, 2012). It begins to feel overwhelming from a critical standpoint: the 'higher powers' develop the curriculum, powerful yet vulnerable teachers implement it, and students endure it. This leads me to a third and most pressing crossroads of all: that of teacher and researcher. To rely on my own authority but to be simultaneously critical of it is my greatest tension of all.

The idea of teacher identity as a location at a crossroads is prevalent in modern teacher identity research, with the crossroads being represented by intersections of professional (Alsup, 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018), socio-historical or cultural (Day, 2018; Carter, 2014; Journell, 2018, Kaplan & Garner, 2018), and/or racial (Chen et al., 2018; Fasching-Varner, 2012; Jackson, 2018) identities. Each teacher's identity has an impact on the students' learning in the classroom (Milner, 2010) as a result of choices teachers make about the content of their curriculum (Chen et al., 2018; Journell, 2018) and the semantic moves they use with their students (Fasching-Varner, 2012). How a teacher IS in their class and what they convey learning to BE is constructed by an intersection of specific values and identities. It seems to be inferred that this identity extends into the assessment of student learning, as assessment can be conceived as part

of the curriculum teachers construct (Pinar, 2005). However, specific research into how teachers negotiate assessment methods through a lens of teacher identity and praxis is under researched.

Furthermore, research that tackles assessment methods that specifically require a teacher to shift from a traditional position at the center of learning and evaluation to a more equitable position with their students have not undertaken the question of how teacher identity comes into play. Student-centered assessment (SCA) is the term I am using in this research to encompass pedagogical methods that reposition students on a more equal playing field with their teacher in regard to evaluating student learning (Bain, 2010). The decentralizing of teacher authority over evaluation is a central value of student-centered assessment, and I have further defined it by four pillars that encompass the best practices of research describing the implementation of SCA: (1) increasing the transparency of learning objectives, (2) supporting students' reflective practice, (3) modelling accurate assessment, and (4) creating and sustaining a space for continual dialogue on student growth and mastery.

At the upper elementary level (grades four through eight), research is concentrated in describing or analyzing the effectiveness of specific assessment tools and methods related to student-centered assessment. These tools and methods included, but were not limited to, portfolios (Austin, 1994; Baron et al., 1998; Bures et al., 2013; Cruz & Zambo, 2013; Juniewicz, 2003; Maxwell & Lassak, 2008; Reynolds, 2010; Underwood, 1998), journaling (Bures et al., 2013; Cruz & Zambo's, 2013; Maxwell & Lassak, 2008; Reynolds, 2010), self- and peer-assessment (Butler & Lee, 2010; Dann, 2002; Lin-Siegler et al., 2015; Ness & Middleton, 2012), and rubrics (Andrade, Du & Mycek, 2010; Cross et al., 1998; Edwins 1995; Kim & Noh 2010; Ross et al., 1998; Suurtamm & Koch, 2014; Underwood, 1998). In the limited studies that explored the teacher experience in implementing these methods, the focus was on the success or

sustainability of the method within the teachers' classroom practices. From this, I found Windschitl's (2002) four dilemma framework an adequate way to describe and understand the political, philosophical, social and conceptual dilemmas that impact teacher practice in shifting pedagogy. Though these dilemmas mirror the intersections of teacher identity at the crossroads, no literature has explored the use of Windschitl's dilemma framework in conjunction with teacher identity as it impacts curriculum and classroom practice.

Additionally, the research that explores upper elementary student-centered assessment methods within Quebec is limited (Alleyn, 2004; Thomas et al., 2011; Tung, 2004), with the findings having aged due to changes to the Quebec Education Program and the Framework for the Evaluation of Learning within the last ten to fifteen years. Though the Quebec Education Program elicits democratic educational values and references the use of student-centered assessment methods, the Framework for the Evaluation of Learning and subsequent government mandates (Editeur officiel du Quebec, 2020; Québec ministère de l'éducation, du loisir et du sport (MELS), 2011) lay out a traditional percentage marking scheme, without adequate description or support for aligning these contrasting assessment methods.

In reality, student-centered assessment is a pedagogy that requires a teacher to reflect on their perception of their teaching role and deconstruct the concept of authority in the evaluation of learning. Though methods at the elementary level are frequently written about, such as the use of portfolios, it is limited in its reflections on teacher identity and curriculum. In Quebec this is a great issue because teachers are currently being guided by two contrasting documents: a Quebec Education Program that encourages student-centered methods and a Framework for the Evaluation of Learning that requires traditional marking procedures. As a Quebec teacher, I have heard my peers express a lack of support in their efforts to unite democratic and traditional

methods and to understand how their decisions in dealing with dilemmas arising from this tension are impacted by their teacher identity and positionality.

In researching the pedagogy of student-centered assessment, my classroom decisions were meant to center the students. And yet, the scope of my research is not on the student outcomes or the student experience. I center myself in the research as an act of agency in promotion of my student's well-being: "It is only once teachers develop this ability, to exercise and act upon their own thoughts in particular situations, or agency, that they can empower their students to do the same" (Carter, 2014, p. 4). My main research question for this study is, *How does a sixth grade teacher experience the pedagogical shift to student-centered assessment and interact with its foundational goals?* The concept of teacher experience is situated in the literature on teacher identity and the use of the term 'interact' is meant to invoke the interaction between my teacher identity, my curriculum and my students. The goal of the research is to understand how these three elements interact within my specific transition to student-centered assessment, in order to provide insight into contemporary teaching and assessment in Quebec, Canada.

To answer this question, my research takes the form of a narrative self-study, inspired by the framework of currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), which is a method for educational self-study. It involves a four-step process: (1) a regressive look at one's own experiences as data, transforming it through analysis, (2) a progressive look toward possible future, (3) an analytical stage of examining past and future to create a present, and (4) the synthesizing of past, present and future to define a 'lived present' (Carter, 2014). This idea of future outlook impacting how one analyzes past experiences came into play significantly in my writing of this thesis, considering how my experiences implementing student-centered assessment took place in a pre-

pandemic world whereas I analyzed and wrote about my own experiences while living through the COVID-19 pandemic. The creation of my present occurred in this unique space of reflection during quarantine in Montreal as the educational sphere in Quebec shifted underneath me. My original research plan was focused on the action research of implementing student-centered assessment in my own classroom, with the intention of exploring this shift from a decidedly curriculum studies framework. However, the recognition of my own present situation was an organic transition to self-study in the realm of teacher identity. In order to better make sense of my lived experiences, I have chosen to use narrative inquiry following Connelly & Clandinin's (2006) three dimensions of narrative: temporality, interactions of characters, and place. The four narratives presented in chapters four and five share a sense of temporality and seek to describe my experiences from August 2019 to March 2020 in context of my past and future outlooks. Through inductive analysis, I have amalgamated the interactions with over 30 students into four student characters. The idea of 'place' in these narratives has both shared and unshared definitions. The school and classrooms remain consistent, but subject area (reading, writing and Mathematics) in my research functions as potentially unique settings, particularly as my students interact differently with different subject areas. The narratives were derived from the artefacts of my reflective journal and lesson planbook kept during the same period. To analyze this data, I implemented a "bricolage" approach (Kincheloe et al., 2017; Kress, 2011; Yardley, 2008). The French word "bricoleur", meaning handyman or tinkerer, elicits the reality of teaching - making do with the tools and resources you have to create the best and most in-depth learning you can present. In terms of research, it is a liberating methodology that allows for tools and methods to change as the need arises and is increasingly accepted as contemporary research becomes multidisciplinary (Yardley, 2008). In my case, it was a useful tool to navigate both Connelly &

Clandinin's (2006) temporal negotiations of narrative as well as Pinar & Grumet's (1976) synthesis phase of currere self-study.

In order to best navigate this interaction of identities, and as part of my bricolage approach, I use arts-based approaches that allow authors to navigate and reflect upon the crossroads of identities they embody, in conjunction with a narrative approach (Carter, 2014). In writing this thesis, I have sought to better understand my own crossroads identity as teacher-researcher. I envision two voices weaving themselves throughout the thesis: Ms. Lauren, the teacher, and Lauren Thurber, M.A., the burgeoning academic. The thesis then acts as a second, overarching narrative, beginning and ending with my journey to self-understanding.

In chapter one, I begin the story of this thesis. Truly, this chapter begins at the beginning; I present a brief autobiography in order to contextualize how I have come to define what being a teacher means to me. But in that autobiographical exploration, I introduce that my crossroads identity is that of teacher-researcher, breaking down how my development towards both teacher and researcher situate me at a unique location at the commencement of this research.

In chapter two, I present a literature review that negotiates the crossroads of my research, reflecting that dual identity of teacher-researcher. I begin the chapter by laying out the body of research on the topic of teacher identity, specifically with connections to curriculum studies and the topic of lived curriculum, in order to find applicable methodologies and relevant themes. The second section of the literature review proposes a four pillared definition of student-centered assessment, gathered from research at the post-secondary level, to make clear the defining values of this pedagogy. In order to understand student-centered assessment in more practical terms, I lean into my teacher perspective for the third section and review the research that explores student-centered assessment methods at the upper elementary level in order to firmly situate my

own pedagogical decisions as student-centered assessment. In the final section, I situate the literature within the socio-political history of Quebec's education system. The purpose of this section is to understand the Quebec Education Program, with context, to make sense of the tension between curricular values and government-approved assessment methods.

In chapter three, I outline my methodology. To add to the growing body of research on teacher identity and curriculum, I describe MY qualitative methodology, especially my analytical tools, in detail. My narrative inquiry methodology is inspired by Pinar & Grumet's (1976) currere framework and follows Connelly & Clandinin's (2006) structure for narrative research. I used "bricolage" to combine thematic, narrative and artistic analysis tools in order to adequately perform a self-study that negotiates between my identities of teacher and researcher, that would also result in a cohesive narrative presentation of the research.

In chapter four, I present the research for the first subquestion: *How did I negotiate the dilemmas that arose during this pedagogical shift?* Following a narrative structure, I present three short stories that balance chronological narration with critical reflection using Windschitl's (2002) framework for pedagogical dilemmas. Each story begins with a vignette, inspired by Carter's (2014) *Teacher Monologues,* whose purpose is two-fold: (1) the vignettes each highlight a central tension, or theme, of the story, and (2) they reflect the lived experience of teachers' stand-out moments, those memories that stay with them and impact their perspectives on teaching for years to come. Each story takes place in separate settings, with subject area acting as the setting. The first story, "But if I'm Actually Grading This…", explores dilemmas in shifting to SCA for English writing class. The second story, "I'm Not Supposed to Be Doing Anything Like This!", looks at tensions in assessing English reading. The final story, "The QEP Never Mentioned Math Tests", focuses the exploration on the location of Math class. In the conclusion

of this chapter, ‘Finding an Imperfect Praxis’, I explore the common themes across subject areas to define the concept of lived curriculum through the idea of an imperfect praxis.

In chapter five, I narrate the second subquestion: *How and why did I adapt a student-centered assessment approach to the needs of sixth grade learners?* This chapter narrates the impact of my teacher identity and curricular choices on my relationship with my students during the shift to student-centered assessment. Here I present a single story, “Molding While Being Molded”, narrated as the interaction between myself and four student characters. The theme of authority weaves itself across this narrative as I explore my perception of teaching and learning in comparison to that of my students. In the conclusion to this story, ‘My Ego and Theirs’, I reflect on the cause of various tensions as being internal and my response to them as contextualized decisions mirroring changes in my self-perception.

In chapter six, I reflect across all four narratives in order to provide a summary that adequately answers what my lived experience was during this pedagogical shift. I build on Windschitl’s (2002) four dilemmas (political, conceptual, philosophical and pedagogical) and align them to connected aspects of my teacher identity. I reflect on the overall transition to student-centered assessment and my ability to adhere to its four defining pillars, most of which required me to undergo a perception shift in addition to a pedagogical one. In this chapter, I make recommendations for extending the research further.

The final chapter, though brief, solidifies this thesis as a narrative unto itself. By circling back to my autobiography at the start of the thesis, I reposition myself at the center of the research and explore the ways in which performing this research has also impacted my identity as teacher-researcher and helped me locate my position at the crossroads.

In unpacking what it means to be a teacher, my intent in this thesis is to explore my teacher identity as it interacts specifically with the role of evaluator and how this role in a modern context impacts my teaching experiences. Student-centered assessment is a pedagogy that decentralizes the teacher-evaluator. In centralizing my identity while attempting to decentralize my authority, through the use narrative, I seek to offer an in-depth view into the experiences of a teacher seeking to shift to a pedagogy of student-centered assessment in her sixth-grade class in Montreal, Quebec. That teacher is me and these stories are mine, until of course they connect with you and become yours, too.

Statement of Positionality

In eliciting the concept of intersecting identities, it is important for me to acknowledge my own positionality as it applies to power and access to education. I identify as a white, able-bodied, cisgendered[1] woman. I am Anglophone Canadian. I was raised in an upper-middle class, 'secular-Christian' household. I recognize that many facets of my identity privilege me within oppressive societal structures and have made my journey through the education system virtually barrier-free. Additionally, those with similar identities to mine are part of a larger history of oppression within the education system in Canada as it has been weaponized against Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, persons who identify as LGBTQ2+, and members of visible minorities. I recognize that I have internalized many biases in my lifetime, and it is my intent to pursue this thesis in search of those biases in order to confront them as they impact my teacher-researcher identity and my praxis.

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[1] As defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Cisgender is "of, relating to, or being a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth"

Chapter One

Becoming Teacher-Researcher: An Autobiographical Narrative

The work I seek to present in this thesis is grounded in currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), as it sits at the intersection of research in teacher identity and curriculum (Carter, 2014). Through the way we experience curriculum, "we choose what to remember about the past, what to believe about the present, what to hope for and fear about the future" (Pinar, 2008, p. 493). If we acknowledge that this thesis too is an act of currere, I believe it is important to acknowledge those elements of the past that inform the choices I make regarding my research and my pedagogy today. Reflecting on my own education positions me as a teacher: which images of teacher I've internalized, in what ways I've defined the concept of schooling, and what values I've prioritized in myself as I've grown personally and professionally. In reflecting back, I saw the ways in which I took for granted the concept of teacher-researcher when engaging with literature by those who similarly invoke the term. This identity is not natural but constructed through experiences and praxis. In this chapter, I will narrate the construction of those dual identities of teacher and researcher within myself. I use the term dual identities because the story of this chapter is simultaneously the story of the thesis itself, and by this chapter's end those dual identities live separately, united only through my own conscious choices to negotiate between them, like an unregulated intersection. Through the nontraditional narrative of this thesis, I seek to continue the story of how teacher and researcher intertwine and combine slowly, through the act of recursive currere woven into each chapter, and develop a clearer location at the crossroads. It is here that we begin our tale:

I am a teacher.

That is how I say it. Not ‘My job is to teach children’ or ‘I work at an elementary school’. I *am* a teacher. Seeing myself as a teacher is wrapped tightly to my identity, this role that feels defined for me, not by me. When did I become a *teacher*?

I went to a collegiate high school in Oshawa, Ontario. Public, not private, but still seen by the community as a highly academic environment that would prepare students for a path to university. There were vocational and college pathways offered, but I was in the gifted/enriched program. I took Latin, Politics, Environmental Geography, Law, History. I didn’t want to teach. I didn’t even sign up to be a peer tutor. I dripped with a lack of enthusiasm for my teachers’ efforts, balked at their choices when I felt they were moving too slowly through the curriculum. I wanted to claim a piece of the world. I knew my high school did not represent a true microcosm; I knew there was more out there. Teachers, in my eyes, held the key to my freedom to see the world. Some special teachers gave me the keys that showed me I could also be part of changing that world. And yet, I kept my distance from them all. High School teachers were just characters in a chapter I felt I was done reading.

I set my sights on McGill University. I was told it was the ‘Harvard of the North’ - a top tier Canadian University where I would be challenged and meet people with goals similar to mine. I was ready to leave Oshawa. As I entered Grade 12, fun projects became assignments and assignments became battles for perfection. There was no space for me to risk a bad reputation, so I swallowed any frustration I held with the curriculum in order to get that much-cherished key to freedom: an A+.

Upon my acceptance to McGill, I spent my first year in the Faculty of Arts, with a focus on politics and women’s studies. Politics in my eyes was the best route for changing the world. I

sat in conference after conference, surrounded by majority white cismale[2] students, prompted with discussion questions that asked privileged students to debate issues they had no stake in, issues that should be defined not as issues but rather questions of humanity. I vividly remember a political science seminar in my first year discussing the legitimacy of Indigenous land claims in Canada - the room was 50 shades of white, blending with my own whiteness, and yet I felt MY voice was less valid than my peers. I thought I was going to a school with similarly minded people, but I started to feel Less-Than and Different. I lasted four months before deciding that politics was not how I would go about affecting the world.

If not politics, then what? I enjoyed Women's Studies, but I felt that would not lead to a career. My high school career quiz told me to be a museum curator, so I briefly considered Art History, but I really did not want to curate art. At this point, I had spent many years on various councils, from Youth Council of Canada, to Teen Council at my public library to Rez Council at McGill. I liked event planning, completing projects and leading a team. But I also wanted to do something that would have a positive social impact on the world. Really, the only careers I knew about were the ones held by my parents. My dad is a professor of Business Marketing. My mom is a Medical Laboratory Technologist who became a Lab Manager and who is now a professor at Ontario Tech University. She leads projects, designs websites, plans lectures. She tells stories of her students' accomplishments. I wanted all of this, too. And if I could deposit some social good into the minds of children, all the better. I turned my attention to the Faculty of Education. I started my Bachelor of Education at 19, at McGill University. I fell in love with the ideals presented in my first Educational Philosophy course, where I met Dewey[3] and "attended"

[2] Related to the term "cisgender", cismale is the term associated with men whose gender identity correspond to the gender given to them at birth.
[3] John Dewey crafted the educational philosophy of pragmatism, which holds similar elements to the theory of constructivism.

Summerhill School[4]. Dewey welcomed me to build experiences for children. He told me that children are the constructors and I their manager. If I provided the right building blocks, I could inform the future decisions of generations. Summerhill showed me my first real-life utopia. A school unlike the overbearing, overscheduled, prison-like institutions that invade our collective conscience in North America. A school that empowers student choice regarding when, how, and what to learn while still displaying that real learning happens! I salivated on these ideas as a student.

I was not yet a *teacher.* This identity was still confined within a time and space. I played the role of *teacher*, I dressed up as one during my stage (aka teaching placement). I walked, talked, behaved as *teacher*, but then I would go home or to class or spend time with family and I was *Lauren*. I questioned if something wasn't right. Wasn't I supposed to feel like a teacher all the time? I pushed forth a caricature of myself, starting a joke with friends where I would read "teacher" stories aloud at parties. But as I was ruminating on my teacher identity, I was becoming other things simultaneously. I was part of inaugurating an after-school program through McGill's Social Equity and Diversity Education Office, where I read about access to education and was taught about inequity. I was *coordinator*. I graduated with my Bachelor of Education at 21 years old (in my high school, I was able to graduate with enough AP courses credits to slice a year off my undergraduate timeline). I was a *graduate*, not a *teacher.*

I took on jobs tutoring, homeschooling, substitute teaching, and within a few months I received my first classroom teaching position. I was closing off several years of working in alternative education environments and beginning a formal teaching position at a semi-private school. I dressed, walked and talked like what I felt a teacher should be. I was teaching second

[4] A.S. Neill's Summerhill School in England is an often-studied institution that offers a democratized educational experience for elementary-aged students.

grade. I remembered my own second grade teacher, who made personalized birthday gifts for each student - she gifted me a journal for all the stories I so loved to write. I wanted to embody her, but also a cross between Miss Frizzle from "The Magic School Bus" and Shari Lewis of "Lambchop's Play-Along". My voice moved up what felt like an octave and rang with an insincere sincerity that feigned excitement about everything. A child told me I reminded her of Miss Honey from the movie "Matilda" and I felt like I had accomplished some sort of achievement. And now, others referred to me as the *teacher.* My friends were *teachers.* My Twitter feed was full of *teachers.* I felt like my dreams night after night were about my classroom and my students. I was *teacher*, but I felt less like *Lauren*. *Teacher* and *Lauren* were not yet tied as one. The role of teacher I was playing felt...wrong. I felt like I was acting a part but trying to resemble these characters.

In pursuit of clarity, two years into my teaching career I began my Master of Arts in Education part time, still at McGill - Montreal and I have clearly become inseparable these past ten years. At this same time, I was switched from second grade to fifth, and then sixth grade. I felt less like an actress playing the role of Miss Honey. I would remind myself of my own fifth grade teacher, Miss Lowes, who made us laugh, designed cool projects but was firm and blunt when she needed to be. It was in this first year of my master's that, for the first time, I saw the kind of teacher that Lauren could be. I was inspired first by the concept of the "hidden curriculum" (Apple, 2004; Snyder, 1971), which acknowledges the social construction of knowledges through schooling not formally planned in the lessons. I came to understand schools as a political institution, particularly as they push forward social stratification. I met the writings of Paulo Freire and danced with his Critical Pedagogy (1972). I dove into the Twittersphere and followed like-minded educators, like Jesse Stommel of Hybrid Pedagogy (@Jessifer) and

Jennifer Gonzalez of Cult of Pedagogy (@cultofpedagogy). I was reminded of the inspirations from that very first Educational Philosophy course. At this time, my increasingly cultivated social media accounts shared news of schools "going gradeless" (Fraser, K., 2017; Sackstein, S., 2017; Spencer, K., 2017). I saw the Freirean foundations of these schools rethinking power structures to what was at the core: grades. That vestige of social class designation weaves itself into the falsely democratic institution of schooling. I began to understand that my hesitation with my own teacher identity was not occurring in isolation. I had shifted worlds - from alternative educational contexts to a traditional position at a semi-private school, an institution built upon the creation of social stratification. Even within the semi-private school environment, I grew increasingly uncomfortable with the role of assessment in reproducing social stratifications. At this time, I began reflecting on how the traditional methods of assessment I was using were potentially inequitable for students with learning disabilities or students whose development could not be adequately captured within those assessment methods.

Discussing these ideas reminded me that I had entered education in order to disrupt it. I had thought teachers were supposed to always have a moral high ground - that's why they were teachers! But now I was beginning to see the story of schooling was more complex – teachers held power to both uphold and breakdown inequities. The school system might have flaws, but a path in teaching could also lead to success and stability, enough to study and critique, such as I was able to do. I thought perhaps THIS will inform the teacher I am meant to be - maybe assessment is the frequency of the system I could disrupt. Going gradeless seemed like a never-achievable dream. Not only did I teach in Quebec, where grading is encoded in the Framework for the Evaluation of Learning that structures the Quebec Education Program (QEP), I was

teaching at a private school. Perhaps it was this moment of theory and praxis reaching a fever pitch that finally solidified my identity as *teacher*.

I spent the next few years of coursework inquiring about the philosophical foundations of gradeless assessment being applied to schools that must still adhere to grading standards. I collected ideals, some strategies, but mostly an increasingly tense internal dialogue informing my teacher identity. Instead of Miss Frizzle and Miss Honey, I had Freire and Jennifer Gonzalez. My internal Freire told me not to ignore my position in an oppressive educational system, to understand the power I wield. He demanded I hold myself accountable to a standard of constant critical reflection (aka Praxis) BECAUSE of this power. To reduce inequities not just every chance I get, but to make those chances happen. And Jennifer, well, she would come in and agree with Freire but remind me to work within present realities, where I need to simultaneously manage a group of kids AND dismantle the patriarchy. This new ideal standard was placed on a mental pedestal for me to one day achieve.

After 5 years of teaching at that same religious semi-private school in Montreal, I received my tenure – this symbol of an institution I am deeply critical of was, in reality, a valuable tool to give me the confidence to try something new. This year also aligned with me teaching a group of students I held close to my heart; a challenging and interesting mix of learners who I had taught two previous years before. A group who demanded to be heard. I needed to finally try what I had been hoping to for a few years now. I wanted to rethink how assessment works in the sixth grade - to see if I could implement all the best parts of this Critical-Pedagogy-minded assessment while still adhering to the standardized grading policies of my environment.

In Fall 2019 as I sought to begin my research, I held inside of me these two dual identities: I was teacher, I was researcher, but was Lauren teacher-researcher? I became increasingly tied to the idea of praxis as a personal pedagogical adherence. Teaching, then, requires constant reevaluation and seeks a transformative curriculum through rigorous recursion (Doll, 1993), an idea that elicits Freire's praxis and recontextualizes it for a new generation of curriculum research. At this point, the aim of my study became action research into my own classroom praxis, to rigorously dissect my own experiences as I sought out that transformative curriculum of student-centered assessment. This research plan, however, was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and set off-course. Following the school shut down in March 2020, which derailed my academic plans, I was suddenly spending more time at home reflecting on my year, my goals and myself. This introspection reflects the burgeoning field of autobiographical curriculum theory of the 21st century. Authors such as Clandinin & Connelly (2000), built on Pinar & Grumet's concept of currere (1976) to study the personal and professional knowledge of teachers. This framework prioritizes the study of lived experience in conjunction with curricular choices in ways that were hoped to result in self-transformation. During a time of forced pause and isolation due to the pandemic, I shifted towards a narrative approach to both share the story of my lived teaching experience attempting a transformative curricular shift as well as seek a deeper understanding of myself as teacher and researcher. At the commencement of this research, I was Ms. Lauren and Lauren Thurber, M.A.; two concepts of self at play, negotiating the research paths I was to take on.

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Chapter Two

Literature Review

There are elements of my research that support me as either teacher or researcher, a metaphor of two roads, with this literature review acting as mediator between those identities, moving my teacher identity towards the crossroads. The purpose of my study is to fully capture my experiences as a sixth-grade teacher in Montreal, Quebec shifting my pedagogy to student-centered assessment. This research lies at the junction of a growing body of research addressing teacher identity and its impact on curriculum. The first section of the literature review outlines this body of work in terms of its themes and approaches to studying the lived curriculum. Furthermore, the topic of student-centered assessment is under-utilized in education research and requires a review to define it more extensively. The second section seeks to accomplish this goal by underscoring its shared values with critical pedagogy in order to locate a definition in practice at the post-secondary level. The third and fourth sections recognize that my research, reflecting much teacher identity research, focuses on the specific location of my teaching as being within sixth-grade English and Math in the province of Quebec, Canada. Section three elaborates on student-centered assessment as it is implemented and researched in classrooms at the upper elementary level. Finally, the fourth section captures what research has been done on the topic at the Quebec level while also providing socio-historical context for student-centered assessment within the Quebec mandated curriculum. Assessment changes over time have led to the competency-based QEP being assessed through quantitative, traditional methods, therefore it is important to understand the assessment methods being used in contexts that serve this conflicting interest in the previous sections defining student-centered assessment.

Teacher Identity & Curriculum

"Curriculum is a site on which the generations struggle to define themselves and the world"

(Pinar, 1999, p. 366)

The upsurge in teacher identity research in the last twenty years is, on the surface, a response to increased teacher attrition rates and policy mandates (Schutz et al., 2018). More deeply, the interest in teacher identity reflects the growing body of knowledge that reveals the impact a teachers' identity has on the students (Milner, 2010; Lyle, 2017). But it is also a personal quest of teacher-researchers, who are sometimes left feeling isolated in their classrooms; unpacking questions of power and authority, reflecting on their own transition from student to teacher (Lyle, 2017). In a world of reforms that demand teachers to perform, centralizing teacher identity places process before product, exploring the self as an act to restore teacher agency (Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010; Craig & Ross, 2008; Lyle, 2017). In this restoration, it also seeks to redefine what a teacher is and who 'gets' to be teacher (Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010; Carter, 2014; Chen et al., 2018; Fasching-Varner, 2012; Journell, 2018). In the face of social, political and institutional realities, teachers develop, sustain or renegotiate their identities in multiple ways in the context of their own experiences (Carter, 2014; Chen et al., 2018; Jackson, 2018; Journell, 2018; Kaplan & Garner, 2018; Lyle, 2017). There is a growing body of research that seeks to understand the concept of teacher identity as a crossroads of several identities and its impact on teachers' curricular choices, thus defining the concept of lived curriculum (Carter, 2014; Craig & Ross, 2008).

In this section, I seek to outline prevalent topics, themes and methodologies within the field of teacher identity research in order to understand the lived curriculum as an organic connection between teacher identity and curriculum studies. As a teacher, I feel that my

curricular choices are culturally situated in my own educational and cultural experiences, but what precisely is understood in the field of teacher identity studies? In particular, I am centering those studies that centralize themes of the lived curriculum and the pursuit of praxis as an act of developing and reflecting on one's teacher identity in practice (Pinar & Grumet, 1976).

Perspectives on teacher identity research differ with scope and goals. Focusing on the development of a strictly professional identity, within the literal and figurative space of the school, tends to address the growing concern of teacher attrition; that is, the search for why good teachers are leaving the profession and its connection to the development of their professional identity (Alsup, 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). Perhaps due to their accessibility in post-secondary institutions, a large subsection of the research concentrates on pre-service teachers and the development of their teacher identities (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Chen et al., 2018; Fasching-Varner, 2012; Jackson, 2018), which feels slightly disconnected to classroom practice. Similarly addressing research into what it means to be a teacher, subject-specific research has emerged as a way to answer what it means to be a ____ teacher (Carter, 2014; Cross Francis et al., 2018; Journell, 2018). Increasingly, the focus of teacher identity research, however, is that of how the identity of teachers impact students and curriculum; it conceptualizes teacher identity as a combination of professional, personal and socio-political identities (Day, 2018; Journell, 2018; Kaplan & Garner, 2018). Furthermore, these multiple sources of teacher identity are dialogical and formed through interactions and relationships with students, coworkers, supervisors, etc (Kaplan & Garner, 2018). Stemming from work on multiple-source teacher identity and pressing on research asking what a teacher is, modern critical perspectives on teacher identity question societal influences that define stereotypical images of teachers and create barriers to the teaching profession, resulting in impacts to classrooms and curriculum (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018; Carter,

2014; Chen et al., 2018; Fasching-Varner, 2012; Jackson, 2018; Journell, 2018). From these approaches, I am adopting the definition of teacher identity as a metaphoric location at the intersection of potentially multiple identities (including, but not limited to, cultural, political, professional and social) and their interaction within the classroom or curriculum space. In particular, I am seeking out research that explores how teachers' identities can be actionable, when possible as an interaction between teacher identity and curriculum choices in order to understand prior research similar to my research question on the lived experience of a pedagogical shift.

Methods of Understanding Teacher Identity and Curriculum

The methods of research across the literature prioritize the involvement of the teacher-participants within the research for two reasons: (1) to ensure a deeper, layered understanding of the teacher's lived curriculum (Carter, 2014; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018) or (2) to motivate and instruct teacher participants on frameworks to continue reflecting on their teacher identity as they grow into their profession (Alsup, 2018; Carter, 2014; Cross Francis et al., 2018; Kaplan & Garner, 2018). Qualitative methods are used throughout teacher identity research and take on multiple forms depending on the research goal. Narrative inquiry, autobiography and ethnographic studies are most commonly used (Lyle, 2017). Interviews can be used as brief narratives to understand how identities, particularly professional identities, are maintained and negotiated (Alsup, 2018; Cross Francis et al., 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). Group interviews can also be used for comparative thematic analysis to note specific impacts of ideas on pedagogy (Jackson, 2018); additionally, thematic or comparative analysis of subject narratives is used to fully link identity statements to pedagogical choices (Buchanan & Oslen, 2018; Kaplan & Garner, 2018). However, if we understand that not all pedagogical choices are conscious, the use of classroom observation, or role-play for pre-service teachers, in conjunction with subject

interviews or narratives helps to uncover motivations behind curricular choices (Chen et al., 2018; Elbaz-Luwish, 2007). In these studies, the researcher is separate from the teacher identity being studied. Bathmaker & Harnett (2010) write with layered narrative, to link the researchers' motivations for performing the research on teacher identity and encourage reflective analysis. Carter (2014), too, places herself amongst her participants in the research and reflects on her own positionality and teacher identity as she engages in analysis. Similar to Bathmaker & Harnett (2010), Carter (2014) envisions the writing of the research as part of the narrative work and uses the space between chapters to contextualize and further narrate on the theme of in-between spaces and crossroads of identities. The act of layered narrative is a compelling approach to empowering work in teacher identity research; having the research narrative reflect both the identity of the researcher and that of the teacher participant(s) fosters a connection between research and classroom experience. This functions as the basis for my own approach in this thesis as I write the research narrative to explore the growing connection between my own identities as both researcher and teacher. Carter's use of currere as an inquiry method to link between teacher identity and curriculum poses a clear framework. Pinar and Grumet (1976) developed currere as a method for self-study in educational research, outlining their four steps of regressive, progressive, analytical and synthetical research. Similar methods of narrative self-study have been applied to teacher identity work in relation to teacher practice (Brooke, 1994; Craig, 2006; Hayler & Williams, 2018; Rice et al., 2015; Ritter, 2009).

Teacher Agency in the Face of Educational Reform

The model of multiple identities is incomplete if we see those identities as separate aspects as opposed to one moulded model (Kaplan & Garner, 2018). Two teachers with one shared aspect of their teacher identity or motivation are not necessarily going to act on that piece

the same way because their total teacher's role identity is composite. In this way, particularizing on the situation and identity of individual teachers to understand the agentic choices they make in regards to their teaching and their teacher's role identity is important. Teacher's act with goals for themselves and for their students, which do not necessarily always align; though the goals may be informed by reform or outsider curriculum, teachers are still agents of their pedagogical choices. Identity is dynamic and changing and therefore all pedagogical choices must be interrogated with this in mind (Kaplan & Garner, 2018) and teachers are craftsmen of their own identity (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). Teacher identity is an ongoing process or renegotiation and defense, particularly against the pressures of reform and institutional guidelines. Interestingly, identity tensions functioned overall as sources of growth as opposed to barriers (Cross Francis et al., 2018; Ruhotie-Lyhty, 2018).

But resilience is not necessarily experienced by all teachers in face of reform (Day, 2018). In face of performance indicators and teaching assessments during reform, some teachers redefine themselves as quality professionals through the act of 'performativity', resulting in an overall reduced resilience than teachers who retain a sense of agency in how they sustain their teacher identity. Cross Francis et al (2018) studies Mathematics teachers specifically, a subject area most associated with performance-indicator reform curriculum. They found that interventions informed by teacher identity reflective work can break through a performance-based teacher identity, resulting in a significant change in the way teachers teach Math. The research minimally explores the idea of agency in defining success as a teacher navigating pedagogical change and further research is needed to understand how teachers sustain a sense of self through challenging shifts.

Teaching at the Crossroads

Teaching identity has a non-literal geographic aspect to its nature; a location at the intersection of two prevalent identities at play. In her *Teacher Monologues*, Carter (2014) explores the narratives of theatre professionals as they transition to drama teachers while also exploring her own identity as a researcher at the crossroads of theatre and education. The subject professional is a crossroads tension motivating identity development through lived curriculum (Carter, 2014; Cross Francis et al., 2018). The crossroads location of teacher identity development can also be envisioned as straddling two institutions: where one does their teacher education and where one does their teaching, wherein the values may either be harmonious or discordant (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018). The values of the school or institution can also form a crossroads with the racial identity of the teacher, forming unique teacher identities particularly where the racial identity of the teacher is dissimilar from that of the school (Chen et al., 2018; Jackson, 2018). Within institutional and social realities, forming an identity as a teacher at a crossroads of values can feel like a trap, both intellectual and political, that can be formed socially but also internally (Pinar, 2005). Regardless of the crossroad, teachers are a product of this intersection, but are still able to practice agency in the negotiation of that identity and are not simply victims of identity location (Kaplan & Garner, 2018). Engaging with praxis in face of a crossroads motivates continued praxis towards a more sustainable sense of self, and sense of teacher identity (Cross Francis et al., 2018).

Power and Positionality

What intrigues me most is teacher identity research that reflects post-modern education research, engaging critically with that central inquiry of who gets to be the teacher. Research in this domain engages with the role of authority and associated power that can come with being a

teacher and how pre-service and novice teachers in particular grapple with the transition from student to teacher. Alsup (2018) explores the duality of authority and vulnerability that comes with the new teacher identity; developing a professional identity as a teacher requires understanding that authority while experiencing a sense of daily vulnerability. The fragility can be personal (Carter, 2014), social or political (Alsup, 2018). Pushing a critical lens to take this deeper, Chen et al (2018) engages with pre-service and novice teachers to not just make sense of authority as a relationship with students but as a positionality in society. How teachers interpret the idea of authority is culturally informed and has repercussions on their teacher practice (Chen et al., 2018; Jackson, 2018; Journell, 2018). This is particularly significant in research taking place in U.S. public schools, where white, middle-class women are over-represented in the profession and reproduce oppressive, culturally-biased interpretations of authority (Leonardo & Boas, 2013). Carter (2014) engages her participants in artistic reflections on how pre-service teachers can internalize these culturally-informed stereotypes of what it means to be a teacher in order to interrupt the cycle. Research that engages with narratives from perspectives of teachers who do not fit the categorical white, middle-class, straight, female vision of teacher furthers our cultural understandings of teacher identity and how it impacts pedagogy (Chen et al., 2018; Jackson, 2018; Journell, 2018).

Impacts of Identity on Curriculum

Teachers tend to express their teacher identity in accordance with what they see as being a ‘good teacher’, documenting their efforts to implement the ‘right’ curriculum (Chen et al., 2018; Lyle, 2017). Their selection of the right curriculum is informed by their teacher identity, which is located at the crossroads of potentially several social and cultural influences. This comes with it a danger if teachers are not given the tools to adequately reflect on their

positionality as it relates to their authority and teacher identity (Chen et al., 2018; Fasching-Varner, 2012; Journell, 2018). Colour-blind teaching, for instance, upholds the hidden curriculum of white supremacy as white teachers implement culturally informed and oppressive semantic moves (Fasching-Varner, 2012) whereas Teachers of Colour, specifically Black women, are more likely to identify their teaching role as a political act (Jackson, 2018). The neutral positioning of the teacher within coursework dealing with politics and religion also upholds oppressive hidden curriculums. Culturally-informed ideas of teachers as retaining neutrality in these situations acts as a barrier for many to enter the profession or engage safely with the curriculum due to the very real vulnerabilities that one's race, gender, sexual orientation and religious background can create within certain classroom contexts (Journell, 2018). Overall, the concept of teacher identity, informed by culture, is linked to the lived curriculum, if not always the written curriculum (Milner, 2010). In discussing the impacts of teacher identity on curriculum, the focus tends to be on the content or style of the curriculum, as opposed to the selection of assessment tools. However, the reality of modern post-reform schooling is that instruction, learning and assessment are intertwined within the concept of curriculum, as Pinar (2005) notes: " Curriculum - presumably the content of learning - mutates to a means to the end that is assessment" (p. 74). Further research is required that addresses the implications of teacher identity on selection of assessment methods, particularly as teacher identity can be explored through ideas of professionalism, dialogic relationships and authority.

Key Takeaways on Teacher Identity & Curriculum

As a teacher-researcher, I feel my own identity lies somewhere at the crossroads and my own curricular choices have been impacted by my own identity, likely in both positive and negative ways. Take, for example, how seeking a graduate degree is an act of establishing a

greater academic authority, meaning that I must believe in the concept of academic authority. My research is built on a growing body of research at the crossroads itself, between teacher identity and curriculum studies. The idea of authority and power weaves itself across the literature as teacher participants reflect on their perception of their teacher role identity. Research methods lean on narrative both as a tool for depth of understanding by the researcher and development of praxis for the teacher participant. Praxis can be translated from pedagogical use into research inquiry method as 'currere' (Pinar & Grumet, 1976), a method mirrored by similar approaches that combine narrative work, qualitative analysis and self-reflection (Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010; Carter, 2014; Chen et al., 2018). By use of currere as an inquiry method, combined with narrative methods and/or thematic analysis, researchers can connect teacher identity to curriculum impact. It can take the form of broad, wide-scope reflections of their teaching in order to capture general motivations for pedagogical choices or highlight behaviours informed by their identity that have hidden impacts on the classroom. Research into subject-specific teacher identity or critical analysis of identity focuses in on content-based curricular choices and how their authority, unquestioned, can recycle and sustain dominant cultural understandings of subject content and teacher stereotypes. Little research has targeted the layered impacts of teacher identity, authority and assessment methods, though the groundwork for such research has been laid out in adjacent work on identity and curriculum. There is a gap in addressing specific assessment methods, such as student-centered assessment, that demand teachers to reflect on their power and positionality.

What is Student-Centered Assessment?

As a teacher, I noticed student-centered assessment permeated the usual learning spaces for teachers – conferences, blogs, social media – but as a researcher, I wondered from where it

truly stems. The idea of assessment as learner-centered, or student-centered, speaks to Freire's (1972) critical pedagogy, which posits that power be redistributed so that students and teachers are equal partners in learning to break down cycles of oppression in our society. However, the term student-centered is not one coined by Freire and was instead implemented to counter and critique teacher-centered, or didactic, approaches, which situate learners as passive recipients of the curriculum and center teachers as authoritarian control of knowledge (Bain, 2010). It echoes Freire's (1972) 'banking model' of education, which acts as a metaphor to describe teaching as an act of depositing, such as at a bank, wherein teachers deposit funds into students, limiting their right to engage fully with the action of learning. The metaphor further explains that traditional didactic models situate students as having no value until teachers determine, or assess, their level of value according to the deposits the teacher has made (Bain, 2010). Didactic teaching is not an artefact from the past, but a reality of my every day teaching experiences within my school context. Though critical pedagogy counters didactic methods, it is not the practical dialogue occurring in spheres of teaching and is not the language teachers are engaging with (Pittard, 2015). It is here that my identity as a teacher and as a researcher held separate perspectives contributing to the direction of this literature review: Ms. Lauren, as teacher, knows that the dialogue in North America around these critical pedagogy assessment ideals is using the language of 'student-centered assessment', but Lauren as researcher sees that research utilizing these terms is limited, and further limited at the elementary level. In this section, I seek to review the literature in order to define and contextualize 'student-centered assessment'. The topic of this research is the shift to a student-centered assessment curriculum within a traditional school environment. For this reason, literature that takes place in similarly traditional educational settings, that is those that are required to formally assess and report marks, is prioritized

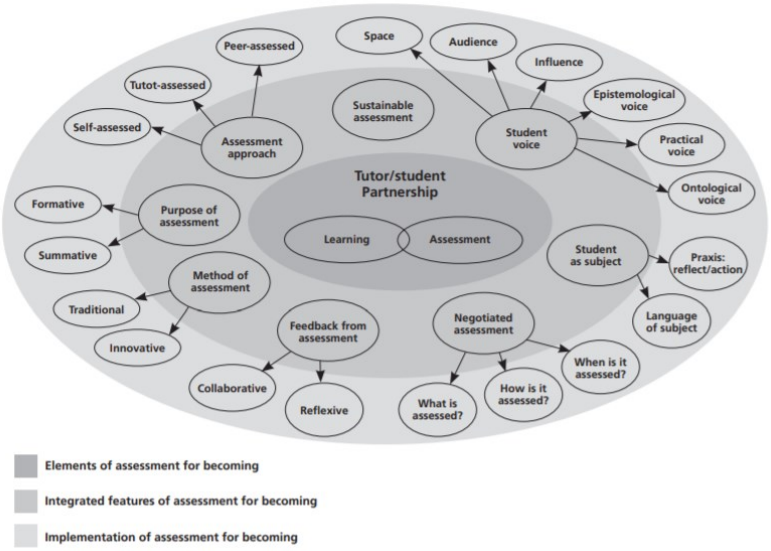
throughout the review in order to best understand prevailing knowledge on navigating the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered assessment

A Critical Pedagogy Perspective

The defining characteristic of student-centered assessment from a critical pedagogy (CP) lens is the effort to level the playing field to empower students to have an equal say in the assessment process (Bain, 2010). In levelling the playing field, does the student or the teacher's role shift...or do they both? Critical pedagogy tackles the concept of authority; how a teacher's identity can be a source of power to be leveraged against students, or alternatively be leveraged to uplift them. The hidden curriculum of assessment is that it informs students who and what is important (Bain, 2010; Boud, 1988; Snyder, 1971). Teacher-centered approaches to assessment can position the teacher as authoritarian, allowing them to limit intellectual freedom and reposition students away from their own self-awareness and toward academic and social conformity (Bain, 2010). Freire (1972) saw traditional grading systems as a tool for oppression by systematically slotting students into categories of success and limiting space for student voice. Though post-modern feminist scholars critique elements of Freire's critical pedagogy that foster sexist, racist and homophobic dialogue, they align with the intent to reconceptualize assessment spaces to foster meaningful development of a diversity of learners (Bain, 2010). In its broad definition, student-centered assessment borrows from critical pedagogy the underlying values of redistributing roles of teacher and student in the assessment method, primarily through student-teacher dialogue. Bain (2010) offers 'assessment for becoming' as a conceptual model for student-centered assessment at the post-secondary level (Figure 1), including increasing student voice, integrating feedback and emphasizing critical thinking.

Figure 1

Assessment for becoming, a conceptual model (Bain, 2010)



To further define student-centered assessment, I scanned the research for that which would address the implicit power role of the teacher as authoritarian when put in a position of evaluator (Elliot, 2008). Further, I was interested in work that sought to rebalance that power among the students, particularly as they function within a traditional institution and therefore attempted to alleviate the tension between formal grading and instructor as final authority, which I too seek to achieve as a teacher. Most of the research I analyzed was performed as case studies (Clifford, 2002; Mossa, 2014; O'Sullivan et al., 2012) due to their balance of description and conceptual context in order to best achieve a thorough definition of student-centered assessment. I also held preference for studies occurring within competency-based post-secondary programs (Elliot, 2008; Mossa, 2014; O'Sullivan et al., 2012; Woodward, 1998; Yan & Brown, 2017), in order to best align with the competency-based curriculum of the Quebec Education Program. Despite the studies occurring in different subject areas (ie; Social Work, Education, Geography,

Management and Women's Studies), they were united in seeking to understand the intentions and outcomes of SCA methods. Across the literature, a framework emerged that appeared to reduce the tension between student-centered assessment methods and formal grading. The following four pedagogical maneuvers represent the underlying, unifying elements that define student-centered assessment within traditional institutions.

I. Make Learning Outcomes Transparent

Several studies underscored the core vale of transparency; if students are going to be empowered to take on a larger role in the assessment of their learning, they must be working on a similar level of clarity with the instructor regarding the course or program expectations (Boud, 1989; Clifford, 2002; Mossa, 2014; O'Sullivan et al., 2012; Woodward, 1998; Yan & Brown, 2017). During their transition to student-centered assessment, Elliot (2008) found that students felt angry and frustrated with traditional methods that kept grading standards secretive, leaving students - whether successful or not in the course - unsure of their actual abilities. For successful student-centered assessment, the learning objectives and/or standards for grading are made explicitly clear, empowering students to self-advocate, justify their learning and more accurately self-reflect on growth. How to make the competencies clear varied slightly among the literature but presented itself in three major ways. Firstly, **instructors can incorporate understanding of the learning objectives into the coursework itself**, including the use of research projects to study the meaning of the competencies and the use of self-assessment to reflect on their understanding of the competencies (Woodward, 1998; Yan & Brown, 2017). Secondly, the students can **work together with the instructor to develop the learning objectives**, engaging in group discussion to clarify group goals (Boud, 1989; Clifford, 2002). Finally, **the instructor can develop a visual tool to enumerate the learning objectives clearly**. This can take the form

of a checklist-table (Appendix A) (O'Sullivan et al., 2012) or a hybrid analytic-holistic rubric (Appendix B) which coordinates specific skills within a competency across mastery levels on a grid that aligns with a quantifiable level (Mossa, 2014). However, it should be noted that rubrics and checklist-tables within the scope of this review are culturally situated, particularly within their institutions, and that Indigenous scholars do not see them as representative of holistic assessment (Binda & Lall, 2013). Regardless of the specific approach, the objectives of the course are made explicitly clear and accessible to the students so that they can know when and how they have achieved mastery of the competency(ies).

II. Encourage Reflective Practice of the Students

In order to then self-assess based on the enumerated competencies, students must become adept at reflecting on their skills. Across the specific assessment methods, students showed the most growth when the reflection component was accompanied with an action plan for improvement within the competency (O'Sullivan et al., 2012; Woodward, 1998; Yan & Brown, 2017). Additionally, reflection of how the course materials relate to their future career practice or current non-academic life liberates students beyond a sense of performance for the institution and towards a performance of self. Non-liberating assessment upholds the hidden curriculum of performance for the institution, where the power of assessment is limiting student focus to performance for grades (Snyder, 1971; Boud, 1988). Assessment defines for students what is important and how they see themselves as learners (Brown et al., 1997) and thus emphasizing self-reflection recenters students within their own learning (Boud, 1989). Specifically, student-centered assessments displayed a commitment to the idea that lifelong learning is continual self-evaluation in three major ways. First, the assessment methods encouraged students to apply the competencies to a variety of situations, including assignments outside the course, extra-curricular

experiences and employment/internship opportunities (Boud, 1988; Mossa, 2014, O'Sullivan et al., 2012). For example, Mossa (2014) highlighted a portfolio method where students were encouraged to include items from outside the course alongside captions that explained how the item proved the development of one of the required skills for the course, displaying student ownership of the learning. Second, student-centered assessments had students reflect on their personal affective connection to learning content or objectives. A journal, for example, was used not only for students to write about their growth in the course but also as a place to denote emotional responses to the content being learned, an alternative way to assess how content is internalized and given personal meaning beyond the institution (Clifford, 2002). Creating a space for affective reflection further empowers students to make the learning their own, reducing the traditional perspective of learning prioritized by the institution and not the student. Finally, self-reflection synthesized feedback from a range of sources, such as occurs in life beyond the institution. When synthesizing the feedback from past assignments, peer discussions, commentary from an instructor or employer and other evidence, a student is calibrating their personal growth and entering into a reflective cycle (Yan & Brown, 2017). Thus, the literature regarding student-centered assessment methods includes comprehensive student reflection in order to extend the purpose for the assessment beyond the context of the classroom or graduation from the institution.

III. Model the Act of Assessment

For students to be empowered as proficient collaborators in the assessment process, they must clearly understand how to *do* assessment. In their initial implementation of student-centered assessment, Tisani (2008) found that there was a low success rate with portfolios due to students lacking proper modelling of how to create them, and then recommended providing portfolio-

creation seminars. For many students, being asked to take a large role in their own assessment is a brand-new task, for which students are potentially not coming into post-secondary courses being prepared to do. Thus, SCA instructors bring attention to the pedagogical processes of assessment through modelling in the form of intentional coursework or seminars (Mossa, 2014; Woodward, 1998). For example, instructors supporting students to use portfolios led a seminar on how to write captions to justify how the item in the portfolio displayed the student's mastery of a specific skill in the course rubric (Mossa, 2014). Students should also be presented with exemplars of accurate self-assessment across mastery levels (Boud, 1998; O'Sullivan et al., 2012). Examples of past portfolios displaying mastery of the course material can be made available online for the students to access throughout the duration of the course or program (O'Sullivan et al., 2012). Models of assessment better prepare students to participate more actively in the assessment process and provide a common language between instructor and student. Having a common language promotes the decentralization of teacher authority because it can help to position both professor and student as peers in the assessment process.

IV. Increase Opportunities for Dialogue in Assessment Process

Because student-centered assessment repositions teacher and students together at the center (Bain, 2010), they must collaborate as peers in the evaluation process. The assessment should be dialogical: the instructor engages in continual dialogue with the students and/or the students engage in dialogue with their peers to make sense of course expectations. Student-teacher dialogue should occur throughout the course or program as a form of conversational feedback as the students develop their self-reflective abilities (Boud, 1988; Clifford, 2002; Mossa, 2014; Yan & Brown, 2017). For example, Clifford (2002) recommended using journals as a cyclical write and respond action between the student and instructor, with as many

opportunities for written response as possible. Additionally, in order to reduce authoritarian power centered on the course instructor, dialogue should also occur at the time of the final evaluation (Boud, 1988; Woodward, 1998; Yan & Brown, 2017). This final evaluation can incorporate dialogue through panel discussion boards (Woodward, 1998), student/grade contracts (Boud, 1988) or portfolio interviews (Mossa, 2014). Dialogue as part of the final evaluation can act as a powerful tool for students to defend their learning, which may be overlooked if their methods do not conform to institutional or instructor bias. Students should also be oriented towards each other to increase opportunities for peer-to-peer dialogue, which expands the range of feedback sources. When using student-centered assessment, spaces should be created for peer support and formative feedback (Tisani, 2008) and can also be incorporated in the final evaluation through a cyclical student-peer-teacher assessment process (Boud, 1988). Regardless of specific method, increasing opportunities for students to communicate their learning can promote student voice and reduce teacher bias.

A Four Pillar Definition

Within a competency-based post-secondary course, student-centered assessment can be integrated in the form of portfolios, journaling, self-assessment, rubrics and/or an amalgamation of the methods. According to the review, student-centered assessment can be defined through four pillars: (1) increases the transparency of learning objectives, (2) supports students' reflective practice, (3) models accurate assessment, and (4) creates and sustains a space for continual dialogue on student growth and mastery. These four pillars define student-centered assessment in both theory and pedagogical practice at the post-secondary level, with potential alignment to Quebec's competency-based curriculum. Research at the post-secondary level is useful for defining student centered assessment as the literature contains some reflection on the WHY of the teachers' pedagogical shifts, contributing to my understanding of the core values. However,

context and application of pedagogical theory and methods differs greatly from post-secondary to upper elementary in any subject. The methods of portfolio, rubrics, journaling, and self-assessment would likely be implemented much differently in a sixth-grade classroom.

Student-Centered Assessment at the Upper Elementary Level

This research is focused on Cycle Three, Year Two (Grade Six) but the body of literature regarding student-centered assessment specific to that grade level is limited, and the literature joining this topic with teacher identity is nonexistent. For this reason, I wanted to understand what research has been pursued at the Upper Elementary level (grades four through eight) by reviewing studies that address the pedagogical methods unveiled in the previous section (portfolios, self -evaluations, and rubrics). This literature is heavily focused on describing pedagogical methods and their impacts on student learning and informs what student-centered assessment *looks* like in a sixth-grade classroom.

Student Agency in Elementary

When it comes to elementary students, what does it mean to be an agent in learning? How should teachers balance the requisite nurturing with respect for personhood? When I think of those touchstone characters of Miss Honey and Ms. Frizzle, I begin to sense the tension that comes with being a teacher specifically for children. I feel there is much focus on the teacher's responsibility to nurture their socio-emotional growth but also a professional responsibility to check their physical and cognitive development along (problematically ableist) age scales and deadlines. Both of these roles, these responsibilities, imply a sort of natural authority over the child. But how natural is that authority? Truly, kids were always agents and in charge of their world of learning, it was the adults and institutions that told them they should not trust their self-feedback. The very natural self-assessing behaviors of children can and have been spun into

negatives on many occasions (Fletcher, 2018). Seeking feedback at the post-secondary level is seen as positive behavior displaying intent to learn, whereas in elementary assessments 'help-seeking' denotes an inability to perform independently. Particularly in sixth grade, help-seeking is noted as a negative proof for mastery and results in a lower mark on provincial exams. Fletcher (2018) repositions help-seeking as a skill of adaptive learning, reframing it as 'student-initiated feedback', which formalizes the process for curmudgeon adults while encouraging a naturally dialogical self-assessment method. By implementing graphic organizers at each stage of the learning cycle, Fletcher showed that the help seeking became more goal-oriented in the process. Austin (1994) presents a method of inviting students into parent-teacher conferences wherein the students get to lead the conversation by displaying their portfolios. Juniewiecz (2003) extends this idea so students are not just responsible for reporting about their work - they are responsible FOR their work, assessing it, setting goals and explaining it clearly. And finally, we can explore children's desire to explore and achieve for their own sake. Oginsky (2003) explores the role of choice and teacher feedback while Dweck (2007) adds that unnecessary praise can "turn agentic learning to self-defeatist learning" (p. 34). Feedback processes need to shift from a unilateral act initiated by teachers to a co-constructed sequence of dialogues between students and teachers, supporting students as they move through the natural process of forethought, performance and self-reflection (Fletcher, 2018). To create a culture of self-assessment, it seems, is to lean into the natural tendencies of childhood and to promote a growth mindset. When we replace these tendencies with artificial ones, we are molding children into performance-oriented learners whose egos are too reliant on high scores to adequately and honestly self-evaluate.

English Language Arts and Mathematics: A Comparison of Assessment Methods

Because the literature at the elementary level is frequently subject-oriented, and my own narratives in this thesis will differentiate subjects as settings, it is important for me to distinguish research regarding the two subjects I teach: English Language Arts and Mathematics.

When it comes to English Language Arts, we are not so plagued by standardized testing here in Quebec as educational systems are in the United States. Our sixth-grade provincial exam is composed of a response to literature, in the form of an essay, and a short narrative, much unlike the American tests containing multiple choice questions to prove grammatical knowledge and basic reading comprehension. These standardized tests often "prioritize validity over fairness" (Cross et al., 1998, p. 11).

The difficulty in English Language Arts is the ability to quantify qualitative data regarding such essential knowledges as developing the profile of a reader, engaging with the writing process, communicating appropriately, etc. Current research in this subject area engages with methods that transform qualitative evidence of learning into feedback-paired data sources that students can understand. Holistic Diagnostic Feedback (HDF), a form of Data Binders, exposes students to their learning achievement in the form of quantitative information. However, Jang et al. (2015) recognized that children process data differently depending on whether they are oriented toward performing well or mastering new learning, and little is known on exactly how they filter this type of feedback. By pairing the data with feedback in a way that makes sense to young students, teachers are more able to mold students' orientations. Combining the use of quantitative feedback with visual and written journaling is a way to support young learners to understand the data they are given, supporting the focus on metacognitive reflection (Bures et al., 2013; Cruz & Zambo's, 2013; Maxwell & Lassak, 2008; Reynolds, 2010). The

HDF/Data Binder seeks reliability and validity of assessment data through eventually having student self-assessment align with teacher assessment, a limiting and oppressive goal as it does not give space for students' negotiation and dialogue. Comparatively, in the case of research that is increasing space for an easily overlooked group in education, Goldstein and Behuniak (2012) studied the use of skills checklist for students with severe cognitive impairments and found that teachers were under-representing students' abilities by grading them a 0 on skills that had not been taught. Specifically for writing, best methods include having students use model papers to generate criteria for a writing assignment, to then be assembled into a rubric to self-assess first drafts (Andrade et al., 2008; Andrade et al., 2010). Lin-Siegler et al. (2015) expanded upon this to clarify best methods for presenting models for self-assessment, proving that it is best to show contrasting cases - the best and the worst models - to support young learners' ability to notice and correct their own errors for writing tasks. This method both supports students' self-assessment abilities while engaging them in a conversation about assessment, whereas a positive-model-only approach would encourage performance orientations and failure avoidance orientations, leaving students without a productive template for acknowledging and improving mistakes.

The mirror of English Language Arts is Mathematics, perceived as a naturally quantitatively-assessed, teacher-holds-the-answers, subject area. The traditional method of assessment remains to be the paper-and-pencil test. Though tests are efficient and appease the supposed parental pressure for quantitative proof of a report card mark, it has limitations for many students. Tests can be harmful, especially in sixth grade, as students are now more conscious of their academic performance and are beginning to use academics as an identity-formation tool (Dweck, 2007). If instead assignments are more holistically marked on a rubric,

this improves students' self-efficacy, reduces their anxiety and encourages them to self-regulate their learning (Smit et al., 2017). Similarly, encouraging self-evaluation had a larger impact on the students in a socio-emotional way than it did on their academic performance. The Quebec provincial exam for Mathematics at the end of grade six / Cycle 3 involves traditional teacher-oriented assessments, including a multiple-choice Concept Booklet, in combination with larger Application and Situational Problems that use a rubric. The rubric, in my experience, is not necessarily student-user-friendly. Thus, I compare the problem Mathematics presents, in contrast to Language Arts - how do teachers make data more inclusive and descriptive?

Ross et al. (1998) found that students became more reliable in their self-evaluations once they received specific training on how to do it; the students were even able to collaboratively develop rubrics along a 3-level performance ability rating scale. Edwins (1995) used a basic structure to integrate short term math goals with long term life goals, with the impact on their identity as opposed to their learning. In the discussion of alternate assessment options in Mathematics, the dialogue is on clarity of student learning at the detriment of student participation, seeking to broaden the math skills that can be assessed and to create new modes for students to show their abilities (Hasemann & Mansfield, 1995; Kim & Noh, 2010; Surtamm & Koch, 2014). Altogether, students seem to be invited into the assessment process more so in English Language Arts than in Mathematics. This could potentially be due to cultural understandings of Math that persist: Math as knowledge to be passed on, and thus approved by the teacher. There is a considerable lack of research that seeks a narrative approach to exploring new methods used in Mathematics.

Portfolios

Portfolios are referenced throughout the QEP but are not explicitly detailed in how to marry quantitative, traditional reporting with qualitative evidence. Bures et al. (2013) discuss the ePEARL digital portfolio system created at Concordia University to be used in Quebec classrooms. The authors make specific reference to the sixth grade English Language Arts government exam in Quebec, stating that because the exam is similar to a unit plan, it is able to be integrated into a portfolio system. Interestingly, the concern for this research was whether the ePortfolio system was reliable enough to compete with standardized assessment, bringing up the question of whether validity comes from rich description (many many details explaining the mastery of work) or triangulation (comparing multiple assignments). Their key takeaway, however, was to not lose the narrative of the portfolio in favor of skills checklists. Overall, the ePortfolio functions as a learning tool more than a measuring tool due to its ability to increase and support student reflection (Bures et al., 2013). Reynolds (2010) further studied digital portfolios, but specifically in Math, stating that they tend to be more successful with higher achieving students and that they did not necessarily increase academic performance. However, there is no teacher commentary regarding the level of support provided to different students nor is there an exhaustive definition of what exactly defines academic performance. Bures et al. (2013), despite saying it did not increase academic performance, state that the ePortfolios did increase the number of strategies students used and their overall attitude toward mathematics. This begs the question, is the problem how we define success in Math? Since self-efficacy, self-regulation and reduced anxiety are pillars of long-term success in Mathematics, it is possible that for young students the portfolio method is more sustainable than traditional testing. Finally, in the Reynolds (2010) case study, the role of assessing computation was more in the hands of the

teacher than the students. In contrast, Maxwell & Lassak (2008) implemented Math portfolios with five categories: (1) mathematical attitude, (2) problem solving, (3) mathematical growth, (4) mathematical writing, (5) mathematical connections. For each category, the students selected evidence and captioned it to show why it displays this competency, all while keeping a Math Autobiography and Learning Log to track their process. This method combines a *performance* portfolio (assessing work at the end of term by selecting performance pieces) with *working* portfolio (reflecting on your growth throughout the term) and is stated to adequately assess Mathematics performance. It seems to contrast perfectly with Reynolds (2010) in terms of what is prioritized in the assessment of performance. Similarly, a *learner profile* portfolio uses the learner attributes as the competencies, allowing students to compile the evidence that shows mastery of these character traits (Baron et al., 1998).

However, the research into portfolios fails to convey exactly the specific skills or essential knowledges that are being assessed through the portfolio. Students always partake in the compiling of the evidence for the portfolio, but little detail is revealed about the extent to which they participate in the grading process. The dialogue instead appears to be cyclical, but directional: teacher → students → parent. Several studies noted the time pressures this placed onto teachers (Austin, 1994; Bures et al., 2013; Cruz & Zambo, 2013; Juniewicz, 2003; Maxwell & Lassak, 2008; Underwood, 1998). Additionally, there is limited insight into the experience of teachers going through the portfolio process. Some commentary references teachers' confusion regarding the creation, purpose and use of portfolios, particularly when implemented by administration (Baron et al., 1998). It seems clear that portfolios act as a vessel for including students in assessment but is not in itself an assessment method that responds to traditional grading expectations.

Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is broken down into two subcategories according to the purpose of assessment: measurement and learning. Self-assessment at the elementary level is used casually and yet enthusiastically, but only as a learning tool (Butler & Lee, 2010; Ness & Middleton, 2012). Teachers at the elementary level are more likely to implement student self-assessment to improve behaviors or executive functioning and are reticent to use it as a reliable measure. Butler and Lee (2010) characterize younger students as being incapable of accurately self-assessing their abilities, yet their research also shows that this may not in fact be true. With the proper tools and frameworks, just as children can increase their Zone of Proximal Development for many learning tasks, they can also extend their abilities for self-assessment. When using self-assessment with sixth grade students every other week, the accuracy of their self-assessment increases over time (Butler & Lee, 2010). Dann (2002) provides a framework for self-assessment in elementary school: (a) self-assessments should be embedded in the overall classroom context; (b) students should understand criteria clearly and have regular opportunities to reflect upon their work; (c) the processes by which students arrive at their judgments need to be understood; (d) teachers need to recognize differences or gaps in judgment between teachers and students; (e) teachers need to work towards closing these gaps through discussions with their students; and (f) self-assessments need to be linked to future learning. The main factor for successful self-assessment is addressing student motivation: Students do not take the assessment seriously without real impact, and additionally their self-assessments are impacted by the academic culture of the school (Butler & Lee, 2010). Exam-based cultures left the students feeling that the self-assessment was a waste of time and did not impact their success, while a learning-based culture saw increased student motivation for self-assessment (Butler & Lee, 2010; Dweck, 2007).

Authenticity and motivation together set up a best-case scenario for self-assessment (Ness & Middleton, 2012), but clarity is also key. Orsmond et al. (2004) agree that a key factor in self-assessment is students' understanding of specific criteria and recommend the use of a subject-specific exemplar. Overall, successful self-assessment culture includes: (1) a clear purpose for the self-assessment, whether tied to grades or to teacher's instructional choices; (2) consistent feedback from the teacher; and (3) items for self-assessment criteria that are clear and concrete (ie; a skill defined as an action, not a concept).

Rubrics

Student-centered assessments must include students in the process, but portfolios and self-assessments in isolation do little to guide teachers in matching student-driven feedback to grading standards. When the research for this grade level discusses grading, rubrics are used most often (Andrade et al., 2010; Cross et al., 1998; Edwins 1995, Suurtamm & Koch, 2014; Kim & Noh 2010; Ross et al., 1998; Underwood, 1998). However, teachers are still faced with the dilemma of matching rubric levels with percentages (Suurtamm & Koch, 2014). Categorically, there are three types of rubrics. Analytical rubrics break larger skills (competencies) into sub skills (criteria) and combine scores to calculate a final mark based on weightings. These weightings, however, are flexible and can be determined in conference with students. Holistic rubrics assign each skill a qualitative level, such as "excellent" or "poor". Finally, a holistic-analytical rubric combines the two to better match qualitative feedback with scoring (Bures et al., 2014). Further research is required to determine the consistency needed for rubric use. Though Underwood (1998) suggests using the same rubric throughout the year to encourage growth, alternate research (Andrade et al., 2010; Ross et al., 1998) encourages involving the students in creating the rubric together. The teacher can use model work to guide

students through the generation of success criteria. As a teacher, I question whether student rubrics from earlier in the course will be as effective later on, as their learning growth mirrors their metacognitive abilities in assessment.

Dilemmas, Barriers, and other Limitations

Windschitl (2002) provides a framework of four categories of dilemmas: conceptual, cultural, pedagogical and political. Conceptual dilemmas are defined by Windschitl as the degree to which teachers understand. As stated in the previous section, an example is the difficulty faced by teachers to match rubric feedback and/or qualitative data with quantitative levels (Bures et al., 2014; Goldstein & Behuniak, 2012; Suurtamm & Koch, 2014), or to match skill-based data to qualitative performance indicators (Baron et al., 1998). Similarly, in compiling a portfolio, teachers face difficulty in choosing selections to display abilities (Maxwell & Lassak, 2008).

Windschitl's pedagogical dilemmas are defined as the difficulty of teachers to put into practice increasingly complex pedagogical methods (2002). The most common pedagogical barrier was time; the student-centered assessment practices required substantially more time than traditional methods and sometimes left teachers stating that the assessment was not completed to the proper standard due to limited time (Bures et al., 2014; Edwins, 1995; Juniewicz, 2003; Maxwell & Lassak, 2008; Suurtamm & Koch, 2014; Underwood, 1998). Another dilemma was finding resources to record student thinking, learning and assessment (Suurtamm & Koch, 2014). There is the difficulty teaching the assessment process itself and determining how to differentiate that instruction for diverse learners along with all other subject area instruction (Baron et al., 1998; Juniewicz, 2003). Like other subject areas, there is also the challenge of obtaining student buy-in for completing student-centered assessment (Butler & Lee, 2010; Reynolds, 2010). Underwood (1998) mentions that these elements culminate in causing anxiety to students and

teachers. Undervalued dilemmas include the day-to-day difficulties, such as students losing their portfolios (Baron et al., 1998). An overall commentary on lack of resources is present in the literature (Baron et al., 1998; Juniewicz, 2003; Suurtamm & Koch, 2014; Underwood, 1998).

Cultural dilemmas are those found when considering that a classroom does not function in isolation and that a teacher must grapple with the structure of norms, expectations and values that uphold and impact the specified learning community (Windschitl, 2002). A major theme of discussion, particularly for this age level, is the presence of differing class cultures and learn identities: performance-oriented (also known as “fixed mindset” or “exam-oriented”) and mastery-oriented (“growth mindset”) students engage very differently with assessment (Butler & Lee, 2010; Fletcher, 2018; Dweck, 2007). Difficulty establishing clarity with parents is brought up (Suurtamm & Koch, 2014) along with the cultural pressure of comparison with teaching colleagues who chose to use traditional methods (Butler & Lee, 2010; Suurtamm & Koch, 2014). Infrequently mentioned is teachers’ internal dilemma with student-centered assessment, wrestling with the larger purpose and impact for their classroom community (Edwins, 1995, Juniewicz,2003).

Political, as Windschitl defines, involves "those aspects of education that are linked with the exercise, preservation, or redistribution of power among students, teachers, administrators, parents, school board members, and other participants in the educational enterprise” (2002, p. 154) with an emphasis on dilemmas arising when teachers seek to reconceptualize and reform the current institutional expectations. A general issue is the difficulty of fitting assessment feedback into the institution- or government-sanctioned report card framework (Surtamm & Koch, 2014). As well, there is an ongoing fluctuating sense of responsibility to government or standardized exams (Surtamm & Koch, 2014), which potentially holds different levels of

importance between administration, parents, students and teachers. Parents also tend to question the validity of student-centered assessment in comparison to traditional methods (Butler & Lee, 2010; Underwood, 1998). Additionally, the student-centered assessment reimagines the power structure between the child and their parent, where some parents do not feel comfortable inviting their child into a discussion of their flaws and failures (Juniewicz, 2003).

Key Takeaways at the Upper Elementary Level

The focus of much of the literature on student-centered assessment at the upper elementary level is on describing the methods used and determining its success rate. Success was defined three-fold: the accuracy of the student assessment (as compared to a supposedly objective standard), the ability of the assessment to improve learning, and the ability of the assessment to build students' self-efficacy and/or self-identity. In terms of accuracy, the research determined that student self-reporting relies heavily on the learner-orientation of the student and the learning priority of the classroom culture (Andrade et al., 2010; Austin, 1994; Butler & Lee, 2010; Maxwell & Lassak, 2008). The ability of student-centered assessment to improve learning was mixed, with reports of some positive impact (Andrade et al., 2008; Andrade et al., 2010; Underwood, 1998), negligible impact (Ross et al., 1998) and no impact (Butler & Lee, 2010; Edwins, 1995; Reynolds, 2010). It appears that the subject area being assessed has a role to play in this. By comparing results of studies based on the subject area or competency of focus, I noted subjects such as writing and math calculation provided more concrete evidence and criteria for students than subjects such as reading and problem solving and tended to result in a larger impact of their learning. The results on learner identity and self-efficacy were reported as having a positive result (Butler & Lee, 2010; Jung et al., 2015; Smit et al., 2017; Reynolds, 2010; Underwood, 1998) or not reported at all.

Across the literature, the barriers and dilemmas are mentioned as part of the findings but are rarely expanded upon in the discussion. There is a particular lack of in-depth teacher commentary on the lived realities of implementing student-centered assessment. Further research is required into the dilemmas, particularly following Windschitl's (2002) framework of four categories of dilemmas: conceptual, cultural, pedagogical and political.

Further exploration is needed to define successful implementation of SCA, making it clear for whom or what the success represents. Is it possible that increasing the number and type of alternative assessments will not just make teachers' judgments more 'accurate', but also will show a better view of students' capabilities? Success for students, however, does not always mean success for teachers. Portfolios improved students' academics and learner orientations, but there were too many barriers to their implementation. Accomplishing more is seen as better than accomplishing less, albeit more in-depth, especially when the standardized tests focus on the breadth of content as opposed to the depth. There was also a pressure that classroom grading should align with government exam results. Still, there is a gaping absence throughout the literature exposing how truly the shift to these alternative assessment methods impacted the teacher's perceptions of their role, their students, their curriculum and, most of all, how the three intersect.

The context of the studies reviewed in this section pulled research globally in order to capture the breadth of literature addressing classroom experience and methods at this grade level. However, following Pinar and Grumet's (1976) currere within curriculum studies, it is important to note that elementary curriculum is greatly impacted by curriculum at the local or national level. When Pinar (2011) discusses the dissolution of the professionalism of the teacher and the stripping of the curriculum from the hands of the teacher, he does so from the historical

perspective of the United States education system. The concept of student-centered assessment must be further defined at the local level of my own research: Quebec, Canada. And for the pursuit of understanding the impact teacher identity has on curriculum, further context for my own teacher training is needed. Therefore, if I am to undertake a reflect on student centered assessment and teacher identity in Quebec, we must understand the education system here in Quebec, particularly the origins of the Quebec Education Program (QEP) as teachers know it today.

The QEP and Student-Centered Assessment: A Curriculum Story

The curriculum is increasingly a product handed to teachers as opposed to an action performed by teachers (Pinar, 2011). Standards, programs and scripted textbooks are pushed onto teachers whose teaching is increasingly tied to student performance on standardized tests (Cross Francis et al., 2018; Pinar, 2011). Hindering the role of self-reflection and self-discovery, this standardization robs teachers of their intellectual freedom to choose the knowledge, the methods and the assessment and limits their awareness of their own teaching identity (Day, 2018). That singular standardized performance became of utmost importance to the point that parents critique their child's teacher for not following the curriculum, regardless of what *their* curriculum truly is (Pinar, 2005). It feels as if standardized curriculum is what manufactures the divide between teacher and researcher, such as I felt within myself. Yet the Quebec Education Program (QEP) is not reflective of the education system in the U.S and brings with it its own tensions to curriculum and teacher agency. The QEP was published in 2001, with discussions beginning in the 1990s. But before we get to that, let's back up and begin our story with the Parent Reform of the 1960s.

There is no clearer proof of the adage ‘education is power’ than the simultaneous actions of the Parent Reform and the Quiet Revolution. Between 1963 and 1966, the Parent Commission produced a five-volume report declaring that education shall no longer be a privilege, but instead a right. This movement towards free education was to uplift the Francophone population, with the new Liberal government leading the charge. The democratization of Quebec education thus began its initial steps, with school curriculums being standardized (Pigeon, n.d.). School boards, however, were divided along religious (Catholic & Protestant) lines, both supported by Government resources. Jewish Day schools underwent their own fight for rights at this time, leading to their semi-private status today (Fraser, 2015).

The Parent Commission also detailed the under-education of teachers, pushing a change to university-level training for all teachers. Here we can see the strong role of parents in the determination of curriculum in Quebec. On the other hand, the 60s and 70s, following the increase in qualifications of teachers, also saw the strengthening of teachers’ unions (Pigeon, n.d.). The government’s role in all of this was to push a civil agenda for the modernization of its population, leading eventually to the secularization of school boards in 1997 wherein they had been newly divided by linguistic differences (English and French).

In terms of curriculum, the democratization of education was built heavily on standardization. Evaluation was built on the collection of comparable data. Throughout the 1970s, success criteria were based on accumulation of knowledge that could be assessed through standardized examinations and prototypes of computerized report cards were introduced. Only minor changes occurred throughout the 1980s, including subtle shifts to mastery-based approaches (Pigeon, n.d.).

In the mid-nineties, at the same time that secular, language-based schooling was in development, the Quebec government invited schools, citizens and educational institutions to take part in the Estates General on Education. The result was that the Quebec curriculum was quickly becoming outdated and required changes to address the needs of a "knowledge and technology-based society" (Guimont, 2009, p.1).

In 2001, Legault's Ministry of Education published the Quebec Education Program (QEP), which sought to "to expand (Quebec's) goal from the democratization of education to the democratization of learning" (Ministre de l'éducation du Québec (MEQ), 2001 p.2). The QEP is a poem reciting the history of modern education in Quebec as a relationship between schools, parents and teachers. At the time of its publication, it was built on a goal to reduce the involvement of the government and increase the role schools take in deciding their pedagogical approach. While declaring a shared vision for educational goals across the province, the competency-based curriculum prioritized the rights for individual students to receive the education that suits them best. I believe Pinar would be impressed by the goal "to meet the needs and interests of all students, and a more flexible organizational model that is better suited to current thinking on child psychology and development and that respects the autonomy of educational institutions and their ***professional*** staff" (MEQ, 2001, p. 2) (emphasis added).

In short, the program is learner-centered. It outlines the essential knowledges for each subject area but defines them through cross-curricular competencies that best support the holistic development of children. From the perspective of Freire's Critical Pedagogy (1972), it acknowledges the prior knowledge of learners and sees them as co-constructors of learning. The program states that all students should play a role in the evaluation process, becoming aware of their own development and partaking in dialogue with the teaching team. It shows a mastery-

based approach, dividing elementary students into two-year "cycles": Grades 1-2 is Cycle One, Grades 3-4 is Cycle Two and Grades 5-6 are Cycle 3. The assessment of skill development is slated to occur at the end of the cycle, providing developmentally appropriate time for learners to grow (Guimont, 2009). Five report card communications are stipulated for each cycle, though the reports were qualitative in nature.

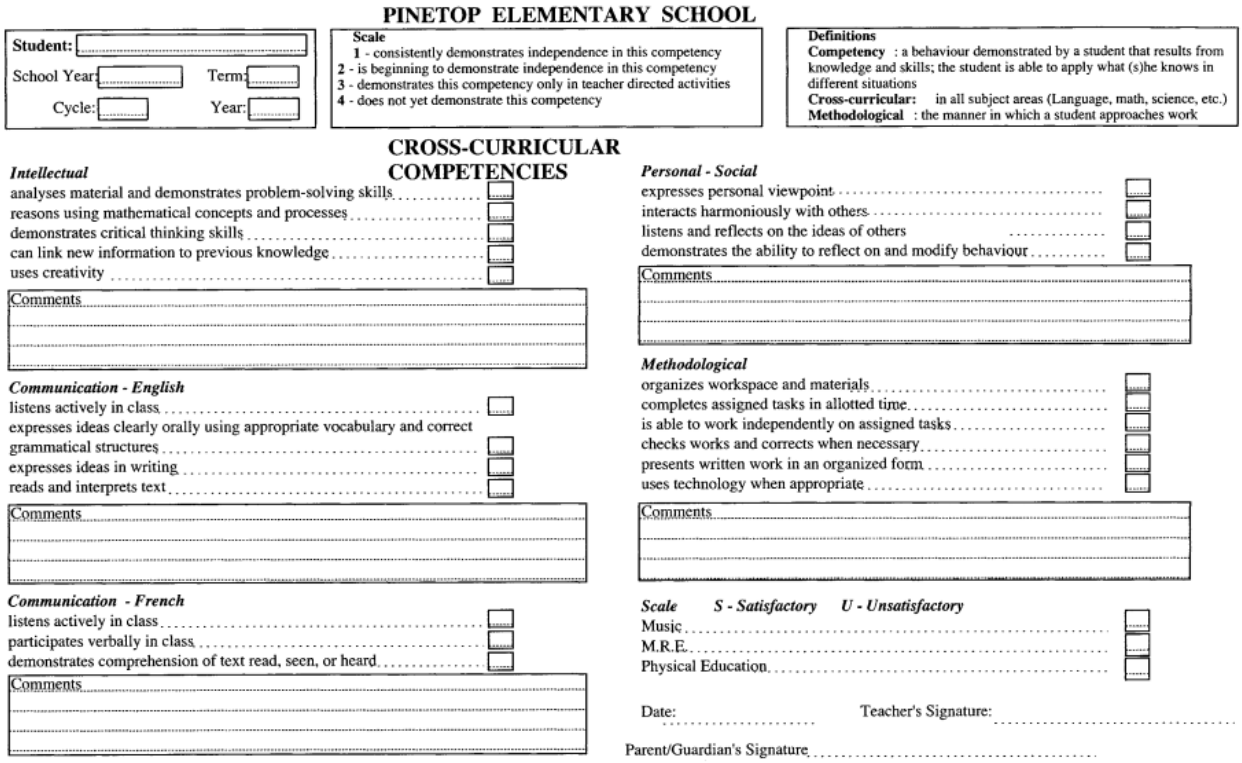
At this point in the story, it is well worth asking, why am I presenting the implementation of student-centered assessment while adhering to Quebec educational expectations as a point of tension if the QEP supports learner-centered evaluations? Because this is where the story gets interesting. The QEP as a curriculum document remains in effect today, but the rules and regulations regarding evaluation have changed drastically.

The QEP was implemented in classrooms progressively, starting with k-2 classrooms, from 2001-2009. Teachers at this time had previously used a data-based assessment approach and were now being asked to transition to a learner-based evaluation approach. The QEP itself outlines the following evaluation tools: self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, observation checklists, annotated assignments and portfolios (MEQ, 2001, p.2). To further clarify, a Policy on the Evaluation of Learning was published in 2003, which outlined assessment instruments and report tools. It stated: "In elementary school, in order to be consistent with the orientations of the reform, the report card must be descriptive and emphasize qualitative results expressed as ratings (e.g. A, B, C, D). Depending on the needs of the school's community, results may also be expressed as grades at the end of a cycle" (p. 41). Research at this time involved understanding these evaluation approaches in the context of Quebec schools implementing the new QEP (Alleyn, 2004; Tung, 2004), with an emphasis on how elementary teachers envision the role of informal, formative assessment (Thomas et al., 2011). Alleyn's research into digital portfolios

even provides us with a now seemingly archaic competency-based, learner-centric report card (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Report Card Template (Tung, 2004, p.111)



PINETOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student:
School Year: Term:
Cycle: Year:

Scale
1 - consistently demonstrates independence in this competency
2 - is beginning to demonstrate independence in this competency
3 - demonstrates this competency only in teacher directed activities
4 - does not yet demonstrate this competency

Definitions
Competency : a behaviour demonstrated by a student that results from knowledge and skills; the student is able to apply what (s)he knows in different situations
Cross-curricular: in all subject areas (Language, math, science, etc.)
Methodological : the manner in which a student approaches work

CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

Intellectual
analyses material and demonstrates problem-solving skills
reasons using mathematical concepts and processes
demonstrates critical thinking skills
can link new information to previous knowledge
uses creativity
Comments

Communication - English
listens actively in class
expresses ideas clearly orally using appropriate vocabulary and correct grammatical structures
expresses ideas in writing
reads and interprets text
Comments

Communication - French
listens actively in class
participates verbally in class
demonstrates comprehension of text read, seen, or heard
Comments

Personal - Social
expresses personal viewpoint
interacts harmoniously with others
listens and reflects on the ideas of others
demonstrates the ability to reflect on and modify behaviour
Comments

Methodological
organizes workspace and materials
completes assigned tasks in allotted time
is able to work independently on assigned tasks
checks works and corrects when necessary
presents written work in an organized form
uses technology when appropriate
Comments

Scale ***S - Satisfactory*** ***U - Unsatisfactory***
Music
M.R.E.
Physical Education

Date: Teacher's Signature:
Parent/Guardian's Signature

Despite the emphasis on holistic qualitative reporting, the Ministry retained its role of implementing standardized examinations at the elementary level. Though these examinations were much different than those seen throughout the late 20th century, newly defined as complex learning and evaluation situations, the concept of government exams smelled like the old curriculum. Additionally, the examinations were seen as more complex and difficult than previous standardized exams (Guimont, 2009). Throughout the eight-year staggered implementation of the new QEP, it became increasingly clear that teachers were unclear on the expectations. The Ministry funded research into a volume of five training booklets to guide and clarify new evaluation approaches (Lafortune, 2008). In sum, the new program emphasized the

application and use of essential knowledges, providing teachers the space and flexibility to choose their own assessment practices and seek coaching on this.

By 2010, a staggering change occurred. While still retaining the QEP as published, the Ministry of Education was now placing the focus of assessment on the attainment of knowledge and standardizing report cards. This change appeared to be for the sake of clarity for parents (Guimont, 2009; MEQ, 2003), who as we saw with the Parent Reform of the 1960s, are significant stakeholders in determining the Quebec curriculum. Where there was previously space and flexibility for teachers, there was now a clear mandate on when and how to communicate learning to parents (Québec ministère de l'éducation, du loisir et du sport (MELS), 2011). The Basic School Regulations were amended in 2010 to detail quantitative reporting of marks using percentages thrice annually per grade level (Editeur officiel du Quebec, 2020). The end of cycle commentary on mastery was removed, replaced with a final percentage mark that is calculated through the weighting of previous term marks, and a final exam mark in the case of Cycle 2 and 3. The Basic School Regulations state that all evaluation must be based on the Framework for the Evaluation of Learning, which stipulates the weightings of the marks and the evaluation criteria (Figure 3).

This shift from learner-centric assessment emphasizing formative evaluation to formal quantitative grading is under-researched as a phenomenon, with contemporary research reflecting the very confusion experienced by teachers. Thomas et al. (2011) researched the use of formative assessment by Quebec teachers, critiquing teachers for emphasizing the product of learning over the process of learning, during a time period where the school regulations were shifting to product-based evaluation. Bures et al. (2013) were also conflicted, attempting to understand the formative nature of digital portfolios in Quebec while limiting the discussion

regarding the difficulties aligning these portfolios with standardized report cards. Since 2010, the standardized report card has not yet seen significant changes besides shifting the template to an online platform for some schools. Ministre de l'education, du loisir et du sport (MELS) documents regarding evaluation methods have been mostly absent since the 2010 pedagogical renewal, leaving schools to interpret this standard for evaluation as permanent. Teachers continue to grapple with such questions and concerns as how and the extent to which students

Figure 3

Standardized Report Card Framework Elementary Cycles 1-3 (MELS, 2011, p.16)

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPORT CARD
20__-20__ School Year

Insert the school board's logo and name

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of school: Institution code: Principal: Signature:	Address: Telephone (area code and no.): Fax (area code and no.):
Student's name: Permanent code: Date of birth: Age on September 30: Cycle: Year: Elementary ___	Recipient(s) of report card (*Check*): Father ☐ Mother ☐ Legal guardian ☐ Other ☐ Name: Address: Telephone at home (area code and no.): Telephone at work (area code and no.): Other (area code and no.):

Reporting term: Starting: Ending:	Attendance						
		Elementary ___			Elementary ___		
	Terms	1	2	3	1	2	3
	Days absent						
	School days						

RESULTS

Enter subject name Teacher:	Cycle ___							
	Elementary ___				Elementary ___			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Final Mark	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Final Mark
Enter a competency if the subject is one for which a detailed result is required under section 30.1								
Repeat the preceding line as many times as necessary								
Subject mark								
Group average								
Comments: *Enter comments regarding the student's strengths, challenges and progress*								

Repeat this section as many times as necessary

can participate in their evaluation when brought to a formal and standardized level. Having started my teaching career in 2014, this version of the QEP is all I have ever known, but these clashing philosophical foundations have never been brought to the surface during any pedagogical development I have attended, leaving me with a sense that those who notice the tension must bear it alone.

Teacher Identity, Student-centered Assessment and the Quebec Education Program

From identity to application of curriculum, it appears that stories, and the research that accompanies them, are born from the tensions. Teacher identities are complex and composed of multiple source identities that impact that decisions at the location of teaching. Those crossroads identities can take many forms, crossing between personal, social, philosophical and political (Carter, 2014; Chen et al., 2018; Jackson, 2018; Journell, 2018; Kaplan & Garner, 2018; Lyle, 2017), much like the dilemmas that teachers face in applying new pedagogical methods (Windschitl, 2002). While teachers in the modern landscape of reformed curriculum might experience a gap between their intentions and the written curriculum (Pinar, 2011), there is much power of positionality that teachers hold in their identities that impacts students (Day, 2018; Journell, 2018; Kaplan & Garner, 2018). This experience of authority and vulnerability defines research involving teacher participants in reflecting on their praxis and perception of their role of teacher (Alsup, 2018), but does not go so far as to explore specific links between these perceptions and teachers' choices of assessment methods. Along this line, student-centered assessment directs the conversation on assessment to pedagogy that repositions the teacher away from the center of the assessment process (Bain, 2010). Following the pillars of transparency, reflective practice, modelling assessment, and increasing dialogue, research on student-centered assessment at the post-secondary level describes the pedagogical choices that increase student

involvement in the assessment process. Research at the elementary level similarly seeks to describe, both method and dilemma, without deeper conversation into teacher motivation and tensions. Thus, just as my identity at a teacher-researcher falls at the crossroads, so too does my research meet at the intersections of identity, authority, curriculum and assessment. Teacher identity work relies on qualitative methods, with data collected at several points in time in order to capture the fluidity of teacher identity (Lyle, 2017). Narrative work, through written or oral reflections, is frequently used for this purpose (Alsup, 2018; Buchanan & Oslen, 2018; Carter, 2014; Cross Francis et al., 2018; Kaplan & Garner, 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018) and can be combined with classroom observation to make connections between identity and pedagogy (Chen et al., 2018; Elbaz-Luwish, 2007). In research connecting teacher identity with curriculum, there is room for self-study (Brooke, 1994; Craig, 2006; Hayler & Williams, 2018; Ritter, 2009; Rice et al., 2015) or research that includes the researcher's own experiences within a grander narrative (Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010; Carter, 2014). Pinar and Grumet's (1976) currere can be used as a methodological framework for self-study research that links teacher identity and curriculum study. Comparatively, research specific to student-centered assessment and its application to upper elementary classrooms relies on description of pedagogical methods. Thus, my methodology for self-studying teacher identity impacts on shifts in assessment methods must find a balance between narrative, currere and descriptive methods.

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Chapter 3

Methodology

Inspired by Carter's (2014) *The Teacher Monologues*, wherein her research writing mirrors the values of her research methods, my hope is that my methodology will reflect the founding values of student-centered assessment: transparency and dialogue. Narrative inquiry is a "dialectic between what was expected and what came to pass" (Bruner, 2002, p. 31), emphasizing the need to understand these tensions within pedagogy. But in some ways more than this, narrative and storytelling is a natural and common way for teachers to interchange about their experiences (Carter, 1993; Carter, 2014). Stories are the language of teaching. When I explain concepts, mathematics, and abstract ideas to my students, I do so through stories. When I speak to my colleagues or my friends and family about my teaching practice, I do so through anecdotes and storied moments. When I plan my curriculum over the course of an academic year, I see it as one story: beginning, middle and end. But I am reminded of the words of Pinar (2011): "We must make clear that education coursework is intellectual work, not simply the sharing of personal experiences in the classroom and popular prejudices about 'effective' teaching" (p. 180-181). If I simply storify the everyday of my practice, I am not eliciting a stronger connection between classroom teaching and scholarity. Thus, using narrative inquiry in conjunction with currere (Pinar & Grumet, 1976) pushes my work beyond simple storytelling. By choosing to narrate the experience through the dual identities of researcher and teacher, I seek to increase depth of analysis. Connelly & Clandinin (1990) are guiding beacons in this process: "When both researchers and practitioners tell stories of the research relationship, they have the possibility of being stories of empowerment" (p. 4). In this chapter, I outline my methodology in full. This chapter also serves the dual purpose of addressing both research and researcher at a

crossroads: while methodologically I was seeking a location at the intersection of identity and curriculum work, philosophically I was in search of a space that reflected my crossroads identity and teacher-researcher. By outlining the reasoning behind each methodological decision I've made, I hope to express the space I have carved for myself as teacher-researcher practicing her own version of currere and to provide extensive description for any teacher-researcher seeking a similar space for themself.

Research Design

This narrative research is a qualitative look at my own experiences shifting to student-centered assessment in my sixth-grade classroom. I am using a narrative inquiry approach within the field of educational self-study (Carter, 2014; Pinar & Grumet, 1976) by seeing my shift to this new pedagogy as a story, focusing on how my pedagogy impacts and is impacted by my lived experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Currere as educational self-study involves a four-step process: (1) a regressive look at one's own experiences as data, transforming it through analysis, (2) a progressive look toward possible future, (3) an analytical stage of examining past and future to create a present, and (4) the synthesizing of past, present and future to define a 'lived present' (Carter, 2014). My understanding of narrative research takes its structure from Connelly & Clandinin's (2006) three dimensions of narrative, including temporality - story as the movement from past, present and future, sociality - the interaction amongst characters in a community, and place - the interaction of character with their setting. I place myself and my experiences at the center of the study's focus; I engage with my experiences across time but also as they interact with the characters of my students and my colleagues as well as the settings of my classrooms. The narrative artifacts of my journal and lesson plans are the core field texts of the research. Though these artifacts act as canonical history, my memories of my experiences

during the shift, as well as my current ethics and values, interact with the artifacts, encompassing a reflexive approach (Butler-Kisber, 2010; Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). By focusing on a singular phenomenon, I prioritize depth of understanding over generalizability (Donmoyer, 1990). In this way, this self-study utilizes a narrative as both method and structure (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Craig, 2006; Craig, 2009)

From August 2019 to March 2020, Ms. Lauren – myself as teacher - revised curriculum while implementing a student-centered assessment approach. These approaches, which include the use of rubrics, checklists, reflection writing, peer-assessments and more, were anchored by the use of student portfolios. My use of portfolios grounded the constantly-changing tools by establishing a physical location for the pedagogical shift within the classroom. I gave each of my students a binder or folder for their portfolio, with dividers for the following subjects: Reading, Writing, Communicating and Math. These binders were located either in a cabinet or on a shelf and were accessible to the students throughout class time. Completed assessments were sorted into the subjects of the portfolio. Additional reflections and goal-setting assignments were also added to the portfolio. The week before report cards were released, the portfolios were sent home to provide context for the report card grades.

Following this period, Lauren Thurber, M.A. – myself as researcher – sought to understand the pedagogical shift I underwent. My main research question for this study is, *How does a sixth grade teacher experience the pedagogical shift to student-centered assessment and interact with its foundational goals?* I am breaking this down into two sub-questions in order to further define what it means to understand experience and to act as guides to specify my own unique experience. The first line of inquiry asks *How did I negotiate the dilemmas that arose during this pedagogical shift?* Here, negotiate is understood as the process by which I interacted

with past or present dilemmas in ways that, if at all, impacted my future teacher decisions. The purpose of this question is to understand dilemmas specific to my teaching context and my own teacher identity. The second line of inquiry further elaborates on the uniqueness of my shift in the context of my cohort of students. This sub-question asks *How and why did I adapt a student-centered assessment approach to the needs of sixth grade learners?* The purpose of this subquestion is to better understand pedagogical choices as they apply to a teacher in my grade level, with the understanding that how one approaches student-centered assessment is impacted by the age of the learners and my own perception of what it means to be a teacher of sixth-grade students. Engaging in currere linked with narrative inquiry helped to link the teacher with the researcher to compose a deeper understanding my teacher identity. With my reflective journal and lesson planbook acting as the source narrative, I then restoried this source narrative, through a mix of artistic, narrative and thematic analysis, in order to construct several narrative stories depicting specific themes on my negotiation of my teacher role identity through the pedagogical shift.

Participants, "Characters", and Settings

My research took place in my own classrooms at a religious-affiliated semi-private elementary school in Montreal, Quebec, with two class-groups. Class 6A was a sixth-grade English class, which totaled five teaching hours per week, and Class 6B was a sixth-grade English & Mathematics course, which totaled ten teaching hours per week. Both classes were integrated classrooms, which included several students with learning difficulties, including dyslexia, dysgraphia and language-based learning difficulties. Both classes were composed of 15 eleven- and twelve-year-old students, totaling 30 students. My school also provided staffing supports, which included: six hours with a teaching assistant per week, eight hours with an

integration aide, and additional hours of in-class support with a Resource teacher, who supports the students with learning difficulties. At the time of my practice, I was 27 years old, in my sixth year of teaching, having been hired by the school in 2014. It was my third year teaching sixth grade.

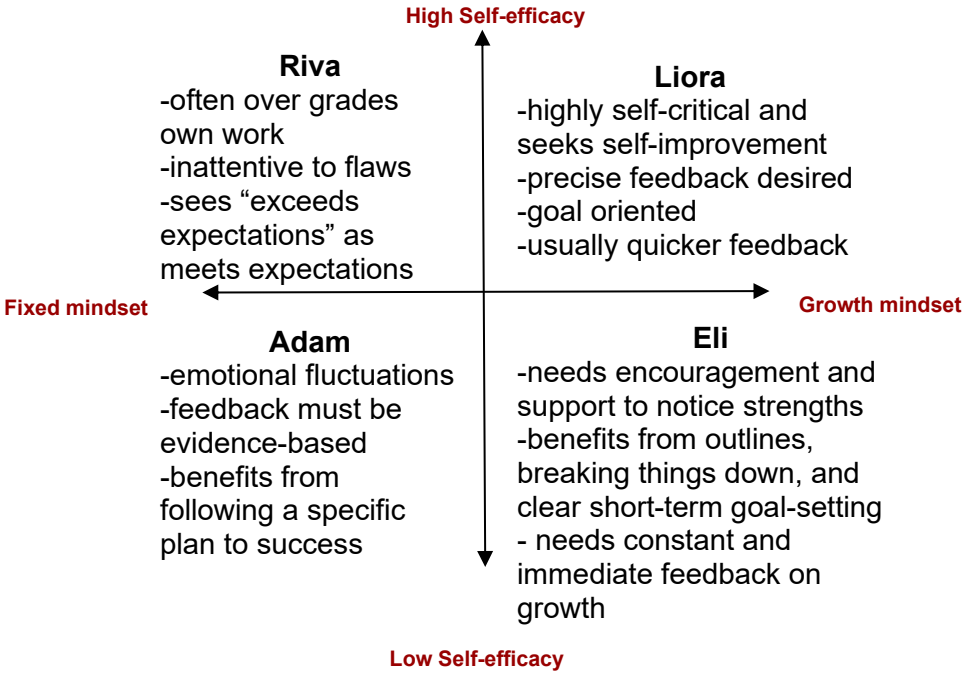
Though my journal entries, lesson plans and memories speak to a group of 30 students, the stories presented in this research will speak only to four student "characters" in order to best address Connelly & Clandinin's (2006) dimension of sociality. While reflecting on student interactions in my journal, students began to reveal similarities in their learner types. For this story, instead of discussing individual students in detail, I will present four student-characters who represent the interactions of those four learner types: Riva, Liora, Adam and Eli. Through inductive analysis of the artefacts, I began grouping students along two axes that defined their self-efficacy and their learner 'mindset' (Dweck, 2007) (Figure 4). Once enough students began to fall into a similar category, I restoried those interactions as being with the same "character". This narrative decision was motivated by a desire to retain anonymity of my students while also focusing on my interactions more broadly as they are impacted by my own perceptions of teaching sixth-grade learners. I also felt amalgamating students into four characters would streamline the temporal nature of the narrative.

Though the realities of teaching in a private school setting provide significant context for many dilemmas experienced during the shift, I will further define the setting from a narrative view of 'place' (Conelly & Clandinin, 2006). Subject matter, otherwise entitled "Classes", function in this narrative as separate settings. By understanding setting as both a place as well as an atmosphere, I understand that different "classes" present different atmospheres, and with those varied and significant impacts on the story. For this reason, I further define the research as

taking place in Grade 6 Reading, Writing, Communicating and Math classes. These four settings manifested into physical locations in the student portfolios in addition to cognitive places.

Figure 4

The Four Student 'Characters'



Note: This figure displays the four learner types revealed through inductive data analysis, with their represented student-character for narrative purposes.

Data Collection

The original intent of the research was to study my implementation of student-centered assessment over the course of an academic year, from August 2019 to June 2020; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent school closures in Montreal, Quebec, the timeline ended early in March 2020. This time frame encompasses two out of the three academic terms of the school, also known as reporting cycles. Though teaching did continue into online distance learning in the Spring, my focus as a practitioner was no longer on engaging with the shift to student-centered assessment in a meaningful way. For this reason, the field texts for this research

include only the entries between August 2019 and March 2020 in my reflective journal and my lesson planbook.

Data Source 1: Reflective Journal

Journaling is a tool I have used since graduating from my teacher education program in 2014, where I learned the importance of reflection in one's practice. The purpose of keeping a reflective teacher's journal is to create a space to share the events of the day, reflect on my feelings regarding those events and openly brainstorm possible next steps. Journaling is a commonly used tool in qualitative research regarding teacher education and teacher identity (Polkinghorne, 1995; Ritter, 2009; Volkmann & Anderson, 1998). The journal was not started with intent to enter it as a field text for research purposes but rather a routine part of my teaching praxis. For this reason, entries were not entered by following specific prompts nor do they follow regular intervals, however they are usually dated and are always written in chronological order. Journal entries sometimes bring in details from my life outside of teaching, but the focus of the entry is largely on events and ideas regarding my pedagogy and my students. Some entries simply create a venting space while others act as a space to workshop pedagogical ideas. In some cases, weeks go by without any entries at all. The absence of entries, in the context of this research, also provided data in conjunction with my own memories of experiences. For example, one particular gap between entries coincided with a period of time that I was feeling particularly tired and frustrated, the source of which can be deduced through artistic, narrative and thematic analysis (see below for details on analytical methods). Journals infused with contextualized memories have a history of use in narrative research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Ritter, 2009)

Data Source 2: Lesson Planbook

In non-self-study narrative research regarding teacher identity in practice, classroom observation is used to give context to teacher reflections (Chen et al., 2018; Elbaz-Luwish,

2007). In this self-study of past experiences, the lesson planbook provides this context. My lesson planbook is a digital artefact where my lessons are detailed on an editable digital calendar, meaning curricular choices are both dated and timed. Lesson plans describe what I actually implemented in the classroom as my curricular choice, without elaboration on why that choice was made. References to support from colleagues or differentiated plans for specific learners is also included in the planbook. Because the planbook is digital, any materials used in the lesson are hyperlinked to the associated lesson. The use of teacher planbooks as an artefact of my pedagogical choices is a means to provide additional context to my journal reflections. In this way, the planbook acts as a story of the curriculum in my classes.

A Note on Student Portfolios

As the focus of this study is on my own experiences as they relate to my contextualized teacher identity, no data was collected directly from students. Any reference to students was second-hand through the journal entries, or through references to individualized planning for specific students in the lesson planbook. Any references to quotations from students should be understood as retellings of interactions as noted in the reflective journal, and not as specific data recorded from students in the classroom. I envision Lauren Thurber, M.A., the researcher, as collecting artefacts from Ms. Lauren, the teacher, following the pedagogical shift.

Analysis

Narrative inquiry informed my selection of analytical tools in a broad sense. My specific analysis process followed Connelly & Clandinin's (1990) approach: (1) broaden, (2) burrow, (3) story and (4) restory. Within this approach, I borrowed from the method of bricolage, which selects tools appropriate to the specific job at hand (Kincheloe et al., 2017; Kress, 2011; Yardley, 2008). As opposed to limiting myself only to those tools most commonly used in narrative inquiry, I pulled from a wider shelf of qualitative analysis methods from the field of education

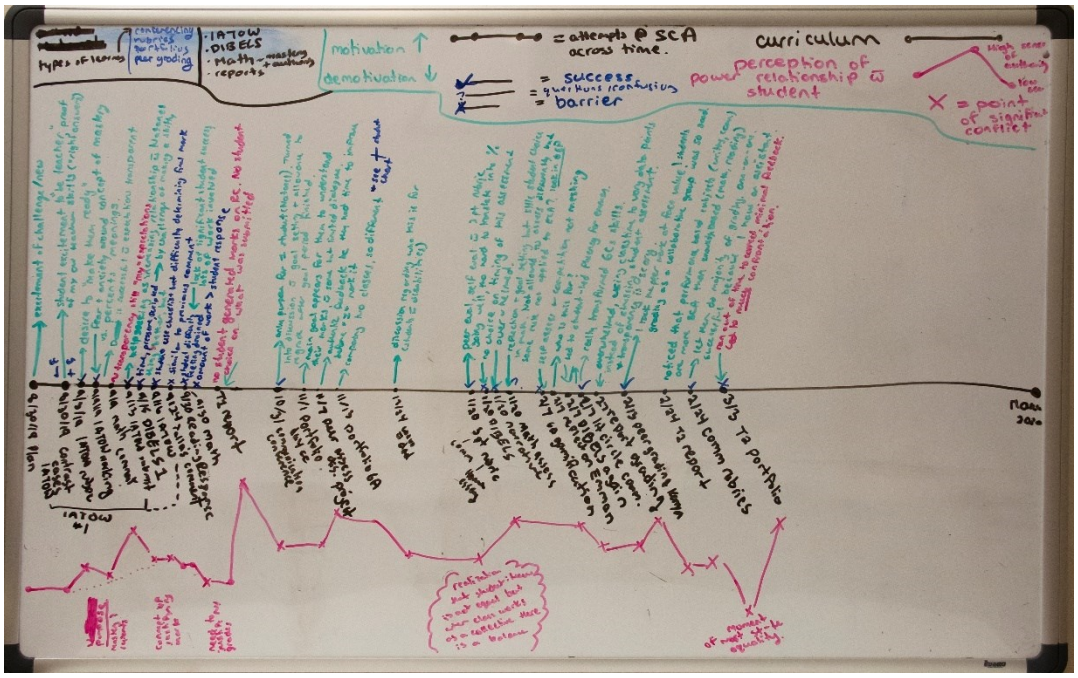
research in order to broaden, burrow, story and restory the data into cohesive narratives. Bricolage is increasingly used within social sciences to capture the multidisciplinary realities of most subject matter (Yardley, 2008), such as the reality of pedagogical research lying at the intersections of arts-based and social science research, as well as to create space for more expressive approaches within critical research (Kincheloe et al., 2017; Kress, 2011). Narrative inquiry has an ever-changing quality that requires both deductive and inductive thematic analysis within a broader research question, particularly in education research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Analysis took the form of a hermeneutic, thematic approach within a narrative analysis framework (Polkinghorne, 2005; Ritter, 2009). By opening myself up to a bricolage approach to analytical tool selection, I could more easily balance between deductive and inductive thematic analysis to best capture the transactional storyline of the shift.

Following Connelly & Clandinin's (1990) narrative analysis approach, the first level of analysis was that of broadening. Broadening defined for me the creation of a big picture and working to streamline data sources into one collection. The first act was to combine journal entries, lesson plan notes and my own memories into a more cohesive and comprehensive set of journal entries. Essentially, journal entries were expanded upon. If an entry spoke about a particular lesson plan, I would hyperlink the activities and build on the specific details by referencing my planbook. If, when reading the journal entry, it elicited an additional memory associated with the entry (such as an interaction with a student or colleague), I would add it in. The result of this initial analysis was a chronological, detailed written record of events, activities and emotions from August 2019 to March 2020. After completing this step, the end result did not help me to see the broad plot of the data and so I engaged in a second tool for this preliminary level of analysis: concept-mapping. Using a large whiteboard, I summarized journal entries into

one-sentence statements and graphed them along a horizontal timeline with their dates approximating distance between entries. Soon into this secondary analysis, I began to see repeated themes, names, and ideas. For this reason, I used the more graphic timeline as the location for my next level of analysis: burrow. The graphic timeline in process grew to a more comprehensive concept map (Figure 5), an arts-based research tool increasingly used in education research (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Poldma & Stewart, 2004).

Figure 5

Concept Map for Data Analysis



Burrowing into the concept map involved exposing significant tension points and success points and synthesizing repeated ideas into more satiable themes. It is during this phase that I developed my dual axes for categorizing students into learner groups, which eventually resulted in the creation of four student characters (as noted in the previous section). Mainly, my act of burrowing involved visually mapping and coding along a narrative timeline (Lapum et al., 2015). The burrowing stage involved several layers of codes over top of the initial narrative timeline.

The first layer of codes involved the use of directional arrows: a downward arrow above a journal entry meant feelings of demotivation, while an upward arrow symbolized feelings of motivation. Additionally, the length of each arrow allowed an additional interpretation of the extremity of the sensation (ie: a long upward arrow signifies a sense of great motivation, whereas a short upward arrow conveys only some feelings of motivation). The second layer of codes interpreted whether a journal entry conveyed feelings of teaching success or of grappling with a pedagogical barrier. In reading the journal entries, I searched for keywords signifying potential dilemmas or barriers (eg: overwhelmed, frustrated, running out of time) in contrast to moments of success (eg: proud, satisfied, really cool). On each entry's point along the timeline, I placed either an 'x', signifying a barrier; a checkmark, signifying a success; or a question mark, signifying a mixture that must be interpreted further. The third layer of codes was used to interpret my feelings of authority in relation to my students. Below the main timeline, I created an interpretive line graph where the y-axis indicated the extent of authoritarian feelings. From this line graph, I could distinguish moments in the story where my sense of authority either drops significantly to a more equal plane with students or increases significantly to an unequal power position towards students. Along this power line, I also noted an 'x' when entries detailed significant conflict with a student or multiple students. The final layer of visual mapping involved listing out repeated ideas in two categories: repeated interactions with students and repeated writing on specific curricular activities.

After concept mapping and visually coding the data, I then moved on to burrow it into the two sub-questions of my research. At this point, analytical tools and methods diverged slightly depending on the sub-question at hand. For that reason, I will discuss each in isolation.

R1: How did I negotiate the dilemmas that arose during this pedagogical shift?

To understand the types of dilemmas, I used Windschitl's (2002) framework of four categories of dilemmas - conceptual, cultural, pedagogical and political - as my salient themes. I relied on the codes for successes versus barriers and burrowed further into the entries marked as barrier-facing. I then digitally coded and sorted phrases, lines and moments into the four dilemma categories.

The next analytical phase was to story this data. Storying is the process by which I formed an initial narrative with the data. Though the initial categorization of the data into the four dilemma categories helped deepen my understanding of the barriers I faced, it did not support a narrative story. Instead I relied on Connelly & Clandinin's (2006) three narrative dimensions to distinguish the structures that create a unique story. After reviewing the literature at this grade level, I felt that dilemmas might present themselves differently depending on the subject being taught. From a narrative standpoint, it made sense to story the data chronologically by subject, with subjects acting as distinguishable settings.

Finally, I analyzed the stories and restoried them to reveal big ideas and expose more deeply the impact of dilemmas on my pedagogical decisions as I moved forward through the year. My initial act of restorying was the use of vignettes to more efficiently direct my reader to the central theme of each story. The use of vignettes contextualizes the experiences and stories my own reflexive processes (Hunter, 2012). I reanalyzed each narrative for gaps, silences, discontinuities and missed inferences in order to restory them into their final form. I then compared back to my data sources to better narrate the transitions between events to display instances of causation, creating a chained narrative (Mishler, 1992)

R2: How and why did I adapt a student-centered assessment approach to the needs of sixth grade learners?

To focus on interactions with students, I isolated entries that spoke about students specifically. Then, I did a preliminary analysis of just those entries utilizing the major elements that define student-centered assessment; however, during this process more salient themes emerged from the data through inductive analysis: feedback seeking, peer collaboration, portfolio-related authority. I then used these themes to code interactions with students. Having amalgamated and digitized my artefacts, I was able to use word processing to group events within themes, as well as collapse any themes that held insufficient evidence (Ritter, 2009).

In my initial storying of the data, I then grouped experiences with specific students with particular themes, hoping to achieve a 1:1 ratio where I might narrate three vignetted themes each focusing on one student character in particular. However, the attempt to story it this way did not ring true to the data and felt forced. I then storied the events in a simple chronological order.

In this version, containing my story to temporal realities prevented me from narrating the most important data. The impact of interactions with students on my identity and my teaching did not in fact follow the same chronology as the interactions themselves. I cut out shortened forms of each interaction, diagramed and reordered them until connections between events felt more fluid.

In order to avoid narrative smoothing, while still presenting a coherent and meaningful research story, I engaged with interpretation by faith as well as by suspicion. In a self-study, analysis must be done with empathy for the experience balanced with critical reading of the data (Josselson, 2004). In this research, emotions were engaged with by faith but understood within context and critically analyzed. Statements of success in the journal entries were met with suspicion until contextualized and triangulated with further evidence, such as actionable next

steps in lesson plans or similar references in the journal. Additionally, I sought to increase objectivity through time and distance, delaying analysis after a rest period of four months following the end of the period of time being studied. By distancing myself from my actions, I hoped to seek greater context and better criticality of my choices while not delaying so long that I had lost the benefit of significant insight into my own intentions.

Limitations

The first limitation is that I am my own focus of the study, affecting the content validity of the research, in that I may have unconsciously chosen to leave out elements of significance to the research questions. This poses an additional risk to the external validity of the research due to the unintentional bias of my own experiences or in the misrepresentation of my performance as a face-saving mentality.

The second limitation is that the assessment tools were teacher-created. Though they were informed by the research, they were not taken directly from a previously vetted study on student-centered assessment. This may entail that the tools used do not in fact represent student-centered assessment. However, as the intent of the study is not to vet the tools themselves but rather to narrate my experiences during a pedagogical shift, describing the process and results of creating my own materials is valuable to the research question and an essential aspect of teaching.

The third limitation is that the study did not match the originally intended timeline due to the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting the construct validity. This study captures two-thirds of a teacher's shift to student-centered assessment and therefore may be limited in its commentary.

The final limitation is that the reproducibility and generalizability of the study is very low. The population of my religious semi-private school represents only a part of the general

population, and the economic status of the school provides access to such resources as a teaching assistant. The purpose of this study is to narrate a specific experience within a specific context to add to the body of literature, which lessens the impact of the low generalizability; however, its inability to be replicated brings the external validity into question.

Summary of Methods

In summary, the following stories were written as the result of narrative research within a framework of educational self-study. I meshed Connelly & Clandinin's (1990, 2006) narrative inquiry framework with a bricolage analytical approach, which synthesized arts-based concept mapping, social science thematic analysis and a narrative analysis framework. The purpose of the following narratives is to evoke the experience of my pedagogical shift to student-centered assessment, expressing the impact of dilemmas, as defined by Windschitl (2002), and student interactions on my teaching and perception of myself as a teacher. Adhering to a methodology that represented the critical values I had developed as both a teacher and researcher was an act of identity merger, situating myself more firmly and confidently at the crossroads of teacher-researcher.

Chapter 4

Responding to Dilemma: A Collection of Vignettes

Trying to integrate student-centered assessment methods into a traditional evaluation culture presents itself with many dilemmas (Windschitl, 2002). But, truthfully, dilemmas are woven into the very practice of teaching. What must be understood is how a teacher responds and reacts to such dilemmas. Dilemmas can function as both motivation and demotivation depending on the greater context and tensions can act as spurring points for a teacher's identity (Cross Francis et al., 2018). By exploring the stories of my teaching life, I can present my lived curriculum. The ways in which I address or do not address dilemmas inform what it means to implement a transformative pedagogical change in real-time. So then, what kinds of dilemmas present themselves most often in this pedagogical shift? In sustaining a commitment to the shift, how does my praxis look and feel? My intent in this chapter is to speak to the reality of balancing identities as both teacher and researcher within myself – the teacher tends to remember the standout moments, but it is the researcher that must deepen and explore the stories surrounding those memories. To explore this, I will be sharing three vignettes – standout moments - separated by subject, understanding both that evaluation methods lend themselves differently to different areas of teaching but also that my character responds to dilemmas depending on the setting in which the dilemma takes place.

"But if I'm Actually Grading This…": Students using Rubrics in Writing Class

Figure 6

Vignette 1, "But if I'm Actually Grading This..."

Students are working at their desks on their second essay of the year, in mid-September. This essay has been a week-long process, involving discussions, planning and, of course, implementing student-centered assessment methods. The students are all at a different place in their work: some are using their checklist-style rubric to know what to include in their essay, some are editing and some are using the final rubric to grade themselves. Riva has been

finished with her essay for some time, but staring intently at her rubric. I walk up to her and ask how she is doing. She looks up at me from her desk, pressing her eyebrows and displaying a serious squint. She then smiles in earnest, displaying the shiny braces across her teeth. She says, looking at the 5 point holistic-analytic rubric in front of her, "I know the mark I want to give BUT if I'm actually grading this I feel like it's not that." After reading her essay one more time, she circles halfway between a level 4 and a level 5, writing 4.5 as her final mark.

In launching a year of student-centered assessment, I was nervous but highly motivated and very excited. My self-efficacy regarding this challenge was high. Following research on best practices for student-centered assessment in writing, I had what I thought was a clear action plan. Our first essay of the year was titled *I Am the One Who*, an opportunity for students to tell me about themselves while reviewing the basic structures and features of an essay. In previous years, the topic was given and I provided students with a graphic organizer to guide their writing before completing a final draft. This time was significantly different. I launched by announcing to both of my grade six classes that this year they were going to have a chance to "be the teacher" and see if they can "grade themselves". Right away, I had diametrical responses. Whereas some students were thrilled by this opportunity, displaying an immediate change in their engagement and motivation, some students were upset, asking me why they should have to do my job. Before even starting our first assessment, our first rubric-creation activity, I was faced with a demotivator - I had always assumed the students would be on board without much convincing, but it became clear that many students were happy with the way of things and comfortable in their roles as passive learners. Midway through writing their first essay, I had the following exchange with my student, Adam:

> Adam: What's the point why do we have to do this?
> Me: Do you mean the brainstorm or the essay?
> A: THIS. You're not even going to read it!
> M: Why do you say that?
> A: Because you told us we do it.
> M: Do you think you're ready to grade yourself in the second week of school?
> A: No.

M: So there you go. I'm gonna read it and I'll grade it, too.
A: *goes back to work*

Navigating this cultural dilemma between these learner types would go on to inform much of my choices throughout the year, particularly as it applies to writing. My group of students had, by this point in their schooling, developed a reputation for hating writing, which I used to inform my assessment choices. In responding to student pushback, I explained that I did not expect them to be ready just yet to grade themselves and that we would need to practice. Some of the skeptical students seemed more at-ease with that, as if their performance anxiety extended beyond the task of writing and into their own abilities to self-grade.

To begin, I presented students with two contrasting case essay models for the assignment. They read the cases independently and then developed a list of items that makes for a good essay. Enter a second dilemma, this time pedagogical. Within the classes, there were students with reading difficulties as well as one English Second Language learner. Despite this, I did not always have adequate support nor did I at the time think to implement digital tools to support them. In one class, I had the support of a Resource Teacher[5] who read the model essays aloud in the hallway with two students who required support. After reading, students then engaged in table talk to determine a shared list with their group. After several minutes of discussing, we shared the ideas altogether. I experienced differences between my two classes. In class 6B, I felt extremely motivated following the lesson. We were able to complete this portion during the time frame I allotted, and when the students shared their ideas for success criteria I felt that they hit upon the correct items. The bulk of my motivation was based on the sense that they completed the activity correctly, defined as having students develop success criteria that was nearly

[5] A Resource Teacher is the teacher in the school who develops and carries out specific learning interventions for students with Individualized Education Plans

identical to what I would have developed. There was also a sense of unity within the class in that all the students took the task seriously, which felt like a sign of respect for my ideas.

For my second class, 6A, I had less support and a handful of students who struggled to make sense of the model essays. Some were not certain which essay was better. Their success criteria lists were limited and I had to step in frequently to guide their thinking, using phrasing such as "What would this student need to add to their essay to make it as good as this other student's?". I was demotivated because I felt that this group might not have the independence or foundational skills to successfully self-grade. Due to the additional support, we did not complete the activity during the allotted period and I now had the pedagogical dilemma of scheduling time and prioritizing items in my curriculum. In that moment, it felt like I would not be able to sustain the self-assessment in class 6A.

For both classes, the compiled success criteria were turned into a single-point revision rubric to help them during the process of their writing (Appendix C). They could check off the elements included, reflect on strengths and weaknesses, and make any revisions they felt they needed before submitting it with a final grade. My choice to take on this approach was directly related to the students' relationship with writing assignments and frequent displays of disengagement or low self-efficacy when writing the previous year. I felt this single point, checklist-style rubric would help them push through and complete the task. This appeared to make a significant difference for one student in particular. Last year, Adam's perfectionism prevented him from following through for fear of not meeting expectations, having his ego hurt. But this year with this assignment everything was clearly laid out, so he was more able to follow through independently.

In a way, this rubric was not about assessment for grading. It was entirely based on assessment for mastery. Which led to my next significant pedagogical dilemma: if this rubric works, and they follow the success criteria perfectly, should all of the students receive 100%? Interestingly, this pedagogical dilemma was informed by school culture, thus building it into a cultural dilemma. The school administration prefers term 1 marks to be presented at a reasonably low level so that the percentage report card marks can display numeric growth over time to match the child's growth. And yet, if we look at performance-based mastery approaches, this philosophy posits that students should be able to fully master each task along the way to achieving a full curriculum. This dilemma was extremely demotivating - I felt immobile at the entrance to two distinct and comprehensible paths, undecided on which road to take. From this immobility, I tried to carve a third path, exactly in the middle of the two. We discussed how Level 3 is a very good mark and the difference between the levels (especially 3 to 4). I wondered if a 3 level rubric is more than enough, that perhaps 4 levels are too much for the beginning of the year. My students, such as Riva (figure 6), were really struggling with 'meeting expectations' verses 'exceeding expectations', and I was struggling with whether grade level mastery is equivalent to a 100% mark or a 90%.

In introducing the final assessment rubric, based on a 4-level system (Appendix D), there had to be significant discussion to define each level. Students were used to percentages, not levels. They did not understand the terminology associated with it. As a teacher, I take for granted the concept of there being a definable expectation that can be met, not met, exceeded or, sometimes, drastically missed. But this simple assumption presumes (a) that my expectations are concrete, and (b) that students can define the shades of those expectations. Though research recommended modelling the assessment process (Mossa, 2014; Woodward, 1998), it neglects the

nuance of what it means to be a teacher assessing student work. With every assignment, a teacher must rely on their professional judgment to make sense of those shades. They must compile observations and context alongside the checklists and rubrics used to communicate the grade. This professional judgment is honed over time through praxis.

Despite the dilemma, I was motivated. The idea that I could express what it means to be a teacher to students who often overlook the responsibility of it gave me a drive. To the bottom of the rubric, I added a space for them to write out their justification for the mark they gave themselves. I hoped they would use the language of the rubric in their justification. When I emphasized that they really had to justify, I saw students rethink their marks and take it more seriously. Afterwards, I reflected on my use of the term "justify": To whom were they justifying their mark? In what way does this use of language undermine their role and strengthen the perception that I am the ultimate authority? When working with rubrics, it appeared to be an ongoing dilemma with myself to understand myself as a professional with clear expectations as well as a teacher actively attempting to decentralize my authority.

Overall, the incompleteness of the definitions between levels posed to be a real barrier to students' successful use of this 4-level rubric. The students were quite adept at using the checklist-based single point rubric, even acknowledging where they were lacking in their essays, but this competency was not reflected in the use of the 4-level rubric. The lack of numerical grade correspondence with the descriptive levels also made it so that the percentage marks students gave themselves below the rubric did not align with my perception of the levels.

Moving into their second essay of the year, I ended up pushing forward on the use of the exemplar/model essays as a way for students to justify their marks. I had thought speaking to the class and modelling again the process for self-grading would improve their self-grading. When

establishing the group-generated criteria of this task, I provided 3 levels of examples for students to examine. They were able to pinpoint the writing elements, but spoke less on the content, which was the main difference between the medium and high scoring exemplars (Appendix E). To distinguish the levels, and correspond the exemplars to the rubric, I labelled them with the level and letter grade they would receive. I did not correspond the essays to percentage grades, which may reflect my continuous hesitation with committing a level to directly corresponding to a specific percentage. In grappling with this, I adjusted the final self-graded rubric to be out of 5 Levels, which I had thought would refine the ability to match a level to a percentage. However, I did not include the corresponding percentages on the rubric.

Similar to their first essay, I gave the students a single point rubric to use while they wrote the essay and sought out feedback. Students' feedback-seeking behaviors had increased from the first essay of the year and they began asking more specifically if they had achieved a certain element from the list. They were seeking external validation based on the rubric, which, at the time, I was hesitant to provide. I wanted them to be able to reflect on their own. In reflection, it would have been of more lasting development had I guided them and modelled how I could determine if they met the criterion and therefore coach them into being self-reliant over time.

For the final grading, because this essay was graded for content and not writing style, I chose to lean on the exemplar essays to define the five levels and support the students' understanding of the terms "meets" or "exceeds" the model expectation (Appendix F). Students who struggled with the essay, often did not refer to the exemplars. They usually over-graded themselves. Those who referred to them and adequately self-graded, tended to do well on the essay.

More significant than the students' grading abilities was my sense of responsibility. I had noticed a change in the level of detail I was providing in my grading feedback. It felt like I, too, had to justify the marks. Instead of this decrease in my central authority acting fully as a motivation, it began to drain me. Following up on assessing the work with clarity and detail was taking up much more of my time. I was no longer able to complete the grading of one project before moving onto the next. One month into the school year and I was experiencing a pile-up on my teaching load.

In response to this increasing sense of being overwhelmed, the amount of student self-grading following a rubric decreased. For their next project, letter writing, there was a much more casual use of self-assessment for revision only, and the project following that, narrative story-writing, I implemented next to no self-grading. After a refresh during a two-week Winter vacation, I was motivated to go at it again and see if their assessment abilities had grown.

In January, they had a choice to write either a short essay or one-page poem on the same topic for a national writing contest. Using a Gallery Walk approach, and a basic 3-level rubric ("winning entry", "good but not winning", "not good enough"), students graded exemplars and left feedback next to each exemplar. I had intentionally changed the wording from "exceeds expectations", etc, to wording that was more contextual and student-friendly. This change in wording did appear to help them understand what a truly top-level piece of writing would be. Having the students able to build on the comments of others as they walked around proved both a success and a detriment. Upon gathering as a class group to share success criteria, I was faced with a rather large dilemma regarding the use of group-generated rubrics. One student, Adam, was insistent that the best poem, the winning poem, was good because it "had eleven rhymes". His one success criteria was not a success criteria at all. And yet, he held a conviction for it and

seemingly convinced several peers of this as well. In establishing our group criteria, we ran out of time before addressing and critiquing that specific criteria. This pedagogical dilemma specifically questions how to reorient students going in the wrong direction, while also avoiding succumbing to taking an authoritarian lead. Perhaps that balance I was seeking was a not always a 1:1 ratio of student to teacher, but rather an appreciation that the students act as a collective group to determine what learning is prioritized. Managing a collective is hard to do, leading it without overpowering it is even more so. It just took so much time to sort ideas and rank them. It was already January and I was going nuts! After this assignment, and due to my stress in completing other areas of the curriculum, I did not have the students grade their own work.

The use of rubrics, particularly for writing tasks, seemed to increase the transparency and clarity of the task, however the demotivations and dilemmas surrounding their use pertain to who should and how to establish the success criteria. With sixth grade students, language and grading practices are not obvious and must be taught explicitly. The use of model exemplars to detail the rubric levels can scaffold student's understanding, but tension arises when the levels are accompanying percentage grading customs. Sixth graders are cognizant of percentages and their meanings for personal success, but they are not naturally associated with levels. Despite my consistent difficulty with determining a percentage mark to associate with rubric levels, not once did I invite the students into this decision-making process. Additionally, there are more shades of mastery in a percentage than in discrete levelling. As the amount of levels in a rubric increases from three to five, there is more detail in the grading of mastery but students may get lost in those very details. Additionally, developing the criteria for the self-evaluation of work takes a lot of time. If left to determine success criteria individually or in small groups, my students missed many of the items I would list as essential. However, time did not always allow for class/group-

generated rubrics. Overall, there was a sense that I had to re-model the assessment practice with each new type of writing assignment, because each task held its own unique criteria. By enumerating criteria, students were seeking more specific feedback and I was providing more specific feedback in my grading.

"I'm Not Supposed to Be Doing Anything Like This!": Integrating School-mandated Reading Assessments

Figure 7

Vignette 2 "I'm Not Supposed to Be Doing Anything Like This"

My students are in the class, completing their essays, while my teaching assistant manages the class. I am outside, set up at a table in the hall. In a basket is a class set of DIBELS® reading assessment booklets, a 1-minute timer, a pen, and a teacher copy of three reading fluency passages. I call the first student on my list. They sit down next to me and I explain the routine of the reading assessment. They read the three passages, I record their score each time and calculate the median score. I tell my sixth-grade student, "Thank you. You did great! Head back to class and ask -- to come read with me next". The student sweetly walks away back into the classroom and, all at once, I realize: I am not supposed to be doing anything like this!

Teachers are often at the mercy of their school mandates. I have taught in a handful of schools during my career, most of which implemented some form of school-wide standardized reading assessment. Such assessments are usually well-intended, with the purpose of preventing students from 'slipping through the cracks' but I have also been told that they have a history of marginalizing students from specific socio-economic, ethnic or racial backgrounds or ability levels. In my own experiences as a teacher, I have witnessed students' familiarity with the content of the passage as a main predictor of their scores for fluency, accuracy and comprehension, and therefore when a passage is standardized some students can be put at an advantage or disadvantage simply due to the choice of topic. The political dilemma is as follows: I am mandated to perform these assessments as part of the school policy on reading intervention.

Culturally, within the school and among parents, it is preferred that the scores are used when calculating the report card marks. The setup of the assessment minimizes student choice and transparency. Clearly, the DIBELS® reading assessment does not qualify as a student-centered assessment method. I was struck with what felt like an insurmountable barrier (figure 7).

I needed to determine how to renegotiate certain elements of this assessment to fit within my goal for using student-centered assessments. There are usually two ways of looking at assessments: assessment for learning and assessment of learning. DIBELS® is a tool for teachers to gauge where students are in their reading development (assessment of learning) and to inform their teaching decisions moving forward to best support each child (assessment for learning). I needed to determine in what ways each of those aspects could be broadened, though informally, to include the students in the process.

Due to the standardized notion of the data, I felt there was no room for students to grade themselves formally. Instead, I was simply transparent and clear with the data and was open to sharing their scores with them. However, upon reflection, there is no proscribed route for associating DIBELS® results with report card percentage marks and that I consistently interpret the data independent from the students' input. It did not occur to me at the time to engage the students in a class conversation about what a rubric for DIBELS® would look like or, as discussed in the previous section, invite the students into a conversation about how their reading performance would associate to percentage marks. My basis for adapting the DIBELS® assessment to student-centered methods existed mostly in the realm of assessment for learning.

Assessment for learning is intertwined with goal setting. Thus, I changed up the prefabricated script (Table 1). The original script is not transparent - it does not even clarify that it is an assessment. When considering the assessment anxieties of younger students, this can

make sense. However, students in sixth grade are quite aware of when the teacher is observing their performance. Thus, the original script feels insincere to me and does not clarify what is expected of them. By changing the script of the assessment, my aim was to invite students in to reflect on their reading fluency, accuracy and comprehension. Despite my sixth-grade students having performed this assessment thrice annually since the second grade, quite a few were unfamiliar with those three terms. This was quite a motivator for me to change things up: clearly, the students had been so uninvolved in the assessment of their abilities that they did not even know what they were being evaluated on!

Table 1

DIBELS DORF Script Changes

Original Script	Revised Script
I would like you to read a story to me. Please do your best reading. If you do not know a word, I will read the word for you. Keep reading until I say "stop". Be ready to tell me all about the story when you finish. Put your finger under the first word. Ready, begin.	Today we're going to check in on how your reading has grown so far this year. I want to see how your accuracy, fluency and comprehension are. You are going to read the passage as best you can. If you don't know a word, I will tell you the word. After my timer goes off, I want you to tell me as much as you can about the passage. Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, please put your finger under the first word. Ready, begin.

After they read the three passages, I asked them which reading skill they felt was their strength and which skill they felt needed to be most improved. In the teacher comments section of each student's booklet, I noted their "work on" item and labelled it "Goal". Students were able to choose a goal quickly, but I wondered if they applied it to reading outside of this assessment context. For certain students, whose reading was not meeting expectations, their goal became their reading intervention (this involved working one-on-one with my teaching assistant on that goal whenever the schedule allowed).

When I stated that their goal was “good”, was I instilling my central authority on the topic? Or was the act of conferencing a transformative student-centered moment? During the Fall reading assessment, I did not ask students to explain their choice of goal or suggest ways they can improve. Instead, upon receiving a goal from the students and explaining why I agreed with it, I suggested an intervention they could do. No student turned down the option, though I wonder if I would have let them turn it down anyways.

A constantly felt pressure was time, which created a dilemma itself: When a student was clearly exceeding expectations, I did not feel the need to ask for a goal. However, I had to fight this urge. Strong students deserve to be a part of their assessment and learning as much as their peers - in my own experiences, these students can equally misjudge their learning, develop low self-efficacy or become underdeveloped in having strategies for improvement due to a history of lacking feedback.

The pressure of time became a larger dilemma during the Winter assessment period, when combined with the drain I was feeling by the end of January. I was extremely demotivated to perform conferences with two classes worth of students, particularly for an assessment I do not enjoy doing. I also, inexplicably, felt that the end of January was not the time to be doing this. I wanted to wait a few weeks until it was report card season and the class culture was unified around reflecting on their learning. However, this is a symptom of one of my major setbacks in changing the DIBELS® to a student-centered method; the student goals and plans lived only in my assessment booklets and did not exist in their portfolios or in a location they had access to. Only students who were given specific interventions were faced with reflecting on their goals on a regular basis. For most students, I had not discussed their goals for reading

fluency since autumn. Had the goals been integrated more seamlessly into the regular curriculum, I likely would not have felt it was the "wrong time" to reflect on their goals.

After skipping the conferencing for about one third of my students during the Winter assessment, I felt incredibly guilty. I pushed myself to conference with the remaining students. And yet, there was still time pressure. The result was compromising the assessment itself. Students who had previously scored above expectations, to the point that their score did not have a significant effect on their overall reading mark, I limited to the passages from 3 to 1. The compromise did not sit well with me, especially as my choice of passage was simply the first from the list and not based on a rationale.

I had made the choice that the conferencing was more important than the data collection. In other words, I felt confident in my knowledge of their learning and where to go in teaching them but prioritized their self-reflections on their learning. Seeing what the students felt was important to them was more novel information than the assessment was otherwise providing.

Comparatively, for students below expectations, I performed the full assessment. I was impressed with the reflective growth of these students in contrast to their goal-setting from the autumn assessment. For one student in particular, Elias, it motivated me to significantly change his daily routine. Elias was a student who would require daily fluency practice to reduce his learning gap. However, there was no way I could fit a one-on-one daily session with him into my tight teaching schedule. Based on his acute goal-setting, I created a digital student-led fluency program for him to perform every day. Had it not been for adding conferencing to the assessment, I may not have determined he had grown into a determined and goal-oriented student.

Finding space within student-centered assessment for school-mandated standardized evaluations is complicated. Though the Quebec Education Program does not mandate an assessment such as DIBELS®, these prefabricated programs are frequently used in Anglophone Quebec schools. The programs do not offer a template for associating performance scores with percentage marks. DIBELS®, for example, organizes the data into program specific scoring and Lexile® levels. This aspect of the assessment of learning could be used as an opportunity to center the students and create a grading rubric, while also clarifying the three major criterion of a reading assessment (fluency, accuracy and comprehension). Despite time pressure, the support of having a teaching assistant manage students while I worked one-on-one allowed the conferencing to work. By incorporating goal setting into the conference following the assessment, I was able to engage students in assessment for their learning. However, my limited reference to these goals meant that the significance of the data was inconsistent from student to student. The idea of supporting students' senses of mastery is embedded in the goal-setting practice, but only as well as goal-setting is embedded in the class space and routines.

"The QEP Never Mentioned Math Tests": Math, Mastery and Student Voice

Figure 8

Vignette 3 "The QEP Never Mentioned Math Tests"

It is a warm, late August day. Teachers are hustling and bustling around the school, preparing for the children to arrive the following week. Other teachers are sitting on tiny chairs in a brightly coloured first grade classroom, with rainbows and shooting stars decorating the walls. My department head gathers her six teachers together to continue a discussion from the end of the previous year: due to parent commentary, the school is clarifying its evaluation criteria for each subject and presenting the weights for each criterion. Today's topic is Math. She tells us that we need to reconsider the weight of Math tests in the students' overall mark for the Math Reasoning competency. Excitement bubbles up inside me. We no longer need to do Math tests! What freedom! And then she explains that she expects Math tests to be no more than 50% of their mark, but that it should still be significant. I am confused. I know that the QEP never mentioned math tests. I know there is no Math test on the final exam. Must that evaluation criteria be defined through a tool rather than the language of competency-acquisition? I offer my suggestion to broaden the language. She accepts! My co-teacher agrees! What excitement! But now, what form of evaluation would actually work…?

How could students possibly self-grade or a have a voice in Math class if, at the end of the day, the numbers do the marking? The answer is either right, or wrong. The work is either shown or it's not. Or at least, that is one version of interpreting the Quebec Education Program (QEP) for elementary mathematics.

The concept of authority runs across the teaching of elementary-grade mathematics; if the teacher does not tell you you're right, the numbers will. The dilemma here is cultural and pedagogical: must this be the definition of becoming a "good mathematician" and, if not, what is? When setting off on my journey to implement student-centered assessment, I had set a goal to implement in both subject areas that I teach. The initial inquiry I set myself on was how I could rebalance the sense of authority amongst myself and my students. What I had not realized before was that Math, in this context I will say 'the numbers', presents itself as an authority of its own. Calculators, computer software, answer books - they were all sources of feedback for students and spaces for determining the correctness of work. Under this definition of "being a good mathematician", neither the teacher nor the student seemingly is required in the process of

assessment of learning. There is still plenty of space for students and teachers to play a crucial role in the assessment for learning under this traditional definition, which I will come back to.

Before we discuss the realities of integrating student-centered assessment into traditional mathematics teachings, we must search back into the QEP to understand its definition of mathematics learning. The dual function of the QEP and the Progression of Learning presents a mixed methods mathematics pedagogy, with traditional essential knowledges within an alternative pedagogical scope. The program defines mathematics learning as the development of three competencies: to solve a situational problem related to mathematics, to reason using mathematical concepts and processes, and to communicate by using mathematical language (Ministre de l'éducation du Québec, 2001). Only the first two competencies are formally assessed. The first competency involving the solution of a situational problem is defined through active-thinking mathematics and focuses on foundational processes such as decoding, validating and sharing information. However, the competency's evaluation criteria is as follows: "production of a correct solution...explanation of the main aspects of the solution….explanation of how the solution was validated". The second formally-assessed competency involves reasoning within mathematics and is also defined through the active-thinking elements of mobilizing concepts and justifying actions. However, this competency must align with the program's Progression of Learning, a document that lists out the Mathematical skills in the curriculum and by what cycle and year students should master them (Ministre de l'éducation du Québec, 2001). The quantity of skills to be mastered paired with the clarity of grade level expectations lends itself to traditional evaluation methods. The Framework for the Evaluation of Learning (Ministre de l'éducation du Québec, 2003) emphasizes the alternative, active-thinking definition of Mathematics but does not clearly outline a learning progression for these

foundational skills. One can empathize with teachers when they choose to assess more traditionally despite the definitions of the Math competencies. Upon getting the green light to broaden my assessment approach for Math, I felt initially like an airplane on a free tarmac without a destination planned (figure 8). The contradiction between the wording of the QEP and the presentation of the Progression of Learning felt palpable.

As a sixth grade (Cycle 3, Year 2) teacher, there is an additional element to the government program: end-of-cycle exams. At the end of the year, a portion of the students' final marks is determined through a week-long exam usually involving 1 concept booklet, 4 application problems and 1 situational problem. The concept booklet includes a combination of mental math, multiple choice and short answer problems, representing traditional Mathematical knowledge. This booklet is scored based on the right/wrong binary. Application problems are medium-sized math problems that combine 3-5 concepts and usually require 30 minutes to solve. These problems are scored using a rubric, however the grading system approaches the rubric through a deduction method: the student begins at the highest rubric level (5) and is reduced as they accumulate minor and major errors throughout the problem. Though a portion of the problem is based on their justification of their solution, this portion of the rubric is reduced in proportion to the number of errors accumulated. Though the application problem requires the development of foundational problem-solving strategies, such as making a plan, sorting information and organizing a complete solution, these strategies are seen as implicit in achieving a correct answer and are not graded in solitude. This combined traditional-active thinking assessment allows for partially correct scores based on the professional opinion of the grading teacher and aligns the final rubric mark with a percentage. The situational problem represents the largest shift to an active-thinking Math approach. A situational problem is a large-sized problem

that combines approximately 10 or more concepts into a multi-step problem following a narrative-like context. Students on average take two hours to complete a situational problem. The situational problem is scored similarly to the application problems, but with less of an emphasis on the accuracy of 'the numbers' and more emphasis on the logical pathway through the often 30 or more steps involved. Utilizing a 5-level rubric, students can sometimes make 1-2 conceptual errors before they drop down a level. The justification of the solution is still scored proportionally to the accuracy of their solution. Grading these types of problems is arduous and time-consuming.

The decision of how best to prepare students for these exams throughout the year presents a pedagogical dilemma. I have been torn regarding the extent to which the accuracy of students' Math work should be prioritized when grading or whether an alternate approach can better display their understanding. However, the exam materials themselves require preparation because unfamiliarity with the format can be a disadvantage or barrier to students displaying their full abilities. Additionally, there is a cultural dilemma via pressure from the school that affirms the undebated role of traditional math tests in Math assessment. At the beginning of this school year, each department met to discuss their evaluation criteria for the year and align the proportions of each criterion. In Math, the question was not presented as 'if' we were to use Math tests, but instead 'when' using Math tests, these grades should account for no higher than 50% of the term mark. When writing up the sixth-grade assessment plan, I changed the terminology of the evaluation criteria from 'Math Tests' to 'comprehension and application of conceptual and procedural skills'. This provided me with flexibly in my choice of assessment tool. I felt motivated that I could make student-centered assessment work within my pre-existing curriculum. I did not significantly change my curriculum because (a) I did not have enough time

to rethink an entire year of Math curriculum broken down into appropriate units, and (b) the school pays for materials to support this curriculum and we are encouraged to use them. With these dilemmas surrounding me, I began the year.

The first formal assessment came at the midpoint of the first unit: it was a traditional test. In a traditional test, the basis is to determine their accuracy with the skills, but I use my professional judgment to award partial marks. I conceptually could not figure out how to guide students through self-assessing through such nuances at this point. Instead, I focused on involving students in their assessment FOR learning. After they completed the test, I had them fill out a mastery chart to reflect on their understanding of each concept (Appendix G), wherein students would rank how well they think they understand based on their experiences completing the test. After I graded their tests, I overlaid my ranking on top of theirs. My focus at this time was increasing their self-reflection of skill mastery. I gave them the opportunity to edit their tests to show mastery but organizing this was difficult. And students mostly disregarded this opportunity, simply asking me what their percentage marks was and accepting the number as permanent. I felt quite defeated.

My next two assessments were smaller application problems, which I simply graded myself and handed back to the students with little reflective feedback. Knowing that it was soon time to complete a situational problem, I had hopes of rebuilding the government rubric for use by the students as both a goal-setting and guided assessment tool. The reality was that I was unable to find time to create this material before the students were scheduled to complete the situational. Timing for this assessment was at the mercy of the school events schedule and upcoming deadlines for report cards, knowing that an average situational problem requires an entire weekend of grading for an entire class. I was frustrated and disappointed in myself. I think

this disappointment in knowing that their attitudes towards Math had not shown significant changes combined with the ongoing conceptual dilemma of how to build an approach that supported student assessment within the government exam framework. I reflected on why I was having such difficulty with Math whereas the approaches, though imperfect, seemed much clearer in English Language Arts. It was that connection that reminded me of the importance of modelling the assessment practice. With this renewed commitment to involving the students in and increasing the transparency of the assessment, I decided we would collectively grade the problem and each student could follow along in their own booklet. It was midway through this process I was reminded of the sheer complexity and number of steps involved in the problem. There simply was not enough time in the day to go through every step, in enough detail for students who need more support and with efficiency for students who have correctly completed the section. Similar to my issues of students' self-awareness vis-a-vis the content of their writing; if the students are logical enough to assess the logic of their work, their work is likely highly logical. Most of the students were not able to sustain engagement through this process. And finally, the reality is that the situational problems are built with multiple solution pathways available for students. This aspect is what allows me to correct based on the logic of their solution over the details of the accuracy, but it results in more than a handful of different combinations for solving. After spending a whole class correcting together and only completing the first quarter of the problem, I abandoned the approach.

There had to be another way. I wanted to avoid another traditional test due to students' correlations with authority from previous years but I also felt that neither myself nor my students were ready to assess through problem solving. Instead, the next formal assessment was built into "challenges". I developed five tasks that would require students to use Geoboards and other

materials to justify their understanding of the five core Math concepts from the unit. Once they've completed the first, they move onto the second, and so on. This process was guided by a self-assessing rubric based on mastery (Appendix H). This rubric lent itself to a conversation with the students about what it means to solve a problem and be a mathematician. The levels incorporated feedback-seeking into them, showing a sliding scale from independence, through using a reference tool, to peer assistance and finally incomplete or completed with significant error. As students completed the tasks, they would mark their level of mastery for each task. Students were thoroughly engaged and thoughtful about their marks. In a completely age appropriate way, some students sneakily sought peer assistance without marking it down. My role during this time was to observe their work and keep notes for my grading purposes later. However, my ability to observe was frequently interrupted with relevant issues brought up by students: students needed clarity on a task, students with technology issues, etc. With incomplete observation notes, my grading of their work relied more heavily on their self-grading and put into question the validity of the assessment. The assessment worked well for me to gauge my students' rates of independent mastery, but I had difficulty aligning their results with a percentage mark.

Going into the next Math unit, I settled into a sort of routine. I use a self-paced approach to my Math program for units 2-5, where students level-up at their own rate as they pass quizzes and online practice programs for each new concept. The students track their results from these assessments on a mastery tracker (Appendix I) and consult with me on changes to their work to meet deadlines and goals. Because I build video lessons into the program, I can invest my class time in having one-on-one conferencing and feedback sessions with students as opposed to leading whole class instruction. The students had access to the answer key in the workbook for

self-correction purposes, but the work that was scored was always corrected by either myself or a computer program. The students were also given some choice in when they would have their final assessment, which was a traditional test. Once again, it appeared that assessment for learning was the aspect most applicable to student involvement. As the units continued, I remarked increasingly about students' abilities to set goals, deadlines and communicate learning barriers. They were more independent and associated knowledge of the material with achieving a successful mark. Some students initially rushed through this self-paced program only to do poorly on the final test; they learned in the following units to ensure they understood most of the work. Using student-centered approaches for the assessment FOR learning felt remarkably successful and motivated me to continue with this practice. Integrating the assessment moments into the learning pathway increased the clarity for the students and seemed to give them scaffolding for better decision-making regarding their learning. However, I had essentially abandoned including students in the formal assessments OF their learning. Despite opportunities for students to record videos of their problem solving and comment on the videos of their peers, I never explored the option of peer or small-group assessment in Mathematics.

Finding an Imperfect Praxis: Conclusion for "Responding to Dilemmas"

Throughout the process of shifting to student-centered assessment, the reality of the political nature was ever-present but rarely astutely felt. My lived experience focused on addressing those conceptual and pedagogical dilemmas - the ones that I can define as require immediate fixing. By looking at the overall trends of my experiences, addressing the cultural dilemmas informed much of my decision-making though I was not always able to label the cultural aspect of the dilemma in the moment. This was particularly true as it related to internal dilemmas about achieving the culturally-informed vision of teacher I wanted to achieve. Pop

culture told me to be a Ms. Frizzle, a Miss Honey, and I felt deeply that shifting 'correctly' to student-centered assessment and adhering strictly to its core values would help me achieve this particular identity. I felt overwhelmed by the pressure that transparency placed on me, but my best tool in this battle was the editing and revising of tangible rubrics. I could feel the frustration of being unable to define the identity of authority in Mathematics, but I couldn't resolve it - instead, I focused on the tangible Math test. When a reading assessment gave no space for dialogue, however, fixing the written script felt like a satisfactory solution in the moment. My imperfect praxis was built on the balancing of the immediate dilemma with its greater cultural implications.

The most commonly brought up issue was that of time: time to model the assessment, time from the curriculum, personal time spent correcting, etc. Frequently, I addressed this issue through compromise and shifting priorities. However, the priorities were informed by school culture as much as my own pedagogical motivations. The academic culture of the school presented a context where differentiated instruction was promoted but a traditional banking model was the norm. I had internalized these two approaches as diametric. My internal debates often came down to choosing between an increase in student-centered approaches or adhering to school norms. If tests were the status quo, it was easier to stick to that than work against the tide. If the reading assessment had to be done by a certain time, I had to compromise the quality of my conferencing to fit that deadline. In the moments of complete inaction, any decision was better than none. When faced with the sometimes overwhelming workload that is the profession of teaching, I could not always focus my attention on the philosophical nature of the shift. I had to address the dilemma and sustain my own health. In survival mode, status quo usually won.

There were some moments that I made a decision toward the student-centered approach against those school expectations. In these moments, there was either some spark of significant motivation or the student-centered approach actually aligned well with the school culture. When it came to writing, I knew my administration was worried about the abilities of my sixth graders due to their academic history. Since I had motivation from particular students by seeing their improvement, it was easier for me to sustain the student-centered approach.

Despite time being a dilemma, it also acted in my favor. In this story, we can make out that my year was defined through an initial jump into student-centered assessment for September/October, then a significant decrease for November/December, followed by an upsurge in January/February. That ebb and flow of the shift can be seen as periods of action and reflection: After a significant period of action, a period of sustained reflection was needed before commencing the next stage of action. This time to reflect allowed me to undertake not just the pedagogical dilemmas right in front of me, but the conceptual and cultural ones that needed deeper thought. These were the dilemmas that most impacted and were impacted by my teacher identity, as I was forced to negotiate at the tension of identity-forming locations. As opposed to diving into decision, I leaned on reflection and I gave myself time. If a decision was forcing me to rethink my role in the classroom, I felt the need to have more information, more data to come to a decision. In these moments the tension of teacher-researcher finds its place defining my teacher identity; the teacher side of me forms decisions on the spot in face of problems at hand, seeking to make the everyday beneficial for as many people in my classroom as possible, but the teacher-researcher feels the greater context, and pressure, for those more conceptual, cultural or political decisions. The researcher side of my teacher-researcher identity held me accountable, even if the result was that of delayed decision and potentially less beneficial overall. I think it is

this imperfect praxis that speaks to the reality of not only shifting to a new pedagogy but shifting my identity and sitting at a crossroads where the road signs aren't so clear.

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Chapter 5

Adapting Student-Centered Assessment, and Myself, to Middle Grade Learners

Even before the school year started, after I made a pedagogical commitment to student-centered assessment, I was already deeply entwined in my own philosophical tensions: I work with children. Curriculum theory centers the teacher and tells me to trust in myself, trust in my curriculum, trust in my professional judgment. It speaks of the decreasing respect attributed to teachers in the eyes of parents or governing bodies. And yet, my curricular choice for this academic year was to trust in my students' judgments. My choice was to empower their voices and their views. It was all very exciting, especially those first days of school when I invited them to join me on this adventure. And then we started learning new things. And it became clear that their judgments were nowhere near similar to my professional judgments. I began to worry, thinking back on how the bulk of the available literature on this SCA pedagogy was in university-level programs. I began to worry - does relying on student judgment replace my own role, and thus the respect I deserve as a professional? These are children, they need nurturing, don't they?

In this chapter, I will be telling the story through the interactions and relationships with my students as I tried, adapted and changed student-centered assessments. Throughout the story, I hope to narrate how my adaptations within student-centered assessments occurred as a response to types of learners in the sixth grade, as opposed to specific students, in order to capture what it means to be a teacher implementing a pedagogical shift that puts her relationship to students on what I can only describe as a pottery turntable.

“Molding While Being Molded”

At the beginning of the year, I held a staunch belief that in order to reduce the presence of my authority, students should be redirected away from seeking my help. As part of a mild inquiry-based approach, I tended to avoid giving live feedback on assignments and instead redirect students to outlines, rubrics or their peers. Afterall, who was I to tell you if you were on the right track? This brought absolute frustration to Adam. He would ask general questions like “Am I doing this right?” to which I would respond something like “I don’t know, are you?”. He made both passive and direct comments about how I did not want to help him do well. It felt like he saw me as his antagonist, preventing his success, and also as the bearer of the good grades, with the ability to pick and choose who would receive the good mark. It was like he saw me as the boss at the end of a level in a Nintendo video game - a necessary evil to beat in order to move forward. Riva was a different story. She sometimes asked, vaguely, how she was doing but was often indifferent to my response. In fact, if I told her to reread the outline, her initial instinct was that her work must be fine because it usually is.

Though my intentions were to increase student independence, my negating of feedback so early in the year was in fact quite an antagonistic move for Adam and enabling of bad habits for Riva. To him, I was basically Bowzer, laughing at the little Mario, until he had to discover a bag of tricks all on his own. To Riva, no feedback meant she was doing perfectly (even if she wasn’t). That isn’t to say I never gave feedback at all. If I noticed a student on the wrong path, I would intervene. If I noticed an element of their work that could improve, I offered my suggestion. But if students came to me seeking feedback, I reoriented them dismissively to the outlines or rubrics. Apparently, I only saw feedback as good if I initiated it myself. When I reflect on who I am, I see this same negativity around help-seeking in my everyday choices. In

fact, I did not even seek out a co-teacher to support me during this transition to student-centered assessment, instead choosing to continue using a personal journal. At this point in the school year, it seems that my bias against feedback seeking was invisible to me.

My relationship with Adam grew hostile, which he communicated through misbehaviors just acceptable enough that it would not warrant a detention. I didn't make connections between my choices and his behaviors. Unfortunately, Adam had developed a reputation with previous teachers and I thought this was just his usual routine. In response, I relied on the transparency of my curricular expectations. I posted the success criteria for Reading, Writing and Communication on the bulletin board, hoping he would realize that "communicating with proper decorum" was part of his mark. By November report cards, his demeanor hadn't changed. Compared to the attention I had to give Adam's behaviors, Riva's academic habits fell to the side, unnoticed. Her marks in reading and writing weren't quite where they should be, but since she wasn't constantly asking for help, the independence of her work gave me confidence in her.

For Adam, I focused on the communication mark. I filled out the rubric for his communication mark (Appendix J), circling a 55% for that singular criterion. Perhaps that mark was a way to finally punish him for the rude comments, or perhaps I genuinely hoped it would give him a jolt to make a change. Most likely, it was a mixture of the two. Though I had the evidence to justify the mark, I was nervous to hand it back to him. And so, I decided to institute one-on-one conferencing about the students' communication marks.

It would be lovely to say that I began one-on-one conferencing due to a research- or philosophy-based foundation, but it was in fact a response to wanting to explain to Adam his mark away from the other students. For these conferences, I purposefully called the students in an order that would result in meeting with Adam third. My first student was Liora. She

understood the criteria and though she undervalued her abilities, when I provided evidence, she was able to clearly express her strengths. My second student was Eli. He needed some help to understand the criteria, but he did not argue his mark. He smiled when I gave him his feedback. I never got around to conferencing with Riva. I was well aware that I most likely would not have time to meet with all students, but I needed to prioritize.

When it was Adam's turn, he was quiet at first as he looked at the rubric while I read each criterion. He asked for clarity on the language of the rubric - this whole time I thought I clearly introduced it and had it posted on the bulletin board, he had not understood what "proper decorum" meant! How could he have realized he was not meeting expectations if he never understood those expectations? I wonder now if he possibly asked me once and I dismissed his question in my pursuit of 'student independence'. During the conference, Adam disagreed with marks. He asked me for examples. Providing one example was not enough, he pushed me to really prove that this was something he consistently did not due over the course of the entire term. It was extremely frustrating because it symbolized that he did not trust my professional judgement - and yet, the entire point of critical pedagogy assessments is that students do seek proper justification. In reality, as a teacher, it was hard to swallow. But when I did justify it, his hostility lessened. He asked me what he had to do to get a better mark. He was seeking feedback, just like he had done every previous instance, but this time I was excited about it!

We talked it out, listed what to do and what not to do, and wrote out his goals on the bottom of the page. And then he asked me: "So will you raise my mark if I do all these things?" I had to face the reality of my assessment - should the mark represent what he deserves from past wrongs or should it reflect and support the learning his is capable of? Is a grade either punitive or a reward … or is it a tool to promote student growth? Thankfully, this conference took place

about a week before report cards were sent out. Thankfully, report cards were now digital and could be edited up to 3 days before. I made him a deal - if he could show the goals he wrote down consistently over the rest of the week, I would increase that criterion a step on the rubric.

Throughout the conference, he was calm, clear and increasingly less hostile. Stepping back into the classroom, it was as if he removed his shield. Stepping into a corner of the classroom, where only his closest friends could see, his tears revealed how devastated he was. My teaching assistant looked at me, shocked. Not only is it rare that I elicit such a response in students, but we had never seen a vulnerable Adam before. My teaching assistant, after hearing about the conference, commended me for finally setting some boundaries with Adam. I felt really satisfied, as if I had cracked the code on an old mystery. But now, thinking back on it, I see the strands of potential that I missed. I wonder if I was not the first teacher to dismiss his feedback seeking. I had thought the use of a rubric to clearly lay out some boundaries was my radical move that led to success, but could revising my bias against help seeking have been the true radical pedagogy?

The conferences, though built for Adam's sake, was a positive experience for Liora and Eli. Liora came away with a language to accurately express her strengths without feeling immodest. Eli came away with a strength to bolster him and a goal to work on. Adam came away with a way of communicating with me that I wouldn't turn away from. I was much more accepting of the feedback seeking because he was using the specific language of his goals as a reference point. Seemingly, specificity and language were the major barriers of me accepting feedback seeking behavior from the beginning of the year. Adam began using the vocabulary or ideas listed in the rubrics to guide his feedback seeking in assignments outside of communication - for reading, writing and math. I must have been responding significantly differently to this kind

of feedback seeking because students throughout the class began referencing outlines while asking for help. I mentioned at the start of this chapter the unique tension of applying SCA with younger students, where seemingly the role of social justice teacher and nurturing professional teacher don't easily mesh. There needs to be some balance between respect for my professional skill and respect for the role of the child in their assessment. In this instance, it seems that students integrating the language of the teacher into their help-seeking behavior struck that balance for me.

Though these conferences and the dialogue I was able to have with my students gave me a slightly more positive view of feedback seeking, I hadn't reflected on my own limited use of feedback until we assembled portfolios to accompany their term 1 report cards. Though most assignments that I handed back to students that day were accompanied with feedback, I had been holding onto the assignments until portfolio day. The students had sometimes completed a replica assignment before having seen the feedback from the first! This meant that I was asking my middle grade learners to process all of this information and feedback at one time. I came away from portfolio day with the feeling that my students cared too much about their grades and not enough about feedback and goals. But for many students, numbers are easier to process than a slew of disjointed commentary. I gave commentary cards, mastery tables (Appendix K) but the process of sorting, analyzing and understanding was not as structured. Afterwards, I saw that Eli and Riva had sorted quite a few assignments into the wrong subject of their portfolio. Had they been sorting this information slowly over time, not only might it have been better organized but they might better access prior learning to create commentary and goals during the portfolio day session.

That day, Riva was particularly interested in understanding where the number for the grade comes from. Even though it was grade focused, I was so happy she was asking for more information. I wanted the students to become more critical of their marks, to seek understanding of how they were graded. Her polite question fed into this goal without questioning my professional judgment as her assessor. Her previous experience with calculated grades was during a unit on mean in Mathematics, but when she averaged out her rubric marks for a reading assignment they did not equate to her final grade. This led to two conversations. The first was that she interpreted the final grade on the rubric as the one which she earned, when it was in reality the grade she had given herself during self-assessment. The second conversation was more complex. I attempted to explain to the class the concept of weighting, phrasing it as certain criteria being more important than others. Though Riva nodded her head, I am uncertain if everyone in the class understood.

Later, Eli asked me about his grade for his letter-writing assignment. He was confused because the mark was quite low even after he edited it. However, the edits he made were based on the corrections I gave when marking it. He thought editing it would increase his mark. Even then, I was unsure what the right answer was. Just a week ago I had allowed Adam's communication mark to change when he showed improvement. Even though I laid out the improvement plan for Adam, I still saw it as an independent change. There's that word again - independence. With Eli, I saw correcting my corrections as implied, not evidence of improvement. It is in his nature to see change as improvement, so why didn't I support this by increasing the mark? Truthfully, the conversation with Eli was much less of a dialogue than with Adam. I was not open to change and I did not invite Eli to justify a change to his mark. With the

power dynamic of student and teacher, it seems student-centered assessment only happens when I invite my students into it and, at this point in the year, not when they ask for it.

The final element of the portfolio that I prioritized was the Parent Interview (Appendix L). I realized following the communication conferences that talking through their work had real rewards for all different learners, but I wasn't going to find class time to adequately walk through all 30 portfolios. However, and this is either a benefit or a detriment depending on circumstance, middle grade learners still partially rely on their parents as their learning partners. For sixth graders, report cards get emailed to parents only, not students, and some parents do not show their children their grades. If that is the only communication of learning, that meant that some of my students were given no chances to discuss their achievements and goals for improvement. So, the parent interview was a required assignment. For my Liora and my Adam, one question asks parents to tell them something they are proud of, giving a dialogue about strength to learners who often skip over it. For Riva, they need to seek feedback on what to improve. And for Eli, there is a question that they get to create themselves. For parents, there was now evidence and concrete examples to understand the students grades. And since the format of my school involves parent-teacher interviews that do not include the students, therefore being a de-centered approach, this interview allows each student to have some voice in the conversation. Even though the dialogue was not with me, I still felt pleased with a compromise I felt led to academic dialogue. On the other hand, I also experienced some relief at the notion that I would not have to sit and justify every mark to every child. I wanted parents to be part of the discussion, I wanted students to have their voices heard, and I needed for myself a bit of breathing room after an arduous week preparing for report cards.

The realization that I had been withholding feedback from the students was a jolt and it pushed me to rethink my approach to oral feedback while students complete their assignments. Throughout the second term, I noticed less antagonism and hostility toward me from Adam. We now had a third reference point: his goals. He began to use rubrics and outlines in his writing and projects, checking items as he included them. This change in my attitude regarding help seeking had, in reflection, a bigger significance for Liora. Through positive peer pressure and seeing that I was now offering support for students who asked for specific feedback, such as pointing out a line on the rubric, she was able to get the attention she desired. Even though she was expecting mainly compliments from me, it was in fact a time that resulted in her receiving useful guidance that pushed her to improve her usually adequate work to the higher level of the rubric. Still, the students were not all consistently using the rubrics and outlines to frame their questions, and I felt this was critical to achieve.

Around this time, the students were finishing their first research projects. I had been quite impressed by the students' growth in assessment - their use of rubric language, their detailed parent interview sheets, and their growing awareness of their academic performance. For this project, I thought I would try peer assessment. This occurred over two class periods. Each period, half of the class presented their projects in a gallery-style while the other half attended the presentations of their peers. The peer-graders were assigned two presentations to grade but could attend all. They would fill out a checklist-style rubric and show me before handing the grade to the presenter (Appendix M). I chose the peer-grading partnerships myself, based on student relationships and academic needs. However, I felt Adam would not take well to his peers being in charge of his grade. Instead, I framed the peer grading as their last feedback moment before the weekend, during which time they could make any revisions to their project their peer-

grader suggested. As of the Monday, I would grade the projects. Not only did this relax Adam, but it also motivated the other students to be more critical in their feedback. At this age, social clout matters a lot! Giving someone a bad mark could have negative social impacts, which could result in the peer-graders being too lenient. However, by reframing it as feedback, the students understood criticality as being helpful and thus I lessened the negative impacts of social clout. I had correctly predicted that Eli and Riva would love this approach - they were specific in giving feedback to their peers while also being intent listeners to the feedback they received. Liora, unsurprising as well, gave impeccable feedback; afterwards, though, I realized a potential positive impact on her I had not previously thought of. Liora is usually touted as 'the smart one' by her peers, and this opportunity forced her peers to provide real justification instead of a repeated phrase. I sometimes worry about enriched students developing imposter syndrome, due to my own upbringing in Ontario's 'gifted program'. I think these moments of peer feedback clarified for Liora that her success is not just luck or natural ability, but her making excellent choices in her project creation.

Despite feeling that this was a successful venture in peer grading, I chose not to implement peer-grading in their next two English projects. In this instance, the projects involved story writing and poetry. For a class that is already sensitive about their writing, I wasn't sure about their comfort with sharing their creative pieces. During an optional 'campfire read aloud' Adam clearly explained he did not want his story read out, even by me. Though I knew the peer grading would have been so beneficial for Riva and Eli, I chose to prioritize Adam's needs above them. I think a lot about this choice. I wonder if post-secondary teachers feel that sharing academic work is a part of the process and that their students had entered academia knowing this. I just think certain assignments for middle grade learners sit too close to their identities to be

critiqued by their peers with a grade or a rubric attached. What I hadn't considered is letting the students select their peer graders, with the same format of improvement before teacher-grading as their previous projects.

During this period, I also seemed to take a step back from student centered assessment, as I noted in the previous chapter. With one of my class groups, I gamified one of my English units to motivate them. In this gamification, Adam, Eli and Riva became increasingly skilled at referring to outlines and rubric for the challenge expectations, because their team points were on the line. However, no self- or peer- grading could occur within a competition format.

This ability to refer to rubrics continued past the end of the gamified unit. The trouble existed when elements of the rubric could not be quantified as content, but instead took the form of description. Within descriptive criteria, the mark was not based on third party references but instead on my judgment. This came to a heated moment during collaborative grading of a collaborative group poster project. I assigned each group another group to grade using the rubric provided at the beginning of the project (Appendix N). Because groups were working together, I was able to observe and guide the grading. This time, the peer grades would act as the final mark. I did not fear the repercussions of social clout for several reasons: (1) the grading process was anonymized slightly as it was shared amongst three or four students, and (2) I told the students that I would be observing their collaborative grading to ensure they were following the rubric, which I could keep tabs on due to collaborative grading requiring dialogue between group members. I saw all students discussing the rubric in detail and really ensuring that the group's poster reflected those elements. Adam and Riva were debating what constituted a paragraph of writing on a poster to determine the mark for the 'content' criterion. However, the final criterion the defined the aesthetic appeal of the poster was more descriptive in nature. When Adam's

group received their grade and he saw a mark deducted in that criterion due to their poster's lack of background, he fell back into his antagonism. He blamed me for the lower mark, claiming I had never told them it had to have a background. I felt like he thought I had purposefully hidden information from him. It was not always possible, though, to define a criterion in terms of clear and simple content, and in this case, it was not even my own interpretation of the descriptive rubric. When I reoriented him to the group-graders and explained that this was a justifiable reason, he was no longer actively upset, but his hostility towards me grew back that day. Similarly, Liora was unhappy with her group's mark and felt the reason was unjustified. When she pressed that group for their reasons, they were unable to provide them. And so, as a result, I increased her group's mark. Once again, I was struck by the importance of dialogue in the grading process for my students, no matter who the grader was.

By the end of February, term two was coming to an end and it was once again report card time. With a rejuvenated desire to dialogue, I chose to conference with all students regarding their communication marks. This ended up being one of my proudest Student-centered assessment moments of the whole year, and it was entirely based on two non-purposeful decisions: The first being the original conferences designed around Adam's individual needs, and the second accidental decision was that I had printed the rubrics with the first term's marks still on them. With all but two students, it was a meaningful dialogue between student and teacher where we jointly decided on their term two success. The students looked at their term one marks, asked questions about the criteria, and then suggested whether they felt that mark would go up, down or stay the same. If they could justify it, I would go along with the mark. I was so proud to hear Eli eloquently list out recent examples of his abilities to discuss ideas in a group. For many students, it naturally turned into a feedback session where, like with Adam, we

listed out goals for improvement. For Adam, Riva and Eli, the final mark was largely decided on by their own judgments. Only Liora quietly pressed for my guidance, shy to give herself too high a mark.

From the highest moment of pride, to quite a low: the following week was term two portfolio day. Due to being entirely overwhelmed with grading according to both school and personal standards of clarity, I had only written a grade, without any feedback, to the students' poetry assignments. Without having a reference point, Adam, along with many of his peers, started comparing their poems and their marks to figure out what made for a good poem. When he felt another student got an undeserved mark, it was the most hostile and upset I had seen him. I knew I was in the wrong, and yet, I refused to admit it. I transformed into the Nintendo boss once again. And then Eli, who's poem I had apparently told him months ago I would help him write, saw his low mark and joined in Adam's fury. Eli was so frustrated around this, understandably, unjust assessment that he used some choice words that got him sent to the principal's office. It was then that Liora quietly came to me questioning the calculation of a mark - and she was entirely correct. I had asked my teaching assistant to write down the grades for the portfolio charts (Appendix O); due to a miscommunication, there were several errors with many students. The whole day felt like it was falling apart around me. My first instinct was that I had given too much power to the students. I was hurt by their critiques, even though my present self can see them as valid. And this moment brought me back to the very same fears I had at the beginning of the school year - how do I balance nurturing children with raising critically thinking academic partners?

My Ego and Theirs: Conclusion to "Adapting Student-Centered Assessment, and Myself, to Middle Grade Learners"

What I've come to see is, for students like Adam, clearly defined, content-based outlines and feedback are key to their development of self-assessment abilities and distancing grades from their teachers' whim. My own response to their help-seeking improved much if they borrowed terms from the outlines and rubrics I provided, meaning I should have devoted more time to clarifying this expectation early in the year. Though my attitude changes regarding feedback changed two and a half months into the school year, I was able to shift to more clearly explaining aspects of rubrics to students so they could borrow the language I wanted them to use in their help-seeking. The dialogue moments that were productive for both me and my students balanced an invitation of student voice with a recognition of teacher professionalism. I think it's okay that I wanted respect, in the form of using academic language and coming to me with a polite manner, while I was actively trying to respect them in turn.

I think there is an added pressure for students in their pre-teen years as they start to form their lasting identities. So much of my own identity, especially academically, was formed in partnership with the teachers I had at that age. Grades can become a large source of identity formation material. Grades without the feedback, assignments without the feedback, can have such lasting effects on older kids. From this perspective, student-centered assessment seems a natural fit for a group of students who are already centering themselves in their schoolwork and their grades. But this also means that my grading decisions are tied up with my students' egos - if the student's perception of themself does not align with mine, it can have a negative impact on our relationship. The moments that I navigated this misalignment most smoothly involved clear feedback and evidence-based dialogue.

Between my own ego and theirs, we still required boundaries in order to protect ourselves. Recentering the students in their assessments is an attempt at equality between student and teacher, but due to those requisite boundaries this equality felt unachievable in perfection. Instead, I found myself increasing students access to resources to boost their power position in relation to mine. Rubrics, outlines, peer-grading and parents were working together to form a web of judgment tools to rise students closer to my level, creating a space where meaningful two-way dialogue was more possible. Still, in my role of teacher to middle grade learners, I had the power to shut down the conversation, whereas the students did not. This remnant of inequity I am left holding, unexamined.

Chapter 6

Summary

Despite my nervousness at the beginning of the school year as I set about to begin my pedagogical shift to student-centered assessment, this change took a larger toll on me than I had anticipated. I was aware that this journey would require a giant physical change - creating space for portfolios, printing and preparing rubrics, remapping the structure of my planbook - but I had undervalued the size of the philosophical nature of the shift and the impact it would have on my emotional well-being as I constantly remolded my identity as a teacher. The foundational goals of student-centered assessment - redistributed sense of authority, increase of transparency, encouragement of student reflection, and increase of dialogue - each had the power to force a mirror onto my teaching practice. But as a collective grouping that defines the shift, they magnified the mirror to a hyper-critical level.

Sometimes the mirror showed me in a good light, adhering to these goals I held close to my heart and feeling like an exemplary teacher navigating the modern classroom. But more frequently, I felt defeated and trapped by these ideals, and perhaps the image of myself I hold in my head. I believed myself to be a rebellious, academic Miss Honey. A teacher who physically and metaphorically bent down to her students if only to lift them up. With such reverence, I admired and upheld these ideals, even when it pushed my teaching beyond what I could hold. And yet, power struggles with students still occurred, repeatedly. The academic side of my teacher identity believed so steadfastly in my chosen pedagogical methods that sometimes my own inflexibility created power struggles even within myself. Transparency became this all-encompassing thing - if I could adhere to it, I was doing well. I spent hours grading, marking numbers on grids for students, more and more until I hit such a point I would give up. In anger, I

often would say it is not worth it, there's no point. But when the incompleteness of my SCA approach faced me in my own classroom, perhaps as a student claiming injustice at my hands, the sense of failure was devastating. I felt such guilt with each failure, but the guilt at being unable to solve those intangible dilemmas, manifested as anger at a system. Anger at a Quebec Education Program that supports my shift but doesn't guide it. Why didn't I have answers to the big questions? Maybe the big questions didn't have answers. That was not what worked for me. In analyzing my own story, I see the role of the unknown in teaching as the villain. The unknown made me latch on to the traditional ideals on authority that I had been taught in my upbringing and reaffirmed in my teacher-training: students should just listen, tests are just how it goes, sometimes students just can't grade themselves.

And yet, it was a worldwide pandemic that temporarily ended my story of SCA, not my own philosophical failures. In understanding my lived experiences, I first asked how it was that I responded to dilemma. I maintained this shift for seven months, through the ups and downs. The dilemmas, they did motivate me. Tiny victories and big inquiries, they motivated me. One glorious moment with a student on a day with a dozen dialogue missteps, motivated me. In analyzing the stories of my experience, I relied on several thematic factors, in particular signifiers of /de/motivation, integrated with Windschitl's (2002) four dilemma types. Addressing these dilemmas revealed that some types, particularly political and cultural, had more subtle and enduring pressure on my decision making, but that most confrontations with dilemma were dealt with based on how they felt *in the moment*. I acted mostly alone in addressing the dilemmas that questioned my perception of teaching. Though in the moment the pressure felt external, such as my experiences moving against the school culture for Math tests, it was embodied internally as a dialogue between Ms. Lauren, the teacher, and Lauren Thurber, M.A., the researcher. My life

experiences, biases and perspectives determined which priority path to take, that of philosophical drive or that of practical management. My use of a narrative approach exposed a pattern of response to dilemma during time of remarkably high motivations and very deep demotivations followed by a period of equally deep reflection. However, it is through this method of self-study that I see that it was the dilemma as instigator and an already-present internal tension with my own identity that exacerbated my motivation level to a point of driving actionable change.

My identity was not being questioned within a vacuum, nor were my decisions regarding my students made with only them in mind. The teacher-student relationship is dually dialogic: my students and I interact with each other, but we also interact within ourselves. In adjusting student-centered assessment for my group of students, at the forefront of my decision-making was: (1) my ability to empathize or understand the perspective of the student in that moment, and (2) my internal tension as my sense of authority fluctuated closer to or farther from my envisage of the right-kind-of-teacher. The shift in curriculum then also shifted the interactions with my students and the dialogues I was having within myself, particularly centering around ideas of duty and authority. I felt a sense of duty to my students, but also a sense of duty to student-centered assessment itself. I felt an initial motivation to shed authority but was instead faced with an ongoing experiment to understand and define the role of mentor – to sustain professionalism, shed authority, and retain the privilege of nurturer. To redefine this role took many failed attempts and sometimes I felt further away from empowering students. Simultaneously my internal dialogue between teacher and researcher was also seeking empowerment for myself. Moments of high tension with students, such as when marks were questioned, seemingly gracelessly, increased my sense of authority but did not result in a sense of personal empowerment. My personal empowerment came when my students were successfully applying

the skills and principles of the pedagogical shift I was researching. Using chronological concept mapping, I could find that my motivation increased following decreases in authority. But through the writing of a cohesive narrative, I could understand that it was not just meeting a research goal but a satisfying interaction with a child that accompanied that motivation.

There was some success in meeting the foundational pillars of student-centered assessment that could be passed on to teachers in similar grade levels. The first pillar asks the teacher to redistribute authority on assessment to the student. At this grade level, I was not successful transferring authority fully but felt more success in redefining the role of teacher as mentor or coach, who invited students into the conversation about what the expectations are before assigning the task and then discussing with them their academic performance following it. The second pillar was to increase transparency. At its most successful for me, this goal acted as a push to use more accessible language when describing expectations and using that language to provide feedback to the students a during the task, particularly as they are still developing their skills to independently use rubrics and checklists to ensure they are meeting expectations. The third pillar of encouraging reflection was very important for this age group: they needed support, guidance and tools such as checklists, mastery trackers and portfolio prompts to adequately reflect on their growth. The fourth and final pillar was increasing dialogue, which ended up being encompassed by the other three pillars. In order to accomplish equity, transparency, and reflection, I needed to be the teacher-coach who dialogues formally and informally with students consistently about their success. When these pillars were confronted with standardized marking, tensions were higher, but with more guidance to realign the shared foundational goals of the QEP with the recommended assessment procedures in Quebec schools, student-centered assessment could be implemented at the upper elementary level in Quebec.

When I look back at the foundational goals and see them in the greater context of my stories, I see that they lay out not just a framework for the pedagogical shift but also for the internal shift of the teacher. Redistribute sense of authority: I had to learn to be okay with not having the pedagogical answers, I could have brought my administration into my negotiation of the big dilemmas. Increase transparency: I should have been more transparent with myself and with expectations for myself. Encourage reflection: you just can't do this without a plan for praxis. Increase dialogue: I needed to talk more about what I was doing, I needed to lean into dialogue about this shift with my colleagues, my students, my administration, my loved ones. I feel like I told myself at the beginning that recentering the students meant decentering myself. Though that may be true in terms of curriculum, I should have quickly realized that the journey of my shift centers around me and it is okay for me to still have need for support. Narrating this story has been a sort of catharsis for me as I shed the guilt without shedding the flaws. As part of my teaching praxis, I know I will continue to work toward the goals of student-centered assessment in my classroom, perhaps more gradually this time as I give myself time to reflect, fluctuate, change course and seek support.

In pursuing research into a pedagogical method that reflects a critical approach to education, I intended to mirror those critical values into my methods and lens. The use of a narrative framework, as opposed to a case study, allowed me to weave in the story my identity and its impacts on my teaching practice. Understanding identity as multiple and intersectional is in line with critical research and better contextualizes the realities of pedagogy. The use of self-study is itself empowering in the context of modern tension between classroom practice and educational research. I believe my use of bricolage analytical methods within a narrative approach helps to bridge the gap between teacher and researcher and provides a model with

implications for further research. It is my hope that less restrictive methods benefit the field of education and increase the accessibility of educational research such as my own that could impact classroom practice.

In terms of pedagogical assessment methods, which tends to be seen as a topic for quantitative classroom-results based data, I believe this research has a radical impact on broadening the approaches used. More than just descriptive, research on assessment methods can be researched through arts-based methods that focus on the experience of the assessment rather than the result. I have given a detailed glimpse into student-centered assessment at the sixth-grade level, for which there was no current writing on the topic in this regard. Teacher-researchers may take up the mantle and study student-centered assessment further in a variety of classroom settings, grade levels and subject areas. Within curriculum theory research, the more teacher experiences that are researched and published, the more our educational policies can reflect the lived reality in schools today.

Of course, the original intent of the research was to narrate the pedagogical shift to student-centered assessment over the period of a complete academic year, a goal that was unable to be achieved due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research should seek to accomplish this objective. Moving forward, I would want to continue exploring the intersection of classroom assessment methods and teacher identity, with the hope of broadening the scope of what it means to be a teacher through explorations with a diverse group of teachers or teacher-researchers. Additionally, it would be of interest to co-narrate the pedagogical shift to student-centered assessment using bricolage methods that invite students into the research process with the purpose of understanding how their experiences intertwine and correlate with the experiences of the teacher.

Chapter 7

The End

I began this thesis with the phrase ‘I am a teacher’. Throughout the shift to student-centered assessment, I never questioned that truth, though I did constantly rethink what that word ‘teacher’ really meant. What was unexpected was the secondary shift in identity that I experienced in this research – the shift to researcher as I wrote this work. The truth is, this work had to be storied and restoried as those dualling forces negotiated with each other: Ms. Lauren and Lauren Thurber, M.A. This final narrative represents me at the crossroads of teacher-researcher. So I suppose my final words are this: I am a hyphen?

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Appendix

Appendix A

Checklist Table

Figure A1

Checklist-table breaking down capability 1.1 of medical program into outcome statements with matching criteria (O'Sullivan et al., 2012)

1.1. Using basic and clinical sciences

In relation to themes and content areas which have been studied, the student:

Mechanisms of health and disease

1.1.1. Explains mechanisms that maintain a state of health.

1.1.2. Recognises health problems and relates normal structure and function to abnormalities.

1.1.3. Describes the pathophysiological process of health problems and can explain their basis at the whole person, organ system, cellular and molecular levels.

1.1.4. Identifies the components of 'basic/medical' science that are necessary to understand a scenario that has not been studied, locates relevant information and interprets the scenario when the relevant information is available.

Approaches to management

1.1.5. Articulates a general plan of management, consistent with the pathophysiological model of illness at an elementary level that includes an understanding of foundation pharmacological principles.

Appendix B
Hybrid Analytic-Holistic Rubric

Figure B1

Hybrid analytic-holistic rubric, to which students in the Geography department can match up
evidence of mastery within their portfolios (Mossa, 2014)

Criteria and ranking	4 (Excellent)	3 (Good)	2 (Fair)	1 (Poor)
Critical and analytical thinking				
• Analyze geographic information (understands issues; evaluates geographic literature, data, methods, and assumptions; interprets patterns, relationships, differences, and trends; and synthesizes information into coherent explanations)	Meets all criteria	Meets most criteria	Meets some criteria	Rarely meets criteria
• Apply interpretation of data toward problem solving or modeling (understands problem, poses research question, gathers and organizes data, evaluates data and applies appropriate methods, and interprets and understands findings, implications and limitations)	Meets all criteria	Meets most criteria	Meets some criteria	Rarely meets criteria
Communication				
• Spatial communication/mapping (presents meaningful spatial data effectively, without distortion and chartjunk; uses appropriate map and design elements, i.e., title and sources, scale, direction, labels, inset, appropriate categories, colors, tones, symbols, line weights, fonts, legend, etc.)	Meets all criteria	Meets most criteria	Meets some criteria	Rarely meets criteria
• Graphical communication (presents meaningful graphical data effectively, without distortion and chartjunk; uses appropriate graph and design elements, i.e., title and sources, including axis labels and units, feature labels, categories, color, tones, symbols, line weights, fonts, legend, etc.)	Meets all criteria	Meets most criteria	Meets some criteria	Rarely meets criteria
• Statistical interpretation and communication (understands variables, data, hypotheses, correctly chooses statistical tests or models, and interprets and communicates statistical findings)	Meets all criteria	Meets most criteria	Meets some criteria	Rarely meets criteria

Appendix C

Single-Point Revision Rubric

Figure C1

Self-created single-point rubric compiled of student-supplied criteria from September 2019.

Version 1: Revisionist Rubric

Creative Essay Self-Evaluation Rubric

Name: _____

Temporary Weaknesses	Required Criteria	Current Strengths
	Writing Mechanics ❑ Proper punctuation ❑ Proper capitals ❑ Indents ❑ Neatly written ❑ Title on top, middle ❑ Name & Date on top	
	Content & Organization ❑ Introduction paragraph ❑ 3 body paragraphs ❑ Conclusion paragraph ❑ Transition words ❑ Details and examples that explain and back up your ideas	
	Style & Voice ❑ Hook ❑ Good vocabulary (juicy thesaurus words) ❑ Varied sentence lengths ❑ Minimal repetition of ideas ❑ Description and creativity ❑ Interesting title	

Appendix D

4-Level Self-Assessment Rubric

Figure D1

Self-created 4-level rubric for students to self-assess their writing in September 2019.

Version 2: Final Assessment Rubric

Name: _____ Title of Essay: _____

Required Criteria	Level 4 Goes beyond expectations	Level 3 Does exactly what is expected	Level 2 Does some of what is expected	Level 1 Only meets 1 or 2 criteria
Writing Mechanics ❑ Proper punctuation ❑ Proper capitals ❑ Indents ❑ Neatly written ❑ Title on top, middle ❑ Name & Date on top				
Content & Organization ❑ Introduction paragraph ❑ 3 body paragraphs ❑ Conclusion paragraph ❑ Transition words ❑ Details and examples that explain and back up your ideas				
Style & Voice ❑ Hook ❑ Good vocabulary (juicy thesaurus words) ❑ Varied sentence lengths ❑ Minimal repetition of ideas ❑ Description and creativity ❑ Interesting title				

Circle your mark for yourself: 4 3+ 3 2+ 2 1

Justify why you gave yourself that mark: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Contrasting Cases Essay Models

Figure E1

Self-created contrasting cases essay models (aka exemplars), Level 5 exemplar

Level 5 - A+ EXAMPLE

"Each Kindness" Response
By Ms. Lauren

Have you ever truly reflected on whether you're a kind person? And what does that even mean? Jacqueline Woodson's book "Each Kindness" explores this.

When I think of the **theme** kindness, I usually imagine a story where the **main character** does something wrong and then makes it better. You know, like the stories we read in grade one. However, in this story the **problem** does not appear to have a **solution**. The main character, Chloe, is very unwelcoming to the new student Maya. For example, she doesn't smile at her or talk to her, and she even participates in bullying Maya on the playground about her second hand clothes. However, by the time Chloe learns what she has done is wrong Maya has already moved away. I wonder...**Why did the author choose to write a book about kindness with an unhappy ending?** I think she does this to show a deeper side to the theme of kindness - that when you are unkind it will make you feel bad about yourself and uncomfortable, just like I felt uncomfortable with the **conclusion** of the story.

The author was also trying to teach a specific **message**. I found the message by thinking about how the problem was not truly solved. I wondered, perhaps there is a different problem in this story. That's when I realized the true problem was not that Chloe was unkind to Maya, but that Chloe was an unkind person and she needed to learn how to be kind. The author taught this lesson with a **metaphor** about a stone in water. The teacher brought a bowl of water and dropped a stone into it and then said, **"This is what kindness does. Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple in the world."** I think what this means is that every little kind act can make a big difference and that you should be kind because kindness is so powerful. I think it is important that the author used a metaphor to explain the message because it connects to so many things. But she also shows the message in the **title**. I think the story is called "Each Kindness" because the author wants us to know that each small thing that is kind has a big impact.

This message reminds me of people doing charity. Specifically, it **connects** to Feed the Truck. Each year at Hebrew Academy, every student is asked to bring one food donation. Bringing one thing is such a little act, just like the stone is so little. But when everyone comes together there are hundreds of donations! Each donation made a ripple! Together, we had the power to help countless families in poverty who cannot afford food. This is just like what the teacher in the story explained to Chloe, each little thing makes a difference.

In conclusion, when I think about what it means to be kind, **I think I agree** with Jacqueline Woodson. I think kindness builds up and builds you up. I think each good thing you put out into the world makes the world a better place and makes you a happier person. I know now that kindness is important to show each day in my life.

Figure E2

Self-created contrasting cases essay models (aka exemplars), Level 4 exemplar

Level 4 - B EXAMPLE

"Each Kindness" Response
By Ms. Lauren

Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson is a story that explores what it means to be kind.

I think the **theme** of the story is kindness. This is shown through the title, obviously, but also throughout the plot of the story. The main character, Chloe, is very unwelcoming to the new student Maya. **For example**, she doesn't smile at her or talk to her, and she even participates in bullying Maya on the playground about her second hand clothes. However, by the time Chloe learns what she has done is wrong Maya has already moved away. Chloe feels awful that she will never get the chance to make it right with Maya. This shows the importance of being kind and how being unkind can affect how you feel.

Speaking of how kindness affects you, this is related to the message. **The author was trying to teach the** message that each little kind thing can have a huge impact. I saw the message in this quote: **"This is what kindness does. Each little thing we do goes out, like a ripple in the world."** I think what this means is that every little kind act can make a big difference and that you should be kind because kindness is so powerful. Like if Chloe had instead been nice to Maya from day one, it could have created a wonderful friendship. But instead, she refused to smile or talk to her and it causes Chloe to become a worse and worse person over time until she no longer liked who she was. This is the power of kindness.

This story's **message connects to another book** I've read called Wonder. In the book Wonder, the boy has a physical deformity that makes him look different from the other kids. Most of the students exclude him and make him feel bad, but there are a couple kids who befriend him and it's really powerful. Just like how in this story Maya is different due to her secondhand clothes and it causes her to be excluded. In both stories, the author is teaching about kindness by showing the result of kids doing unkind things.

In conclusion, when I think about what it means to be kind, **I think I agree** with Jacqueline Woodson. I think kindness builds up and builds you up. I think each good thing you put out into the world makes the world a better place and makes you a happier person. I know now that kindness is important to show each day in my life.

Figure E3

Self-created contrasting cases essay models (aka exemplars), Level 2 exemplar

Level 2 - D EXAMPLE

"Each Kindness" Response
By Ms. Lauren

I just read Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson. In the story, a new girl comes to school. Her name is Maya. Chloe is not nice to her. She does not smile or talk to her. Maya bring jacks to school and asks some girls to play. Chloe excludes her and then makes fun of her with her friends. They call Maya names, like "Never New" because her clothes are second hand. Then one day the teacher brings in a bowl of water and drops a stone in it. She tells the class that this is what kindness is. Then the kids list out kind things they have done. All the kids say something, even Andrew who is very mean. But Chloe cannot think of anything. She decides to be nice to Maya and that she will smile to Maya next time she sees her. But she never sees Maya again because Maya moves away. And that's how it ended.

The theme is kindness. I know because of the title. The title talks about kindness. The message is also about being kind. The teacher taught them a lesson about including and being nice to other people.

This connects to my life. I am kind to people in my life. At home I pick up messes on the floor so my mom doesn't have to do it all the time. At school the other day I gave a pencil to Sarah because she needed one.

In conclusion, the story is a good one. I recommend it.

Appendix F

Contrasting Cases 4-Level Self-Assessment Rubric

Figure F1

Self-created contrasting cases self-assessment rubric, wherein students could refer to the exemplars to locate their performance level.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title of Story: _____

Based on the model response examples, I would grade my response as…

Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
My essay is very similar to the A essay example.	My essay is very similar to the B essay example.	My essay is better than the D example but not as good as the B.	My essay is very similar to the D example.	My essay is slightly worse than the D example.

Justify your choice of grade:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix G

Math Test Mastery Self-evaluation

Figure G1

Self-created self-evaluation for students following first math test.

Test 1 Self Evaluation

September 2019

Name: _____

Rank how you *think* you did for each concept using the rubric below.

- ***Mastered*** means you totally understand it and did it correctly;
- ***Developing*** means you mostly understand but may have made errors;
- ***Undeveloped*** means you did not know what to do on that concept.

	Mastered	Developing	Undeveloped
Place Value (Q 1-5)			
Divisibility (Q 6)			
Comparing Numbers (Q 7)			
Rounding (Q 8)			
2-digit Multiplication (Q 9)			
Word Problems (Q 10)			
Prime Factorization (Q 11)			

Appendix H

Math Challenges Mastery-Based Assessment

Figure H1

Self-created self-evaluation for students as they completed 'challenges', in lieu of a second math test.

Math Assessment: 1.4, 1.7-1.8 Geoboard Challenges

Name: _____ Date: _____

Challenge & Concept	Completed Independently	Completed Using Workbook or Reference Book	Completed with Peer Assistance	Incomplete or Completed with Error
1: Triangles				
2: Measuring Angles				
3. Circles				
4: Circle Graphs				
5: Representing Exponents				

Self-Reflections:

Current Difficulties	Current Strengths

Teacher Feedback:

Appendix I

Math Unit 2 Mastery Tracker

Figure I1

Self-created mastery tracker for students to input check-in scores and progress dates as they complete their first self-paced Math unit.

Name: _____

Unit 2 Mastery Tracker

Skill Section	Completion Date	Check-in Score	
		1st attempt	2nd attempt
2.1 Division (p. 52-55) ♥♥♥♥			
2.2 Different Meanings of Fractions (p. 56-59) ♥♥♥♥			
2.3 Equivalent Fractions (p. 60-61) ♥♥♥♥			
2.3 Reducing a Fraction to Simplest Form (p. 62-64) ♥♥♥♥			
2.4 Ordering Fractions with the Same Numerator (p.65) ♥♥♥♥			
2.4 Ordering Fractions with Different Denominators [by finding the LCM] (p. 66-67) ♥♥♥♥			
2.5 Adding & Subtracting Fractions with Different Denominators [by Finding LCM] (p. 68-72) ♥♥♥♥			
2.6 Multiplying a Natural Number [A Whole Number] by a Fraction (p. 73-75) ♥♥♥♥			
2.7 Converting Metric Units of Measure for Length (p. 76-78 ♥♥♥♥			
Unit Review (p. 80-87) ♥♥♥♥			
Unit Test ♥♥♥♥			
Unit Problem Solving (p. 88-89) ♥♥♥♥			
Game Time (p.90) ♥♥♥♥			
Personal Extension Choice: _____ ♥♥♥♥			

Appendix J

Rubric for Communication Competency (ELA)

Figure J1

Self-created rubric for grading the designated criteria for their term marks in communication, used during student conferencing during term 1 report cards in Fall 2019.

English Term 2 To Communicate to learn	*95* *Exceeds expectations*	*85* *Successfully meets expectations*	*75* *Adequately meets expectations*	*65* *Minimally meets expectations*	*55* *Experiences difficulties and does not meet program expectations.*	*45* *Experiences great difficulties and does not meet program expectations.*
Participates in class discussion using proper decorum						
Communicates Clearly						
Participates in small group discussions using proper decorum						
Demonstrates Talk to Learn behaviours (responds meaningfully to others, uses sentence prompts, provides evidence, asks appropriate questions, etc)						

Appendix K

Term 1 Portfolio Reflection for Writing

Figure K1

Self-created reflection sheet for the writing competency section of the student portfolio, for term 1 report cards in Fall 2019.

Name: _____

Term 1 Writing

1. My current **strengths** in writing (explain with evidence):

2. Something I need **to improve** (explain with evidence):

3. Overall, circle the range you think you are in Writing:

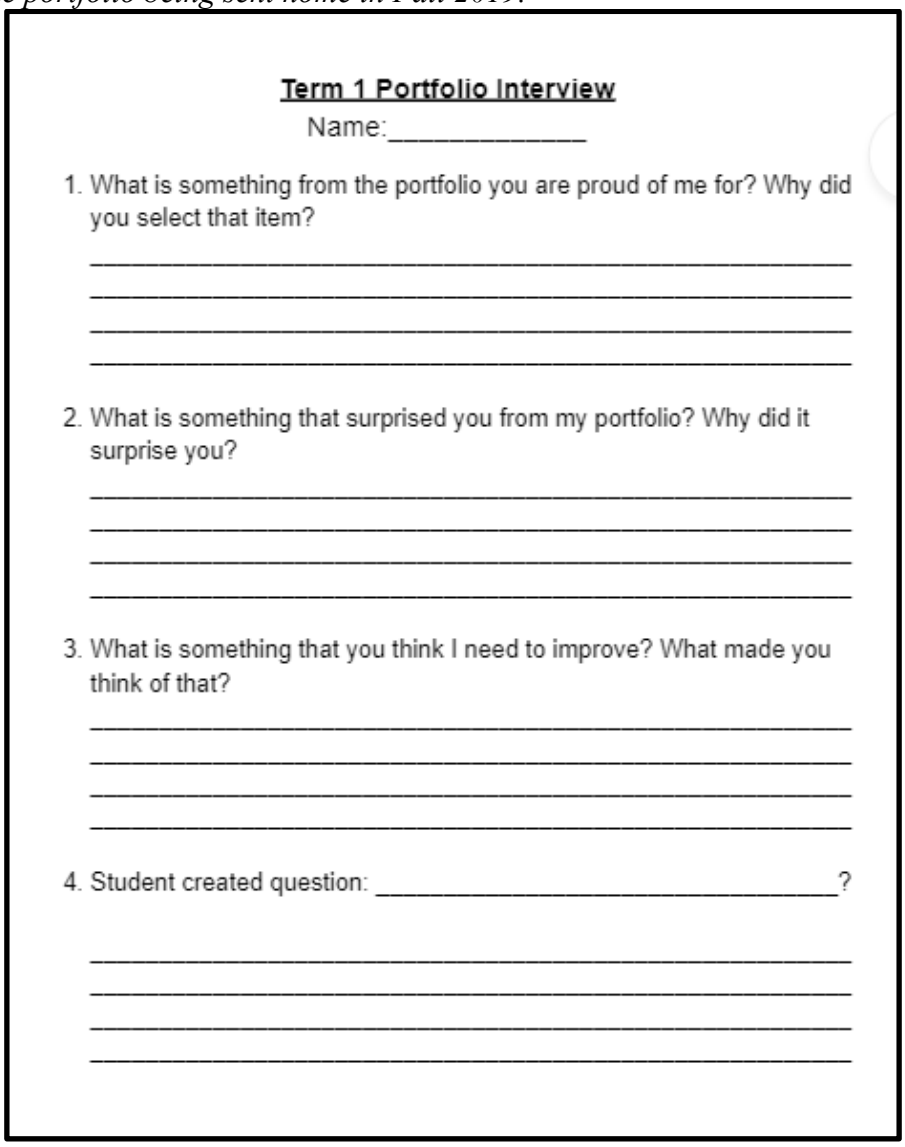
95 Exceeds expectations	*85 Successfully meets expectations*	*75 Adequately meets expectations*	*65 Minimally meets expectations*	*55 Experiences difficulties and does not meet program expectations.*	*45 Experiences great difficulties and does not meet program expectations.*

Appendix L

Term 1 Portfolio Student-Parent Interview

Figure L1

Self-created interview sheet for a student-parent interview at home to elicit discussion around the portfolio being sent home in Fall 2019.



Term 1 Portfolio Interview

Name:_____

1. What is something from the portfolio you are proud of me for? Why did you select that item?

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What is something that surprised you from my portfolio? Why did it surprise you?

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. What is something that you think I need to improve? What made you think of that?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Student created question: _____?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix M

Peer-Evaluation Rubric for Research Projects

Figure M1

Self-created rubric for peer evaluation of students' research projects in Fall 2019.

Disability Research Project - Fall 2019

Project by: _____ Evaluated by: _____

	Seems unfinished...	I have many suggestions to improve this...	This is good to me!	Wow! This is cool and unique!
Spelling and Grammar ❑ Capitals ❑ No spelling errors ❑ Sentences make sense				
Content ❑ Information is clear ❑ The information makes sense ❑ Headings help me keep track ❑ I see URLs ❑ I learned *a lot!*				
Style ❑ The images match the info ❑ The design is readable and organized ❑ The presentation is attractive				

Two things I liked:

1.

2.

One suggestion for improvement:

1.

Appendix N

Rubric for Collaborative Peer Evaluation

Figure N1

Self-created rubric for collaborative peer evaluation of poster projects in Winter 2020.

	Wow! Above Expectations	**Great! Meets Expectations**	**Good. Almost meets expectations**	**Not there. Does not meet expectations**
Details and Information	More than 5 paragraphs that are well explained in grade level language	4-5 paragraphs of details that are well explained in grade level language	3 paragraphs or more that aren't fully explained well	Information is incomplete or very confusing
Organization	information is grouped in a way that makes sense, using headings	information is grouped in a way that makes sense but missing headings	information is mostly grouped in a way that makes sense	information is kind've just all over the place???
Complete	All listed elements included	all listed elements included but editing errors	1 element missing	2 or more elements missing
Well Designed	Really eye catching and visually organized	Visually organized but could have more style	Somewhat organized but I have a few ideas for improvement	Disorganized or bland looking

- Complete: info, images, fill in the whole space, URLs, title, names, edited properly

Appendix O

Term 2 competency Evaluation Grids for Student Portfolios

Figure O1

Self-created evaluation grid for the Reading competency for term 2 report cards in Winter 2020.

6th Grade ELA - Term 2

Competency: Reading **Name:** _____

Skill	Evidence of Mastery	Level 5 - 90s **Exceeds Expectations**	Level 4 - 80s **Mastered**	Level 3 - 70s **Nearly Mastered**	Level 2 - 60s **Needs Big Improvement**	Level 1 - 40-50s **Below Expectations**
Exhibits Profile of a Reader	DEAR Tracker: ____ 20 Book Challenge: ____					
Fluency and Accuracy	One-on-One Reading (DIBELS) F: ____ A: ____					
Comprehension (Written)	One-on-One Reading (DIBELS) C: ____					
Comprehension (Oral - Novel Study)	Out of my Mind Test: _____ Thunder Cave Test: ____					
Responds to Literature	Flaws? Response: ____ One Plastic Bag Response: ____					

Overall, in reading my mastery level is: _____.

Ask Yourself
- ❑ Am I proud of my scores?
- ❑ Did I do my best?
- ❑ Do my scores make sense?
- ❑ What can I do to improve?
- ❑ What is my plan for mastery?

Stop And Jot: Jot down 3 things that you can do to continue getting the scores you've received OR to improve your scores:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Figure O2

Self-created evaluation grid for the Writing competency for term 2 report cards in Winter 2020.

6th Grade ELA - Term 2

Competency 2: Writing **Name:** _____

Skill	Evidence of Mastery	Level 5 - 90s **Exceeds Expectations**	Level 4 - 80s **Mastered**	Level 3 - 70s **Nearly Mastered**	Level 2 - 60s **Needs Big Improvement**	Level 1 - 40-50s **Below Expectations**
Narratives	Scary Story: _____					
Media Production	Kenya Poster: _____					
Self-Expressive or Informational	Autobiography: ____ Quickwrite: _____					
Creative	Meaning of Home: ____					

Overall, in writing my mastery level is: _____.

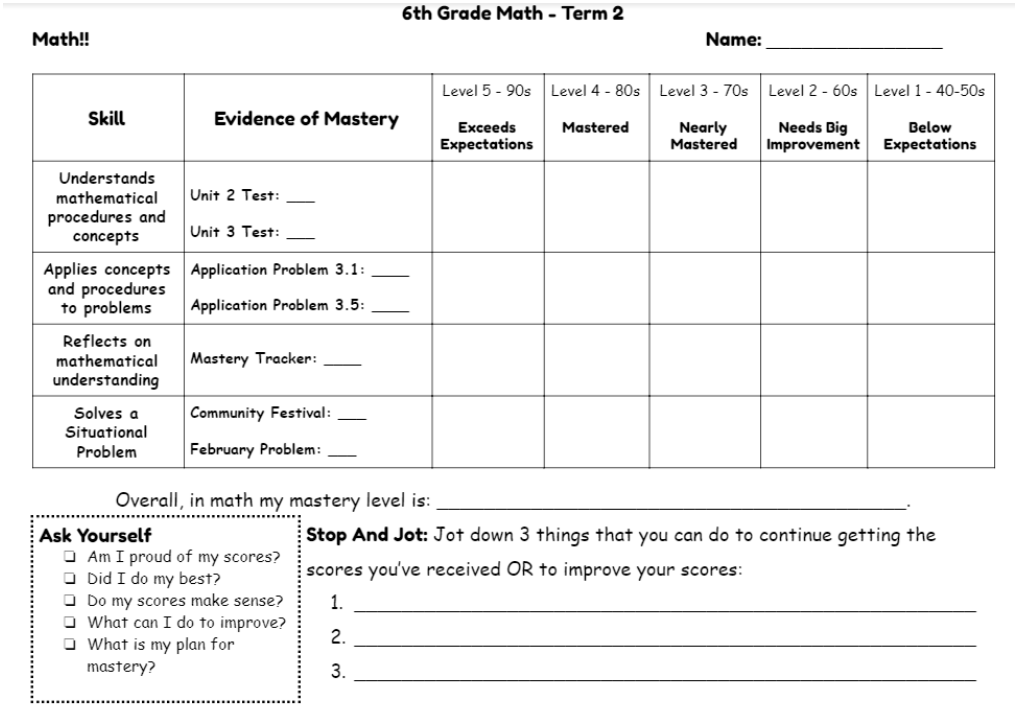
Ask Yourself
- ❑ Am I proud of my scores?
- ❑ Did I do my best?
- ❑ Do my scores make sense?
- ❑ What can I do to improve?
- ❑ What is my plan for mastery?

Stop And Jot: Jot down 3 things that you can do to continue getting the scores you've received OR to improve your scores:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Figure O3

Self-created evaluation grid for Mathematics for term 2 report cards in Winter 2020.



6th Grade Math - Term 2

Math!! **Name:** _____

Skill	Evidence of Mastery	Level 5 - 90s **Exceeds Expectations**	Level 4 - 80s **Mastered**	Level 3 - 70s **Nearly Mastered**	Level 2 - 60s **Needs Big Improvement**	Level 1 - 40-50s **Below Expectations**
Understands mathematical procedures and concepts	Unit 2 Test: ___ Unit 3 Test: ___					
Applies concepts and procedures to problems	Application Problem 3.1: ____ Application Problem 3.5: ____					
Reflects on mathematical understanding	Mastery Tracker: ____					
Solves a Situational Problem	Community Festival: ___ February Problem: ___					

Overall, in math my mastery level is: _____.

Ask Yourself
- ❑ Am I proud of my scores?
- ❑ Did I do my best?
- ❑ Do my scores make sense?
- ❑ What can I do to improve?
- ❑ What is my plan for mastery?

Stop And Jot: Jot down 3 things that you can do to continue getting the scores you've received OR to improve your scores:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____