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# Encouraging Diversity And Multiculturalism In London, Ontario: A Case Study Of Two Elementary Schools

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Graduate Program in Education

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

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Encouraging Diversity and Multiculturalism in London, Ontario: A Case Study of Two  
Elementary Schools

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Abhilasha Duggal

Graduate Program in Education

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

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
The University of Western Ontario  
London, Ontario, Canada

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## Abstract

Elementary school students have diverse learning needs and their academic learning, in particular, varies between students - especially so for those students from culturally non-dominant backgrounds. This study investigated the following research questions: What teaching strategies can be used to support diverse students' academic learning process within the classroom setting? What are the perceptions and practices of teachers, principals, and vice principals in relation to the academic learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education? What are teachers', principals', and vice principals' perceptions of multicultural education in the curriculum today and to what extent they are satisfied with current Program Policy Memorandum No. 119, which was created to support multiculturalism, diversity and inclusive education in schools? The data gathered consisted of semi-structured interviews with principals, vice principals, and teachers, document analysis, and observations of teachers. The following themes were identified: Teaching as a service-oriented career; changes in the teaching profession; teacher assumptions about race and class; social categorization ("an us versus them" culture); multicultural education at Sunflowers Elementary School; and multicultural education at Carnations Elementary School. An exploratory qualitative case study research paradigm was adopted, supported by a modified version of constant comparative method of data analysis. The findings from this study have the potential to illuminate teaching approaches that are ultimately intended to create inclusive classrooms for students and more broadly, further contribute to the development of culturally sensitive teaching and curriculum in elementary schools, teacher education and multicultural education in Ontario.

**Keywords** Multicultural Education, Inclusive Education, Equity, Diversity

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## Chapter 1

### 1 Introduction

Canada is known to be a country in which multiculturalism and diversity are important aspects of national culture as shown through the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1990). In many ways, Canada is a good example for the globalized world of a democratic nation composed of people of many different races, religions, and languages. Members of minority groups immigrate to Canada in hopes of seeking beneficial life opportunities, yet rely upon Canada's reputation of racial tolerance, religious and linguistic freedom (Adams, 2007). In turn, their children may have journeyed with them or subsequently have been born in Canada and present in schools as having a common and some unique academic learning needs that require schools and classroom support.

#### 1.1 Overview of Multicultural, Diversity and Immigration Issues

In recent years, a dynamic immigration policy has attracted an increasing number of "New Canadians" from countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Ministry of Education, 2009). It is notable that much of this diversity is evident in the citizens in major cities, particularly in the urban region of Toronto, as well as in the urban areas of Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal. It is important to note that this Master's thesis focuses on multicultural education issues in London, Ontario. "Issues of multiculturalism differ in various provinces within Canada and across the United States". "Education is a state responsibility in the United States and a provincial responsibility in Canada. In the U.S. this has been accomplished primarily through civil rights policies and federal education policies. In Canada, the work has been done through multiculturalism and other related policies, in the areas of citizenship, identity and social justice" (Johnson & Joshee, 2000, p.53). Immigration has increased rapidly over the last decade, resulting in a great number of multicultural and diversity issues being represented within public education agendas. In its ideal form, multiculturalism promotes and contributes to the

idea of an “open-minded society” (Florida, 2012). It brings together people with different views and encourages them to live, work, and communicate with each other so that, ultimately, more cohesive communities emerge and richer lives are led.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Research provided by Statistics Canada (2005) indicates that by 2017, about “one-fifth of nation’s population will be members of diverse faith communities from religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism,” which will result in increasing religious and cultural diversity in Canada (p.63). In addition, Ontario was the “province of choice” for more than half of the “1.1 million newcomers who arrived in Canada during the 2001-2006 periods” (Statistics Canada, 2005, p.63). More than half of those newcomers settled in areas outside of Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2005). In such cases, newcomers often will come to cities such as London, Ontario, and those who are of school age will enter the local school system (Statistics Canada, 2001 & 2003).

My research questions were the following:

1. What teaching strategies can be used to support diverse students’ academic learning process within the classroom setting?
2. What are the perceptions and practices of teachers, principals, and vice principals in relation to the academic learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education?
3. What are teachers’, principals’, and vice principals’ perceptions of multicultural education in the curriculum today and to what extent they are satisfied with current Program Policy Memorandum No. 119, which was created to support multiculturalism, diversity and inclusive education in schools?

My perception of inclusive education is that teachers and students produce, reinforce, recreate, and transform ideas about race, equity, and racial differences in the classroom. Academic institutions are, in effect, cultural models, where students learn about equity and teachers are at the forefront of promoting ideas of diversity and encouraging multiculturalism.

The existence of social exclusion often reflects a conflict in society. “On the one hand, people strongly value individual choice, freedom, rewards for effort and ability. On the other hand, people value equality, fairness and justice. These values mean that a society will be differentiated and meritocratic. Some people will be left far behind than others” (Abrams, Christians & Gordon, 2007, pg. 16). *Social exclusion* refers to processes in which individuals or entire communities of people are inadvertently or systematically blocked from having access to civil and other rights, opportunities, and resources (e.g. suitable housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation and due process) that are normally available to most members of society and are key to social integration (Hayes, Gray, & Edwards, 2008; Saunders, Naidoo, Griffiths, & 2007).

The concept of *marginalization* refers to the notion that sometimes a democratic society deliberately or in an unintended way excludes select individuals (Sue, 2003). For example, individuals who come from minority backgrounds may not be given the same respect as individuals who are perceived as belonging to the dominant cultural groups. Some educational researchers (eg. Abrams, Christians & Gordon, 2007) with a particular interest in social exclusion and marginalization propose that through creating or taking advantage of opportunities for encouraging multiculturalism and diversity in school curriculum, society will be able to better address the concerns of people who are recently arrived visible minorities. Ideally, multiculturalism allows for the celebration of one’s heritage, and is therefore a crucial feature of an ethnically diverse yet democratic and egalitarian society (Fleras & Elliott, 2003; Tator, 2005). Further, topics related to social exclusion, marginalization, and racism are overlapped with the research objectives and are also explored in this Master’s thesis.

Teachers play a crucial role in the effective (or less than effective) implementation of diversity policies (school based) in education. However, teachers’ perceptions concerning racism have received relatively little attention and importance in much of the current scholarly literature (Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 1999).

In the area of curriculum, anti-racist scholarship education typically take account of the structural, economic, and social roots of a key marker of difference, namely inequality

(Fleras & Elliott, 2003; Dei, 1996, 1999, 2005). The construct of race matters in this field, functions as a framework for: a) human differences that contribute to or validate the marginalization of individuals who are racialized and thus categorized as “Other;” and b) the institutionalization of white dominance (Fleras & Elliott, 2003). Anti-racist education also takes account of unequal social and power relations, as well as consider how the unequal distribution of resources will prevail unless challenged by, for example, culturally inclusive teaching (Fleras & Elliott, 2003; Law, Phillips & Turney 2004).

Fleras and Elliott (2007) argue that a *multicultural society* is one that “involve[s] a belief that a society of many cultures is better than mono-cultural, preferred over assimilation as a policy alternative, and can prevail as long as certain ground rules are in place... yet, the concept of multiculturalism remains poorly theorized because of competing discourses, hidden agendas and different levels of meaning” (p. 277).

Fleras (2009) summarizes, Canada’s national project of multiculturalism is based on a commitment to inclusiveness through the concept of social justice, plus recognition of the politics of identity, and civic participation. Priority is given to acceptance toward difference, protecting rights, reducing prejudice, and removing discriminatory barriers. As both a policy and human rights issue, Fleras maintains that Canada affirms the value and dignity of all citizens, regardless of ethnicity; such emphasis on the value of multiculturalism remains important, especially, as Canada’s demographics become increasingly diverse in the twenty-first century.

### 1.3 Personal Interest

My personal interest with this thesis topic stems from my educational and personal experiences growing up in New York City. I wanted to examine and understand my own educational experiences with multicultural education further. After moving to London, Ontario five years ago, I realized that the diversity and multiculturalism which I experienced in my childhood in New York was, in many respects, an experience that I took for granted. My educational and childhood experiences, along with the friendships that I made in school and in my community, were with individuals from ethnic backgrounds from all over the world. As a second-generation Nepalese-American, for



me the “melting pot” concept was something with which I was very familiar. Little did I know then, that the multicultural environment that I was living and growing up in Queens, New York, was to influence and shape who I was to become as an individual.

As I reflect on my memories of Queens, New York, as an adult I retrospectively regard it as a vibrant place where attempts to balance cultural diversity, immigrant ethnicity, and demographic differences through multicultural laws and policies as being part of American democratic values. My broad view is that multiculturalism is the conventional social value in the rich mosaic of immigrant neighborhoods of Astoria, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Woodside, Maspeth, Forest Hills, Fresh Meadows, Corona and Flushing, where I spent my childhood. Reflecting back, the diversity in the public elementary, middle, and high schools I attended, shaped my thinking and perspective about society.

My parents had emigrated from Nepal, a country vastly under developed compared to the United States. My family and I settled into cosmopolitan New York City in 1983. Initially, I remember my parents went through a culture shock and had some difficulties settling into their newly adopted country. Eventually, my parents slowly became adjusted, and we made roots within the community. I was three years old when we immigrated to the United States and was much too young to understand my parents’ experiences. However, as I grew older I observed my parents and the challenges they experienced making a life in a new country as new Americans. Although my parents were educated, it took them time to get used to the environment in New York City and the diversity of cultures and languages around them. As most immigrants do, I remember we spoke a mixture of both English and Nepali (my mother tongue) at home, and we attempted to retain our Nepalese cultural identity. Over the years, my family and I settled in, and the highly diverse culture of New York made our transition much easier. I recall that my parents encouraged me to respect other faiths and nationalities that were different from my own.

I attended elementary, middle, and high school in Queens, where multiculturalism ideals were encouraged in a variety of ways in the educational policy mandated by the New York City Board of Education. In addition, I had the opportunity to teach in public

schools in Brooklyn, as part of the New York City Teaching Fellows program. Based on my experience if the same study was done in New York City I would have found that multicultural education has progressed further. I have provided the following strategies that New York City teachers would often implement to encourage a multicultural environment (and could potentially be beneficial here in the school system in London, Ontario):

1. Teachers supplemented the curriculum with current events and news stories, which encouraged the sharing and critical reflection of global experiences which supported the high number of minority students in the classroom.
2. Teachers often would encourage cooperative learning, which focused on students' different strengths and encouraged acceptance.
3. Teachers would encourage the integration of a diverse reading list and classroom library which demonstrated the universal human experience across cultures that promoted awareness and responsiveness of embracing diverse beliefs.
4. Teachers often were aware and knowledgeable of the characteristics and learning styles of various ethnic groups and individuals.
5. Teachers were clear on their own ethnic and cultural identity, which helped students to examine their own racial attitudes towards other ethnic groups.
6. Teachers were exposed to strategies of successful teaching methods of ethnic and language-minority students.
7. Teachers learned how to adapt classroom instruction and assessment to accommodate the cultural resources that their students bring to school.
8. Teachers often relied heavily on the home school connection which encouraged families to participate in the classroom and school environment and contribute a multicultural perspective.

The teachers and mentors I had shaped the individual that I have become today. I recall vividly my attendance at the yearly International Day Parade and International Food Festival, which were school events and traditions. My perspective was that the sharing of food and experiencing of other cultures' music was a teaching opportunity (however small) to generate appreciation of each other's cultural differences. I remember as a child, feeling excited to share with my classmates and teachers, various aspects of my cultural background and heritage. I felt these events encouraged students to share in each other's unique backgrounds, through celebrating and sharing in each other's food, music and the arts.

Through participation in my high school marching band, in which I played the flute, I had the chance to see New York City's diverse neighborhoods throughout Queens, Manhattan, Brooklyn, Bronx and Staten Island. I had the opportunity to perform in various New York City parades such as St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Greek Independence Day, Puerto Rico Day, West Indian Day Carnival and Chinese New Year Day Parades. I remember how my music teachers would introduce various musical pieces from other ethnic backgrounds. We would perform them at cultural events across New York City and school concerts. Through music I learned self-expression, creativity and acceptance. It was an opportunity to foster a connection with the diverse students around me.

When I reflect back on all of these fond childhood memories I experienced, I realize that multicultural education made me a better person and a good citizen, than I might have otherwise been. It encouraged my ability to be able to relate and appreciate individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. I learned early on to respect people's views, identities and differences. I benefitted from interacting and communicating with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This was beneficial to further enhance by own unique identity, without completing assimilating into American culture and erasing my Nepalese roots and background. The model of public education which I received in New York City is one that I am endorsing and promoting for further reflection for London, Ontario.

Now, as a parent of a daughter who will soon enter the London, Ontario public school system, I would like to see more representation of minority teachers in the classroom. My perception is that it is important for students to see themselves represented in their teachers. Especially, during the elementary and middle school years, where all students' identity and perception of the world around them is being shaped. I strongly believe that for Black, Latina/o, Asian American/Pacific Islander and Aboriginal youth to succeed in London, Ontario, we must have representation of Black, Latina/o, Asian American/Pacific Islander and Aboriginal teachers. It is important to note that I saw myself represented in the teachers that I had in my elementary, middle, and high school years. I want my daughter to feel accepted, safe and valued. My perception is that diversity, equity, and inclusive education are starting points towards making goals of acceptance with the school setting achievable. It is important for teachers and students to create an environment which celebrates and recognizes each other's unique differences.

## 1.4 Rationale

Equity education is a part of what George Dei (1996) calls the "deep curriculum" (p. 79) which incorporates the official curriculum as well as the many aspects of hidden curriculum of school culture, power relations, and individual experiences of teachers and students. Teachers (may or may not) have discretion over what, how, and how much or little to teach in the area of equity education. Prior teacher knowledge and experience with cultural difference and diversity education are only two of many factors that affect teachers' decisions. As global citizens, our students will be open to an extensive diversity of people, thoughts, and material during their lifetime, so through the creation of informed, thoughtful pedagogical resources and practices teachers can guide their students to address and increase their understanding of cultural diversity and respect for difference.

My view of an inclusive school system, or the term *inclusion*, is not specifically related to just an educational program, service, or teaching approach offered through the public school system. It incorporates a school system that attempts to ensure that all students have access to participate in the school community and students' identity is reinforced in the way the school is run. Differentiated instruction involves modifications to the school

curriculum, teaching strategies, and teaching practices in combination which takes into account the individual racial and ethnic differences and needs of all students. *Inclusive education* means that all students, regardless of their differences, are part of the school community and can feel that they belong and are encouraged by the school's attempts to ensure access, participation and achievement for all students.

Changing the school culture to make it more inclusive is a feature of school reform occurring in London, Ontario schools. A more inclusive school culture is brought about by staff's commitment to change and encouraging a democratic discussion of current teaching beliefs and practices. It is important for schools to focus on the development of collaborative work cultures which involves teachers sharing and problem solving together, and the continuous upgrading of teachers' skills through professional development both internally and externally. The use of focused professional development encourages the creation and implementation of inclusive curriculum that is aligned with students' needs and achievement.

Schools in London, Ontario have made attempts shown through policies (such as PPM No. 119, which originated in 1993) to change school cultures and practices to become more inclusive and culturally-responsive toward students. Schools in London, Ontario have acknowledged and valued the diversity of students and are working toward developing new conceptualizations of school management and improving teaching strategies. The school level practices described in this thesis have emerged from situations in which administrators and teachers were willing to address their strengths and challenges, to better meet the needs of their school community, teachers' capabilities and their students' backgrounds. Thus, schools across London, Ontario and school cultures that have been described in this thesis have emerged from unique perspectives from the interaction of teacher and multicultural student populations.

Giroux (1989) argues that since the 1980s there has been a reorganization of the discourse around citizenship education. In Canada, federal policies have restructured the discourse into a social cohesion framework (Joshee, 2004). Policies (such as PPM No.

119) are instead more concerned with promoting a sense of shared values as a means of achieving social solidarity.

Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) PPM: No 119 state, "Developing and Implementing Equity and Education Policies in Ontario Schools" sought to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to live in an increasingly diverse world, appreciate diversity, and reject discriminatory behaviors and attitudes. The Ministry of Education's vision entailed bringing the Equity and Inclusive Strategy to life in schools and school boards. The Ministry of Education's goal was to provide superior education to all its students and the school system would successfully prepare students for their future roles in society (Ministry of Education, 2009).

The purpose of the Memorandum was to provide direction to school boards regarding how to review, develop, implement and monitor equity and inclusive education policies in order to support student achievement. "All publicly funded school boards are required to develop, implement, and monitor an equity and inclusive education policy that includes a religious accommodation guideline, in accordance with the requirements set out in this memorandum and the strategy, and that complies with relevant legislation, including amendments to the Education Act" (Ministry of Education, 2009, p.3).

"Board and school leaders must be responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario's communities. Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes. School boards and schools are expected to provide leadership that is committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning. Specifically, boards will identify a contact person to liaise with the ministry and other boards to share challenges, promising practices, and resources" (Ministry of Education, 2009, p.5).

In order to achieve the Ministry of Education's vision of equity and inclusive education strategy they have mentioned the following three goals:

1. “Shared and committed leadership by the ministry, boards, and schools to eliminate discrimination through the identification and removal of biases and barriers”.
2. “Equity and inclusive education policies and practices to support positive learning environments that are respectful and welcoming to all”.
3. “Accountability and transparency with ongoing progress demonstrated and communicated to the ministry and the community” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.5).

“Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by teachers and staff, and welcome in their learning environment. To this end, boards and their schools will use inclusive curriculum and assessment practices and effective instructional strategies that reflect the diverse needs of all students and the learning pathways that they are taking. Schools must provide students and staff with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Students should be able to see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, and culture of the school. Also, since schools have a pivotal role in developing the work force of tomorrow, students should be able to see themselves represented in the teaching, administrative, and support staff employed at the school” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.6).

## 1.5 Theoretical framework – Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is the theoretical framework which I utilized in this study to understand the issues of how oppression and race matters in two London, Ontario schools. CRT views racism as a common part of life: Ford and Airhihenbuwa (2010) found subtleness and frequency of occurrence as key characteristics of modern racism. By subtleness Ford and Airhihenbuwa (2010) suggest that constant exposure to minor insults can potentially, in effect, be “additive” and have a long term negative impact on an individual’s health. Occurrence reinforces the choice to operationalize and systematize everyday racism. Critical theorists (eg. Ladson-Billings (1998); Bell (2009); Freeman (1978) suggest “everyday racism” is a notable element of the social environment.

The critical race theory framework was used as a critical lens in this thesis to understand how:

1. Race is a focus of academic discussion and political action in schools. The social practices that are enabled through race are examined (both racist and race-neutral practices).
2. In order to promote multiculturalism, it is important for both teachers and administrators to comprehend teaching practices by asking critical and destabilizing questions.
3. Diversity is created by individuals engaging in routine, everyday behaviors and specific practices which discourage structural inequities in the social system.
4. Theorizing personal experiences as well as collective action is required to promote social change in schools.
5. Maintaining the connection between theory and practice means developing a clear strategy to put theory into practice (Dei, 2000, 2004).

Critical theorists like Bell (2009); Freeman (1978); Ladson-Billings (1998, 1997) have long argued that the classroom itself is not a mere site of “neutral” instruction. The CRT movement began as a group of interdisciplinary scholars and activists interested in studying and changing the relationship between race, racism and power (Delgado & Stefanic, 2000). Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman’s research has been attributed to the start of CRT (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Bell and Freeman were unsatisfied with the slow pace of racial reform in the United States so far as policy and practice in legal institutions and claimed that the traditional approaches of combating racism were achieving smaller gains than in earlier times. Thus, according to Delgado and Stefanic (2000) CRT is an outgrowth of Critical Legal Studies (CLS), which was a leftist movement that challenged traditional legal scholarship. These CRT scholars were later joined by Richard Delgado. In 1989, they held their first conference in Madison, Wisconsin, which was the beginning of the CRT as a movement (Delgado & Stefanic, 2000).



CRT has been taken up and refined by subsequent education scholars. Critical race theory is focused on the importance of experiential knowledge, which includes the narratives of actors' experiences, as a way to understand race-based oppression (Honig, 2008). As Honig (2008) has argued, race is entangled and also "invisibilized" (in education institutions) today. CRT symbolized methods of thinking about and measuring social systems and groups that integrate recognition of the following claims, as outlined by (Delgado & Stefanic, 2000), (a) race is a crucial piece of social organizations and systems; (b) racism is institutionalized—it is a deep-rooted feature of social systems; (c) members within social systems may add to the creation of these systems through social practices; and (d) racial and ethnic identities, in addition to rules, practices, and assignments of prestige and power connected with them, are not fixed entities, but instead are socially created phenomena that are repeatedly being revised on the basis of a group's own self-interest.

CRT categorized four beliefs. First, critical race theory notes the daily realities of racism, and it remains to privilege North Americans. Second, it endorses the opinions of people of color by using storytelling to assimilate empirical information drawn from a collective history as the "Other" into accounts of central societal orders. Third, CRT critiques the liberal view that significant social change can happen without radical change to remaining social arrangements. Related to the critique of liberalism, CRT also interrogates the effectiveness of civil rights legislation sanctioned in the United States, disputing that, reducing the effects of racism on people of color, the main targets of this legislature have been White people (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Tate's (1994) autobiographical commentary in *Urban Education* was mainly used by CRT in education. A year later, the publication of Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) article, "Towards a Critical Race Theory of Education," initially drew CRT to public attention in education groups. In special issues on CRT in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* in 1998 and in *Qualitative Inquiry* in 2002, CRT was probed for it being used as a possible lens through which educational practices and policies could be examined (Ladson-Billings, 1999).

In recognition of researchers working in the general field of critical educational studies, critical race theorists in education are dedicated to social justice as an overall standard. However, critical race theorists distinguished the occurrence of race and racism in the ongoing understanding of students of color and in the building and practices of educational institutions. Ladson-Billings (1998) noted, “Despite the scientific refutation of race as a legitimate biological concept and attempts to marginalize race in much of the public, political discourse, race continues to be a powerful social construct and signifier” (p. 8). Race is a societal creation and it has substantial influence on all people. Here, the origins of CRT in legal studies focused on the effects law has played in racializing people and to legal production of citizenship, which in turn lead to educational rights. CRT in educational research has been used to reveal discrimination in current educational practices and policies. Ladson-Billings (1999) and Solorzano and Bernal (2001) have used CRT to examine practices for preparing teachers to teach culturally diverse students.

My perception of CRT is that it is a method of looking at race relations, which is helpful for countries such as the United States and Canada. Learning to look critically at race relations is a key part of critical race theory. Examining everyday interactions and finding the racial component in them, can help move the racial equality cause forward in educational systems perhaps more than a sometimes simplistic “color blind” approach. CRT does not allow scholars to see research participants as data sources alone. Those who share their stories in this thesis are people, with voices, complex lives and struggles. It would be unjust for researchers to take these stories for their own benefit. Instead, CRT demands that research benefits the participants, and the communities like London, Ontario which participants come from. CRT is consistently utilized to define issues and concerns within communities of color in education, addresses K-12 public school system and teacher education. By adding to the CRT literature in this way, CRT scholars are more clearly able to understand and address the multifaceted terrain of racism in K-12 education.

Beyond the scope of topics in CRT research, its largest limitation is that it is primarily a theoretical tool. CRT effectively helps to guide research questions and inform analysis (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). However, because of limited discourse on how to design

CRT research, projects meant to challenge dominant narratives often continue to rely on methods of research designed by the dominant (White) culture. For teachers and school leaders who want to promote multicultural education and construct research for the betterment of communities and who aim to disrupt power dynamics of researcher and participant, it is essential to acknowledge racism within K-12 schooling and outline CRT research methods that effectively match that theoretical perspective.

## Chapter 2

### 2 Review of Literature

For the last forty years, multiculturalism in Canada has shaped much of this country's identity and sense of community based on ideas like respect, tolerance and individualism. Multiculturalism is an ideology, policy and practice which infiltrates many social institutions in Canada, including London, Ontario's education system. Many scholars have pointed out that the values, meanings and experiences associated with diversity are constantly being negotiated, shifting across time and space and "educational policies and programs have reflected these changes" (Joshee, 2004, p. 127).

#### 2.1 Historical and Current Education Diversity Policies in Ontario

Ontario's public school system supports the democratic values of fairness, equity and respect (Ministry of Education, 2009). It has attempted to set up a bold plan working towards becoming one of the best public education systems in the world. Program policy memorandum No. 119 attempted to change school procedures regarding how it dealt with concepts of race. The Ministry of Education claimed that it developed an effective plan to better equip students with the knowledge, skills, values and disposition to live in a diverse world. The policy makers behind PPM No. 119 valued diversity and rejected discriminatory attitudes and ideas (Ministry of Education, 2009). Literature from Rizvi and Lingard (2010) helped me to understand how policy leaders were able to implement their goals.

The Ministry of Education took initiatives in providing course selections which would be used to facilitate multicultural education to students. The Ministry considered the impact of inclusive course topics and materials on students when it was selecting coursework to include in the outlined curriculum for school to use. The Ministry specifically indicated that students take coursework related to topics in Canadian and World Studies subjects, stating that students should, "Demonstrate an understanding of the rights, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, as well as willingness to show respect, tolerance and

understanding towards individuals, groups and cultures in the global community” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 24).

Research done by Davidson (2009) illustrated how after the 1940’s, the population in Canada increased significantly. This led to education curriculum reform in Ontario and a move away from its previous Eurocentric perspective evident in curriculum policies and documents. Although the curriculum has been changed numerous times since then, the author notes, it still lacks the inclusion of experiences and views from racial and ethnic minority groups. These groups complained to the government that this was the main reason for disconnection and poor results in its minority youth (Davidson, 2009).

It is important to note how the idea of multiculturalism education was introduced into the classroom. There existed three phases with the Ontario school system’s experience with equity issues. Initially, in the 1970’s, there was a recognition of a problem. Second, during the 1980’s there was a search for a solution to the problem. Third, during the implementation phase of multicultural education, due to changing student demographics together with community/parental pressure for change, the Ministry of Education reformed past policy which was not meeting school needs. As a reaction to, and in recognition of, the barriers for immigrant groups and members of the lower earning working classes, multi-cultural programs, language courses and diversity in text were introduced to schools (Davidson, 2009).

In Ontario, as elsewhere in North America, the government dialogue about diversity has altered through the years. Diversity issues have not continually been addressed, or even acknowledged in some instances. As Harper (1997) summarizes, problems have been repressed, with adverse outcomes in each case. For example, the involuntary moving of Aboriginal children to residential schools was an example of how government, through schools, separated students. Currently, religious separation occurs by the element of the publically-funded Catholic school system boards. Parents can choose whether to send their children to a Catholic or non-Catholic school, so it is not an involuntary segregation, like the historical racial segregation policies. However, it does produce a condition where modifications are maintained upon among children, as “a photocopy of your

current Roman Catholic baptismal certificate or your Roman Catholic Sacrament of Confirmation certificate” was listed as a required item to apply to employment postings at a Catholic school board in Ontario. Further, it was stated that “individuals holding other views need not apply” (WCDSB, 2010, p.1).

In the last twenty years, boards have been obligated to create policies planned to address some of these significant, systemic inequalities short of long-term responsibility and backing (Dotzert, 1998). Though these actions have been given different stages of thought under various provincial governments, the present application timelines and clear step-by-step plan in the Equity and Inclusive Education policy document makes it evident that the time for change in Ontario is now.

## 2.2 Benefits of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is seen as vital for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to address their challenges to ensure success in the school system. It is important to teach young people to value their differences and be able to stand in the shoes of others (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Davidson (2009) argued that multicultural education will enable all students to understand their classmates better. It also acts as a positive change agent in the specific areas of diversity and tolerance for these students when they become adults. Davidson (2009) stated that the main goal of antiracism education is that all students are provided with a learning environment that is free of bias and discrimination.

In Culturally Responsive Teaching, Gay (2000) provides a case study which highlights the role of positive connections with students’ families in multicultural education. This study highlighted the Circle of Learning strategy employed by the Kickapoo Nation in Kansas. The Circle employed the curriculum to highlight cultural values, and the results of this program were measured through a survey after the curriculum had been used for two years. Students mentioned an increase in the positive outlook of their culture and it seemed to be intertwined with “increased interest and participation in school, self-confidence, feelings of efficacy in dealing with the non-Indian world” (Gay, 2000, p. 136).

In Zirkel's "The Influence of Multicultural Education Practices on Student Outcomes and Intergroup Relations" contained a catalogue of more than twenty studies conducted within the last twenty years, all of which conclude "a strong, positive racial or ethnic identity is associated with higher levels of academic performance" (Zirkel, 2008, p. 1151). Furthermore, Zirkel linked this positive individuality with influence on areas in from goals of attending school, to increasing academic achievement. The studies she reviewed categorized an assortment of methodologies, sample sizes and periods (Zirkel, 2008).

The research of Powers (2006) and Eccles, Wong, and Sameroof (2006) provided significant information. Powers declared that "Native cultural identification was positively correlated with students' intention to complete school and their presence and participation at school" (Powers, 2006, p. 43). This quote is meaningful to my research because it shows how a positive understanding of students' home culture is advantageous in the context of school engagement, and encouraging a view of home culture contributes to additional academic benefits. The research of Eccles et al. (2006) further contributed to the ideas offered by Powers indicating that for the participants they studied, there is a positive connection between understanding home culture and grade point average. This is important to my research because it is instrumental in showing the benefits of multicultural education extend to increasing academic achievement.

Irvine (2000) described an intercultural or culturally competent human being as someone who "possesses an intellectual and emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all humans and, at the same time, accepts and appreciates the differences that lie between people of different cultures." All students have the right to expect mutual respect, fair treatment and equivalent access to experiences. Williams and Cooney (2006) explained that through multicultural education, teachers can inspire a willingness to learn about the diverse perspectives of other individuals. Their research is important to my work because it shows that educators are influential in inspiring the social and emotional growth of students from diverse backgrounds by cultivating early literacy skills and the arts to encourage an appreciation of cultures in early childhood classrooms. Through reading,

writing and art, students learn to celebrate unique life experiences and learn that individuality and diversity can unite a class. In order to make sure that lesson plans are grounded on culturally responsive pedagogy, it is imperative for teachers to critically assess all aspects of their instruction (Williams & Cooney 2006).

Multicultural education is important and encourages all students to understand that the multicultural perspective is inclusive and extensive which can be practical to real world opportunities dealing with diversity. It incorporates far beyond the one-dimensional inclusion of culturally-based lesson plans and activities. Nieto (2004) writes, “If the purpose of education is to prepare young people for productive and critical participation in a democratic and pluralistic society, the activities, strategies and approaches we use with them need to echo these concerns.” Nieto (2004) claimed that when students are provided with opportunities to inspire their own cultural uniqueness, they will be prepared to battle change on a larger scale as they develop into adult citizens of our society. Nieto’s research is important to my work because it shows that whether students are arguing a specific matter, building shared programs, contributing to community written terms, or manufacturing petitions to counter dangerous conditions, students will hold essential critical thinking skills and confidence they have cultivated through multicultural education for positive benefit of society Nieto (2004).

According to Dines and Humez (2003), encouraging meaningful school experiences enhances to the resiliency of children who have witnessed stress, hardships, or violence. In building a warm, nurturing relationship with students, teachers can contribute to the formation of a positive cultural identity. Most teachers have not been trained to work specifically with students who have been exposed to violent behavior which often is seen in the school system today. Furthermore, schools in urban areas with great levels of poverty continue to have the highest levels of crime, yet the smallest educational, social, cultural and economic resources for battling violence. The research of Dines and Humez (2003) indicates the importance for teachers to develop trust with students and endorse teaching practices that address violence prevention.



In answer to the need for alternative conflict resolution techniques, teachers can develop constructivist approaches such as role-playing, research projects and small group discussions that challenge students to negotiate cultural differences. “The critical element in the expansion of intercultural learning is not the fullness with which one knows each culture, but the degree to which the process of cross-cultural learning, communication and human relations [has] been mastered” (Mahoney & Schamber, 2004). The research of Mahoney and Schamber (2004) is important to my work because it indicates that when a curriculum comprises analysis and evaluation of cultural difference as an alternative to fighting or minimization, it allows for important changes in intercultural compassion development.

### 2.3 Various Approaches to Multicultural Education

There are a number of approaches to multicultural education and to view them as distilling down to one theory is unfeasible. Banks’ (2001) research allowed me to see how instructional strategies in schools have often prevented students from learning because of insufficient educational resources and prospects. Banks defined the early stages of multicultural education as hurried efforts to support the identification of endeavors of different racial and ethnic groups. Banks provided a description of multicultural education as being a concept, procedure and educational reform established in the 1960’s following the civil rights movement.

Banks (2001) thought of multicultural education as an alteration because it is “...trying to change the schools and other educational institutions so that students from all gender, racial, language, and cultural groups will have equal opportunities to learn” (p. 4). Banks stressed that creating changes involves schools to do more than just focus on curriculum. Banks cautioned that teachers and administrators working in the direction of educational equality should be mindful that, “When prejudice and discrimination are reduced toward one group, they are usually directed toward another group or they take on new forms” (p. 4). This statement indicates Banks’ belief that multicultural education is an ongoing process and it cannot be considered as a onetime reorganization or program. Banks highlighted the notion that when multicultural education is viewed as a continuous development, a school’s success improves.

The developments in such accomplishments are direct consequences from teachers' abandonment of curriculum which concentrates on conventional principles rather than focus on attempts to manufacture multicultural relationships with students from an assortment of cultural, ethnic, gender-based, racial and religious backgrounds. Banks (2001) argued that the longer children from diverse backgrounds stay in school, the more these minority students lag behind white students. This delay is frequently the outcome of being obligated to learn from curriculum which has no link to the students' unique backgrounds or experiences.

Banks (2001) demonstrated the necessity for curriculum which encompasses many viewpoints and examined multicultural education in relation to historical outlooks, arguing, for example, that African Americans worked to make changes in society that encouraged multiculturalism. Banks examined the history of multicultural education and showed how the impact of the civil rights movement U.S. resulted in the changes in education that followed the movement. In effect, Banks' work added onto that of Sleeter and Grant (2001), which questioned the usage of the single-group study methodology to multicultural education. Banks found that schools often practice that approach in month-to-month studies of cultural groups. For example, schools may study Latino History one month, Asian American History another month and Black History the next month. Furthermore, Banks (2001) claimed that the single-group studies approach was an understated effort at teaching multicultural education because it focused on learning one group at a time. However, Banks endorsed the approach since it offers an alternative to teaching from the perspectives of "White wealthy men over everyone else(s)" historic perspectives.

Though Banks (2001) viewed the single group studies approach as a weak effort in making multicultural connections, Sleeter and Grant (2001) argued that single-group studies are political and "aimed toward social change" (p. 67). They found the single-group approach as a method to get members of leading groups to distinguish issues of oppression and help those individuals from oppressed groups attain feelings of pride and

empowerment, which is driven from achievements of the past such as the civil rights movement.

Sleeter and Grant (2001) recognized the single group approach as a method which established the importance of negotiating existing curriculum and ceasing the exclusion of individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds. Sleeter and Grant (2001) found that the multicultural education approach was often designated as “a popular term used by educators to describe education for pluralism” (p. 67). This approach was recognized to contribute to teaching methods to reduce prejudice, oppression, and discrimination. This method can be utilized to support attempts to discuss reallocation of power, produce opportunities for encouraging equality and allow prospects that encourage social justice.

For the purposes of my research study, Sleeter and Grant’s (1994) approaches are valuable in providing an assortment of prospects for a comprehensive understanding of multicultural education and opportunities for application that are consistent with the stages of willingness of many audiences. The following is a more elaborated explanation of Sleeter and Grant’s (1994) model.

The authors described five approaches to multicultural education and the use of any approach, or a combination of approaches, when a teacher has the choice, is a reflection of their philosophical/ideological viewpoints. The approaches are: 1) the Teaching the Culturally Different Approach; 2) the Human Relations Approach; 3) the Single Group Approach; 4) the Multicultural Education Approach; 5) and the Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist Approach. In practice, these methodologies overlap and teachers often utilize more than one approach simultaneously.

U.S. proponents of teaching the culturally different approach seek to promote the academic achievement of students of color offered through culturally relevant teaching. Sleeter and Grant (1994) studied seventeen articles and eleven books that support this method, which is often employed with students of color. The objective is to assist students to cultivate expertise in public culture; as well as within the dominate group and

results in achieving positive group identity. The authors found existing literature which gave many aspects of culture or language great amount of attention instead of observing unequal social relations. There is an importance given to constructing bridges to allow individual student's achievement and social mobility. Sleeter and Grant (1994) found curriculum offers the greatest attention, for example, in methods to modify instructional processes to allow it to be more compatible with students' learning and communication style.

Further research conducted by Sleeter and Grant (2001) identified four major weaknesses to this method: 1) It shows an obligation to student achievement, but is weak in its development of recommendations for practice, for example, substantial recommendations in the area of Hispanic and/or Asian Americans; 2) There is minimal detailed evidence about how to teach children of color; 3) There is hardly any dialogue of goals; and 4) The proposals for curriculum are not as established as the recommendations for instruction. By and large, the methodology is too restricted, because it places the weight of eradicating racial discrimination on individuals of color and their teachers instead of sharing responsibility with the general population and particularly Whites.

Supporters of the human relations approach are apprehensive about the use of methodologies regarding students getting along. Sleeter and Grant (2001) found students are advised to appreciate the harmonies between all people by considering social and cultural changes, but it does not take into consideration changes in institutional and economic power. The authors examined nine articles and five books supporting this method. According to Sleeter and Grant (2001), they found teachers, in reaction to difficulties stemming from school desegregation, struggled with efforts with helping students recognize their culturally diverse peers.

Sleeter and Grant (2001) found that weaknesses with this approach are: 1) There is an absence of connection between applications (theoretically and conceptually), with social psychology and theory on inter-group conflict; 2) There is no linkage with cross-cultural differences; 3) There is an absence of expansion of long term goals; and 4) Areas such as

poverty, institutional discrimination and powerlessness are not significantly addressed. Focus on the single group studies approach is related to current issues of oppression of people of color or women or gays and lesbians, or low socioeconomic groups. Language is a major topic of this approach along with curriculum, instruction, and literature emphasizing prescription and application more than goals or theory. Sleeter and Grant (2001) found weaknesses of this approach are: 1) Lack of attention to stratification and social action and 2) A tendency to ignore multiple levels of diversity.

Sleeter and Grant (2001) observed that when teachers utilize the multicultural education approach, they should teach from an assortment of perspectives. For example, when teaching students about Native American culture, teachers should inquire further into the individual tribes of whom they would like to see celebrated and honored instead of focusing on those leaders often shown in textbooks such as characters like Sacagawea, Squanto and Pocahontas.

The need to encourage philosophies of diversity and multiculturalism in the curriculum is a direct consequence of attempts to combat bias and exclusion in the curriculum content (Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000). Furthermore, it is important to understand that curriculum has a variety of dimensions. Two commonly researched aspects are “the hidden” and the formal curriculum. According to Henry et al. (2000) the formal curriculum involves the, “content and processes of instruction, which are shaped by the selection of educational materials such as books and teaching aids” (p. 233). Some writers argue that the lack of inclusive curriculum is the key factor in black students’ schooling and leads to chronic suspensions, absenteeism and high dropout rates (Brathwaite & James, 1996). The capability of the teacher to take on leadership roles in the classroom can make a difference in helping all students feel empowered by the curriculum. In this respect, Ingersoll (1996) notes the following, “the amount of power held by teachers does indeed make a positive difference in how schools function; but the effect depends on the types of school activities over which teachers have influence and autonomy” (p. 160).

Regardless of such recommendations and resources, Solomon and Levine-Rasky (2003) note in “Teaching for Equity and Diversity” that teachers who work in high diversity environments rarely plan lessons that recognize inclusion, or clearly and intentionally implement equity pedagogy. In that respect, then, “an observer of Canadian teachers’ classroom practices would discover a generally unsystematic, serendipitous implementation of equity education” (p. 52). For example, as these lessons are unintended there is greater inconsistency in the level and quality of equity education across areas and curriculum areas such as mathematics. It is better to deliberately insert equity education into consistent programming since teachers often depend on illustrations where students are showed an issue of equity or diversity, which then allows for a teachable moment to talk over student-generated content. In contrast, students in schools which are more similar in population, where there is a lower likelihood of obvious diversity generated problems, would therefore result in a lesser focus of equity-specific education and instruction.

## 2.4 Perspective of the Minority Teachers in the Classroom

Carr and Klassen’s (1997) findings from the United States indicate that the “racial minority teacher” has a particularly significant role to contribute positively to equity in education. Specifically, they are effective and influential in the areas of “enhancing cultural compatibility, demystifying the hidden curriculum, developing positive attitudes towards persons from a variety of backgrounds, expressing lived experiences, connecting with the students and connecting with communities” (Carr & Klassen, 1997, p. 70). Their research is important to consider because it illustrates the importance of having minority teachers in the classroom. Carr and Klassen showed why it is important for minority students to have the diverse perspectives of teachers from different racial backgrounds.

## 2.5 Perspective on Privilege from the White Teachers in the Classroom

McLaren (2003) wrote about his teaching experiences at a school in a Canadian “rural ghetto” and how it altered his own perceptions about his own whiteness. He conducted an ethnographic study about his experience teaching fourth and sixth grade students for a few years at a school in a low-income rural area in Canada. For example, McLaren described journal entries about his challenges with his poor minority students. He described their perceptions of him as a white male as well as their perceptions about race, gender and socioeconomic status. As well, McLaren wrote about how he had to set aside his own ideological beliefs about teaching and learning in order to make connections with his students. McLaren gained information from his students and made countless efforts to connect with them and with their parents.

Subsequently, after these educational experiences and studying the education field, McLaren (2003) recommended that educators “unthink whiteness” and “rethink democracy” (p. 263). He argued in favor of getting away from blaming existing social conditions and finding new methods to encourage social justice. Further, McLaren wrote about the awareness of looking at whiteness from another viewpoint. For example, he stated, “We must create a new public sphere where the practice of whiteness is not only identified and analyzed, but also contested and destroyed” (p. 264). McLaren recommends that when educators pick to look outside whiteness, it may result in constructing hope for others.

Alice McIntyre (1997) is another researcher who looked at pre-service teacher perceptions of race and education in her participatory action research (PAR). McIntyre referred to similarities between herself and her participants (1997). The research emphasized the need for self-examination and self-expression (p.30). McIntyre interviewed and met with focus groups of thirteen white college students who were completing their education degrees. McIntyre had eight sessions with the young women and the conversations centered on the participants’ perceptions of “whiteness” and

racism. McIntyre's research unveiled the participants' distorted stereotypes regarding issues such as teaching in the inner city, racism and reproducing racist educational practices.

McIntyre (1997) discussed the similarities among her participants' perceptions of their own "whiteness" and their perceptions of being future educators. She discussed biases in her "white on white" research and found that "what is taken-for-granted by many whites- both researchers and participants- as normal, self-evident, and typical is precisely what needs to be identified, challenged and re-imagined" (p.33). McIntyre found that the women had limited experiences with people of color and their perceptions were often based on their parents' views and what they had learned from the media. McIntyre felt that it was her responsibility to create a platform for positive social changes. Her research was used to help prepare her participants for working with inner city students of color. She wanted the participants to remove layers of racism and preconceptions about inner city students and people of color. McIntyre wanted her methodology to "provide opportunities for white researchers and educators to expose the dynamics of racism among white people..." (p. 134).

McIntyre (1997) also thought it was part of her responsibility as a white researcher at a predominantly white institution to address issues of racism and to create opportunities for her participants' to rethink their own perceptions of "whiteness". She found that most of the participants considered their own experiences as "normal" and often viewed people of color as deficient or lacking in opportunities. McIntyre wanted her participants to move away from the "white knight" perspective of going into a school and saving the poor minority students. Instead, she wanted them to realize how harmful their perceptions could be if they were unwilling to look at things through multiple lenses. If these women wanted to make positive changes, they would have to stop putting blame on society, poverty and the lack of resources (p.129). McIntyre wanted the participants to continue to have an open dialogue about how to change their perceptions and how to become more open to the process of self-reflection and self-critique.



In terms of multicultural education, the participants had a very limited view of what it actually meant. Most of the participants described multicultural education as teaching students about a variety of cultures, but they did not clearly understand the importance of discussing issues of racism and how it contributes to inequalities in society. McIntyre found she made progress with her participants in terms of expanding their perceptions of racism and white privilege, but she felt that the discussions were still in the beginning stages of working towards creating social changes. McIntyre analyzed the participants' past experiences and found that they were much more comfortable discussing personal experiences rather than common themes of racism throughout society. She also found that the participants needed to have more experiences with people of color and this was a limitation in her research. The study of teachers' perceptions of whiteness helped to deconstruct issues of racism and created opportunities for awareness of the role of white privilege in education and in society in general. Alice McIntyre (1997) opened the door for a small group of white teachers to re-evaluate their perceptions of "whiteness" and for them to take on more transformative teaching practices.

McIntyre (2005) expanded her study of "whiteness as a discourse in multicultural education" in a study of white students in her teacher education classes. McIntyre's research allowed pre-service teachers to participate in classroom-based and observation-based activities that gave them opportunities to reflect on how race affects their teaching practices and views of students of color. McIntyre used classroom activities and student teaching related work to help white middle-class teachers gain a stronger understanding of their white privilege and how it affects their teaching practices and perceptions of students. Open dialogue and written activities also gave students the opportunity to learn more about effective ways to teach from multicultural perspectives.

## 2.6 Reasons Why the Background of the Teacher is Important

The background of an educator is important for a student to make sense of knowledge, teaching, and learning. Students come from different locations and backgrounds; and so do educators. A failure to recognize and appreciate these experiences is to push out of

the margins the experiences of people who are different from us (Dei, et al., 2010). This argument presented by Dei is related to my research question because the degree of multicultural education made available to students, has at best, an indirect effect on their ability to achieve success in school. Furthermore, significant new investments in education are not reaching many marginalized students who need help due to long-identified systemic barriers of learning which are not being properly addressed (McMurty & Curling, 2008). This argument is related to my research question because further research needs to be conducted on how to bridge the gap across those barriers. It is not enough for educators and school leaders to state that they are offering multicultural education. More research needs to be conducted on how it is being done and whether or not it is effective.

Dei (2010) argued that the term “*marginalized*” refers to a process and not a label. It is a process of social devaluation that serves to justify disproportional access to scarce societal resources. In the case of marginalized students and teachers, it is important to understand the process of identification, the “seeing” and “not seeing” of students by teachers that devalues students (Dei, et al., 2010). Dei’s arguments are important for my study because they illustrate a need for further research that should consider teachers’ training regarding how to better equip teachers with the strategies, vocabulary, and sensitivity to educate a growing minority or non-dominant student population that is increasing.

“*Color-blindness*”, as indicated by teachers’ inability to act together with, or comprehend diverse student populations, not only has an effect on minority youth groups but it also has an influence on white youth groups who live in Ontario. Many young people who live in mostly white areas are scared to discuss differences in skin color as they may have learnt, wrongly, that it is inappropriate culturally (Knowles & Ridley, 2006). Young people may believe that being black, or from other minority groups is somehow embarrassing or shameful. This claim is important for my research because it illustrates how professional learning must be provided to teachers to help those who

currently do not teach in culturally sensitive ways to instruct and properly facilitate social interaction for a growing diverse student population.

## 2.7 Teacher Education Programs

Sleeter's (2005) study about current teacher preparation programs and their efforts to educate white teachers about culturally diverse students illustrated that more needs to be done to help close the "overwhelming presence of whiteness" (p. 96). For her research, Sleeter observed the results of 80 studies on the topic of the effects of pre-service teaching strategies related to multicultural educational practices. Sleeter's research was significant because it acknowledged the inadequate knowledge some white teachers have about teaching students of color from multicultural perspectives. She regarded the inadequate amount of multicultural related teacher preparation as an emergency for schools with students of color and low-income students.

Sleeter (2005) framed this research around her years of experience with multicultural education and examined the results of the 80 studies about this subject. Sleeter found it troubling that most predominantly white colleges frequently offer limited classes in multicultural education. She also stated that many of the courses available were often disjointed and emphasized only areas of the individual professor's interest. It was evident to Sleeter that in most cases, pre-service teachers of color were more dedicated to learning about multicultural education. Sleeter discovered that non-white pre-service teachers were often "more committed to multicultural teaching, social justice and providing children of color with academically challenging curriculum" (p. 97).

Sleeter's (2005) research established that many past studies on multicultural education examined the lack of preparation white teachers have in teaching minority students. However, she recognized that schools could do more to help with this problem. Sleeter proposed that teachers who "culturally match" their students should be positioned at those students' schools. Based on the high number of white teachers entering the teaching field, this would not always work. In this case, Sleeter recommended that pre-service teachers become more involved in their students' communities. She found that some pre-service teachers in the United States are now mandated to live in a community

different from their own backgrounds proceeding to teaching at a school in that location. It is important to consider these approaches which can help teachers make improved connections with their students and the school communities.

This information provided by Sleeter (2005) is based on previous studies about the influence of multicultural courses and training; there must be more attention on follow-up sessions and time for teachers to look at what they have learned. In most cases, teachers acknowledged learning from the courses and they acknowledged it impacted their outlooks about multicultural education. Nevertheless, the studies determined that most teachers did not utilize strategies in multicultural education even one month after the courses or workshops ended. Sleeter (2005) suggested that multicultural teacher training should not be framed as deficiency-based models, but with encouraging or strengths-based frameworks as teaching approaches. Also, it is also important that skills be taught in the courses which go beyond training, and should continue in the new teachers' classrooms. It is important to consider Sleeter's research, because it suggested that university and school connections are important for on-going and supporting teachers' knowledge about multicultural curriculum (2005).

Geneva Gay (2005) also presented suggestions for teacher training programs. She felt that multicultural curriculum should be integrated through all teacher preparation coursework instead of being presented in a few isolated courses. In her 1997 research, Gay advised that multicultural education should also be available as a worthwhile area of specialization. For example, the research designated that there must be seats for multicultural education for both pre-service and veteran teacher training along with on-going staff development trainings. Gay argued that this will assist teachers to continue to study more about the numerous areas of multicultural education.

Gay (2005) examined the problem of scarce teachers of color teaching in inner-city schools and the overpowering focus on standardized testing. These two factors were often found to minimize the extent of multicultural curriculum being utilized in the classrooms of white middle-class teachers. Gay found that multicultural education in

teacher training programs lacks focus since an assortment of models are being used. Gay viewed multicultural education as being equally both a problem and a solution which warrants increased attention at the political level and in teacher training programs. It is essential for white teachers to have stronger considerations of how to work with students from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. It is important to consider Gay's research since it showed the importance of teachers learning to make multicultural connections resulting in helping underachieving students achieve success in school. Lastly, Gay's (2005) research established that politicians, principals, teachers and pre-service teachers have to comprehend the significance of creating multicultural connections with students. Gay's (2005) research is relevant today, because it indicates how these connections will certainly assist all students with their overall school achievement and will benefit students who will feel valued by their teachers.

In addition to Gay's (2005) research, Ladson-Billings' (2005) research also investigated various elements that influence teacher preparation programs. For example, Ladson-Billings provided information about how economic issues have altered the focus of many programs. Specifically, Ladson-Billings argued how those alterations resulted in changes in teacher training programs. Economic cutbacks in education have led to questions and criticisms about the value of academic rigor in alternative certification programs and politicians continue to influence teacher-training programs. Ladson-Billings' (2005) research is relevant today, since her focus on addressing the fluctuations in the country's demographics is related to the research I am examining further. She also advised that additional attempts needed to be done to help make connections with students who are ethnically and culturally diverse.

Ladson-Billings' (2005) research included results from a study done in 2000 where she illustrated that "88% of the teachers are white and in some areas that figure soars as high as 99%" (p. 230). She recommended that the number of teachers of color is declining due to the fact that they are moving on to more profitable professions such as doctors and lawyers. Sadly, this illustrates how more should be done to encourage individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds to become teachers. Ladson-Billings noted that those

individuals who are planning to be teachers are often white, middleclass, females which greatly influences how university courses are taught. They are also the ones who (because of white privilege) graduate from high school and complete university degrees with success.

Regrettably, Ladson-Billings (2005) found the curriculum in pre-service teaching programs is often based on an idealized school student who is middle class and a university graduate, which accommodates to the white middle-class perspectives. Ladson-Billings placed responsibility on university professors to be dedicated to teach students about diversity.

Ladson-Billings (2005) emphasized the importance of pre-service teachers having opportunities to study strategies in implementing successful multicultural education. Ladson-Billings posits that politicians, thinking and often teacher-training programs were based on the deficit models of the 1960s and 1970s. She emphasized that programs should stop seeing poor students of color as “at-risk” or “lacking” (p. 231). This terminology will not continue if there are more opportunities for learning about diversity for both pre-service and veteran teachers. Ladson-Billings deliberates that the responsibility lies within the university professors, politicians, pre-service teachers and the veteran teachers. Lastly, she stressed that faculty of color must be supported regarding issues of diversity.

In a review of related literature, Nieto (2004) found that teacher education students, most of whom are white and monolingual, generally view diversity of students’ backgrounds as being a problem. Often, teacher education programs function within a mono-cultural framework, reinforcing the values of only the dominant culture. Nieto’s research is relevant to my own work, because it indicates how as a result; many teachers are unprepared to face the wide range of cultures, languages, lifestyles and values of many classroom settings. Teachers may try to treat all students the same way, suggesting that this “colorblindness” is the best way to promote equality. Also explored here were most common characteristics of effective teachers in urban schools. These effective teacher

characteristics include a belief that all students are capable learners and an ability to communicate this belief directly to students.

Ken Zeichner (2003) described effective teachers as those who maintain consistently high standards for all students and did not blame students for failure. Instead, these teachers are aware that a lack of multicultural education negatively affects students and can cause students to exhibit indifference. In many cases, poor performance is not the result of an inability to complete the work. “If students do not believe they have the ability...it makes little sense for them to invest any effort at all in their learning,” (Neito, 2004). Nieto’s research is important to what I am examining because it indicates how when a curriculum becomes purely standardized and only reflective of the dominant culture in a society, students that are members of other cultures become more disengaged (Nieto, 2004).

## 2.8 Political Forces Affecting Multicultural Education

Geneva Gay (2005) discussed changes in teacher education programs and she described them as being “more conspicuous, contentious and extensive” (p. 221). For instance, the increase in standardized testing and accountability based on the test scores has made teacher training more political. Gay spoke of how different tensions and opinions cause clashes in determining what should be taught in teacher preparation courses. She explained that there are individuals who want to continue to teach the “status quo” when it comes to teaching pre-service teachers about diversity. However, there are those individuals who argue that multicultural teacher training must be approached with new conceptions and from new directions (p. 222).

Gay (2005) shared examples of how Sergiovanni (2003) called this a means of creating “collective action” (p. 222). To create positive changes, Gay (2005) suggested that pre-service teachers learn about the achievement gaps among students from different cultural backgrounds (p. 222). In Gay’s (2005) article, it was noted that teachers must be prepared to teach students with a variety of academic needs. It would be ideal for teachers to learn to focus more on teaching higher levels in content areas to better prepare students for the increase in standardized testing. However, multicultural education

advocates suggest teachers “learn how to adapt their content knowledge and pedagogical skills to the contexts of culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student populations and school situations” (p. 221).

Gay’s (2005) article suggested that teacher preparation go beyond teaching middle-class white teachers the skills used in conventional schools since the demographics are changing and the classrooms are changing. For example, currently there are more students from impoverished families, there are more students of color and there are more students who are linguistically diverse who attend public schools.

Although Gay (2005) respected the work of multicultural advocates, she was concerned that their work stayed mainly in higher education academic settings. Gay felt that the public did not have strong connections or knowledge about ideas regarding multicultural education. Unfortunately, those with political power tend to focus on issues of student achievement and multicultural education is not viewed as a priority. Gay felt that opponents of multicultural education use “scare tactics” when discussing standardized testing and it allows testing to be viewed as the priority in educational reforms which stifles the opportunities for creating more outlets for multicultural curriculum. It is also problematic when blame is placed on the children with low achievement scores and politicians often ignore the problem of incompetent teaching practices (p. 223).

Gay (2005) believed that those in favor of multicultural education should become more politically active as a means of promoting multicultural education. Multicultural education should be viewed as more than a program of teaching practices; it should also teach future teachers that creating changes involves changing policies and shifts in power and pedagogies. Though Gay felt test scores should show improvement, Gay argued that political interests should also do more to stop repeating the “errors of the past” (p.226). When political interests are solely focused on improving test scores, it often excludes opportunities for making multicultural and moral connections with students. These test-driven political agendas are often geared towards establishing a “quick-fix” and short term solutions (p. 226). Gay’s research highlighted how students of color are often



ignored in many educational reform plans and teacher education programs potentially should help end this problem.

Nieto (2005) discussed multicultural education in relation to how individuals relate to it in terms of the overall purpose of education. For example, she mentioned the ideals of Horace Mann and John Dewey and their visions of public education as an “apprenticeship to civic life” (p. 43). Nieto is apprehensive because this is not what is happening in education today. Nieto’s (2005) is relevant to the work that I am studying because she mentioned how the pressures of standardized testing overshadow the need for multicultural education that helps promote positive social changes. Nieto also pointed out that advocates of multicultural education often have different agendas. She felt that although their agendas may differ, most advocates want to “provide all students with high-quality and equitable education” (Nieto, 2005, p. 56). Nieto also felt that multicultural education should work to assist students who often are failed by the public school systems. She recommended that teachers use culturally responsive pedagogy to help address socio-political issues. She stressed that it is imperative for educators to teach their students as Giroux suggested, to “Challenge institutional policies and practices, both in schools and society that perpetuate inequality” (Nieto, 2005, p. 57).

## 2.9 Resistance to Multicultural Education

Higginbotham (1996) recommended that student resistance to multicultural discourse results, in part, from the way educators approach the issue and argued that educators' choice of materials may communicate unintended messages about who is responsible for the onset of society's inequalities. Research done by Chizhik and Chizhik (2005) further added onto Higginbotham's (1996) research, that instructors collect readings and create activities to enable students' understanding of social justice. According to research done by Chizhik and Chizhik (2005), it is important to show students that they can play a role to offset social inequality. Nevertheless, Chizhik and Chizhik (2005) point out that students come into the classroom with predetermined ideas of social inequity which may impede with their understanding of what the teacher is essentially attempting to teach. "In short, students preconceived notions about social inequity may contribute to resistance to curriculum presented in the course" (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2005, p. 116).

## 3 Chapter 3: Methodology

In Chapter 3, I explain the use of the case study methods offered by Stake (1995, 2000) and Yin (2003) in my qualitative research. As well, I will examine the case study methodology theoretically, discuss its types and goals and describe my application of the methods in my research design. Further, I will discuss my research questions, describe each research site context, my data collection methods, and approach to data analysis and writing. Data triangulation involved the use of multiple data sources of evidence in case studies, including observations, interview, and document analyses, or a combination of two or more of these techniques (Stake, 2000). The data I collected were from observations, semi-structured, interviews, document studies and reflective journals.

### 3.1 Research Questions

1. What teaching strategies can be used to support diverse students' academic learning process within the classroom setting?
2. What are the perceptions and practices of teachers, principals, and vice principals in relation to the academic learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education?
3. What are teachers', principals', and vice principals' perceptions of multicultural education in the curriculum today and to what extent they are satisfied with current Program Policy Memorandum No. 119, which was created to support multiculturalism, diversity and inclusive education in schools?

Irvine's (2003) research supports the need for teachers to learn more about multicultural education. She wrote about how approximately "44% of the elementary and high schools in the United States do not have any teachers of color" (p.52). Irvine's statement and the studies used in my review of literature indicate the need for more research of current teachers' perceptions of multicultural education. It was especially important for me to examine how white teachers' perceptions are framed since there are so few teachers of color in the teaching force.

## 3.2 Overview of Qualitative research method

I conducted an exploratory qualitative case study. The focus of my research was on understanding the perceptions and practices of eleven teachers teaching within the Ontario school system, along with the perceptions of two principals and two vice principals in relation to the academic learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education. My case study sought to understand the “why” and “what” (Yin, 2003, p.6). A qualitative methodology is appropriate for this research because of its focus on building meaning from the experiences of a small number of people (Patton, 2002).

Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (2000) described a qualitative approach to research as “a means for describing and attempting to understand the observed regularities in what people do, or what they report as their experience” (p. 96). Therefore, this is important to my work because I interviewed eleven teachers, two principals and two vice principals; and used the data to determine how and why their personal backgrounds and experiences have influenced their perceptions of multicultural education. This approach also allowed me to interview (the group of teachers, principals, and vice principals) and explore information about their knowledge of multicultural education. It also helped to find out how the teachers used that knowledge in their teaching. Thus, the interviews permitted me to understand the participants’ perceptions of multicultural education.

According to Yin (2003), a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions (p.6); (b) the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) the researcher wants to cover contextual conditions because they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. An exploratory case study was an appropriate approach for this because it is this type of case study which can be used to answer a question that is needed to explore the presumed links between real life interventions which are too complicated for survey or experimental strategies.

According to Baxter and Jack (2008) case study research is more than only conducting research on a single individual or situation. This approach has the potential to deal with

both simple and complex situations. Like Yin (2003), Baxter and Jack (2008) note that case study enables the researcher to answer “how” (p.547) and “why” (p.548) type questions, while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated. For the novice researcher, a case study is an excellent opportunity to gain tremendous insights. It enables the researcher to gather data from a variety of sources and to “converge the data to illuminate the case” (p. 556).

I viewed my participants as “meaning makers” (Warren, 2001, p. 83). Further, in the spirit of critical race theory I recognized there were multiple viewpoints of participants. My data were, in part, obtained from an interview guide which influenced participants’ responses. In the interviews, I hoped that my participants felt comfortable engaging deeply with the topic at hand, and I encouraged them to share other issues around equity in their school environments that I did not specifically ask them to discuss. In my attempts to prompt for specificity and detail in participants’ answers, I wanted to capture the richness of their lived experiences, with a focus on making meaning of their responses.

### 3.3 Data Collection Method

My strategy was to conduct semi-structured interviews, and mostly ask open-ended questions. I found this approach was beneficial because it allowed participants to respond to a common set of questions and also allowed me to ask follow up questions to specific participants. I used a variety of questions ranging from “descriptive, experience, and knowledge questions” (Cohen, et al., 2011, p.417). Examples of these types of questions are: 1. Introduce a topic. 2. Probe for further information or responses. 3. Directly or indirectly ask for information. 4. Follow up on a topic or idea (Cohen, et al., 2011). I wanted to get their perceptions in regards to how effective PPM No. 119 has been within the local school system, and the educational experiences of teachers, and school administrators in hopes of learning how PPM No. 119 has shaped teachers and school administrators’ lives today.

My contacts at the Thames Valley District School Board suggested two elementary schools which were each found to have a highly diverse student population. They provided me with the appropriate contact information of two principals. My research approach was to first email a brief introduction to the two elementary school principals. In that email, I sent my Letter of Information to School Principals, which occurred in December 2013 (Appendix, C). Additionally, I followed up my email by leaving voicemails at the school requesting that the principals contact me. At the first meeting with the two principals, I introduced myself and further discussed my research goals. This meeting took place in January 2014. Both introductory meetings were approximately 45 minutes where I answered any questions that the principals had and established a professional, ethical relationship. Next, I requested an opportunity to speak with teachers at the next school staff meeting (which was in January 2014 at “Sunflowers” Elementary School and February 2014 at “Carnations” Elementary School (both pseudonyms). Also, I asked principals to email my Letter of Information to teachers, prior to my meeting to allow them to be fully aware of what my research interests were before I met with them at the staff meeting. The principals generously agreed to do so. I found that this approach was helpful in recruiting potential research participants.

At the staff meeting I introduced myself and I provided brief information about the fact that I was an elementary school teacher in New York City and provided a descriptive overview of my research study to potential research participants. Teachers had the option of either agreeing to both the observation and interview or agreeing to only the interview. Initially, I had a total of sixteen teachers who expressed their interest by providing me with their names and email and agreed to be interviewed. However, when I attempted to schedule a time for their interviews five teachers wanted to back out. On another occasion with a teacher when I arrived for the scheduled interview, that teacher informed me she was suspended, due to the administration stating she was viewed as being overanxious and needed to leave the school grounds!

In terms of the other four potential participants, they each expressed their regret for committing to this research study and voiced realization of other work commitments.

The timing of my research study unfortunately took place during report cards and teachers were extremely busy with other commitments. However, I remained optimistic, respectful, and persistent. Finally, I was successful in confirming scheduled interview times with potential fifteen research participants. I followed my ethics protocol. A concern I had was whether my sample size in the two schools would be sufficient. Thus, I requested the two principals again speak at the next staff meeting as a second attempt to recruit more participants, which took place in February 2014. Again, I introduced myself, and requested interested teachers to participate. However, I was unsuccessful in recruiting additional participants.

Using a semi-structured interview format, I interviewed eleven teachers, two principals and two vice principals for approximately forty-five to sixty minutes each. The questions were intentionally structured to move from more basic to complicated; as well as from more general to more personal. I hoped that, as the interview progressed, the participants would feel more comfortable with me and with the interview itself, and that their heightened comfort level would then result in greater openness and depth. As Patton (2002) explains, open-ended questions allow the respondents to express their thoughts and ideas in their own words and phrasing, which in turn provides the researcher with a more accurate picture of the participants' views and experiences. Accordingly, I chose to use semi-structured, rather than fixed-response interviews, to allow for greater freedom for the participants to answer as they saw fit.

I hoped that the participants would be more willing to discuss this potentially challenging topic if the interview was more conversational, less rigid, and formal. Initially, I was concerned that a fixed-response interview style may come across as an investigation or judgment on their teaching practice, which would likely stifle an open dialogue. In order to give control and a sense of comfort to the participants, my participants chose the interview location. I interviewed ten teachers at their classrooms and one teacher at the school library. I interviewed two principals and two vice principals at their school office. With the participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded using a tape recorder, later transcribed, which allowed my attention during the interview to carefully

observe and note participant behaviors such as body language and vocal tone (Patton, 2002).

Following Patton (2002), the research participants were provided with transcribed data after the analysis process to help minimize any misconceptions or misunderstandings I might have had from their interviews. One participant made revisions and one teacher asked to make additions to the interview through email. To address ethical concerns around the data collection, all electronic data were stored on two of the researcher's private computers which are both password protected with separate passwords. Furthermore, the participants' identifying data, used for contact purposes, were stored on one computer while the research containing the pseudonyms was stored separately. If identifying data were accidentally recorded, I removed all details which may enable the teachers to be recognizable within my study during transcriptions. All paper copies of the transcribed interviews are kept in a locked filing cabinet at Western and will be destroyed after five years (Cohen, et al., 2011).

### 3.4 Modified Version Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method, also known as grounded theory method, was first developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and a modified version of it was the method I used to develop and analyze concepts from data at the same time. Constant comparative methodology incorporates four stages of analysis: (1) comparing incidents to each category, (2) integrating categories, (3) delimiting the theory and (4) writing the theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006).

Merriam (1998) identified five key benefits of the constant comparative method that make it ideal for the purposes of this study. First, it is a means of examining complex social units comprising of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Second, it results in rich holistic accounts of a phenomenon. Third, it offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand the readers' experiences. Fourth, insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research.



Finally, the method can be useful to education innovation, evaluating programs and implementing policy (Merriam, 1998).

Throughout the four stages of the modified version constant comparative method:

1. I continually sorted through the data collection and analyzed the information. This method involved reviewing data retrieved from my interviews and observations and comparing them to other data retrieved from my observation in the field. Emerging themes were then noted and data was reviewed again.

2. I made notes of categories on margins and more elaborately using flash cards which helped me keep track of common themes which started to emerge. In doing so, I was looking for both similarities and differences to identify tentative patterns, which can then be compared to each other.

3. I grouped data according to patterns in order to develop a theory. In order to make these comparisons, data reduction charts were constructed and saved as hard copies for my researcher's notebook as well as transcribed into a word processing document to be stored on the computer.

4. I analyzed all data in this fashion paying particular attention to triangulating data and comparing data across and within participants (Merriam, 1998).

Data can be collected from observations, interviews or research sessions. During the process of gathering data the researcher can use different techniques to obtain information related to the study. The techniques for collecting data are: document collecting, participant observing, and interviewing. Collecting written documents offers a basis of information as well as in-depth descriptions of how individuals think about their world. The researcher examines written documents to get a deeper understanding and description of the participant's beliefs, conduct and experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006).

Charmaz (2000) wrote that coding assists with the development of theories that direct the data and guide new data collection and it allows the researcher constant awareness of a type of intimacy with the data as he or she constructs meaning. In order to achieve this, I

reviewed my data several times before I even attempted to code. This allowed me to be certain that I knew the data and could code with more confidence. I reflected on data in relation to the literature on multicultural pedagogy and teachers and was able to better analyze the perceptions and actions of my participants. Furthermore, I continuously gathered new data such as my formal, informal, classroom observations and emails. I began to see more themes and sub-themes in the analysis, participants' perceptions, and philosophy of teaching, background, teaching pedagogy and classroom practices. I continually compared themes within each category to determine findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This technique described by Glaser and Strauss (1965) in LeCompte and Schensul (1999) is called "constant comparison." The researcher simultaneously codes and analyzes data in order to get a depiction of the concepts and ideas of interest. By constantly comparing precise items to others, the properties of the items can be determined. The relationships to each other were inspected and a union of the items and their relationships are then said to have occurred (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

By comparing patterns that developed, I was able to enhance my codes and leave out others that were not related for my data. All in all, I was reading, examining, interpreting, and making common themes all the time in order to understand the perceptions and teaching practices of teachers. I withdrew collecting and coding my data once I was satisfied and reached a point of saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). That was the case when I did not see new themes emerging from my analysis. Using a modified version of Glaser and Strauss's (1965) constant comparative model, I audio taped interviews, wrote transcriptions for each interview and analyzed the rest of my data such as emails. In addition, I made journal writings of my anecdotal notes of curriculum documents teachers showed me at our interview meetings, notes of books and internet sites teachers referenced to using. I documented what I viewed in community boards located by the school office to detect common themes. Emergent codes were inscribed in the margins of each participant's transcribed interviews. Journal entries were read and emergent codes written in the margins. To ensure trustworthiness of data, I checked with my participants by providing them each with a copy of their interview transcription to see whether my transcriptions were accurate.

Robert Stake (1995) explains that “analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations” (p. 71). From the time that I first collected data, I began to analyze them. The major analysis emerges from a complex combination of data and experiences from observations, interviews, document study, reflective journals, audio recording, and email communications. In a qualitative study, interpretation is a major part of all phases of the research process, and represents my attempt to make the data more meaningful. Analyzing and interpreting findings are a process that carries great responsibility and the need for integrity and honesty is an imperative, which I took seriously.

Prior to starting my research, I reviewed and reflected on the work of relevant scholars’ research related to multicultural education, as part of my preliminary literature review. First, I focused on receiving information about my participants’ background (gender, racial origin, and ethnicity). Second, I inquired with teachers, principals and vice principals about the level of multicultural education found in curriculum used by students. Third, I asked teachers to discuss their own level of commitment of promoting equity and preventing discrimination to minority students. Based on my participants’ responses to questions, I explored what teaching strategies and leadership styles are used to support students’ learning process regarding multicultural education within the curriculum today and to what extent they were satisfied with current Program Policy Memorandum No. 119, which was created to address this issue.

### 3.5 Member Checks

Member checks were essential during my interview as outlined by Taylor and Bogdan (1998). The purpose of the member checks when working with interview data was to ensure, from the perspective of the participant, accuracy in their statements or intentions. I emailed my transcripts of the interviews to my participants for their review. In order to establish rigor in my analysis, I showed and discussed my findings and observations with teachers. They did not refute or question any notes taken during the study. Also, I kept a reflective journal. Furthermore, teachers actually helped me to better understand my observations in their classroom.

## 3.6 Research Tools

With the permission of participants, I used a tape recorder in interviews and pen and paper to document my observational data.

## 3.7 Individual Interviews

With the appropriate ethical approvals from Western University and the Thames Valley District School Board, I contacted two elementary schools within the London area to focus my research on. School 1 will be known as pseudonym “Sunflowers” Elementary School, and School 2 will be known as “Carnations” Elementary School. Individual interviews provided an excellent methodological tool to gather rich information and stories from the eleven teachers’, two principals’ and two vice principals’ professional lives I was researching. I engaged with teachers, principals, and vice principals by establishing a trusting and ethical relationship with my participants.

At the staff meeting with teachers, I explained my study, answered any questions and emphasized my ethical obligations to the school, any/all participants and sought to enlist their support and participation. I let them know about my background, why this topic is potentially helpful to the teaching professional, and how their participation might have an impact in the area of diversity and multicultural education. My strategy was to use a semi-structured interview question guide. My intentions and the purpose of my study were stated clearly when I introduced myself. I made it clear that participants had the freedom to interrupt, ask questions, or choose not to participate at any stage should they feel uncomfortable without facing any penalty.

Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility since participants largely respond to the same questions and can express their views in their own terms. I built rapport by initially spending time in the interview with the eleven teachers, two principals and two vice principals and asked a warm-up, low key question at the beginning of the interview. I was confident that rapport building would help create a positive relationship amongst the researcher, teachers, principal, and vice principals. In broad terms, I encouraged teachers, principals and vice principals to describe teaching strategies and leadership

styles related to multicultural education. Such analysis helps in better elaboration and exemplification of the points under discussion (Cohen, et al., 2011).

### 3.8 Research Strengths

The strengths in using a semi-structured interview are it potentially increases the comprehensiveness of data provides for participants “voice” and is a flexible technique for small-scale research (Drever, 1995). Semi-structured interviews are used when obtaining research that would benefit from a fairly open framework. Semi-structured interviewing begins with broad and more general questions and is used when more useful information can be obtained from a focused yet conversational two-way communication with teacher participants (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

The advantages of the case study method are it can relate directly to individual’s everyday experience and facilitate an understanding of complex real-life situations. A case study was appropriate for my research study since I was in a natural environment such as a school setting. For example, teachers’ perceptions and the ways in which they paid attention to multicultural pedagogy can be seen in the context of their work. Therefore, the data are time-dependent, context-dependent and inherently tied to the phenomenon itself (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### 3.9 Research Limitations

A weakness of a semi-structured interview guide approach is that important topics may be omitted (Cohen, et al., 2011). As indicted by researcher Robert Yin (2003), case studies have become a common research strategy. However, a common limitation of this approach is that the scope of methodology sections in articles published in journals are too limited to give the readers a detailed and accurate view of the decisions taken in the study. Critics of the case study method such as Flyvbjerg (2004) argue that the study of a small number of cases offers no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Case study, as a research method, has been criticized as lacking in rigor and objectivity. However, while some case studies may not offer statistics, they nonetheless may allow for a researcher to tell a story which may be a good method of creating a

picture in comparison to other research methods (Yin, 2003). Case study methodology is best suited to this research, though like every method it is not without its drawbacks.

Yin and Merriam note the problems of interviewer bias, which may arise from a conflict of interest, especially if the study draws upon inappropriate sources of funding (Merriam, 1988) as well as the potential for poor quality of work (Yin, 2003). Successful case studies depend heavily upon the acuity and interview skills of the researcher and ethical reporting of the data gathered (Merriam, 1998). Additionally, Guba and Lincoln note that case studies “tend to masquerade as a whole when in fact they are but a part – a slice of life” (Merriam, 1988, p. 33).

Critiques of the case study method cite its lack of generalizability (Yin, 2003), and impenetrable length (Yin, 2003). Merriam reiterates the problem of a case study’s length, which “may be deemed too lengthy, too detailed, or too involved for busy policymakers and educators to read and use” (Merriam, 1988, p. 33). As for generalizability, Merriam explains that “rather than applying statistical notions of generalizability to case studies, one should develop an understanding of the generalization that is congruent with the basic philosophy of qualitative inquiry” (Merriam, 1988, p. 34). In essence, she agrees that case studies are usually not generalizable in ways that the quantitative one-to-one method can be. However, they can provide useful and applicable comprehensive information.

### 3.10 Validity and Reliability

Validity, in qualitative research, refers to whether the findings of a study are true and certain—“true” in the sense that research findings correctly reveal the situation, and “certain” in the sense that research findings are supported by the evidence (Yin, 2003). I emailed a copy of transcripts of conversations to the eleven teachers, two principals and two vice principals in individual interviews, which further strengthened validity. This is important because it offered an opportunity for participants to agree or disagree with what has been said, therefore strengthening data.

### 3.11 Triangulation

Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives (Stake, 2010). To establish validity and trustworthiness, triangulation of data is necessary.

“Triangulation is a means of checking the integrity of the inference one draws (Schwandt, 2001, p. 257). Stake (2000) maintains that “triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (p. 443). Data triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources of evidence in case studies, including observations, interviews and document analyses, or a combination of two or more of these techniques (Stake, 2000). While I was in the field, I was able to achieve triangulation by what I saw (observations) in the teachers’ classrooms, along with what I heard from the interviews with principals, vice principals, and teachers. I also took field notes of the interaction between teachers and students. I especially paid close attention to how teachers made connections and related to all students in the classroom setting. Additionally, I took notes on what was being taught in lesson plans related to my thesis topic of multicultural education. I made notes of the materials being displayed on the walls of the classrooms and the hallways within the school building. My perception is that it was important to focus on these visible areas since it demonstrates the school’s culture and values in the subject of multicultural education. I have included a description in my data collection (Tables 4.1 - 4.21).

Data triangulation involves using various methods of obtaining information in order to increase the validity of a study. These sources are likely to be participants, or program staff (Stake, 2010). Theory triangulation involves the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data. Therefore, if various evaluators interpret the information in the same way, then validity is established (Golafshani, 2003).

Methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative methods to study the program. For example, results from surveys, focus groups, and interviews could be compared to see if similar results are being found. If the conclusions

from each of the methods are the same, then validity is established. This type of triangulation involves the use of different locations, settings, and various key factors related to the environment in which the study took place, such as the time, day, or season. The key is identifying which environmental factors, if any, might influence the information that is received during the study. These environmental factors are changed to see if the findings are the same across settings. If the findings remain the same under varying environmental conditions, then validity has been established (Merriam, 2009).

### 3.12 Interview Schedule/Time Line

My study began in January 2014. I set up my interview schedules in the morning, afternoon or evenings to suit participants. I was highly responsive to accommodate to the needs of my participants, and work with their availability (Cohen, et al., 2011).

### 3.13 Consent

I sought informed oral and written consent from each potential participant at the beginning of my interview. Potential participants had the right to give, or not give (and then they will not be part of the study), informed consent regarding their participation. In order to do this, participants were fully briefed about the purpose, what sort of information is being sought, how it will be used and the implications for them as participants.

### 3.14 Ethical Considerations

In qualitative research, one of the most common tools used for data collection is observation. I assured participants that their identities will not be revealed to the reader, and gave each participant a pseudonym. I treated participants with respect, and adopted a humble and non-judgmental attitude to participants' claims. I avoided projecting my own views, attitudes, and opinions by adopting an unbiased non-judgmental attitude to participants as I am not the focus of the study (Cohen, et al., 2011). Of course, my ethics application for this study went through the ethical review process at Western University and the Thames Valley District School Board prior to beginning any fieldwork.



## 3.15 School Profiles

### **Sunflowers Elementary School**

Sunflowers Elementary School is located in a part of London. In 2006 this neighborhood was home to 19,250 permanent residents. There are about 7,585 households with a home ownership rate of 60.0 percent and an average individual income of \$37,190. The western side of the neighborhood is characterized by a concentration of rental high rises, low cost condominiums, and entry level detached housing. The central part of the area has more ranches on large lots and looks like many of the other mature middle class neighborhoods in the city. The 2013 average sale home price was \$211,543 (Statistics Canada, 2008).

At Sunflowers Elementary School, there are eighteen (18) kindergarten through grade eight teachers, four (4) developmental education teachers, two (2) learning support teachers, one physical education teacher, four (4) French teachers, one librarian, thirteen (13) educational assistants, four (4) early childhood education teachers, three (3) custodians, one secretary, one principal and one vice principal. At the time of the research study, the principal had worked at the school for less than one year (Interview with School Principal).

The School Council's mission statement is located at the front by the school office which states, "It is dedicated to enhancing the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth of each child. Our primary mission is to support, communicate with, represent, and encourage the involvement of parents in the education of their children. Working collaboratively we will help foster effective partnerships among students, parents, staff, members, and community. We are committed to creating excellence together" (Field Note). It provided a clear statement of goals for the school, described clearly the schools' day-to-day activities and the school's commitment to the community.

### **Carnations Elementary School**

Carnations Elementary School is located in another part of London. It is home to 16,225 permanent residents, or 5.3 percent of London's total population. There are about 7,130 households, with a home ownership rate of 62.5 percent and an average individual income of \$40,952. The centerpiece of the neighborhood is the shopping facility. Also, recreational facilities including an outdoor pool and parks would be built. The area is a mix of high rise condominium and rentals, townhouses and fully detached homes at several different price points. The 2013 average sale home price was \$261,167 (Statistics Canada, 2008).

At Carnations Elementary School, there are seventeen (17) kindergarten to grade eight teachers, three (3) learning support teachers, two (2) English second language teachers, one (1) French teacher, three (3) early childhood education teachers, seven (5) educational assistants, one librarian, one physical education teacher, one chief custodian, two (2) evening custodians, one music teacher, one secretary, one principal and one vice principal. At the time of the study, the principal had worked at the school for less than one year (Interview with School Principal).

Carnations Elementary School's mission statement is located at the front of the school states, "We build each student's tomorrow every day". The school has on display a vision statement by the Thames Valley District School Board which states, "The Thames Valley learning community inspires innovation, embraces diversity and celebrates achievements, and a strong foundation for all students". Carnations Elementary School has a sign right by the school office stating, "The voices of our people create community. The voices of our people create respect. All the voices of our school belong. All the voices of our people celebrate peace" (Field Note).

### **3.16 The Process and Focus of In-depth Interviews with the Elementary Teachers, Vice Principals, and Principals**

This study was not intended to offer a comprehensive examination into the lives of these specific eleven teachers, two principals and two vice principals. In this thesis, I offer

teachers, principals, and vice principals as they seem in the study. The participants offered all biographical information during our interviews. I did not ask the participants to classify their gender, race, sexual orientation, or other indicators of identity. I thought that the participants should make the choice to disclose, and discuss characteristics of their distinctive backgrounds as they desired (and many did so). Furthermore, their choice to mention distinctive features of their identity may or may not have been significant to the topic I was exploring. Specifically, issues of identity may have related to multiculturalism and their experiences in teacher education programs, and professional development experiences. Thus, I have only indicated the age, gender, race, or other features of the participant if they provided this information in the interview. A brief introduction to each participant follows below. I have tried to offer some biographical details along with their experiences teaching, and experiences in teacher's college. Of the fifteen participants in this research study, thirteen were female and two were male. All fifteen participants were Caucasian and from European backgrounds, and taught in an elementary school in London, Ontario. Both Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School are located in a lower socio-economic area.

**The following eleven elementary teachers, two principals and two vice principals were interviewed (names have been altered to preserve anonymity):**

**Sunflowers Elementary School**

Johanna

Belinda

Kimberly

Maya

Elsa

Elizabeth

Martha

**Carnations Elementary School**

Lily

Ana Maria

Brenda

Denise

Brianna

Ashley

Emma

Penelope

I have provided a second set of pseudonyms in my eleven elementary teachers', two principals' and two vice principals' profiles to further protect the identities and ensure confidentiality of the participants.

### 3.17 Teacher Profiles

#### **Sarah**

Sarah has been teaching for eight (8) years and fell into the 31-40 age category. Sarah grew up in Ontario and attended Teacher's Education at a University in Ontario. At University, she was part of the French program, where she mentioned she learned about culture through the arts and through music. She took Spanish classes as well, which helped her learn about different cultures through language, literature, and the arts. She mentioned her cultural awareness was more from experiences than from university education. She felt time in the classroom could not necessarily prepare teachers to teach cultural awareness; it is something that comes from personal experience and interest. She was exposed to resources which helped her balance her classroom. She mentioned she has considered taking Additional Qualifications courses to become an English Second Language teacher in the future.

#### **Henrietta**

Henrietta is a teacher and has worked at the school for ten (10) years. Henrietta graduated from University and attended Teacher's Education in Ontario. Henrietta mentioned she is from Ontario. Henrietta fell into the 41-50 age category. Henrietta mentioned she has one daughter, who is in middle school.

### **Brittany**

Brittany is a teacher and has worked at the school for two (2) years. Brittany graduated from University and attended Teacher's Education in Ontario. Brittany mentioned she is from Ontario. Brittany fell into the 31-40 age categories.

### **Sasha**

Sasha is a teacher and fell into the 51-60 age category. Sasha is a grade two teacher. Sasha went to Teacher's Education in Ontario, graduated in 1986 and is a veteran teacher. Sasha mentioned her University degree was in Anthropology, which has helped her learn about various cultures. Sasha mentioned she had benefitted from her varied life experiences. When she was a teenager, she lived in Europe where she went to a French school. She had the opportunity to live in China for a year, where she taught English. When she was 24, she travelled extensively through South East Asia. Sasha mentioned she worked as an English Second Language teacher for a number of years, where she would do presentations for schools.

### **Keith**

Keith is a teacher and has worked at the school two (2) years. Keith fell into the 31-40 age category. Keith is the only male teacher in this study. Keith mentioned he grew up in Ontario. Keith has been teaching for seven years. Keith stated he loves children and first started his teaching career teaching kindergarten. Keith completed his undergraduate degree at a University in Ontario and went to Teacher's College for a year in Australia. Keith mentioned in Australia there were some students from Asian and Latin American backgrounds, but it was not significant. Keith related to the Aboriginal students there, since their situation was similar to the First Nations students in Canada. Keith mentioned after teaching for seven years, he felt more confident in his abilities. Keith thought that teaching students from various cultural backgrounds and learning needs has given him a great amount of exposure. Keith mentioned that students can come into the classroom with different skill sets and contextual backgrounds. Keith mentioned, "Nothing can

prepare you for those students that walk into your classroom, whether you are seven year teacher, or twenty year teacher, you can always better yourself” (Interview).

### **Deborah**

Deborah is a teacher and fell into the 21-30 age categories. Deborah went to University and Teacher’s Education in Ontario. Deborah has worked at the school for less than one (1) year. Deborah mentioned she grew up in Ontario. Deborah works with students ranging from kindergarten to grade eight. Deborah splits her time between two schools. Deborah mentioned at the school she supports twenty four students and at the second elementary school she supports twenty three students. Prior to teaching in Ontario, Deborah taught overseas for five years. Deborah mentioned her work experience abroad has helped her with her current position as an English Second Language teacher.

### **Katie**

Katie is a teacher and also works at the school library as a teacher-librarian. Katie is a veteran teacher and has been in the education field for twenty four years, where she has been employed both as a teacher and teacher-librarian. Katie has worked at the school for twelve (12) years. Katie fell into the 51-60 age categories. Katie is unmarried and does not have any children. Katie attended University and Teacher’s Education in Ontario. Katie completed her three part specialist to become a teacher-librarian. Katie has always had an interest in books. Katie currently attends a lot of teacher and librarian workshops.

### **Lauren**

Lauren is a teacher and has worked at the school for seventeen (17) years. Prior to teaching at the school, Lauren had the opportunity to teach at a small rural school within Ontario. Lauren has an Undergraduate degree in Science and she attended Teacher’s Education in Ontario. Lauren is from Ontario. Lauren fell into the 41-50 age category. Lauren is not married. Lauren’s teaching experience has taught her the importance of building a safe environment where students can take a great amount of risk.

### **Linda**

Linda is a teacher and has worked at the school for seventeen (17) years. Linda fell into the 51-60 age categories. Linda went to University, and Teacher's Education in Ontario. Linda mentioned she grew up in Ontario. Prior to teaching at the school, Linda taught at several schools at a large city in Ontario. Linda has a caseload of approximately seventy students, ranging from kindergarten to grade eight. Linda has found that the English Second Language teacher becomes the de-facto person, for providing opportunities for staff to gain knowledge about different cultures. Instead, Linda found it should be a shared experience. At Teacher's Education, Linda wanted to complete a useful Additional Qualification, so she pursued English Second Language. Over the last few years, Linda has completed the three part qualifications to pursue her specialist as an English Second Language teacher.

### **Madeline**

Madeline is a teacher at the school and fell into the 21-30 age category. Madeline has worked at the school for three (3) years. Prior, to working at the school she has taught at a private school in Ontario for one year. Madeline completed her University degree in Ontario, where she studied Drama and English. Madeline attended Teacher's Education in Ontario. Madeline mentioned she grew up in Ontario. Madeline teaches approximately forty students.

### **Cadence**

Cadence is a teacher and fell into the 61-70 age categories. Cadence has worked at the school for ten (10) years. Prior to working at the school she has taught at other elementary schools and high schools within Ontario. Cadence completed her University degree in Ontario. Cadence attended Teacher's Education in Ontario. Cadence mentioned she grew up in Ontario.

### 3.18 Vice Principal and Principal Profiles

#### **Darrell**

Darrell is a vice principal and has worked at the school for three (3) years. Prior to that, Darrell mentioned he worked as a vice principal for two years at a small rural elementary school within Ontario. Darrell mentioned he completed University and Teacher's Education at a University in Ontario. Darrell is currently studying online for a Master's degree in Leadership at a university in Australia. Darrell mentioned holding a Master's is a requirement of the Thames Valley School Board for an administrator position like principal or vice principal. Darrell began his teaching career as an elementary school teacher, where Special Education was his focus. Previously, Darrell was employed as a Resource Service Consultant, and supported school boards, when they were looking to expand their capacity to support students with disabilities. Darrell fell into the 31-40 age categories. Darrell mentioned he grew up in Ontario.

#### **Felicity**

Felicity has been a principal at the school since September 2013. Thus, she has worked at the school for less than one year. Prior, to that she was a vice principal for two years, at an elementary school within Ontario. Felicity fell into the 51-60 age categories. Felicity is married and has two children. Felicity attended University, Teacher's Education and her Master's degree from schools all within Ontario. Felicity mentioned she grew up in Ontario.

#### **Bianca**

Bianca has worked at the school as vice principal for two (2) years. Bianca mentioned she grew up in England, and attended middle school and high school in Ontario. Bianca fell into the 41-50 age categories. Bianca attended University and Teacher's Education in Ontario. Bianca began her teaching career as a high school science teacher.



**Benjamin**

Benjamin is a principal at the school since January 2014. At the time of my study, Benjamin worked at the school for less than one month. Benjamin began his teaching career seventeen years ago. Benjamin completed his University degree in Music, and attended Teacher's Education in Ontario. Benjamin completed his Master's degree in Critical Literacy from a University in Ontario. Benjamin fell into the 41-50 age categories.

## 4 Chapter 4 Results

The earlier chapters have provided a backdrop regarding how teachers utilize multicultural curriculum and how they conceptualize this curriculum. Chapter one offers a summary of multicultural education as an area of interest and my personal connection to the subject. Chapter two contains a literature review: recognizing relevant literature and research examining the challenges of placing into practice multicultural curriculum, and some of the results experienced by students of color learning a multicultural curriculum. Chapter three positions my interview subjects and research methods. Chapter four provides a summary description of the data gathered from these interviews.

Transcription records for all my participants added up to more than sixty pages of interview content. The transcription covered both extremely topical material as well as tangential information about participants. I have organized the data thematically. The data aggregate into five somewhat individual categories addressing the research questions.

Throughout the research study, “perspectives on meanings” prevailed, the teacher’s meanings, the principal’s meaning, the vice principal’s meaning, and the researcher’s interpretation of the teacher’s, vice principals, and principal’s perceptions. The researcher was aware of these four points of view when discussing, comparing and analyzing the naturalistic setting (Patton, 2002). This chapter describes further the qualitative presentations and analysis of data. Qualitative data were gathered from in-depth interviews, observations, and field notes to help better understand and interpret the emerging themes and emergent understandings of elementary teachers, vice principals and principals which were generated.

### 4.1 Description of the Findings

The first theme addresses the way the interviewees comprehend and implement multicultural curriculum in their classroom. This incorporates the teachers’ pedagogy of multicultural education, centering the classroom on students versus centering the classroom on coursework; engagement pedagogy; insights of teacher authority; and the

content related to multicultural education shown within the curriculum by the teacher. The second theme includes the personal experiences that the teachers identified as preparation for multicultural education. The third, fourth, and fifth theme includes the limitations and benefits on the application of multicultural education. These five themes are interconnected; and strongly overlapping in some areas. The differences and commonalities will be discussed in depth below. This chapter explores in detail the use of qualitative data to better understand and to continue to support the emerging themes and understandings which were generated.

## 4.2 Similarities and Differences in Teachers' Profiles

As shared in the descriptions of the participants, and on the basis of socio-economic status ten of the eleven teachers were white middle-class women and one white middle-class male. The eleven teachers in my study worked in London, Ontario.

## 4.3 Research questions explored

In this chapter, the data collected and analyzed provided a further understanding of the following three research questions:

1. What teaching strategies can be used to support diverse students' academic learning process within the classroom setting?
2. What are the perceptions and practices of teachers, principals, and vice principals in relation to the academic learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education?
3. What are teachers', principals', and vice principals' perceptions of multicultural education in the curriculum today and to what extent they are satisfied with current Program Policy Memorandum No. 119, which was created to support multiculturalism, diversity and inclusive education in schools?

Note: The data found in the tables in the next section are summarized, unless there is a direct quote. I have put in bold words, where the key themes arise. Dates of interviews have been removed to maintain confidentiality.

**Table 4.1: Similarities of theme one – Supported by responses from teachers, principals, vice principals and researcher’s reflections**

<b><u>Theme one: Teaching as a service-oriented career</u></b>
<p><b><u>Responses at School A</u></b></p> <p><b>Researcher’s reflection - Johanna mentioned the S.W.I.S. (Settlement worker in schools) has helped facilitate connections within the community for families that come in and can help provide language support (Interview).</b></p>
<p><b>Researcher’s reflection - Elsa emphasized the importance of utilizing the school’s internal resource such as the S.W.I.S. worker, who is important for many immigrant families new to Canada.</b></p> <p><b>Elsa commented,</b></p> <p>“I think that it is on an individual basis. I don’t know how globally that is available. I can speak for myself. I know where to go. Every year it is great our S.W.I.S. worker talks about her role. She is an important link. <b>If you think about new immigrant families, their first interaction will be with the school where they spend the most time. Having the S.W.I.S. worker will help them find important resources and having her here is invaluable</b>” (Interview).</p>
<p><b>Researcher’s reflection - Brenda emphasized the S.W.I.S. worker is a good resource. A great amount of families are still learning English. The S.W.I.S. worker has a good knowledge of their backgrounds, and how best to assist them. Brenda’s comment supports emerging understanding of theme number one.</b></p> <p><b>Brenda mentioned,</b></p> <p>“<b>Our settlement worker is very connected to the parents. I have been to a couple of ESL sessions for parents.</b> A lot of parents are learning English. The ESL teachers set up a welcoming environment. They have food” (Interview).</p>
<p><b>Researcher’s reflection - Kimberly sees herself as more of a service provider to her students than an authority figure. She wants to make more connections with families to make sure they are able to reach her. She has considered creating a class website, to make families aware of what is taking place within her classroom. The website is a good resource to offer families important information. She is aware of the internal supports put into place within the school such as the S.W.I.S. worker. It is for the school to look at those families in need. She found there are different supports put into place and the settlement worker works out of the school. The S.W.I.S. worker did a presentation at a staff meeting, about what her job is. She connects parents with the school system. She mentioned for new immigrants, they are learning about Canada and what supports are available. She is there and is a great resource.</b></p>

**Kimberly** mentioned,

“For me, I contact parents by writing a note in the planner. The kids may know English a lot better than the parents. I need to work on making sure the parent understands. One teacher has on her classroom website a link that can translate everything into a certain language. I see that as being very beneficial. I will look into doing that. **I can put all my announcements. Parents can access it in a language they know**” (Interview).

**Martha** mentioned,

“This is my first year here and every morning you hear in the announcements that we are a community. That we strive to have that community feeling. It is a big building. It is hard for us to get to know each other. **The tone for the students is we are one big community and teachers are here**” (Interview).

**Researcher’s reflection** – **Penelope** mentioned the internal resources offered within the school, such as the ELL teacher, interpreters and S.W.I.S. worker have important roles in providing services to both staff and students.

**Penelope’s comment** supported emerging understanding of theme one,

“Depending on where and how their situation is? We have an ELL teacher that comes, that are supported by staff. **We have a S.W.I.S. worker. She has a special role. She attends meetings. She helps parents. We invite interpreters to help in our meetings.** We have an ESL teacher, for further support. A teacher can have her as a resource. For example, in literacy you can do this for the student. You use the strategies she uses in the classroom” (Interview January 29, 2014).

**Researcher’s reflection** – Emma mentioned she has felt connected with the population she works with. The experiences she watched her parents go through, has helped relate to families. An important part of the job is helping families receive the services they need and finding that support.

**Emma** reiterated further understanding of emerging theme number one,

“The schools I have taught have been quite diverse. I see a lot in common with new immigrants in the community. **I feel a good connection and understanding where the families are coming from.** We have a good connection with the LUSO center, which supports our community. The center is a community agency, and provides support connecting resources and settlement workers” (Interview, February 13, 2014).

### Responses at School B

**Researcher's reflection - Lily** viewed the school administration's efforts related to multicultural education as being a work in progress. **Utilized the school's resources to provide the needed services for his students.**

**Lily mentioned,**

**“The S.W.I.S. worker has been a good internal resource to go to for support. If I have concerns I go to her. I promote constant communication with my ELL families to her.** She gives them access to free programs, cooking classes, banking solutions and how to live with the adversity they face being new to Ontario, new to London. Where in London you can access community support. **I have a good relationship with the ELL teachers at this school, and are always modifying.** My students go to meet with her. I can go to that resource in my building. I might go to the Board office, to get information about IEP, or Learning Disability. I rely heavily on my ELL teacher. There are two teachers here. I rely on her. I rely on the resources offered here” (Interview, February, 25, 2014). **Lily** added another valuable resource, **“Our librarians are good about promoting cultural diversity,** putting books on display, and sharing new resources. Our Elementary Teacher Organization in Ontario puts out information” (Interview).

**Researcher's reflection – Brenda** mentioned she wanted to make more meaningful connections with the students who are from diverse cultural backgrounds. **Brenda** mentioned she has received a great amount of internal support through using the ESL teachers as a resource and providing accommodations for students. **Brenda** asks ESL teachers to share and they can teach us to adapt things, simplify things for students just learning English.

**Brenda mentioned,**

**“I have four ELL students. I don't feel that I am able to address the individuals easily. The ESL teachers makes the personal connections easier and the cultural backgrounds.** The students are from South America, Guatemala, and most from the Middle East. I would like to talk about how ESL teachers have also helped. Whenever I have ESL teachers in my class, I have to collaborate. They are really helpful in teaching us how to adapt material for students” (Interview).

**Denise mentioned,**

**“The staff in this school, is open, our settlement worker is wonderful.** We have new administration this year, and things change. We are thinking of having a committee to promote multiculturalism” (Interview).

**Ana Maria mentioned,**

**“In terms of ESL teachers, they work closely with the families.** Anything the families would need, like healthcare, clothing, or where to get things. They help them. Or the

settlement worker can help them. **They get a translator, which is something the settlement worker would organize.** I know with a couple of teachers that I support, when they did a class on culture and communities. They did posters. They would ask parents to come in. They do have a multicultural week here. We have parent volunteers” (Interview).

**Researcher’s reflection – Brianna** mentioned the S.W.I.S. worker is a major link for the families. Helping families to settle in. Find resources they need within the community.

**Brianna** discussed what internal tools are used,

**“We have on our website, a number of translation languages, so families can find out what is happening at the school.** We get background information. The S.W.I.S. worker is a real link to welcome families, and link for the community. We do activities to draw parents in, like a family dance. We welcome through volunteer opportunities, and a volunteer lunch. A lot of parents are hesitant. They see this as a language barrier. We are always thinking of better ways to communicate. Parents call asking how to access the website. We always have translators available at our meetings.” (Interview).

**Table 4.2: Similarities of theme two – Supported by responses from teachers, principals, vice principals and researcher’s reflections**

### **Theme two: Changes in the teaching profession**

#### **Responses at School A**

**Researcher’s reflection – Belinda** mentioned she saw changes in the teaching industry. **Multicultural education was not something that was talked about when she first started teaching. It was not a topic discussed when she went to Teacher’s College.**

**Belinda’s** comments further supported understanding of theme two,

**“The focus in education right now is to differentiate for everyone.** I don’t think I do it different for kids who are new Canadians, whose heritage backgrounds are different from other kids in the class, or different from me. **I am not sure if we access the families very much. Things have certainly changed. I think I do differently because of learning needs,** if they are ELL students. That is how it presents itself, than you take steps” (Interview).

**Belinda mentioned a changed she has witnessed,**

**“Celebrating Chinese New Year is next week, and is big deal in my classroom.** There is a huge Cambodian and Vietnamese population. It is part of Canadian culture. Canadian culture is multicultural. I think that whatever is being celebrated, let’s celebrate it. This year, we have a party. We don’t celebrate EID as much, because the children who are Muslim don’t come to school. We try to talk about it, and ask questions. The girls come

back with Henna on their hands. That is my favorite” (Interview).

**Researcher’s reflection – Maya** commented there is not as much need to reflect deeply into multicultural education today. **A great deal of resources have been put into place over the years.** The importance of multicultural education depends on the school administration. There was more of a need in the past to address concerns of diversity and multicultural education. The school’s surrounding community changed in terms of its demographics.

**Maya** mentioned,

“We have lots of stuff in our library. When I started teaching, these were questions that people were asking. Why we don’t have this stuff? Recently opportunities are there. In the past, there were tons through PD. Someone from the cross-cultural learner center would come. The need is not there as much. We are already developed in the way we do it” (Interview).

**Maya** discussed her teaching experiences,

“At one point, this was a **little school, in a non-diverse neighborhood.** It changed when a lot of refugees came from Cambodia. When I taught at this school 23 years ago, half my class was from Cambodia, and had just come to Canada within four or five years. The school community changed. Housing changed. Those families brought houses. Initially when that happened there was a lot of training for people who came in as refugees, and what happened in Cambodia. There was a lot of exposure on what kids and families have gone through. **Now, it is not needed as much. Most of the books are multicultural and multiracial.** The ethno-central material is gone. The materials are multicultural. All schools still lag in giving some kind of equal balance to kids’ cultures and backgrounds” (Interview).

**Maya** went on to provide an example of what is currently taking place,

“**There is some type of school concert, whether called a Christmas concert or a Holiday concert.** We may not have an assembly at Lunar New Year, which is a big holiday. This is represented in the classroom. For example, in grade two there is a book called Celebrations, which is part of our curriculum. So all year long, students are learning about those things. But, when that is not part of the unit, in the classroom you can read books to the kids. When kids are having celebrations, we talk about traditions. We always decorate our door for EID, and would foster a sense of community so students would have more of an understanding. **We read a lot of stories which come from other cultures,** like in picture books, in math books, which is based on a story in China. The most important part is **including it everywhere**” (Interview).

**Researcher’s reflection – Elsa** mentioned since she began the teaching profession, she has witnessed major changes. Her content has changed dramatically in the last twenty years of teaching. **Elsa** is more focused on skills, the curriculum has changed, and her **teaching strategies have changed.** When **Elsa** began teaching twenty years ago, it was



more about units and holidays. Now, the content is different. **Elsa** encourages students to think about literature, features of society, education, and discrimination. Elsa knows what type of educational methodology she wants to emphasize in her class.

**Elsa went on to provide an example,**

“All the classes are very diverse, and that is something I enjoy. We have a lot of Cambodian, Vietnamese, Jamaican, and Syrian. When I first taught here; I had to learn the phonetics, and pronouncing kids’ surname correctly. **In the past, my content was based** on holidays, Halloween, and Christmas. How that has changed in the last ten years? I don’t do that. For example: I do a warm up activity, where there is a minds on. The kids help me figure out what we are going to do for that activity. So for the month of December we talked about it. Why don’t we do something related to holidays? We use words like invitation, cake, card, gift, family. We are moving towards the direction of **talking about celebrations in general**” (Interview).

**Elsa** mentioned,

“I like to find texts which illustrate diversity, like The Family Is Special. It is about a girl that goes back to Vietnam to find her family. The kids loved it. A lot of their families are from there. **The books are more available now; from the beginning of my career it is easier now. But, still a challenge**” (Interview).

**Researcher’s reflection** – **Emma** mentioned teachers were at first resistant to The Thames Valley District School Board’s Inclusive Policy, since it changed the way teachers did things. But, eventually teachers understood that the policy was more about enhancing, and making improvements.

**Emma** discussed an experience she had,

“I think one challenge I faced was we tried to be more inclusive, in assemblies and announcements. It challenged traditional teaching methods. Staff felt it was being changed, and were set in their ways. **So, the point, our school is a microcosm of Canada. If, we were in London, or Toronto, we still have to expose our students to what is there.** We want to be in line with the Board’s diversity policy, making sure we are doing everything to be inclusive towards everyone. At first, since teachers had done it for so long, the reaction was a little negative, wondering why it is changing what we have done. But, once we talked about the education piece, they understood. We weren’t stopping what they were doing. We were enhancing, that was the most important part” (Interview).

### **Responses at School B**

**Denise** mentioned,

“There wasn’t much there, in my basic Bachelors of Education courses. There might have been some classes, and weren’t memorable. I remember thinking when I finish Teacher’s College. I went in 1990. **These topics weren’t at the forefront.** I knew if I wanted to get a job, I wanted a useful AQ, either Special Ed, or ESL. I knew where ever I teach, as a

classroom teacher, I had 100% ESL population” (Interview).

**Denise** provided an example,

“I think there is more teachers could do. When, it comes into the curriculum, in grade 2, with Celebrations, multicultural education comes in. **We try to do things with morning announcements and school assemblies.** If it is a holiday, we do a blurb. We did one a few years ago. We haven’t done one since. There is supposed to be a multicultural fair in May, and more could be done. We do have religious accommodation policy with prayer mats. **Students are more comfortable asking for them than in the past.** Sometimes, parents ask for accommodations for curriculum. They negotiate with administrators” (Interview).

**Ashley** mentioned,

“I would say, starting teaching 17 years ago, very little. **A lot of professional development in the last few years, has gleamed from different perspectives, which is building teachers. There has been a focus on equity and inclusive education.** Our safe schools focus on homosexuality, and religious concerns regarding classroom instruction. Policies and procedures through the Ministry and the Board are being used to guide and to make sure we are an inclusive community” (Interview).

**Table 4.3: Similarities of theme three – Supported by responses from teachers, principals, vice principals and researcher’s reflections**

### **Theme three: Assumptions about race and class**

#### **Responses at School A**

**Researcher’s reflection – Kimberly mentioned teachers should not make the assumption, that all students have the same prior knowledge in their experiences, and being sensitive to that.**

**Kimberly provided an example of emergent understanding of theme three,** “Students want to share their backgrounds and experiences. I encourage that. I know everyone does not have the same prior knowledge. We talk about where they went on summer vacation. Like in September, there is always a writing activity that teachers do every year. For example: What did you in the summer? **A lot of these students, who may not have a lot of money may not have done anything.** We were talking about tobogganing. One student didn’t know what that was. It is important, that in everyday activities, like in Canada we have snow. Is there something that you do from where you are from? One student said, I remember when we lived in Cambodia, that we did this in Christmas, instead of having a tree. **I encourage sharing experiences”** (Interview).

**Researcher’s reflection – Elsa mentioned her experience at a poverty workshop which was valuable, and utilized what she learned in her teaching practices today.**

**Elsa's comment provided further supported emergent understanding of theme three,**

“A couple of years ago, I went to a poverty workshop. **We talked about visible and invisible signs.** How a parent could be upset because their kids are coming home dirty playing in the yard. **What if that child only has two pairs of pants?** That parent doesn't have a washing machine. **We think about those aspects of poverty.** How we can support families who don't identify? Our school has found ways to do that and **maintain the dignity of the family,** by sending anonymous gift cards. Or winning a backpack filled with food. That was a helpful workshop” (Interview).

**Table 4.4: Similarities of theme four – Supported by responses from teachers, principals, vice principals and researcher's reflections**

#### **Theme four: Us versus Them**

##### **Responses at School A**

**Researcher's reflection – Belinda mentioned some teachers view themselves separately from the students they teach. It is apparent in the type of language they choose to use when speaking to students.**

**Belinda mentioned,**

“All staff, I don't think you can say all staff is aware. Everyone has their own place on the spectrum. **There are a lot of people that still see things as us and them.** White Canadians and everyone else. I don't think that is any different here at this school, than it is in any part of society. There are diversity kits. Most teachers are aware. **The interpretation of the curriculum is different from teacher to teacher.** I have been surprised about how other educated adults, who have all the same training, but don't have the same life experiences. **There are individuals in every school community who don't have openness, or ignorance, that it isn't just us and them”** (Interview).

**Belinda's comment further supported understanding of emergent theme four,**

“The curriculum says we are studying our multicultural education. **Some teachers may say that Chinese people do this, or Muslims do this. It is in Canada we do this. Canadians celebrate these things, and that Muslim Canadians celebrate these things. Sikh Canadians celebrate these things.** It is hard to know how to encourage teachers to move along in the spectrum. People live isolated lives, even with all media. A lot of people cannot name a lot of countries around the world. It is challenging. I am not sure if it comes from more in-servicing, or it comes from parents being more active. Everyone just needs to do their best, and provide the best example that they can” (Interview).

**Researcher's reflection – Elsa mentioned she begins her classes with writing assignments on topics related to those covered in class, or political/cultural features of**

news, indicates that **Elsa wants her students to process information and find their own thoughts** regarding these subjects.

**Elsa** mentioned,

“I think it depends on the individual. In terms of me seeking out, I know where I would go. I have grown a lot, and teaching at this school made me grow, and that is a blessing. I could do more. I have students and we talk about EID, about what they do. A lot of teachers today, assume that is what students need. **As if students are separate from them. I don’t assume.** We have had a prayer room. The students feel confident if there is a need they will come and share. **Students feel that they can ask, it is a good sign, in terms of the environment in the building. During EID a few years ago, there were a lot of kids who were fasting. We would eat lunch at gym. Our ESL teacher would bring them somewhere else. Those are all steps in the right direction”** (Interview).

**Table 4.5: Similarities of theme five – Supported by responses from teachers, principals, vice principals and researcher’s reflections at School A from in-depth interviews, observations, and field notes**

#### **Theme five: Multicultural Education at School A**

**Researcher’s reflection:** The educational program at School A involves **student-centered learning** with the assumption that all students can accomplish educational success. The school positions itself with the viewpoint that students at their school are **active learners**. Furthermore, the school as an attempt to carry on with the learning process attempts to work closely with teachers, staff, students, parents, and volunteers. The school also engages parents and community people to work together. Teachers and students are seen as learning together. The school also delivers an assortment of opportunities for students’ learning such as **student-to-student mentoring and role modeling**. The mentoring program is one of the characteristics of School A, where students from different ages learn together during a certain class period.

**Table 4.6: Kimberly’s Perception**

**Researcher’s reflection -** In addition to providing concrete teaching, **Kimberly** viewed her role in the classroom as projecting consideration, and kindness for students. She provided an educational environment where she as an educator can be encouraging, warm, and encourage high student achievement. She saw herself as a **student-centered teacher** whose focus is on creating an educational environment, where all her **students are supported in their educational needs**. She mentioned that her personality is caring and it was important for her that her classroom radiated these qualities. She believed that her classroom showcased these aspects of her personality, both professionally and personally. She emphasized the importance of **creating a safe environment for all her students**, and that was an important aspect of being a good educator. She aimed for her students to feel

safe and cared for. She wanted to **instill in them a life-long love for learning**. In summary, she chose from diverse literature for her students which shows **Kimberly's** flexibility, and student centeredness in framing the literary context of her classroom. **Kimberly** mentioned experiencing difficulty with making deeper multicultural connections with her students. **Teachers feel they are on their own and did not receive any support in terms of administration or professional development to help them move beyond doing what is currently going on**. **Kimberly's** comment further illustrates her perception of what takes place at School A (Observation).

**Kimberly** attempted to **nurture a community classroom, and encouraged open communication**. **Kimberly** emphasized working together to find solutions to conflicts for her students. **Kimberly** created a welcoming, heartfelt, student-oriented community. As an educator, **Kimberly** attempted to find teaching strategies to utilize with her teaching style to enable high student achievement. **Kimberly** is aware of each student's needs. She wants to make a strong impact in their educational process (Observation).

**Kimberly** attempted to nurture a community classroom. She encouraged open communication. **Kimberly** emphasized working together to find solutions to conflicts for her students. She created a welcoming, heartfelt, student-oriented community. She attempted to find teaching strategies to adapt her teaching style to enable high student achievement. **Kimberly** wanted to make a strong impact in their educational process. **Kimberly's** classroom mission statement is posted in front of the classroom which states, "Fair in the classroom is not everyone getting the same, but everyone getting what they need" (Field Note).

**Kimberly's** comment further illustrates her teaching style,

**"I think it is being differentiated in the way of knowing what student's need**. So, none of my students are recent immigrants from other countries. Instead, for the ones who have been here for a while, they are more comfortable in English. I try to incorporate literature from books. I would like to learn other techniques as well" (Interview).

**Kimberly's** comment further illustrates the teaching strategies she utilizes,

"I do a lot of community activities. We have **community circle**. How do you feel today? We have a talking stick, which is the dog. So, if you have the dog you can speak, if you don't than you can't. I really believe that a class will work together if they feel safe. **Kimberly** further illustrated a strategy she uses, for example, "one way they can feel safe is if they share, and even what's your favorite food. So, for attendance, I have a question in the morning and afternoon for them to share. I think the more they learn about each other, the more comfortable they are. That is how I meet the social needs of feeling like they belong. **I emphasize community**. I have a **reward system** as well. Building that **safe community** for other students. It is a big part of what I do and in my classroom management system" (Interview).

**Kimberly** mentioned,

“We have the settlement worker, if you need to speak to her. **It is really up to us, if you want to learn more.** I think there was a big PD thing last year, if you want to learn about diversity. I think the principal asked people to attend. Two people go, and present a half an hour what happened. These are the resources and you can use it in the library. I am sure it is something that we could really use. It isn’t emphasized” (Interview).

**Kimberly** mentioned,

“**I don’t think there is a lot of training,** and I did not receive the training. **I haven’t heard of multicultural learning,** or trained in any aspect. I don’t think we are trained. I know who to go to. **I would go to the settlement worker or ESL teacher first.** I would go to the learning support teacher. If I had a student, and we had to do an IEP, that parent didn’t speak English very well. We could get a translator. Options are available to the school, and to those parents. **The school wants parents to be involved and will make accommodations for that.** They see it as a priority. I think that is important as well. Parents want their children to succeed, and be mindful of that. It may not be perceived that way. **It is a breakdown of communication because culture or language is different.** Things can be perceived differently, than what they are. I don’t see it that often. People do it through literature. **It isn’t something that is talked about in staff meetings as a focus.** It isn’t brought on. I haven’t really heard teachers talk about multicultural education. For us, I think people do it. They are unaware of it. They probably are doing a good job. It’s not in the forefront of my mind. It is unintentional” (Interview).

**Kimberly** mentioned,

“I felt very prepared after I left Teacher’s College, to teach curriculum and to use different strategies. I don’t think it came across my mind to teach different cultures. It was always brought up in text books. **Or in language arts, pick books with different characters and different names from around the world. It incorporates into everything.** Instead, of let’s focus on a unit. That isn’t the philosophy that they taught us. **It was assumed that you would try to incorporate it into all or different subject areas**” (Interview).

**Table 4.7: Johanna’s Perception**

**Researcher’s reflection - Johanna** mentioned that she likes to meet within a **community circle.** She ascribes to the **T.R.I.B.E. activities** for students to **come together and share ideas.** She stressed **the importance of sharing ideas** and creating a **safe environment** for students to **learn and listen to each other.** **Johanna** emphasized that her teaching philosophy’s emphasizes for students to not only focus on the words being said, but how the words and being used. She realized the importance to **adjust each lesson** according to the needs of the students (Interview).

**Johanna is mindful that there is always a strategy to reach different students. It is**



**important to consider each student's physiological needs, learning differences or cultural differences. Johanna altered her teaching style based on each student's individual need** which appeared to be a skill which has improved in her years of teaching. The students in her classroom respond very well to her. **Johanna received information from each individual student, in order to determine and check whether he or she understood what she discussed.** Further, **Johanna** wanted the students not only to learn for the moment, but to keep learning, enthusiastically and continuously, even as they progress to high school or university. **Johanna** wanted to prompt her students to make connections with the information learned to what is taking place in current news. **Johanna** believed that she needs to reach out to the student from their way of learning (Observation).

**Johanna** stated that **non-verbal communication is an important area to focus on.** It is a method for students to be aware of how different people communicate, and is not necessarily because of a lack of interest but due to factors like cultural differences students may have. For example, **Johanna** mentioned that some students may require a longer pause in sharing ideas to let the idea settling in, as opposed to just getting right in there and answering the question. The most striking part was her desire to teach in both an imaginative and educational manner to embrace diversity in her classroom (Interview).

**Johanna** appeared to be quite serious about doing well. **Johanna's** enthusiasm for teaching diverse students originates from her having learned the value of education early on in life. As an educator, **Johanna attempted to find different methods to approach all students** regardless of their ethnic background, educational level, resources and gender differences **Johanna** created an environment in her class where students were eager to learn. I noticed that her students loved to listen to her, and seemed to appreciate her way of teaching. **Johanna** was accommodating and constantly changed her class to meet the needs of the students (Observation).

**Johanna** felt that **multicultural education was an opportunity to embrace naturally who we are. It is important to have a safe place within the school building to be ourselves, and be comfortable with our cultural backgrounds.** She mentioned that sharing in one's background, could be a natural day to day thing and described it as being as subtle as sharing a snack.

**Johanna** noticed that there are certain teachers who organize potlucks, where cultural food is discussed. It is an important opportunity to share their backgrounds. **Johanna's** perception was that it is an organic process, rather than prescriptive. **Johanna** mentioned she is open to learning more about multicultural education. She understands that she needs to make more multicultural connections in her classroom (Interview).

**Johanna** not only encouraged the limits of her students, she pushes her own. **Johanna has high expectations for herself. Johanna** knows that it requires much more work. **Johanna** acknowledged that it is up to each individual teacher to try different techniques to teach the material. Since, not all students learn the same way. **Johanna** realized that teaching requires giving more than what is required nowadays from teachers. **Johanna is extremely caring, and wants all students to succeed in her classroom. Johanna puts every effort into addressing the needs of her students.** I was captivated by watching

**Johanna** go beyond what is necessary to make sure that everybody in the class has understood the material, and felt comfortable to ask questions. Diversity is described by **Johanna** as something that is not only planned in the curriculum. Instead, opportunities to address and learn about each other's diversity can be addressed depending on how it comes up into daily conversation (Observation).

**Johanna's example**, illustrates how a student offers subtle gestures in sharing aspects of their cultural background,

“I brought some spring rolls, why don't you share some with me?” (Interview).

#### Table 4.8: Belinda's Perception

**Researcher's reflection - Belinda** is an experienced teacher that approaches the classroom as a professional. **Belinda** knows how to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of her students. The skills she has acquired have been developed in her years as an educator (Observation).

She has not taken part in a great amount of formal training in multicultural education. **The teaching of multicultural education ends up being based on whether or not teachers choose to use it in their classrooms. She received a small amount of multicultural training in University.**

**Belinda** mentioned,

“I think there hasn't been anything formal. But, there are likeminded people. **We serve a multicultural community.** The staff is aware of that. The Board is active in providing diversity kits to the school. It is available. **We do not have training.** It depends on the ESL population in the school, and who delivers the ESL program. A few years ago, there was an ESL teacher. We sat down, and worked with some documents together. This was not formal training. But, training I accessed from this person. He had information which I thought I could use. We met after school” (Interview).

**Belinda's** example emphasized what strategies she utilizes,

“Resources. I think that people overestimate resources and your biggest resource is your imagination and your students. Every year we always have a heritage celebration. It is just because I want to eat spring rolls and hummus. We have a party. Students can bring whatever they want. But, if they want to bring something from their culture, or their grandmother's culture, they have the opportunity to do so. My biggest resource is a good calendar with all the events in it, and **building in time for conversation and sharing**” (Interview).



**Table 4.9: Elsa's Perception**

**Researcher's reflection** – Elsa mentioned School A organizes various cultural events and activities for the community. **These events have provided resources to the community, and have helped make families feel welcome. Elsa expressed that this was the first school she taught in London. Elsa had a desire to make a difference into the lives of low-income students. Elsa realized that literature provided her with an innovative method to explore, make connections in each individual student's life, and encouraged a creative learning environment. Elsa mentioned benefitting from professional workshops and implementing what she learned into her classroom. Elsa emphasized the importance of using the services provided internally at School A, as well as making use of the resources provided at Thames Valley District School Board.**

**Elsa mentioned,**

“When administration knows you are interested, they will encourage that. Administrators get to know the staff. I could say I would like to pursue this workshop. We have people in the PTA, who come back with concerns. There is always room for development. **Our school creates a welcoming environment.** Visually, we have a great sign, right in the front. We have had a **cultural night**, driven by our ESL teacher, and a committee of teachers who worked hard on that. A couple of years ago, we had another community night. **Different community partners were brought in.** We had a free book give away, clothing swap, to bring the community in, and make them feel welcomed. Parents liked it. This event was tied into a music concert. You can come and get some food, books, or shop” (Interview).

**Elsa gave an example of what she is currently teaching in the classroom,**

“I am talking about families with my grade sixes. I have a presentation on my IPAD called families are unique. I talk about different types of families, single-parent families, same-gendered, grandparents. I showed that today. It was interesting. It wasn't a lesson about that. There were just pictures. We are talking about all kinds of families. We are talking about that, for example, blended families, grandma and grandpa. There were two boys. They were cheering, when they saw this. I checked with one my students, and asked what that was about? One student said, I cheered when I saw a family of my culture. They were happy to see him there in that ethnic group. It is easy for me to incorporate that in my daily practice” (Interview).

**Table 4.10: Maya's Perception**

**Researcher's reflection - Maya felt that it is important to teach students that there are different customs and beliefs; however she has experienced many challenges in that process.** In Maya's classroom her mission statement is displayed in the front which states, "In our class, we care about each other. We listen carefully. We show respect to other people and they belong. We treat other people the way we want to be treated". **Maya displays small touches of symbols of unity such as making a portrait of faces of different ethnicities showcasing her students, and their diverse backgrounds. The students are holding hands, emphasizing unity in the classroom. Maya has a pillow on her rocking chair of students from around the world, wearing their countries' unique outfit, holding hands around a globe.** Maya has learned from experience to accommodate for all students and to draw upon each student's individual strengths and talents. **Maya** mentioned that School A has a cultural heritage night, and families have participated in it. **Maya** mentioned that individual classes may tap into the families backgrounds by doing activities which centers on each student's heritage (Field Note).

**Maya mentioned challenges she faces,**

"The most challenging things, there are two different things; multiculturalism is one thing, and people learning English is another thing. It is part of it, and not the same. It is the recognition that everyone came from somewhere, unless you are Native American. For all children it is recognizing that. If it was you, your parents, your grandparents, that's what makes Canada. That's what makes it interesting. Other countries may not be like that. **The hardest thing is time, to spend with the students, preparing materials.** If you are not used to ESL students, you have to think differently about how to include them. That is the challenge for the ESL part of it. The multicultural part is not challenging, having the right resources, having the right materials, and having an open mind" (Interview).

**Maya** mentioned,

"Teachers do this for all your students. You have a student who is really quiet, from any cultural background. You have to accommodate for that student. One way is not to expose them in front of the class all the time, and let them be that person. **You can encourage them.** Always call on them when they raise their hand and that can be a cultural thing. Or that can be a personality thing. Or it could be both. When you are writing your report card comment and you are writing your oral language comment. So, this term, my comment is how they add something with other kids' conversations. For example, I could give this person a D, because they never do. Or, I can reflect on what they do in a smaller group. I think that is a good way to accommodate. **Teachers are looking at it a different way.** When she is working with a partner, she is listening" (Interview).

**Maya** mentioned,

"We do have cultural night event. There are different times when people come in; a parent

comes in to show you how to do something which is related to tradition. **Lots of classes do family trees. That definitely taps into background. For example, this one included their tradition, holiday celebrations, and religious celebrations. We used that as a text for talking about families. Families help them do it. We spend some time with another student, doing a compare and contrast, to see how we are similar and different. Lots of grades do a timeline. A lot of cultural and family stuff comes up from that”** (Interview).

**Maya does not recall Policy Program Memorandum 119, which focused on Inclusive Education.** “No, I have never heard of it. I am sure I could access it online. That purple tree one, I might have read it at some point. The literature is provided, only if you are on the staff at that time. If you came two years later, you may not have gotten it. We get a lot of stuff. It’s probably at home. I don’t keep everything here. Yeah, that was years ago” (Interview).

**Table 4.11: Elizabeth’s Perception**

**Researcher’s reflection - Elizabeth included equity and inclusion in her practice. Elizabeth was inclined to address topics regarding equity more willingly. Elizabeth wanted her students to comprehend and model her behavior of how to treat other students. Elizabeth stated she worked on the idea that communication is a crucial piece in understanding others. Elizabeth worked around the model of being respectful, encouraging, listening and sharing of thoughts. Elizabeth perception was that this was a central pathway to support her students in being compassionate and understanding. Elizabeth** discussed the importance of first modeling and helping students prepare specific inclusion skills. **Elizabeth** wanted to inspire students in her classroom to talk, be understood and be able to learn. **Elizabeth** wanted to be an available teacher to her students, encouraged students to learn and take on new tasks. **Elizabeth’s perception of her teaching personality was that she was a caring teacher. Elizabeth perceived herself as consciously altering her teaching strategies according to what each individual student needs.**

**Elizabeth encourages students to listen attentively and feel a part of the classroom environment. Elizabeth encourages the idea of creating a safe environment and wants to create an educational environment where students are nurtured. Elizabeth’s perception of herself is as being a nurturing teacher. For Elizabeth, it is not sufficient to state that one is nurturing, it must be recognized in the classroom environment. Elizabeth’s expectations of behavior for her students are illuminated through a mixture of written rules in her classroom, and statements she makes at the start of each day** (Observation).

**Elizabeth’s classroom environment symbolizes the model of encouraging student communication, acceptance of individual diversity, and tolerance of class members. Multicultural lessons all are carried out within a produced school framework of beliefs and experiences. Elizabeth enables student individual learning activities which**

support team and group interrelations as students work collaboratively to study texts in a safe atmosphere. All students are appreciated, and celebrated as unique persons with their own voices. Students feel comfortable and important in **Elizabeth's** classroom. She offered words of encouragement for collaborative work assignments, and offered personal attention. **Elizabeth** encouraged students to discuss their ideas, and valued student involvement in the learning process and shared her own experiences. **Elizabeth** encouraged the class to feel confident to share their own experiences. **Elizabeth** chose amongst a variation of diverse literature for the students to read demonstrated her flexibility and student centeredness in outlining the literary environment of her classroom. **Elizabeth** prospered on the idea of imaginative individuality in her classroom. The choices **Elizabeth** made for herself and her students reveal aspects of her classroom dynamics which are based on her own teaching philosophy. **Elizabeth's** creative approach to apply different teaching methods in the classroom, and adapt her teaching style according to the needs of her students demonstrated her techniques to include students. Further, she is engaged in directing, and helping students (Observation).

**Elizabeth used literature and storytelling to address diverse races and ethnicities in the classroom. Elizabeth promoted celebration of everybody's culture through literature, which gave students an opportunity to be involved and share their views about their culture. She mixed student-centered awareness and teaching expertise and conveyed positive, diverse, and engaging literary instruction. Elizabeth's teaching incorporated numerous components which were shown in the warm-up activities such as starting each activity by preparing students for the subject of the day using questions, articles, or current news programs (Observation).**

**Elizabeth** began each class with important questions which emphasize many features of learning that students should contemplate on and write about in their daily writing journals. It is reflected in the questions which usually are centered on current events topics. Further, through literary discussions which encouraged students to reflect, analyze various texts and participate in group work. During my class observation, I noticed that **Elizabeth** was welcoming and was attentive to the needs of her students. **Elizabeth** mentioned that students felt comfortable in her classroom, which was important to her. Furthermore, students did not hesitate to ask, and suggest anything new in her classroom. **Elizabeth's vibrant nature and capacity to accommodate her teaching to students' needs showed her to be an experienced and compassionate educator. Elizabeth's positive outlook and nurturing personality facilitated a good relationship with her students (Observation).**

**Elizabeth** mentioned,

“Good multicultural curriculum should go past different stories about different people” (Interview).

**Table 4.12: Martha's Perception**

**Martha** mentioned,

“This is my fourth year, my third year in Thames Valley, I graduated in 2010. In my world, it is we safe? Are we happy? Are we comfortable? For me personally, ethnicity wasn't a big part of my background. My parents don't have strong roots to their backgrounds. My dad's family passed away when he was young, and doesn't know where he is from. My mom is French-Canadian, a little bit of Irish, Scottish. I have taken the approach that I am Canadian and from Toronto” (Interview).

**Martha mentioned making connections with her students,**

“Now, as a teacher, I try to have different perspectives, so my students don't have a challenge later. It is not that I am a White-Canadian. My students are used to diversity. I taught them about Diwali, Hanukkah, and Kwanza. I taught all of it at a private school, at the age of 22, teaching a toddler class. I liked teaching there and switched over to the public board because I couldn't help the population I wanted to work with. I learned a lot there. I tried my best having these experiences. I feel like the training is something you just have” (Interview).

**Martha mentioned accommodations she provides for her students,**

“In my practicum, my last placement was in a developmental center and looked at diversity in a different way. In terms of ethnicity and culture not so much. I was in different buildings, in different parts of the city. It was more what I was taking in, and the experience of being there. **I ask questions.** I am not afraid to ask. I think that it is important to ask. I don't pretend I know everything. If I am teaching about Christmas, or Hanukkah, I think it is important to be open and ask. I had one student that didn't celebrate Christmas. I talked to the family. They said it is okay for him to participate in learning about Christmas. We talked about how he celebrates EID at home. We took that as a learning experience. We let him lead the way. Sometimes, you have the kids in teacher role. I try to see as much as I can” (Interview).

**Martha mentioned challenges she has faced,**

“Here, I have 40 students. I do find that a big challenge. I go with the flow, and be ready to work with what is there” (Interview).

**Martha discussed experiences where she was sensitive to race,**

“It is okay we all have bad days. I can give you some space today. I try to start that from day one. I am learning as I am teaching. If I am putting a video, in that video there were people who are looking different. One student said, I couldn't find a skin color crayon. He was looking for the peach, which wasn't his skin color. He picked up the brown color. In his mind, he was sensitive to color. Maybe that conversation will carry on in other place”

(Interview).

**Martha mentioned wanting to learn more about how to make multicultural connections with students,**

“I think this is an area I am lacking in. I am not sure if I have not found what I am looking for. I am still new to teaching. This is going into my fourth year, and that is something I would like more support in. I haven’t been a part of too many. I notice they do a lot after school meetings. In the beginning of the school year they had a parent teacher night. They try to bring everyone together”. (Interview).

**Martha mentioned her experiences at Teacher’s College,**

“I haven’t had too many experiences. Right from Teacher’s College, there is always that making sure we are using that appropriate language. For example, a report card would look different from the West End to East End of London. In terms of learning about their backgrounds, I would like to learn more” (Interview).

**Martha has benefitted from using internal supports,**

“I would start with the Learning Support Teacher. I haven’t had the formal training if I had a parent that I could not communicate with. They could help me find the resource of where to go. When I was in Teacher’s College, I took an ESL class. That is where I got the books. I have them on my shelf and looked through them. I think it is overwhelming to get them with everything else, and it was a Policy Class. If we could look at the policy, individually. I don’t know if I know everything I have looked at it. I have read through the PPM 119 document. I haven’t really used it. I need to do more of my work on my end” (Interview).

**Table 4.13: Penelope’s Perception**

**Researcher’s reflection – Penelope felt the school wants to establish a sense of community for everyone.** Penelope mentioned that the school provides important resources to teachers through the library. It makes sure they have access to relevant materials, and promote culture through the arts and through literature.

**Penelope mentioned,**

“As soon as I came here I had one person say, our school, represents 73 languages. We are continuing to work on things. There is so much you can continue to work on a school. We are proud of this school and want to do more for students. Since, I have been here; it feels like a sense of community for everyone. **All the parents I have spoken to have said, that this feels like a warm school.** During registration we had a parent that said I already know my son will do well here” (Interview).

**Penelope mentioned,**

“We had a multicultural evening and teachers loved it. New teachers bring their own ideas. We want to plan one this year. The library can request materials which can be purchased which is open for students to sign out” (Interview).

**Penelope illustrated examples of where she has learned about diversity and inclusion,**

“I am learning about the needs for families and students. I have a good sense of how to move forward with our community and providing services which they may not have had in the past. In both modules we learn about diversity and inclusion. We have conferences and guest speakers. Examples of how to be inclusive through research, strategies, and books (Interview).

**Penelope** mentioned,

**“The Ministry provides direction to the Board of Education, and teachers. There is a flow of how information is given. Policy and Procedures are written. You have to incorporate inclusive education”** (Interview).

**Penelope** mentioned,

“It comes down to Safe Schools, and promoting safety. There are workshops for students and teachers within the Board. For example, one of our grade 8 teachers invited 7 girls from grade 7 and 8, to Brescia, to encourage education in girls and women. We have Safe-Schools conferences, which students participate in, at the school board level. We wanted our students exposed as much as possible. You have to build that sense of tolerance, with students. We look at it under safe schools, character education, talking about how other people feel, being more sensitive and responsible for the needs of others” (Interview).

**Penelope provided an example of how teachers can have access to additional training,**

“There are always opportunities from the Board office for staff. Teachers have networking opportunities at our school, network at other schools and share at staff meetings. Through our network learning, we have learning coordinators, and instructional coaches. Our Board office person is always willing to help and send out resources” (Interview).

**Penelope** mentioned that PPM 119 is distributed to staff,

“The booklet with the tree. We have distributed it to staff. The Ministry works with the Board. We receive Ministry documents through emails and training. Our Ministry documents are fluid and need to change because of the changing communities. With feedback from parents, through task force committees where teachers sit in. They look deeper at policy and provide feedback. We are working with families at schools, and that information goes to the Board office, which starts to change policy. What is working makes it work better. I always think it is fluid and not concrete, which makes it better” (Interview).



**Table 4.14: Emma' Perception**

**Researcher's reflection – Emma** felt that School A has a great amount of supports in place for the community. The school continually is attempting to make improvements based on what students and families within the community need.

**Emma** mentioned,

**“This school is very open in terms of understanding.** We have the connection with the attendance counselor, school support counselor, LUSO and YMCA. There are community resources going in, and out of here. **The vision of the school is that it is a hub of the community. Parents can access services. We are looking at how we are communicating with parents, in a way they can understand.** Parents may not speak English, when we have meetings, we need interpreters. Our website is all in English. I wonder how the school can put a Google translator. When, we send out our newsletter, how can we be inclusive with that? We welcome everyone. We need to find a way, so families can understand, to communicate and to be part of their children's education. We recognize that the communication piece can be a challenge. For example: When students come to register. They have difficulty filling out the form. The settlement worker could help them. If they need further help filling out those forms, then we look at what could be done to help them. They come in with a family member that is more proficient, and can help them. The Board does have registration forms in various languages. We make sure that is accessible. They are able to read that, and we work on the interpretation piece” (Interview).

**Emma's perception is that professional learning is focused on student achievement and what students' needs,**

“The training we are looking at, in terms professional learning, we consider to be teacher learning, is based on student learning. My learning, is also based on student learning. At staff meetings, at the network sessions, we look at what our student needs. We look at academic needs. For example, if a student, has ELL needs, that could be a focus. Basically, when the students come in, to the schools, they will be identified. They work with the ESL teacher and work with the teacher as a resource” (Interview).

**Emma** illustrated,

**“We implemented in announcements, based on a calendar that various groups celebrated,** what Yom Kippur was, what EID was, and the community really liked that. We tried to incorporate a holiday assembly, encouraged having one thing and study all or none, which was our policy. The students benefitted from seeing all. The announcements and the assemblies are a big thing for us. **Professional development is up to what the teacher feels they need to work on for them, with the lens of, this school, and what this community needs, and what students need. Since, teacher growth is based on student growth, thinking what students need”** (Interview).



**Emma** mentioned,

“There are opportunities; there are resources that come to us. I find one of the challenges is that resources come to the school Board, or come to the school, without being fully supported. Questions like, why do we need this, what is this for? We might get a memo that states, this is what this resource is and how it can be used. But, if you are sending it out to 160 schools, it might be put on the shelf, and not used. **We have to determine if it will be based on student need.** We will get a variety of things from the Ministry based on numeracy. If that is something we need to use, or inclusive education, and sit as a group, and think can we use them. The staff comes to talk to us, and have their own professional learning network. There is funding from the Board, which allows them to choose and work with other teachers. **If we think there is a great need, then we could recommend it”** (Interview).

**Emma** provided an example,

“For First Nations, there are resources; we don’t have a lot of students here at this school. If you see there is a need or a high percentage of your population which requires that, you can tap into that. **Usually, if there is going to be a workshop, it is offered at the Board.** If a teacher wanted to go, could be tribe training, it is a different way of managing your classroom. **The type of training offered at the school is focused on academics.** We do have a literacy coach, and works with us. Someone comes from the Ministry, which works on the networking piece, solve problems and practice as a group. We look at data. Look at students we need to support. We discuss things, and try to work out things. If, we determine, languages need to be focused on, we would notice based on what the teachers are saying. If, they say my students don’t understand, then we would have our ESL supports with us. Talk about how we can support our students and that is how we would determine that piece” (Interview).

**Emma** provided an example,

“When I was in training, we had a group from First Nations; we had a conversation on that. They would talk about the ceremonies, a smoke ceremony. Why that is important to them, and the traditional difficulties. It gave me an understanding of the residential school, and how that is still affecting our students who are from First Nations. It gives you an understanding of what is going on. There is a whole team at the Board level that is dedicated to diversity. So the resources are there. **If we need support, they will run their professional development. If we see the need is in this area, there are people who can support us and support our teachers”** (Interview).

**Table 4.15: Similarities of theme five – Supported by responses from teachers, principals, vice principals and researcher’s reflections at School B from in-depth interviews, observations, and field notes**

<b><u>Theme Five: Multicultural Education at School B</u></b>
<p><b>Researcher’s reflection</b> - The educational program at School B involves student-centered learning with the undertaking that all children can accomplish educational success. The school positioned itself with the viewpoint that the children at their school are <b>active learners</b>. Furthermore, <b>the school attempted to work closely with teachers, staff, other children, parents and volunteers. The school engaged parents, and community people to work together. Teachers and students are seen as learning together.</b> The school delivered an assortment of opportunities for students’ learning such as <b>student-to-student mentoring and role modeling</b>. The mentoring program is one of the characteristics of School B, where students from different ages learn together during a certain class period.</p>

**Table 4.16: Lily’s Perception**

<p><b>Researcher’s reflection – Lily mentioned she benefitted from the resources provided at School B, particularly the S.W.I.S. worker and the T.R.I.B.E. training provided.</b> Lily was able to pull out the PPM 119, which she had at her classroom desk and showed me the strategies she uses. Lily mentioned using her own students as resources to connect with students in the classroom and promote aspects of tribe culture. Lily showed me an outline of tribe principles, which is posted on the wall (Field Note). Lily believed that her teaching style is making a difference on student achievement. It is accomplished by being present for all the academic needs of all her students. Lily mentioned that the culture of testing has hurt the students of Carnations Elementary School, and posed challenges in her day-day as an educator. Lily felt that this is due to students not learning through creative multicultural-based lessons, since teachers are encouraged to instruct for test preparation (Observation).</p> <p>Lily mentioned,</p> <p>“At this school we do a lot, <b>most teachers have T.R.I.B.E. training, which the principal will pay for through the Board training.</b> All you have to say you are willing to do it. The Board will pay for it. They value it. <b>They value everyone, regardless of gender, social/cultural background and religious background.</b> We want to encourage an inclusive environment. We have character trait assemblies. They are on the announcements. We use it when we are on duty. I feel it is great. I think we do an excellent job at this school” (Interview).</p> <p><b>Lily mentioned benefitting from the Policy Program Memorandum 119, and uses the curriculum documents it provided,</b></p>
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“I know that document. I have it my classroom. I have been using it all the time. It is good at reminding teachers, of what is expected, and what to do with a student. The school did give us that document. I am happy with it”. “It gives you a quick overview, of the different stages of the ELL. Is that a two, or is that a three? I find it very valuable to review. I know as part of that, stage 1, stage 2, grade science curriculum, it is more visually, more of a game, it comes with a textbook. It makes it easier, for these students, and for everyone. That is the curriculum part of it. I got that from my ELL teacher. **I ask her, if there is curriculum available, because this is modified and it ties right into the curriculum**” (Interview).

Lily mentioned,

“**The buddy system**, I try to alter the groups when I make them. I sometimes let them choose. They will choose who will be accepting of me and my ideas. I may not have the vocabulary that they do. I give them the choice; sometimes I will match them with someone who speaks their Native language. I have some students from Iraq, and Iran, and most are Middle Eastern backgrounds. Some can understand different dialects, since I cannot speak any; I use those students to assist me in communicating, and using those students to communicate back to me. **I use those students as interpreters**” (Interview).

Lily mentioned,

“**I use T.R.I.B.E. It is a community building program**, focusing on four tribal rules, one, attentive listening, so in small group situations, as you can see, they are focused. Two, when someone is speaking, you are looking at them, caring about what they say, and show open body language. I review that throughout the year. Then, there is appreciation, no put downs, and the right to pass. If you put that upfront, and building tribes. That is good for any student, especially to ELL and other students need to listen to them. Give them the right to pass if they don’t feel like sharing. So, that community building is great. Our school encourages assemblies which focus on integrity, respect, and acceptance. These are the values of the school. If, everyone buys in, it opens the door, students feel accepted” (Interview).

**Lily illustrated how she utilizes students, and classroom resources to provide accommodations.**

“It is an ongoing process. I inform the administration. If there is anything available, you can go to the website and check for training. Or go to the union rep. I know with one of my students, we have been using Google translator to communicate. If I need something more, I have sat him down by the computer. He speaks Arabic. It has been efficient, and fairly accurate. I haven’t trained on it. I am using it to help him communicate with me” (Interview).

Lily mentioned,

“At this school it is diverse; however, it is more of a time thing. We have enough professional development that we are encouraged that we have to take from our

administration” (Interview).

#### **Table 4.17: Ana Maria’s Perception**

**Ana Maria** mentioned,

“Within the Board, I had to take a couple of workshops just on how to track the ESL students that we support in this school. We have ESL tracker, they are divided into stages based on their Oral, Reading, and Writing. Twice a term, we go into the classroom around report card time, talk to teachers, and see where they are. The training is an all-day session. We learn the ropes of ESL tracker, which is a report card a teacher’s uses. What is good about this board is that once a month, all the ESL teachers get together. Our supervisor has a theme, and agenda that we look over. It is ongoing” (Interview).

**Ana Maria** stated the credential ESL teachers need,

“Nowadays, you have to have your ESL part 1. I had to have that to apply to this position, it is an AQ course, and it was online, over a month and half, every day. You had to have so many hours in. We had to do a report, check in with our instructor. We had group discussions. I had my ESL part 1 and I would like to get my specialist” (Interview).

**Ana Maria** mentioned a class she took which benefitted her,

**“At Teacher’s College I took “Teaching In Isolated Communities” which focused on Aboriginal Education. I found that quite knowledgeable in terms of cultural differences, and things that are acceptable to us, and not to them.** Learning about their backgrounds. It has been so long ago and don’t remember a lot of what I learned. I did not have any ESL training, other than the Isolated Communities course, which was offered” (Interview).

**Ana Maria** illustrated an example, of how they assess students,

“So what we do, in this Board, when we get a new student, we do an initial assessment, which is your writing, reading and oral language. Once we do that assessment, we determine what stage they are in. We have a guide we follow. We decide with the classroom teacher, maybe the resource teacher, if they should be accommodated or modified? If there is a grade 4 student, new to Canada, this child may not have had an education experience for a couple of years. That means he has a lot of learning gaps, so he would be an ELD student. We find out how big are the gaps? Maybe his learning level is on a grade 2 level. Then, we would modify his program to meet the grade 2 level, and build his way up. Then, if you have students where it is an ESL thing, then you lessen the steps, expectations and still maintain the curriculum. Throughout the year, you are still talking to the classroom teacher, to see how they are doing. I am new at this school, three days a week; I talk to all my teachers that I am working with. We decide should I stay in the classroom, or should I take them out? That depends on where they are with their

English” (Interview).

**Ana Maria** provided another example,

“If I have a student new to Canada, I take him out of the classroom. He needs to strictly build his vocabulary. I give him folders that he needs to work on. The teacher is working on something that he may not understand. But, with other kids, I would sit beside the student, or students. If there are a couple of kids in the class that I support. **If they need fewer stimuli, I take them into the room. The goal is having them in the classroom as much as possible; support them and that teacher.** I have a child that is brand new and may need more support. It is better if it is more focused and less action” (Interview).

**Ana Maria illustrated some challenges she is currently facing,**

“For me, because I am split between two schools, I have so many schools. Altogether, I have 47 kids. I have 23 kids at this school. This is a high ELL school. There are ESL teachers that are attached to 6 or 7 schools. They are rural schools. There might be five students in one school. One student in another. Regardless, what I am finding for me, since I am split between two schools, I may have a couple of kids that could use me every single day. But, I cannot be there. I hope the strategies that I am encouraging for the student, and classroom teacher are being followed week to week, even if I am not there. That is my frustration” (Interview).

**Ana Maria continued to discuss some challenges, and successes she has experienced,**

“**The reality is those strategies may not always be used.** As a former classroom teacher myself, I can get it. If you have a classroom between 17 or 25 kids. You are trying to follow the curriculum, and accommodate everyone. Then, you have a child that is ESL and may also have special needs issues. It is really hard, and that is what makes it frustrating for me. You take two steps forward and ten steps back. For example: At my other school, I was there yesterday, and won’t be there again until Tuesday. Sometimes, students may forget what happened. Sometimes, they do well. It depends on the development of each individual student. I had a student over two years, could not grasp the English language. I had another student; I worked with for six months. He was doing well. It was amazing. Then you start to wonder, is there something more going on, then just an ESL issue?” (Interview)

**Ana Maria** mentioned,

“That’s where the investigation begins. I have students here, which I think could use additional assessments like for example: using a Woodcock Johnson. There are some significant learning gaps, which isn’t just ESL, like processing. Students have been here for two years, and the basic things are just not there. You teach them a strategy. They have lost it a day later or even half-an-hour later. I wonder is there a deficit there? I think that is the biggest frustration for me and for other ESL teachers as well” (Interview).

**Ana Maria illustrated how she accommodates students,**

**“I do a combination of groups here, one-on-one support here, then group support in the class, and one-on-one support in the class.** This school; generally, the staff and students respect each other, and get along. There is that equality. You know, the first day when I walked, one class, had all these hands. It was all about them, and why it is important to be. I thought that was great to see when walking into the school” (Interview).

**Ana Maria mentioned the professional tools she has benefitted from,**

“I will then talk to the teacher about some of their culture and traditions. Other students, that I am not familiar with, I talk to the other ESL teacher here, or the Learning Coordinator. We do have ESL conference. We just ask a question, and someone will answer it. If I go on the ESL conference, someone posted I need an English-Mandarin dictionary. It goes out to all the ESL teachers. The ESL conference is a good resource. You ask one of us, and someone will know the answer. It is just whatever someone wants an answer to. Or, where do you think a student should be placed, in terms of an ESL stage. Questions like, how do you use ESL tracker? Or, I have a concern with a child going from grade 8 to grade 9, and they want to go to a non-ESL school. What should I do? I need this resource, where can I get it? I need a translator that speaks this language, where do I get it? You can just post it on there and someone will know the answer. A lot of people will post on it, which has community involvement, to send to the parents and give to the classroom teacher. For example: We got an attachment about Black-History Month which we could give to the classroom teacher to use. So, if the classroom teacher asks us something that we don't know about, we could go to the ESL conference and ask the question” (Interview).

**Ana Maria** mentioned resources she has benefited from,

“I am new to this role, to this Board. When I was hired for this ESL position, I had the tracker training within the first couple of weeks I was here, which was great. Every once in a while, you might have a training sessions geared towards cultural diversity, or ESL, or you might not have any. I think it is just what the Board is able to get someone to speak about, or what is offered. When I go to my ESL meeting once in a month that is when I get my training. For example: My learning coordinator might have someone come in and talk about something that is ESL related. Then, it is up to us to share it with the school.” (Interview).

**Ana Maria** mentioned she has benefitted from learning from other teachers, “I would say from my experience, it was learning as you go. Sometimes, I find those resources myself. **For here, if I don't know I would ask someone senior, go to my supervisor, or go to the conference site. Everyone seems to be quick about replying. I feel like as an ESL teacher at this Board, you learn through other people, not necessarily workshops. But, with people who have been around, and know the ins and outs”** (Interview).

**Ana Maria** discussed not having any experience with PPM 119,



“I have that document; I haven’t personally gone through or read the document. But, when I had my workshop, they gave me the document, and said this is something to read at your leisure. I don’t have an opinion right now; I have the book which I haven’t looked at” (Interview).

**Table 4.18: Denise’s Perception**

**Denise has benefitted from learning from other ESL teachers,**

“I have a lot of work experience. It is helpful to talk to other ESL teachers. A lot of the PD is offered at the Board office. We all come. Once a month we have a meeting, and PD is part of that each month. There are always things to learn. We are developing different ways of doing things. The Ministry is changing the ways they are looking at ESL. There is an ESL policy that came from the Ministry that came in 2007, which came from an auditor’s report. The ESL policy came first. They all have the purple tree. The Ministry has come out with other documents” (Interview).

**Denise discussed how ESL teachers make assessments,**

“We make a distinction between ESL, ELD, and English Literacy Development. I have some students, who have had limited prior schooling, the academic needs are different. We give them an initial assessment, in English and Math, which comes from the Ministry. That gives us an idea of what type of programming to give them. We work from there. In math; it is often filling the gaps. Especially, if kids haven’t had schooling. The math is mostly numeracy based. So, you have kids seven or eight, that haven’t read or graph, or done problem solving. We change the learning expectations for ESL students. They work on the same topics and curriculum. They have less language based expectations. We help the classroom teacher. We also suggest in the way that they are teaching, to take out the language complexity, by providing visual supports, providing outlines for lectures” (Interview).

**Denise discussed challenges she faced,**

“We have 60 kids on our caseload. We determine who needs ESL support, and who doesn’t with the classroom teacher. My intermediate student would get more support than other groups. We have ESL students with learning needs, trying to support them, and what type of learning difficulties they have. If, they need special education services, or if you are just learning English. All the tests they use in Spec Ed, so you don’t know if it’s that, or ESL” (Interview).

**Denise discussed her teaching experiences,**

“I do a lot of basic, the way we do things in Canada, trying to have a welcoming, and warm environment. What do you do when you get invited for a birthday party, answering those questions? Sometimes, kids use their first language if they are asking questions to other

students. We have a range of languages. I encourage using the language for explaining things. But, not for social reasons” (Interview).

**Denise** mentioned,

“I have done things in the past, with teachers on PD days. Not recently, not for any reason, to help them. This year, we have been working on policy statements. What our thoughts are for parents/teachers that are an on-going discussion in our ESL meetings. Anti-bullying, is something the school is working towards. In terms of resources, in the library, we try to get things that reflect the multicultural background of our school” (Interview).

**Denise** mentioned, “As a classroom teacher, I don’t remember getting that much training. I try to give it to new students, when they come to the school, and the kindergarten teachers. So, they are more aware, of what kind of things they can do for ESL students” (Interview).

**Denise** mentioned benefitting from the services provided by learning coordinator,

“He has done a fantastic job. When this policy came in, there were a number of things which needed to be changed. In terms of things we didn’t have. He talks a lot with ERGO, which is the provincial group. He keeps telling us we are pretty good as a Board, in terms of being on top of things, and using the ESL funding for ESL teachers. The Ministry funding is not set in stone for ESL, the way it is for other areas. Other boards have made other choices, and this board has shown an interest in this topic” (Interview).

#### **Table 4.19: Brenda’s Perception**

**Researcher’s reflection - Brenda** tried to foster a **nurturing classroom** that is in **harmony** with all of **students’ academic needs**. **Brenda** showed me her personal choice of curriculum, I noticed numerous choices from several literacy practices and world literature that reveals multi- ethnic viewpoints. **Brenda** believed that using this curriculum, offered her students the greatest opportunities for understanding each other. **Brenda** believed that the best technique to engage students through investigating different portions of literature from each individual and the entire class’ viewpoints. **Brenda** believed that a student may view literature from their own unique experiences. **Brenda** liked to incorporate audio in her lessons for those students, who do not like to read, are not able to read, or do not understand English fluently. **Brenda** wanted to make sure that they understand what she is teaching. **Brenda** incorporated any kind of technology which invited the students into the lesson, and ultimately helped them learn. (Observation).

**Researcher’s reflection - Brenda** responded relatively well to all students in her classroom by listening to their ideas, and needs. **Brenda** attempted to push their learning limits. **Brenda** celebrated everyone’s culture through literature, gives different students opportunities to be included, and share their opinions about their cultures. She obtained a great amount of helpful material from the Thames Valley District School Board website, Culture grams, The World Kids, and other elementary school resources. During my



observation of **Brenda**, she was the only teacher that structured a lesson around the topic of multiculturalism (Observation).

**Researcher's reflection - Brenda** chose an activity from a book titled, "We are related". She had her students research their family country of origin, and create a heritage collage. **Brenda** mentioned to her class that this activity would help to build map skills. **Brenda** had the students share where their family was from and to describe something unique about their country. **Brenda's** students were from countries like: Nicaragua, Iraq, Lebanon, Colombian, Ireland, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, China, Hong Kong, Albania, Scotland, Ukraine, Somalia, Honduras, Portugal, Jamaica, Greece and Palestine. **Brenda** attempted to engage students by asking them questions such as: Why is it good to know about your past? What did your parents or grandparents tell you about this country? In the end, she shared her own country of origin. **Brenda's** students seemed excited to hear about where she was from. **Brenda** asked me to participate in the classroom lesson as well, and share my own cultural background with the class (Observation).

**Researcher's reflection - Brenda** has a monthly calendar displayed in the front of her classroom which states for each month, she covers certain values which she deems important. For example: September - Kindness, October - Respect, November - Responsibility, December - Honesty, January - Integrity. **Brenda** has an outline of the tribe philosophy which she follows, and it is displayed in the front of her classroom. The T.R.I.B.E.S. Community Agreement states principles such as, "Attentive listening. Appreciation: No Put Downs. The right to pass. Mutual Respect" (Field Note).

**Brenda mentioned her professional learning experiences,**

"I have taken workshops. In the last school I taught at, I had a lot of First Nations I spent a lot of time learning about that. Through my professional learning at school, I took several workshops to learn about their point of view. Some of their biases about how they have been treated in the past. How they would like to be treated now. I have also learned about Aboriginal books to have in the class library and authors. I learned about a reading program called, First Nations Communities Read, which has about 20 books. I have worked on getting that into schools" (Interview).

**Brenda mentioned she has benefitted from attending conferences, which has been an important resource for her,**

"I just went to a huge conference in Toronto. I don't know if I saw anything about multicultural. I feel that I could learn more. Black History is a big thing. It is happening right now. I have had different workshops. I haven't been to anything recently. Lawrence Hill is an author that was there in the Toronto workshop and learning the different perspectives. Even reading adult books can be helpful" (Interview).

**Brenda mentioned,**

"I have been teaching for 24 years. I don't recall a lot. I have always been interested in books, and paid attention to that. I may have been exposed to that. It was a long time ago.

One thing that happens a lot at schools, you can choose music groups to come to your school, that are from different backgrounds. They might do story telling or dance. They might have musical concerts. Over the years, that has happened. I think that is good” (Interview).

**Brenda mentioned that there is a great amount of curriculum resources which covers her day-to-day-teaching,**

“It is very busy in the classroom, and there is so much to teach. Our curriculum is loaded. I tried to read a variety of things to them. For example: We are reading about Oscar Patterson, who is a Canadian, jazz pianist. But, his family is from the Caribbean. It is an example of an immigrant who has come here, and has become famous. I am very interested in Music. Tying into black history month, we have been looking at African playground, the map, learning translations and looking at that. We are just starting that. I have worked with other classes before” (Interview).

**Brenda mentioned she has benefitted from attending events within the community, which has helped her bring in important literature to use within the school,**

“I connect with the ESL teacher to find out what I should get. On my reading logs, there is a site called, International Kids Digital Library. You can go on there, and read books. It will translate them, and there are picture books. I may have heard about it through the ESL teachers” (Interview).

**Brenda mentioned utilizing tribe in her classroom to help create an inclusive environment,**

“We do T.R.I.B.E. circle, to feel the inclusion, and sit in groups. It is good to develop a sense of belonging. I am aware that the student is from that country. I might know that language; pair them up in seating arrangement” (Interview).

#### **Table 4.20: Ashley’s Perception**

**Researcher’s reflection** – Ashley mentioned School B has programs put into place to help bring in a **global perspective**.

**Ashley** mentioned,

“In this school, outside and near the office, we have a map of the world, of where the students are from, their flags are marked out. One of the classes, made a quilt of where students are from. **Curriculum helps to support it**, for example, in grade 2, it is Celebrations and Traditions. There is an overall umbrella of different backgrounds. We focus on students in our school. At this school, **newsletters are given to families in different languages**. We show them how to use a **translation tool**. At assemblies, we are mindful of everyone. I think you are building an awareness of all students, and not who is just at our school. **Address what is at our school first, in our text, conversations, lessons, and bring a global perspective. We have a Me to We program.** We have

students collecting books, and that will be used to buy bricks to build homes” (Interview).

**Ashley** mentioned,

“It is the nature of what you take. At some schools you are dealing with a religious component. For example, there are some students at this school which need a prayer room and that is an accommodation we can easily make. To me it is what we do, we have students who need that, and we make it possible. At some schools, it might be issues with transgendered students, and washroom choices. So, the issues come in the training. Immigrants are a huge piece. But, at some schools they aren’t. At the training, you chose what is relevant to you. They do a general umbrella of what is inclusive education. You further delve onto, what is an interest of yours. You focus on what is needed for your community. There are always opportunities to network further, and see what is working at your school” (Interview).

**Ashley** mentioned,

“I think here, the preparation, you are just put into a school. You work within what is established at the school. Now, I am in the school, I work with the settlement worker. I work in close contact with the ESL teacher, because they are able to provide information. They let me know what their concerns are. **The staff here embraces diversity, which has been a positive thing.** We have a grade 8 student that wants to start a gay/straight alliance, in a systematically intentional way. It could cause un-comfortableness for other community members, so how are we sensitive to that? There is the **Family Center**; I have attached myself to that, as a partnership I want. **Families that are new to the community,** there are support services, if a child is depressed; it is an agency that is community based. It is about accessing the resources that are here” (Interview).

**Ashley** illustrated,

“If it is an academic issue, we would test students. Is it a student that needs a language support, because of a delay, or a language barrier? It needs to be ESL, or ELD, the majority of our students here follow in ESL. We put it on a stage, where are the students, as newcomers. Not necessarily just students from different backgrounds, and looking at all students. **That is the inclusiveness of a system, of understanding what the strengths are, where the students are coming from, and moving forward that way.** For example, if a family is coming in, to talk about high school transition, we offered an interpreter. So, everyone could be on the same page. So, parents could be heard” (Interview).

**Ashley** explained,

“**Teachers are worried about being politically correct. In that effort, if they are not aware of how to say something or do something, they don’t do it.** The fear can stop the ball rolling. That is one big obstacle. Another obstacle, I think sometimes the connection from school to home, if there is a language barrier, can create an obstacle. We don’t want to communicate with parents, the assumption can be it is better to say less or do less. For example, a teacher stated at a meeting with a parent when the parent didn’t understand

something, they were speaking louder and slower. They felt bad, because they didn't know how to better communicate. If we are worried about that, we can get an interpreter. We need to be honest, about what the obstacles are. One student I asked, being a multicultural school, how do students respect each other? Everyone just gets along, teachers stated. There will always be kids who make comments. We need to be able to ask questions in a respectable way. The staff is working hard at building a global understanding" (Interview).

**Ashley** mentioned,

"In our grade 6, 7, 8, they do jobs in the school. For example, morning office coverage when the secretary is on break, lunch program, and milk program. Students work in things not in the academic area. We don't have a student parliament or government. But, that will be interesting, because how will we decide, who will be president? **How do we get all of the students involved? So we have all students' voices, which are pieces that are important? Are we hearing from all of our students?** If I go to a workshop and I see all males, or all white, if someone is doing a workshop. People just adding a picture, and not being aware of the audience. Socially, we have in math, everything is problem solving based; we incorporate our student's names. We have a grant used to offer a multicultural night, and that will be done in May. Parents and families will come in, that provides a social aspect. This school is inclusive by nature, because of its location. It has been for years. Parents come into the school. We have volunteers, and are very diverse, in ethnic, economic, academic, background. We have parents who haven't worked. Or who are lawyers. We have a mix" (Interview).

**Ashley** discussed,

"I know the library is doing a gap analysis, are we representing? They are doing a walk to Australia. So the numbers of steps are calculated how to get to Australia. So there are a lot of books on Australia. I know next month, it is Black history month. What relevant meaningful things can we do? It is not just about coloring a picture of Martin Luther King. But, making connections to our school, our lives, and bigger. It is getting kids excited. The Olympics will be a big piece in February, be able to talk about different countries, and cultures. The grade 7 and 8 are talking about what countries will wear, and seeing how that could represent what is important to them. As a Canadian, when Canada's athletics represent, there is a bias. It is how someone may perceive that piece" (Interview).

**Ashley** mentioned,

"I would say, on most questions, we are at the beginning stages, opportunities are there, you have to seek them. I don't think at the province, we are 100% looking at the documents. **Our next step for in the fall, I would like to do an Equity walk, and walk through the school. Walk through with a certain lens, walk down the front door, in the classroom, hallway, and be at a comfort level.** There are going to be certain areas you are strong in and need improvement in. Get your staff to be honest, and see if there is the evidence. Not if we do it. But, do we see the evidence?" (Interview).

**Ashley** mentioned,

“I was on the Equity and Inclusive Education committee. Through the school board, when the memorandum came out, the School Boards, need to come up with policies and procedures. How to put it into place? We would look at existing, and ones that need to be created. It is still being developed. I was a consultant. I worked through literacy, and language acquisition was important to me. There is often a barrier to language. When, I was in elementary school, anyone could do well in math. Nowadays, you need to have language to do math. I joined the Equity; I have an interest in gender issues. I did my Master’s in Critical Literacy, looked at gender, and what is portrayed in picture books. We were looking at First Nations/Inuit, which was an important topic when I was in it. There was a symposium. It was train the trainer model. You bring people. They bring their ideas. I was on the team.” (Interview).

**Ashley** mentioned,

“Going from policy, we have a need. They have created. We have a procedure. We have a policy in place, now within the schools. I would say depending where you are. This school is further ahead than my previous school. Diversity was a lot less. It goes to show, it is meant for all students. It shows we are meeting the needs of all the kids. If you don’t have a significant minority at your school. It may not reach them. **If it is equity inclusive, are we making sure that all students feel welcomed? I go back to the individual, every individual**” (Interview).

**Table 4.21: Brianna’s Perception**

**Researcher’s reflection - Brianna mentioned that the school tries to be sensitive to students’ diverse cultural backgrounds, and respect everyone’s right to their own opinion.** Brianna mentioned School B tries to encourage all students to have a voice, and bring forth concerns which are important. **Brianna** expressed that through literature, and being aware of current topics administration wants the school to be presented globally within the community. **Brianna** mentioned that the school is part of a global village.

**Brianna** mentioned,

“We try to provide a number of clubs, and activities which will support students based on their own interests and requests. **Students who need to pray at a certain time, global issues, based on what students care about in their home countries. We try to keep abreast to the news, and be sensitive to what is happening to the students that it might impact. We try in our morning announcements, for example, in our anti-bullying week; we read the criteria in all of the languages in the school. So, they hear their own voice.** There are still a number of issues which may still come up in the yard. Some, students based on how their parents feel about an opposing culture. They have issues between each other, which we may not have anticipated. Politically incorrect situations

come on. We talk first of all to the students, and explain the standard here. This is a public school. Talk with parents, about issues which arise. **We have to find that balance.** Respecting everyone's right to the opinion, and still be sensitive" (Interview).

**Brianna** mentioned,

"I think one thing we do here is give students a voice. They will bring forth the concerns they have. If, their voices are quieted, then we are giving them their voice. We cannot know what is important to our students. **We make sure they see representation of which they are, and the things that are important through current topics, literature, and language in the school which is presented globally. We do live in a global village**" (Interview).

**Brianna** mentioned,

"I would say we were given a lot of background knowledge. It is only worthwhile so you can implement, some of the learning, for example: Safe-Schools, looking Gay/Lesbian/Transgendered students. All the pockets which need representation, looking at Anti-Bullying campaign. Once, I was working in schools, and could see the need. The professional learning opportunities, and see what was needed. We did a lot in-service training. For example, I go this Wednesday, all day, and working on particular topics" (Interview).

**Brianna** stated,

**"We did a lot of equity and inclusion, and hands-on practical learning which was valuable.** I don't think we did enough work on First Nations/Inuit community at my last school. There was not a lot of training. I went to some in-service programs. I would say this was something not addressed properly" (Interview).

**Brianna** discussed,

**"I think at this school, we do a lot of background searches, getting to know students through parents, getting support through our ELL teachers.** We get to know the students, and what supports they need. I have had students who were refugees, and have experienced some trauma still, since they left their country of origin" (Interview).

**Brianna** stated,

**"We are products of our pasts. We bring a story to our present.** The things I am sensitive to may not be reflective of all of the things which need to be addressed. I think it is continuous cycle. Supporting pockets of the school. Finding another pocket which needs to be heard and addressed. Create a safer school. Finding all the pockets which need attention. You have to be diligent, and even to the level of seeing how we represent gender. We are using language. Are we seeing the literacy of, we see girl child or a boy child? Which they may not see each other as" (Interview).



**Brianna** said,

“I would say everyone has a working knowledge of what is expected or anticipated, and London is homogenous. **It is interesting in a school like this, as ours gets more diverse in student population. Are we addressing all of the needs, representing students, and need to get better at?”** (Interview).

**Brianna** mentioned,

“**I would look for workshops.** We had a series of workshops at the board level about equity and inclusion. We spent six or seven days doing our own research projects. **The workshops were about how we could be more inclusive in education.** We would try to look at how we could bridge the population. For example, with First Nations/Inuit, students tended to live away, from the school area. They fluctuated with living on the reserve, and living in town. Getting in contact with the parents was difficult, and looking at how we could draw them. I would say teachers are assumed to know, that the literature/activities should be multicultural. But, if we have not had students from Africa. We have a little sharing session, about the background of where they are from, and what they may need” (Interview).

**Brianna** said,

“I was thinking, last year a student came from Korea in April, and spoke minimal English. **The teacher would look for support from the ELL. They provide modified work. You would go to the ESL department and look for support. I think the teacher would try to find an ESL teacher to give me the materials I need”** (Interview).

**Brianna** stated,

“**If you were a teacher, and you want information, you could get the Equity and Inclusion. You could get additional qualification. If, you said this is my population right now, could we ask someone from the school community to talk about the culture, we don’t do that.** That would be good to do” (Interview).

**Brianna** mentioned,

“There was an area about Equity and Inclusion, which had speakers come in to speak to us. In both occasions, in the sessions, the leaders of the two sessions had a personal connection with Equity and Inclusion. One was a First Nation’s lady, and a person who came here from India. They gave us that perspective. Perhaps, it’s not your background, your place of origin, and how that makes someone feel. **It was persuasive, because it was people’s experiences. We looked at how we could make it more inclusive.** For example, special needs students, what rights parents have for their children? We talked about inclusion for students from multicultural backgrounds. We have to be able to represent and support students” (Interview).

**Brianna** said,

“I think that I am very conscious, that the work in those areas will never be done. I always go back to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, that in order for equality to happen. You can’t get to it if everyone starts at a different starting point. You can see it clearly. How a teacher teaches based on how many boys and girls are in a class. We tend to look for boys to answer math questions, and girls to answer literacy questions. So, if we put all those layers in a classroom. **We have to be in tune to our own views, perspectives, and prejudices.** Even our positive stereotypes could be negative. For example, looking at an Asian child and say you will be good in math and science. It is work that is never done. I believe you can’t say you can give girls and boys the same opportunity. If they were denied it from the past. We need to look to the past, to understand that. I think what you would find is we are given enough information that you need; it is your job to do what you’re supposed to. Probably you will see the issue if it was a human rights violation and query brought to the Board. Then, it will come to you. Did you do what you’re supposed to? There are checks and balances. We meet regularly. Every school has one. You have to meet twice a year. We talk about Equity and Inclusion” (Interview).

**Brianna** said,

“The Board does surveys around Anti-Bullying. They look at what we need to look at further. I think at the school level, at meetings two students from every school attend, based on the school population. Every school is diverse. Every school has a different feel. **So yes, our voices are heard. It has left us to figure out what the issues are. There are people who can support us on what we need.** The people are special task forces which are on assignment. For example, they could come in with First Nations, and do recovery. If they are disengaged from school, they can work intensively with that student, and provide that service” (Interview).



## Chapter 5 Conclusions

### 5 Introduction

In Chapter 5, I summarize my research findings, discuss implications for multicultural education within Ontario, make recommendations for teacher education programs in Ontario and suggest future research that might further expand the knowledge based on these issues.

#### 5.1 Research Questions Revisited

My research study examined the following three questions:

1. What teaching strategies can be used to support diverse students' academic learning process within the classroom setting?
2. What are the perceptions and practices of teachers, principals, and vice principals in relation to the academic learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education?
3. What are teachers', principals', and vice principals' perceptions of multicultural education in the curriculum today and to what extent they are satisfied with current Program Policy Memorandum No. 119, which was created to support multiculturalism, diversity and inclusive education in schools?

Reoccurring themes were identified and examined during data analysis: teaching as a service-oriented career; assumptions about race and class; changes in the teaching profession; social categorization (“an us versus them” culture); multicultural education at Sunflowers Elementary; and multicultural education at Carnations Elementary. These themes were formed around teacher's beliefs and perceptions of multicultural education. As discussed in the previous section, the five themes identified detail how the participants dealt with multicultural education in their pedagogical approaches and classroom practice. The themes were based on the eleven teachers', two principals' and two vice principals' general perceptions as well as many other aspects of their teaching experiences at Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School.

My research covered discussions about subjects that are often difficult to talk about such as issues related to race, class, and religion. Teachers often did not want to disclose their own personal experiences with these areas because they were concerned it would impact their job. Teachers often did not want to disclose both personal and professional experiences due to protecting their overall reputation within the professional organization. However, my perception was that it was worthwhile to discuss and acknowledge these significant difficulties since it would allow for greater knowledge which would benefit both teachers and schools. I attempted to provide a safe environment for the teachers to openly discuss their opinions and feelings about such subjects. The teachers mentioned they were not doing enough to promote multicultural curriculum at Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School. At the conclusion of my interviews, some of the teachers mentioned that multicultural education has not been focused on greatly and when it was taught, it was not a major part of the curriculum.

## 5.2 Implications for Practice

Based on the field elements of this study as well as the findings, my perception is that without personal and professional reflection on multiculturalism, teachers risk an ethnocentric pedagogy which reproduces the perpetuation of Anglo-European values and valuing. In broad terms, my perceptions are supported by past research (eg. Carr & Klassen, 1997; Fleras & Elliott, 2009) that has indicated that due to the ethno-centric nature of the curriculum and the over representation of white teachers in schools, youth from black, Asian and other minority backgrounds are creating Eurocentric literature themselves (Pearce, 2005). For example, young black and Asian people often use white characters in their creative writing. Students who create characters that are not white often rely on stereotypical images. Further, these images are completely different from their lived experience. Thus, resulting in adopting “one identity for school and one for home” (Warner, 2008, p. 42).

It is within the classroom setting where a global outlook can be “inserted” into the curriculum and the history and contributions of all areas of society can be included. This

attainment of a global perspective and anti-ethnocentrism is especially important amongst black, Asian and other minority students, as minority populations have risen (Ofsted, 1999; Sherwood, 2009). From the reading that I did and the field study in the two elementary schools, my broad perspective is that if a teacher begins their curriculum from a global perspective, then it is eventually embedded and interwoven into every aspect of teaching and contributes to student learning in the classroom.

My broad perspective is that encouraging students to see themselves, as well as cultural difference in a multicultural education, effectively advances an equity agenda in education. Thus, it is both a grounding principle as well as an effect of that curriculum. Equity in education is governed by two major principles: namely those of fairness and inclusion (Field, Kuczera, & Pont, 2007). First, fairness denotes the idea of a level playing field where all are or should be deemed as equal. Furthermore, it means a level playing field where, regardless of identity, classifications such as gender, race, ability, sexuality and social class are recognized as having unequal differences within them. In aspirational terms, this means no obstacles should stand in the way of access or attainment of an equal level of education. The second area, inclusion, refers to the idea that the basic level of educational attainment that each individual can expect to receive within contexts that are equitable. Inclusion means that —all people regardless of their color, gender, socio-economic status, religion, capability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, culture or appearance have the right to be regarded and treated as equal members of society (Bevan-Brown, 2006). My broad perspective and a driving force behind my research study is that an inclusive education is important to provide to students, since it emphasizes identifying, ameliorating, and even removing any existing barriers to education.

Inclusive education begins, in part, with a focus on multiculturalism in education curriculum. Multicultural education is an important area to research because it potentially contributes not only to positive peace in interpersonal as well as intrapersonal relationships but also to good citizenship (Niens & Chastenay, 2008). In a school setting there is an expectation for teachers to reflect upon and evaluate their own attitudes, assumptions, values and how those views relate to people living around us. Broadly

speaking, society expects teachers to have an open mind because it allows for the worldview of students and the life experiences teachers bring into the teaching and learning process (Gaine, 2005). Furthermore, there is an expectation from schools systems for teachers to educate themselves on the issues, concerns and strategies that allow for opportunities for all students to learn, feel safe, respected and validated by the curriculum, in teaching and learning environment of both the school and classroom. Ethnicity is a significant facet of many children's sense of identity. It is imperative for teachers and students to understand differences in a constructive way, allow students to learn and explore each other's identity and backgrounds (Gaine, 2005).

According to the Ministry of Education, "Professional learning activities must be ongoing, evidence-based, and focused on positive outcomes. Boards will therefore provide opportunities for teachers (including guidance counsellors), support staff, administrators, and trustees to participate in training on topics such as antiracism, antidiscrimination, and gender-based violence, and will provide information for students and parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education. Boards are also encouraged to draw upon existing expertise within their own organization, other boards, and their own community partners and agencies. Changing individual and collective behavior, as well as organizational and institutional practices, will help to ensure that the education system is free from discrimination" (Ministry of Education, 2013, p.7)

### 5.3 Limitations of the Study

Time limitations also played a large role in the outcome of this thesis. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) limitation is defined as "some aspect of the study that the researcher knows may negatively affect the results of the study, but over which the researcher has no control. Two common limitations are "less-than-ideal sample size and length of the study" (p.83). This Master's level research was achieved within a period of three months. These small windows of time and limited resources, such as a small sample size, led to compromises in the research terms. First and foremost, the small number of interviews and observation of teachers, I was able to perform is a reflection

upon the short time allotted for this research available for soliciting study participants. Had there been more time, and more resources such as a sample size of more than two schools, I would have liked to have interviewed more teachers. Nonetheless, I have confidence in the perceptions that I have collected from these teachers permit further study and can complement to existing literature.

## 5.4 Implications for Further Study

Queries of external validity are an important consideration for a small case study such as this. It would be unreasonable and incorrect to claim that interviewing eleven teachers, two principals and two vice principals; can explain teachers and administrators' motivations across the board. However, a key feature of case study methodology is that it can recognize further areas which are suitable for study. A few areas ready for further study are the links between pedagogical practices of multicultural education and identities such as race and age; overlapping understandings of multicultural pedagogy and student engagement; student perspectives on teacher engagement strategies; limits on teacher implementation of multicultural curriculum; and teacher motivations for using a multicultural curriculum.

This area of studying the perceptions and practices of teachers, vice principals and principals in the area of multicultural education was the area I explored further and researched specifically within the elementary school level of two schools in London, Ontario. As stated throughout my research and the research of others, there are many teachers who are not aware of the importance of teaching students multicultural perspectives. Further, teachers mentioned that they did not have to directly experienced racism to be sensitive to their students' experiences or be able to bring in effective models of multiculturalism into the classroom.

It was clear from the findings of my study that the teachers believed multiculturalism was important aspect of an education and therefore were willing to learn more about multicultural education. Many teachers expressed that they felt they did not receive adequate training in university to work with diverse students. Teachers wanted to receive

more professional training which would further assist them in making connections with students, leading to improved student achievement. There is a significant amount of research that suggests white middle-class are not using multicultural curriculum in their classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2005). For that reason, universities, school districts and schools should work towards making more connections with their students.

From my research findings, I have several suggestions for future research for a potential model for encouraging multicultural education for schools within London, Ontario:

1. It would be helpful to research schools or school districts that have strong multicultural-based curriculum. It would also be beneficial to research schools and districts that use quality multicultural professional development with their teachers. It is important to think about how the students and their parents view the curriculum at such schools like Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School. Further, it would helpful to study their perceptions regarding the multicultural practices at their school. Researching these topics would further add to contributing to the topic of multicultural education in London, Ontario classrooms.
2. Pre-service teachers often take one or two university courses in multicultural education, but they need to learn to apply that information to what they will teach in their classrooms. Some of the teachers in my study shared that they did have one or two courses focused on multicultural education in university, but they believed that they would benefit from ongoing training to successfully teach with multicultural perspectives. For future research, it would be helpful to study how effective these university courses were and what areas could be further improved on.
3. For a follow-up study, it would be interesting to observe the teachers in their classrooms before discussing multicultural education pedagogy and practice with them. It would also be helpful to interview the teachers after they received multicultural professional development.
4. In this study, as it turned out, I interviewed primarily white female teachers who volunteered for this study, and they were all from similar (European) backgrounds.

Teachers in my study were both generous with their time, very cooperative, and it was clear that they took the interviews they participated in very seriously. Future research should include a more representative sample of teachers, both male and female, from different racial and cultural backgrounds. It would be important to include the voices of both minority and white teachers, to obtain a full picture in the area of multicultural education. Most of the teachers interviewed admitted that, as a result of the study, they began to think deeply about how they could learn more about multicultural education.

5. For a follow-up study, it would be important to research the effects of professional development in the area of multicultural education, and interview teachers to explore specific teaching strategies they found effective, with a research focus on the perspectives of English second language teachers.

The findings in my study indicated that the teachers were open to learning more about multicultural education and they were also honest and admitted that they did not have enough knowledge about the subject. The participants stressed that it was important to have on-going training and professional development either through the Thames Valley District School Board or internally at Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School rather than simply counting on one or two multicultural university courses taken more than ten years ago. Sadly, the majority of my teachers were unaware of Policy Program Memorandum No. 119 and the teaching strategies it outlined. Many teachers openly mentioned they received numerous curriculum and policy documents with no on-going follow-up internal training from school administration. While the Ministry of Education has developed a specific policy to support diversity and equity issues, the impact of this policy did not seem to be manifested in extensive changes in teaching practices in the schools where my participants were teaching. Many teachers mentioned their major support was the services provided by the internal support of the school settlement worker and English support teacher.

## 5.5 Final Thoughts and Research Findings

1. The findings of my study have shown that there is not enough multicultural education taught at both Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School. The teachers need more training about the many aspects of teaching culturally diverse students, which could be achieved by setting up a multicultural committee. For example, some teachers in my study often had pre-conceived ideas about their students and questioned whether or not those assumptions were based on issues of race or class. It is important for teachers to move beyond making assumptions about their students and to look into why they are forming those biases or stereotypes.

Kimberly mentioned, “Students want to share their backgrounds and experiences. I encourage that. I know everyone does not have the same prior knowledge. We talk about where they went on summer vacation. Like in September, there is always a writing activity that teachers do every year. For example: What did you do in the summer? A lot of these students, who may not have a lot of money may not have done anything. We were talking about tobogganing. One student didn’t know what that was. It is important, that in everyday activities, like in Canada we have snow. Is there something that you do from where you are from? One student said, I remember when we lived in Cambodia, that we did this in Christmas, instead of having a tree. I encourage sharing experiences.” I liked Kimberly’s willingness to encourage cultural awareness in the classroom by creating an environment where students’ felt comfortable to share their unique experiences.

I liked the point that Martha mentioned, “In my practicum, my last placement was in a developmental center and looked at diversity in a different way. In terms of ethnicity and culture not so much. I was in different buildings, in different parts of the city. It was more what I was taking in, and the experience of being there. I ask questions. I am not afraid to ask. I think that it is important to ask. I don’t pretend I know everything”. Martha’s comment illustrated her openness towards learning more and being sensitive about students’ backgrounds which will further strengthen her teaching abilities.



2. The findings of my study suggest that teaching teachers about the many layers involved with multicultural education can be a challenge. As Brianna stated, “We are products of our pasts. We bring a story to our present. The things I am sensitive to may not be reflective of all of the things which need to be addressed. I think it is continuous cycle. Supporting pockets of the school. Finding another pocket which needs to be heard and addressed”. As Ashley mentioned, “Not necessarily just students from different backgrounds but looking at all students. That is the inclusiveness of a system, of understanding what the strengths are, where the students are coming from, and moving forward that way. So, everyone could be on the same page”. Further, I liked Ashley point that, “We are at the beginning stages, opportunities are there, you have to seek them. I don’t think at the province, we are 100% looking at the documents. Our next step for in the fall, I would like to do an Equity walk, and walk through the school. Walk through with a certain lens, walk down the front door, in the classroom, hallway, and be at a comfort level. There are going to be certain areas you are strong in and need improvement in”.

Offering legislation like Policy Program Memorandum number 119 is helpful to provide direction to schools and administration across London, Ontario, however many teachers admitted they do not use the document in their teaching strategies, partly because the strategies are not continuously emphasized by school administration due to other priorities that have to be advanced. Nonetheless, that information was helpful in answering research question number three. (What are teachers’, principals’, and vice principals’ perceptions of multicultural education in the curriculum today and to what extent they are satisfied with current Program Policy Memorandum No. 119, which was created to support multiculturalism, diversity and inclusive education in schools?).

3. The findings of my study have shown multicultural education varies individually at Carnations Elementary School and Sunflowers Elementary as was listed in my themes. As Maya mentioned, “We do have cultural night event. There are different times when people come in; a parent comes in to show you how to do something which is related to tradition. Lots of classes do family trees. That definitely taps into background. For example, this one included their tradition, holiday celebrations, and religious

celebrations. We used that as a text for talking about families. Families help them do it. We spend some time with another student, doing a compare and contrast, to see how we are similar and different. Lots of grades do a timeline. A lot of cultural and family stuff comes up from that”. The teachers at both schools in this research study described the teaching strategies in which they purposely taught for equity and inclusion; they most often used activity-based learning, such as hosting a class celebration, using (at times) appropriate multicultural curriculum, including discussion and on-going modeling of appropriate behavior. However, the discussions and teacher modeling were less likely to be consciously planned or explicitly performed and more likely arise from creating a teachable moment. Teachers often emphasized creating a classroom culture which was nurturing and safe for all students. These findings were helpful in answering my research question number one. (What teaching strategies can be used to support diverse students’ academic learning process within the classroom setting?).

4. The findings of my study have shown at both Carnations Elementary School and Sunflowers Elementary School that teachers reported teaching multicultural education and diversity related topics mainly when an appropriate time presented itself, but in the course of their daily teaching, they sometimes had those natural opportunities. Another one of the challenges some teachers faced was although they were interested in teaching more deeply about multiculturalism, it was not a significant priority to the rest of the staff, nor was any pressure coming from the parent community (who were often New Canadians and were learning about the school system in London, Ontario). These findings were helpful in answering my research question two. (What are the perceptions and practices of teachers, principals, and vice principals in relation to the academic learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education?).

5. The findings of my study have shown from my interviews, there was evidence that multicultural education was often done on an “as needed” basis. As Brenda mentioned, “I have four ELL students. I don’t feel that I am able to address the individuals easily. The ESL teachers makes the personal connections easier and the cultural backgrounds”. As Maya mentioned, “Now, it is not needed as much. Most of the books are multicultural and multiracial. The ethno-central material is gone. The materials are

multicultural. All schools still lag in giving some kind of equal balance to kids' cultures and backgrounds". Both teachers' comments showed they could benefit from further training. It is important for the teachers to learn more about the various approaches to multicultural education such as the information given by Sleeter and Grant (2001). It is also important for the school leaders to recognize there are methods to integrate the skills needed for the standardized tests into more creative lessons which can include more sections related to multicultural education. This is something that should be addressed for both Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School future professional development.

However, as one school administrator pointed out, "Policy is a fluid process". For policy to be effective, it needs to be monitored with a proper checks and balances system for both school administration and teachers. After participating in an interview for my study, one administrator wanted to create a multicultural and diversity committee to act as a platform for administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Further, offering specific teaching strategies is imperative however there needs to be an ongoing review by school staff which needs to be continuously reviewed, monitored and practiced with school administration and teachers.

6. On the basis of the data collected in this study, the teachers at Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School could benefit from learning more about the layers of multicultural education. Since much of the teaching force in these two schools is made up of white middle-class women, it is important for those who train teachers to be aware of the importance of educating teachers about multicultural education. As Banks (2009) and Sleeter and Grant (2001) have shared, multicultural education cannot be viewed as a "program" that is distinct from school curriculum; rather it should be regarded as part of the curriculum. Additionally, students in low-income schools such as Sunflowers Elementary School and Carnations Elementary School always need to feel valued. When teachers make strong cultural connections with students, despite their socio-economic status, it gives students opportunities to share their experiences and their knowledge with other students as equals.

7. The research findings from this study established that many of the participants were not satisfied with how the issues of multiculturalism were addressed and felt their prior university and teacher education programs did not adequately prepare them to handle some multicultural issues in their future classrooms. Many teachers mentioned that Carnations Elementary School and Sunflowers Elementary School were the most diverse schools they had taught in and there was a significant need to address this topic further.

8. The research findings from this study showed, using Banks' (1995) five-staged dimensions of multicultural education, teacher education programs in London, Ontario (based on the self-reporting of participants) currently appear to be amongst the first two dimensions. Teachers in this research study discussed some features of content integration of placing students from diverse backgrounds into the curriculum. Teachers discussed some areas of knowledge construction where teachers help students understand, investigate, determine the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference and perspectives of the discipline they're teaching. However, teachers did not mention that these were central features of their training.

My findings show that more could have been done in the areas of equity pedagogy, where each teacher modifies the way he or she teaches in order to enable students from diverse backgrounds to learn more effectively. Further, more could have been done in the area of prejudice reduction, where teachers use teaching methods to help kids develop more positive racial attitudes. More could have been done in the area of empowering school culture and social structure. It would be helpful to critically examine where grouping and labeling practices exist within the school culture. For example, there could exist a disproportionality in school achievement. Finally, more could be done in looking at what the school staff looks like racially and the interaction of the school staff.

9. The research findings from this study showed that CRT with its overall commitment to social justice and the elimination of racism is extremely useful when understanding and implementing multicultural education effectively in schools. In my earlier discussion of CRT framework I described: Race is a focus of academic discussion and political action in schools. The social practices that are enabled through race are examined (both

racist and race-neutral practices). In my research findings, I discovered in order to promote multiculturalism, it is important for both teachers and administrators to comprehend teaching practices by asking critical and destabilizing questions. Diversity is created by individuals engaging in routine, everyday behaviors and specific practices which discourage structural inequities in the social system (Dei, 2000, 2004).

I used CRT as a lens to examine multicultural education and diversity and found that the growth of multicultural education has in many respects involved a long and arduous journey, yet there is still much further to travel if we wish to support the learning of all students in our multicultural classrooms. As Denise mentioned, “There wasn’t much there, in my basic Bachelors of Education courses. There might have been some classes, and weren’t memorable. I remember thinking when I finish Teacher’s College. I went in 1990. These topics weren’t at the forefront”. Most teacher education programs have reacted slowly to this need and have a tendency to understate the importance of multicultural education to their teacher candidates (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009). As noted earlier, many teachers in my study mentioned that multicultural education was not emphasized heavily in their teacher education programs. The continuing inaction in this domain is troublesome because it creates an inequitable learning environment for students of diverse ethnicities, cultures and religions.

The essence of multicultural education is to support democracy as a way of life. Attitudes and dispositions toward democracy become part of one’s character or being and are reflected in one’s actions. These attitudes and dispositions from teachers and administrations need further opportunity to be developed for example those which greater embrace of heterogeneity. These will guide a person to participate actively and effectively in a pluralistic democratic society. Diversity provides a way for educational institutions like schools in London, Ontario to transform themselves towards goals of social justice, inclusion and equity (as mentioned in PPM No. 119).

10. The research findings from this study showed that teachers often made assumptions about their students based on race and class, based on prior experiences with the student populations in their classrooms. In her book, *Becoming Multicultural Educators*:

*Personal Journey toward Professional Agency* (2003), Geneva Gay states that she believes in “the viability of autobiography as a research methodology and a rich source of substantive data for multicultural teacher preparation and classroom practice” (p. 7).

Research-informed professional development opportunities that utilize an autobiographical, self-reflective method encourage teachers to develop their skills as effective multicultural educators and professionals who are critically conscious and analytically reflective about their personal knowledge, beliefs, values and actions.

Erickson (2007) proposes using critical autobiography as part of the curriculum content and as a methodology of action research. Erickson recommends that students can investigate their own lives, families, and local community, while teachers may observe and ask questions to identify the particular cultures of their individual students. In this process, the teacher tries to understand the uniqueness of each student’s culture without judging and stereotyping him or her.

While Erickson (2007) would like to avoid teachers’ stereotyping of students, Gay (2003) focuses on personal preparation for becoming multicultural educators. As Gay (2003) states, the autobiographical method focuses on self-study through which teachers can examine and criticize their thinking, feelings, beliefs and practices. Self-study includes aspects of teachers’ past and present educational processes and lived experiences at local, national and global levels. The key challenge for teaching professionals is how to use one’s personal and professional journey to develop one’s own vision and improve one’s beliefs and practices and be used as a means of self-growth.

Finally, this research study provides valuable understandings regarding the use of multicultural education and summaries opportunities teacher education programs have to better “train” teacher candidates for teaching in multicultural contexts. Therefore, educators within teacher education programs should re-examine and further develop the strategies that are used to “train” teacher candidates, so that ultimately teachers feel better prepared to teach (and lead) in today’s culturally, racially and ethnically diverse classrooms.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview Questions



Project Title: Encouraging diversity and multiculturalism in London, Ontario's elementary schools

Principal Investigator: Dr. Pamela Bishop, PhD, Department of Education, Western University

Co-Investigator: Abhilasha Duggal, Master's of Education Student, Western University

1a. From your professional learning at school, to what extent do you feel you have adequate training to teach students from different backgrounds?

1b. From your teacher training at university, to what extent do you feel you have adequate training to teach students from different backgrounds?

2a. How do you accommodate the academic needs of students who are from different backgrounds?

2b. What are the most challenging aspects of these types of practices (to accommodate all students)?

2c. How do you accommodate the social learning needs of students from different backgrounds?

3. To what extent does all relevant staff aware of, and active in promoting diversity through multicultural education?

4. To what extent, does the school tap into students' family, language, and culture as foundations for learning?

5a. To what extent, does the school provide opportunities for staff to gain knowledge about different cultural groups?

5b. To what extent do teachers receive training to help them use students' family, language, and culture as foundations for learning?

5c. To what extent, do teachers receive training to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students and parents?

6a. Are you familiar with/have you read Policy Program Memorandum No. 119?

6b. To what extent are you satisfied with PPM No. 119?

## Appendix B – Letter of Information to teachers



Project Title: Encouraging diversity and multiculturalism in London, Ontario's elementary schools

Principal Investigator: Dr. Pamela Bishop, PhD, Department of Education, Western University

Co-Investigator: Abhilasha Duggal, Master's of Education Student, Western University

### LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Teachers,

My name is Abhilasha Duggal. I am a Master of Education research student in the Faculty of Education at Western University. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information required for you to make an informed decision regarding participation in a research study. This study has been approved by Western University and Thames Valley District School Board.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study and take part in an interview. I am studying the teaching practices utilized by teachers in elementary school students' learning process. The purpose of my research will be on understanding the perceptions and practices of teachers teaching within the Ontario school system, along with the perceptions of school principals in relation to learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education.

This study aims to explore what teaching strategies can be used to support diverse students' learning process within the classroom setting. The purpose of my data

gathering will be to gain perspective on what teachers and school principals think about multicultural education in the curriculum today, and to what extent they are satisfied with current Program Policy Memorandum No. 119, which was created to support this matter. This policy had a goal of constructing an equitable and inclusive education plan for all students. The document focused on diversity, promoting inclusive education, recognizing and removing discriminatory biases, and obstacles which prohibit students' learning and growth.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked questions about how you incorporate diversity and multiculturalism in relation to learning opportunities for encouraging multicultural education. The meeting will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place. It is anticipated that the entire task should last approximately about 30 minutes. With your permission, the session will be audio taped so that I can accurately analyze the data. The tapes will only be reviewed by me, and then will be transcribed, and will then be destroyed. I will email you a copy of the transcripts to ensure validity and reliability of what we discussed. You can amend any of the transcripts or add further comments if you wish to.

With your permission, I would also appreciate being able to observe you at work in your classroom. During that time in the classroom, I will not be talking to anyone, just observing. I am simply attempting to understand how you teach in relation to the topic related to multicultural education. Also, I will observe artefacts such as posters, awards, and memorabilia on corridor walls, near the front offices, and in classrooms that are curriculum and policy documents which is an important aspect of my research focus.

There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. You will not be compensated for your participation in this research. If at any time in our conversation, you feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions, please let me know. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to.

The results of these research findings have the potential to illuminate the teaching approaches in the subject of diversity and multiculturalism. Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at Western University. The results of

the study may be published but your identity and your school's identity will not be revealed.

Participation is voluntary, and taking part in the study is entirely your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to, and there will be no penalty. All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study. If the results are published, your name will not be used. If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data will be removed and destroyed from our database.

I am happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at (phone number/email removed) or my Thesis Supervisor, (Dr. Pamela Bishop at phone number/email removed) if you have study related questions or problems. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Research Ethics (phone number/email removed).

With kind regards,

(Signature)

Abhilasha Duggal

## Appendix C- Letter of Information to School Principals



Project Title: Encouraging diversity and multiculturalism in London, Ontario's elementary schools

Principal Investigator: Dr. Pamela Bishop, PhD, Department of Education, Western University

Co-Investigator: Abhilasha Duggal, Master's of Education Student, Western University

### LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Principal,

My name is Abhilasha Duggal. I am a Master of Education research student in the Faculty of Education at Western University. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information required for you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this research study.

I wish to carry out a research study to be conducted at your school. My goal is to talk with teachers and yourself, to find out how diversity and multiculturalism is incorporated within the classroom setting. I would greatly appreciate your approval and support. This study has been approved by Western University and Thames Valley District School Board.

My data collection techniques will include: observations of teachers, interviews, anecdotal notes, and audio recordings. During that time in the classroom, I will not be



talking to anyone, just observing. I am simply attempting to understand how teachers teach in relation to the topic related to multicultural education. Also, I will observe artefacts such as posters, awards, and memorabilia on corridor walls, near the front offices, and in classrooms that are curriculum and policy documents which is an important aspect of my research focus.

All information retrieved in this study is strictly confidential, and only to be used for the purpose of this study. I invite you and teachers at your school to take part in this important study.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer questions about how diversity and multiculturalism is being incorporated in the classroom, and what teaching strategies are being used. It is anticipated that the entire task will take about 30 minutes, and the meeting will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place.

With your permission, the session will be audio taped so that I can accurately reflect on what was discussed. The tapes will only be reviewed by me, and then will be transcribed, and will then be destroyed.

I will email you a copy of the transcripts to ensure validity and reliability of what we discussed. If at any time in our conversation, you feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions, please let me know.

There are no known or anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to. You will not be compensated for your participation in this research.

The results of these research findings have the potential to illuminate the teaching approaches in the subject of diversity and multiculturalism. Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location at Western University. The results of the study may be published but you and your school's identity will not be revealed.

Participation is voluntary. Taking part in the study is entirely your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to and there will be no penalty if you do not wish to be part of this study.

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study. If the results are published, your name will not be used. If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data will be removed and destroyed from our database.

I am happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at (phone number/email removed) or my Thesis Supervisor, (phone number/email removed) if you have study related questions or problems. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Research Ethics (phone number/email removed).

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please let me know.

With kind regards,

(Signature)

Abhilasha Duggal

## Appendix D - Consent Form



Project Title: Encouraging diversity and multiculturalism in London, Ontario's elementary schools

Principal Investigator: Dr. Pamela Bishop, PhD, Department of Education, Western University

Co-Investigator: Abhilasha Duggal, Master's of Education Student, Western University

I have read and understood the Letter of Information for this study. I will sign both copies of the consent form and keep one for my records, while the other is for the researcher.

If at any time you have further questions, or problems, in relation to this study, you may contact me (phone number/email removed), or my Thesis Supervisor, (phone number/email removed).

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Research Ethics (phone number/email removed).

I agree to participate in this research project. By my signature, I acknowledge that this study has been fully explained to me. I have had a chance to ask questions, and have received satisfactory answers to those questions.

Name of Participant

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Signature of Participant

Date \_\_\_\_\_

With kind regards,

(Signature)

Abhilasha Duggal

## Appendix E – Western Ethics Approval Form



Research Ethics

Use of Human Participants - Initial Ethics Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Pamela Bishop  
 File Number: 104463  
 Review Level: Delegated  
 Protocol Title: Encouraging diversity and multiculturalism in London, Ontario's elementary schools  
 Department & Institution: Education, Western University  
 Sponsor:  
 Ethics Approval Date: October 31, 2013 Expiry Date: March 31, 2014

**Documents Reviewed & Approved & Documents Received for Information:**

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Other	consent form	
Instruments		
Western University Protocol		2013/10/02
Revised Letter of Information & Consent		2013/10/17
Revised Letter of Information & Consent	SEE REQUESTED CHANGES MADE TO LETTER TO TEACHERS- Paragraphs 1 and 2 specifically state the explicit PURPOSE behind the research.	2013/10/25
Response to Board Recommendations		2013/10/25




This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the approval date noted above.

This approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the NMREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

Members of the NMREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the NMREB.

The Chair of the NMREB is Dr. Riley Hinson. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

 Grace Kelly (grace.kelly@uwo.ca)	 Vikki Tran (vikki.tran@uwo.ca)	 Erika Basile (ebasile@uwo.ca)
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*This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.*

## **Appendix F: Glossary of Terms**

### *Academic Learning*

Aronson, Carlson, and Zimmerman (1998) suggest that academic (or actual) learning time is “. . . that precise period when an instructional activity is perfectly aligned with a student’s readiness and learning occurs” (p. 3). In general, academic learning time is the teacher-directed instructional time in classrooms when learning actually occurs.

### *Culture as a Process*

As Sleeter and Grant (1987, 2003) note, multicultural education includes directly lived experiences, including the nature of oppression and social change. In an allied way, Sleeter and Bernal (2004) describe critical pedagogy theory as that which attends to “the culture of everyday life, viewing culture as created within historic, as well as contemporary power struggles” (p. 253). In this definition, the idea of culture is considered an ongoing process. Sleeter and Grant (1987, 2003) encourage teachers to embrace social, political, and economic subjects into the curriculum as part of students’ lived experiences.

### *Cultural Identity*

Cultural identity embraces variables of diversity such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, exceptionality, language, religion, geography, and age. Banks (2007) mentions vis-a-vis cultural identity that “the group is the social system that carries a culture” (p. 13). Further, Banks (2007) recognized a particular group’s micro-culture that exists within a macro-culture, which is the overarching or national culture. Gollnick and Chinn (2006) identified certain characteristics of culture, namely that culture can be learned, shared, modified and changed. Thus an individual may fit into many micro-cultural groups at the same time within a macro-cultural context.

### *Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Gay (2000) defined culturally responsive teaching as the teacher using the cultural knowledge, past experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to encourage

learning, and teaching students how to utilize those elements. Specifically, culturally responsive teaching legitimates the cultural heritages of various ethnic groups that influence students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to acquiring knowledge within the formal curriculum. It shapes how children connect home and school learning experiences as well as lived sociocultural realities. Culturally responsive teaching utilizes a widespread variation of instructional strategies that link to different learning styles. It teaches students to recognize and appreciate their own and other cultural heritages. Finally, it integrates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills that are regularly taught in schools (Gay, 2000).

### *Cultural Pluralism*

Cultural pluralism is an idea established by philosopher Kallen (1924) in the early twentieth century. Kallen disputed that “each ethnic group had the democratic right to retain its own heritage” (Bennett, 1999, p. 52). In its best form, cultural pluralism is a process of cooperation categorized by shared respect between two or more cultural identities (Bennett, 1999). The concept cultural pluralism challenges the idea of cultural assimilation, which is the basis of the analogy of American “melting pot”. Cultural assimilation is a procedure by which people from a minority ethnic and/or racial group integrate their lives into the dominant culture of the host society (Bennett, 1999).

### *Diversity*

The Ministry of Education (2006) defines diversity as, “The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status” (p. 6).

### *Equity*

The Ministry of Education (2006) defines equity as, “A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without understanding individual differences” (p. 6).

### *Ethno-Cultural*

Ethno-cultural means describing an ethnic group that has a distinct culture. The Ontario Ministry of Education (1993) defines anti-racism and ethno-cultural equity in education as, “An approach to education that integrates the perspectives of Aboriginal and racial minority groups into an educational system and its practices” (p.40). This Ministry document addressed equity stating that the goal of anti-racism education is to eradicate racism in all its appearances.

### *Inclusive Education*

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural (UNESCO, 2008) defines inclusive education as the “process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all students” (p.5). Specifically, inclusive education focuses on allowing full barrier-free access within the education system.

From a policy position, UNESCO (2008) views inclusive education as “Central to the achievement of high-quality education for all learners and the development of more inclusive societies. Internationally, it is increasingly seen more broadly as reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners” (p. 5).

### *Multicultural Education*

There are various and many distinctly different approaches to multicultural education. Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (2005) defined multicultural education as adopting a culturally responsive pedagogy with trained instructors facilitating it. Nieto (1996) defined multicultural education as “antiracist education” which is “a process important for all students” (p. 307). The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) describe multicultural education as a philosophical concept manufactured on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents, such as the U.S. Declaration of Independence (National Association of Multicultural Education, 2011).



### *Resistance*

For the purposes of this study, oppositional behavior of an individual or group individuals to another individual/ or group's idea or action often happens because of a racial factor (rather than the intrinsic worth of an idea or action) and may occur in an environment involving power relationships utilizing methods of domination and suppression. Entrenched in the concept of reluctance of acceptance and/or change, it is often manifest as active, passive, and as absent behavior (Higginbotham, 2000).

### *Ideological Resistance*

Resistance to ideology connotes feelings of disbelief, defensiveness, guilt, and shame, which some Anglo-European pre-service teachers (and teachers) experience when they are requested to confront racism and oppressive social norms in class discussions [or training situations] (Rodriquez, 1998).

### *Pedagogical Resistance*

Pedagogical resistance refers to the roles that teachers feel are necessary if they are to manage inconsistent messages from their co-teachers and administration regarding teaching expectations (curriculum and maintain class control) and from their multicultural advocates (instrumental in student-centered, culturally sensitive, constructivist class activities) and how they are expected to perform as teachers (Rodriquez, 1998).

### *Social Exclusion*

“Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods, and services and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole” (Levitas, Pantazis, Fahmy, Gordon, Lloyd, & Patsios, 2007, p. 25).

My perception of social exclusion is that it offers to explain the existence of social inequalities. It attempts to describe the reality that some individuals in society lack the capacity to overcome their poverty due to systemic barriers which deny them access to policy makers, educational and professional opportunities to overcome their situation.

### *Tokenism*

Tokenism often encourages stereotypes by reducing a culture to a thin lens that is prescribed by the dominant culture in a society. Through this method, a non-dominant culture is often represented in an inaccurate or “flat” way in the classroom setting, rather than represented as complex and linked to daily learning in an inclusive way. However, there is no way a teacher can learn everything about a culture because culture itself is a dynamic, ever-changing, multifaceted worldview and complex set of processes and practices. A more encouraging method is for teachers to be prepared to reflect on how cultural differences may affect student learning and to be receptive to modify their curriculum and pedagogy as a result (Nieto, 2004). Hogg & Graham (2010) defined tokenism as, “The policy or practice of making a perfunctory gesture toward the inclusion of members of minority groups. This token effort is usually intended to create an appearance of inclusiveness and deflect accusations of discrimination” (p. 138).

My perception of the term “*token*” is used to explain an individual who is admitted into a group because of their racial differences from members of a group, to make it appear as if the group does not discriminate. Their visibility within the organization creates a great amount of pressure to succeed and exhibit the correct stereotypical behaviors that the group is looking for.

## Curriculum Vitae

Name: Abhilasha Duggal

### **Education**

State University of New York at Stony Brook

Stony Brook, New York, United States

1997-2001, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Sociology

State University of New York at Stony Brook

Stony Brook, New York, United States

1993-1995, Faculty of Political Science

Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration

Western University

London, Ontario, Canada

2013-2014, Faculty of Education

Master of Education

### **Related Work Experience**

Tutor

2008 - Present

London, Ontario, Canada

- Work one to one with elementary school aged students teaching subjects: English, Math, Social Studies, Science and Reading. Apply new strategies, theories, methodologies and practices.

### **Third & Fourth Grade Classroom Teacher**

New York City Teaching Fellows

2007-2008

Brooklyn, New York, United States

- Worked as a special education teacher, implemented individualized education program for 8 special education students in a 3rd and 4th grade self-contained classroom. Identified and tailored goals to each student's individual needs and abilities.
- Coordinated with parents, teachers, teaching assistants and service providers for students with learning challenges such as: Learning Disability, Emotional Disturbance, Mental Retardation, and Autism. Provided interventions and methods with successful behavior management plan. Fostered a sense of curiosity and understanding of varied subjects (English, Math, Social Studies, Reading, Writing, and Science).

### **Classroom Teaching Assistant**

New York City Teaching Fellows

2007

Brooklyn, New York, United States

- Worked with classroom teacher and taught high school freshman and sophomores U.S. History and World History.

### **Administrative Assistant and Kindergarten English Teacher**

2006

Kathmandu, Nepal

- Taught English in a village government school by incorporating teaching methods such as guided interaction, modeling, graphic organizers, visual aids, games, activity books, flash cards, tapes and textbooks