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Investigating the Place of Children's Home Literacy in the Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum: A Document Analysis

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Graduate Program in Education

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Abstract

The Ontario Kindergarten programmatic curriculum was examined to determine and articulate how it represents children's and families' funds of knowledge in relation to home literacy and literacy learning at school. *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) was the primary source within the document analysis methodology. Funds of knowledge underpins this study as the main theoretical framework. This study was driven by three questions: In what ways does programmatic curriculum, *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), connect (or not) literacy learning with children's home language and literacy experiences from home? How are families depicted within (if at all) the programmatic curriculum in relation to their children's literacy? What are some recommendations for programmatic curricula based on the analysis? The findings indicated that *The Kindergarten Program* had little emphasis on family involvement, home language, and deep understandings of children's home, culture, and community perspectives. However, the programmatic curriculum document highlighted children's sense of belonging, and the freedom to express their opinion and ideas. The study recommends that the programmatic curriculum needs to look closely at children's funds of knowledge to allow educators to include the child as a whole and value the experiences they bring to school from home. Funds of knowledge also give teachers the chance to communicate and create relationships with families that are built on a mutual trust. These relationships between teachers, children, and families contribute to the construction of a concrete bridge between school and home allowing children to value who they are and create a solid basis for being lifelong learners.

Keywords: Kindergarten curriculum, funds of knowledge, funds of identity, literacy, family literacy

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Chapter 1

1.0 Coming to the research: My tale

My first vivid memories of literacy are from when my mother would gather us all on one bed and read us a bedtime story, and sometimes she would create stories out of her imagination which I used to wait for anxiously. My mother also retold lots of stories of her childhood focusing on when she engaged in summer adventures in the mountains of Lebanon with her siblings and cousins. These early experiences helped to lay the foundation of my *funds of knowledge* and my *funds of identity*: Funds of knowledge are “historically-accumulated and culturally-developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and wellbeing” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133). Funds of identity are the knowledge that children formulate from their social world away from their homes (Esteban-Guitart, 2016). The other kind of literacy that I distinctly remember was at school. My early school years were spent at a private school in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the country where I was born. From the time I was in grade 1, language and literacy became all about spelling tests, reading tests, and grammar tests. By the time I was in grade 5, we were assigned 20 words each week and had to know 100 words for the midterm test. Spelling in this way seemed particularly challenging to me as I always needed to use a dictionary to understand the words I had for the week. Unfortunately making sense of reading at school was also a challenge. The books that we used in the classroom came mostly from the United Kingdom, which made it hard for us as students in the UAE to relate. Additionally, reading tests were performed orally in front of the whole class. I detested English class and felt like I would never reach an acceptable level of English language proficiency. My funds of knowledge were ignored and my identity negatively affected.

Later, however, I learned that language and literacy learning could be different. After grade 5, I relocated to Canada with my parents, and I attended grade 6 in a public school. The overall atmosphere in the new school was completely different compared to my experience in my previous school in the UAE. I will never forget my grade 6 teacher. Once, he asked my parents if they could bring me to school a bit earlier in the morning so he could help me in the transition phase of my learning journey and adapt to the new environment. Although it took me a while before I adapted to the new school life, I always enjoyed these short morning lessons offered to me by my teacher. He tried to understand me for who I am and connected language and activities to things I could relate to (i.e. building from my funds of knowledge). He always encouraged me and helped me to build more self-confidence (i.e. ameliorating by funds of identity). For this reason, I will never forget him.

Of course, things did not stay the same. As I got older and moved to higher grade levels, things got harder, and I felt like it was always a one-way learning. Over time, I felt that the disconnection between who I am and the school I was attending started to grow even more. The classes I enjoyed the most were those that offered hands-on activities, for example, woodworking, parenting, and cooking. These events allowed me to express my identity. Near the end of high school, it was time to apply for post-secondary education. My parents thought it was essential for me to attend a university not a community college and they got disappointed when I chose to go to a college to study Early Childhood Education (ECE).

During my ECE program, I felt that I had discovered who I am and that this is the place where I want to be. The class and placement experiences taught me a lot about the importance of knowing the child as a whole and taking into consideration his/her interests. After I had

graduated with an ECE diploma, I enrolled in a Social Development Studies program at a university in Ontario. During that time, I started job seeking overseas and was eventually hired as a kindergarten homeroom teacher in a private school back in the UAE.

I was very excited to start my new job working with children for whom English was not their first language. The school I worked at was in the process of receiving its International Baccalaureate (IB) certification. The use of the IB in the school demanded that as educators, we focus on the children and how their surrounding environment influenced them. I was thus encouraged to connect the learning themes to my students' interests and family life in ways that allowed the students to share their life experiences with the class. I engaged in long conversations with local Emirati parents to have a better understanding of their culture and their traditions as 99% of the students in the school were Emirati. I found that the more I interacted with parents, the more I came to understand my students and serve them better.

Besides having IB as a curriculum, the school adopted stand-alone standards from a school curriculum in the United States. The standards were subject driven, and our schedules had specific time slots allocated for these subjects. At the accountability level, we as teachers were expected (by school administration) to teach according to IB, plus teach and assess the students according to the standards. As a teacher who believed in child-centered teaching, I tried to include the IB theme into all the subjects; however, it did not always work. The emerging of both IB and US standards created a wide gap, since IB mainly concentrated on children's inquiries and culture, and standards were mostly subject-specific. For example, a math lesson used coins which were all US coins. It was very hard for the children to remember the names and the value of each coin because they do not use US currency in their country. The school administration

insisted on using the US currency as a model during our lessons. I always struggled to understand the reasons why children's experiences and interests cannot be the driving force of their learning at school.

A couple of years later, I moved back to Canada with my husband and our two young children. When my eldest son started kindergarten in Canada, I became more assured about the significance of including the child's experiences and interests in the learning process in the classroom. I began to volunteer in my son's classroom and communicated with his teachers on a regular basis. The teachers appreciated the help I offered and learned a lot about my culture. When I had the opportunity to organize a story time for the class the theme was related to a special occasion my family and I were celebrating.

When I started my journey as a Masters student at the Faculty of Education, I was eager to learn more about the kindergarten curriculum in Ontario. Ontario is a multicultural province; its doors are always open for new immigrants. According to Statistics Canada (2011) "the vast majority (94.8%) of Canada's foreign-born population lived in four provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta" (p. 9). Statistics show that Ontario accommodates the largest number of "people born outside the country ... where around 3,611,400 immigrants or 53.3% lived [in Ontario]" (p. 9). As a result, "slightly over one-quarter (25.9%) of its [Ontario's] population belonged to a visible minority" (p. 16). In addition to immigrants, Canada has welcomed more than 39,000 Syrian refugees (Government of Canada, 2017). Having a high percentage of minorities in Ontario, it becomes vital to investigate the position of families and children within the Ontario kindergarten curriculum. This research is important to me as an educator and a mother of minoritized students. To date, no study has looked specifically at the Ontario

kindergarten curriculum document through the lens of funds of knowledge and funds of identity. Essentially, it is also a topic that it is of vital importance to children, family, and educators more broadly and to the research literature, particularly in the literature on literacy education.

The purpose of the present study is to:

- Extend and increase knowledge about the importance of including children and family's funds of knowledge into programmatic curriculum and daily classroom activities,
- Create conditions to advance the learning of students by linking and relating students' everyday life, their community, and family background into the school curriculum,
- Provide knowledge to foster parent-teacher relationships by developing networks of regular collaboration between home and school creating and maintaining an overall learning environment that is based on trust.

The study asks the following research questions:

1. In what ways does programmatic curriculum, *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), connect (or not) literacy learning with children's home language and literacy experiences from home?
2. How are families depicted within (if at all) the programmatic curriculum in relation to their children's literacy?
3. What are some recommendations for programmatic curricula based on the analysis?

1.1 Research background

In the 21st century, research in literacy education highlights the increasing epistemological diversity among students. More and more children come to school from a variety of different cultures, languages, communities, and family structures. Socio-cultural studies of language and literacy education (e.g., Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992) have found, for instance, that children enter schools having already benefited from a diversity of rich literacy experiences and language backgrounds. Kindergarten, then, can be seen as a nexus where the knowledge of families and school meet, producing amongst learners, educators, and parents a blend of emotions marking the beginning of a child's educational journey.

During kindergarten, the relationships that form between the families and their children's educators have been found to have significant effects on parents' attitudes towards schooling. For example, a study by Gonzalez and Moll (2002) found that when teachers took the initiative to understand families, as well as, respected and valued the knowledge these families have, families became willing to participate in school activities. Consequently, teachers, families, and learners could "come together within communities in which learning is mutually educative, co-constructed and jointly negotiated" (p. 631). Specifically, relationships between school and home have a significant role in literacy learning. When teachers connect students' home experiences to classroom literacy, it enables teachers to provide a learning environment that is rich in both written and oral literacy (Moll & Greenberg, 1990). Still, Hull and Schultz (2001) claim that educators "have reached a point in the history of literacy teaching and learning at which we [educators] need to build a bridge between the domains of home and school, because the gap is ever-widening" (p. 7). Pahl and Rowsell (2005) went even further and claimed that the gap is

evident since what teachers are teaching in school and what children practice outside of school does not often correlate. Now in Ontario, with the release of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), educators have a new opportunity to consider the role of families in literacy learning, and this is where the current study enters.

On July 15, 2016, the province of Ontario released a new programmatic curriculum entitled *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), mandated for use in all publically funded schools in the province. According to Doyle (1992, as cited in Deng, 2010), programmatic curriculum “is at the intermediate levels between institutional curriculum and classroom curriculum planning, with a focus on curriculum writing in the form of curriculum documents and materials” (p. 384). Drawing on the work of Doyle, Deng (2010) highlighted that planning the programmatic curriculum is a complicated process which involves “committees made up of representatives from governments, educational agencies, schools, universities, business, industry, and the community at large” (p. 385). In addition to the complexity of the programmatic curriculum, its effects on children and families are also complex and need to be investigated. Therefore, to understand children’s experience at school, it becomes essential to inquire into the programmatic curriculum (Hedges, 2007).

1.2 Overview of the thesis

This study is premised on the foundation that a deep understanding of children and their families is essential to early childhood curriculum. Esteban-Guitart (2016) maintained that “the educational process can be greatly enhanced when teachers learn about their students’ households and their everyday lives” (p. 38). The twinned theories of funds of knowledge and funds of identity form the backbone of this study. Although the concept of funds of knowledge

was established in the late 1980's, it continues to be of great interest in the education literature, especially the early childhood curriculum and literacy education literature. For instance, Research by Llopart and Esteban-Guitart (2016) found that between the years 2011 and 2015, “92 peer-reviewed articles identified as being related to the FoK approach” (p.5). Their research also found that literacy was directly linked to the concept of funds of knowledge. Many other researchers have built on the original concept of funds of knowledge by extending and exploring the idea more specifically concerning the students as individuals. For example, Hedges (2015) and Hedges, Cullen, and Jordan (2011) studied the concept of “funds of knowledge-based interests.” According to Journal of Curriculum Studies' (JCS) website, Hedges et al. (2011) is one of the most read articles, with over 5500 views. Also, the work of Esteban-Guitart (2012) and Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014b) extended the concept of funds of knowledge by developing the concept of “funds of identity.” Funds of identity does not only focus on the knowledge acquired from home and community but also other funds that contributed in defining one's self (Esteban-Guitart, 2016). Therefore, it becomes evident that the theory of funds of knowledge serves as a solid basis for many literacy-related types of research. This study hopes to further contribute to this literature by investigating the claim in *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) that “children, families, and educators ... [are] at the heart of Ontario's approach to pedagogy for the early years” (p. 9). The study seeks to identify if and how the programmatic curriculum engages with children's families and their home literacy and cultural experiences. A qualitative, document analysis methodology was adopted (Bowen, 2009) since it aids in developing a better understanding of the searched topic and contributes to the discovery of problems and solutions (Bowen, 2009; Merriam, 1988). This study was informed by a diverse range of literature. Chapter 2 provides a brief review of kindergarten in Ontario, pertinent

literature on children's interests and literacy learning in the early years, and literature related to literacy through family engagement. Chapter 2 concludes with an overview of the theoretical framework, funds of knowledge, that guided the study. Chapter 3 features a description and an explanation of the methodological approach that was deployed, the research design, and the process used in analyzing the programmatic curriculum. Chapter 4 presents the findings to children's and family's funds of knowledge and the programmatic curriculum. Tables are provided to offer a detailed explanation of the results. Chapter 5 sheds light on how the examined curriculum highlights children's and family's funds of knowledge by discussing the findings and provides the conclusion of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 also offer suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

To underpin this study, the literature from the following areas was reviewed: Kindergarten in Ontario, children's play in the early years, literacy in the early years, and family engagement.

2.1 Kindergarten in Ontario

In Canada, education is a provincial responsibility, which means that each province develops its own teacher certification program and curriculum documents. The Ontario kindergarten program is "a two-year program for four- and five-year-olds" (OME, 2016, p. 4). Having said that, children born on or before December 30th can enter kindergarten in Ontario, which means children as young as 3.8 years of age can be in a kindergarten classroom.

The Ontario kindergarten curriculum went through dramatic changes over the past decade. "In September 2010, Ontario began phasing in full-day kindergarten" (OME, 2013a, p. 1) having previously offered a half-time program instead. *The Full-Day Early Learning -Kindergarten Program* (2010-2011) specifies that it was built on the six principles that were developed in: *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings* (2007), commonly referred to as ELECT (OME, 2010-2011). The ELECT (2007) document identifies six principles that are meant to support and guide educators in the early years:

1. Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health;
2. Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children;
3. Respect for diversity, equity and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children's

rights, optimal development and learning;

4. A planned curriculum supports early learning;

5. Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity and exuberance;

6. Knowledgeable, responsive early childhood professionals are essential. (p. 5)

After the implementation of full-day kindergarten in Ontario, two new documents were released by the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME), *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* (OME, 2013b) and *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (OME, 2014). Subsequently, a new kindergarten curriculum document was developed – *The Kindergarten Program* (2016). The vision that the *Ontario Early Years Policy Framework* embraced is “to ensure that children, from birth to age six, would have the best possible start in life” (OME, 2016, p. 5). The framework sets out four directing principles: “1. Programs and services are centred on the child and the family; 2. Programs and services are of high quality; 3. Strong partnerships are essential; 4. Programs and services are publicly accountable” (OME, 2013b, p. 7). The policy framework was the foundation that facilitated the building of the document *How Does Learning Happen?* (OME, 2014). The document's principles and vision are built on a “commitment to strengthening the quality of early years' program by ensuring these programs are centred on the child and the family” (p. 4) The pedagogical document is developed around four foundations: Belonging, Well-being, Engagement, and Expression. The document further explains that the “four foundations apply regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting” (p. 7).

The Kindergarten Program (2016) claims that the programmatic curriculum is aligned with and

extended by the four foundations established by *How Does Learning Happen*. The pedagogical document - *How Does Learning Happen?* – explains that early years' education should not focus on specific expectations and outcomes that are predetermined; however, education in the early years needs to focus “on supporting the development of strategies, dispositions, and skills for lifelong learning through play and inquiry” (OME, 2014, p. 15). The 2010-2011 kindergarten program had set six learning areas: personal and social development; language; mathematics; science and technology; health and physical activity; and arts (OME, 2010-2011). However, *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) offers only four learning areas: *Belonging and Contributing*; *Self-Regulation and Well-Being*; *Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours*; and *Problem Solving and Innovating*. Figure 2.1 below demonstrates the ELECT guiding principles with the 4 foundations for learning and development as a continuum throughout the different stages of learning. The document *How Does Learning Happen?* (2014) that includes this figure, explains that the “pedagogical approaches to support the key foundations for learning are common across settings and ages for a continuum of learning” (p. 14).

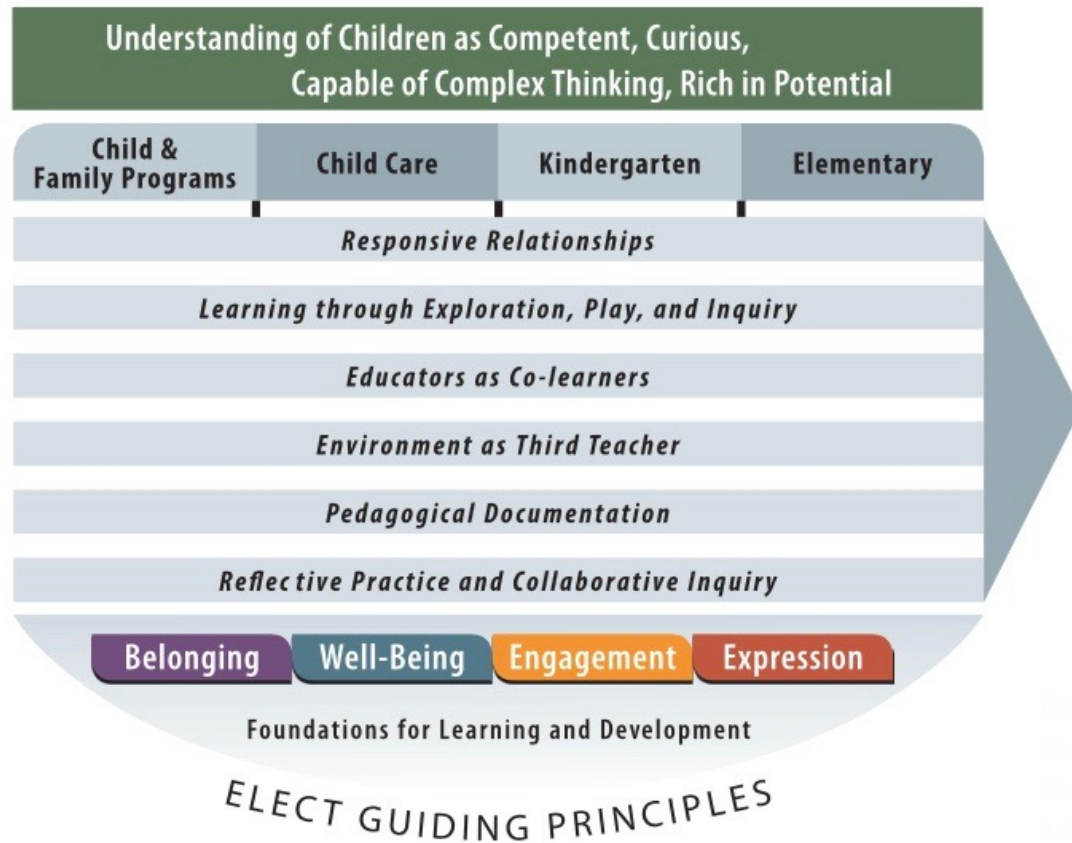
Figure 2. 1. ELECT Guiding Principles

Figure 2.1. Supporting a continuum of learning. Reprinted from *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (p. 14), by Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p.14. Copyright 2014 by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

2.2 Children's play in the early years

The literature on play in the early years is pertinent to review in this study given that *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) aims to provide children with a “play-based environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of all children” (p. 8).

There is a rapidly growing literature on children's play and interests which indicates that the

experiences children encounter with their families and their community significantly stimulate children's interests and play (Hedges et al., 2011). The literature agrees that in the early years, children express their interests through play (Hedges et al., 2011; Hedges, 2015; Riojas-Cortez, 2001; Wood, 2014). According to Vygotsky (1997/1978), play positions children's learning and development as social practices. In addition, when children play, they perform at a higher cognitive level, in comparison to when children follow rigid instructions that do not represent their needs and interests (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Children informally integrate their own family traditions and cultural activities within their play (Karabon, 2016). Karabon (2016) describes play as the "opportunity for children to connect various elements of their lives together to replicate what they know and socially construct new understandings as they engage with others, materials, and the environment (p. 2). Furthermore, Rogoff (2003) describes play as children's work, where children can replicate and imitate their own experiences. Vygotsky (1997/1978) concluded that the kind of play that gives children pleasure is the play where the "child creates an imaginary situation" (p. 93).

The play literature differentiates types of play. Imaginary play "lends itself for children to demonstrate culturally and socially learned practices" (Karabon, 2016, p. 2). Teachers can understand children's way of life by observing their imaginary play (Riojas-Cortez, 2001). Furthermore, when teachers engage in children's play, it does not only extend the play but it also enables the teacher to have a deeper understanding of children's cultural knowledge (Fleer, 2015). According to Wood (2014), the notion of constructing a curriculum based on children's play and interests is founded in early childhood education. In addition, the early childhood classroom needs to incorporate learning experiences that are relevant and meaningful to children (Carr et al., 2010). It becomes imperative for the classroom environment to be rich with

resources and teachers provide children with ample opportunities to explore and inquire freely (Stephen, 2010). When children are offered flexible time and unstructured materials to explore, it offers “multiple affordances for children to draw upon their interests and construct meaning in their play” (Chesworth, 2016, p. 303).

Riojas-Cortez (2001) states that in the early years' classroom, children's home and cultural knowledge “is often displayed through many activities but it is especially evident during sociodramatic play episodes” (p. 35). The author further explains that educators need to observe children's play as a way of understanding children's real cultural and home practices since “the problem that teachers have when trying to implement a ‘culturally relevant or reflective’ curriculum is that they often focus on the folkloric elements of a culture such as artifacts, food, and holidays, among others” (p. 36). As a result, teachers come to a shallow understanding of children's culture and home practices (Riojas-Cortez, 2001). According to Hedges et al. (2011) who studied early years' curricula and children's interests, children's interests should not only be viewed from a play-based angle as children are also influenced by “their families, communities, and cultures” (p. 187). Their research concluded that for early years' education to move forward, educators need to focus on the knowledge and interests that children bring from their home and community. Therefore, the role of the teacher becomes to provide children with opportunities to engage in meaningful play that will “foster thinking and intellectual curiosity” (p. 36). Although existing literatures emphasizes the importance of play that is derived from children's interests (Hedges et al., 2011; Heydon, 2013; Heydon, Crocker, & Zhang, 2014; Moll et al., 1992) further research is needed to understand the ways programmatic curricula relates play with children's interests and knowledge. This study was concerned with the ways in which the Ontario

programmatic curriculum associates play with children's interests and knowledge acquired from home.

2.3 Literacies in the early years

The early years' literature shows that literacy is a significant part of children's everyday experiences at home and school (Compton-Lilly, 2006; Gee, 2010; Marsh, 2004; Pahl, 2002). Empirical evidence appears to confirm that the notion of literacy has dramatically evolved over the past 20 years. The definition of literacy has developed away from the conceptualization of it being only about reading, writing, speaking, and listening only one language (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress, 1998, 2003; Pahl, 1999). Literature shows that literacy practices are influenced by family's culture and values; for instance, Lazar, Edwards, and McMillon (2012) indicated that "literate practice is much more complicated, extensive, and deeply embedded in culture" (p. 47). Further, researchers like Moll and Greenberg (1990) have found that when literacy curricula connect learning opportunities with the students' social world, this will not only increase the success of learning but will allow teachers to provide a broad range of practices both written and oral. Similarly, Pahl (2002) carried out an ethnographic study with culturally diverse 5-8 year-old boys. She documented literacy meaning making in the home and observed the complexity of early years home literacy interactions. For Pahl, "home becomes the space where habitus is improvised upon" (p. 164). The growing diversity within today's classrooms has contributed to the understanding of literacy as *multiliteracies*.

Multiliteracies is a term that was developed by the New London Group in 1996. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) stated that two factors had triggered the development of multiliteracies. One is "the increasing multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making" (p. 5) and

the second is the “increasing local diversity and global connectedness” (p. 6). The pedagogy of multiliteracies is meant to harness multicultural, multilingual, and family literacy. Subsequently, the New London Group (1996) highlighted the significance of studying literacy through a socially and linguistically diverse lens while using multimodal methods to practice literacies. Multiliteracies is an essential element in understanding children's' diverse cultural and linguistic practices that are acquired at home. For example, a case study that was conducted by Compton-Lilly (2006) established a link between childhood and culture as powerful resource “tools for literacy learning” (p. 74). Other scholars such as Barton and Hamilton (2005) further confirmed that literacy is connected and influenced by individuals' daily activities and communities. The New London Group (1996) allied literacy to students' understanding and meaning making, while emphasizing the importance of providing children with opportunities and activities that reflect their cultural backgrounds. They further indicated that the primary duty of education is to provide students opportunities to fully participate “in public, community, and economic life” (p. 60).

The New London Group (1996) further explained “that the use of multiliteracies approach to pedagogy will enable students to achieve the authors' twin goals for literacy learning: creative access to the evolving language of work, power, and community, and fostering the critical engagement necessary for them to design their social futures” (p. 60). The pedagogy of multiliteracies views culture and communities as a core influence on students. To bridge family literacy and school literacy, multiliteracies and related literature argue that educators need to value students' communities, languages, and cultures and make them part of the classroom. Witness, for example, Street, Pahl, and Rowsell (2009) who stated that social influences are connected to literacy. In their research, they came to understand that it is “impossible to isolate

literacy practices from the much wider range of semiosis that was presented ... within homes" (p. 196). According to Street (2003), literacy is not merely a straightforward skill that is learned as social traditions always influence it. He contends that "it is not valid to suggest that 'literacy' can be 'given' neutrally and then its 'social' effects are only experienced afterwards" (p. 78). It is clear from research that, children's home experience and social interactions at school influence early literacy learning.

The New London Group (1996) maintained that there needed to be a high valuation ascribed within literacy education to linguistic plurality. This study will refer to children/students who speak more than one language as *multilingual*. Regarding multiliteracies pedagogy and the literacy education literature for multilingual children, Jim Cummins is a major figure. He and Schecter (2003) have emphasized that "teachers must see their role as creating instructional context in which second language learners can become active partners in the learning process and, second, teachers must view themselves as learners" (p. 11). His multiliteracies project with Margaret Early engaged students from schools around the world to participate in learning activities that revealed their identities, which is referred to as "identity text" (Cummins & Early, 2011). The term identity text describes the "products of students' creative work or performances carried out within the pedagogical space orchestrated by the classroom teacher. Students invest their identities in the creation of these texts-which can be written, spoken, signed, visual, musical, dramatic, or combinations in multimodal form. The identity text "then holds a mirror up to students in which their identities are reflected back in a positive light" (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 3). Through the design and use of identity texts, students can feel empowered and able to voice their thoughts, knowledge, and identities.

Furthering the notion of funds of identity for multilingual children, Lazar, Edwards, and McMillion (2012) justified that “literacy practices vary across cultures, and students come to school with a variety of literacy and language experiences that may not match those that are practiced or valued in school” (p. 47). Banks (2008) also explained that the process of implementing a system that supports multilingual students requires a commitment by the school to improve and restructure its instructions through a long-term plan. He further adds that it is important for schools to embrace an environment that is built on understanding and accepting other cultures, because once “individuals are able to participate in a variety of cultures, they are more capable of benefiting from the total human experience” (p. 1). Schwarzer, Haywood, and Lorenzen (2003) firmly agree that teachers have the power to create a classroom that fosters multilingual learning with the help of students, their families, and the community. Moreover, they suggest that “this cross-cultural literacy awareness benefits both students and teachers in building a community of learners since their native literacy and native cultural backgrounds are considered rich resources instead of obstacles” (p. 456). Using the children’s native language in different contexts within the classroom encourages them to utilize their home experiences and literacy skills.

The literature also stresses the importance of valuing multilingualism. Cummins and Schecter (2003) claimed that teachers need to value students’ identities by incorporating “students’ language and culture within the classroom and see proficiency in language other than English as a significant accomplishment” (p. 9). In other words, when teachers value students’ languages, they are reflecting a sense of appreciation and acceptance which in turn promotes the students’ learning experience. As a result, students will be able “to invest their sense of self, their identity, in acquiring their new language and participating actively in their new culture” (Cummins &

Schechter, 2003, p. 11). As Wink (2011) describes it “we, in education, are a mirror of society” (p. 6). She argues that “textbooks and teachers need to mirror the student” (p. 29).

Many rich ethnographic studies have been completed during the past 40 years that stress the importance of early years' home literacy experiences to children's literacy acquisition (Heath, 1983; Moll, Amanit, Neff, & Gonzales, 1992; Purcell-Gates 1996; Taylor 1982). The implications of these studies emphasized the need for home practices and knowledge to tie-in with school literacy curricula. One of the first and most influential studies was conducted by Heath (1983) over a period of 9 years. Heath's (1983) research pointed to the profound cultural differences she observed among the different communities. She also documented the improvement in students' learning when teachers started to understand their students and included their home experiences in classroom activities. Another significant study conducted by Taylor (1983) also documented the complexity of daily reading and writing within families. She stated that “literacy develops best in relational contexts which are meaningful to the young child” and stressed the importance of rethinking the way literacy is taught at schools (p. 79). Taylor and other recent literature further claim that family literacy is an essential component for understanding students' social, cultural, and linguistic diversity. More recently, for instance, Swartz (2006) described family literacy as the daily interactions that parents and children encounter through reading and writing individually or together. Heath (2010) contended that family literacy is not only about continuous language interactions among family members but also about the “real pleasure in doing and being with children in all stages of development from infancy into young adulthood” (p. 33). She views family literacy as “enjoyment and delight, wonder and curiosity, playful thinking, and leisurely work of children and parents doing something together” (p. 33).

Literature perceive literacy in families as something that is social and evolves over time. Rowsell (2006) stated that “our first memories of making meaning with words, images, and objects occur in our homes” (p. 7). The home is the core of learning, development, and making sense of one’s surroundings. According to Gillen and Hall (2003), “literacy is given meaning by the cultural discourses and practices in which it is embedded and young children are from birth witnesses to and participants in practices” (p. 7). They argue that “literacy is an act of meaning making” (p. 8). Alternatively, Hedges et al. (2011) expressed that children’s interests and inquiries are greatly influenced by their families and knowledge acquired at home.

Despite the existence of a large body of research on the importance of family literacy for students’ success, schools continue to place little emphasis on understanding and including family literacy in school (Frey, 2010). Frey (2010) noted that it is essential for schools to understand what home means and examine the fundamentals of fully engaged families so they can integrate these fundamentals into the school’s administrative structure. Schools need to move away from perceiving family literacy as a way to support school work. Schools and teachers need to start understanding family literacy as a tool that strengthens the bond between family members and instead promote learning and exploring. Family literacy needs to be understood as a natural process, since the time that family members spend together “is arguably the most valued element of all for resilient families” (Frey, 2010, p. 50). Barton and Hamilton (1998) explained that literacy is a social act that represent the daily activities and interactions amongst people in different settings, e.g. home, work, and school. Therefore, the literature is clear that schools need to value the importance of family literacy as a socially constructed practice that develops over time. Ball and Pence (2000), for example, argued that “children reproduce the culture of their primary caregivers, peers, and the media” (p. 21). There is no doubt, according to

Victoria Purcell-Gates (2007), the Canada Research Chair in Early Childhood Literacy, that children's academic achievement is linked to at-home literacy practices which significantly impact individuals' literacy practices throughout their life.

The literature points to an unfortunate consequence of the emphasis on academics in the early years, while home literacy practices are changing to accommodate school literacies (Cairney, 2003; Frey, 2010; Hannon, 2003; Heath, 2010). Heath (2010) has expressed that many parents are now focusing on the language aspect of family literacy and disregarding the importance of interaction with children at home through play. She further explains, that the new forms of "work and play" have changed due to economic changes, which is causing many children to lose the pleasure of listening and reading classical literature and exploring the outdoor world. Although many educators view "home as an important foundation for later learning and ... literacy [learning]" (Cairney, 2003, p. 85), teachers should not ignore the importance of literacy experiences as a way of life without always linking it to academic achievement. Family literacy, this branch of the literature claims, "will never lend itself to being fast, easy, or efficient. Reading together calls for real time committed and unattached to a specific goal or tangible reward ... intangible are the rewards that reading together gives: social intimacy, laughter, fulfillment of curiosity, and contemplation of the wonders of real and imagined worlds" (Heath, 2010, p. 38). Thus, family literacy should be considered as a phenomenon that naturally informs the school's literacy. The following section will describe the importance of connecting families and schools to enhance students' literacy learning.

The early literacy literature from Clay (1977, 1986); Heath (1983); Millard (2003); Pahl (2004, 2014); and Purcell-Gates (1996) among others, agree that the first place that children encounter

literacy experiences is at home. The essence of their research argument is that those experiences help children construct meaning, build a foundation of their understanding, and communicate their ideas. Clay (1977, 1986) argued that children come to school with knowledge of print literacy, and teachers need to allow the students to construct new knowledge through utilizing the knowledge they already have. Therefore, to develop students' literacy, educators need to better understand students' home experiences by building mutual relationships with families and encourage family engagement.

Building relationships between families and schools also inform families on ways they can support literacy learning at school. For example, a study that was conducted by Purcell-Gates (1996) focused on understanding the relationships between school learning and the home, and its effect on children's process of learning to read and write at school. The study concluded that there was "a complex pattern of schooling influence with literacy knowledge emanating directly from the school instruction and activities as well as from home-based activities that were put into increased play by the onset of schooling" (p. 426). Many studies have shown that a high level "of parental involvement has been associated with better student attendance; higher math and reading scores, higher graduation rates, and less grade retention" (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011, p. 117). Also, Pascal (2009) claims that "the most effective time to engage parents is when their children are young" (p. 29).

Schools need to help "parents learn the language of schooling so that the parents can provide every possible assistance to their children in terms of developing the child's learning and love of learning, and in creating the highest possible shared expectations for learning" (Hattie, 2009, p. 33). An important step in building a relationship between families and schools is validating the

family's home experiences as a precious resource in understanding children's home practices. Valuing families empowers them and enables them to "come to authenticate their skills as worthy of pedagogical notice" (Gonzalez et al., 2005, p. 108). When teachers come to understand parents, parents become more confident and would participate more in school activities (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Hensley (2005) reaffirms by explaining that when teachers value parents, they give them the sense of empowerment, which dramatically enhances school-home relationships. To build a healthy relationship with parents "school should consider cultural and economic difference of families." (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011, p. 119). Moreover, LaRocque et al. (2011) note that it is essential for schools and teachers "to address emotional barriers, physical barriers, and cultural differences to increase parent involvement for all families, and in particular families who are from diverse backgrounds" (p. 118). The need to consider the diversity of cultures and languages within the classrooms was the trigger of the current approach to literacy as multiliteracies.

The notion of multiliteracies sheds light on the importance of promoting multiliteracies by classroom teachers as a way of acknowledging students' diversity. Dyson (1990) highlighted that "teachers help children shift through the rich diversity they bring to the school and select only their intentions in varied learning spaces" (p. 211). Consequently, it is important for both educators and parents to view education as a triangle held up and supported by three equally important legs; the parent, the child, and the school. In other words, the fundamental elements educators need to focus on are the family, the community, and relationships between the school and home.

The literature indicates that it is important to understand the difference between family involvement and family engagement. In this regard, Ferlazzo (2011) states that schools that strive towards “family involvement often leads with its mouth - identifying projects, needs and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute. A school striving for parent engagement, on the other hand, tends to lead with its ears - listening to what parents think, dream and worry about. The goal of family engagement is ... to gain partners” (p. 8). The author further argues that “we need to relate to families not as clients, but as partners in school and community improvement” (p. 10). The theoretical framework underpinning this study is the theory of funds of knowledge. In this study, I seek to determine if the programmatic curriculum connects literacy learning with children's home experiences. In addition I seek to investigate the position of families in children's literacy learning.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is designed to shed light on the programmatic curriculum for kindergarten in Ontario and the opportunities it opens up for children's home literacy experiences to inform and coalesce with school learning. The main theoretical framework underpinning this study is the concept of funds of knowledge which is inspired by the vibrant work of Vygotsky (González et al., 2005).

Over many years, Vygotsky's work has informed many educational studies and classroom practices. Vygotsky and Cole (1978) have strongly argued that the culture of the home and the environment has a significant influence on learning, noting that the “learning a child encounters in school always has a pervious history” (p. 84). According to Hedges et al. (2011), “Vygotsky believed that children's informal daily interactions provide a bank of experiences to draw on to develop more formal, scientific, conceptual knowledge in later schooling” (p. 189). In

Vygotsky's view, cognitive development is not the core of education; rather it is the sociocultural events and activities that constitute education (Moll, 1990). One of the major contributions of Vygotskian psychology, according to Moll and Greenberg, (1990), is the proposal that human thinking must be understood in its concrete social and historical circumstances" (p. 319). Further, for Kozulin et al. (2003), Vygotsky's "approach emphasizes the importance of sociocultural forces in shaping the situation of a child's development and learning and points to the crucial role played by parents, teachers, peers, and the community in defining the types of interaction occurring between children and their environments" (p. 2).

2.4.1 Funds of Knowledge

The term funds of knowledge was first developed in the 1990s by Luis Moll, Norma Gonzalez, James Greenberg, Carlos Velez-Ibanez, and Cathy Amanti in Tucson, Arizona. The term refers to: "historically-accumulated and culturally-developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and wellbeing" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 133). Additionally, the term is conceptualized as "the diverse social networks that interconnect households with their social environment and facilitate the sharing or exchange of resources, including knowledge, skills, and labour essential for the household's functioning" (Moll, Tapia & Whitmore, 1993, p. 140).

The first pilot study of funds of knowledge was developed through a project that integrated two fields: education and anthropology (Moll et al., 1992). The assumption that commenced the study "is that people are competent and have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge" (Gonzalez and Moll, 2002, p. 625). The project was designed to help teachers understand culturally and linguistically diverse families through the case of a Mexican

community in the United States. The study included home visits for teachers to “develop innovations in teaching that draw upon the knowledge and skills found in local households” (Moll et al., 1992, p. 132). The authors utilized a combination of tools such as ethnographic observations, life history, and case study, to collect their data (Moll et al., 1992). They claimed that when educators leverage students’ experience at home and in the community, classroom instructions can reflect these experiences. As a result, teachers moved away from traditional constructed activities and instructions within the classroom (Moll et al., 1992). Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti (2005) affirmed that when children are engaged in activities that are meaningful and related to them, they will be motivated and interested in participating and being part of the learning process. Children’s curiosity and inquiries are inspired “by the experiences they engage in with their families, communities, and cultures” (Hedges et al., 2011, p. 187). Hedges et al. (2011) further contend that to provide children with planned and spontaneous opportunities in the classroom, teachers need to engage the parents, which can help in understanding children’s inquiries. Hence, educators who “fail to capitalize on children’s learning gained in informal settings would therefore appear to ignore a rich source of children’s prior knowledge, experience, and interests” (p. 188).

Research on funds of knowledge has focused on the knowledge children gain from their homes and the community; conversely, children also “create their own social worlds and funds of knowledge, which may be independent from the social lives of the adults surrounding them” (Esteban-Guitart, 2016, p. 46). The following section will further explain the theory of funds of identity.

2.4.2 Funds of Identity

The central focus of funds of knowledge is acknowledging the rich experiences children bring from their home. However, funds of knowledge have inspired researchers to further inquire about understanding the identity of individuals. This inspiration has generated a new term, funds of identity, which intermingles with funds of knowledge to create a whole picture of each individual (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b). Below is a definition and explanation of what funds of identity mean to articulate the concept better:

Funds of identity, created through social interactions among people in a given context, are lived experiences by the self that can include significant others, cultural tools, geographical places, institutions, and activities that people use to express and understand themselves. Through learning practices, individuals create identity artifacts, their funds of identity, that enables them to both expand their knowledge and abilities and to connect learning contexts and experiences. In other words, learning means not only mediated process of knowledge creation but also mediated process of identity creation (Esteban-Guitart, 2016, p. 51)

Funds of identity, as defined like above, recognizes how family and community inform children's learning and also how other environmental and social interactions in and out of school help in the development of the child's unique identity. The question of digital communication technology has entered the literature relative to funds of identity.

Digital technology has become part of most households, with a large number of children in the 21st century have mastered the art of navigating the internet, playing electronic games, and

exploiting the social media (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b; Esteban-Guitart, 2015; Moll, Soto-Santiago, & Schwartz, 2013). Technology has become one of the notable contributors to children's funds of identity since it might be significantly different from the funds children acquire from their families. Affirming, Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a) noted that it is important for educators to understand students through the influence of digital devices and social media networking which has created a new environment and context for learning. They argue that the term "identity, as a concept, is often an ambiguous, confused, and abstract term. There is no general agreement about what identity is and how it is constructed ... it must be stressed here that 'identity' is not a thing, but a social construct vaguely referring to a vastly complex set of phenomena" (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014b, p. 32). The funds of identity that are created through socially interacting build on and create a real understanding of the ones' self, which in return helps develop the knowledge and capacity to associate school and experience (Esteban-Guitart, 2016).

Both funds of knowledge and funds of identity are important in understanding that students are individuals who can create their own understanding besides being influenced by home, culture, and community. What is crucial to this study, in relation to identity, is that "literacy practices are infused with identity" (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012, p. 115). Pahl and Rowsell (2012) pointed out that "literacy is a culturally mediated and practice-infused activity that constantly pulls on the personality of the speaker, the writer, or the reader. Our ways of being, speaking, writing and reading are intimately bound up with the different discourse communities which in turn shape our identities further" (p. 115).

2.5 Chapter summary

The Kindergarten Program (2016) went through changes to move away from being subject-based towards focusing more on inquiry and interest based. The programmatic curriculum aims to center children and their families as a core element in the kindergarten. Many types of research on play focus on the importance of sociodramatic play and the ways educators can better understand children. The literature also argues that when educators allocate time to observe children during play, they may come to understand children's culture and interests better. Observations can serve as a guide to teachers during activity planning and other classroom planning to reflect children's funds of knowledge.

The literacy literature is replete with understandings that literacy is influenced by culture and the home environment. Multiliteracies acknowledges children that come from diverse background and harnesses multilingualism and family literacy. Family literacy is vital in the early years. It becomes fundamental that the educators and parents engage in ongoing conversations to help form a relationship that is built on trust. Finally, the theoretical frameworks guiding this research are funds of knowledge and funds of identity. The next chapter will explain the methodological approach that guided this study.

Chapter 3

3.0 Methodology

The purpose of this study was to analyze *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), to determine and articulate how it represents children's and families' funds of knowledge in relation to home literacy and literacy learning at school. The study was designed to address the following research questions:

- In what ways does programmatic curriculum, *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), connect (or not) literacy learning with children's home language and literacy experiences from home?
- How are families depicted within (if at all) the programmatic curriculum in relation to their children's literacy?
- What are some recommendations for programmatic curricula based on the analysis?

Section 3.1 below explains the qualitative research methodology that was deployed to analyze the programmatic curriculum. In turn, section 3.2 outlines the document and specifies the sections that were examined and analyzed. Then, section 3.3 describes the analysis process, followed by Section 3.4 that offers a summary of the chapter.

3.1 Qualitative Research: Document Analysis

To respond to my research questions, I conducted a document analysis. For this project, I examined *The Kindergarten Program*, 2016. *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) is "a two-year program for four- and five- year-olds" (p. 4) developed by the Ontario government. Bowen

(2009) described document analysis as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or reevaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet –transmitted) material (p. 27). For McCulloch (2012), documents, as a data resource, are vital to investigate. Many researchers use document analysis as a part of a triangulation method to increase the credibility of the study. However, document analysis “has also been used as a stand-alone method” (Bowen, 2009, p. 29). Document analysis provides the researcher with evidence of development or change (Bowen, 2009). Merriam (1988) reminded that “documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (p. 118). Thus, researchers are advised to “look at documents with a critical eye” since documents are not usually constructed for the purpose of further research (Bowen, 2009, p. 31). Document analysis constitutes a method that examines and interprets the “data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 3). According to Bowen (2009), “documents provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings” (p. 30).

3.2. Data collection

The primary data source I used in this study was the recently released Ontario 2016 kindergarten curriculum document. The programmatic curriculum is publically available at the OME website. The document consists of four units: A Program to Support Learning and Teaching in Kindergarten; Thinking about Learning and Teaching in the Four frames; The Program in Context; and The Learning Expectations. For the purpose of this research, I analyzed chapters 1.2 Play-Based Learning in a Culture of Inquiry, 1.3 The Learning Environment, 1.4 Assessment

and Learning in Kindergarten: Making Children's Thinking and Learning Visible, 3.2 Building Partnerships: Learning and Working Together, and the entire chapter 4 of the curriculum. Note that chapter 4 consists of the following subsections, 4.1 Using the Elements of the Expectation Charts, 4.2 The Overall Expectation in *The Kindergarten Program*, 4.3 Belonging and Contributing, 4.4 Self-Regulation and Wellbeing, 4.5 Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours, and 4.6 Problem Solving and Innovating. Chapters 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) focuses on providing the reader with research based information regarding play, the environment, and assessment and how it is presented in the kindergarten classroom. The chapter explains the role of "play-based learning in a culture of inquiry; the role of the learning environment; and assessment *for, as, and of* learning through the use of pedagogical documentation, which makes children's thinking and learning visible to the child, the other children, and the family" (OME, 2016, p. 7). Play, the environment, and assessment in the kindergarten are vital parts of the everyday learning atmosphere, and this study would not be complete without looking at how the programmatic curriculum represented these elements from a funds of knowledge perspective. Chapter 3.2 focuses on discussing the responsibilities and relationships between children, families, educators, principals, and the community. It begins by claiming that "young children's learning and development take place in the context of social relationships, responsive relationships are of central importance in their early learning experiences" (p. 108). Since my research aimed to investigate the place of children's and families' funds of knowledge and literacy learning and how schools build relationships with families, chapter 3.2 was a vital part of my analysis process. Chapter 4 is the one that "sets out the learning expectations for the kindergarten program" (p. 115) and is divided into four main frames. Within the four frames, there are four components that are weaved in. These four

components are: *Learning Expectations*; *Conceptual Understandings*; *Professional Learning Conversations and Reflections*; and *Ways in Which Thinking and Learning Are Made Visible*. Chapters 4.3 to 4.6 of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) were the fundamental parts of my documents analysis for two reasons. First, these chapters are core elements that classroom teachers must use while planning their daily lessons. Secondly, teachers, as explained by the Ministry of Education, to “turn first to the section in a program document that outlines what the children are expected to know and will be able to do” (p. 115). Thus, analyzing chapter 4 of the document was pertinent for identifying how the programmatic curriculum does (or does not) include family involvement and children’s home literacy and home language(s).

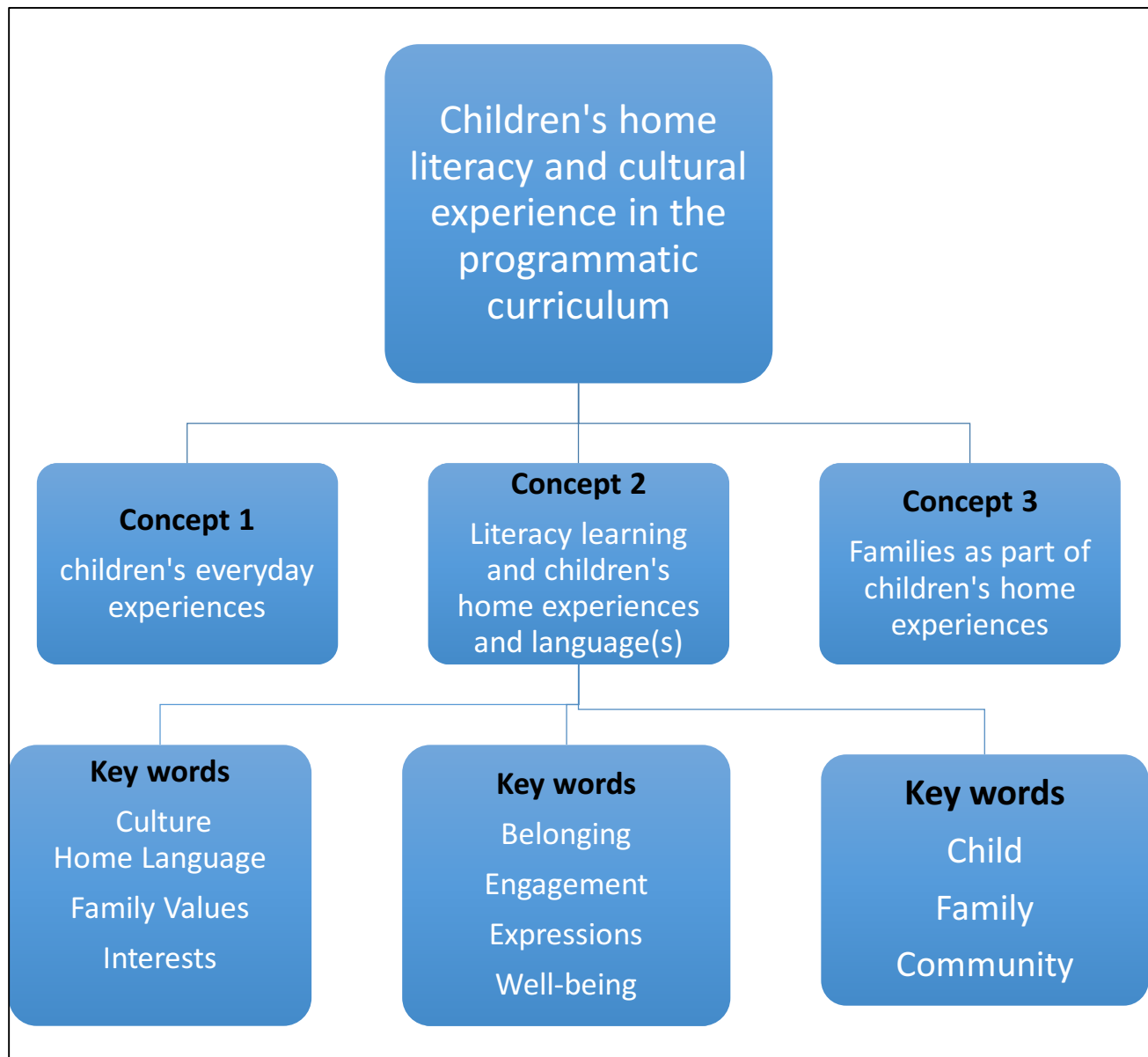
3.3 Data analysis

This study followed Bowen’s (2009) stages of document analysis. The first stage is skimming, which involves looking through the document and becoming more familiar with the data. The second stage is reading. This stage involves thoroughly reading, rereading, and examining the document. Also, the second stage includes a combination of “content analysis and thematic analysis” (p. 32). Content analysis is a stage “of organising information into categories related to the central question of the research” (p. 32). Further, thematic analysis is a strategy that helps in forming patterns in the data (Bowen, 2009). The third stage of document analysis is interpretation. At this stage, the researcher explains the meanings of the findings.

For the purpose of this research, I created a visual tool that could help me to identify the central categories that I focused on during the analysis of the curriculum document. As shown in figure 3.1, the overall focus of the analysis was: Children’s home literacy and cultural experiences in *The Kindergarten Program* (2016). Starting from the main focus, I generated three concepts that

were driven from my research questions, and I assigned a set of keywords for each concept.

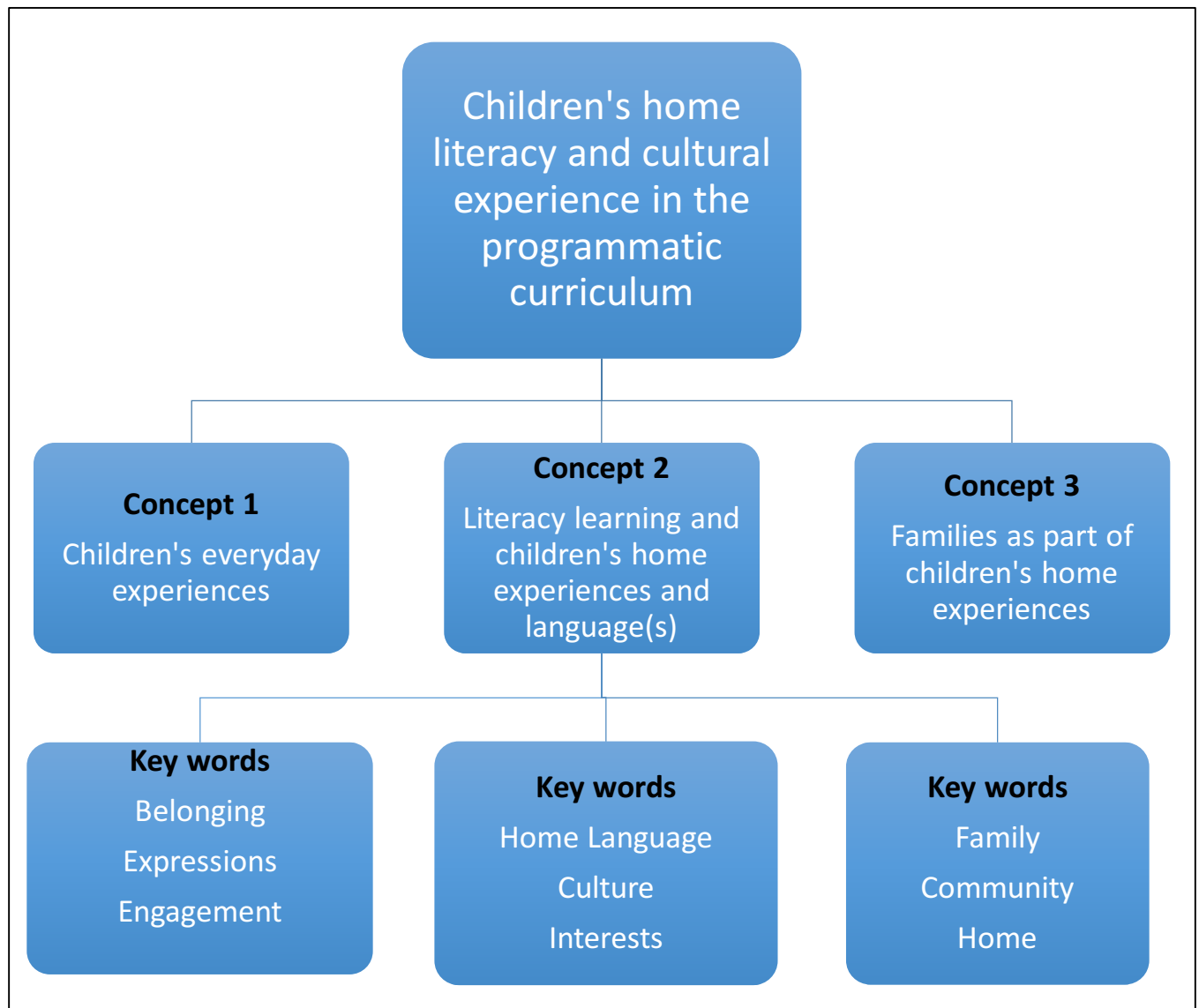
Concept 1: Children's everyday experiences. The related keywords are: *culture*, *home language*, *family values*, and *interests*. Concept 2: Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s). The related keywords were: *belonging*, *engagement*, *expressions*, and *well-being*. Concept 3: Families as part of children's home experiences. The related keywords are: *child*, *family*, and *community*.

Figure 3. 1 The Proposed Three Concepts and Their Related Dimensions

The keywords for all three concepts were developed from literature on funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992; Gonzalez et al., 2005; Hensley, 2005; LaRocque et al., 2011,) and adopted from *How Does Learning Happen?* (OME, 2014). Research on funds of knowledge emphasizes the importance of children's everyday interaction at home and the impact of cultural influences on their behaviors (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Hedges et al. (2011) explained that "children's interests are stimulated by the experiences they engage in with their families, communities, and cultures"

(p. 187) as well as, “language parents use in conversations and interactions with children influence their experience, information, knowledge-building, and understanding” (p. 193).

At the start of my analysis, I noticed that the keywords were not in line with the proposed concepts and it was difficult for me to critically analyze the document and find related key terms that matched with both the concepts and the keywords. As a result, I ended up moving some of the keywords from one concept to another and deleted some keywords to help keep me focused on the concept I was working on. Figure 3.2 includes the keywords that I used during the document analysis. The keywords for concept 1 were changed to: *belonging*, *expressions*, and *engagement*. Concept 2 keywords were changed to: *home language*, *culture*, and *interests*. Concept 3 keywords were changed to: *family*, *community*, and *home*.

Figure 3. 2 The Three Concepts and their Related Dimensions Used During the Analysis

3.3.1 Stages of Data Analysis

As mentioned, I followed Bowen's (2009) three stages of document analysis: skimming, reading, and interpretation. The first step I took towards preparing for the document analysis was printing all the chapters. As reading research suggest that reading paper-based document is necessary when reading academic documents that require a high level of concentration (Durant & Horava,

2015; Stoop, Kreutzer, & Kircz, 2013; Walsh, 2016). The second step I took was color coding the three concepts and the related keywords. Bowen's (2009) three stages of document analysis which I followed are summarized as shown below:

Stage 1

I first skimmed the selected chapters of the curriculum document. I familiarized myself with how the document is arranged. Secondly, I read through all the specified chapters.

Stage 2

The second stage of the analysis required a comprehensive and an in-depth reading of the document. Since the chapters I was analyzing consisted of 224 pages, I needed to divide up the work on how to go about reading and analyzing the document. I started with chapter 3.2 of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) which concentrated on building partnerships among children, parents, educators, principals and the community. This was followed by chapter 4 which included the learning expectations. The information in chapters 4.1 to 4.6 are presented in a chart format with multiple columns and extra subheadings in between. Finally, I went back and looked at chapters 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 which focused on Play-Based Learning in a Culture of Inquiry, The Learning Environment, and Assessment and Learning in Kindergarten.

Throughout the reading stage, I highlighted whatever I identified as relevant to the three suggested concepts and their related keywords using the different color codes and I also wrote comments. To critically analyze the document, I used the following questions as a method to guide my analysis:

- Does the document present children's everyday experiences?
- What are the terms used to identify children's home knowledge and experiences?

- How are the following terms represented in the document: culture, home languages, and families?
- How is the word 'literacy' represented in the document?
- How does the document represent literacy learning?
- How is the process of learning described in the text?
- What is the role of the teacher?
- What is the role of the student?
- What is the role of family?
- How are families included in the learning process?
- How is communication between families, students, and teachers represented in the document?

Stage 3

During stage 3, I created tables for each chapter that could help me visualize the connections and the disconnections between the document and the three concepts and their related keywords. Due to the fact that chapters 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 3.2 of the document were presented differently from chapters 4.1 to 4.6, I analyzed chapters 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 3.2 through in-depth reading and highlighting only, using the color codes and then reported my findings in chapter 4.

For chapters 4.1 to 4.6, I first created a table that presented the 123 specific expectations matching each expectation to one or more concepts when relevant (see Appendix A). Next, I formed a table with three columns where each represented one of the three concepts, and then I pasted the specific expectations that matched with each concept (see Appendix B). To clearly identify how the three concepts relate to the four frames in chapters 4.3 to 3.6, I created a table

that presented the four frames, then I matched the overall expectations in one column and the specific expectation in another column (see Appendix C). After analyzing the overall and specific expectations, I moved to the conceptual understandings and its connection to the three concepts. I created a table that included the four frames and all the respective conceptual understandings, and then I matched the conceptual understandings to the related concept(s) (see Appendix D). Later, I moved on to the educator's intentional interactions. Again, I created a column for each frame then pasted only the educator's intentional interactions that were related to one or more of the concepts (see Appendix E). Finally, I analyzed the professional learning conversations. For this step, I created a table with the four frames and pasted only the professional learning conversations that I found to be related to one or more of the three proposed concepts into each frame (see Appendix F). I used all tables as a guide for the analysis and the writing of my findings.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This study adopted a qualitative document analysis approach to identify the position of children and family's literacy and home literacy experiences at school within the Ontario 2016 Kindergarten curriculum document. The data were analyzed following the work of Bowen's (2009) three stages of analysis: skimming, in-depth reading, and interpretation. Building upon this analysis, this study will offer a new perspective on the ways the Ontario curriculum document represented the knowledge that is acquired at home, the home language(s), the family, the community, as well as the children's prior experiences. The next chapter will discuss in detail the findings of the document analysis.

Chapter 4

4.0 Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the findings regarding how the Ontario kindergarten curriculum document addresses funds of knowledge and funds of identity using the three concepts: Children's everyday experiences, Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s), and Families as part of children's home and school experiences. Table 4.1 below presents a summary of the fundamental categories I used to guide my analysis of the programmatic curriculum. The first column in table 4.1 states the overall focus of the study, funds of knowledge within the programmatic curriculum; the second column includes the three concepts that focus on the scope of the analysis; the third column displays the keywords that I used to link the three concepts with the statements presented in the programmatic curriculum.

Section 4.1 provides an overview of the goals and purpose of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016). This section also includes a brief comparison of *The Full-Day Early Learning – Kindergarten Program* (2010-2011).

Section 4.2 describes the findings from chapters 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 in relation to funds of knowledge and funds of identity. Note that chapters 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 are designated to explaining the role of play and inquiry in the kindergarten classroom, the environment, and assessment methods that are adopted by *The Kindergarten Program*.

Section 4.3 describes the analysis of chapter 3.2 in the curriculum document and what it provides in relation to the three concepts mentioned above. Note that chapter 3.2 is designated to describe the relationships between children, teachers, families, principals, and the community.

Sections 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, and 4.7 provide the findings from chapter 4 in the curriculum document which includes 31 overall expectations and 123 specific expectations distributed among four frames in an expectation chart format. These frames are: Belonging and Contributing, Self-Regulation and Well-Being, Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviour, and Problem Solving and Innovating. Section 4.2 includes tables that express the number of specific expectations mentioned in relation to the three concepts along with their percentages.

Subsequently, key terms that relate to the keywords of concepts 1, 2, and 3 can be found in tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 respectively. Sections 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 will describe other elements that are presented in chapter 4 of the curriculum document. The elements are conceptual understandings, professional learning conversations, and educator's intentional interactions. Also, a table is provided to demonstrate the number of statements and the percentages within the four frames.

Table 4. 1

Three Concepts and Keywords of Each Concept

	Concepts	Keywords
	1.Children's everyday experiences in the programmatic curriculum	A. Belonging B. Expressions C. Engagement
Funds of knowledge within the programmatic curriculum	2. Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s)	A. Home language(s) B. Culture C. Interests
	3. Families as part of children's school and home experiences	A. Family B. Community C. Home

4.1 The goals of *The Kindergarten Program*

The overall purpose of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) “is to establish strong foundation for learning in the early years, and to do so in a safe and caring, played-based environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of all children” (p. 8). The overall purpose of the program stayed the same when compared to the 2010-2011 kindergarten program. However, when comparing the goals of *The Kindergarten Program* of 2016 and 2010-11 versions, it is evident that some of the goals have changed. In the kindergarten curriculum (2010-2011) one of the goals was to prepare children to transition to grade 1 smoothly. However, the revised 2016 kindergarten programmatic curriculum stresses the emphasis on children’s smooth transition into the kindergarten classroom and the significance of learning through interactions and building relationships. Table 2.1 presents a comparison between the goals of both the 2010-2011 kindergarten programmatic curriculum and the 2016 program.

Table 4. 2

A Comparison Between the Goals of The Kindergarten Program 2010-2011 and 2016

2010-2011 <i>The goals of the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten</i> program are	2016 The primary goals of <i>The Kindergarten Program</i> are
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to establish a strong foundation for the early years by providing young children with an integrated day of learning • to provide a play-based learning environment • to help children make a smoother transition to Grade 1 • to improve children’s prospects for success in school and in their lives beyond school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to establish a strong foundation for learning in the early years; • to help children make a smooth transition from home, child care, or preschool settings to school settings; • to allow children to reap the many proven benefits of learning through relationships, and through play and inquiry; • to set children on a path of lifelong learning and nurture competencies that they will need to thrive in the world of today and tomorrow.

The present curriculum states that it values children as:

Competent, capable of complex thinking, curious, and rich in potential and experience.

They grow up in families with diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Every child should feel that he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor to his or her

surroundings, and deserves the opportunity to succeed. When we recognize children as competent, capable, and curious, we are more likely to deliver programs that value and build on their strengths and abilities (OME, 2016, p. 10).

The image of the child and the process of learning and developing has changed to reflect a reciprocal relationship between the child with the family, the environment, and the educator.

Figure 4.1 presents the image, from the curriculum document, used to explain the position of the child and the reciprocal relationships that occur between the child and the educators, the environment, and the family. *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) recognizes the importance of child development thought relationships. This image is presented in the programmatic curriculum to explain that “learning and development happen within the content of relationships among children, families, educators, and their environment” (p. 9).

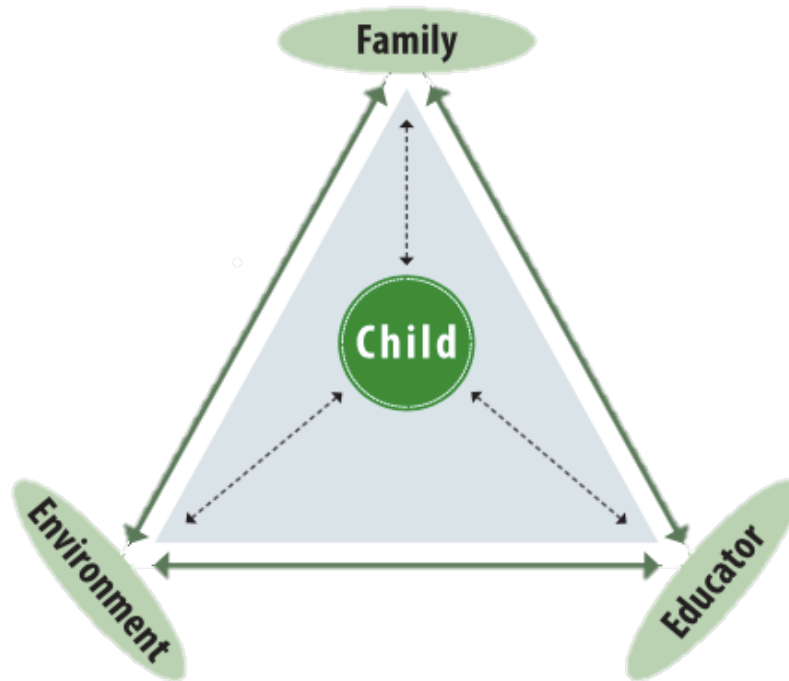
Figure 4. 1. Children Learning in *The Kindergarten Program*

Figure 4.1. Children's Learning in the programmatic curriculum. Reprinted from *The Kindergarten Program* (p. 9) by Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 9. Copyright 2016 by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

The present curriculum provides a definition of what family stands for. *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) views families as:

individuals who are competent and capable, curious, and rich in experience. Families love their children and want the best for them. Families are experts on their children. They are the first and most powerful influence on children's learning, development, health, and well-being. Families bring diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives. Families should feel that they belong, are valuable contributors to their children's learning, and deserve to be engaged in a meaningful way. (p. 10)

According to numerous publications by the OME (2007, 2010, 2013a, 2014), the great emphasis on the importance of children learning through play, interacting with others, and the world around them is evident. The following section provides an overview of the evidence in the programmatic curriculum regarding children's play, the environment, and assessment in the early years.

4.2 Kindergarten fundamental elements

This section presents the findings from chapters 1.2 Play-Based Learning in a Culture of Inquiry, 1.3 The Learning Environment, and 1.4 Assessment and Learning in Kindergarten: Making Children's Thinking and Learning Visible. The programmatic curriculum presents these chapters in the order mentioned above.

4.2.1 Play through inquiry

Chapter 1.2, Play-Based Learning in a Culture of Inquiry, encompasses evidence from research on play. Play in the kindergarten classroom is built on *inquiry stance* in which "children explore, manipulate, build, create, wonder, and ask question" (p. 18). Inquiry in *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) "is at the heart of learning in all subject areas" (p. 18) and is available to all children at any time. The educator's role is "to support children's learning through play, using an inquiry approach" (p. 18). Teachers build on children's learning by "observation, interpretation, and analysis" (p. 19) of children's play. Socio-dramatic play, in other words, imaginary or pretend play, is described as offering opportunities for children to explore and discover various materials that are provided for them. The document refers to socio-dramatic play as a way where by children utilize language and integrate new language that is learned. Furthermore,

participating in socio-dramatic play allows children “to describe and extrapolate from familiar experiences, and to imagine and create new stories” (p. 20).

Inquiry in *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) is described as the tool that aids children to develop “higher-order thinking skills by capitalizing on children’s natural curiosity, their innate sense of wonder and awe, and their desire to make sense of the environment” (p. 21). As part of play-based learning in an inquiry stance, educators also partake in the process of wondering and asking question alongside the children. Furthermore, the chapter explains that teachers interpret and analyze the observation documents to reflect on “their own [educators] inquiry and learning about how the children learn” (p. 25). As well as, this “analysis, which focuses on how the children’s thinking and learning relates to the overall expectations, informs the choices educators will make about how to further challenge and extend the children’s thinking and learning” (p.25)

The section on Communicating with Parents and Families about Play-Based learning, focuses on educating parents on how learning happens in the kindergarten classroom. The document states “A shared understanding of how learning takes place through play can encourage family members and community partners to support play at home” (p. 28). Families’ relationship with educators is summarized in as follows: “families also have valuable insights into their own children. When educators foster a more reciprocal relationship with families, both educators and families will have a more complex understanding of the children” (p. 28).

4.2.2 The classroom

Chapter 1.3 The Learning Environment focuses on the classroom environment. The chapter starts by describing the classroom environment as the “third teacher” which is a term adapted from

early childhood educator Reggio Emilia's approach. The chapter further explains that the "classroom environment is thoughtfully designed, and to encourage communication, collaboration, and inquiry" (p. 29). The environment is arranged by teachers before children come to class. It emphasizes the importance of offering choices to children regarding materials, time, and physical space. Having said that, the environment is not fixed. Educators and children co-plan, co-create, and rearrange according to children's needs and input. The outdoor learning environment is presented as an extension to the indoor classroom. The aim of the outdoor classroom is to allow children to interact with nature, since many children nowadays spend less time outside and more time indoors.

4.2.3 Assessment and Learning in Kindergarten

Assessment in *The Kindergarten Program* is a process where teachers observe and record what children say, do, and represent during the day. Educators "ask probing questions in order to document and interpret the children's thinking and learning" (p. 36). These observations and interactions enable teachers to understand what children already know and what needs to be planned next. *The Kindergarten Program* adopted *pedagogical documentation* as the tool for assessment. Pedagogical documentation "refers to the process of gathering and analyzing a wide range of evidence of a child's thinking and learning over time and using the insights gained to make the child's thinking and learning visible to the child and the child's family" (p. 37). The information is gathered "from observations, notes, photos, videos, voice recordings, work samples, and interactions with children" (p. 37). The process of assessment is "done on an ongoing basis" (p. 37).

Educators are directed to deeply analyze and interpret the documentations as a way to deepen

their understanding of the child. The chapter includes three types of assessments: assessment *for* learning, assessment *as* learning, and assessment *of* learning. The first type of assessment described is the assessment for learning which refers to the “ongoing observation, documentation, and assessment” that reveals new learning (p. 40). Furthermore, “Assessment for learning is ongoing and drives instruction. It occurs in all contexts of children’s play and inquiry” (p. 40). The second type of assessment described in the chapter is assessment as learning which refers to “the process that involves children in thinking about and understanding their own learning and that helps them become autonomous learners” (p. 41). Children contribute to assessment as learning by reflecting on their own work, and think of next steps they need to take to move forward. As well, children take part in assessing other children’s work. The third type of assessment described in the chapter is assessment of learning which refers to the summarization of a “child’s key learning and growth in learning in relation to the overall expectations at a given point in time, and outlining next steps in learning” (p. 43). This third type of assessment is shared with parents and families to support children’s learning at home and school. Sharing assessment with parents allows parents to communicate with educators about a “child’s background and behaviour at home” (p. 44).

The chapter notes “the importance of educators self-awareness in pedagogical documentation” (p. 38). Since what educators choose to document reflects the teachers own “values and what they deem important to notice about children” (p. 38). It further explains that educators “must be aware of their own subjectivity and biases” (p. 38).

4.3 Building partnerships

Building partnerships among children, educators, families, principals, and the community is the core focus of Chapter 3.2 in *The Kindergarten Program* (2016). Studies on family engagement and bridging school and home by Purcell-Gates (1996), LaRocque et al. (2011), Gonzalez et al. (2005), among many others, discussed the great learning benefits children gain when families are involved in school, yet *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) provides only 7 of 256 pages that discussed Building Partnerships.

At the beginning of chapter 3.2, the document states that “children make sense of the world around them through interactions with other children, their parents and other family members, educators, and members of the community in which they live” (OME, 2016, p. 108). It was also mentioned that “collaborative inquiry is carried out by all involved – children, educators, parents and other family members, and members of the community who have an interest in children’s learning” (p. 108). The chapter includes five subsections: Children, Parents and Families, Educators, Principals, and Local Community. Each subsection is explained briefly stating the responsibility of children and the role of each on children’s learning. As part of my document analysis, I read through each subsection and identified the ways that children’s literacy and funds of knowledge are represented in throughout the chapter. The following sections 4.1.1 to 4.1.5 below I further presented the findings by briefly describing each subsection presented in chapter 3.2 of the programmatic curriculum.

4.3.1 The place of children in the document

The chapter Building Partnerships starts by explaining children's interactions and responsibilities. Included in the subsection, Children, is a description of the importance of children's interactions and experiences towards becoming responsible learners. The chapter explains that "with appropriate instruction and through experience, children come to see how an applied effect can enhance learning and improve achievement and well-being" (OME, 2016, p. 108). The chapter contends that it is the educator's responsibility to provide children with a "play-based inquiry" that fosters acceptance, complex thinking and creativity (p. 108). At the end of the Children section, seven points were listed offering examples about what educators can do to provide children with a richer learning environment. Only 1 out of 7 points referred to children's culture; the point was "supporting children's inquiries by providing material (including cultural materials representing the classroom community) that change as the children's needs and wonderings change" (p. 109). Another two points suggest cooperative learning with children, they are "co-constructing learning and acting as co-learners with the children" and "co-constructing the learning environment with the children" (p. 109).

4.3.2 The place of parents and families in the document

The second subsection, Parents and Families, provides information about the importance of schools and families working together to support students' success at school. It starts by stating that "studies show that children perform better in school if their parents are involved in their education" (OME, 2016, p. 109). The subsection emphasizes the importance of parents understanding the kindergarten programmatic curriculum to help their children succeed. Further explanation states that when parents are familiar with the program, they can provide greater

support to their children, plus be able to better communicate with teachers, and “ask relevant questions about their children’s development” (p. 109).

This chapter acknowledges that “parents are the first and most powerful influence on their children’s learning, development, health, and well-being. Parents bring diverse social, cultural, and linguistic perspectives, and are their children’s first role models with respect to learning about values, appropriate behaviour and ethnocultural, spiritual, and personal beliefs and traditions” (OME, 2016, p.109). It is further explained that parents and teachers working together will “only benefit the children in the program” (p. 109) while the school offers parents and families a welcoming environment that respects diversity.

The end of the subsection about parents and families provides seven suggestions that are meant to encourage more family involvement. The first five recommendations offer ideas on how teachers and parents can work together to understand the school environment and the programmatic curriculum. The last two suggestions offer ideas that encourage families to come to class and volunteer in many ways (e.g. reading stories using the home language).

4.3.3 Educators’ role

The third subsection focuses on Educators. It describes the role of a teacher as follows:

“Educators support children and families in high-quality, intentional, play-based learning environment, using varied learning and teaching strategies and assessment approaches to address individual children’s needs and ensure meaningful learning opportunities for every child” (OME, 2016, p. 112). Subsequently, it explains the role of the teacher and the early childhood educator working collaboratively to plan activities and continuously assess children. Teachers are

encouraged to have ongoing conversations with parents both formally and informally as this would “support children’s learning and overall sense of well-being” (p. 112).

4.3.4 The duties of school principals

The fourth subsection titled Principals, labels the principal as “a community builder who plays an important role in creating and sustaining a positive school environment that is welcoming to all, and who ensures that all members of the school community are kept well informed” (OME, 2016, p. 113). The principal works with both teachers and families “to ensure that every child has access to the best possible early learning experience” (p. 113). Additionally, the principal is situated in a leadership position which makes him/her accountable for making sure that communication between teachers and families are taking place and that every child is receiving the appropriate support.

4.3.5 The Local Community

The fifth subsection titled The Local Community, explains that building partnerships with the community is important for children transitioning into kindergarten. Schools and the local community can work together to plan activities inside and outside the school which in turn can encourage children and families to participate. Teachers can “also find opportunities for children to participate in community events, such as programs offered in public libraries, community centres, museums, and provincial parks and conservation areas” (OME, 2016, p. 114). Overall, involving the local community with schools and vice versa builds a stronger social community life for all.

4.4 Learning expectations in the programmatic curriculum

Chapter 4 in the programmatic curriculum focuses on the learning expectations. These expectations are presented in two ways – overall expectations and specific expectations. The function of the learning expectations is to “describe children’s learning in the Kindergarten program” (OME, 2016, p. 116). The overall expectations broadly describe the learning goals, while the specific expectations offer greater details and provide the knowledge and skills needed to be accomplished at the kindergarten level (OME, 2016). Moreover, specific expectations are offered “to assist educators in observing and describing the range of behaviours, knowledge, understanding of concepts, skills, and strategies that children demonstrate as they make progress in their learning in relation to the overall expectations” (p. 116). The language in this chapter as Halliday (1969) would describe it, is *regulatory language*. For Bainbridge and Heydon (2013), regulatory language is viewed as “controlling the behaviour, feelings, or attitudes of other” (p. 139). In other words, the language regulates what the children need to be doing. For example, specific expectation number 17.3 reads “investigate and explain the relationship between two-dimensional shapes and three dimensional figures in objects they have made (e.g., explain that the flat surface of a cube is a square)” (OME, 2016, p. 234). The above specific expectation describes specifically what the teacher needs to observe in order to identify whether the student has achieved the specific expectation. In addition to the fact that chapter 4 includes all learning expectations, chapter 4 also constitutes 56.4% (141 pages) of the entire programmatic curriculum.

To accurately analyze 123 specific expectations, I created a table (see Appendix A) which includes the number of each specific expectation, as presented in the programmatic curriculum,

in the first column. The second column includes each specific expectation, followed by a third column I used to write short comments. The last three columns represented a column for each concept with a color code. As I read each specific expectation, I highlighted words and/or sentences that linked to the concepts using the matching color code. Then I indicated a link to the concept by placing a star under the concept's column. In the case that a specific expectation linked to more than one concept, I placed an additional star under each concept it represented. After completing the same procedure for each specific expectation, I created another table (see Appendix B) which consists of three columns, each column represented one concept. Under each column I pasted all the specific expectations that are linked to the matching concept. Consequently, I was able to calculate how many specific expectations were linked to each concept. The following is the result of the analysis of all specific expectations presented in chapter 4.

Concept 1, children's everyday experiences, appears to be the most addressed concept with 20.3% representation. Concept 2, literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s), and concept 3, families as part of children's school and home experiences, are found to be at a low percentage 7.3% and 6.5% respectively. These low percentages of concepts 2 and 3 indicate that the kindergarten curriculum document has offered few specific expectations that relate to young children's families, home experiences, and language(s). As shown in Table 4.2 below, the first column represents the three concepts, the second column represent the keywords that guided my analysis, the third column represents the number of specific expectations that represented the corresponding concept over the number of total specific expectations, and the fourth column displays the percentage that the corresponding concept was exemplified among the specific expectations.

Table 4. 3

The Number of Statements and Percentage Relevant to the Three Concepts Within the Kindergarten Specific Learning Expectations

Concepts	Keywords	Number of specific learning expectations	Percentage of learning expectations
1.Children's everyday experiences in the programmatic curriculum	Belonging Expressions Engagement	26/123	20.3%
2. Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s)	Home language(s) Culture Interests	9/123	7.3%
3. Families as part of children's home and school experiences	Family Community Home	8/123	6.5%

4.4.1 Concept 1: Children's everyday experiences

Concept 1 focused on finding relevant learning expectations in the document that promote a child's sense of belonging, expression, and engagement. There are 26 out of 123 specific learning expectations that include key terms that represent the keywords. Table 4.3 shows concept 1 in the first column, the keywords in the second column, and the key terms related to concept 1 in the third column. The keywords guided me in the analysis process. As indicated below in Table 4.3 in the second column, the keywords were: belonging, expression, and

engagement. As mentioned in Methodology section of this thesis, the key words were driven from the research questions and from literature on funds of knowledge. The key terms I found that represented the keywords are: *responding, discuss, verbally, non-verbally, body language, signs, gesture, arts, communicate, arts, describe, retell, act, talk, demonstrate, belong, thoughts, express, ideas, preference, dramatize, and stand up for themselves*. Many of the expectations that are linked to concept 1 were associated with the keyword expression. For example, the specific expectation number 6.5 reads “discuss and demonstrate in play what makes them happy and unhappy, and why”. Another example about expression from the specific expectation number 21.1 stated “express their responses to drama and dance (e.g., by moving, by making connections to their experiences with drama and dance, by talking about drama and dance)”.

Table 4. 4

Key Terms Present in the Learning Expectations That Represent Concept 1

Concept 1	Keywords	Key terms
Children's everyday experiences	-belonging -expression -engagement	Respond, discuss, verbally, non-verbally, body language, signs, gesture, arts, communicate, ask, describe, retell, act, talk, demonstrate, belong, thoughts, express, ideas, preference, dramatize, and stand up for themselves

4.4.2 Concept 2: Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s)

Concept 2 focused on literacy learning and how to connect it to children's home experiences and language(s). Only 9 out of 126 Specific Expectations linked literacy learning with children's experiences. Only the specific expectation numbered 5.1 mentioned the statement “another

language”; however, it was referring to a child helping a classmate who speaks another language. Home languages are not included in the overall expectations nor in the specific expectations. Among the 126 specific expectations, multiple statements included the notion “use language”; however, they did not specify what language. According to Bainbridge and Heydon (2013) “language arts in the curriculum document refers to the two official languages of Canada (English and French)” (p. 10) which in this case, the language in the programmatic curriculum refers to the English language. For example, specific expectation 1.6 stated “use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) to communicate their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems” (OME, 2016, p. 155). Table 4.4 shows concept 2 in the first column, the keywords in the second column, and the key terms related to the keywords that are associated with concept 2 in the third column. The keywords are: culture, home language, and interests. During the analysis, the following key terms connected the most with the keywords to concept 2: *connection, connect with, use language, use vocabulary, reading behaviour, interest in, write, personal experience, familiar, personal experience, prior experience, prior knowledge, retell –orally or non-verbally, everyday experiences, and experiences at home.*

Table 4. 5

Key Terms in the Learning Expectations That Represent Concept 2

Concept 2	Keywords	Key terms
Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s)	-culture -home language -interests	Connection, connect with, use language, use vocabulary, reading behaviour, interest in, write, personal experience, familiar, personal experience, prior experience, prior knowledge, retell – orally or non verbally, everyday experiences, and experiences at home

4.4.3 Concept 3: Families as part of children's home and school experiences

Concept 3 focused on how families are physically engaged in their children's learning at school and the ongoing communication between school and home. Only 8 out of 126 specific expectations addressed families' engagement and communication with school. Among these 8 expectations, 6 were under the overall expectation number 21. The focus of overall expectation number 21 is for students to "express their responses to a variety of forms of drama, music, and visual arts from various cultures and communities" (OME, 2016, p. 315). Therefore, 6 out of the 8 specific expectations that represented concept 3 focus on arts as a way to include cultures and communities. For example, specific expectation 21.5 reads "express their responses to visual art forms by making connections to their own experiences or by talking about the form" (p. 315). Table 4.5 shows concept 3 in the first column; the second column shows the keywords: family, community, and home; and the third column present the key terms: *folk tales, communities, community, cultures, legends, group, groups, and home*.

Table 4. 6

Key Terms Found in the Learning Expectations That Represent Concept 3

Concept 3	Keywords	Key terms
Families as part of children's home and school experiences	-Family -Community -home	Folk tales, Communities, Community, Cultures, Legends, Group, Groups, home

4.4.4 The four “frames” in the Kindergarten program and their relation to the three concepts

After analyzing all the Specific Expectations as a whole, I analyzed the four frames: 4.3 Belonging and Contribution; 4.4 Self-Regulation and Well-Being; 4.5 Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematical Behaviours; 4.6 Problem solving and Innovating. To analyze the 4 frames, I created a table (see Appendix C) consisting of three columns. The first column identified the frame, the second column indicated which overall expectation was present in each frame, and the third column presents only the Specific Expectations that correlated to one or more of the three concepts. I obtained this information by referring back to the programmatic curriculum and recording which overall and specific expectations were presented in each frame, then referred back to Appendix A to extract the specific expectations that I already highlighted then I linked it to each frame. The analysis showed that 14 out of 27 specific expectations within the frame 4.3 represented the three concepts in some way. Frame 4.4 presented 6 out of 26 Specific Expectations connecting to the three concepts. Frame 4.5 presented literacy learning in many ways; however, only 12 out of 66 specific expectations were associated with the three concepts. Frame 4.6 showed that 14 out of the 43 specific expectations were related to the three concepts. Table 4.6 shows the 4 frames in the first column, the number of specific expectations which contain terms or ideas relevant to the three concepts in the second column, and their corresponding percentages in the third column. Among the 126 specific expectations, only two specific expectations represented all three concepts; that indicates a very low number of specific expectations representing all three concepts. These two specific expectations are: 5.2 “talk about events and retell, dramatize, or represent stories or experiences that reflect their own heritage and cultural background and the heritage and cultural backgrounds of others (e.g., traditions, cultural

events, myths, Canadian symbols, everyday experiences)” (OME, 2016, p. 308) and 21.2 “dramatize rhymes, stories, legends, and folk tales from various cultures and communities (e.g., use actions, pictures, words, or puppets to tell a story in the dramatic play area or in the blocks area)” (p. 315).

Table 4. 7

The Number of Statements and Percentages Relevant to the Three Concepts Within the 4 Frames

Frames	Number of specific expectations	Percentage of specific expectation
4.3 Belonging and Contribution	14/27	51.8%
4.4 Self-Regulation and Well-Being	6/26	23%
4.5 Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematical Behaviours	12/66	18%
4.6 Problem Solving and Innovating	14/ 43	32%

4.5 Conceptual understandings in the kindergarten curriculum

Conceptual Understandings are presented in chapter 4 as a link to the overall expectations. The purpose of the Conceptual Understandings is to “allow educators the flexibility to adapt them for use in their classrooms and with families. Some are expressed as learning goals, some are ideas that could be integrated with other Conceptual Understandings, and some are expressed from the children’s point of view” (OME, 2016, p. 117). The number of Conceptual Understandings varies between one frame and another. In order to analyze the conceptual understandings, I read

all the Conceptual Understandings in each frame and highlighted the statements that were most significant to the three concepts; concept 1: Children's everyday experiences; concept 2: Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s); concept 3: Families as part of children's home and school experiences. Subsequently, I created a table (See Appendix D) which includes the four frames in the first column. The second column includes the Conceptual Understandings that I found associated with the three concepts, followed by a third column I used to write short comments. The last three columns represented a column for each concept with a color code. As I read each statement from the Conceptual Understandings column, I indicated a link to the concept by placing a star under the concept's column. In the case that a specific expectation has linked to more than one concept, I placed an additional star under each concept it represented.

As a result of the analysis, I found that frame 4.3 has the highest number of Conceptual Understandings that relate to the three concepts scoring a percentage of 37.7. Each of the other three frames present the three concepts at a percentage lower than 15. During the analysis, I found that there was one Conceptual Understandings that was present in all four frames. This Conceptual Understandings is "Knowledge is socially constructed – created by people learning, working, and investigating together – and can be shared" (OME, 2016, p. 126). It emphasized that learning is created socially and through interacting with others. The Conceptual Understandings thus seem to have more emphasis on culture, communities, and linguistic diversity compared to the specific expectations. For example, in chapter 4.3 in the curriculum document under conceptual understandings, it reads: "It is essential for us all to honour and understand diverse cultural, linguistic, and personal preferences." (p. 132).

Table 4.7 shows the four frames in the first column; the second column presents the number of Conceptual Understandings that related to the three concepts over the number Conceptual Understandings presented in each frame (note that the total number of conceptual understandings varies between each frame); the third column shows the percentage of conceptual understandings related to each frame. As displayed in Table 4.7 below, in the first frame, Belonging and Contributing, 23 out of 61 (37.7%) conceptual understandings are related to one or more of the three concepts; the second frame, Self-regulation and Well-Being, 6 out of 42 (14.3%) conceptual understandings are related to one or more of the three concepts; the third frame, Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviours, only 10 out of 77 (13%) of the conceptual understandings relate to the three concept; the fourth frame, Problem Solving and Innovating, presented the lowest number of conceptual understandings related to the three concepts with only 5 out of 52 (9.6%).

Table 4. 8

The Frames and the Number of Their Related Conceptual Understandings

The four frame in the programmatic curriculum	Number of conceptual understandings for each frame	Percentage of conceptual understandings for each frame
4.3 Belonging and contributing	23/61	37.7%
4.4 Self-regulation and well-being	6/42	14.3%
4.5 Demonstrating literacy and mathematics behaviours	10/77	13%
4.6 Problem solving and innovating	5/52	9.6%

4.6 Educator's intentional interactions in the kindergarten curriculum

The frames 4.3 through 4.6 in the curriculum document are presented in a chart format having the Specific Expectations in the first column, Ways in Which Children Might Demonstrate Their Learning in the second column, along with The Educator's Intentional Interactions presented in the third column of the chart.

This section (4.3 of the findings) focuses only on The Educator's Intentional Interactions. The Educator's Intentional Interaction "provides examples that illustrate how educators engage with children's learning and develop their own professional capabilities as researchers into children's

learning” (OME, 2016, p.119). Note that the column that presented The Educator’s Intentional Interactions is divided into three sections: responding, challenging, and extending. To analyze The Educator’s Intentional Interactions, I read through all the examples and highlighted the statements that related to the three concepts; concept 1: Children’s everyday experiences; concept 2: Literacy learning and children’s home experiences and language(s); concept 3: Families as part of children’s home and school experiences. Later, I created a table (See Appendix E) that I divided into four columns, each column representing a frame. Next, I only typed the examples that were relevant to the three concepts and highlighted them using the color code for each concept to identify which example related to which concept. The results shown in Table 4.8 (see below) indicate that the first frame had 9 examples, the second frame had no examples related to the three concepts, the third frame presented 10 examples, and the fourth frame had only 3 examples.

Concept 1, Children’s everyday experiences, was addressed in 7 out of 9 statements in the first frame. Among these nine examples, only two referred to languages. For example, the first example states “to provoke further discussion, they add photos of American Sign Language (ASL) to photos of children’s’ non-verbal communication” (OME, 2016, p. 127), and the second example reads “The educators have numerous conversations about honouring the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child-rearing practices, and lifestyle choices of families” (p. 141). Moreover, only 2 out of the 9 examples in the first frame mentioned families and family engagement. These are: “An educator invites children’s family members into the classroom to share stories of important family events, and then invites the children to talk about those events” (p. 133) and “The educators have numerous conversations about honouring the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child-rearing practices, and lifestyle choices of families” (p. 141).

None of The Educator's Intentional Interactions examples in the second frame have referred to any of the three concepts.

In frame 4.5, there are 10 examples that relate to the three concepts. Concept 3, families as part of children's home and school experiences, was referred to 6 out of 10 Educator's Intentional Interactions statements. The examples focused on both inviting parents and communicating with parents. For example, one of the statements explains that the educators and families can work together "to help the child both at home and at school... the educators send home envelopes with letter tiles and name cards so the families can play the sound games at home" (OME, 2016, p. 193). Moreover, 2 examples out of the 10 were related to concept 2, literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s). The example that was provided specified the use of home language(s) as a way to support children's written communication. Concept 1 was addressed in 3 examples in the third frame. The examples focused on including children's home experiences and prior knowledge. The fourth frame had only 3 examples that each has represented only 1 of the three concepts.

The analysis of The Educator's Intentional Interactions section showed the word "home Language" was mentioned in both frame three and four. The first example is "To support children's use of written communication in many contexts, the educators post signs children have written in their home language(s)" (OME, 2016, p. 198). The second example is "Some of the songs have been shared by the families in the community and some are known around the world. Families send in some of their favourite music and tell stories about why it is special. In some cases, families share in their home language, and older siblings in the school support communication" (p. 251) and the third example is "To support children's use of written

communication in many contexts, the educators post signs children have written in their home languages. The children's families who use written communication in their home language contribute to the signs. The parents who are unable to come into the school join via web conference" (p. 275).

Table 4. 9

The Number of Examples of the Educator's Intentional Interactions

The four frame in the programmatic curriculum	Number of examples from the whole document
4.3 Belonging and Contribution	9
4.4 Self-Regulation and Well-Being	0
4.5 Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematical Behaviours	10
4.6 Problem Solving and Innovating	3

4.7 Professional learning conversation in the kindergarten curriculum

A section on Professional Learning Conversation (PLC) appeared 21 times, inconsistently, throughout chapters 4.3 to 4.6 of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) following the expectation charts. PLC is presented to "illustrate the insights and innovations that collaborative reflection can provide to support children's learning and encourage families' involvement" (OME, 2016, p. 117). The section of PLC within the programmatic curriculum explains that teachers "are responsible for implementing a program that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, integrated, developmentally appropriate, and culturally and linguistically responsive, and that

promotes positive outcomes for all children” (p. 117). The overall programmatic curriculum includes 21 PLCs.

To examine and report on the findings of the PLC, I created a table (see Appendix E). The table includes the four frames in the first column, the second column includes the PLC that connect to the three concepts, followed by a third column I used to write short comments, and the last three columns represented a column for each concept with a color code. I only typed the appropriate PLC under the second column and indicated which concept(s) were related to each PLC by highlighting a word or a sentence and placing a star under the applicable concept column(s). The findings show that only 9 out of 21 PLCs represented the three concepts; concept 1, Children's everyday experiences, is represented by two PLC, concept 2, Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s), is represented by two PLC, and concept 3, Families as part of children's home and school experiences, is represented by eight PLC.

The two PLCs of concept 1 were found related to children's experiences. One included the various cultures in the classroom and children's prior knowledge, and the other reflected teachers planning for classroom activities and themes according to children's interests and prior knowledge. Concept 2 PLCs were linked to home language; one has expressed the importance of maintaining home language, and the other has presented a case where the teacher asks parents to help in translating teacher-to-parent notes to support other parents who do not speak English. The eight PLCs that represented concept 3 focused on ways to inform and make parents and families more aware of what is happening in the class, some focused on inviting families to share their knowledge with the class, and other examples focused on inviting families to informal classroom event, i.e. inviting parents for a breakfast meeting.

Table 4.8 below shows the four frames in the first column and the number of PLCs in each frame that represented the three concepts over the total number of PLCs in each frame (note that the number of PLCs varies among each frame). The results are: The first frame had 0 out of 4 PLCs representing one or more of three concepts, the second frame had only 1 PLC which represented one of the concepts, the third frame had 4 out of 9 PLCs that represented one or more of the three concepts, and the fourth frame had 4 out of 7 PLCs that represented one or more of the three concepts.

Table 4. 10

The Number of PLCs Related to the Three Concepts Within Each Frame

The four frames in the programmatic curriculum	Number of PLCs representing the three concepts
4.3 Belonging and Contributing	0/4
4.4 Self-regulation and well-being	1/1
4.5 Demonstrating literacy and Mathematics Behaviours	4/9
4.6 Problem solving and innovating	4/7

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter describes the findings from the Ontario programmatic curriculum, focusing on the specific expectations, conceptual understandings, Educators intentional interactions, and Professional learning conversations. Overall these findings suggest that there is little emphasis on family involvement, home language, and deep understandings of children's home, culture, and community perspectives. On the other hand, the programmatic curriculum document highlighted children's sense of belonging, and the freedom to express their opinion and ideas.

Literacy learning and the connection with home language(s) were neither included in the overall

and specific expectations, nor in the conceptual understandings sections. However, home language(s) was/were briefly mentioned in the Educator's Intentional Interactions and Professional Learning Conversations as stated above. More family/community involvement was evident in the conceptual understandings, Educator's Intentional Interactions, and Professional Learning Conversations. However, few statements have referred to families and communities in the overall and specific expectations. In the next chapter, I discuss the key findings pertaining funds of knowledge of children and their families in the Ontario programmatic curriculum.

Chapter 5

5.0 Puzzling times

Writing chapter 5 was challenging. Not because it was the last chapter and I had to discuss my findings and present the implications for future research, but because I felt like I was living in a bubble. My family, my thesis, and I lived in that bubble. I tried to block everything else that was happening outside my bubble, in other words, the real bubble - the world around me. I woke up one morning (January 30th, 2017), feeling cheerful and confident that I would finish writing chapter 5. I prepared my coffee, served the kids breakfast, and sat down. At that moment, my husband looked at me and said, "Today during Fajir [morning prayer], the Imam of the Mosque announced that extra precautions would be taken." I opened my eyes wide and said: "WHY?". He replied, "Haven't you heard?" and I said, "Heard what?". Then, he narrated that the night before (January 29th, 2017), a shooting incident had happened in Quebec City at the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec. I was aware that several political dilemmas were occurring outside my bubble, but I had been trying to stay focused within my bubble. A couple of hours later after my husband told me about the news, he and I went to the Mosque responding to a call of multi-faith solidarity against the shooting incident, initiated by London, Ontario's mayor in collaboration with the city's faith-based organizations and leaders. As I was walking towards the Mosque, I felt my heart pounding, my eyes tearing, and my emotions tangled. I felt love, compassion, and unity. I felt fear, a fear of the world that I don't know. I am afraid of the day my kids are not kids anymore, the day when they wake up and start seeing the vicious reality that we (humans) live in. Besides what is happening and will happen, I want them to see the good in people; I want them to search and see the kindness that still exists. I want them to grow to be genuine people, respond to hate with compassion, and most importantly be proud of their

identity. Every morning I know that my responsibility is growing. My responsibility not only towards my children but towards all children who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I know I will not be able to reconstruct the world, but I know I can start somewhere, at schools. I believe that many children call and consider schools as their “second home”. Teachers are and continue to be powerful and influential agents in schooling. Teachers have the capacity to enable or disable learning. Based on these beliefs, I see my study of great importance in such challenging and puzzling times. Undoubtedly, schools need to foster understandings of all children and value their funds of knowledge and identity. Schools need to engage with families and create authentic and robust relationships that are built on trust and understanding and leave behind those connections that are constructed on rhetoric. Today, the way media and politics portray or illustrate particular groups is far away from the reality. Therefore, it becomes vital for teachers to understand families and children thoroughly. Teachers work with children who see the world through friendships, soccer games, dolls, Dora, Pokémon's, video games, hockey, camping, and the list goes on. Most children neither see nor understand the political tangle that exists in the world we live in today. Thus, teachers in this messy world, need to avoid prejudice and value students' different funds of knowledge and identities. The position of teachers is significant in the lives of children and the ways they later view the world around them. Having said that, open-mindedness towards students' diversity is a robust pillar and a fundamental necessity for all educators, particularly those who practice in the early years' setting. Now I turn to explain the overview of this chapter. These are my investments, and why this research is of such importance to me.

5.1 Chapter Overview

The notion of Funds of knowledge and Funds of Identity represent the knowledge that children gain via interactions within the home and the community which in turn shape their identities.

The knowledge that children bring into the classroom becomes a venue through which educators identify children's interests, their cultures, and their families' perspectives. In this regard, the significant findings in *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) were the absence of the embodiment of a thorough recognition of children's funds of knowledge and funds of identity. The goals of *The Kindergarten Program* indicate little evidence of promoting family engagement and drawing on children's prior knowledge. Although *The Kindergarten Program* suggested a "shared understanding of children, families, and educators" (p. 9), the analysis concluded that the position of families in the programmatic curriculum is merely viewed as a channel that only leads to children's academic achievement. Additionally, home language has no definite position in the programmatic curriculum.

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. In what ways does programmatic curriculum, *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), connect (or not) literacy learning with children's home language and literacy experiences from home?
2. How are families depicted within (if at all) the programmatic curriculum in relation to their children's literacy?
3. What are some recommendations for programmatic curricula based on the analysis?

This chapter further discusses the findings. The theoretical framework, funds of knowledge and funds of identity, guided the interpretation of the results and they are weaved through each section. Sections 5.2 to 5.5 below, discusses the most significant findings; *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) goals, play in the programmatic curriculum, the position of families and parents, the home language in the curriculum, and children's home literacy experience. Section 5.6 includes an overall implication of the study. Finally, section 5.7 addresses future studies.

5.2 *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) goals

Regardless of the changes that were relevant to *The Kindergarten Program* (2016), the goals still did not exemplify the importance of children and family's funds of knowledge and funds of identity. One of the goals in *The Kindergarten Program* changed from "to help children make a smoother transition to Grade 1" (OME, 2010-2011, p. 1) into helping "children make a smooth transition from home, childcare, or preschool setting to school settings" (OME, 2016, p. 8). It shows a shift from the focus on preparing children for Grade 1 to focusing on helping children adapt to the kindergarten classroom. However, the focus is to transition *from* home instead of *with* home. None of the goals emphasize the importance of including the home and knowledge acquired at home in the process of transition. According to the research literature, the home environment and the coherence between home and school is a vital factor that affects children's literacy learning (Cairney, 2003; Heath, 1983; Makin, 2003; Purcell-Gates, 1996). Makin (2003) confirmed that even though the notion of a harmonious relationship between home and school "is now widely accepted, acceptance does not appear to have been translated into environmental change, especially in schools" (p. 328). That is the case in *The Kindergarten Program*, the primary goals do not indicate any signs of bridging the home and school as a unit working

together. However, *The Kindergarten Program* “supports engagement and ongoing dialogue with families about their children’s learning and development” (p. 8). Having said that, the programmatic curriculum still does not indicate a great emphasis on educators learning from family’s funds of knowledge. Therefore, to move forward towards supporting children in transition to school and supporting the literacy learning process, the goals need to reflect and emphasize the importance of working with families and integrating children’s funds of knowledge through transitioning into kindergarten. The programmatic curriculum can utilize the use of pedagogical documentation, which is used in the curriculum as an assessment tool, to bridge home with school. The programmatic curriculum can also encourage families to share artifacts with the school and other items that represent the children’s funds of knowledge and funds of identity. Regularly allowing parents to see what is happening at school and families sharing artifacts from home and communicating can ease the transition to school and build a strong connection between homes and schools. The following sections will further discuss the many ways the programmatic curriculum minimally integrates children’s funds of knowledge and funds of identity into the curriculum document.

5.3 Play in the programmatic curriculum

The programmatic curriculum states that “play is a vehicle for learning and rests at the core of innovation and creativity” (OME, 2016, p. 18). The document also stresses the importance of inquiry and teacher-student collaboration and the ways they are all intertwined throughout the day. However, the programmatic curriculum demonstrates a lack of emphasis on children’s funds of knowledge and funds of identity and their relation to play. The concept of play is universally known to be the core of the early childhood classroom. What is even more important is

connecting, understanding, and valuing play from a funds of knowledge perspective. From a funds of knowledge viewpoint, teachers need to engage with students to mediate the students' cultural and social ways of knowing and valuing that knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Adair and Doucet (2014) affirm that educators need to connect play with cultural and knowledge acquired from home. They further explain that when teachers do not recognize play "as both cultural and racial, teachers often fall into the trap of normalizing play instead of broadening interpretation of play" (p. 362). Also, disconnecting play from children's funds of knowledge results in missing children's "full complexity and variability" (Adair & Doucet, 2014, p. 363).

A fundamental pillar of funds of knowledge is to provide children with learning experiences that are rooted in children's cultural, social, and historical knowledge. Moreover, current literature highlights the importance of educators preparing learning activities for children that express and extend children's home and community interests and experiences (Henward, 2015; Souto-Manning, 2013). It becomes imperative for a teacher to observe children play, specifically during imaginative play. Riojoas-Cortez (2001) explains that imaginary "play allows children to exhibit their funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge tell teachers what children know and are capable of doing" (p. 39). Findings from the programmatic curriculum indicate that "play is an optimal context for enabling children to work out their ideas and theories and use what they already know to deepen their understanding and further their learning" (OME, 2016, p. 19). On the contrary, the document stated that play "has an important role in learning and can be used to further children's learning in all areas of the Kindergarten program" (p. 19). Therefore, the programmatic curriculum focused on the learning areas within the Kindergarten program and ignored the importance of building on children's funds of knowledge through play. Furthermore,

the findings show that *The Kindergarten Program* characterize socio-dramatic play as a period where children practice communicating, integrating language and new skills learned. For example, the document states that “children begin to assimilate adult prompts, descriptions, explanations, and strategies by incorporating them into their self-talk” (OME, 2016, p. 20). Again, the programmatic curriculum does not link socio-dramatic play with children's funds of knowledge and funds of identity. Although, as Karabon (2016) also affirms, imaginative play is the period where children substantially engage in reproducing “real-life scenarios in their own imaginative way” (p. 2). The programmatic curriculum needs to place more value and importance on the socio-dramatic play as a tool for teachers to understand children's complex and holistic being, rather than just focus on academic expectations.

Children's inquiries are the catalysis of learning when capitalizing children's curiosity and wonders; however, *The Kindergarten Program* neglect the importance of building on children's funds of knowledge through their inquiry. The programmatic curriculum “adopt an inquiry stance – a mindset of questioning and wondering – [teachers] alongside the children, to support their learning as they exercise their natural curiosity” (OME, 2016, p. 21). Furthermore, the programmatic curriculum identifies one of the roles of the teacher when reflecting and analyzing documentations of children's work is to “make connections to the overall expectations” (p. 24). An inquiry is an authentic expression of students' interest and cannot be linked or driven from intended expectations. Wells (1999) argued that an inquiry should focus on:

Starting with ‘real’ questions that are generated by students' first-hand engagement with topics and problems that have become of genuine interest to them. For it is when learners have begun to formulate their own theories, to test them in various ways, and to submit

them to critical evaluation by their peers, that they can most fully appreciate contributions to the problems with which they are engaged that have been made by more experienced workers in the field (p. 91).

Lindfors (1999) further explained that “children’s inquiry acts provide a window to their thinking, allowing us to glimpse what they make sense of and how they are doing it, how they understand and how they use others to help them” (p. 16). An inquiry stems from children and teachers help in scaffolding and guiding students’ learning. A central role for teachers then becomes to observe and document children’s questions and interests and communicate them with children and families. *The Kindergarten Program* document states that teachers need to interpret and analyze the observations of children’s play from the perspective of “how the children’s thinking and learning relates to the overall expectations” (OME, 2016, p. 25). The document further added that when “educators question and wonder along with the children, they bear in mind *the intention for learning* –which, in any given context, will involve one or more of the overall expectations” (p. 21). For teachers to truly include children’s funds of knowledge in the classroom, activities need to be significant to children and “their families and communities and reflect their inquiries about their worlds.” (Hedges, 2014, p. 47). Therefore, children’s thinking and learning should not always relate to the learning expectations presented in the programmatic curriculum. Educators need to value all children’s interests and play even when not aligned with the learning expectations presented in the curriculum. These precautions allow children to represent their cultural replication during play.

The Kindergarten Program (2016) employs a pedagogical documentation as an assessment tool to gather and analyze children’s thinking and learning, and the programmatic curriculum does

indicate the importance of teachers being “aware of their own subjectivity and biases” (p. 38). Noting “the importance of educator self-awareness in pedagogical documentation” (p. 38) is vital since teachers’ subjectivity and biases can significantly influence what teachers view as valuable and important versus what it is not. Adair and Doucet (2014) explain that “adults tend to interpret children’s behavior based on individual characteristics rather than their social, cultural, racial, or political identities and understandings” (p. 361). Another important fact, for Karabon (2016), is that teachers might “grapple with identifying this knowledge as valuable to learning at school because it may not align with the disciplinary focus of the existing curricula” (p. 2). Hedges et al. (2011) argue that teachers find it challenging to identify and document children’s interests that are driven by popular culture as a precious resource. Therefore, it is important for teachers to be aware and reflect on their biases while interpreting documentations.

5.4 Position of families and parents

Although *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) claims that “children, families, and educators ... [are] at the heart of Ontario’s approach to pedagogy for the early years” (p. 9), the analysis indicated that the relationships between schools and families are not built on the understanding of children’s and families’ funds of knowledge. Chapter 4 included the figure 4.1 which shows that the child is in the center with arrows flowing back and forth between and among the child, educators, family, and the environment. The image gives the illusion that an equal flow is moving among all the contributors. However, chapter 3.2 and the sections that represented families in chapter 4 of the curriculum document, reflected a contradiction between figure 4.1 and the description of the role of the family and how educators communicate and include families. Two sections represented families in chapter 4 of the programmatic curriculum:

Educators intentional Interactions and Professional Learning Conversation. The following describes the contradiction.

The Kindergarten Program (2016) presents the relationship between school and home as a one-way flow of knowledge. For example, *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) states that it is important “for schools and parents to work together to ensure that home and school provide a mutually supportive framework for children’s education” (p. 109). The document further explains that parents need to learn from teachers to help support their children in meeting their learning needs. The aim throughout the curriculum focused on supporting children academically while providing examples of parents and families helping educators throughout that process. This model of a relationship between school and home reflects Ferlazzo’s definition of family involvement instead of family engagement. Wink (2011) described the two models as “family involvement is akin to Doing It to Them, and family engagement is a process of Doing It with Them” (p. 199). Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) further explain that the primary goal of “parent involvement may provide opportunities to enhance student achievement, but parent engagement might provide superior opportunities” (p. 3).

The majority of the examples that represent families in the Educator’s Intentional Interactions and Professional Learning Conversations reflect family involvement through examples showing the educator communicating with parents to share their children’s progress. For example, “the educators and the family talk about strategies to help the child both at home and at school” (p. 193). This is an example of parental involvement. However, the Educator’s Intentional Interactions offer only four examples that suggest families sharing songs, stories, traditions, or something from their culture by coming to class and exchanging it with the class. These models

that encourage parents and families to come and share their culture and help children to understand cultural differences, and having special days, for example, culture day, represent the *tourist approach* (Derman-Sparks, 1989). Derman-Sparks (1989) described this approach as teaching “about cultures through celebration and through such ‘artefacts’ of the culture as food, traditional clothing and household implements” (p. 7). According to Edwards (2006), the tourist approach encourages educators to recognize and learn about the diverse cultures through special days and through parents who share their cultural traditions, instead of understanding how culture affects children’s way of learning and how families view schools from their cultural perspectives. McLachlan, Flear, and Edwards (2013) stated that the ways for educators to understand “how children learn in their families and communities is central to enacting a culture-historical perspective, because it takes children’s cultural knowledge and ways of knowing as a basis for practice” (p. 74). When educators fail to build on children’s strengths and capabilities that they acquired from home, it results in disadvantaging children with diverse backgrounds because of the lack of understanding the educators have. McLachlan et al. (2013) suggested that teachers through the curriculum need to “move beyond simplistic understanding of what it means to have culturally diverse learners in centres and classrooms: by engaging in conversations with children, parents, extended family and community about the approaches to teaching and learning adopted in different cultural groups and countries” (p. 82).

As Ferlazzo and Hammond (2009) suggested, it is critical for schools to develop “quality parent-to-teacher relationships and quality teacher-to-teacher relationships” (p. 5) that are built on trust. In other words, creating relationships based on *mutual trust* (Esteban-Guitart, 2016). Mutual trust “is the creation of networks of exchange [between teachers and parents] based on mutual trust” (p. 36). According to Esteban-Guitart (2016), creating networks of exchange between parents

and teachers based on a “mutual trust is one of the core elements of funds of knowledge approach” (p. 36). Therefore, to ensure that children receive optimal opportunities in their learning journey, teachers need to understand the experiences and language that children have gained before entering schools. In other words, understanding children's funds of knowledge and funds of identity. McLachlan et al. (2013) revealed that “teachers need to understand not only ‘what’ children need in order to develop language and literacy, but also ‘how’ these concepts are introduced to children in their homes and communities, so that they can build on this conceptual knowledge in the centre or school setting” (p. 171).

5.5 Home language in the curriculum

The results of the analysis indicated that ‘home language’ was merely mentioned throughout the chapters 3.2 and chapter 4 in the programmatic curriculum. Throughout the learning expectations the words “use language” and “using vocabulary” were repeatedly used to express the expectation of using language. As mentioned above in the findings chapter, the word ‘language’ in the programmatic curriculum refers to the English language as Bainbridge and Heydon (2013) explain that English and French are “the two official languages in Canada” (p. 10). The use of home language was not mentioned in any of the overall expectations, specific expectations, or conceptual understandings. The home language was raised in two sections, Educator's Intentional Interactions, and Professional Learning Conversations. However, the examples that were provided referred to home language as a tool to translate some materials to help some parents to understand tasks that need to be completed at home with children. There is only one statement that referred to the importance of maintaining home language in the Professional Learning Conversations section. The statement read, “A group of educators discuss the

importance of maintaining children's home language. Their focus is on the role of that educators can play in helping families recognize the benefits of maintaining their home language as integral part of their culture, values, social attitudes, and behaviour" (p. 194). However, the above statement is a possible conversation that educators might discuss, not an actual part of the curriculum's expectations. This indicates that the document does not impress the importance of home language in the context of the programmatic curriculum nor acts on the use of home language as a relevant part of the school or in the classroom. This echoes the words of Cummins (2006), "home language other than English or French are viewed as largely irrelevant to children's schooling. At best, they are treated with benign neglect and ignored; at worst, educators consider them an obstacle to the acquisition of English or French and discourage their use in school and at home" (p. 5). In other words, children who are multilingual will need to choose between using or not using their home language since it will influence their sense of belonging within the classroom environment.

The Kindergarten Program (2016) takes for granted English as the primary language that is used to communicate within the classroom. The programmatic curriculum states that "The Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy focuses on respecting diversity, promoting inclusive education, and identifying and eliminating the discriminatory biases, systemic barriers, and power dynamics that limit the ability of children to learn, grow, and contribute to society" (p. 101). However, by not promoting home language(s) as part of the overall or the specific expectations results in a violation of students' equity (Cummins, 2006). The English language is viewed as "the language of cultural elite" which makes it a powerful language (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2013, p. 12). Therefore, the curriculum needs to balance the power of the English language and other languages that children bring to school to support students' identity and sense

of belonging as a way of valuing the whole child always, not only when using the English language to communicate. Cummins and Schecter, (2003) remind us that many educators in the past have discouraged the use of home language in the classroom and that was distinctly visible in the history of First Nations students. They further explained that to inverse this pattern, educators need to challenge the “assimilationist attitude and practices that have long been tacitly supported by the societal power structure.” (Cummins & Schecter, 2003, p. 4) The curriculum needs to support the use of home language as a way of accepting students’ funds of knowledge and funds of identity, and by doing that, the curriculum is promoting equity among all students, especially among cultural and linguistic minorities.

5.6 Children’s home literacy experience

Concurrent to home language(s), literacy experiences are deeply rooted in home experience. As Lazar, Edwards and McMillion (2012) stressed “literacy practice is much more complicated, extensive, and deeply embedded in culture” (p. 47). It is evident that the learning expectations in the programmatic curriculum promote students’ sense of expression and engagement as several specific expectations include the words that encourage students to share their thoughts. For example, respond, discuss, verbal and non-verbal communication, ask, retell, express, and stand up for one’s self. However, the programmatic curriculum presents a gap by not linking children’s literacy experience to literacy experiences acquired at home. Moreover, the programmatic curriculum holds teachers accountable for ensuring “that all children receive the support they need” and for providing them with an “environment that support creative and complex thinking” (OME, 2016, p. 108). Contradicting this notion, the findings of this study showed that 1 out of the 7 points presented in chapter 3.2 of the programmatic curriculum, touched on students’

culture by promoting the use of “cultural materials” (p. 109). Including materials in the classroom that represent a culture does not mean that students’ sense of cultural belonging, funds of knowledge, and funds of identity are represented and included in the learning process. Language and literacy are culturally situated (Lazar et al., 2013) and the programmatic curriculum needs to build on the diverse and rich literacy experiences children bring from home. Genishi (2016) affirmed “that early childhood classrooms are most vibrant when children’s preferences are not only allowed but encouraged” (p. 160). In other words, the curriculum needs to encourage children to share and include their funds of knowledge and identity daily throughout the day, while teachers need to value and support children by offering activities to build on children’s experiences. Hedges et al. (2011) stressed that when educators “fail to capitalize on children’s learning gained in informal settings would therefore appear to ignore a rich source of children’s prior knowledge, experience, and interests” (p. 188).

The curriculum promotes students’ rights to interact and communicate using different mediums; however, it lacks the connectivity to children’s literacy roots that are acquired at home. As Hedges et al. (2011) explained that when educators view and link children’s interests with children’s funds of knowledge, educators will become able to understand children at a deeper level instead of a superficial level. To gain the knowledge about children, teachers need to engage in conversation with children and their parents. Again, parents are an important component that teachers need to invest in to obtain a “deeper understanding of children and their interest” (Hedges et al., 2011, p. 195). As Esteban-Guitart (2016) puts it: “learning involves connecting, it involves linking knowledge, minds, and/or activity contexts” (p. 103). To provide children with the overall purpose of *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) “of establish[ing] a strong foundation”, it becomes vital to include children’s literacy that is driven from home and

individual experiences outside school. The following section will include some recommendations on how the curriculum can embrace children's language and interest.

5.7 Overall recommendations

Funds of knowledge and funds of identity as a theoretical framework allow educators to include the child as a whole and value the experiences they bring to school from home. They also give teachers the chance to communicate and create relationships with families that are built on a mutual trust. These relationships between teachers, children, and families allow schools to build a concrete bridge between school and home giving children the chance to value who they are and build a strong foundation for being lifelong learners.

Based on the findings and analysis, the first recommendation is to develop a kindergarten curricula that reflects children's funds of knowledge. Additionally, funds of identity is needed for educators to build a stronger understanding of children. The two sections in *The Kindergarten Program* that concentrate on the educators' role, Educator's Intentional Interactions and Professional Learning Conversations, need to highlight the importance of children's funds of knowledge and funds of identity. Lazar et al. (2012) describe teachers as "a major factor in the student achievement equation" (p. 15). Therefore, teachers' role needs to promote in-depth conversations with children to understand their funds of knowledge and funds of identity and provide them with in-class activities that encourage them to share who they are. Esteban-Guitart (2016) in his latest book *Funds of Identity*, offers pedagogical examples of strategies to discover students' funds of knowledge and funds of identity through multimodal literacy activities in the classroom. For example, students draw a self-portrait or identity drawing; students draw significant circles (student draws a circle in the middle that represent

them, then draw other circles that represent significant people in their life, then students draw squares that represent objects that are important to them. The closer the circle or square to the center circle the more relevant/important it is for them), the student takes photographs of things that are important/meaningful to them and share it with the class, and students' express meaningful experiences through writing a diary (Esteban-Guitart, 2016). These are all examples that can be incorporated into the Learning Expectations and Educator's Intentional Interactions throughout the programmatic curriculum.

The second recommendation is, the programmatic curriculum needs to explicitly recognize home language and literacy experiences that are acquired at home throughout the learning expectation. Children should be encouraged to use home languages. The Educator's Intentional Interactions section in the programmatic curriculum should promote the use of multilingual and diverse books. By doing that, children can learn that English is not the only language in the world and that all languages are equally valued (Bainbridge & Heydon, 2013). Chow and Cummins (2003) suggested some ideas that promote the use of home language. For example, children can create personal storybooks that include home language to share with the class (with teachers and families help). The authors also suggest inviting parents to class to read bilingual books to children. Such activities can be included in Educator's Intentional Interactions, Professional Learning Conversations, Conceptual Understandings, and Specific Expectations.

Finally, the programmatic curriculum needs to encourage parent engagement and parent involvement in reciprocal ways with the school. On-going conversations (face-to-face, email, or phone) between teachers and families need to be evident in *The Kindergarten Program* (2016) to build trust between educators, parents, and children. The programmatic curriculum needs to

stress the importance of both parents and teachers planning social and school events together to encourage a deeper understanding of each other away from academic obligations. In addition to constructing an understanding of parents, teachers still need to educate families about the curricula and the many ways in which learning happens in the classroom. Thus, it becomes vital for educators not to segregate or value one over the other, meaning the building of relationships and the families being curricular informants, since both are fundamental in the early years' classroom.

5.8 Future research

The present research focused on the Ontario programmatic curriculum and analyzed the ways the curriculum includes children and families' funds of knowledge, funds of identity, and home language(s). Attention to funds of knowledge and funds of identity of children who come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and how are they situated in the classroom curriculum is a worthy exploration in future research on early childhood education. Also, further research is needed to examine the position of the educators in interpreting the curriculum and the kind of support they receive in the process of understanding children's identity and connecting with families.

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Appendix A

Match checklist between the Ontario kindergarten 123 specific expectations and the three concepts

1. Communicate with others in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes, and in a variety of contexts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
1.1	explore sounds, rhythms, and language structures, with guidance and on their own				
1.2	listen and respond to others, both verbally and non-verbally (e.g., using the arts, using signs, using gestures and body language), for a variety of purposes (e.g., to exchange ideas, express feelings, offer opinions) and in a variety of contexts (e.g., after read-aloud and shared reading or writing experiences; while solving a class math problem; in imaginary or exploratory play; in the learning areas; while engaged in games and outdoor play; while making scientific observations of plants and animals outdoors)	Expression and engagement	*		
1.3	use and interpret gestures, tone of voice, and other non-verbal means to communicate and respond (e.g., respond to non-verbal cues from the educator; vary tone of voice when dramatizing; name feelings and recognize how someone else might be feeling)	Home experience and language(s) are not included	*		
1.4	sustain interactions in different contexts (e.g., with materials, with other children, with adults)				
1.5	use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) in various contexts to connect new experiences with what they already know (e.g., contribute ideas during shared or interactive writing; contribute to conversations in learning areas; respond to educator prompts)			*	
1.6	use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) to communicate their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems	Does not relate to home experiences		*	

		and language(s)			
1.7	use specialized vocabulary for a variety of purposes (e.g., terms for things they are building or equipment they are using)				
1.8	ask questions for a variety of purposes (e.g., for direction, for assistance, to innovate on an idea, to obtain information, for clarification, for help in understanding something, out of curiosity about something, to make meaning of a new situation) and in different contexts (e.g., during discussions and conversations with peers and adults; before, during, and after read-aloud and shared reading experiences; while exploring the schoolyard or local park; in small groups, in learning areas)	Expression	*		
1.9	describe personal experiences, using vocabulary and details appropriate to the situation	Expressions, belonging, and experience	*	*	
1.10	retell experiences, events, and familiar stories in proper sequence (e.g., orally; in new and creative ways; using drama, visual arts, non-verbal communication, and representations; in a conversation)	Expression	*		
1.11	demonstrate an awareness that words can rhyme, can begin or end with the same sound, and are composed of phonemes that can be manipulated to create new words				

2. demonstrate independence, self-regulation, and a willingness to take responsibility in learning and other endeavours

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
2.1	demonstrate self-reliance and a sense of responsibility (e.g., make choices and decisions on their own; take care of personal belongings; know when to seek assistance; know how to get materials they need)				

2.2	demonstrate a willingness to try new experiences area; select and persist with things that are challenging; experiment with writing) and to adapt to new situations (e.g., having visitors in the classroom, having a different educator occasionally, going on a field trip, riding the school bus)				
2.3	demonstrate self-motivation, initiative, and confidence in their approach to learning by selecting and completing learning tasks (e.g., choose learning tasks independently; try something new; persevere with tasks)				
2.4	demonstrate self-control (e.g., be aware of and label their own emotions; accept help to calm down; calm themselves down after being upset) and adapt behaviour to different contexts within the school environment (e.g., follow routines and rules in the classroom, gym, library, playground)				
2.5	develop empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to each other's feelings upset; have an imaginary conversation with a tree or an insect; role-play emotions with dolls and puppets)				

3. Identify and use social skills in play and other contexts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
3.1	act and talk with peers and adults by expressing and accepting positive messages (e.g., use an appropriate tone of voice and gestures; give compliments; give and accept constructive criticism)	Expression	*		
3.2	demonstrate the ability to take turns during activity and discussions (e.g., while engaged in play with others; in discussions with peers and adults)				
3.3	demonstrate an awareness of ways of making and keeping friends a group with guidance from the educators)				

4. Demonstrate an ability to use problem-solving skills in a variety of contexts, including social contexts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
4.1	use a variety of strategies to solve problems, including problems arising in social situations (e.g., trial and error, checking and guessing,				

5. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity among individuals and families and within schools and the wider community

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
5.1	demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view (e.g., help a friend who speaks another language; adapt behaviour to accommodate a classmate's ideas)	The only expectation the mentions the words "another language". belonging, expressions, and culture/home.	*		*
5.2	talk about events and retell, dramatize, or represent stories or experiences that reflect their own heritage and cultural background and the heritage and cultural backgrounds of others (e.g., traditions, cultural events, myths, Canadian symbols, everyday experiences)	This statement includes all 3 concepts	*	*	*

6. Demonstrate an awareness of their own health and well-being

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3

6.1	demonstrate an understanding of the effects of healthy, active living on the mind and body (e.g., choose a balance of active and quiet activities throughout the day; remember to have a snack; drink water when thirsty)				
6.2	investigate the benefits of nutritious foods (e.g., nutritious snacks, healthy meals, foods from various cultures) and explore ways of ensuring healthy eating (e.g., choosing nutritious food for meals and snacks, avoiding foods to which they are allergic)				
6.3	practice and discuss appropriate personal hygiene that promotes personal, family, and community health				
6.4	discuss what action to take when they feel unsafe or uncomfortable, and when and how to seek assistance in unsafe situations (e.g., acting in response to inappropriate touching; seeking assistance from an adult they know and trust, from 911, or from playground monitors; identifying substances that are harmful to the body)				
6.5	discuss and demonstrate in play what makes them happy and unhappy, and why	Express their feelings	*		

7. Participate actively and regularly in a variety of activities that require the application of movement concepts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
7.1	participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities (e.g., dance, games, outdoor play, fitness breaks)				
7.2	demonstrate persistence while engaged in activities that require the use of both large and small muscles (e.g., tossing and catching beanbags, skipping, lacing, drawing)				
7.3	demonstrate strategies for engaging in cooperative play in a variety of games and activities				

8. Develop movement skills and concepts as they use their growing bodies to move in a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
8.1	demonstrate spatial awareness in activities that require the use of large muscles				
8.2	demonstrate control of large muscles with and without equipment (e.g., climb and balance on playground equipment; roll, throw, and catch a variety of balls; demonstrate balance and coordination during parachute games; hop, slide, wheel, or gallop in the gym or outdoors)				
8.3	demonstrate balance, whole-body and hand-eye coordination, and flexibility in movement balance beam; play beach-ball tennis; catch a ball; play hopscotch)				
8.4	demonstrate control of small muscles (e.g., use a functional grip when writing) while working in a variety of learning areas (e.g., sand table, water table, visual arts area) and when using a variety of materials or equipment (e.g., using salt trays, stringing beads, painting with paintbrushes, drawing, cutting paper, using a keyboard, using bug viewers, using a mouse, writing with a crayon or pencil)				
8.5	demonstrate spatial awareness by doing activities that require the use of small muscles				

9. Demonstrate literacy behaviours that enable beginning readers to make sense of a variety of texts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
9.1	use reading behaviours to make sense of familiar and unfamiliar texts in print (e.g., use pictures; use knowledge of oral language)	Literacy learning only, it does not include anything about home experiences and language(s)		*	

10. Demonstrate literacy behaviours that enable beginning writers to communicate with others

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
10.1	demonstrate an interest in writing (e.g., choose a variety of writing materials, such as adhesive notes, labels, envelopes, coloured paper, markers, crayons, pencils) and choose to write in a variety of contexts (e.g., draw or record ideas in learning areas)	Literacy learning only, it does not include anything about home experiences and language(s)		*	
10.2	demonstrate an awareness that text can convey ideas or messages (e.g., ask the educator to write out new words for them)				
10.3	write simple messages (e.g., a grocery list on unlined paper, a greeting card made on a computer, labels for a block or sand construction), using a combination of pictures, symbols, knowledge of the correspondence between letters and sounds (phonics), and familiar words	Literacy learning only, it does not include anything about home experiences and language(s)		*	
10.4	use classroom resources to support their writing (e.g., a classroom word wall that is made up of children's names, words from simple patterned texts, and words used repeatedly in shared or interactive writing experiences; signs or charts in the classroom; picture dictionaries; alphabet cards; books)	Literacy learning only, it does not include anything about home experiences and language(s)		*	
10.5	experiment with a variety of simple writing forms for different purposes and in a variety of contexts				
10.6	communicate ideas about personal experiences and/or familiar stories, and experiment with personal voice in their writing (e.g., make a story map of "The Three Little Pigs" and retell the story individually to a member of the educator team during a writing conference)	Both literacy learning and home experiences are shown in this expectation		*	

11. Demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of a variety of written materials that are read by and with their educators

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
11.1	demonstrate an interest in reading (e.g., expect to find meaning in pictures and text; choose to look at reading materials; respond to texts read by the educator team; reread familiar text; confidently make attempts at reading)	Literacy learning only, it does not include anything about home experiences and language(s)		*	
11.2	identify personal preferences in reading materials (e.g., choose fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, posters, or computerized in different contexts (e.g., educator team read-alouds, shared experiences in reading books, independent reading time)	The word “preferences” reflects a choice given to the student, which means expression is evident. The rest of the sentence indicates literacy learning only.	*	*	
11.3	demonstrate an awareness of basic book conventions and concepts of print when a text is read aloud or when they are beginning to read print (e.g., start at the beginning of the book; recognize that print uses letters, words, spaces between words, and sentences; understand that printed materials contain messages)				
11.4	respond to a variety of materials that have been read aloud to them (e.g., paint, draw, or construct models of characters or settings)				
11.5	make predictions regarding an unfamiliar text that is read by and with the educator team, using prior experience , knowledge of familiar texts, and general knowledge of the world around them	Literacy and experiences		*	
11.6	use prior knowledge to make connections (e.g., to new experiences, to other books, to events in the world) to help them understand a diverse range of materials read by and with the educator team	Both literacy learning and student's prior knowledge		*	

11.7	use illustrations to support comprehension of texts that are read by and with the educator(s)			
11.8	demonstrate knowledge of most letters of the alphabet in different contexts (e.g., use a variety of capital and lower-case manipulative letters in letter play; identify letters by name on signs and labels in chart stories, in poems, in big books, on traffic signs; identify the sound that is represented by a letter; identify a word that begins with the letter)			
11.9	retell, orally or with non-verbal communication, familiar experiences or stories in proper sequence (e.g., in new and creative ways, using drama, visual arts, non-verbal communication, and representations; in a conversation)	both	*	
11.10	retell information from non-fiction materials that have been read by and with the educator team in a variety of contexts (e.g., read-alouds, shared reading experiences)			

12. demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of media texts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
12.1	respond critically to animated works (e.g., cartoons in which animals talk, movies in which animals go to school)				
12.2	communicate their ideas, verbally and non-verbally, about a variety of media materials (e.g., describe their feelings in response to seeing a DVD or a video; dramatize messages from a safety video or poster; paint pictures in response to an advertisement or CD)	Express ideas.	*		

13. use the processes and skills of an inquiry stance (i.e., questioning, planning, predicting, observing, and communicating)

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3

13.1	state problems and pose questions in different contexts and for different reasons (e.g., before, during, and after inquiries)				
13.2	make predictions and observations before and during investigations				
13.3	select and use materials to carry out their own explorations	Belonging	*		
13.4	communicate results and findings from individual and group investigations state simple conclusions from an experiment; record ideas using pictures, numbers, and labels)				

14. demonstrate an awareness of the natural and built environment through hands-on investigations, observations, questions, and representations of their findings

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
14.1	ask questions about and describe some natural occurrences, using their own observations and representations (e.g., drawings, writing)				
14.2	sort and classify groups of living and non-living things in their own way (e.g., using sorting tools such as hula hoops, sorting circles, paper plates, T-charts, Venn diagrams)				
14.3	recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns in the natural and built environment (e.g., patterns in the design of buildings, in flowers, on animals' coats)				

15. demonstrate an understanding of numbers, using concrete materials to explore and investigate counting, quantity, and number relationships

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
15.1	investigate (e.g., using a number line, a hundreds carpet, a board game with numbered squares) the idea that a number's position in the counting sequence determines its magnitude (e.g., the quantity				

	is greater when counting forward and less when counting backward)			
15.2	investigate some concepts of quantity and equality through identifying and comparing sets with more, fewer, or the same number of objects (e.g., find out which of two cups contains more or fewer beans [i.e., the concept of one-to-one correspondence]; investigate the ideas of more, less, or the same, using concrete materials such as counters or five and ten frames; recognize that the last number counted represents that number of objects in the set [i.e., the concept of cardinality])			
15.3	make use of one-to-one correspondence in counting objects and matching groups of objects			
15.4	demonstrate an understanding of the counting concepts of stable order (i.e., the concept that the counting sequence is always the and of order irrelevance (i.e., the concept that the number of objects in a set will be the same regardless of which object is used to begin the counting)			
15.5	subitize quantities to 5 without having to count, using a variety of materials (e.g., dominoes, dot plates, dice, number of fingers) and strategies (e.g., composing or decomposing numbers)			
15.6	use information to estimate the number in a small set (e.g., apply knowledge of quantity; use a common reference such as a five frame; subitize)			
15.7	explore and communicate the function/purpose of numbers in a variety of contexts (e.g., use magnetic and sandpaper numerals to represent the number of objects in a set [to indicate quality]; line up toys and manipulatives, and identify the first, second, and so on [to indicate ordinality]; use footsteps to discover the distance between the door and the sink [to measure]; identify a favourite sports player: "My favourite player is number twenty-four" [to label or name])			
15.8	explore different Canadian coins, using coin manipulatives (e.g., role-play the purchasing of items at the store in the dramatic play area; determine which coin will purchase more – a loonie or			

	quarter)			
15.9	compose and decompose quantities to 10 (e.g., make multiple representations of numbers using two or more colours of linking cubes, blocks, dot strips, and other manipulatives; play “shake and spill” games)			
15.10	investigate addition and subtraction in everyday experiences and routines through the use of modelling strategies and manipulatives and counting strategies (e.g., use a counting sequence to determine how many objects there are altogether; count backward from the largest number to determine how many objects remain)	Children’s everyday experience	*	

16. measure, using non-standard units of the same size, and compare objects, materials, and spaces in terms of their length, mass, capacity, area, and temperature, and explore ways of measuring the passage of time, through inquiry and play-based learning

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
16.1	16.1 select an attribute to measure (e.g., capacity), determine an appropriate non-standard unit of measure (e.g., a small margarine container) (e.g., determine which of two other containers holds the most water)				
16.2	16.2 investigate strategies and materials used when measuring with non-standard units of measure (e.g., why feet used to measure length must be placed end to end with no gaps and not overlapping, and must all be the same size; why scoops used to measure water must be the same size and be filled to the top)				

17. describe, sort, classify, build, and compare two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional figures, and describe the location and movement of objects through investigation

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
17.1	explore, sort, and compare the attributes (e.g., reflective symmetry) and the properties (e.g., number of faces) of traditional and non-traditional two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional figures (e.g., when sorting and comparing a variety of triangles: notice similarities in number of sides, differences in side lengths, sizes of angles, sizes of the triangles themselves; see smaller triangles in a larger triangle)				
17.2	communicate an understanding of basic spatial relationships (e.g., use terms such as “above/below”, “in/out”, “forward/backward”; use visualization, perspective, and movements [flips/reflections, slides/translations, ad turns/rotations]) in their conversations and play, in their predictions and visualizations, and during transitions and routines				
17.3	investigate and explain the relationship between two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional figures in objects they have made (e.g., explain that the flat surface of a cube is a square)				

18. recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns, and extend, translate, and create them, using the core of a pattern and predicting what comes next

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
18.1	identify and describe informally the repeating nature of patterns in everyday contexts (e.g., patterns in nature such as morning-noon-night, the four seasons, or the arrangement of leaves on the stem of a plant; the pattern on a piece of clothing; the pattern made by floor tiles; the pattern of words in a book or poem; the pattern on a calendar or in a schedule; the pattern of the beat or rhythm in songs), using appropriate terminology (e.g., “goes before”, “goes after”, “repeats”) and gestures (e.g., pointing, nodding, using slap/claps)				

18.2	explore and extend patterns (e.g., fill in missing elements of a repeating pattern) using a variety of materials (e.g., beads, shapes, words in a poem, beat and rhythm in music, objects from the natural world)			
18.3	identify the smallest unit (the core) of a pattern (e.g. ABBABBABB – the core is ABB) and describe why it is important (e.g., it helps us to know what comes next; it helps us make generalizations)			
18.4	create and translate patterns (e.g., re-represent “red-blue-blue, red-blue-blue, red-blue-blue” as “circle-square-square, circle-square-square, circle-square-square”)			

19. collect, organize, display, and interpret data to solve problems and to communicate information, and explore the concept of probability in everyday contexts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
19.1	ask questions that can be answered through data collection (e.g., “What is your favourite ...?” ; “How many pets do our classmates have?”; “Which month had the most snowy days – January or February?”, collect data, and make representations of their observations, using graphs (e.g., concrete graphs such as people graphs or graphs using representational objects; picture graphs)				
19.2	interpret data presented in graphs (e.g., “There are more children n the pizza line than in the hot dog line – that means more children like pizza”; “The blue bar is twice as long as the yellow bar”; “There were twice as many snowy days in January as snowy days in February”) and draw conclusions (e.g., “We need to order more pizza than hot dogs for play day” ; “January was more snowy than February)				
19.3	respond to and pose questions about data collection and graphs				

20. apply the mathematical processes to support the development of mathematical thinking, to demonstrate understanding, and to communicate thinking and learning in mathematics, while engaged in play-based learning and in other contexts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
20.1	demonstrate an understanding of number relationships for numbers from 0 to 10, through investigation (e.g., show small quantities using fingers or manipulatives)				
20.2	use, read, and represent whole numbers to 10 in a variety of meaningful contexts (e.g., use a hundreds chart to read whole numbers; area; find and recognize numbers in the environment; write numerals on imaginary bills at the restaurant in the dramatic play area)				
20.3	compose pictures, designs, shapes, and patterns, using two-dimensional shapes; predict and explore reflective symmetry in two-dimensional shapes (e.g., visualize and predict what will happen when a square, a circle, or a rectangle is folded in half); and decompose two-dimensional shapes into smaller shapes and rearrange the pieces into other shapes, using various tools and materials (e.g., stickers, geoboards, pattern blocks, geometric puzzles, tangrams, a computer program)				
20.4	build three-dimensional structures using a variety of materials and identify the three-dimensional figures their structure contains				
20.5	investigate and describe how objects can be collected, grouped, and organized according to similarities and differences (e.g., attributes like size, colour)				
20.6	use mathematical language (e.g., “always/sometimes/never”; “likely/unlikely”) in informal discussions to describe probability in familiar, everyday situations (e.g., “Sometimes Kindergarten children like pizza more than hot dogs”; “It is likely that January will be a snowy month”)				

21. express their responses to a variety of forms of drama, dance, music, and visual arts from various cultures and communities

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
21.1	express their responses to drama and dance (e.g., by moving, by making connections to their experiences with drama and dance, by talking about drama and dance)	Belonging, expression, and culture.	*		
21.2	dramatize rhymes, stories, legends, and folk tales from various cultures and communities (e.g., use actions, pictures, words, or puppets to tell a story in the dramatic play area or in the blocks area)		*	*	*
21.3	express their responses to music by moving, by making connections to their own experiences, or by talking about the musical form		*		
21.4	respond to music from various cultures and communities (e.g., folk songs, Indigenous chants, songs in different languages, Inuit throat singing)	Expression and community			*
21.5	express their responses to visual art forms by making connections to their own experiences or by talking about the form	Connecting to their own experiences	*		
21.6	respond to a variety of visual art forms (e.g., paintings, fabrics, sculptures, illustrations) from various cultures and communities	Expression, belonging, and community	*		*

22. communicate their thoughts and feelings, and their theories and ideas, through various art forms

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
22.1	communicate their ideas about something (e.g., a book, the meaning of a word, an event or an experience, a mathematical pattern, a motion or movement)	belonging	*		

23. use problem-solving strategies, on their own and with others, when experimenting with the skills, materials, processes, and techniques used in

drama, dance, music, and visual arts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
23.1	use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create drama and dance (e.g., try out different voices for parts of a story or chant; find different ways to move to music, trying to connect the movement with the mood and speed of the music; create a sequence of movements)				
23.2	use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create visual art forms (e.g., choose materials to make a three-dimensional structure stable; choose an alternative way to fasten their materials if the first way is unsuccessful)				
23.3	use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create music (e.g., experiment with different instruments to create a rhythm pattern to accompany a familiar song; contribute to making a variation on a familiar song with the class)				
23.4	communicate their understanding of something (e.g., a familiar story, an experience, a song, a play) by representing their ideas and feelings through the arts	Expression	*		

24. use technological problem-solving skills, on their own and with others, in the process of creating and designing (i.e., questioning, planning, constructing, analysing, redesigning, and communicating)

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
24.1	identify practices that ensure their personal safety and the safety of others, and demonstrate an understanding of the importance of these practices				

24.2	state problems and pose questions as part of the process of creating and designing			
24.3	make predictions and observations as part of the process of creating and designing			
24.4	select and use tools, equipment, and materials to construct things			

25. demonstrate a sense of identity and a positive self-image

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
25.1	recognize personal interests, strengths, and accomplishments		*		
25.2	identify and talk about their own interests and preferences		*		
25.3	express their thoughts (e.g., about a science discovery, about something they have made) and share experiences (e.g., experiences at home, cultural experiences)		*	*	

26. develop an appreciation of the multiple perspectives encountered within groups, and of ways in which they themselves can contribute to groups and to group well-being

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
26.1	understand that everyone belongs to a group/community (e.g., family, a class, a religious community), and that people can belong to more than one group/community at a time	Belonging and community	*		*
26.2	understand that different groups/communities may have different ways of being and working together	Community and culture			*

26.3	describe, both verbally and non-verbally, ways in which they contribute to the various groups to which they belong	Expression and belonging	*		
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27. recognize bias in ideas and develop the self-confidence to stand up for themselves and others against prejudice and discrimination

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
27.1	develop strategies for standing up for themselves, and demonstrate the ability to apply behaviours that enhance their personal well-being, comfort, and self-acceptance and the well-being, comfort, and self-acceptance of others (e.g., speaking confidently, stating boundaries, making choices)	belonging	*		
27.2	think critically about fair/unfair and biased behaviour towards both themselves and others, and act with compassion and kindness				
27.3	recognize discriminatory and inequitable practices and behaviours and respond appropriately				

28. demonstrate an awareness of their surroundings

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
28.1	recognize people in their community and talk about what they do (e.g., farmer, park ranger, police officer, nurse, Indigenous healer, store clerk, engineer, baker)	Community knowledge			*
28.2	28.2 recognize places and buildings within their community, both natural and human-made, and talk about their functions (e.g., farm, church, hospital, mosque, sweat lodge, arena, mine, cave)				

28.3	28.3 develop an awareness of ways in which people adapt to the places in which they live (e.g., children in cities may live in high-rise buildings and use sidewalks and the subway; children in the country may take the bus to school)			
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29. demonstrate an understanding of the natural world and the need to care for and respect the environment

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
29.1	identify similarities and differences between local environments (e.g., between a park and a pond, between a schoolyard and a field)				
29.2	describe what would happen if something in the local environment changed (e.g., if trees in the park were cut down, if the pond dried up, if native flowers were planted in the school garden)				
29.3	identify ways in which they can care for and show respect for the environment (e.g., feeding the birds in winter, reusing and recycling, turning off unnecessary lights at home, walking to school instead of getting a ride)				
29.4	participate in environmentally friendly experiences in the classroom and the schoolyard (e.g., plant and tend to plants; use local products for snack time; properly sort recycling)				

30. demonstrate an awareness of themselves as dramatists, actors, dancers, artists, and musicians through engagement in the arts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
30.1	demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in drama and dance (e.g., contribute their own ideas to role playing; creating their own actions to accompany a song or chant and/or follow actions created by a classmate) ; in music (e.g., contribute their own ideas to a		*		

	class song); and in visual arts (e.g., create a sculpture from clay)			
30.2	explore a variety of tools, materials, and processes of their own choice (e.g., blocks, puppets, flashlights, streamers, castanets, rhythm sticks, natural and recycled materials) to create drama, dance, music, and visual art forms in familiar and new ways			

31. demonstrate knowledge and skills gained through exposure to and engagement in drama, dance, music, and visual arts

No.	Specific expectations	Main ideas/ Comments	C1	C2	C3
31.1	explore different elements of drama (e.g., character, setting, dramatic structure) and dance (e.g., rhythm, space, shape)				
31.2	explore different elements (e.g., beat, sound quality, speed, volume) of music (e.g., clap the beat of a song; tap their feet on carpet and then on tile, and compare the sounds; experiment with different instruments to accompany a song)				
31.3	explore different elements of design (e.g., colour, line, shape, texture, form) in visual arts				

Appendix B

Table of the three concepts and what specific expectations matches

<p>Concept 1 Children's everyday experiences 26/123 20.3%</p>	<p>Concept 2 Literacy learning and children's home experiences and language(s) 16/123 13.8%. only 7.3% actually refer to home experience</p>	<p>Concept 3 Families as part of children's home and school experiences 8/123 6.5%</p>
<p>1.2 listen and respond to others, both verbally and non-verbally (e.g., using the arts, using signs, using gestures and body language), for a variety of purposes (e.g., to exchange ideas, express feelings, offer opinions) and in a variety of contexts</p> <p>1.3 use and interpret gestures, tone of voice, and other non-verbal means to communicate and</p> <p>1.8 ask questions for a variety of purposes</p> <p>1.9 describe personal experiences, using vocabulary and details appropriate to the situation</p> <p>1.10 retell experiences, events, and familiar stories in proper sequence (e.g., orally; in new and creative ways; using drama, visual arts, non-verbal communication, and representations; in a conversation)</p> <p>3.1 act and talk with peers and adults by expressing and accepting positive messages</p> <p>5.1 demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view (e.g., help a friend who speaks another language; adapt behaviour to accommodate a classmate's ideas)</p> <p>5.2 talk about events and retell, dramatize, or represent stories or experiences that reflect their own heritage and cultural background and the heritage and cultural backgrounds of others (e.g., traditions, cultural events, myths, Canadian symbols, everyday experiences)</p>	<p>1.5 use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) in various contexts to connect new experiences with what they already know</p> <p>1.6 use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) to communicate their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems</p> <p>1.9 describe personal experiences, using vocabulary and details appropriate to the situation</p> <p>5.2 talk about events and retell, dramatize, or represent stories or experiences that reflect their own heritage and cultural background and the heritage and cultural backgrounds of others (e.g., traditions, cultural events, myths, Canadian symbols, everyday experiences)</p> <p>9.1 use reading behaviours to make sense of familiar and unfamiliar texts in print (e.g., use pictures; use knowledge of oral language</p> <p>10.1 demonstrate an interest in writing (e.g., choose a variety of writing materials, such as adhesive notes, labels, envelopes, coloured paper, markers, crayons, pencils) and choose to write in a variety of contexts (e.g., draw or record ideas in learning areas)</p> <p>10.3 write simple messages (e.g., a grocery list on unlined paper, a greeting card made on a computer, labels for a block or sand construction), using a combination of pictures, symbols, knowledge of the correspondence between letters and sounds (phonics), and familiar words</p>	<p>5.1 demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view (e.g., help a friend who speaks another language; adapt behaviour to accommodate a classmate's ideas)</p> <p>5.2 talk about events and retell, dramatize, or represent stories or experiences that reflect their own heritage and cultural background and the heritage and cultural backgrounds of others (e.g., traditions, cultural events, myths, Canadian symbols, everyday experiences)</p> <p>21.2 dramatize rhymes, stories, legends, and folk tales from various cultures and communities (e.g., use actions, pictures, words, or puppets to tell a story in the dramatic play area or in the blocks area)</p> <p>21.4 respond to music from various cultures and communities (e.g., folk songs, Indigenous chants, songs in different languages, Inuit throat singing)</p> <p>21.6 respond to a variety of visual art forms (e.g., paintings, fabrics, sculptures, illustrations) from various cultures and communities</p> <p>26.1 understand that everyone belongs to a group/community (e.g., family, a class, a religious community), and that people can belong to more than one group/community at a time</p> <p>26.2 understand that different groups/communities may have different ways of being and working together</p>

<p>6.5 discuss and demonstrate in play what makes them happy and unhappy, and why</p> <p>12.2 communicate their ideas, verbally and non-verbally, about a variety of media materials</p> <p>13.3 select and use materials to carry out their own explorations</p> <p>15.10 investigate addition and subtraction in everyday experiences and routines through the use of modelling strategies and manipulatives and counting strategies</p> <p>21.1 express their responses to drama and dance (e.g., by moving, by making connections to their experiences with drama and dance, by talking about drama and dance)</p> <p>21.2 dramatize rhymes, stories, legends, and folk tales from various cultures and communities (e.g., use actions, pictures, words, or puppets to tell a story in the dramatic play area or in the blocks area)</p> <p>21.3 express their responses to music by moving, by making connections to their own experiences, or by talking about the musical form</p> <p>21.4 respond to music from various cultures and communities (e.g., folk songs, Indigenous chants, songs in different languages, Inuit throat singing)</p> <p>21.5 express their responses to visual art forms by making connections to their own experiences or by talking about the form</p> <p>21.6 respond to a variety of visual art forms (e.g., paintings, fabrics, sculptures, illustrations) from various cultures and communities</p> <p>22.1 communicate their ideas about something</p> <p>23.4 communicate their understanding of something</p> <p>25.1 recognize personal interests, strengths, and accomplishments</p> <p>25.2 identify and talk about their own interests and preferences</p>	<p>10.4 use classroom resources to support their writing</p> <p>10.6 communicate ideas about personal experiences and/or familiar stories, and experiment with personal voice in their writing</p> <p>11.1 demonstrate an interest in reading (e.g., expect to find meaning in pictures and text; choose to look at reading materials; respond to texts read by the educator team; reread familiar text; confidently make attempts at reading)</p> <p>11.2 identify personal preferences in reading materials</p> <p>11.5 make predictions regarding an unfamiliar text that is read by and with the educator team, using prior experience, knowledge of familiar texts, and general knowledge of the world around them</p> <p>11.6 use prior knowledge to make connections (e.g., to new experiences, to other books, to events in the world) to help them understand a diverse range of materials read by and with the educator team</p> <p>11.9 retell, orally or with non-verbal communication, familiar experiences or stories in proper sequence (e.g., in new and creative ways, using drama, visual arts, non-verbal communication, and representations; in a conversation)</p> <p>21.2 dramatize rhymes, stories, legends, and folk tales from various cultures and communities (e.g., use actions, pictures, words, or puppets to tell a story in the dramatic play area or in the blocks area)</p> <p>25.3 express their thoughts (e.g., about a science discovery, about something they have made) and share experiences (e.g., experiences at home, cultural experiences)</p>	<p>28.1 recognize people in their community and talk about what they do (e.g., farmer, park ranger, police officer, nurse, Indigenous healer, store clerk, engineer, baker)</p>
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<p>25.3 express their thoughts (e.g., about a science discovery, about something they have made) and share experiences (e.g., experiences at home, cultural experiences)</p> <p>26.1 understand that everyone belongs to a group/community (e.g., family, a class, a religious community), and that people can belong to more than one group/community at a time</p> <p>26.3 describe, both verbally and non-verbally, ways in which they contribute to the various groups to which they belong</p> <p>30.1 demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in drama and dance</p>		
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Only 2/123 include all three concepts, which is 1.6% of all specific expectations!!!!

Only 1 specific expectation that mentions “another language” however it is referring to a child helping another child that speaks another language. Home language(s) is not included in the overall expectation nor in the specific expectation. (5.1 demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view (e.g., help a friend who speaks another language; adapt behaviour to accommodate a classmate’s ideas)) None of the overall or specific expectation

Appendix C

The four “frames” in the Kindergarten program matched with the specific expectations that are related to the 3 concepts

Frames	Overall expectation	Specific expectations
4.3 Belonging and Contribution 14/27 51.8%	1 3 5 22 25 26 27 28 30	1.2 listen and respond to others, both verbally and non-verbally (e.g., using the arts, using signs, using gestures and body language), for a variety of purposes (e.g., to exchange ideas, express feelings, offer opinions) and in a variety of contexts (e.g., after read-alouds and shared reading or writing experiences; while solving a class math problem; in imaginary or exploratory play; in the learning areas; while engaged in games and outdoor play; while making scientific observations of plants and animals outdoors) 3.1 act and talk with peers and adults by expressing and accepting positive messages 5.1 demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view 5.2 talk about events and retell, dramatize, or represent stories or experiences that reflect their own heritage and cultural background and the heritage and cultural backgrounds of others 22.1 communicate their ideas about something (e.g., a book, the meaning of a word, an event or an experience, a mathematical pattern, a motion or movement) 25.1 recognize personal interests, strengths, and accomplishments 25.2 identify and talk about their own interests and preferences 25.3 express their thoughts (e.g., about a science discovery, about something they have made) and share experiences (e.g., experiences at home, cultural experiences) 26.1 understand that everyone belongs to a group/community (e.g., family, a class, a religious community), and that people can belong to more than one group/community at a time 26.2 understand that different groups/communities may have different ways of being and working together 26.3 describe, both verbally and non-verbally, ways in which they contribute to the various groups to which they belong 27.1 develop strategies for standing up for themselves, and demonstrate the ability to apply behaviours that enhance their personal well-being, comfort, and self-acceptance and the well-being, comfort, and self-acceptance of others 28.1 recognize people in their community and talk about what they do 30.1 demonstrate an awareness of personal interests and a sense of accomplishment in drama and dance
4.4 Self-Regulation and Well-Being 6/26 23%	1 3 6 22	1.3 use and interpret gestures, tone of voice, and other non-verbal means to communicate and respond 1.6 use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) to communicate their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems 1.8 ask questions for a variety of purposes 3.1 act and talk with peers and adults by expressing and accepting positive messages 6.5 discuss and demonstrate in play what makes them happy and unhappy, and why

		22.1 communicate their ideas about something (e.g., a book, the meaning of a word, an event or an experience, a mathematical pattern, a motion or movement)
4.5 Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematical Behaviours	1 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 21 22	<p>1.2 listen and respond to others, both verbally and non-verbally (e.g., using the arts, using signs, using gestures and body language), for a variety of purposes (e.g., to exchange ideas, express feelings, offer opinions) and in a variety of contexts (e.g., after read-alouds and shared reading or writing experiences; while solving a class math problem; in imaginary or exploratory play; in the learning areas; while engaged in games and outdoor play; while making scientific observations of plants and animals outdoors)</p> <p>1.3 use and interpret gestures, tone of voice, and other non-verbal means to communicate and respond</p> <p>1.5 use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) in various contexts to connect new experiences with what they already know</p> <p>1.6 use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) to communicate their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems</p> <p>1.9 describe personal experiences, using vocabulary and details appropriate to the situation</p> <p>1.10 retell experiences, events, and familiar stories in proper sequence</p> <p>9.1 use reading behaviours to make sense of familiar and unfamiliar texts in print</p> <p>10.1 demonstrate an interest in writing</p> <p>10.3 write simple messages</p> <p>10.4 use classroom resources to support their writing</p> <p>10.6 communicate ideas about personal experiences and/or familiar stories, and experiment with personal voice in their writing</p> <p>11.1 demonstrate an interest in reading</p> <p>11.2 identify personal preferences in reading materials</p> <p>11.4 respond to a variety of materials that have been read aloud to</p> <p>11.5 make predictions regarding an unfamiliar text that is read by and with the educator team, using prior experience, knowledge of familiar texts, and general knowledge of the world around them</p> <p>11.6 use prior knowledge to make connections</p> <p>11.9 retell, orally or with non-verbal communication, familiar experiences or stories in proper sequence</p> <p>12.2 communicate their ideas, verbally and non-verbally, about a variety of media materials</p> <p>13.3 select and use materials to carry out their own explorations</p> <p>14.1 ask questions about and describe some natural occurrences, using their own observations and representations</p> <p>15.10 investigate addition and subtraction in everyday experiences and routines through the use of modelling strategies and manipulatives and counting strategies</p> <p>21.1 express their responses to drama and dance (e.g., by moving, by making connections to their experiences with drama and dance, by talking about drama and dance)</p> <p>21.2 dramatize rhymes, stories, legends, and folk tales from various cultures and communities</p> <p>21.3 express their responses to music by moving, by making connections to their own experiences, or by talking about the musical form</p> <p>21.4 respond to music from various cultures and</p>
28/66 42%		
12/66 18%		

		<p>21.5 express their responses to visual art forms by making connections to their own experiences or by talking about the form</p> <p>21.6 respond to a variety of visual art forms (e.g., paintings, fabrics, sculptures, illustrations) from various cultures and communities</p> <p>22.1 communicate their ideas about something (e.g., a book, the meaning of a word, an event or an experience, a mathematical pattern, a motion or movement)</p>
<p>4.6 Problem Solving and Innovating</p> <p>14/ 43 32%</p>	<p>1</p> <p>6</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>13</p> <p>23</p>	<p>1.2 listen and respond to others, both verbally and non-verbally (e.g., using the arts, using signs, using gestures and body language), for a variety of purposes (e.g., to exchange ideas, express feelings, offer opinions) and in a variety of contexts (e.g., after read-alouds and shared reading or writing experiences; while solving a class math problem; in imaginary or exploratory play; in the learning areas; while engaged in games and outdoor play; while making scientific observations of plants and animals outdoors)</p> <p>1.5 use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) in various contexts to connect new experiences with what they already know</p> <p>1.6 use language (verbal and non-verbal communication) to communicate their thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems</p> <p>1.8 ask questions for a variety of purposes</p> <p>1.9 describe personal experiences, using vocabulary and details appropriate to the situation</p> <p>1.10 retell experiences, events, and familiar stories in proper sequence</p> <p>6.5 discuss and demonstrate in play what makes them happy and unhappy, and why</p> <p>9.1 use reading behaviours to make sense of familiar and unfamiliar texts in print</p> <p>10.1 demonstrate an interest in writing</p> <p>10.3 write simple messages</p> <p>10.4 use classroom resources to support their writing</p> <p>10.6 communicate ideas about personal experiences and/or familiar stories, and experiment with personal voice in their writing</p> <p>13.3 select and use materials to carry out their own explorations</p> <p>23.4 communicate their understanding of something (e.g., a familiar story, an experience, a song, a play) by representing their ideas and feelings through the arts</p>

Appendix D

Conceptual understanding and the connection to the 3 concepts

	Conceptual Understanding	Comments	C1	C2	C3
4.3 Belonging and Contributing 23/61 37.7%	The ways in which people communicate are diverse and are influenced by their background experiences.				*
	Knowledge is socially constructed – created by people learning, working, and investigating together – and can be shared.	(this statement was repeated 3 other times in this section 4.3)	*		*
	Oral language is the basis for literacy, thinking, and relating in all languages.			*	
	People can have differing points of view.		*		
	I can use language to negotiate and express thoughts.	does not specify what kinds of language		*	
	It is essential for us all to honour and understand diverse cultural, linguistic, and personal preferences.		*		*
	I am a member of a community. Some people in the community are the same as me and some are different from me.				*
	I can have many roles in the community				*
	We are learning that all persons have values and that we can benefit from accepting and welcoming individual differences.		*		*
	It is essential for us to honour every person's uniqueness.		*		
	We learn about our strengths and come to understand how we belong and how we can contribute.		*		
	We can contribute our unique knowledge when we engage with others.		*		*
	It is important to pay attention to, and share, various different perspectives.		*		
	Everyone needs to have a sense of belonging		*		
	We all need to be heard and have a voice in the groups to which we belong		*		
	It is important for all of us to listen to and consider the diverse viewpoints expressed in the groups to which we belong		*		
	Culture and society influence our opinions, biases, and beliefs.				*
	Everyone has the right to feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.		*		
	It takes courage to stand up for what you believe in.		*		
	Everything in our daily lives is connected		*		
Communities support people in different ways.				*	
People contribute to their communities in different ways				*	

	All aspects of a community are connected and interrelated				*
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<p>4.4 Self-regulation and well-being 6/42 14.3%</p>	Conceptual Understanding	Comments	C1	C2	C3
	The ways in which people communicate are diverse and are influenced by their background experiences.				*
	Oral language is the basis for literacy, thinking, and relating in all languages.			*	
	We can learn how to adapt our behaviour to suit a variety of social circumstances, including the customs of different groups of people.		*		*
	People can have differing points of view.		*		
	I can use language to negotiate and express thoughts.	(does not refer to home language)			*
Knowledge is socially constructed – created by people learning, working, and investigating together – and can be shared.		*		*	

<p>4.5 Demonstrating literacy and Mathematics Behaviours 10/77 13%</p>	Conceptual Understanding	Comments	C1	C2	C3
	The ways in which people communicate are diverse and are influenced by their background experiences				*
	Knowledge is socially constructed – created by people learning, working, and investigating together – and can be shared.		*		*
	Oral language is the basis for literacy, thinking, and relating in all languages.			*	
	Being literate enables people to think about and make sense of the world.			*	
	The arts are a vehicle for understanding different cultures and communities and expressing our own ideas about them.				*
	Through interacting with various works of dance, drama, music, and visual arts, including multimedia art works, we deepen our awareness and appreciation of diverse perspectives.		*		*
	The arts have symbols that are rooted in a particular social, historical, and cultural context and therefore may have meanings that are different from what we know from our own culture and time.				*
	There are many ways to communicate thinking, theories, ideas, and feelings.			*	
	The arts provide a natural vehicle through which we can explore and express ourselves.		*		
The arts provide a natural vehicle through which we can explore and express ourselves in a variety of creative ways.		*			

4.6	Conceptual Understanding	Comments	C1	C2	C3
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Problem solving and innovating 5/52 9.6%	The ways in which people communicate are diverse and are influenced by their background experiences.			*
	Knowledge is socially constructed – created by people learning, working, and investigating together – and can be shared.		*	*
	There are many ways to communicate thinking, theories, ideas, and feelings.			*
	Through the arts, we can become critically literate and creative citizens of the world.			*
	The arts provide a natural vehicle through which we can explore and express ourselves in a variety of creative ways.		*	

Note: This statement “Knowledge is socially constructed – created by people learning, working, and investigating together – and can be shared.” Was stated in all four sections.

Appendix E

The Educator’s intentional interactions in relations to the three concepts

4.3 Belonging and Contributing	4.4 Self-regulation and well-being	4.5 Demonstrating literacy and Mathematics Behaviours	4.6 Problem solving and innovating
The Educator’s Intentional Interactions			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provoke further discussion, they add photos of American Sign Language (ASL) to the photos of children’s non-verbal communication. 2. Over time, the educators revisit their pedagogical documentation, including their videos and photographs, talking with the children about all the different ways people communicate their thinking and learning. 3. An educator invites children’s family members into the classroom to share stories of important family events, and then invites the children to talk about those events. 4. An educator places books in the blocks area that illustrate homes and structures from around the world (making sure that the images do not represent stereotypes) 5. The educators observe the children talking about the things they like, such as animals, foods, and pastimes. They document the responses for us in future planning. 6. the educators decide to discuss with the children the concept of multiple perspectives on the same 	<p>No statements that support the concepts.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. together, the educators and the family talk about strategies to help the child both at home and at school... the educators send home envelopes with letter tiles and name cards so the families can play the sound games at home. 2. To support children’s use of written communication in many contexts, the educators post signs children have written in their home language(s). 3. As many families are unable to attend the conferences in person, the educators take photographs and upload them to an e-portfolio and have phone conversations with families after they have accessed the work samples on a secure, password-protected blog 4. After analysing the pedagogical documentation, they learn that the children have been making connections to their prior experiences in their play. They plan to name and notice the strategy (making connections to prior knowledge) as one that 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After tasting several rice dishes from a variety of countries, the children decided they would like to taste other dishes from different cultures. The educators collect menus from a variety of ethnic restaurants in their community. They invite children to explore the menus with them, looking at which dishes would be healthy choices, while keeping in mind the food allergies in the classroom. 2. To support children’s use of written communication in many contexts, the educators post signs children have written in their home languages. The children’s families who use written communication in their home language contribute to the signs. The parents who are unable to come into the school join via web conference. 3. Families begin to participate and contribute via blog and e-mail as

<p>idea. They use spatial reasoning in mathematics to prompt the children to explore the concept. For example, the educators show the children an arrangement of cubes that would look different from multiple perspectives (side view, front view, back view). The children describe the quantity and the arrangement they can see from their viewpoint. (belonging and expression)</p> <p>7. The educators have numerous conversations about honouring the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child-rearing practices, and lifestyle choices of families.</p> <p>8. They rethink the learning environment to ensure that they are creating an atmosphere free from bias and built on mutual respect. (allowing children to feel a sense of respect, belonging, and free to express their thoughts)</p> <p>9. Based on their documentation, the educators decide to provoke further discussion about “fairness/unfairness/bias” by introducing the concept of “stereotyping” (belonging)</p>		<p>readers use to help them understand what an author means.</p> <p>5. The educators encourage the children to recognize patterns that are part of daily life: “what patterns do you follow when you get up in the morning and come to school?”</p> <p>6. The educators document the children’s thinking and how they use their prior experience with the data to think about their predictions, as well as the children’s reasoning, communication, reflections, and the connections they make.</p> <p>7. One of the children has a family member who is a dancer. The educators invite the dancer to share his dance style with the class.</p> <p>8. Some of the songs have been shared by the families in the community and some are known around the world. Families send in some of their favourite music and tell stories about why it is special. In some cases, families share in their home language, and older siblings in the school support communication.</p> <p>9. A small group of parents bring in patterned fabrics from their countries of origin and share the stories behind the patterns in the fabrics with the children. Afterwards, an educator discusses the patterns with the children and then invites them to create their own fabric patterns.</p>	<p>examples of other purposes for writing</p> <p>Recommendations</p>
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		10. The educators ask the children and their families to look for examples of art at home and in the places where they work, play, and shop.	
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Appendix F

Connections between the professional learning conversation and the three concepts.

Section	Professional Learning conversation	Comments	C1	C2	C3
4.3 Belonging and Contributing 0/4	There are only 4 PLC. None are linked to the 3 concepts				
4.4 Self-regulation and well-being 1/1	Re. SE2.4: The educators have a breakfast meeting with parents about supporting the children's development of self-regulation. At the meeting, one child's mother says, "Whenever he is concentrating on his building blocks at home, he turns his back to the rest of us and focuses on what he is making." This information gives the team an insight into how to help this particular child focus his attention when he is in class.	Inviting parents to school to strengthen connection, while still making fun.			*
4.5 Demonstrating literacy and Mathematics Behaviours 4/9	Re. OE1: A group of educators discuss the importance of maintaining children's home language. their focus is on the role of that educators can play in helping families recognize the benefits of maintaining their home language as integral part of their culture, values, social attitudes, and behaviour.	Teachers recognizing the importance of home language. Educators communicate their thoughts with parents. What is missing: how are educators encouraging the use of home language at school.		*	*
	Re. OE9: Following up on feedback from a meeting with families , an educator decides to send home a couple of the questions she uses when reading with children to help children comprehend the text. She asks some families to help by translating the following questions into the home language : "What do you think might happen in the book?" "How did you figure that out?" "What does this book remind you of?" The educator then also invites the families to share other questions that they ask when reading with their children.	Great example of building on parent teacher meeting. Following up after meetings creates a strong relationship between teachers and parents. Connection between home and school, through using home language as a tool to		*	*

		allow most, if not all, parents to understand the notes sent home.			
	<p>Re. OE10: The educators post the stages of picture making and the stages of writing in the writing area and on the Family Information Board. They post pedagogical documentation that shows the children’s thinking and learning. Children have been drawing and writing to communicate a memory, retell an experience, describe a point of view, describe a structure, and/or gather data from their classmates. At subsequent family conferences, the educators ask the parent(s) to share the kinds of writing that children do at home, and discuss with the parent(s) how the samples of the children’s work illustrate the stages of picture making and writing. Together, the educators and the parent(s) discuss the children’s thinking, learning, and progress. At their drop-in coffee mornings, several parents comment that talking about the documentation has helped them understand their child’s learning process.</p>	<p>Evidence of informing parents on what is going on in the class by posting on the family board. Teacher builds connection by understanding what children do at home, and informing parents what children do at school.</p>			*
	<p>Re. OE22 They decide to use music from the various cultures of children in the classroom in order to help them to make connections to their prior knowledge and experiences. Families volunteer to share recorded music associated with their culture.</p>	<p>Belonging: by including the various cultures in the classroom, children feel a sense of belonging. Another example of engaging parents/families, while valuing their culture and background.</p>	*		*
4.6 Problem solving and innovating 4/7	<p>Re. SE6.1 In addition, they decide to discuss with the parents on the school council ways in which this information can be shared with families to encourage more outdoor play and physical activity outside school time.</p>	<p>Thinking of ways to inform parents.</p>			*
	<p>Re. OE10: The educators post the stages of picture making and the stages of writing in the writing area and on the Family Information Board. They also post pedagogical documentation that shows the children’s thinking and learning. The children have been drawing and writing to communicate a memory, retell an experience, describe a point of view, describe a structure, and/or gather data from their classmates. At subsequent family conferences, the educators ask parents to share the kinds of writing that children do at home, and discuss with parent(s) how the samples of the children’s work</p>	<p>Evidence of informing parents on what is going on in the class by posting on the family board. Teacher builds connection by</p>			*

	<p>illustrate the stages of picture making and writing. Together, the educators and the parent(s) discuss the children’s thinking, learning, and progress. At their drop-in coffee mornings, several parents comment that talking about the documentation has helped them understand their child’s learning process.</p>	<p>understanding what children do at home, and informing parents what children do at school.</p>			
	<p>Re. SE13.1 This led them to plan “themes” that were based on the children’s interests</p>	<p>Building on children’s interests and prior knowledge.</p>	<p>*</p>		
	<p>Re. SE23.4: The educators invite a parent who is an artist working in various media to discuss the educators’ plans to improve the Kindergarten visual arts program</p>	<p>Parent/families engagement with school.</p>			<p>*</p>

Curriculum Vitae

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Waterloo Collegiate Institute, Waterloo, Ontario

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Curriculum studies; Early Childhood Education; Early childhood literacy; Multiliteracies pedagogies and culturally and linguistically diverse children's meaning-making and identity construction.

AWARDS

January 2017

Joan Pedersen Memorial Award

WORK EXPERIENCE

August 2011-2014

Senior Kindergarten Homeroom Teacher

Emirates National School, Al Ain, UAE

- Applying the HighScope structure of teaching under the PYP (Primary Years, IB) curriculum.
- Provide a variety of materials and resources for children to explore, manipulate, and use, both in learning activities and in imaginative play.
- Plan and conduct activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and work time that provides students with opportunities to observe, question, and investigate.
- Confer with parents or guardians, other teachers, counselors, and administrators to resolve students' behavioral and academic problems.

August 2008-2011 Junior Kindergarten Homeroom Teacher

Emirates National School, Al Ain, UAE

- Teach basic skills such as color, shape, number and letter
- Observe and evaluate children's performance, behavior, social development, and physical health.
- Provide a variety of materials and resources for children to explore, manipulate, and use, both in learning activities and in imaginative play.
- Plan and conduct activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and work time that provides students with opportunities to observe, question, and investigate.
- Confer with parents or guardians, other teachers, counselors, and administrators to resolve students' behavioral and academic problems.
- Attend PYP training sections regularly.

September 2007-2008 Senior Kindergarten Teacher

Al Dhafra Private Schools, Al Ain, UAE

- Responsible of preparing the weekly plan for English, Art, and Physical Education lessons.
- Interviewed teachers seeking a position as an English teacher.
- Explain curriculum for new Parents wanting to place their child in the school
- Strong communication with the principle and other English teachers.

May 2006-May 2007 School-Age Program Supervisor

Glencairn Child Care Centre, Kitchener, Ontario

- Evaluating student teachers on their four month placement period.
- Responsible of the weekly curriculum presented to the school age children.

May 2005-April 2006 Part-Time Permanent Early Childhood Educator

Glencairn Child Care Centre, Kitchener, Ontario

- Adapt and plan activities for different age-groups.
- Interact with parents sharing with them my thoughts and taking their ideas into consideration.
- Communicate with school supervisors and management with matters related to child's progress.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

May 2012

PYP- Play based learning (category 3)

3 days training at Greenfield Community School, Dubai, UAE

- September 2011 **Training on the HighScope Curriculum**
18 hours training on small group, large group and conflict resolution
(Emirates National School Al Ain)
- June 2011 **HighScope Curriculum Certificate of Attendance**
40 hours HighScope curriculum training
(Emirates National School Al Ain)
- August 2010 **Everyday Math Certificate of Attendance**
EDM Workshop
(Emirates National School Al Ain)
- June 2010 **International Baccalaureate Certificate of Attendance**
IB workshop
(Emirates National School Al Ain)
Introduction of the PYP Curriculum Model

MEMBERSHIPS

August 2013-present **Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE)**

REFERENCE

Upon request