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Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue; it makes it a requirement for survival. - Rene Dubos

We were born to unite with our fellow men, and to join in community with the human race. - Cicero

We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are. - Anais Nin
Multicultural Education and Policy Making

By Walid Chahal
Introduction

Being involved with other concerned citizens in addressing and fighting racism in our city, I find that the biggest stumbling block that we encounter is the denial of racism. Comments that I hear frequently include: “Canada is not a racist society”; “Thunder Bay doesn’t have that problem”; “This is not a racist institution”; “I am not a racist.” People with privileges usually do not face discrimination and because they are not affected by it, they assume that it does not exist. Hence, how can you fight something that does not exist in some peoples’ perceptions?

I teach race and ethnic relations on a regular basis at Lakehead University and am approached by students (including former students) who confide in me about the discrimination they face in the city of Thunder Bay. Also, because I sit on several anti-racism committees, I hear of many incidents of racism directed against members of our ethnic minorities. Because of the existence, and of course, the effects of racism, those of us who are concerned with fighting it and ameliorating the situation often become very frustrated when trying to seek and produce change, especially when approaching members of different organizations in the city. In my opinion, our lack of success and inability to produce change in our city, especially at the organizational level, is due to: 1) the denial of the existence of racism by those who control and occupy powerful positions in the city, both at institutional and business levels; 2) lack of documentation of incidents of racism; and 3) a lack of studies that deal with racial aspects and racialization processes. As the co-chair of Diversity Thunder Bay, which is a committee that, among other things, addresses issues of racism in the city, I, along with other members at the executive level, believe that in order to move forward in achieving racial harmony the first step is to document the existence of racism. Consequently, we will be able to show people in our city who have power, influence, and privileges that racial discrimination is a serious problem and although may not face discrimination nor be affected by it, this does not mean that it does not exist. Recently, members of Diversity Thunder Bay were able to receive funding from the Ministry of Canadian Heritage to conduct a qualitative/quantitative research project to provide evidence of the nature and scope of racism and race relations in the city. The Diversity Thunder Bay study, which was completed on March 21, 2002, included a strategic community survey of 360 people and in-depth interviews of 50 people. The study (Diversity Thunder Bay, 2002) revealed evidence of systemic racism directed against members of Aboriginal and other racial/ethnic minorities in Thunder Bay, with the greatest discrimination being experienced by Aboriginal people. Sites where racial incidents occur include retail establishments, schools and work places. This study (Diversity Thunder Bay, 2002) also found that racialization and discrimination were exhibited by some of the representatives of the city’s major institutions including the police, health and recreational services.

With this contextual background in mind, I argue that the biggest stumbling block in society to addressing racial/ethnic inequality, especially at the institutional level (including education), is the denial of racism. In this paper, I cite evidence that reveals the existence of discriminatory practices in our educational institutions and the inequality of outcome among our diverse student population. I examine the causes of the persistence of racism and discrimination in these institutions despite following multicultural, anti-racism education policies and practices. I also look critically at multicultural education and its application in our schools. To address these issues, I first look at the current changes of Canada’s demographic patterns, the increase in the number of ethnic, multicultural and Aboriginal students in our schools, and
how this changing demographic impacts on policy making, both inside and outside our schools. I then focus on multiculturalism, from its meanings, components and evolution to its promotion as a concept and as a policy and its link to the principles of liberal ideals. Subsequently, I discuss the complexities and processes of the social construction and reconstruction of the racist ideologies and practices in our schools and show their links to the larger society and policy-making. I also explore some alternatives that aim at the eradication of these discriminations and inequalities. Finally, I discuss the challenges in the context of the current restructuring and cutback to our educational institutions.

Demographic Considerations

Canada’s population is becoming increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse due to changes in immigration patterns over the last two decades. The changes in the demographic patterns derive mainly from the changes that have occurred in immigration policy since the 1960s, when Canada introduced the point system and opened up immigration to developing countries. These changes were steps in the right direction towards eradicating the most overt forms of racism and ethnocentrism that characterized Canada’s immigration policy prior to the 1960’s (see the work of Bolaria and Peter Li, 1988). In the early 1960s, ninety percent of immigrants came from European countries, whereas in the 1990s, most of Canada’s immigrants came from Asia. The trend is expected to continue and most of the immigrants to Canada will come from non-traditional sources, most notably Asia and Latin America (for further detail, see Frideres, 1992; Isaijw, 1999, chapter 4; Henry, 2000, chapter 3; Kalbach and Kalbach, 1999).

Settlement Patterns

Over the last two decades, the majority of immigrants have tended to settle in Canada’s metropolitan areas. These centres continue to become more ethnically diverse (Kalbach and Kalbach, 1999, p. 48). According to Statistics Canada, in 1996, around three-quarters of all immigrants (including 93 percent of those who arrived between 1991 and 1996) lived in the large urban centres of Montreal, Edmonton, Calgary, and Winnipeg are expected to be racial minorities. In Ottawa-Hall and Windsor, one sixth of the populations will consist of racial minorities. Around ten to fourteen percent of the populations of Halifax, Kitchener, Hamilton, Victoria, and Regina will be racial minorities. In addition to the increase in racial minorities, Canada’s Aboriginal population, on the whole, is also growing rapidly. The projected estimate for the beginning of this century is that it will be over one million (for details, see Frideres, 1998, chapter 5).

The dramatic change in Canada’s ethnic make up is also reflected in our schools. In the early 1990s, according to Contenta (1993), more than half of the students in Toronto came from non-English speaking backgrounds. In Vancouver, about half of the “51,776 students speak English as a second language and, of those, 15,000 are in E.S.L. classes” (P. 84, See also Ryan 1999, pp. 35-36). Similarly, the size of the Aboriginal student population in some Canadian cities is expected to increase. For instance, it is estimated that in a decade from now, about one-third of the school population in Saskatchewan will be of Aboriginal ancestry. As Watkinson states, this will almost double the number of Aboriginal children in the school system. As Watkinson states, this will almost double the number of Aboriginal children in the school system. In the next few years “one-half of all kindergarten students in Saskatchewan will be of Aboriginal ancestry” (1999, pp. 99-100). The increase in the number of ethnic, multicultural and Aboriginal students in our schools is expected to continue given the recent changes and the current trends in Canada’s immigration patterns referred to above. Accordingly, our institutions need to reflect the multi-ethnic, multicultural aspects of our society.
especially at the level of policy making, inside and outside of our schools, so that system-wide rather than piecemeal applications and change are possible. In the following sections I will address the changes that are required by looking critically at acts and policies that are guided by human rights models, beginning first with multiculturalism.

Living in a Multicultural Society

Romulo F. Magsino (1993, p. 2) tells us that the main literal understanding of the word multiculturalism denotes cultural retention. This literal interpretation, however, often evokes negative responses from people who subscribe to the ideals of unity and equality, especially when some of the cultural elements of specific ethnic groups are perceived as dysfunctional and antithetical to the ideals of unity and integration as defined by the dominant culture. Yet, despite this narrow interpretation of the concept of multiculturalism, it has been evolving in a manner that corresponds with the principles of a democratic society. The following passage is lengthy but fundamental to understanding policy-making in the context of the multicultural ideology that shapes the larger society:

Multiculturalism as an ideology … is modelled after liberal virtues of freedom, tolerance, and respect for individual differences. As an ideology, multiculturalism embraces a constellation of ideas and ideals about Canada’s multicultural mosaic that many Canadians appear to endorse over the American “melting pot.” Canadians have long taken pride in themselves as a tolerant society, with numerous national polls demonstrating consistent support for the principles of multicultural tolerance. To be sure, this endorsement varies with time and place, especially when political and economic costs are perceived to be excessive when compared to the anticipated benefits. Nevertheless, multiculturalism is endorsed as a defining cultural value, and living in multicultural society allows for a more varied and richer experience than in a monocultural society (Fleras & Kuhz, 2001, 10).

The endorsement of the ideals of freedom, tolerance, and respect for diversity constitutes an important part of our collective Canadian identity and putting them into practice through policy has been a key aspect of Canadian institutions.

The Policy of Multiculturalism and Education

Multiculturalism as a state policy was proclaimed, adopted and promoted by former Prime Minister Trudeau in 1971. By doing so, he was acting on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which called for the recognition and maintenance of Canada’s diversity. In its examination, the Royal Commission was searching for ways to “reconcil[e] the concepts of dualism and multiculturalism” (cited in Li, 1999, p. 151). According to Li (1999, p. 151), “The final recommendations of the Royal Commission were mainly about how to carry an official bilingual policy, but it made sixteen recommendations regarding how key institutions can change to maintain their language and culture.” During this period, the House of Commons presented its three main principles: cultural retention and development; full egalitarian participation in Canadian society; and cultural sharing (R. F. Magsino, 1993, p. 2). To this end, many subsequent Provincial Acts had either referred to or adopted these principles, albeit in varying degrees. Examples include: the 1974 Saskatchewan Multicultural Act; the 1984 Alberta Cultural Heritage Act; the 1983 Manitoba’s Intercultural Act; and Manitoba’s Policy for a Multicultural Society. Additionally, there were statements by different provincial governments containing provisions to support these multicultural principles. For instance, the Ontario Ministry in May 1977, the Government of New Brunswick in 1986, and the Nova Scotia Department
of Culture, Recreation, and Fitness in 1981, have all shown support for these principles (R. F. Magsino, 1993, pp. 2–3, see also, R. F. Magsino, 1986). Similarly, the Multiculturalism and Intercultural Education (1984) and the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) adopted by the federal government clearly reflect these principles. The Acts affirm:

(1) It is here by declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to: (a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage … (cited in Magsino 1993, p. 8).

More importantly, subsection 3(2)(a) of the federal Multiculturalism Act acknowledges the existence of discrimination in Canadian society and communicates the government’s commitment to make certain that the existence of unfair barriers to employment and career enhancement will be eradicated (Multiculturalism and Citizenship, Canada 1989-1990, cited in Henry et al, 2000, p. 335).

Education and Students Rights

In this section, I will look at the link between the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, specifically section 15 (1), and the rights of students. First it should be indicated that this section of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is similar to subsection 3(2)(a) of the federal Multiculturalism Act, in that, it acknowledges the existence of discrimination and calls for its eradication, as well as it expresses a need to be proactive in assisting those affected by it. According to Watkinson (1999), “inequality of educational outcomes among the diverse student population is a human rights issue, one that is governed by the Charter and other human rights legislations, as well as by societal values” (p. 92). She further argues that the implication of equality rights section of the Charter on discrimination may prove to be compelling. According to section 15.(1):

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, and in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms).

As a constitutional document (unlike other documents, such as the Canadian Bill of Rights), the Charter is directly applicable to the provinces and to public schools. The Charter, however, is a complex document that is difficult for individuals without knowledge in constitutional law to apply (Ogloff & Meyers, 1993, pp.27-28). Watkinson (1988, p.18) states: “Laws or acts of governments or their agents, including school officials, which discriminate against individuals because of their race, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, age, or mental or physical disability will be ruled unconstitutional unless they can be justified under section 15 (1).” Emphasizing the significance of section 15 of the Charter, Watkinson (1999, p. 93) draws on the Eldridge v. British Columbia case (1), and indicates that this section, more than any other section, acknowledges and upholds the human dignity of every person:

First, it expresses a commitment—deeply ingrained in our social, political and legal culture—to the equal worth and human dignity of human persons…. [Section 15(1)] ‘entails the promotion of a society in which all are secure in the knowledge that they are recognised at law as human beings equally deserving of concerns, respect and consideration’. Secondly, it instantiates a desire to rectify and prevent discrimination against particular groups ‘suffering social, political and legal disadvantage in our society’ (cited in Watkinson,1999, p. 93).

In addition to the acknowledgement of human dignity,
this section also states that discrimination is not acceptable. It also shows, as stated earlier, the need to take measures in ameliorating the situation of those affected by discrimination and to be proactive in seeking approaches to eradicate it (2).

True equality of treatment, especially in the context of education and students from disadvantaged backgrounds, cannot be achieved by simply treating every one the same. Achieving true equality means that the social conditions of students from disadvantaged backgrounds have to be examined closely and must be rectified (for further explanation, see the work of Contenta 1993; Wotherspoon 1998; Li 1988). Thus, it is imperative that policy makers and educators should ‘take measures to ensure that disadvantaged groups are able to benefit equally from government services’ (Watkinson, 1999 p. 99). Students and their advocates have used section 15, and as Watkinson points out, it will be used in the future to challenge the education system’s discriminatory practices and its inability to provide them with equal benefit.

The Keegstra case (1) and the Eaton case (3) are good examples of the usage of section 15. In Keegstra’s case, it was argued that a teacher’s anti-Semitic views hinder the rights of students to equal benefit. In the latter case it was argued “that students with disabilities have a right to an integrated education” (Watkinson, 1999, p. 97). According to Watkinson there are definitely other challenges ahead. It is possible that students may challenge curricula that are racists or ethnocentric (as shown above), “or those that exclude the experiences and histories of marginalized groups such as Aboriginal peoples, [Black people], persons with disabilities…” (Watkinson, pp.97-98; see, for further critical examination of Aboriginal education; Wotherspoon, 1991; Wotherspoon and Satzewich, 1993, Chapter 5; Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, vol. 5, chapter 4). Aboriginal peoples have limited educational opportunities compared to the overall national average. For instance, the functional illiteracy rate of Aboriginal peoples is 45 percent compared with the overall Canadian rates of 17 percent (Tait, 1999). Aboriginal peoples also have high drop out rates compared to the national average (for details see Clark, 1997). Charter challenges involving issues other than explicit or implicit racist curriculum could be in relation to the “omissions of the contributions and history of Aboriginal people.” On that, Watkinson indicates, “no one has yet argued, under human rights legislation or the Charter, that the lack of Aboriginal material and Aboriginal teachers in schools denies Aboriginal students equal benefits of a public service, but the argument is there to be made” (1999, p.99-101). The argument could be also in relation to the lack of representation of Aboriginal peoples in teaching and administrative positions (p.101).

**Rethinking Multiculturalism as Public Policy: Its Application and Assumptions**

Despite the positive elements of multiculturalism as public policy, as well as with respect to its application and assumptions, some social analysts find it problematic (for a good summary, see the work of Walcott, 1993; Henry et al 1999; and 2000). According to Henry et al (2000, p. 338) the Multiculturalism Act failed to deliver on its promise of addressing racial inequality and the systemic racism in Canada. As a result of this failure, an anti-racist critique of multiculturalism ensued. In this section, I will refer briefly to the main criticisms of multiculturalism.

Firstly, the concept of diversity in the Multiculturalism Act is limited to
symbolic rather than political or transformative kinds of change” (Henry et al, 1999, p. 96). Secondly, Walcott (1993, p. 26) argues that symbolic multiculturalism as public policy, “is one way of maintaining the existing hegemonic practices that define Canada as a dual (English and French) nation.” He continues:

The notion of duality (above) engages the country in a debate focusing mainly on English and French concerns with all others having to force their way on to the agenda. Through symbolic multiculturalism, little has to change structurally to include racial minorities and the ruling class hegemony can continue within an appearance of change that masks the reality (p.26).

Walcott views the element of power to be of fundamental importance to shedding light on the role that multiculturalism plays in maintaining the hegemonic structure in Canadian society. He stipulates: “Multicultural policies serves to place racial minority people in locations that are once more determined by the hegemonic other” (p. 32). Thirdly, the concept of tolerance is at the core of the state ideology of multiculturalism. It implies a binary split of “superiority and inferiority in implicitly assuming that some attributes and behaviours associated with minority groups need to be accepted, condoned, or sanctioned” (Henry et al, 2000, p. 337). In other words, “acceptance by the dominant culture is dependent on the good will, forbearance, and benevolence of those who do the tolerating” (Henry et al, 2000, p. 337). Fourthly, as stated above, although, the Multiculturalism Act (1988, cited above), in principle, is supposed to “recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage….”, it does not, however, as Walcott (1993, p. 38) tells us, refer or place the creation of the text of the Act in the historical context of the struggle and resistance against assimilation. As Walcott (1993, p. 38) further elaborates:

The notion of multiculturalism as “fair and just” policy serves to unify the nation state as an “imagined community” of tolerant persons who are accepting of other people to make multiculturalism a point of national pride. While producing multiculturalism as a point of pride, the Act does not call into question that the concept of national unity embedded within multiculturalism serves to continue the hegemony of English and French Canadians, and by extension White Canadians.

Hence, a race-based analysis reveals the failure and inadequacy of multiculturalism to address the problems of systemic racism in Canada. However, despite its problems and the hegemonic elements referred to above, I argue that multiculturalism as state policy was a step in the right direction from the ethnocentric, assimilationist policy that characterized much of Canada’s history (for an historical analysis of assimilationist policy and its protracted devastating impact on Canada’s minority, see the work of Churchill, 1984, Mougeon and Heller (1986), Itwaru and Ksonzek, 1994).

Multicultural Education

The adoption of Multiculturalism as government policy and later on as legislation provided the moral and the practical base on which to change direction from the monocultural, assimilationist orientation. Many schools boards started to adopt policies, programs, and practices aimed at developing “a learning environment [which] acknowledges the reality of diversity in Canadian society and… to produce students who were more tolerant, respectful, and understanding of cultural differences” (Henry et al, 2000, p. 249). Drawing on the concepts of multicultural education in the literature, Magsino (1985; 1989; and 1993) shows the strong link between multicultural education and cultural accommodation. He provides useful points concerning the multicultural conception of multicultural education. Magsino’s different points about multicultural education reflect the following emphasis: cultural pluralism; equal power and dignity among all cultural groups; and the preservation of the ethnic groups cultural identity, language and the development of
institutions that support their culture and language.

Conceiving multicultural education in this way is significant and school administrators, educators and policy makers should pay close attention to this conceptualization. The problem, however, has to do first with the reality that still, to a great extent, exists in the larger society which still reflects the lack of application of these multicultural conceptions. In other words, if we have a society that is striving to adopt these elements of multiculturalism that Magsino is proposing, subsequently, it would be easier for educators and administrators to produce these multicultural changes in our educational institutions. The research indicates that educators are poorly prepared when they actually enter a multiethnic, multicultural classroom setting (see the work of F. Henry et al, 2000, chapter 8; & b. hooks 1994, chapters 2-3). Additionally, the research still shows the existence of racism in our schools. Drawing on the findings of numerous studies, Henry et al (2000, chapter 8) typify the manifestation of racism in the following ways:

- Racially biased attitudes and practices of teachers and administrators
- Eurocentric curriculum
- Racial harassment and racial incidents
- Streaming of minority students (especially Blacks) into non-academic programs
- Assimilationist culture of the school
- Lack of representation (e.g. lack of administrators and teachers from minority groups)
- Devaluing of the role and participation of parents and community

The existence of racism in our schools as manifested in the findings listed above is a serious issue that needs to be addressed by policy makers, teachers and school administrators alike and the rest of society. Magsino (1993, p. 4) provides a useful schema that can assist educators and administrators to make the curriculum reflective of the need of multiethnic, multicultural students. His schema includes:

- multicultural components in individual regular subjects; heritage cultural studies; heritage language programmes; the use of non-English and non-French as the language of instruction for some subjects; and the evaluation of textbooks for bias, prejudice and stereotyping. In this schema, he also suggests additional helpful co-curricular activities such as multicultural festivals, trips to heritage locations, multicultural days, symposia on ethnic/race relations, and occasional ethnic presentations. If the elements of this schema are incorporated adequately into the curriculum, it can ameliorate the situation for many of the ethnic students, as well as make them feel that they are part of the education system and part of the Canadian society. It makes them feel that their ethnicity and their experience count. In the following section I will delve further into the complexity of the issue of racism, discrimination and I will critically examine multicultural, anti-racist education.

Re-evaluating Anti-racist/Multicultural Education

Recognizing and tackling racism (or sexism) are not always easy as I believe that the social construction of race, gender, and class biases blur our vision. What this means is that the majority of people do not intend to be racist, sexist or class biased. Accordingly, what we need to do is to constantly think and rethink our perceptions and our conduct in relation to race and ethnicity (and gender and class). One of the problems that confronts us today as educators and concerned citizens does not only involve the recognition of the existence of current ideologies and inequities of race, gender, and class and their historical links, but also their visible and invisible effects (including privileges or lack of them) on all of us. By that I am not suggesting that the effects (especially of ideologies, as mentioned above) or the processes are simplistic or one dimensional, nor that
they affect us in the same way, or that we are passive in our responses, because I believe that ideologies are constantly constructed and reconstructed, resisted and reproduced (see the work of Miles, 1989; Troyna, 1993). What this means in essence according to Robert Miles (1989, p. 132) is that we should avoid “any assumption of simple and historical duplication.” He further stipulates: “[racist] Ideologies are never only received but also constructed and reconstructed by people responding to their material and cultural circumstances in order to comprehend, represent and act in relation to those circumstances” (p. 132). What Miles points out is that there are many factors at the individual and collective levels that can come into play and reconstruct our past racist ideologies. In other words, as he eloquently puts it (132-33):

[racist] ideological reproduction is therefore a consequence of a transaction between historical legacy and individual and collective attempts to make sense of the world. A [racist] discourse “inherited” from the past is likely to be reconstituted if it is to be used to make sense of the world in a new context, while new circumstances can be expected to stimulate the formation of new representations.

Looking closely at Miles’ analysis in the context of education, Fazal Rizvi (in an introduction to Barry Troyna’s book, 1993) indicates that:

“specific forms of racism can change, and inherited racist discourses are likely to be reconstituted. New circumstances are likely to lead to new formulations of racism. This also means that an expression of racism in media, text books, policies and in schools is not necessarily going to be the same as its reception” (p.15).

As mentioned earlier, today’s students constitute a diverse group, one that is very different from the “homogenous” student population that the Canadian educational system was initially intended to serve. The use of the term diverse includes “individuals and groups who have historically suffered discrimination and disadvantage due to their cultural heritages, racial and ethnic identities, gender and class experiences, and mental and physical abilities” (Watkinson 1999, p. 92). This is important to note because often the term diversity is used to emphasise inclusion, tolerance and harmony without taken into consideration those who have been adversely affected by the racist ideologies, policies and practices that are embedded in history. Although, at the level of policy making we have been moving in the direction of eradicating racism and sexism, our practices and dominant ideologies still reflect discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender and class (Wotherspoon, 1998).

Reflecting on this diversity in regards to education, knowledge and multiculturalism from an historical perspective, the noted educator Peter McLaren stipulates:

Diversity that somehow constitutes itself as a harmonious ensemble of benign cultural sphere is a conservative and liberal model of multiculturalism that, in my mind, deserves to be jettisoned because, when we try to make culture an undisturbed space of harmony and agreement where social relations exist within cultural forms of uninterrupted accords we subscribe to a form of social amnesia in which we forget that all knowledge is forged in histories that are played out in the field of social antagonisms (cited in hooks, 1994, p. 31).

McLaren asserts that without serious reflection and understanding of our antagonistic past we will not be able to achieve harmony. In other words, in order to achieve harmonious existence, we need to address the source of our anger and hostility and their historical links. In the aforementioned discussion, I have indicated that the processes of social construction and reconstruction of racist ideologies and practices, as well as resistance to them,
are complex. However, taking into consideration their complexity and dynamism should not mean that they are not still having adverse effects on students, especially on the basis of race, ethnicity, class and gender (the latter two will not be addressed due to the limited parameters of this paper). Thus, their negative impact is still being felt in the classroom, and with respect to the inequality of educational outcome between social groups. It should also be indicated that students from these diverse backgrounds are, on average, doing somewhat worse in schools than students from other communities (Minister of Education and Training, 1994 report cited in Watkinson, 1999, p. 92). Other factors of course account for the difference, but one cannot deny the historical and social patterns of discrimination and inequity, as well as the consequences of racism in the educational system and the way they negatively influence the educational achievement and chances of people of colour and members of diverse groups.

What I am saying is that quite often we are not always aware of our biases or positionality (some, of course, are but do not acknowledge them). One of the biggest challenges for us in our day-to-day interactions is to be able to confront our individual and collective biases. Reviewing the research, Henry et al (2000, p. 257) provide evidence of this ethnocentric bias and racism in our educational institutions. They point out: “Racism in the schools and university is reflected in the ethnocentric attitudes, assumptions, practices, and the systematic racism that is so pervasive.” What is needed then in order to make a difference is a lot of critical awareness and thinking, as well as engagement – which together develop one’s “conscientization” (Paulo Freire, 1974).

Attempts have been made over the last decade or so to incorporate multicultural and anti-racist approaches to education, albeit with little success, because these approaches have not been incorporated through out the entire curriculum. They have been a kind of tokenism (an add-on to the existing curriculum). The complexity of the problem is captured in the work of bell hooks (1994); she provides many incidents that reflect this tokenism. According to her, this kind of tokenism is true even in areas where people who are working towards progressive change exhibit biases. As she states: “in women’s studies … individuals will often focus on women of colour at the very end of the semester or lump everything about race and difference in one section. This kind of tokenism is not multicultural transformation, but it is familiar to us as the change individuals are most likely to make” (p.39). She continues by asserting that: “such pedagogy is not an interrogation of the biases conventional canon (if not all canons) establish, but yet another form of tokenism. What educators ought to do, according to her is to make “the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute [and make this] … a central goal of transformative pedagogy” (p. 39). After closely reviewing the findings of task forces, surveys, and studies, as well as the testimonies of racial minority students, parents, teachers, and academics from all parts of Canada, Henry et al (2000) summarize the different aspects of racism in our educational institutions and the effects of racism on both educators of colour and racial-minority students. They stipulate that:

... racism is woven into the formal curriculum and influences the ways in which knowledge is structured, valued, and transmitted... Also notable is the importance of the hidden curriculum in creating a negative and hostile physical and social environment for students of colour. Racism in the schools and university is reflected in the ethnocentric attitudes, assumptions, practices, and the systematic racism that is so pervasive (p. 257).

Henry and associates also provide evidence of racism in educational institutions by exposing the lack of success of boards and schools to work on “an inclusive and an equitable relationship with racial-minority parents and communities.” They further cite evidence that show:

the failure of teacher training programs to provide students with the necessary knowledge, understanding, and skill to effectively manage a multiracial classroom...Biased assessment and placement procedures are some of the most
powerful forms of different treatment in the educational system and affect the educational achievement of racial-minority groups, especially black students (p. 257; see also Contenta 1993; b. hooks, 1994; Ryan, 1999; Dei, and Calliste, 2000).

The research also makes the link between the prevalence, both historically and currently, of racism and racist ideologies in the larger society and its impact on different social institutions, including our schools (see the work of T. Wotherspoon, 1998; Wotherspoon & V. Satzewich, 1993, chapter 5; S. Contenta, 1993; & C. Crichlow, & W. McCarty, 1993). Additionally, studies show the link between racism in society and schools and the issue of identities and representations (see for instance, the work of Kelly, 1998; Ryan, 1999, Contenta, 1993; McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993; C. James & A. Shadd, 2001; & F. Henry et al, 2000).

The discussion above reveals the complexity of the issue of discrimination and racism and the unprepared-ness of individuals and institutions to adopt multicultural, anti-racist education in an effective way. Moreover, it shows the lack of understanding to the seriousness of the impact of discrimination and racism on ethnic and racial students. In order to understand discrimination and racism one must consider how the social arrangements and micro processes of the school not only reflect but also play a significant role in producing the racism (and sexism and class elitism) and ethnic relations of power and resistance that circulate throughout the larger society. Micro and macro processes are not outside each other but are constructed simultaneously.

With respect to the micro level, I find the conceptual work of M. Fullan (2001) on the meaning of educational change and what he proposes to be useful for those of us who are concerned in pursuing and effectively implementing multicultural/anti-racist education. For instance, he explains that “…individuals and groups working together have to become clear about new educational practices that they wish (and/ or someone else wishes them) to implement” (p.48). In another passage on the meaning of educational change and what needs to be done at the organizational levels and processes, he stipulates:

First, change will always fail until we find some way of developing infrastructures and processes that engage teachers in developing new understandings. Second, it turns out that we are talking not about surface meaning, but rather deep meaning about new approaches to teaching and learning. Meaning will not be easy to come by given this goal and existing cultures and conditions (pp. 38-39).

Fullan’s ideas could be applicable in the context of anti-racist education as 1) educators and administrators have to be clear about the new multicultural, multi-ethnic educational practices; 2) the right programs and processes to engage teachers in gaining new insights have to be in place; 3) in order for the new innovation to be assimilated, its meaning has to be shared; 3) recognition of the fact that it is not going to be easy for the meaning of the new change to be the norm, when the existence of racism in the larger society is, to a great extent, still reflected in schools (e.g., official and hidden curriculum and the conduct of teachers and administrators) and taken for granted. Fullan further explains that reforms sometimes fail not so much because of teachers but from how reforms are introduced and implemented. He states:

All of this is less a criticism of teachers and more a problem of the way in which change [e.g., adopting multicultural, anti-racist education] is introduced, and especially the lack of opportunity for teachers to engage in deeper questioning and sustained learning. As a result, meaningful reform escapes the typical teacher, in favour of superficial, episodic reform that makes matters worse (Fullan,
What is needed is to closely examine the biases present in the educational system (see for example the work of hooks, 1994; Henry, 2000; Ryan, 1999). Concerning this point, the work of Ryan (1999) is relevant because he shows, among other things, that the lack of success--in the adoption of multicultural or anti-racist approaches to education--is due to their inability to question the biases that are inherent in the educational system. Ryan acknowledges the positive elements of these approaches, which advocate presenting the cultures of different ethnic, racial groups in a positive light, addressing omissions of their contributions in the curriculum and showing the significance of resistance and struggle against racism by these groups, yet he directs our attention to the actual processes that are part of the hidden curriculum. He asserts, “most multicultural and antiracist approaches are not as (yet) equipped to analyze the process of representation in schools.” He continues, “while representation remains an important part of their respective approaches, it does not figure directly in the ways representation works outside of curricular images through, for example, the so-called ‘hidden curriculum’ and all interactions that take place in schools” (p. 11). Accordingly, a good anti-racist approach has to also enable educators to re-examine the processes of the hidden curriculum. Further more, as bell hooks (1994) reminds us that true multiculturalism:

Compels educators to recognize the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is shared in the classroom. It forces us to recognize our complicity in accepting and perpetuating biases of any kind… We… [must] teach in a way to transform consciousness, creating a climate of free expression that is the essence of a truly liberatory liberal arts education (p.44).

Hence, close examination of these biases is needed so we can move in our policy making towards the direction of true multicultural education. At this point, I would like to get back to the work of Fullan. He explains that change involves three phases, initiation, implementation and institutionalization (Fullan, 2001). So far, I have been, more or less dealing with the initiation phase. The processes of reforms encounter difficulty not only in the initiation phase but also in the implementation and institutionalization phases (Fullan, 2001). According to Fullan (2001, chapter 5) the difficulty that is usually encountered in the implementation and continuation of new change involves several factors both at the micro and the macro levels. In order for effective implementation, continuation and institutionalization to occur, especially in the case of anti-racist education, supports for the eradication of racism have to come not only from the inside of schools but also the outside. As Datnow and Stringfield (2000, p. 199, cited in Fullan, 2001, p. 93) put it:

Our research has documented that reform adoption, implementation, and sustainability, and school change more generally, are not processes that result from individuals or institutions acting in isolation from one another. Rather, they are the result of the interrelations between and across groups in different contexts, at various points in time. In this way, forces at the state and district levels, at the design team level, and at the school and classroom levels shape the ways in which reforms fail or succeed.

Thus, meaningful and lasting reform is a slow process and requires a tremendous effort at the individual and the collective levels, as well as at the macro levels of policy making. The aforementioned discussion is important because it enables us not only to understand the complexity of racial discrimination, individual and institutional biases, but also the steps that we need to closely follow at the micro and macro levels so we can move in the direction of eradicating racism. Stated differently, I propose that what is needed in our schools is a serious commitment to antiracist/multicultural approaches and programs to learning and education, where teachers and administrators: 1) think and rethink their perception and conduct; 2) closely examine the official and the hidden curriculum in relation to issue of race and ethnicity; 3) work together in a concerted effort with other concerned educators, community
In order for Multicultural education to work and to be effective, institutional or organizational change is required and certain elements must be included in our strategies to progress toward racial equity. Henry and colleagues (2000) offer good suggestions for organizational change that can be applied in our educational institutions. First, we must work on developing self-reflective attitudes and practices that promote greater individual and institutional accountability. Second, we need to incorporate the contributions and interests of all ethno-racial groups in the curriculum. Third, there has to be a serious commitment to get rid of all forms of racial discrimination and disadvantage. Fourth, increase representation and participation of racial groups as full participants in the development of the curriculum. Fifth, there has to be serious commitment towards promoting racial equity and the implementation of good strategies to combat racism (p. 398). All of these suggestions need to be implemented at the various micro and macro policy-making levels. To this end, close examination of the existence of discrimination in our schools is needed and multicultural and anti-racist approaches to education have to be well integrated at every phase of the change process in order to reverse the trend. Additionally, as Magsino (2000, pp. 335-337) tells us that in order to produce fundamental change and influence the government and its institutions need to address ethnic, racial inequality and push for true multicultural education, especially at a time of budget cuts followed by the

Educational Restructuring and Cutbacks

In addition to these aforementioned elements, it should be pointed out that the challenges that lie ahead for marginalized students will be linked to the current changes in relation to the restructuring and cutbacks to our educational institutions and programs. Wotherspoon (1998) tells us that “cutbacks in programs and State services designed to enhance educational and economical opportunities have placed the least privileged segments of the population in an even more vulnerable position when they cannot gain access to the programs and the resources required for competitive success” (p.161). Furthermore, the market-oriented forces of globalization coupled with the neo-liberal/conservative policies in Canada are already adversely affecting our students, especially those who are marginalized, and transforming our educational institutions.

Currently, less emphasis is placed on critical thinking, analysis and reflection, yet all three are important for human development and social responsibility including, among other things, the issue of race and ethnicity. Standardized testing means more emphasis on the end-result and less on the process and learning. In other words, students’ scores may improve, but does this mean that they are learning or interested in what they are learning? Furthermore, stressing the
end-result in this way will diminish the creativity of students as their learning is reduced to working towards meeting standardized results.

Some of the research on school reform in the United States is very insightful and useful for the Canadian educational context. For instance, McNeil (2000) and Apple (2000) were able to convincingly demonstrate the harmful effects of institutionalizing standardized curricula and testing, and the reliance on the new right (i.e. neo-liberal, conservatives and others) marketized solutions to educational problems. They were also able to show the urgency for policy makers and educators to seriously rethink and critically reflect on test-driven curricula and their harmful impacts. They argue that the institutionalization of extreme forms of educational standardization not only intensify educational inequities but also conceal historical and current inequities. McNeil adequately shows—by drawing on several practical examples—that reducing education to standardized tests and performance indicators will harm both the curriculum and “those [including racial and class background] who historically have not done well on standardized tests.”

Drawing on a host of studies, Apple adds to this line of analysis by spending more time on critically analyzing the link between the new right (recognizing its various segments and concerns) and educational standardization, pedagogical perspectives and the question of inequity both within and outside the school. Apple examines the connection between policies of the new right (including educational “reform”) and the question of inequity, which draws in the complex interactions of race, class, and gender both inside and outside the school settings. By taking the larger social structure into consideration, he urges readers and educators to look critically at the claims about the assumed neutrality of the market-oriented policies of the new right regarding school “reform” (i.e. standardization) and its harmful effects. In order to fully understand the current educational situation, he also advises us to delve beyond the surface and not to make simplistic, one dimensional or deterministic assumptions.

Additionally, in order to achieve harmonious co-existence and meaningful multicultural and antiracist education, Apple asserts that we need to address the causes of social antagonism and widespread inequity and trace their economic and political relations and their historical roots. As I have indicated earlier, the work of McNeil and Apple are insightful and useful for the Canadian educational context and for policy makers and educators who are concerned with issues of social justice and equity. McNeil and Apple are both appalled by the harmful effects of institutionalizing standardized curricula and testing, and on the reliance of new right marketized “solutions” to educational problems. While both authors make the link between schools and the larger society, the former however concentrates on the microprocesses within the schools, whereas the latter, in addition to spending time on these processes, also spends equal time on their links to the larger society. I think the substance of both of these articles are exceptionally helpful for policy makers and educators, especially those who are concerned with social justice issues, by asking us to critically reflect on current “reform” policies, pedagogical perspectives and practices. I support the analyses presented in the work of McNeil (2000) and Apple (2000), and I maintain that schooling and learning cannot be measured or reduced “solely to what is testable.” Education is about much more than the “reductive, simplistic paper-and-pencil tests” or simply acquiring and repeating information.

According to Wotherspoon (1998 p.140): since its origins “public education [including university education], has continued to be driven … by contradictory dynamics … a capitalist imperative and a democratic imperative.” I argue that currently we are moving in the direction of the former (capitalist imperative) due to the influence of the forces of globalization coupled with the neo-liberal/conservative policies. The negative effects of the transformation of our educational institutions are also evident in the deteriorating quality and accessibility of post-secondary education in Canada. Some of these
changes at the post-secondary level include: rising tuition fees, increase student debt loads; dwindling faculty members; the elimination of programs that ensure accessibility to marginalized groups (on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender and class); closer ties to and reliance on corporate sector demands (which means that knowledge will be further treated like a commodity); federal and provincial cutbacks and less support for research (For further documentation and explanation of these changes and their impact on our students and education, see the work of Doherty-Delorme, & Shaker, 1999 and Moll, 1997). My discussion of the above analyses, in part, points out that the institutionalization of extreme forms of educational standardization not only intensify educational inequities but also conceal historical and current inequities, and consequently, harm both the curriculum and disadvantaged individuals and groups “who historically have not done well on standardized tests.” In this light, in order to have effective multicultural and antiracist education, among other things, we need to address the causes of social antagonism and persistent inequity, and to be able to trace their economic and political links, as well as their historical roots.

**Concluding Remarks**

I focussed in this paper on the rights of ethnic, and especially immigrant and Aboriginal students to education that reflects their cultural heritages, experiences and contributions, and one that is free of discrimination and racist practices. I drew on alternative strategies and analytical works, which enable us to apply and incorporate, more effectively, multicultural and anti-racist approaches to education not as a tokenism (an add on) but through the entire curriculum. Furthermore, I explored the possible legal arguments regarding discriminatory practices and inequality of outcome among the diverse student populations on the basis of human rights issues, human rights legislation and s.15 (1) of the Charter. I also referred to some evidence which shows that the market-oriented forces of globalization juxtaposed with the neo-liberal/conservative policies both in Canada and the US are already having negative effects on educational institutions and students, especially those who are from disadvantaged background. These forces and regressive policies, I should add, will make it more difficult for us to move further in the direction of creating an environment that is conducive to learning and critical thinking.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that in order to produce meaningful fundamental changes, the only option we have is to work hard as a society to resist the oppressive market-oriented forces of globalization and the neo-liberal/conservative policies both inside and outside our educational institutions. We also need to constantly strive as a society to adopt, reflect on, and apply at every level of our lives the liberal virtues of freedom, true equality, tolerance, and respect for individual differences, and the acknowledgement of human dignity of every person, as well as make a tremendous effort to rectify and prevent discrimination against any group “suffering social, political and legal disadvantage.”

**Notes:**


(2) In interpreting section 15 (1) of the Charter, it is important to learn from cases that drew on this section and look at the court ruling on them (e.g., the Eldridge and Andrews cases, on the former, see the discussion by Watkinson, 1999, pp. 114, 119; on the latter, see the work of J. Paul R. Howard 1993).


**References:**


Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, vol. 5, chapter 4


On October 8, 1971, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau announced a federal "policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework."¹ Several provinces - including Ontario, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan - soon followed Trudeau's lead by implementing programs and policies to address multicultural education.² Unlike these provinces, British Columbia's government has hesitated to develop policy on multicultural education. Instead, several piecemeal reforms have been attempted since the 1970s - none of which has brought substantive change to BC's public school system.
This historical narrative illustrates the circuitous, four-part route through which multicultural education arrived on BC’s policy agenda. As well, it attempts to explain the reluctance of BC’s policy-makers to embrace the concept of multicultural education.

Part I: Advocacy and Resistance

Following the passage of Trudeau’s multicultural policy in 1971, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism quickly began promoting the ideal of Canada as a multicultural nation. Initially, the Secretary of State directed its efforts at community groups and ethnic communities and not at public schools. Without the direct initiatives from Ottawa that marked the government’s efforts for bilingualism, British Columbia’s government initially ignored the issue of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism was first promoted in British Columbia (BC) by the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews (CCCJ). Beginning in 1970, Charles Paris and the CCCJ’s multicultural resource team began offering immigration settlement and language instruction in-service in the Vancouver school district. Funding for Paris’s group initially came from the federal Manpower and Immigration Department as well as the Secretary of State. By the mid-1970s, Paris’s team was also receiving funding from the City of Vancouver, Social Planning Department, and the provincial human resources ministry. In 1977, when the education ministry denied funding to the team for conducting English as a second language workshops and in-services for the Vancouver school district, the CCCJ switched its focus in the public schools from language instruction services to multiculturalism workshops.

The CCCJ was not alone in its efforts to promote multiculturalism. In spring 1977, secretary of the BC Multicultural Women’s Steering Committee, Lorna Ashlee criticized the government’s decision not to fund Paris’s resource team and told education minister Patrick McGeer that it was "unrealistic to expect that individual school districts [would] be able to develop effective programs of their own as they lack[ed] the information and resources." In concluding her letter to McGeer she charged that the provincial government was not committed to multiculturalism, despite the 1971 federal policy.

In 1978, the Vancouver Multicultural Society (VMS) of BC also began lobbying the provincial government to implement multicultural education programs. Begun in 1974 by a "group of individuals" who "had the insight to recognize a growing need of coordination between the various ethno-cultural communities and interested individuals in the Greater Vancouver area," the VMS was mandated to act as an "umbrella organization" for various ethnic and multicultural groups seeking to advance the cause of multiculturalism. In a letter to Pat McGeer on March 9, 1978, Joseph Katz, University of British Columbia professor and chair of the VMS’s Education Committee, argued that BC was not paying sufficient attention to multicultural education. He requested that the education minister "establish a Division of Multicultural Studies and appoint a coordinator," to oversee the instruction of non-official languages and cultural studies. Though McGeer, a former UBC professor himself, appeared sympathetic, he insisted that first priority in education would be given to English and French "due to national unity problems." Nevertheless, he asked associate deputy minister Jim Carter to explain to Katz how local boards could initiate and finance special courses as they saw fit.

McGeer and the education ministry also felt the direct pressures of fellow ministers. Sam Bawlf, Minister of Recreation and Conservation,
forwarded a letter to McGeer, dated April 3, 1978, from Jozepha Herfst, president of the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA). AMSSA served as an umbrella organization for multicultural interests in the province. In the letter, Herfst noted that a delegation from the society had recently met with a Mr. Cross of the Recreation and Conservation Ministry to "propose changes in government policy on culture and to encourage multiculturalism." Herfst also requested that Bawlf appoint a director in his ministry to communicate the ideas and recommendations of AMSSA to cabinet and that he approach the Ministry of Education "regarding a possible conference on Multiculturalism and Curriculum Development." She stated that schools alone cannot completely erase community racial tensions that may exist, schools can and must play a larger role in making sure that our youth of today can develop a strong sense of understanding and appreciation for those whose background and heritage is (sic) different from their own.

In addition to grassroots interest groups and provincial politicians, federal members of parliament were also influential in advocating for multicultural education. In October 1977 Simma Holt, federal Member of Parliament (MP) for Vancouver-Kingsway requested $21,425 from Norman Cafik, Minister of State for Multiculturalism, to fund a Parkside Preschool Society project, one of approximately seven public works projects in Holt’s riding receiving funding through the Canadian Department of Manpower and Immigration. Holt copied the letter to McGeer, claiming that differences in language and culture between parents and children, have in the past ... caused serious delinquency problems and extreme violence in homes. Foreign-born parents do not understand the culture mix their children acquire upon entry to Canadian schools. I can cite numerous cases throughout my 32-year writing career where children become drug addicts and delinquents because of this conflict at home. The Parkside program may help about 44 children, and lead to solutions for thousands.

On behalf of McGeer, Deputy Minister Walter Hardwick defended the status quo and opposed Holt’s request. He believed that multiculturalism was not something that was best treated separately, but rather was currently being "woven into the fabric of the educational process," in social studies courses or through fairs and pageants depicting music, dance, costumes, food and languages of ethnic communities.

Part II: Political Winds of Change

Nevertheless, by the late 1970s, BC’s initial resistance to multiculturalism was displaced due to federal and provincial political developments. In 1973, the federal government had appointed the first Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism (CCCM) to advise the federal minister about implementing its multiculturalism policy. Forty-seven ethno-cultural backgrounds were represented among the 101 political appointees to the Council. Unlike the federal government, the CCCM - from its inception - had persistently recommended that the federal government play an active role in funding and creating materials for language instruction in Canadian public schools. Of the Council’s 20 recommendations made in 1977, 12 dealt directly with provincial education, including the suggestion that "school curricula be developed and implemented in full consultation with qualified educators and representatives of the ethno-cultural communities concerned."

By 1978, the federal multiculturalism directorate had become increasingly responsive to the CCCM’s input. In 1977, Orest Kruhlak, a member of the directorate, had met with several CCCM members
to hear their ideas about promoting multiculturalism in schools.\textsuperscript{18} Afterward, Kruhlak hired Roberta Russell, a former teacher, to assess the resources and policies that existed for schools to deal with multiculturalism and cultural pluralism.\textsuperscript{19} By 1979, Russell had compiled substantial material resources that the directorate then distributed to provincial education ministries.\textsuperscript{20}

Russell’s resources proved timely as multiculturalism took on increased provincial importance early in 1979 due to the public controversies stirred by the arrival of Vietnamese refugees. In February 1979, Hugh Curtis, then BC’s provincial secretary, sponsored a conference on multiculturalism entitled "Toward a Provincial Multicultural Policy."\textsuperscript{21} The conference’s purpose was to assist the Education Ministry and its ad hoc advisory committee to examine the status of learning non-official languages in BC; to identify related needs and concerns; and to formulate recommendations for the minister’s consideration.\textsuperscript{22} The conference agenda indicates that the opening reception was held at Hodson Manor in Vancouver, the home of the VMS. One month later, BC’s Education Ministry co-sponsored a second multiculturalism conference with the VMS. The stated purposes of this second conference - held several days before the provincial election - were identical to those of the first.\textsuperscript{23}

In fall 1979, McGeer told the BC Association of Teachers of Modern Languages that the "development and implications of multicultural curricula [were] of great interest to government."\textsuperscript{24} He also announced that, upon the recommendations of the ad hoc advisory committee, a survey would be undertaken to determine BC’s requirements in terms of multicultural programs and curricula. Simon Fraser University’s Elaine Day and Stan Shapson undertook the survey in 1981 and concluded that many school districts [had] made more than a beginning in implementing programmes and activities in the areas of English as a second language, multiculturalism for all children and languages other than English or French. It [was] equally clear from the opinions expressed by respondents that the climate [was] receptive to further development in all of these areas.\textsuperscript{25}

BC’s government was in a position to act upon Day and Shapson’s recommendations in 1981 because of a number of political changes instituted both federally and provincially. In December 1979, the provincial education ministry had been split in two. Brian Smith, a lawyer, became Minister of Education for the K-12 programs. McGeer was assigned as minister to oversee the post-secondary system.\textsuperscript{26} That same year Steve Paproski was appointed federal multiculturalism minister. In December, Paproski wrote to Smith stating that the federal government wished to encourage "greater consultation with provincial governments," in program implementation.\textsuperscript{27} Joe Clark’s newly-elected federal Conservative government, restructured the CCCM into regional components and appointed Enrico Diano of Vancouver as the Regional CCCM chair for BC. Paproski advised Smith that Diano would soon contact the Minister to "discuss mutual concerns" in the area of multiculturalism.

However, the administrative changes instituted by Prime Minister Clark were short-lived, for nine months later Clark’s Conservatives were defeated by the federal Liberals on a motion of non-confidence. Enrico Diano lost his post as regional director of the CCCM; however, he was not without a political posting for long. On August 26, 1980, BC’s new provincial secretary Evan Wolfe announced that Enrico Diano would be appointed as the province’s "part-time, $39,000-a-year adviser on cultural heritage."\textsuperscript{28} According to Wolfe, the government originally planned to establish a multicultural directorate with full-time staff but opted against enlarging the provincial bureaucracy and preferred instead "more direct contact and flexibility" between the government and ethnic communities. Diano’s role included sustaining and fostering individual differences of cultural heritage in BC.\textsuperscript{29}

Although members of the federal CCCM were generally political
appointees, members of the public were prepared to tolerate this since the CCCM was essentially an advisory body with no discretionary powers. However, multicultural groups in BC reacted to Diano’s appointment as provincial cultural heritage advisor with outrage and cries of mockery, since Diano had no practical multicultural experiences from which to direct various provincial initiatives. He simply happened to be from an ethnic minority background. According to Evelyn Lee, executive director of the Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities, Premier Bennett’s promise of support for multicultural programs was a political ploy to win ethnic votes. Other ethnic and multicultural groups argued that Diano—an investment broker—was unsuited for the job, as he himself had admitted that he "didn’t know much about the subject" of multiculturalism. Critics also implied that the appointment had been purely politically motivated, with the right-wing Social Credit government rewarding Diano for his work on Progressive Conservative Joe Clark’s 1979 federal election campaign.

BC’s Social Credit government responded to these criticisms by creating a cabinet committee on cultural heritage, which included provincial secretary Evan Wolfe, deputy premier and minister of human resources Grace McCarthy, education minister Brian Smith, and labour minister Jack Heinrich. According to Premier Bennett, the government’s cultural heritage program represented a serious commitment to "respecting the multicultural nature" of BC’s society, which would allow community concerns to be identified by the ad hoc advisory committee and the cultural heritage advisor, who would channel them to the cabinet committee. The cabinet committee would then determine the appropriate course of action for the ministry best positioned to address the concerns.

On April 23, 1981, the provincial government also announced the creation of an inter-cultural information centre to "gather information on existing multicultural organizations and their services, as well as government services to cultural communities, and make it available to individuals and communities throughout the province." According to Wolfe, the cabinet committee wished to provide "better communication between cultural groups and the ethnic and general media" since this had been "a major concern of the BC Human Rights Commission’s recent conference on racism and the media" held recently in Vancouver.

In June 1981, the provincial government assured a place for multiculturalism on the political agenda when it struck an advisory committee on cultural heritage, mandated to report on cultural heritage conservation in BC. Although the major focus of the Committee’s report was resource conservation, architectural heritage and the promotion of the arts, the committee dedicated two full chapters to multicultural education and the instruction of English as a second language. One entire chapter was also devoted to racism.

And so, in 1981, multiculturalism had finally arrived on the political agenda in British Columbia as a result of efforts made by various lobby groups, individuals, and politicians, as well as pressures from the federal government. In spite of this commitment to multiculturalism, BC’s government had yet to embrace the concept of multicultural education. This, however, would follow later in 1981 in the wake of an explosive human rights issue.

Part III: Human Rights and the KKK: BC’s Commitment

In 1979, BC’s Human Rights Council, the CCCJ and the Secretary of State had co-sponsored a human rights conference in Vancouver, BC with a view to pressuring the provincial government to adopt a more proactive - and less reactive - stance on human
rights. Conference delegates resolved that Canadian multiculturalism was an "empty slogan" and that the best way to make it meaningful was to "introduce a carefully prepared and tested program into the schools, a program required of all students" to teach "our children that Canadians are peoples of many cultures and religions, all equally deserving our respect." Yet, BC’s government essentially ignored this plea.

In 1980, events instigated by the BC wing of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) helped precipitate more proactive human rights and anti-racism initiatives on the part of the provincial government. Beginning in the spring, the KKK had launched a recruiting campaign across Canada. Western Canadian Klan organizer Wolfgang Droege, a Victoria resident, then announced a series of media interviews planned for mid-October. On October 31, 1980, a regional branch of the National Black Coalition requested the authority from the BC Attorney-General’s Office to proceed with charges against the Ku Klux Klan, which had been distributing literature at the BC Institute of Technology and various public schools throughout the province.

In December 1980, provincial MLA Emery Barnes addressed the provincial house and asked what steps the education minister had "taken to prevent the propagation of hate literature propaganda in institutions under his jurisdiction." In keeping with the government’s reactive stance to human rights issues, Smith replied that school boards and colleges possessed "ample authority" to rebuke non-educational "distribution and intrusions." Nevertheless, Smith promised to institute new "regulations which would assist with the problem" by "strengthening the hands of principals in repelling intrusions of a non-educational nature on school grounds."  

On December 9, 1980, assistant deputy attorney-general Murray Rankin, advised the provincial government that the case against the Klan did not "disclose a prima facie case under the Criminal Code, as it did not appear to meet the requirements of willfully promoting hatred." Barnes, a popular former Canadian Football League star, continued to press the government. He criticized the government for its passive, reactionary approach to racism, claiming that within BC there was a "Mount St. Helens type of sleeping monster" that could "evolve into open racial strife." Quoting from an article written by Wes Knapp, a VSB trustee and spokesman for the BC Teachers’ Federation 1977 task force on racism, Barnes accused provincial authorities of denying the existence of racism in BC "despite the overwhelming evidence that it is part of the history of the province." In support of his claim, Barnes recounted his amazement, after visiting various schools in Vancouver, "at the number of young people in grade 10 or 11" who had "never seen a person of non-white extraction in their schools."  

Under the Human Rights Code (Section 16), the labour minister possessed the authority to appoint a board of inquiry at the request of the Human Rights Branch in situations whereby the branch was unable to settle an allegation. Nola Landucci, Director of the Human Rights Branch made such a request to the labour minister and on March 25, 1981, the province appointed John McAlpine, a Vancouver-based lawyer, to report on Ku Klux Klan activity in BC.

On June 25, 1981, the provincial government tabled McAlpine’s report. In it, McAlpine recommended changes to education, law enforcement agencies, the media and the government. McAlpine did not find that racism was "rampant" in the schools of BC. However, when McAlpine interviewed BC Klan members, he found that they were greatly concerned over what was
perceived to be the deterioration of public schooling "filled with minorities who have a language handicap." Klan members believed that such conditions slowed the progress of English-speaking children who, they argued, were being "held back" by incompetent immigrants.

Oddly, McAlpine appears to have inadvertently supported the Klan’s view by quoting Ed May, BCTF Anti-Racism Coordinator, who argued—illogically—that because immigration had increased from 1970 to 1980, the most fundamental form of anti-racist education was the English as a Second Language Program. Rather than investigate the veracity of the Klan’s claims, McAlpine recommended changes to British Columbia’s "anglocentric system of education" to include anti-racism programs in schools, multicultural in-service programs for teachers, curricular changes, race relations subcommittees in each district to deal with the "problem," and incentives for teachers to return to university to retrain, since McAlpine claimed, "most of them were trained at a time when the classroom consisted primarily of white students." On the same day, attorney general Allan Williams introduced a new BC Civil Rights Protection Act.

The day after the government tabled McAlpine’s report, education minister Brian Smith—a lawyer—declared the following in the provincial legislature:

I think it is appropriate today, following the introduction of the Civil Rights Protection Act yesterday, to announce that multicultural education will be strengthened in BC schools today, as a preventive means of combating racism. Today, I am happy to announce that we will appoint a provincial coordinator of multicultural education in English as a second language to pull together multicultural programs, and that in the fall we will set up a major provincial workshop for teachers.

Part IV: The Commitment That Would Not Be

Smith’s commitment to multicultural education never came to fruition. Political winds of change blew multicultural education off its course in 1982 due to a major provincial recession. Bill Vander Zalm, a Dutch immigrant, replaced Brian Smith as education minister and swept away Smith’s promises under a two-year Social Credit government restraint program that imposed a 12% ceiling on government expenditures. By 1984, the government had plans to replace both the Human Rights Branch and the BC Human Rights Commission with a human rights panel made up solely of cabinet ministers. The provincial government became preoccupied with financial matters and subordinated social concerns, as evidenced by the lack of reference to multiculturalism, anti-racism or human rights in the Ministry of Education’s annual reports from 1982 to 1987. In 1988, however, the political winds of change blew and sent the educational ship of state once again in the direction of multicultural concerns. With a much improved economic outlook and an impending provincial election, the Social Credit government resumed courting the electorate with promises for all. As for the Ministry of Education, its 1988 annual report promised to “increase the level of representatives of minority communities to ensure their input into educational planning and to develop more accessible, appropriate education programs for these groups.” Although the Social Credit party did not get the opportunity to fulfill its election promises due to its defeat by the left-leaning New Democratic Party (NDP), the NDP ensured a prominent place for multicultural education on the policy agenda throughout the 1990s. This prominence was perhaps most
noteworthy in 1992 when the Ministry of Education was transformed into the Ministry of Education and the Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights.52

Conclusion

In the end, multicultural education briefly made its way onto BC’s policy agenda along a circuitous path. Initially, several public and private agencies advocated a broader social mandate for the schools, notably the CCCM, the CCCJ, and AMSSA. Some provincial and federal politicians such as Emery Barnes, Brian Smith and Simma Holt were also active in promoting multicultural education’s cause. However, none of their efforts carried the urgency of John McAlpine’s report, prompted by the activities of the KKK.

It is notable that throughout the 1970s, however, the discourse surrounding multiculturalism remained highly political, conflating the social policy of multiculturalism with the concept of multicultural education. Indeed, the developments described in this chapter point to the significant role of political determinants in establishing educational policy—at the virtual exclusion of the children and educators impacted by such policies. At no time did the promoters of multicultural education present data or evidence that would convince educational or political authorities of the veracity of their claims, opting instead to argue on moral and ethical grounds. Nor were their requests specific enough for policy-makers to sketch out substantive changes in educational policy and practice. Furthermore, neither the policy-makers nor the educational administrators systematically investigated the intellectual, social or personal needs of the province’s students—or, for that matter, their teachers. This is not entirely surprising, however, since it was not until the mid-1980s that faltering world economies forced the concept of “accountability” onto the public policy agendas of many governments. In retrospect, however, this lack of systematic, objective data appears to lie at the heart of BC’s failure to take multicultural education seriously or to develop educational policies that would illustrate the importance of cultural diversity to Canada’s national life. Multicultural policy theorist Romulo Magsino has argued that, just as educational decision makers "have the obligation to pursue the intent for which educational institutions are established," so too do they need to construct a "clear view of and justification for, the policies and practices which flow from that intent."53 In the absence of a vision and justification for multicultural education, it appears to have been impossible for government officials to commit themselves to something so ill-defined.

Since the 1970s, increasing numbers of policy analysts and education theorists have argued against positivistic, data-driven approaches to policy-making and educational administration.54 Several theorists now promote a view of policy-making as a value-laden enterprise, arguing that there is a "moral imperative for school systems to provide for the development of the human capacities of children of immigrant and other minority communities."55 The historical research presented in this paper suggests that although moral imperative may be desirable for policy-making, it has not
been sufficient to ensure meaningful reform to multicultural education in BC. Future research will hopefully include more data-based studies from which to guide educational policy and practice.

Notes

1Debates of the House of Commons, 8 October 1971, 8545.

3In this paper, I distinguish between multiculturalism - a federally-designated socio-political policy - and multicultural education - an educational initiative to meet the needs of learners in ethnically and culturally diverse school systems.

4Wallace to Smithson, 14 May 1970. British Columbia Archives (BCA) MS 1163, Provincial Secretory Box 24, Files of the CCCJ.


7Information sheet obtained from the Vancouver Multicultural Society of BC.


11Ibid.


13Ibid.


16Ibid., 11-12.

17CCCM, A Report of the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism, (Ottawa: Secretary of State for Multiculturalism, 1977), 93. The federal B and B Commission urged the provinces to comply with its recommendations, but ultimately acknowledged that education fell under provincial jurisdiction and that the federal government would only assist where requested. See Debates of the House of Commons, 8 October 1971, 8584.

18Interview with Manoly Lupul, Calgary, AB., 30 August 2000.

19Ibid. According to Lupul, Russell was the "main catalyst behind the Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education (CMIE)," formed in 1981 with the multicultural directorate's financial support.


21Conference Agenda, "Toward a Provincial Multicultural Policy" Conference, 3-4 April 1979, sent to Jim Bennett by Tom Fielding, Director of the Cultural Services Branch, Provincial Secretary and Government Services. BCA GR81-056: Minister of Education, 1975-1979: Multiculturalism.

22Unknown Ministry of Education.


"Smith Appointed New Minister of Education," Education Today, 6 (December 1979), 1.


"Adviser Appointed," The Province, 27 August 1980, C10. See also "'Almost Full-Time' Adviser To Be Paid $39,000 Annually," The Vancouver Sun, 27 August 1980, B15.


Among the committee members were Judge Norman Oreck, Jozepha Herfst of the VMS, Katharine Mirhady of the Vancouver School Board, and UBC's Patricia Wakefield. Debates of the Legislative Assembly, 28 April 1981, 5247.


Ibid., 17.


Minutes of the Legislative Assembly, 9 December 1980, 4280. See also "KKK is a Threat," The Province, 27 November 1980, B1. First established in the United States, the National Black Coalition has a number of branches throughout Canada, including a national umbrella group. The KKK also met with opposition from Vancouver Alderman Harry Rankin when it made a request for a Business License and official status under the BC Societies Act. Alderman Rankin appealed to Attorney General Allan Williams to intervene and bar the Klan from receiving a Business License and official status under the Societies Act. See "Rankin Seeking A-G Okay to Sue Klan for 'Hatred,'" The Province, 30 October 1980, A6 and "Klan Probe Urged," The Province, 18 November, 1980, A4. It also appears that Klan propaganda entered Langley Secondary School at the request of Social Studies teachers who were studying "neo-fascist and racist organizations." When teachers received the information, they forwarded it to the anti-racism coordinator at the BCTF. See "Klan Recruiting in BC Schools." The Province, 19 November, 1980, A1.

Minutes of the Legislative Assembly, 9 December 1980, 4280.


Debates of the Legislative Assembly, 19 March, 1981, 4646.

Ibid., 4647. In 1973, the BC Teachers' Federation began taking on increased social responsibilities, beginning with a task force on the Status of Women in education. (See
BCTF Members Guide to the BCTF, (Vancouver: BCTF, 1996-97), 130.) In 1975, at the request of a Surrey teacher, Lloyd Edwards, the BCTF launched a program against racism. See T. McKenna, "Confronting Racism, Promoting Respect," Rethinking Schools, 13 (Summer 1999), 3.

44Ibid. See also "BC Schools to Fight Racism," The Vancouver Sun, 26 June 1981, A1.


47Ibid., 70.


49Ibid; Debates of the Legislative Assembly, 26 June 1981, 6453.


52Unfortunately, a full understanding of the developments from 1988 to today will not be known until the government records are turned over to the British Columbia Archives in 2008, as public documents are held for a 20-year period before their transfer to public archives.


What impact does Canada’s educational system have on students’ intercultural awareness and sensitivity?

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Introduction

As technology has evolved and made communication and contact with diverse regions of the world part of everyday experience, the importance of positive intercultural relationships both globally and internationally have become increasingly important (see Brishlin, Cushner, Cherie & Yong, 1986; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1993; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003; Nesdale & Todd, 2000; Swiniarski, Breitborde & Murphy, 1999). While the importance of positive intercultural relationships is evident, what is less evident is how Canada’s children and youth are developing the intercultural sensitivity and competence necessary to establish and maintain positive intercultural relationships.

What impact does Canada’s educational system have on students’ intercultural awareness and sensitivity? Have Canada’s schools started to make adjustments that reflect the cultural diversity of Canada? Currently, the Canadian literature that addresses these questions is insufficient. However, what is abundantly clear is the need for Canada’s students to be supported in the development of the intercultural sensitivity and competence necessary to establish and maintain the positive intercultural relationships that research has shown to be increasingly important (see Brishlin, Cushner, Cherie & Yong, 1986; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1993; Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003; Nesdale & Todd, 2000; Swiniarski, Breitborde & Murphy, 1999). The school system is the ideal mechanism by which to assist children and youth in the development of intercultural awareness and sensitivity. However, substantial changes to the current delivery of multicultural education and to pre-service and in-service training of educators are essential if Canada is to successfully foster intercultural awareness and sensitivity.

Multicultural education involves a number of issues and its development and delivery has evolved over time. Canadian classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse, and yet research (Codje, 2001; Dei, 1996) indicates that this diversity has not been reflected in the classroom curriculum. We will discuss the potential of the educational system to successfully foster intercultural awareness and sensitivity, the lag in the educational system’s response to increased diversity within the classroom, issues related to curriculum, the importance of multicultural education, the practice of multicultural education, and issues associated with training for pre-service and in-service educators.

The Untapped Potential of the Canadian Educational System

Multicultural education policies began to surface in the late 1970’s throughout all of Canada. Echols and Fisher (1992) examined the development of multicultural policies in Canada. These researchers found that policies adopted by the Toronto Board of Education in 1976 were said to be the most comprehensive multicultural policy statements in Canada at the time, but argued that certain aspects reinforced inequality and other issues in opposition to the goals of multicultural education. Provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec quickly followed suit in the development of multicultural education policies.

During the early 1980’s school boards in British Columbia officially began developing and implementing multicultural education policies. Unofficially, various boards throughout the province had been practicing multicultural education prior to the implementation of these policies as necessitated by the high rates of immigration (Echols & Fisher, 1992). It was also during the 1980’s that the two largest school boards in Montreal, Commission des Ecoles Catholiques de Montreal (CECM) and Commission des Ecoles Protestantes du Grand Montreal (CEPGM), adopted in depth multicultural education policies. One difference between the multicultural education policies adopted in Quebec
in comparison to other provinces was that the Quebec initiatives were created with the notion of incorporating and advocating French culture as well. While the Edmonton Public School Board also approached their multicultural policies from a similar stance, their policies and programs focus not only on the French language but on six other languages as well. According to Echols and Fishers (1992) few school boards in the Atlantic region undertook multicultural education policies during this same period. In 1988 there was a large push toward multicultural education in Canada due to the country’s legitimization of multiculturalism (Sogunro, 2001), mainly through the passing of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in July 1988 (Edwards, 1992). Overall Canadians as a whole supported multicultural ideology during its initial stages, but on the condition that it did not alter their lives in any way (Edwards, 1992).

There was an assumption that since multicultural education was deemed an important part of education, it was being included in the school system, but this assumption has not been well supported by research (Echols & Fisher, 1992). Instead research has found that while multicultural education is encouraged, it is not practiced to the extent that it should be (Echols & Fisher, 1992; Sogunro, 2001). Educational settings can be effective agents of social change (Edwards, 1992). Schools have been identified as effective settings to teach children and youth intercultural awareness, understanding, an appreciation of the similarities and differences of various cultures; in general schools are good places to teach multiculturalism and necessitate its inclusion in our educational system (Echols & Fisher, 1992; Sogunro, 2001). Schools can make children aware of the outside world and teach them to understand, respect, and (at the very least) tolerate members of different cultural or ethnic groups (Edwards, 1992). As an effective agent of social change, our educational system is the perfect place to infuse multicultural ideology into our society.

Children and youth need to be taught a global perspective that includes an open perception of oneself and others (Swiniarski et al., 1999). They arrive in the educational system with a pre-established system of values created by peers, parental, and other familial influences and this pre-established system will be altered through the experiences that they have in school, in other settings, and through cognitive changes associated with development. One of the primary objectives of the school system is to expose children to a wide range of values that exist within society to promote intercultural acceptance and understanding (Halstead, Taylor & Monkia, 2000). Like Swinarski et al. (1999) Halstead and colleagues (2000) promote a “values” approach to education as a way of assisting children as their value system evolves throughout development. However, it is not clear how well schools are able to provide this type of support given shifts in curriculum and educational priorities. Similarly, Khan (1999) posits that the lack of education on diversity that exists in many schools undermines the ability of the educational system to prepare students for the diversity that they will face in both the workplace and other areas of daily life.

Sogunro (2001) has posited that the educational system provides an ideal environment for transmitting the goals of multiculturalism and should ideally be seen as promoting intercultural awareness, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures and races. Before the system can meet these expectations and provide such an environment, it is necessary that staff at all levels in the schools system (i.e. educators, curriculum planners, administrators) be provided with the skills and knowledge to develop better ways of teaching ethnically diverse groups of students (Sogunro, 2001;
Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001; Tiedt & Tiedt, 1999). Specifically, Sogunro (2001) identified several issues that need attention in the educational system. These issues include but are not limited to: curriculum reform to reflect broader cultural perspectives, changes in teachers’ prejudicial attitudes, understanding of how different cultural backgrounds may result in variations in students’ learning styles, consideration of how cultural and language differences may be associated with barriers that affect the learning process of students, developing intercultural awareness among students, and the adoption of effective leadership and management practices that support multicultural education.

Research has demonstrated that the Canadian educational system does not adequately reflect Canada’s multicultural society but instead maintains a focus on the dominant mainstream culture (see Anchan & Holychuk, 1996; Banks, Cookson, Hawley, Jaqueline, Nieto, Schofield & Stephan, 2001: Henze et al., 2000). According to some of the researchers, a curriculum that focuses on mainstream ideology marginalizes and devalues minority youth while also depriving students from mainstream society of the opportunity to benefit from a wider world perspective while reinforcing misleading conceptions of other cultures. The literature on multicultural education abounds with methods of modifying and revamping educational systems (see Banks et al., 1997; Hansman, Spencer, Grant & Jackson, 1999; Hui-Ju, 2002; Jenks et al., 2001; Reese, 2001; Sogunro, 2001; Swinarski et al., 1999, Tiedt & Tiedt, 1999). However, questions remain about the impact of Canada’s educational systems on students’ intercultural awareness and sensitivity and whether or not schools have started to make adjustments that reflect the cultural diversity of Canada.

**Diversity within the Classroom**

As the Canadian population expands in its cultural diversity so does the diversity represented in each classroom. (Sogunro, 2001). Never before have student populations been as culturally diverse as they are today, and they will be more so in future decades as this trend continues. (Sogunro, 2001). Furthermore, the increase of minority school-aged children is occurring in all geographic areas and not just within inner-city areas (Deering, 1997). While the educational system has adapted to meet the needs of these children by providing supportive programming such as ESL (English as a Second Language), serious challenges to the academic and social success of minority youth within the educational system have been raised.

Research on the challenges that face minority youth in the Canadian educational system has identified a number of issues. Educational institutions preserve and perpetuate social inequalities within a system dedicated to providing equal opportunities for learning, thus structural and institutional dimensions of racism continue to affect minority students in terms of their academic achievement and success (Henry, Tator, Mattis & Rees, 1996). The researchers also report that minority students have lower achievement scores and higher drop-out rates in addition to facing marginalization and alienation within the educational system. One of the most prominent issues within a consideration of the school system and its impact on minority students is the absence of a broad representation of world experiences in classroom discourse and textbooks (Codje, 2001; Dei, 1996). According to minority youth, the school system often misrepresents, devalues, and contradicts the experiences of some students while simultaneously recognizing the experiences of other students (Codje, 2001; Dei, 1996).

This misrepresentation and devaluing of cultures other than the dominant culture is present in curriculum design and in textbooks. The content and impact of textbooks have been called into question by a
Anchan and Holychuk (1996) have argued that textbooks and the media have ignored or denied the existence of individual from different ethnic backgrounds. Other researchers contend that textbooks are often biased and tend to ignore or misrepresent people from other races and cultures (Henze, Katz, & Norte, 2000). This tendency for textbooks to provide an ethnocentric view of the world, denying or ignoring the history of other cultures leads to misconceptions about other races and contributes to racism. Therefore, Henze and colleagues argue that the educational system needs to identify these issues and deal with them effectively.

Other challenges faced by minority youth are associated with the process of acculturation that some of these youth experience as they adapt to life in Canada. Research on acculturation in children and youth has explored the consequences of changes in cultural context, through the process of immigration and acculturation to a new cultural setting (Berry, 1997; Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen., 1992; Buki, Ma, Storm & Stom, 2003; Gutierrez, Sameroff, & Karrer, 1988; Lazarus, 1997; Parke, 2000; Santisteban & Mitrani, 2003). Research in this area has explored the acculturation of adolescents (see Buki et al., 2003; Fuligni, 1998b; Berry et al., 1992; Berry, 2003) from a variety of perspectives including but not limited to the strategies used in acculturation (Berry, 1997; 2003), impacts on family process and parental child rearing practices (Buki et al., 2003; Fuligni, 1998), and acculturation disparity between children and their parents and the associated conflicts (Lazarus, 1997; Kagiticibasi, 1989). This body of research is important as it reveals the importance of conflict, parent-child relationships, peer influences, and school influences in minority youth adjusting to a new culture.

Diversity within the classroom poses many challenges for the educational system and yet these are challenges that can be successfully addressed. Researchers have argued that the Canadian educational system does not adequately reflect Canada's multicultural society (i.e. Anchan & Holychuk, 1996; Banks et al., 2001; Henze et al., 2000) and questions remain about the current state of students’ intercultural awareness and sensitivity and whether or not schools have made adjustments to reflect Canada’s cultural diversity. However, much of the literature focuses on how to modify and revamp educational systems (see Banks et al., 1997; Hansman et al., 1999; Hui-Ju, 2002; Jenks et al., 2001; Reese, 2001; Sogunro, 2001; Swinarski et al., 1999, Tiedt & Tiedt, 1999) and is in encouraging in its support of the educational systems as being ideally placed to successfully address these challenges.

### The Importance of Multicultural Education

The Canadian educational system has endorsed multicultural education and yet research has shown that multicultural education has not been embraced within the system (see Sogunro, 2001; Swinarski et al., 1999). The increasing level of diversity within classrooms and the increasing importance of positive intercultural relationships both globally and internationally (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003; Nesdale & Todd, 2000) have underscored the importance of successfully implementing multicultural education within the educational system. Multicultural education is necessary to both foster the development of intercultural sensitivity and to ensure the success of all students regardless of whether or not they belong to the “dominant” culture.

Often schools in Western countries tend to reflect the dominant cultural group, which tends to be Caucasian and of middle-class socioeconomic standing (Keim, Warring, & Rau, 2001; Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). Schools in North America do not tend to reflect the
diverse nature of the continent’s population (Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). This poses a problem as culture has been linked to children’s learning styles, as well as their academic performance (Jibaja-Rusth et al., 1994; Sogunro, 2001). It is argued that for this reason minority children evidence less success in schools, and have a significantly higher drop-out rate than students belonging to the majority group (Phinney & Rotheram, 1986; Sogunro, 2001). Sogunro’s (2001) study shows that 83% of participating minority parents felt that the curriculum design reflecting the majority or mainstream culture was a probable factor for the academic failure of their children. Currently, educational facilities are said to have low expectations for minority students (Moodley, 1991). These low expectations of minority students can be largely associated with evidence that minority students are not demonstrating similar levels of school success as their majority peers. The reason they are not excelling to the same extent as their peers is due to the fact that the education they are receiving is biased and not geared towards the ways they learn best. By including multiculturalism in education we are providing every student with same opportunities and equitable learning experiences.

Students from non-dominant cultures are prone to issues regarding marginalization and low self-esteem, which also affects their success in school (Sogunro, 2001). Culture has been linked to a student’s development of self-esteem, and self-esteem correlates to academic achievement (Sogunro, 2001). Self-esteem and academic achievement create a vicious cycle in that when self-esteem is low it hinders academic achievement, and conversely when academic achievement is low the ability for positive self-regard is affected. If biased educational practices hinder a child’s academic achievement their self-esteem will be negatively affected. If a child is marginalized by peers, due to a lack of cultural knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity the child’s self-esteem and academic achievement will both be negatively affected. Multicultural education demands that educational practices and environments support the positive inclusion and learning of every student.

Multicultural education will prove to be essential in all endeavors inside and outside the classroom, while enriching and enhancing the entire curriculum. All members of today’s society need to be culturally competent (Meltzoff & Lensen, 2000). In order to properly contribute, participate, and function in a country as pluralistic as ours it is important that every individual be culturally knowledgeable, sensitive and aware. If children are to make it in tomorrow’s world it is imperative that we teach them to be culturally competent. Not only does multicultural education teach students about the people and the world around them, but it also teaches and encourage other important lessons such as critical thinking, understanding one’s place in history, civic courage and duty, and social relations to name a few (Sogunro, 2001).

Multicultural practices in the classroom will help increase the academic success experienced by students, especially minority students (Sogunro, 2001). Multicultural education allows students of various cultures to reach their full potential, and diminishes some of the inequalities of the traditional school system that can hinder students of minority heritage. It helps to prepare all students for the world they are to encounter, and is a benefit to both majority and minority students. Multicultural practices help contextualize curriculum material so that students from diverse backgrounds are able to see their lives and values reflected in the material being taught (Moodley, 1991; Sogunro, 2001). The lack of multicultural practices within the classroom can result in students disconnecting from the curriculum as it is not apparent how such materials are relevant to their experiences. Without multicultural education many minority students may receive mixed messages.
about their importance and their worth if they never see any positive connections of their culture in the curriculum, but constantly see connections to the dominant culture.

Practicing Multicultural Education

Effective multicultural education requires teachers and administrators to work towards becoming culturally competent. An individual’s or an organization’s quest towards cultural competency is thought to fall along a continuum. There are six stages in the continuum: 1- cultural destructiveness, 2- cultural incapacity, 3- cultural blindness, 4- cultural pre-competence, 5- cultural competency, and 6- cultural proficiency (King et al., 2004). As the titles of each section of the continuum clearly outline, the higher end of the continuum, cultural proficiency, is where one would desire to be. The majority of services working with children and families tend to lie in between cultural incapacity and cultural blindness (King et al., 2004). This would suggest that educational institutions are not culturally competent, and are therefore not creating settings that are culturally inclusive.

Current multicultural education programs often treat issues of culture and diversity in a superficial manner (Echols & Fisher, 1992; Moodley, 1991; Sogunro, 2001). Seventy percent of the participants in Sogunro’s (2001) study (which included parents and teachers) thought that the scope of multicultural education was very limited, and tended to focus on econopolitical history and development of a small sample of countries. Often this type of curriculum is found to be accompanied by 1-2 school days focusing on the foods, songs, dances, dresses, and artwork of different cultures (Sogunro, 2001). This same treatment of culture as a “holiday” or “artifact” was noted in Echols and Fisher (1992) study, and they also agreed that this treats cultural diversity in a superficial manner. Such curriculum often focuses on the “exotic” differences of a culture and are “add on’s” to the curriculum (Moodley, 1991). Educators are often under the impression that if they address surface issues of diversity by merely providing basic information about different cultures then students will become more accepting and tolerant; but research shows that this is not necessarily the case and other negative outcomes may ensue (Moodley, 1991).

The “holiday” or “artifact” treatment of culture frequently reinforces differences between cultures and an “us” vs. “them” viewpoint, while reinforcing perceived hierarchies of culture, despite the fact that the attempt is to focus on acceptance and similarities (Moodley, 1991). Sogunro (2001) states that this manner of incorporating multicultural ideologies just grazes the surface of multiculturalism, and misses all the other, more important aspects of different cultures that should be explored. When multiculturalism is explored in a superficial manner, and is perceived to merely be an “add on” to the curriculum decreased effects are observed (Edwards, 1992). While it is important that all educators make earnest attempts to incorporate multiculturalism into their classrooms, it is more important that it is done in a positive and effective manner.

In order for multicultural education to be positive and effective it needs to be continuous and manifest itself throughout all areas of the curriculum, at all times of the year (Sogunro, 2001). Exploring multicultural issues solely during the month of December is not in line with concepts relating to the proper implementation of multiculturalism in education. Multicultural education should include the exploration of
different cultures through their political, social, and economic frameworks, and also examine the various complexities of the culture and our relationship with each culture (Sogunro, 2001). Unfortunately, this is not the practice at most schools; most schools focus on surface information about a particular group’s way of life, neglecting deeper more meaningful information and the interconnectedness amongst various cultures across the world (Sogunro, 2001); resulting in the trivialization of various cultures (Edwards, 1992; Moodley, 1991). All classroom practices and experiences should demonstrate an awareness and recognition of cultural diversity (Sogunro, 2001). Echols and Fisher (1992) also noted that multicultural activities in secondary schools allowed for more passive experiences than in elementary schools.

It is essential that multicultural education programs be aimed at the developmental level of the students in the classroom, while also fostering interest in the students, in order to be successful (Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). Programs should increase in complexity with age, since children’s understandings of various cultures and membership becomes increasingly complex (Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). This way the programs maintain the interest of the students while matching their developmental level of comprehension. In one study, elementary schools were found to demonstrate more practices relating to the implementation of multicultural education than secondary schools (Echols & Fisher, 1992; Moodley, 1991). As children mature their cultural frameworks are changing and also maturing. Multicultural practices should occur to a similar extent in both elementary and secondary schools due to the fact that the students are constantly learning new ways to organize their cultural frameworks.

As well, the cultural demographics of the student population should be taken into account when developing and implementing multicultural programs; minority and majority students have different needs and perspectives (Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). It is thought that majority children need accurate information about various groups while a focus is maintained on understanding, and developing a sense for the benefits and importance of a diverse society (Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). Majority children are thought to be less aware of ethnic differences in comparison to their minority classmates, and may exhibit more ethnocentrism (Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). Often, minority children are familiar with the majority culture, but their own culture is left out of the curriculum; the focus for these students would be on fostering a greater sense of the various achievements and strengths in their culture (Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). To a large extent multicultural education programs need to be tailored to the specific needs of each student population. This does add to the challenges of implementing multicultural ideology, but results in more positive and effective learning environments.

Multicultural education must mirror the needs and demographics of the student population, and should endeavor to develop positive self-esteem in minority children through the understanding that they are valid members of society (Moodley, 1991); especially since self-esteem has been associated with academic achievement (Sogunro, 2001). When educators only incorporate superficial multicultural initiatives students do not achieve higher self-esteem (Moodley, 1991), and we are not teaching them that their culture is valid to our society. Past curriculum, as found in one study, tended to treat cultural diversity in six different fashions: minority groups have been treated as marginal Canadians, contributors to the dominant culture, as beneficiaries of the dominant culture, as problematic groups, viewed in a hierarchy of cultures, and as a “museum” of cultural differences (Sogunro, 2001). This type of curriculum does not foster a positive
sense of belonging and membership in our society, and would work to diminish any positive self-esteem students from minority cultures had.

Minority (and majority) students do not merely need to learn basic facts about their heritage, but the development of political efficacy, and the means to be able to work towards equality (Moodley, 1991). All students need to feel and understand that they are valid members of Canadian society, which is enhanced by their membership to other cultural groups, and as such can contribute in marvelous ways to society. Students also need to learn and understand that they can be effective agents of change themselves. By creating education that is meaningful to minority students while emphasizing that their culture is a valid part of larger Canadian culture we will help students to feel as if they belong, which will help these students to develop and maintain positive self-concepts. Conveying the notion that these students have the ability to affect and change society will also positively aide their self-esteem, and show that they are important members of our society. Again, the manner in which multicultural programming is implemented and the educational components of the program drastically affect the success of its implementation.

One question that arises in regards to including multicultural education is whether or not multicultural teachings should be incorporated into all subject matters, or if it should be a subject entirely on its own. A survey question in one study attempts to determine how the participants believe multicultural education should manifest itself in school settings. Participants included teachers, principals, parents, and multicultural education administrators. The study documented that 44% of the participants held the belief that multicultural education should be incorporated into all subject areas, while 26% thought it should be a subject on its own (Sogunro, 2001). Fourteen percent thought schools should engage in both, while the remaining 6% were seen as less concerned with how multiculturalism was taught (Sogunro, 2001). Overall it appears that most believe it should appear in all subject areas, which is in agreement with other research on how to best incorporate multiculturalism in the classroom (Sogunro, 2001).

Unfortunately multicultural education is often limited to social studies classes (Moodley, 1991).

One general and basic recipe to multicultural education is outlined by Sogunro’s (2001) and suggests 10 guidelines to teaching multiculturalism including items such as: exploring culture through literature and oral accounts delivered by individuals from the cultures of interest, examining similarities and differences in cultures, and asking students to talk about their culture. It is important to note that multicultural values and ideologies need to be promoted and exhibited outside of the classroom as well as inside (Sogunro, 2001). Experiences outside the classroom should be used as teachable moments whenever possible (Sogunro, 2001). Echols and Fisher (1992) note that it is important for all classrooms to be defined as multicultural, regardless of whether or not the student population is viewed to be multicultural or monocultural; therefore making multicultural education an important aspect of teaching in every school district and every classroom.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge diversity both between and within cultures (King et al, 2004; Le Roux, 2002). Not all members of one cultural group share the same values, beliefs, and attitudes; and too often we categorize people into racial, linguistic, and religious groups and wrongly assume that they all share the same culture (King et al., 2004; Le Roux, 2002). A person’s culture cannot necessarily be determined by the colour of their skin, the language they speak, or their religious affiliations. It is important to discover what cultures are important to the students as opposed to
assuming that they identify with certain cultures based on certain characteristics.

At present, there is an overwhelming need for the implementation of appropriate multicultural education within our school system. Current practices are not in accordance with the literature on what constitutes suitable multicultural practices. It is imperative that we work towards training educators in the importance of multicultural education and in its proper implementation. Multicultural education must begin to occur consistently in every classroom every day.

**Teacher Training Initiatives**

Teacher education programs need to reflect and prepare teachers for the diversity they will encounter in their classrooms (Deering, 1997; Keim et al., 2001; Van Hook, 2002). Echols and Fisher’s (1992) study on the implementation of multicultural education suggests that curriculum planning including multicultural ideologies are partially hindered due to the lack of training of teachers in this area. Research shows that pre-service teachers are not being educated on how to teach effectively in multicultural classroom settings (Van Hook, 2002). In 1999, The National Center for Education Statistics conducted a survey in the United States that determined that only 20% of teacher participants expressed confidence in working with a culturally diverse student population (Van Hook, 2002). This is not an acceptable figure. Multicultural education is needed in every classroom, not in only 20% of them. The lack of preparation or training to teach diverse student populations relates to high teacher turnover rates in urban schools (Williams Chizhik, 2003). Sogunro (2001) states that Canadian teachers and administration are not prepared with the necessary multicultural skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are imperative in today’s school system, and that changes to the curriculum are not occurring at an adequate pace. The lack of these multicultural skills, knowledge, and attitudes reduce the effectiveness of each teacher, especially in schools with diverse populations (Sogunro, 2001). Teachers’ lack of preparedness to educate in a multicultural manner is the breeding ground for lack of multicultural practices in the classroom and misapplication of multicultural practices.

The inclusion of multicultural ideologies in the classroom is one that will benefit all students, and is of great significance to today’s educational system. Unfortunately a study conducted by Ogden (2001) showed that in regard to educational objectives pre-service students in the United States consistently ranked Cultural Awareness as their least important educational objective. Students embarking on their teaching careers viewed cultural awareness as their least important concern; suggesting that in their teaching practices they would also place minimal importance to the inclusion of multiculturalism in their classrooms. The study demonstrates the need to teach pre-service and in-service educators of the importance of cultural awareness and the necessity to be culturally aware. While school boards and government officials may insist that multiculturalism play a role in today’s classrooms, in the end it is the commitment to this ideology by the classroom teachers that determines its actual implementation and success (Ogden, 2001). Obviously if educators view cultural awareness as their least important educational objective then they will not be committed to including effective multicultural practices in the classroom. This can be seen in the United States where various states have mandated multicultural education components, yet many are not in full compliance with the mandates (Van Hook, 2002).

In contrast a recent study of pre-service and in-service educators in Southern Ontario suggested that educators were willing to implement multicultural education but do not feel as if they had enough training to do so successfully (Ewers, 2004). Both pre-service and in-service educators
reported a high willingness to include multiculturalism in their teaching practices. The majority of participants also indicated that they were comfortable including multiculturalism into their programs, with some stipulating that they would need additional training or education. The pre-service participants were more dissatisfied with the training experiences that they were offered in multicultural education than were the in-service participants. More than 60% of all participants indicated levels of implementing multicultural education that were 50% or below, indicating that educators were not including multicultural education into their programming nearly to the extent that it should be. In addition, the majority of participants indicated that multicultural education was incorporated into the classroom during certain times of the year, and within certain lessons or subject areas. This indicated that educators were more likely to implement multicultural education according to the artifact or holiday approach to multiculturalism, a type of approach that can be more detrimental than helpful (Moodley, 1991; Sogunro, 2001).

In order to successfully implement multicultural education or ideologies in the classroom school staff must be trained regarding these matters and their importance in the classroom (Keim et al., 2001; Phinney & Rotheram, 1986). Phinney and Rotheram (1986) note three aspects multiculturalism training should focus on: theory, society, and classroom. Training regarding multiculturalism can be extremely diverse and conducted in a variety of manners, including workshops, conferences, reading, and courses (Sogunro, 2001). A study conducted by Keim et al. (2001) shows the positive effect of multiculturalism courses in relation to awareness, knowledge, and skills. The results of a pre-test, mid-test, post-test analysis of one multiculturalism course indicated positive impacts on the multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills of the participants.

It is possible to teach cultural competence, and multiculturalism courses can foster cultural competence making educators more effective in their classrooms. However, educators need to take part in more than one course or workshop on multiculturalism, due to the fact that research shows a single course may not have a long-lasting effect on the educator’s teaching (Deering, 1997; Jennings & Potter Smith, 2002). The more experiences an educator has to learn about multicultural education, and the more she develops her cultural competence the better. Multicultural education is a complex subject and one course cannot completely teach educators all that they need to know on the subject. One study notes the need of a field placement along with the multiculturalism course to positively affect the cultural sensitivity of a pre-service student, but Deering (1997) does also comment on earlier work of his that did not find the same result. Deering (1997) does suggest that similar to the need for educators to be involved in more than one multiculturalism course, more than one placement is needed as well. Classroom cultural diversity is not a prescribed formula in every setting. It is important for individuals to have different experiences in different settings to see how multiculturalism manifests there.

Another factor that aids multicultural education implementation is the support educators receive after training (Jennings & Potter Smith, 2002). The schools they return to after training and other educators in these schools need to also support multiculturalism in education. The Jennings and Potter Smith (2002) study uses a case study to show the importance of support after completing a multicultural education course, and the importance of time and partnerships in creating lasting and effective multicultural programs in a school. Multiculturalism in education needs to be a school wide initiative. Every member of the school needs to be committed to implementing multiculturalism in their practices for
the betterment of everyone involved. Multicultural education needs to be implemented in a systemic fashion with supports for pre-service students, experienced educators, and administrative personnel at all levels.

At present, the educational system has not approached the implementation of multicultural education from a systemic approach. While addressing multicultural issues or attempting to include multicultural elements within the classroom, teachers often adopt the superficial approach discussed earlier because it is seen as the safe and positive route (Moodley, 1991). More in-depth analyses of cultures, including a consideration of the historical and current relationships between different cultures is perceived negatively (Moodley, 1991) and not implemented as a strategy. This is likely due to the discomfort experienced by that teachers who feel unprepared to teach multicultural ideologies, and deal with the controversy that may arise. Traditional teacher training programs are not helping to prepare teachers to deal with diversity and the risky issues/topic that may result and for this reason need to be modified to do so (Sogunro, 2001).

Multicultural training needs to create culturally competent educators, while preparing them to deal with sensitive subject matters. Often students are talking about and dealing with culturally sensitive issues outside the classroom doors. Dealing with these issues openly in the classroom may help to ensure that students receive accurate information and comprehend all aspects and viewpoints. Educators and students can work towards the prevention of problems that might occur otherwise had these subjects not been broached.

Many teacher training programs relating to diversity, often wrongly encourage teachers to teach in a superficial manner, and have been shown to contribute to the stereotyping of minority students (Deering, 1997; Jennings & Potter Smith, 2002). In regards to pre-service students, their experiences with multicultural education are often restricted to lessons or units on certain countries, and neglects issues of prejudice, discrimination, social action, or social reconstructionism that are essential to multicultural education (Sogunro, 2001).

Multicultural education in the Classroom needs to be implemented in a systemic fashion with supports for pre-service students, experienced educators, and administrative personnel at all levels. At present, the educational system has not approached the implementation of multicultural education from a systemic approach. While addressing multicultural issues or attempting to include multicultural elements within the classroom, teachers often adopt the superficial approach discussed earlier because it is seen as the safe and positive route (Moodley, 1991). More in-depth analyses of cultures, including a consideration of the historical and current relationships between different cultures is perceived negatively (Moodley, 1991) and not implemented as a strategy. This is likely due to the discomfort experienced by that teachers who feel unprepared to teach multicultural ideologies, and deal with the controversy that may arise. Traditional teacher training programs are not helping to prepare teachers to deal with diversity and the risky issues/topic that may result and for this reason need to be modified to do so (Sogunro, 2001).

It is essential that educators not only receive multicultural education training, but that the training endorses practices that are in accordance with current multicultural ideologies. New teaching requirements should be implemented to ensure that teachers are prepared to effectively teach all student populations in regards to multiculturalism, which may result in mandating teachers to have a certain number of courses, workshops, etc. in order to receive their certification (Sogunro, 2001). Furthermore, multicultural courses and workshops should be reviewed to ensure that they are encouraging proper multicultural practices.

A vast majority of teachers in today’s classrooms were trained and employed prior to our country’s adoption of multicultural policy (Sogunro, 2001). Prior to the adoption of multicultural policies one of the goals of education was to assimilate students into the dominant culture, making everyone “Canadian” (Sogunro, 2001). Earlier teacher training reflected this ideology, and will be difficult to change, but will be a necessary change (Sogunro, 2001). We cannot have teachers in schools still following the old educational policies. Therefore, continuous training of in-service educators is essential. As mentioned earlier it is also necessary that these training initiatives educate teachers of the importance of multiculturalism in education. Teachers originally trained in the assimilation school of thought may not fully comprehend the need for multiculturalism, and may have opinions that do not align with current thinking in this area. These educators really need to understand the benefits of multicultural education and to understand how it will make them more effective with all their students.

It is important that new training initiatives help both pre-service and in-service teachers to think multiculturally as opposed to monoculturally (Sogunro, 2001). Cultural acceptance requires sensitivity and cultural awareness (Sogunro, 2001); if teachers are to teach...
acceptance then they must be accepting themselves and be sensitive and aware of cultural differences. It is imperative that educational staff is aware and sensitive to the various nuances of a particular culture, such as verbal and non-verbal cues, in order to effectively teach all students (Moodley, 1991; Sogunro, 2001). New teacher training initiatives should focus on changing teachers’ instructional styles, expectations, and evaluations, and educate teachers on the backgrounds of children from various cultures and issues pertaining to these cultures, such as survival and adaptation problems, to help make their instruction more suitable to all students (Moodley, 1991). Proper training in multicultural education will help teachers and administrators feel more at ease including multicultural ideology into their school setting. Such training will also help teachers approach difficult or controversial topics, which sometimes arise when exploring beyond the superficial aspects of any culture (Sogunro, 2001).

The development of pre-service and in-service courses on multicultural education can draw upon a number of resources. Philip Lister (1999) developed a taxonomy of cultural competence that was used to foster cultural sensitivity in nurses within a health care setting. Lister’s “Taxonomy for Developing Cultural Competence” might help to shape teacher training programs in regards to working with multicultural populations as it was developed to be transferable to any issues in any field or any profession where one must successfully deal with various cultural groups. The taxonomy is based on five levels, namely: cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural understanding, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence. Each level is essential to effectively work with people of various cultures and backgrounds and should act as guideline to teacher training curriculum (Lister, 1999). Teacher training programs may want to divide their curriculum into the five sections outlined in the taxonomy and work towards having the teachers demonstrate competency in each level prior to moving to the next.

Similar to Lister’s (1999) taxonomy, King et al. (2004) outlined cultural competence as being comprised of five essential elements: valuing diversity, capacity for cultural self-assessment, awareness of cross-cultural dynamics, the ability to institutionalize cultural knowledge, and adaptation to service delivery reflective of cultural knowledge. Teaching educators about these five elements and having them discover ways these elements might manifest themselves in the classroom might help to create culturally competent educators who properly practice multicultural education. However, the researchers also noted that in order to fully implement multicultural education the school as a whole must be assessed in regards to the five essential elements (King et al., 2004).

This approach to assessing the school as a whole was successfully implemented by the University of Canberra, in Australia. Subsequent to discovering that pre-service students found their multicultural education course lacking in realism and real-world practicality, the university decided to create a fictitious school, Jeir Creek, to provide the students with real world applications of multicultural education and the opportunity to put theory to practice (Faulkner, 2001). The end result was that the pre-service students felt they learned and retained more about multicultural education and how to apply it in a school setting through this program, as opposed to more traditional programs/courses. The students reported increased comprehension, skill development, interpersonal skills and teamwork, and felt that they became more self-directed learners (Faulkner, 2001). The success of this teacher training program may serve as a sounding board for the development or modification of Canadian teacher training programs.

The path to multicultural education is not one without obstacles. Van Hook’s (2002) study examined the perceived barriers to proper incorporation of multicultural education as viewed by 68 pre-service
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The results of this research indicate 4 major barriers: difficulty discussing sensitive topics; policies and practices detrimental to diversity; difficulty implementing a diversity curriculum; and inability to recognize and accept diversity. These barriers are thought to be the main deterrent of the implementation of multicultural education (Van Hook, 2002). Principals in another study viewed finances as a barrier to the implementation of multicultural education, because shrinking resources make it difficult to implement new or improved programs (Sogunro, 2001). Future investigations in multicultural education should examine these barriers further, and work to find solutions to overcoming these barriers.

Challenges and Future Directions

There are clear barriers to multicultural education and the potential of the Canadian educational system to effectively implement multicultural education is largely untapped. However, the research is clear in its support of educational systems as being ideally positioned to facilitate the development of intercultural awareness and sensitivity (Echols & Fisher, 1992; Halsted et al., 2000; Sogunro, 2001). The Canadian educational system currently faces a number of challenges in regard to multicultural education. These challenges include adapting to the increasing diversity within its classrooms, providing students with proficiency in intercultural awareness and sensitivity, and supporting educators in their development of and implementation of multicultural practices within the classroom.

Shifting the educational system away from its focus on “dominant” culture perspectives towards an inclusionary stance that recognizes the voices, values, and perspectives of many cultures will enhance the academic and social success of all students (King et al, 2004; Phinney & Rotherham, 1991; Moodley, 1991; Sogunro, 2001).

Educators need more training and assistance in order to implement multicultural practices within the classroom. Many research studies (Deering, 1997; Ewers, 2004; Jennings & Potter Smith, 2002; Keim et al., 2001; Ogden, 2001) have demonstrated that educators need more supportive training. Furthermore, the researchers have underscored the importance of supportive environments that provide educators with multiple training opportunities that facilitate the successful implementation of multicultural education practices within the classroom. Without such training we will never truly be able to create a society that respects and appreciates cultural diversity, we will continue to discriminate against those who are culturally different, and we will continue to place all our students at a disadvantage because they have not learned to be culturally competent.

Despite these obstacles and challenges, the classroom is one of the best places to support questions about culture and to promote intercultural awareness and sensitivity. Changes to both pre-service and in-service training along with a commitment on the part of administrators to provide supportive environments and facilitate changes to curriculum materials will go a long way towards the successful implementation of multicultural practices in Canadian classrooms.

References


Awakening the Sleeping Giant:
Combating Racism- Educating our Youth

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Abstract

Racism is largely borne out of strongly held assumptions and beliefs about our selves and others. Strongly held assumptions and beliefs can prejudice our view of the world in both positive and negative ways (Allport, 1954). If these prejudicial views are very positive towards one group, they can lead to ethnocentric thinking, whereas, negative views towards a group often lead to stereotyping others and at a systemic level can lead to racism (Isajiw, 1999, p.144). As educators, it is important we recognize long held assumptions and biases in ourselves first so that we can help others to question their assumptions and biases. This paper will discuss the conceptual framework of transformative learning theory as a means to become more critically reflective of taken-for-granted ‘frames of reference’ or ‘habits of mind’ that hold the potential for prejudice. It will also describe three teaching strategies that have been successfully used to facilitate understanding and recognition of assumptions and biases. These teaching strategies can be adapted for a variety of contexts, settings and age groups and some suggestions for doing so are provided. The underlying rationale of this article is that educators should play a key role as critical helpers to awaken ‘the sleeping giant’ of unchecked biases and assumptions—so vital to transformative learning, combating racism and educating our youth.

Introduction

The notion of multiculturalism is not new to education, neither are the challenges that educators face to incorporate multicultural education strategies into the classroom and school environment. However, the motivation and reasons for choosing to teach with a multicultural perspective varies amongst educators whether in the classroom or workplace. These reasons may include such things as teaching multiculturalism as a component of Canadian citizenship, politics and law (Wood, 1989), educational equity, empowerment of students and their families, expanding the multicultural, multiethnic knowledge of students, understanding and promoting harmony amongst and between groups, and personal reasons (Davidman & Davidman, 1994, p. 3).

Wood (1989) argues that although change in education can occur at different levels, teachers play a vital role in the process of providing our youth with a multicultural education. As part of his argument, Wood (1989) challenges teachers to take up the following 6 themes that are directed at improving the quality of school life and incorporates all subject areas and grade levels:

1. We should reflect multiculturalism across the curriculum.
2. We should be the small voice of conscience within our schools.
3. We should help students recognize the role of cultural conditioning.
4. We should respond to the societal curriculum’s messages about cultural diversity.
5. We should establish multiculturalism as an element of school-community relations.
6. We should advocate the principles of multiculturalism (pp. 13-19).

Although this paper is intended for teachers of elementary, secondary or post-secondary students in a formal classroom setting, the background information and strategies are just as applicable to anyone interested in “teaching” and who want to make their teaching multicultural. These strategies have been used by parents in simply wanting to know their children better, in church youth groups, in workplace sensitivity training and in not-for-profit organizations. A commitment to multicultural teaching is needed to “confront and fight against racism, sexism, and other discrimination in schools and society”, however, as Gollnick & Chinn (1998) recognize, teachers who do so “develop strategies to recognize their own biases and overcome them. They use their knowledge and skills to support a democratic and equitable society”
In this paper, the theory of transformative learning is presented as the theoretical context of three learning activities that may be useful tools for educators in helping students understand biases and assumptions. The three activities are described in detail with comments from students who have participated in these activities as to the effectiveness of their “awakenings”.

**Background to Transformative Learning theory**

Transformative learning is considered to be of a constructivist philosophy, person oriented, and emancipatory (Cranton, 1994). It is constructivist because it builds upon the experiences and contextual factors of the learner. It is person oriented because it takes into account the needs, interests, and experiences of the learner. It is emancipatory because it is consciousness raising and liberating with an objective toward individual and social change. If one of the important goals of education is to provide the means for changing society and individuals (Apps, 1973; Lawson, 1979), then facilitating transformative learning ought to be a critical objective of education in general and higher education in particular (Cranton, 1994; Schmuck, 1988).

The conceptual framework for transformative learning is rooted in the work of Habermas (1971), a communicative theorist, who identified three domains of learning: the technical (empirical knowledge governed by technical rules), the practical (social norms), and the emancipatory (self-knowledge and self-reflection), (as cited in Cranton, 1994, p. 24). In 1985, Mezirow (1985a) drew further on Habermas’ (1971) work and related the process of self-directed learning to perspective transformation, which led to a critical theory of self-directed learning (Mezirow, 1985b). During this period, he defined meaning perspectives, meaning schemes and psychological assumptions and discussed the different types of distortions that can cloud meaning perspectives. Recognizing clouded meaning perspectives or biases “can lead to discussions about the inclusion of different ethnic, religious, gender, socioeconomic, disability, and age-groups.” (Davidman & Davidman, 1994, p. 331)

Mezirow’s (1991) meaning schemes are the subunits of meaning perspectives and include “specific knowledge, beliefs, value judgments, and feeling that constitute interpretations of experience” (pp. 5-6). Mezirow and Associates’ (1990) meaning perspective involve “a collection of meaning schemes made up of higher-order schemata and evaluations” (p. 2). They comprise the particular frame of reference from which to view both the world and one’s self. Meaning perspectives have two dimensions, which according to Mezirow (1997), are made up of habits of mind and point of view. These two components are the habitual way in which things are done (which are highly influenced by an individual’s context) and the way in which the habits of mind are expressed. Mezirow (1991) introduced transformative learning “as an explanation for change in meaning structures that evolves in two domains of learning based on the epistemology of Habermas’ communicative theory” (cited in Taylor, 1998, p. 5). The first, instrumental learning is related to Habermas’ technical knowledge, which is seen as being based on positivism. The second, communicative learning is related to Habermas’ practical knowledge, which is seen as being based on constructivism.

**Purpose of the Activities as they relate to Transformative Learning**

Transformative learning theory is viewed as being based on constructivist assumptions, which Mezirow (1991) describes as including: A conviction that meaning exists within ourselves rather than in external forms such as books and that personal meanings that we attribute to our experience are acquired and validated through human interaction and communication. (p. xiv)

Meaning perspectives are important components of transformative learning because they are the filter for experiences (Taylor, 1998) that allows individuals to reflect on their “presuppositions of prior learning” (Cranton, 1994b, p.27) Three types of meaning perspectives are described by
Mezirow (1991, pp.28-29). Epistemic are those relating to knowledge and how we use knowledge. Sociolinguistic are related to social and cultural norms, expectations and language. Psychological are related to the way individuals see themselves as individuals. The three teaching activities described in this paper address these three types of meaning perspectives. The creative bio-poem relates primarily to the psychological, the Maps of Bangladesh relate to the sociolinguistic, and the Points to Ponder relate to the epistemic.

The purpose of these activities is to engage participants in what Mezirow (1995) describes as three common themes in his theory of transformative learning: (1) the centrality of experience, (2) critical reflection, and (3) rational discourse. These themes are emphasized as being both necessary and central to learning. The learner's experience is the starting point from which critical reflection and rational discourse can occur (Tennant, 1991). Critical reflection occurs as a result of questioning one's assumptions and beliefs. This can involve questions involving instrumental learning through a critical reflection of assumptions (such as focusing on critiquing a map or text) but also can involve a deeper subjective reframing of self through a critical self-reflection of assumptions (such as focusing on one's cultural limitations) (Mezirow, 1998). Taylor (1998) suggests that transformative learning consists primarily of the process of a critical reflection of assumptions, such as “habits of mind based on logical, ethical, ideological, social, economic, political, ecological, or spiritual aspects of experience” (p. 9). The aim of all three activities is that participants come away with a deeper understanding of their own deeply held assumptions and biases, to awaken the sleeping giant within each of us.

The remainder of this paper will focus on a description of these three teaching activities. A more detailed description of the methodology of implementing these activities and sample copies of variations that have been made are available from the author at deborah.mindorff@brocku.ca.

### Bio-Poem

A bio-poem is simply a biographical poem based on a series of questions. Bean (1996) describes bio-poems as using “a formulaic structure to create a poem expressing what the writer sees as significant or meaningful dimensions of a subject's life” (p. 110). The simplicity of this activity is that the prompting questions contained within the bio-poem can be modified to any age, setting or suitable context, while keeping the intention of helping students think about whom they are and what they believe. The bio-poem prompts participants to answer about 10-12 questions such as “What three things do you value? What three things do you fear?” Since students are requested to answer quickly and with their first response, the bio-poem helps them to reflect and articulate in words the experiences they have had. Wood (1989) argues that not only are we a product of these experiences but more importantly “along the way we pick up many ideas which we do not examine critically” (p. 14). The bio-poem is a safe way to help students examine themselves in the “appraisal stage” of critical thinking that Brookfield (1987) discusses and provides a nice platform for engaging in reflective practice (Schon, 1983; Schön, 1987).

A bio-poem can also provide the skeleton on which one can flesh out the lens of one's experiences, through critical examination and comparison in discussion with others. For example, answers provided by refugee students to the question, “What three things do you fear?” invariably include one or more of the following three answers: “war, loss of freedom, and never seeing my family again”. These are powerful answers in themselves but they also provide a perspective that may not be as immediately thought of by native-born Canadians. It is in this practical way, as Wood (1989) suggests that teachers can
“... respond effectively as issues emerge spontaneously, that is, turn the peer groups rejection of a newcomer, for example, into a learning experience through discussion and example” (p.17).

Formative and summative evaluations from the author’s undergraduate course provide liberal examples that students find the bio-poem a useful activity to understand them and see the lens that they look at the world through:

The exercise where a couple of peers wrote down all the lenses they looked through (bio-poem). I was amazed when you actually think about it and see them all in writing where your biases are and where the differences with others can engage in conflict. I really started to think about how I interpret situations and what my past experiences or ideas have done to influence my views.

I also really enjoyed the [bio-poem] questions posed at the beginning of each seminar because they made me think about myself in ways I hadn’t done before. I learned a lot of what I value in life just by taking a few minutes to think about it.

This past theme has made me more aware of cultural differences in relation to education. This has mainly come up in seminars. I appreciate the insight because I have come from a schooling background that has always had mainly one point of view and has not really made me think through other people's eyes as some of the past activities have (especially the bio-poem questions about our background).

To begin this activity, participants fill out the handout entitled “BioPoem”, a creative writing technique adapted from Gere (1985, as cited in Bean, 1996, p.110). The facilitator should start out by reading his/her own bio-poem out loud and then asking one or two other volunteers willing to share with the larger group. When the facilitator/instructor is the first to read their bio-poem, they provide a model of shared risk, so necessary to provide a safe learning environment (Mindorff, 2000). The bio-poem accomplishes a number of other things as well. First, it provides a bridge-in to the topic of understanding biases and assumptions by creating a fun, yet informal way for individuals to reflect on their lives and what they value and believe. It helps instructors to get to know a few things about their audience in a very short period of time and vice versa and also helps students to get to know one another better. It is helpful to pull in examples from participants mentioned in their bio-poem when you open the discussion about the different lenses that people use to look at life. The following is my own bio-poem based on the original bio-poem formula:

Line 1: First name: Deborah
Line 2: Four traits that describe character: Sensitive, enthusiastic, passionate and Dutch
Line 3: Mother of Eusebia, Chesed, Jacob, Petra, Hadassah, Tikvah and Aviva
Line 4: Lover of Claude (my husband), truth and sunshine (list three things or people)
Line 5: Who feels challenged, often overwhelmed, and compassion (three items)
Line 6: Who needs validation, my family and to work in my garden, (three items)
Line 7: Who fears rats, winter never ending, and not finishing my Ph.D (three items)
Line 8: Who gives encouragement, hard work and unsolicited advice (three items)
Line 9: Who would like to teach in Africa for a year, write a book and learn to stop and smell the roses (three items)
Line 10: Resident of the global village
Line 11: Last name: Mindorff

Here is another example of a 2nd year undergraduate student’s bio-poem modified considerably from the original bio-poem to fit questions that related to course content:

Line 1: First name: Theresa, she is like a tree because she has roots firmly planted in loving soil of family, her faith is like a trunk- it gives her strength and branches are always moving about.
Line 2: Whose nickname is Tree, Mother Theresa, and Luigi, the name her husband calls her.
Line 3: Whose favourite TV show is 20/20, Friends, and Seinfeld.
Line 4: Who would like to be a bird, if she could be any animal because
they are free and can fly south for the winter.

Line 5: Whose favourite teacher in elementary school was someone who was kind and treated all equally, he made everybody feel special.

Line 6: Who values her family, health, and faith. (three items).

Line 7: Who aims in her life to be a good citizen, a great mom, and a good role model.

Line 8: Whose favourite fairy tales are Beauty and the Beast.

Line 9: Whose dad’s favourite saying is: “Were you in the boat when the boat tipped over?”, “Nooo, I was in the bloomin water…”

Line 10: Who would like to interview Mother Theresa or Harriet Tubman.

Line 11: Whose favourite flower is a daisy or lilacs.

Line 12: Who is a sister of Joe, Donna, Kathy, Rayond.

Line 13: Who fears dying before kids are independent, a fire in the home. (three items)

Line 14: Who would like to go to Hawaii travel, go to Kosovo, go to 3rd world in an orphanage. (three items)

Line 15: Who is very irritated by people who are talking during lectures & church, crumbs from the toaster (husband) and making lunches. (three items)

Line 16: Who would like to go to Disney, if she could go anywhere during spring break.

Line 17: Whose favourite day of the year is mother’s day or any day when all the family is together and there is no arguing (snow days, summer- pool).

Line 18: Whose favourite board game/card games are: scrabble

Line 19: Who has experience with models through buying models for Christmas.

Line 20: Whose favourite part of March Break was: going to the Zoo and taking a weekend away.

Line 21: Who is an optimistic, deep and analytical type of thinker.

Line 22: Who will take this one significant thing with her from this course: applying philosophies of education to understanding diversity in the classroom.

Line 23: Last name:

From these two examples, there is a great deal that a stranger (student, teacher or reader) can learn. In my own bio-poem, a number of lenses are evident, for example, Dutch lens, mothering lens, and academic lens. These lenses of mine will always cloud my judgments and values and if unrecognized as lenses could lead to stereotyping and prejudice. Note that I see myself as a resident of a global village, rather than expressing the geographical location of where I live. Often I find immigrant students will provide two countries of residency as they still feel so much a part of their country of birth. Other times, students will convey two households they live in because of family separation or divorce. The similarities and differences of our answers is often what provide the bridging discussion for students in the classroom. No one’s answer is wrong or set in stone for life; it is merely a snapshot of who they are on that particular day.

In the second example you will notice a significantly expanded bio-poem used in a full credit course on Curriculum Theory and Design. The questions were asked weekly at the beginning of seminars and took about 10 minutes of time. The first four lines are simple questions intended to get to know students in the class; the remaining lines are more directly related to the course content or issues that arise out of it. For example, the questions of lines 5-7 relate specifically to understanding various philosophies of teaching. There are no limitations, except your own creativity to the ways in which the bio-poem can be adapted to suit any content, age or context.

Maps of Bangladesh

The second activity is one of my favourite entitled the “Maps of Bangladesh” activity. I was first exposed to these maps as part of an Environmental Science course on Participatory Development illustrating the different ways the same village can be viewed by different individuals and how this can affect work done in a community if all stakeholders views are not considered. I have developed the maps of Bangladesh into a learner-centered activity intended to help students to surface and examine their
Participants are given three maps of a village in Bangladesh drawn by different inhabitants of the village. The old men of the village drew one of the maps, the young men of the village drew one map, and the women of the village drew one map. The task for the participants is to determine who drew which map and more importantly, to give their reasons why they think so.

Participants must first do this activity on their own and then are put into groups of about five where they write out on overhead transparencies their group results. During the process of recording their individual responses on the transparencies, individuals have an opportunity to really share their various perspectives and provide reasons for their answers. This critical discourse allows students to realize that other people in their group may have the same answer as they do but for completely different reasons. Also, they find that others may have a totally different answer than they do but for the same reasons. What is significant is that everyone starts to consider (sometimes for the first time!) how and why he/she thinks the way they do and what influences their particular perspective. Once students have accomplished this group work, an opportunity is given for them to share their results with the larger whole group. (The number of groups who share is sometimes limited due to time constraints).

It is vitally important that adult educators model some of the ways to provide a safe critique and probe at unchecked biases and assumptions when each group has finished presenting their findings. It becomes fun when the class is able to pick out other people’s assumptions and biases. I particularly like using the maps of Bangladesh as they present a great opportunity for unearthing cultural and racial differences and stereotypes about gender, age, and roles in society.

This activity has been easily adapted by getting students as individuals or in particular groups to draw a map of their own school or downtown district they are in and then review similarities and differences in what was drawn. Another way to move the activity away from looking at cultural and racial differences to a discussion more about economic and socio-class difference is to provide students with three lists of garbage from three different households of different socio-economic class and ask them to figure out which list goes with which household and their reasons why they think so.

Here are some participant comments from formative and summative evaluations on the most significant learning activity from a full year undergraduate course:

One certain experience sticks in my mind and it is that of the Bangladesh maps. I thought it was a very unique way to teach an important concept. When the class shared answers, I soon realized the different perspectives shared by all. This shows how curriculum needs to be individualized to different perspectives and strengths in every person.

I found the mapping activity the most significant activity that contributed to me personally. I never realized the importance of looking at your “lens” and see how this can affect the people around you.

The exercise of the Bangladesh maps was eye opening for myself. This exercise allowed me to see how different we truly are as individuals. This excellent activity gave people a chance to see through different perspectives and gave people ideas to how this would carry over in to the teaching profession. For myself, it made me realize that there are many other views and angles on things, that can differ from my own and be right at the same time.

The Bangladesh map exercise I found to be interesting. I realized how we use stereotypes without even realizing it. Hopefully, in the future I will not make such assumptions based on gender.

Points to Ponder

In the final activity that takes place after participants have completed the maps of Bangladesh exercise, I pull together the groups’ collective learning through this activity by making connections to my 3 years of cumulative research and experience.
using the maps of Bangladesh activity with over 1000 individuals from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds. Based on this research, I have created the following list of “Points to Ponder” to help ensure transfer of learning to other situations and to encourage discussion.

• Look and listen for qualifiers from others (ie. I haven’t actually ever been to Bangladesh…)
• Be aware of your own assumptions and bias (ie. Women drew this map because they would take children to school and go to market.)
• Be explicit about your own assumptions (ie. I’m assuming that the village elders will be most aware of politics.)
• Think of the impact of your decision (ie. How important is it for me to check my biases and assumptions to the outcome of the activity or to this person/task I am involved with?)
• Ask yourself some questions (ie. What lenses am I looking at this from?; What experiences do I have that are similar to this situation?; How much do I really know about this person/situation?)
• Ask for more information (ie. What is the purpose of this activity?; What is the source of this information?; For what purpose is this information being used?; How long ago was this information collected?)
• Check for bias and assumptions in others (ie. Who funded this project/information? Whose voices are represented in this information? Whose voices are not represented and why?)
• Do not make sweeping statements about what you know- you may have to eat your words! (ie. “Oh, this activity is easy for me, I’ve lived in Bangladesh for three years!”)
• Be open to the opinions, perspectives and explanations of others- they have different life experiences that have brought them to where they are (You can have the right answer but reasoned incorrectly, the wrong answer but reasoned well, the same answers but for totally different reasons, different answers but for the same reasons)
• Find ways to follow the advice “Having compassion, make a difference.”

These suggested points are intended to be used as a guide in becoming more skilled as a “critical helper” (Brookfield, 1987, p.4) and to help awaken the sleeping giant of unchecked biases and assumptions. They can also be adapted to fit other teaching activities or strategies that allow for multiple perspectives to be acknowledged. One final student voice about this activity:

We talked a lot about multiculturalism. I really reflected on myself in terms of the biases I may have about immigrant children in the classroom. It is significant to me because I do not consider myself to be prejudiced or racist, yet I did have some biases. This is something I need to think about more thoroughly.

Conclusion

As the face of our Canadian society changes to reflect immigration trends, so must we strengthen our commitment to combat anti-racism in the classroom. This commitment needs to be rooted and nurtured in the classroom by teachers. Every teacher can find ways to “add a multicultural dimension to the courses we teach” (Wood, 1989. p. 13) and to “be the small voice of conscience within our schools” (p.14). It is not sufficient to give lip service to multicultural classrooms and yet fail to model and explain strategies in which educators can work at the core of ethnic intolerance. As Davidman and Davidman (1994) state: “the multiculturalness of a setting is not determined by the type of students in the class; it is created by the perspective and knowledge base the teacher works with” (p.8). One of the goals of multicultural education is to “meet the individual learning needs of each student so that all students can progress to their fullest capacity” (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, p.331). According to Gollnick and Chinn (1998), this goal has not been met and the primary
reason put forward is the failure of teachers “to effectively use the cultural backgrounds of students in providing effective instruction” (p.331).

This paper has provided a descriptive rationale and brief overview of three activities intended for teachers to help them overcome this failure in one way, through perspective transformation. Perspective transformation has been linked throughout the paper with transformative learning theory as a means to understanding assumptions and biases so common in racist thinking and behaviour. When a teacher is able to awaken students to understand the power behind multicultural values and beliefs, they are more able to use this belief system as “potentially powerful variables in the learning process of individuals and groups” (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, p.7). When this takes place, the multicultural classroom challenges are thereby turned into valuable curricular resources.

Educators can use the activities as they are described in this brief or adapt them in meaningful ways to fit their curriculum to trigger or facilitate transformation learning for any student in any context. As Davidman and Davidman (1994) suggests “every subject can be taught in ways that reflect the reality of cultural differences in this nation and the world” (p.331). Regardless of how the activities are adapted, questioning techniques and guided reflection always play a central role in this objective and cannot be successful unless the educators themselves awaken their own sleeping giants first.

References


Narrative discourse of African international high school students in Canada

Recommendations for school reforms and support

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Abstract

The migration of African children to Canada is often supported or supervised by adults, who in many cases are either immediate family members or tribal kinsmen/women. However, over the past ten years or so, the internationalization of Canadian public high schools in some provinces has supported the temporary emigration of students of African decent in pursuit of ‘better’ educational opportunities. Most students come from high-income families; hence, their parents provide them with sufficient funds to support themselves as boarders, under the supervision of school administrators and in some cases “foster parents” who belong to the dominant Canadian culture. The learning experiences of these students are compounded with many challenges, which are partly attributed to lack of support from their Canadian schools. These learning experiences affect them and their families in Africa, which calls for an examination of the participating schools support structures, provided to facilitate their socio-cultural changes and learning needs towards a satisfactory learning outcome.

The discussion in this chapter is guided by information acquired from informal interviews with six students and their natural parents, as well as my personal experience as a loco parentis to one of the student. Issues analyzed include students learning challenges and experiences in relation to curriculum process and policy differences; immigration policies in relation to parental visit for advocacy; as well as assessing the available learning support by schools in terms of their suitability and compatibility to the students. Further discussions are advanced on suggested remedies that may enhance positive transformation as a means to effective support for a better classroom inclusion of these students.

Global changes are transforming societies around the world and Canada is no exception. Local and national economies are becoming increasingly international as a result of new trade agreements and the emergence of a borderless workforce emanating from educational institutions (BCCIE, 2003). The world is increasingly characterized by its complexity, interconnectedness and diversity through education at all levels. Further realities of globalization and growing international interdependence are lending increasing weight and urgency for educational changes in terms of what is taught and how it is taught to reach the diversified population of learners at all levels in the Canadian public educational systems. As a result of these challenges, immigration policies grant more student visiting visas to post primary and secondary international students to Canadian public institutions in search of “qualitative” education, thereby increasing the number of African students as temporary immigrants [based on the status of their student visiting visas]. Statistical data between 1981-1991 revealed an increase of approximately 400% African and Middle Eastern immigrants in this category (Grayson, 1994). According to economic observers, the influx of international students to Canadian public schools (post primary and secondary) serves as an effective enterprise, which generates revenue of more than $2.5 billion per year, the equivalent of 27, 500 jobs (British Columbia Center for International Education Website, March, 2003). This definitely can be appraised as accruing benefits at a limited cost to schools as well as provinces involved with the training of foreign students.

For the purpose of this chapter, data were acquired through informal interviews with six students from three different boarding schools in two provinces between 1998-2001 and through my own experiences acting as mediator for students and schools on behalf of their parents. However, from an educationist perspective, specific questions are advanced and responded to in this chapter: How compatible are the curriculum and pedagogical approaches with their learning styles? What extent do immigration policies support or facilitate school-parent relationship for these learners? What and how effective are the support structures provided by the schools in facilitating conducive learning to the students? The responses to these questions serve as the analytical base for discussion and recommendations for
schools to undertake transformation in order to incorporate these learners into the mainstream of Canadian multicultural educational structures.

**Synopsis of curriculum and pedagogical learning differences**

A global racial profile of these students clearly classifies them as black, hence, the learning experiences of these African youth in a ‘foreign’ land are synonymous to those of resident African Canadians in various public high schools. Eminent Canadian black theorists (Dei, 1996a, Brethwaite, 1996, James, 1996 and Solomon & Ogbu, 1992) through scholarly research and literature reiterated the shortcoming of Canadian educational theory and practices for these categories of learners. A major concern was the lack of anti-racist curricula and pedagogical approaches in the public high schools, which if effectively provided would accentuate proper learning environment as well as internationalize learning for the benefit of these students. Indeed black educators, parents or guardians of African decent are highly disturbed by the marginalization as well as depersonalization of African students by the school leadership, teachers and even their classmates (Cudjoe, 1997).

Majority of the students recalled negative learning experiences with the curriculum policies (content) and process (pedagogy). They acknowledged great disparity between that of their home countries and of Canada, which contributed a major learning setback. Curriculum content of courses in most if not all high schools in African countries are made up of the core subjects in addition to skill oriented disciplines, designed to reflect the existing socio-cultural and environmental life style of the people (Samoff, 1988). Learners’ mastery of content is based on their cognitive level with emphasis on cognitive mapping for processing and storing information (Bloom 1981, Phillip & Soltis, 1991). For example teaching and learning in subjects like mathematics and the sciences are directed through memorization of tables and basic formulas as against the use of calculators, practiced in Canadian classrooms.

These international students are familiar with the orthodox pedagogical practices of African teachers, which are within the philosophical paradigm of essentialism and perennialism, teacher directed learning with emphasis on lecture teaching method (McNergy, 2001). Such process is different from the Canadian school system, whose general semantics of the core curriculum content and learning style is pragmatic and child-centered in approach (Dewey, 1913 cited by Gutek, 2001). The teaching and learning strategies consider all learning domains but with greater emphasis made on the affective and psychomotor levels (Krathwol, 1964 cited by Erant, 1991). Canadian public high school teachers facilitate student’s self-directed learning through the use of various technological resources while pedagogical methods in disciplines like mathematics and the sciences rely on the use of equipment such as computers and calculators, which are new to most African international students, thereby creating learning difficulties and setbacks to them. In a conversation, some freshmen reiterated their limitation to access of computers during school hours. One of them commented

*We do not have access to computers in our foster homes. In my case, I tried working on one of the family computers; I was stopped by my host parents. They fear I may damage the computer. The only opportunity I have is to use my recess periods during school hours to practice my skills. Sometimes, I may want to remain after school to continue practicing, but because the library is to be closed, I have no option but leave.*

Insufficient time and lack of extension of computer periods by the school affects their meeting the demands of computer knowledge to substantiate their learning demands for a better performance. Disparity in curricula policy and processes places the African international student at a learning difficulty and disadvantage, which affects their readiness to learning as well as intrinsic motivation (Brunner, 1968; James, 1996), as compared to their Canadian classmates. Particularly, the learning difference affects their performance in the specialized readiness test administered in most provinces in
Canada. Most times, student outcome of this measurement indicates low scores as a result of poor performance; if not properly managed by the teachers and principals it may affect their total learning outcome (Gagne & Driscoll, 1988).

Educational policies of developing countries such as those in Africa often reflect the socio-cultural environmental needs of their states regardless of international pressure by world donor organizations as the World Bank (Psacharopoulus, 1990). Hence, the paradigm of all educational objectives based on the concept of self-reliance at all educational levels, which is implemented through the diversification of subjects that reflects the conventional orthodox life pattern of its people (Carnoy & Samoff, 1990). High school students learn life oriented skill subjects such as agriculture, arts and crafts, carpentry, pottery for certification (Fafunwa, 1987, Nyerere, 1982 cited by Sammoff, 1988). The learning processes of these disciplines are psychomotor oriented involving high bodily-kinesthetic learning (Gardener, 2003; Kirman, 2002). In some Canadian schools similar subjects such as woodwork may be available but limited to some grades and not lead to certification, which African students require in their home countries. In some cases, such subjects are not offered at all [often associated with the lack of teachers] which forces the students to supplement with other kinetics related courses such as outbound learning activities like skiing, snowboarding etc, which have no relevance or long term benefit on their return home, partly because of environmental differences which makes the acquired skill dysfunctional.

Linguistic chaos is also a major learning setback for these categories of students. Some of the students come from countries whose official and language of instruction are neither French nor English that are used as medium of instruction in Canadian schools. Some of the students, specifically from the eastern part of Africa, use Spanish, German, Portuguese, Arabic and Swahili languages emanated as colonial legacies (Fafunwa, 1987). Adopting the two major languages used in their new high schools slows their pace of learning as well as affecting their performance in the provincial tests, especially those administered to “new comers” or immigrants (Carter & Mok, 1992; Solomon & Ogbu, 1996). Furthermore, their commitment to learning French or English languages also affects the pace of their academic acculturation and assimilation as demanded in the skills of computer, reading and communication as compared to their Canadian classmates, thereby making learning more demanding and difficult, which affects their overall performance (Gagne et al, 1988).

Curriculum differences are not only limited to African students in Canada but also in allied developed countries like Britain, which has a larger share of international high school programs. Duncan, a chairman of the Rampton Committee in Britain, pointed out

*Our curriculum [host country curriculum], our school organization, and the general atmosphere in our schools do not really recognize the presence or the well being of the ethnic minority pupils, especially the West Indian and the Africans (Jones, 1986:16 cited by Yekwai, 1988)*

Canadian multicultural and anti-racist educationists (Ghosh, 1996; Dei, 1996; James, 1996; Solomon & Ogbu, 1997 and Brethwaite, 1996) through various studies have noted that the Canadian public high school curriculum is yet to fully include an effective multicultural curriculum to meet the diversified cultures of its residents either permanent or temporary [as in the case of African high school students].

A preview of some provincial Social Studies curricula used by international high schools students
illustrates minimal positive reference of Africa for literary appreciation. As observed by Yekwai, curricula contents dwell on negative stereotyping of Africa in a theory void of history prior to Livingstone. Yekwai (1988) added

_The Afrikan has been stereotyped into negativism that is extensive and for the most part unique to him/herself. As illustrated in the education system, and the teaching of history [Social Studies] part of the curriculum reflects the dominant ideology, an ideology that incorporates the values of whites as against that of the oppressed Africans. (p. 55)_

An illustration of this statement is supported with a personal experience of the writer’s visit to a class in a public high school in a major city in Canada. A Social Studies instructional poster (a map) displayed on the classroom wall as a learning resource had a title Problems around the world. The African continent was most heavily labeled with negative issues as famine, drought, aids and allied epidemic diseases, hunger and poverty. Such a negative teacher approach to pedagogy is considered counter productive to learning especially in a class with students from multicultural backgrounds.

The affected international African students for the first time are mandated to comprehend negative curriculum content about their home states, as against the positive beliefs and value systems they have learned and upheld from their nations, indeed they experience for the very first time racism within a learning context (Pearse, 1986). African scholars in diaspora regard this process of passing negative information as a source of knowledge by teachers as a process of miseducating the African child (Miller, 1986; Yekwai, 1988). This approach to teaching creates a cognitive trauma to the learners, which disorganizes their social cognition (Anderson, 2002; Siegler, 1996).

Selected text resources or class readings along with a racially biased pedagogical approach for the implementation of the ‘ideal’ curriculum in international schools by teachers of the majority culture has a retrogressive effect on the African students and their peers. Academically, the affected students become disinterested in learning especially on tasks oriented with negative issues related to their continent, which not only affects their performance but also provides a base for them to nurse racial prejudices and grievances against the affected teachers. A presentation of such biased material and pedagogy by teachers fosters miscommunication between students of the dominant culture and the affected students. Often they are confronted with very embarrassing questions, one student commented, “I was asked by a classmate if it is true we sleep on tree tops because we cannot afford shelters due to poverty and also to protect ourselves from the wild animals of the jungle”. The affected students do not have answers to such naïve questions and are unprepared to be diplomatic in responding due to their inexperience and age. The few that chose to respond to their peers in such a dialogue might be harsh and sarcastic which may lead to conflict and could tarnish peer relationships in and outside the classroom thereby affecting positive socialization between and within peers (James, 1996; Mervis, 1998).

**Inadequate boarding facilities**

In some of the international high schools, conventional boarding buildings such as dormitories are augmented with private rented homes otherwise referred to as family host homes as against the information provided on paper to parents regarding the residencies of their wards. Some parents expressed their disgust and dissatisfaction with improvised facilities, and considered such a school’s residential policies inappropriate, deceitful and cheating in comparison to the large sum of money paid for their children’s accommodation. One of the
parent commented “We are used to the boarding structure where students are placed in hostels and assigned matrons as well as share responsibilities to students as prefects in managing their affairs. This reflects the community values experienced in our culture. I am really disappointed to have my son placed in a foster home, at least they [the school] should have informed us on this arrangement.” Schools involved with public international high schooling must be efficiently transparent in their communication with the parents, they must provide detail information to facilitate them to constructive decision making as well as being a means to fostering trust and confidence of the school leadership for an effective parent-school relationship (Etzioni & Etioni-Halevy, 1973; Morgan, 1997).

Assigning foster parents from the dominant culture with inadequate knowledge on the traditional socialization process of the African child is culturally counter productive. The communication gap between the student and the foster parents may generate discipline and behavior problems. Many times conflict on perceived behaviors may arise between them. In the African culture, youth or children are instructed not to stare at an elder (parent or adults) directly on the face during an inquiry, dialogue, or reprimands in the case of an offence. The non-directional stare of an elder by the youth culturally demonstrates respect to the elder in the African tradition while in the majority culture it is measured as sign of guilt and rudeness to the elder. The discrepancies of behavioral judgement in the case of the foster parents may result to inappropriate judgment of the child or youth’s behavior. In most cases erroneous character judgments like behavior disorders or problems are labeled on such an African child and reported to the school management who forward such information to the biological parents in anecdotal reports. Such reports can be devastating to the parents and may damage the confidence and relationship between the students and their biological parents. Additionally, such misjudgment of behavior by the foster parents may cause some reactions by the students of either solitary withdrawal “non-communicado,” or resort to total deviancy by becoming confrontational as well as violating and ignoring school and home rules (Solomon & Ogbu, 1992).

### Parental advocacy and immigration visa policies

In discussing educational underpinnings related to the role of parents for a multicultural education, Tator and Henry (cited by Cudjoe, 1997) on Multicultural Education: Translating Policy into Practice stated Canada’s educational institutions have, for the most part, failed to understand the important and positive role that parents can play in the learning process of students. They have failed to encourage and promote a school/community relationship in which parents feel they have meaningful access and an active involvement in the education of their children. The sense of alienation, isolation and exclusion is experienced more acutely by visible minority and immigrant parents. (p. 306)

A deduction from the above statement includes the parents of African international high school students, classified as temporary minority immigrants by the status of their visas. Major factors that inhibit the natural parents from getting involved as well as collaborating with the school administration to provide learning, social and psychological support to their children is based on the strict visa control measures of the immigration officers at the consular offices in Africa. Such a control measure is associated with poor communication and information sharing between the affected schools and the consulates in charge of awarding visas. The impact of the rift created between the two
organizations results to consulates denying visiting visas to the natural parents of this category of students.

The non-interventional strategy of school administrators in support of parents’ efforts in seeking and negotiating for visiting visas (school intervention is based on parents’ request) from the consulates in Africa indicates their preference for dealing with the “foster parents” assigned to students by the schools, who often belong to the dominant culture. This act of preference and lack of support to the natural parents connotes a racial bias. Also, the denial of visiting visas to such parents for the purpose of providing support to their children by consular offices is considered an obstruction and denial of their fundamental human rights of association with their wards as well as a violation of their rights to parental advocacy as stated in the Canadian Parents Council policy statements upheld in all the provinces.

In addition, the non-intervention of the affected schools for parents soliciting visiting visas clearly defines that the economic gains of the students’ participation in their school programs is more important than ensuring parent-school relationships, considered a fundamental principle to effective learning as referenced in most provincial Parent Advisory Council policy statements (BCCPAC, 2002).

In his social learning theory of “Zone of Proximal Development” for social cognitive development of children and youth learning, Vygotsky (2003) reiterated the need for children/youth learners to interact with adults as parents and teachers for the facilitation of their intellectual development. Vygotsky recommended that, parents and other significant adults should guide the child’s learning by interacting with them and providing them with directions and cues to better grow into their potentials. He clearly stated,

*Full development during the ZPD depends on social interaction. The range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone. (p.1)*

Prominent Canadian social learning theorist, Bandura (1997) reiterated that children do not learn much on their own; rather they need to be assisted by their parents and teachers, who serve as models in assisting them build a strong and effective self-efficacy, paramount for learning in and outside schools. Such learning support is seen as modeling for the learners, “although most parents and teachers are already somewhat aware of the fact they teach by example, they probably have forgotten how influential modeling can be” (Cain, 2000:40).

The participation of parents in any stage of their children’s learning cannot be overemphasized. Piaget (1970) in his Cognitive Development Learning theory referred to the middle and senior years of high school as The Concrete Operational Stage, considered a critical period for learners. At this stage, students are active in their pursuit of knowledge as well as appreciate and depend on parental interaction for social, emotional and learning support (Bandura, 1997; Vygotsky, 2003).

Parents or guardians of international African high school students are people of very high-class status in their home countries with a very strong financial base, which makes them capable of sustaining and visiting their children in foreign schools. Immigration officials need to consider this when denying them visas to fulfill their visitation rights in support of their children. Parental denial of visiting visas will definitely discourage other parents from sending their children to Canadian high schools and may turn to other developed countries as Britain and the United States amongst others. Furthermore, such immigration attitudes and policies may tarnish diplomatic relations between states affected [many of the parents are policy makers who may turn their personal
grievances to official biases]. On a
general note, such immigration policy
can be politically interpreted as a
retrogressive step to Canada’s role as a
world power in promoting global
education.

The Need for School Transformation

In order to promote and attract
more patronage of Canadian
international public high school
education by foreign and less developed
countries, the affected schools need to
transform their schools by adapting
structures of material and non-material
culture to provide a conducive learning
environment for a successful outcome
for the learners. The concept
transformation is preferred to that of
reforms as a means to articulate new
visions of education in the Canadian
educational system to assimilate this
group of students (Dei, 1996a,
Cawagas & Toh, 1989). There is a need
for an effective transformation
paradigm, a frame of reference or vision
of education described by Toh &
Cawagas (1989) as “that which
empowers the learners not only to
critically understand the world’s
realities in a holistic framework, but
also to move learners and teachers act
towards a more peaceful, just and
liberating world” (p.11). In this regard,
transformative approach proposes,
“virtually every facet of [Canada’s]
education system needs to be examined
critically, if it is to be made more
responsive to the needs of those who fall
outside the mainstream. Teacher
training and recruitment, curriculum
revision …must be subject to scrutiny
(Towards a New Beginning, 1992:82
cited by Cudjoe, 1997). The increase in
population of temporary immigrants as
international students calls for an
effective transformation of the existing
support systems in order to ensure a
proper assimilation of these learners
into Canadian education system while,
at the same time use the learning
outcomes they have acquired to be
functional in their African countries on
their return home. Hence, the
following recommendations are a
response to the stated discursive
questions.

Improve relations between
schools and consulates

Most officials of the Canadian
High Commission in African cities are
inadequately informed on the
operations of international high schools
as compared to tertiary schools. The
schools need to initiate and establish
thorough procedures of disseminating
information regarding their school
programs both on the Web and to the
immigration consulates in major
African cities. Through effective
communication, both Canadian
embassies and the affected schools can
facilitate good work relationships,
which may minimize discrepancies
regarding the award of visas to parents
and students.

Having offered admission to
the students after rigorous review of
their credentials [parents and students],
international high school
administrators should confidently
solicit for parents needing visiting visas
from the embassies located in African
states. This support should include a
strongly worded reference letter, citing
parental prerogatives as stated in
Canadian Parent Advisory Council’s
policy statements to parents for
presentation at the high commissions.
This will alleviate conflicts and
embarrassments such parents face at the
hands of immigration officials.

Parental visits are not only a
fulfillment of their responsibilities and
obligations but a means of providing
learning support, and advocacy for their
children as well as improving and
promoting school-parent relationships
(Montessori, 1948; Vygotsky, 1934,
2003). Children have an advantage in
school when their parents encourage
and support their school activities.
Herbert Kohl (cited by Cudjoe, 1997)
commented,

No one has a stronger, more direct interest
in good education than a parent. Educators who fail to recognize this,
seeing parents instead as irrelevant,
Parents’ involvement will empower both parents and their children through interactions with the schools (Henry & Tator, 1991 cited by Cudjoe, 1997).

**Internationalizing teaching and learning in Canadian public high schools**

Schools involved with the training of this category of students need to reflect transformative multicultural pedagogical practices that systematically include alternative view points as a course for transformative discourse in schools (Cudjoe, 1997). As commented by a Somali guardian of one student,

*There is the need for [white teachers in these public schools] to undergo a course on fundamental teaching skills and methods with multicultural dimension so as to equip them on how to deal with these children in their classrooms.*

Transformative pedagogy can be obtained only when teachers adopt multi-various teaching techniques that will foster active learning and effective classroom interaction within peers of different cultural backgrounds for an inclusive classroom. Popular teaching technique that will facilitate this is the Cooperative Learning teaching method (Johnson and Johnson, 1990, 2002). Advantages of using this method, according to various researchers from Canada and the US include an improvement of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships among culturally diversified learners in the classroom (Brubacher et al, 1990, Gardner, 2003). In addition, group members often extend their relationships outside the classrooms, which fosters effective socialization amongst peer groups (Mervis, 1998). African international students are often quiet and reserved in the classrooms, they see themselves as ‘tokenized’ persons who are alone or nearly alone amongst their peer groups (Kanter, 1977 cited by Russell & Wright, 1992) hence, are passive learners most times. With cooperative learning they are likely to interact freely with their peers of other cultural background by observing and imitating them, a prerequisite to learning amongst middle and high schoolers for the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Additionally, cooperative group learning will improve the language and communication skills of these African international students as they interact with their peer members of the majority Canadian culture in classroom-based learning tasks (Flaitz, 2003, Johnson and Johnson, 2002).

In addition, teachers should adopt the Self-Directed Learning approach (Arellado et al., 1996) as a teaching and learning technique in their classrooms with international high school students. Studies have shown that learners of middle and high schools at this level begin to find out what is best for them and begin to build a repertoire of skills and strategies that aid learning by exploring various socio-cultural environments and adopting their own learning styles (Ghosh, 1996, Rafroth et al, 1993). With the SDL teaching technique, learners/students select assignments/projects that will allow the learners to explore their skills, dealing with the tasks within his/her intercultural perspective as an “authority”. With this approach to learning, the international student is not only provided the choice of implementing his/her own learning style, but also can express the deductive perspective of knowledge inherent from his/her home country’s learning style to an inductive Canadian learning style, thereby making learning more meaningful, enriching and self satisfying (BCCIE, 2003:3). Additionally, through this learning method, the students will improve their writing and research skills, adapt to their new curriculum in their host schools and enhance their learning.

Teachers of the majority culture should endeavor to teach using texts
and pedagogies from a perspective that will enhance the positive aspects of African culture and indeed minority cultures. In order to avoid miseducating the students, teachers should endeavor to minimize ethno-curricula biases as well as increase the positive motivation of these students. They should take a quantum leap by sourcing familiar literary texts by African writers [on Africa]; through such choices authentic knowledge to cooperative learning can be enhanced (Pearse, 1986).

Teachers need to minimize or remove ethnographic biases when expressing the curriculum, Kehoe, (1993) added, “teachers should provide information about other cultures which follow the criteria of teaching by similarities, the nature of everyday life and positive achievements” (p. 3). Popular learning must foster and be directed towards positive and multicultural learning as a means of reaching the culturally different but related human learners (Banks, 1997, McGee-Banks, 1997).

Teachers of the majority culture should regularly use the services of community members of African decent as resource persons or guest speakers in their classrooms Garcia et al. (1991 cited by Cudjoe, 1997) reiterated, “Invite parents, families and community members to participate in school activities in a variety of ways, e.g., involvement in classroom activities, and supporting instructional programs” (p. 309). In addition, teachers should be encouraged to develop thematic topics related to the continent and its people, especially in disciplines like Social Studies, Geography, History or Business Education. This approach will promote community-school relations as well ensure a sound knowledge based information from such guests. The presence of the guest(s) will provide motivation to the international student. Using of guest instructors will also assist the teacher in a number of ways. It also relieves the teacher [often of the majority culture] of the embarrassment of not having a good knowledge base or knowing what to teach and of formulating and adopting biased information acquired from texts and transmitting this to the students, which might in the long run miseducate the culturally diversified learners (Howard, 1999).

Many high schools with international students do not have extensive extramural ESL/FSL programs within the school to boost these students’ English/French language skills. Principals and teachers should liaise with ESL/FSL centers nearest to the school to allow these students to participate in short term out of school programs in ESL (Flaitz et al, 2003), as well as use the opportunity to socialize with people similar to their cultural background to conquer their isolative feeling as minorities. This will help the students develop their communication as well as writing skills faster with adult group support from other kinsmen in the ESL centers (Further Education Unit, 1989). There is the need for the affected schools and the education ministries of the provinces to engage in strategies of internationalizing teaching and learning. Some of the curricular strategies suggested by BCCIE, (2003) stated

**Integrating international learning outcomes in the existing curriculum by asking questions such as what are the international dimensions of the subject area, what knowledge and skills do students need to know to function in the field of study in an international setting and what are the learning needs of international students p.2.**

Provinces should consider an inclusive global curriculum. School administrators and teachers in international high schools should be involved in the development, design and implementation of thematic curricula units reflecting global cultures in subjects like Social Studies, Business Studies and the like to incorporate positive learnable issues reflecting the presence of international students in an inclusive classroom (BCCIE, 2003:3).
Teachers of international high schools should select anti-racist text materials on Africa, if possible written by Africans (Saakana & Pearse, 1986, Yekwai, 1988). They should emphasize more positive reflections of Africa in their pedagogies as historically documented in her ancient civilization and technologies, from ancient Egypt to the Great Walls of Shona in Zimbabwe as well as the great Serengeti safari amongst others. They should elaborate the positive civic and economic ties between Canada and African states in relation to natural resources such as oil for interdependence of states e.g., Canada and the Sudan, rather than projecting the latter Africans as mere recipients of refugee protection for the advancement of humanity.

Increase parent and community relations

School administrators of international schools should assign foster parents that are knowledgeable of the cultural background of African international students. The lack of common cultural knowledge and understanding between the foster parent and the students may lead to miscommunication which might foster resistance or deviant and maladjusted behavior, which might lead to wrongful labeling of the students as Behavior Disorder (Hutchinson, 2002; Andrews and Lupart, 2000). Additionally, with the consent of the principals, foster parents should be encouraged to connect the students with African communities close to them by permitting them to participate in extra curricular activities such as the Heritage Days celebration amongst others. Involving the students in such activities will foster continuity of socialization with their kinsmen and women of the same culture, as well as minimize their racial ‘isolation’ or ‘tokeness’ (Russell & Wright, 1992).

School administrators and teachers should connect these international students with members of their ethnic families that are African Canadians in the communities. By so doing, learners will not only find a home familiar to their cultural setting but will encourage and foster effective communication in the mother tongue a means of retaining their identity and preserving some tenets of their socio-cultural practice with their “people” a very powerful source of socialization (Bullara, 1997; Yau, 1997).

Additionally, teachers and principals involved with these students should participate in School District organized workshops on issues of multicultural education, learning and diversity. Their participation will enable them become familiar with strategies that will facilitate a more constructivist model to teaching than the transmission model which does not take into consideration the culturally diverse learners in the classroom (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2000; Bullara, 1997; McGee-Banks, 1996).

Schools should also encourage and use the services of school counselors with some multicultural training to deal with counseling procedures that may involve the international students (Brammer, 2004). In some instances, school administrators need to liaise with guardians of these students who are often both members of their home tribe and Canadian citizens, in dealing with behavior issues as practiced in the African tradition for behavior modification.

Conclusion

The participation of African and indeed developing nations in the educational globalization trend of the new millennium is inevitable. On personal grounds, African parents involved in the training of their children and wards in foreign high schools believe that the learners will acquire a ‘qualitative’ education which will assist them acquire certification for future positions and status in their ethnic home states, thereby retaining the family status and tradition of the upper and middle class. This chapter
has reiterated the various issues international high school students and parents are confronted with in the pursuit of foreign education in Canada. Major concerns reiterated were parents’ constrains to visit and advocate directly on behalf of their children due to inability to obtain visiting visas, and the non-effective support as a result of lack of cultural understanding and ineffective relationship between the students and their Canadian foster parents. Overarching learning concerns reiterated include implementation shortcomings with regards to disparity in curriculum processes and policies, experienced by the students thereby affecting their learning performance and subsequent outcome in comparison with their classmates. Generally, the aforementioned lapses are related to limited support provided to the students and their parents by all human agencies connected with the learning process of these students in Canadian public high schools. Additionally, the chapter advanced some specific suggestions on the aforementioned limited learning supports as school principals should support parents with authentic reference letter to enable them access to visas to visit and oversee the learning processes of their wards; teachers and parents of host schools adopt a multicultural curricula process and policies of the provinces; extensive use of community resources reflecting African learning materials and persons as additional support structures to the students. With such in-school reformations, adequate support can reach the learning needs of these categories of students, which will foster effective diplomatic relations between states involved with such educational programs.

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Voluntary Study Networks among New Chinese Immigrants Enrolled in Postsecondary Institutions:
An Autoethnographical Study

by
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Many new Chinese immigrants choose to go back to colleges and universities to complete their acculturation and adaptation. Therefore, more and more Chinese students are enrolled in postsecondary institutions. In order to cope with the academic, emotional, and living difficulties in the process of adaptation to a new environment, many Chinese students organize after-class voluntary study networks in addition to the structured in-class cooperative learning organized by instructors.

The study of cooperative learning can be dated back to the beginning of last century. However, it was only in the early 1970s that the quantity of research in this field began to accumulate at an accelerating speed and this tendency continues unabated today (Slavin, 1996). However, most of the research was focused on the effects of group learning on student achievement. Studies of the achievement effects of group learning, according to Slavin (1996), have been conducted in every major subject, at all grade levels, in all types of schools in many countries. Moreover, studies have also been conducted both in laboratories and classrooms.

Currently, more and more researchers have reached a consensus that cooperative learning has a positive effect on the student achievement (Cohen, 1994; Keeler & Anson, 1995; Qin, Johnson & Johnson; Slavin, 1996; Springer, Stanne, & Donavan, 1999). In fact, more and more researchers have begun to focus their studies not on the general question of effectiveness of cooperative learning but on why and under what conditions the cooperative learning is effective on student achievement (Slavin, 1996; Cohen, 1994). Cohen, in her inductive review paper (1994), focused on task and interaction, and attempted to move away from the debates about rewards and goal and resource interdependence that have characterized research in cooperative learning. She argued that a focus on task and interaction could move the research to a second generation of cooperative learning that was more based on detailed knowledge of the conditions under which cooperative learning was effective.

Slavin (1996) also admitted that there was a growing consensus among researchers on the positive achievement effects of group learning and an increasing number of educators had used cooperative learning in all levels of schooling. However, there were still confusions and disagreements about why group learning was effective and what made group learning effective. Thus, he identified four major theoretical perspectives that explained the reason why group learning was effective: motivational, social cohesion, cognitive development, and cognitive elaboration perspectives. He tried to reconcile these four perspectives since they all had well-established rationale and most of them had empirical support. The reconciliation efforts produced a figure that reflected the relationships and connections between these perspectives. The figure is consistent with the proposition that these perspectives were complementary, instead of contradictory.

He argued that the four theoretical perspectives were all useful to enhance our understanding of the conditions under which group learning may affect student achievement. The figure, which linked these four perspectives in a causal model, provided a framework for predicting different paths by which group learning might affect achievement. The model not only showed the importance of group goal and individual accountability, but also suggested ways by which student achievement might be affected by introducing group activities that might not need extrinsic motivation.

He concurred with the long-established theory that group learning had its greatest effects on learning when groups are rewarded based on individual performance of the group members. He argued that the group goal and individual accountability, as the extrinsic reward, would motivate
student to learn, encourage groupmates to learn, and help groupmates to learn. And then, through the elaborated explanation, cognitive elaboration, peer practice and peer correction, enhanced learning would be finally realized.

However, Slavin identified three tasks or conditions under which group goal and individual accountability might not be necessary: controversial tasks without single right answers, voluntary study groups, and structured dyadic tasks. Empirical evidences showed that there were instances in which controversial task without right answers and structured dyadic tasks were effective without group goal and individual accountability. There was, however, little research on voluntary study groups at the postsecondary institutions and no attempt had been done to introduce the idea into the secondary school.

Boud, Cohen, & Sampson (1999) indicated that group learning might better suit those university students from minority groups than traditional individualistic learning. However, there is little further experimental or qualitative research into group learning among minority groups such as Chinese students in postsecondary institutions. My literature review shows that still less research has been done on voluntary study networks/groups among new Chinese immigrants enrolled in postsecondary institutions. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate this rarely touched field so that both our empirical and theoretical understanding of this type of cooperative learning will be deepened.

This autoethnographical study starts with a narrative of my own academic and living experience as a new Chinese immigrant enrolled in an eastern Canadian university with focus on the voluntary network of which I was a member. It records my thoughts and emotions when dealing with the academic and living difficulties in the process of acculturation and revolves around motivation, organization and benefits of the voluntary study networks. Then I try to reflect on my own experience by using psychological, motivational and cognitive theories to explore the motivations and benefits of voluntary study networks, and to explain the effectiveness of voluntary study networks. This systematic and theoretical introspection approach will surely help me to better understand my own experience and offer insights into the new Chinese immigrants in postsecondary institution as a subgroup of a whole Chinese immigrant community.

This study will serve as a basis for my further research in which I will employ ethnographical approach and involve five new Chinese immigrants who are currently enrolled in postsecondary institutions. The enhanced understanding derived from my research will have various implications for students, instructors and program planners: students can utilize the result of this research to improve the effects of their voluntary group learning; instructors can improve their instructions by taking into consideration of both in-class cooperating learning and after-class learning; educational administrators and policy makers can create more congenial and favorable conditions to facilitate the acculturation and adaptation of new immigrants.

**Narrative of my Own Experience of Voluntary Study Groups**

While I was teaching EFL (English as Foreign Language) in a university in China, my wife and I decided to immigrate into Canada—a developed and English-speaking country. The motivations underlying the decision were mixed: the influence of political and historical factors, the desire to expand our horizon, the drive to transcend ourselves, and the aspiration to serve as a bridge between the two distinctive cultures. We were not the first ones who planned to go abroad and surely wouldn't be the last ones. The past decades have witnessed tens of thousands of people studying and/ or working in US, Canada,
England, Australia, Germany, France, and Japan, to name just a few of them. Their stories of hard struggle in the initial years and the ensuing successful establishment spread widely back in China and stimulated the ambition of every people like me.

In July 2001, after two years of application and preparation, my wife and I stepped on this land and began to create our own stories. We chose the route of first going back to school, then finding jobs and finally establishing ourselves. In fact, this three-step development pattern was the dominant one among Chinese international students or immigrants. Thus, I was not surprised at all when I found that there were twelve Chinese international students or immigrants enrolled in the PhD or Master Program in our faculty. Actually, I felt happy about that. Similar academic and ethnic background made it easier for us to form a network or group that would help us overcome the initial academic, psychological and living difficulties.

The concept of network was far from a new one for a Chinese student. The Chinese culture attaches much importance to network and interpersonal relationship. A typical example is in the field of employment. Most of the job opportunities not only need the applicants to meet the required qualifications but also need them to enlist all their social networks and resources. For example, when I graduated from my master program in China in 1997, I attempted to find a job as an English teacher in a reputed university. However, I knew that several other applicants who had similar academic background wanted this position, too. Fortunately, my mother's friend was a professor in this university and managed to get some valuable information as to how to prepare for the half-hour trial teaching session and the half-hour interview. This information, to some extent, contributed to my better performance in the trial teaching session and interview. It turned out later I obtained this position just because of my better performance in the teaching session and interview.

Therefore, most of Chinese people have the skill and patience to establish their own social network. When they move to a new environment, the establishment of a new network becomes a matter of necessity. For example, when my wife and I received our offer and decided to move from Toronto to Kingston, we had no idea where the city was and where we could rent a room. Fortunately, a friend of mine graduated from Queen's and had one good friend there. After my friend talked to her about my situation, she offered to rent a room for us. After we arrived at Kinston, she showed us around and told us the information about shopping, transportation, and library, etc. Her assistance greatly helped us integrate into the new environment.

Soon after we settled down, the new term began. During the orientation for new graduate students I met the other three Chinese students. We introduced ourselves to each other, talked about our basic background information and finally left contact information with each other so that we could exchange information later. It turned out that the newly established network played an important role in our later course study.

The academic terms in Canada are much shorter than those in China: there are only 12 weeks here whereas there are 20 weeks in China. The compressed term made everything intensive: I had to spend day and night reading textbooks and supplementary materials, wrestling with elusive concepts and unfamiliar research methods. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to keep up with the teacher's schedule. Even when I managed not to be left behind, the torturous paper writing characteristic of graduate study often drove me crazy and made me sleepless at night. When I couldn't understand a concept or figure out a clue to the solution of a problem, I would resort to calling upon the other members of our voluntary study network. By talking to our partners I found that I reorganized my ideas and made them clearer. Besides, since the members and I had our own unique ideas, the exchanges between us provided us with inspiration and often led to the resolution of the problem.

The talks between network members were not restricted only to...
academic problems. Our talks also covered issues in our daily lives such as information about sports and shopping since our lives did not consist exclusively of academic study: we had to satisfy our physical needs as well as our intellect needs. Besides, in order to be successful in our academic study, we also discussed some other related topics that were not of pure academic nature such as choosing our thesis advisors based on the information about prospects of the study areas and/or the personalities of the supervisors.

By the end of the first year, the voluntary study network was further expanded to include both Chinese members and some Canadian members and covered almost all aspects of my life.

Reflections on my Experience

The careful reflection of my own experience of voluntary study networks indicated three themes: 1) voluntary study networks lead to various benefits, 2) the effectiveness of voluntary study networks is psychologically accountable.

Voluntary Networks as a Socially Motivated Behavior

According to Eggen and Kauchak (1999), motivation is defined as the force that energizes, sustains, and directs behavior toward a goal. Motivation can be described in two broad categories: extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. New Chinese immigrants enrolled in postsecondary institutions were highly motivated both extrinsically and intrinsically. They were extrinsically motivated because they wanted to complete their acculturation, obtain their degrees, find a job and establish themselves. They were intrinsically motivated because they harbored a strong drive to grow as human beings and fulfill their total potential. They set their immediate and long-term goals, believed that they were capable of achieving them, and adjusted to the demands of studying and living.

Invariably, new Chinese immigrants in postsecondary institutions would encounter various difficulties in their acculturation. Of these difficulties, three were important: language barriers, cultural background differences, and difficult nature of graduate education.

First, new immigrants needed to overcome language barriers. English is foreign language for new Chinese immigrants. Although they had been studying English for many years and some of them were excellent compared to their peers, the reality was that when they first arrived in Canada, they were frustrated to find that they functioned poorly in their daily lives and in classrooms. They couldn’t follow the gibberish of the native people; most of the TV programs were incomprehensible without the aid of captions that were designed for the hearing-impaired people; their once-fluent spoken English turned into broken English again; their reading was much slower and more inaccurate than their Canadian classmates; and their writing seemed to be childish against the standard of academic writing.

Second, cultural background differences also added to the already-bad situation. For example, when discussing in class, instructors or Canadian classmates sometimes might be humorous and told jokes. When the whole class burst into laughter, we still didn’t know what was funny about that joke. Another example, when studying quantitative research, we encountered many statistical terms such as ANOVA, Correlation, Multiple Regression that we had never learned before yet were familiar to native students since they had taken elementary course in statistics.

Finally, the difficult nature of the graduate study created obstacles for new immigrants. Graduate students were expected to meet higher requirements compared to undergraduate students, be more independent, and self-regulated in their academic study. When standards and requirements for a course or a term paper were set, no excuse such as language barriers or lack of background knowledge should be used to lower the standards and requirement although these might be taken into consideration in the evaluation. Assistance and instruction from instructors are
available in class and after class. However, most of the work should be done independently.

All these difficulties, along with others, made the first year of the graduate study very difficult, if not insurmountable. Faced with these obstacles, new Chinese immigrants were motivated to employ various strategies to overcome them in order to reach their goals. Since most of work should be done after class, the voluntary study network seemed to be an effective and intuitive strategy to serve the purpose of understanding difficult concepts, and finishing assignments and term papers to meet the requirements of the instructors.

**Voluntary Networks Lead to Various Benefits**

A substantial body of research has been done on group learning since the early days of last century. Slavin (1996) stated that research on group learning had been one of the greatest success stories in the history of educational research. With the accumulation of evidence from this body of research, there is a growing consensus among researchers about the positive effects of group learning on the academic achievement of learners.

Voluntary networks, one of the cooperative learning strategies, contributed to the improvement of academic performance among new Chinese immigrants. The typical example was the voluntary network for the Quantitative Research course. Since most of the Chinese students didn't have basic knowledge in statistics, this 12-week course turned out to be one of the most difficult courses. A lot of mathematical concepts and statistical analysis methods such as central tendency, dispersion, General Linear Model, factor analysis, discriminant analysis needed to be understood before we could design our own quantitative research. The discussions between network members were heated and occurred during breaks, after class, on our way back home, and on the telephone. We used concrete examples and simple words to explain to each other the abstract concepts, and introduced to each other the valuable books and materials that helped us to write our term papers. When feeling puzzled, anxious and frustrated, we encouraged each other and support each other even if we couldn't provide some substantial assistance. All these strategies helped us to understand the abstract concepts and write our term papers. The result was better performance in this course. But for the interactions between network members, my final mark for this course couldn’t have been so high.

The voluntary network not only improved our academic performance, it also had some other benefits. It helped relieve anxiety, establish our self-esteem, foster the liking of class and school, and develop friendship between members. Slavin (1995), after a thorough review of previous studies and research, also confirmed that cooperative learning could lead to a variety of non-cognitive benefits. He concluded:

_Cooperative learning had been shown in a wide variety of studies to positively influence a host of important noncognitive variables. Although not every study has found positive effects on every noncognitive outcomes, the overall effects of cooperative learning on student self-esteem, peer support for achievement, internal locus of control, time on-task, liking of class and of classmates, cooperativeness and other variables are positive and robust._ (p. 70)

As a student, our main anxiety came from academic study. Language barriers and lack of background knowledge hindered us from obtaining an efficient and deep understanding of our lectures and textbooks. Condensed semester made us work against time and under pressure. The anxiety also came from the fear that our assignments or papers received unfavorable comments or poor grades. The communications between network members helped to solve academic problems and thus
relieved our anxiety. The improved academic performance helped us establish self-confidence and self-esteem. As time went by, we began to participate more in class discussion and contribute our own opinions from our unique perspective. We began to like classes and lectures that used to be a source of suffering in the beginning. The communication between network members promoted understanding and developed friendship. We began to know more about each other and visited each other’s homes. The discussions expanded outside the academic field too. For example, we sometimes discussed things like how to prepare a certain dish or where to buy a cheaper printer.

The Effectiveness of Voluntary Study Networks was Psychologically Accountable.

I have mentioned that voluntary study network contributed to the improvement of our academic performance. But why was the voluntary study network effective? What made the network work? The answers to these questions will help us understanding the mechanisms underlying the voluntary study network and thus promote a deeper understanding of this phenomenon.

Slavin (1995) suggested that there were two major categories of theories to account for the effectiveness of cooperative learning: motivational and cognitive theories. Motivational theories focused on the reward or goal structures under which students operate (See Johnson, Johnson, Maruyama, Nelson, & Skon, 1981; Slavin, 1977, 1983, 1995). Since students work together toward a common goal in cooperative learning, they encouraged one another’s learning, reinforced one another’s academic efforts, and helped group members to succeed.

Cognitive theories focused on the effects of interactions between group members and cognitive elaboration process in students’ learning (See Fantuzzo, King, & Heller, 1992; Fantuzzo, Polite, & Grayson, 1990; Fantuzzo, Riggio, Connelly, & Dimeff, 1989; Rosenshine, & Meister 1994). Cognitive theorists argued that interaction among students on learning tasks will lead to improved student achievement because students will learn from each other in the discussion. During the discussion, cognitive conflicts will arise, inadequate reasoning will be exposed, unclear ideas will be reorganized, higher-quality understandings will emerge. Cognitive elaboration processes such as explaining materials to someone else (peer tutoring) will help students gain a deeper understanding of the problems by relating the current knowledge to their existing knowledge (schemas), organizing their thoughts, sorting out important ideas, and then communicating their understanding to the other members.

The motivational and cognitive theories account for the effectiveness of voluntary study network. We were motivated to form a study network because we have a common goal: to improve our academic performance. The assumptions for voluntarily establishing this network was that by cooperative learning we could help each other reach the goal which might have been impossible if we worked individually as the result of linguistic, emotional, and academic difficulties. Besides, by recalling the content of the lectures and textbooks, discussing the difficult concepts, and explaining to each other, we were engaging in the cognitive elaboration processes that led to enhanced understanding of the problems.

Implications for Learning and Teaching

Since empirical and experimental data all demonstrate the effectiveness of voluntary study group, it is my suggestion that Chinese students should be aware of the role of voluntary network in our academic and daily lives and thus more actively participate in the network. Efforts can be made to upgrade the less formal
voluntary study networks to more structured course-based affinity groups so that the contacts and exchanges between members can be more frequent and efficient. Instructors can also contribute to the establishment of the study groups by advocating the benefits of this practice and mainstreaming Chinese students into different study groups. Both Chinese students and their non-Chinese group members will benefit from this mixed grouping; the unique perspectives brought in by both sides complement each other and provoke insights. Besides, mainstreaming Chinese students into mixed groups will help Chinese students find their own values, improve their self-esteem, cause them to like school and class more, and develop friendships between group members.

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Multiculturalism as Reflected in Children’s Artwork

How do children perceive and represent multiculturalism and related issues?

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Drawings have long been established as a form of communication and representation. This recognition of drawing as a form of communication goes back to ancient artifacts such as cave wall drawings and Egyptian hieroglyphics. Such artifacts have been studied and considered as a reputable source of learning about ancient civilizations. More recently, drawings have been studied as a way of uncovering representations about existing cultures and concepts.

One of the most fascinating areas within the study of drawings is the examination of children's drawings as a way of tapping into how children perceive and represent the world around them and the concepts within that world. It is yet another way of examining the influence of developmental and sociocultural factors on children's representations. The study of children's drawings has opened up a new avenue of inquiry for addressing issues such as how children perceive their own cultural affiliation or affiliations and their understanding of complex concepts such as multiculturalism.

Recently, the Multicultural Days School Contest examined children's representations of multiculturalism through their artwork and writing. While children's conceptualizations of ethnicity and other issues associated with multiculturalism have been examined in a variety of ways, this marks the first time that Canadian children have been asked to express their understanding of multiculturalism in a picture format. Through theme-based analyses, the children's drawings were considered in terms of how well they illustrated children's representations of multiculturalism as a concept.

### Investigating Children's Perceptions of Multiculturalism

How do children perceive and represent multiculturalism and related issues? This is a question that has yet to be fully addressed within the literature. That being said, there are large bodies of literature that partially address children's perceptions of multiculturalism by examining issues related to those perceptions. That research includes investigations that focus on children's perceptions of ethnicity (see Brown, 1995; Nesdale, 1999; Nesdale, 2001), both their own and other people's, as well as studies on issues such as acculturation (see Berry, 1997; Buki, Ma, Storm & Stom, 2003; Lazarus, 1997; Parke, 2000; Santisteban & Mitrani, 2003), and children's responses to diversity in their environment (see Asamen & Berry, 2003; Berry, 2003b; Coleman, Casali & Wampold, 2001; Hamm & Coleman, 2001; Onyekwuluje, 2000; Straffon, 2003).

Many studies have focused on children's perceptions of ethnicity by examining stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes that children hold in regards to the social majority and groups perceived to have minority status (i.e. Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Doyle, 1996; Aboud & Skerry, 1984; Asher & Allen, 1969; Augoustinos, Ahrens, & Innes, 1994; Biggler & Liben, 1993; Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Doyle & Aboud, 1995; Nesdale, Durkin, Maass, & Griffiths, 2004; Teichman, 2001; Vaughan, 1987; Williams & Morland, 1976). Taken together these studies have shown that by the age of four children from dominant ethnic groups are able to selectively differentiate between ethnic groups, and based on those differentiations attribute positive characteristics to the in-group and negative characteristics to the out-group. Four-year-olds also show in-group biases and are able to accurately use the cue provided by skin colour to identify members of their own ethnic group. What is less clear is how positive and negative attributions towards majority and minority groups change over development. When considering children from the age of four up until the age of seven, studies consistently show an increase in in-group positivity and out-group negativity. However, the results are mixed after the age of seven with some studies showing a decline, others showing an increase, and some finding that the positivity and negativity of attributions level out over time.

Another approach to examining issues related to multiculturalism has focused on the process of acculturation in children and youth. This research has explored the response of children and
youth to the process of immigration and acculturation (Berry, 1997; Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen, 1992; Buki, Ma, Storm & Stom, 2003; Fuligni, 2001; Gutierres, Sameroff, & Karrer, 1988; Lazarus, 1997; Parke, 2000; Santisteban & Mitraní, 2003) and much of the research has focused on adolescents (see Buki et al., 2003; Fuligni, 1998a; Berry et al., 1992; Berry, 2003a). Studies have examined adolescents in terms of the level of acculturation disparity between adolescents and their parents with a particular focus on the level and type of parent-child conflicts (Lazarus, 1997; Kagiticiabasi, 1989). Other studies have focused on acculturation strategies demonstrated by adolescents (Berry, 1997, 2003a) as well as the impact of acculturation on family functioning and discipline (Buki et al., 2003; Fuligni, 1998b). As a whole, research in this area examines the adjustment of immigrant minority youth to their new cultural environment and considers how adjustment is influenced by factors such as parental influence, peer relationships, interpersonal conflict, and school experiences.

As immigrant minority youth must adjust to the new culture so must majority youth adjust to the changes in their environment as ethnic diversity increases. While much of the research that addresses this issue focuses on attributions, stereotypes, and prejudicial attitudes (i.e. Nesdale, Durkin, Maass, & Griffiths, 2004; Teichman, 2001), other research focuses on children’s responses to diversity in their environment, particularly within school settings (see Coleman, Casali & Wampold, 2001; Hamm & Coleman, 2001; Onyekwuluje, 2000; Skuy, Goldstein, Mentis, & Fridjhon, 1997; Straffon, 2003). Research in this area has accorded some consideration to how beliefs are influenced by children’s environments (Asamen & Berry, 2003; Berry, 2003b; Skuy et al., 1997; Straffon, 2003), what strategies adolescents employ to address diversity in their environments (Coleman, Casali & Wampold, 2001; Hamm & Coleman, 2001), and how children develop multicultural beliefs (Onyekwuluje, 2001).

The question of how children develop multicultural beliefs is one of the key elements associated with understanding how children perceive multiculturalism. Researchers have considered a variety of different explanations for the development of beliefs about other ethnic groups including social learning (Allport, 1954; Berry, 2003a; Kowalski, 2003; Murray & Mandara, 2002; Rosenfield & Stephan, 1981; Verkuyten, 2002), social motivation (Millner, 1996; Nesdale, 2004; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001, Towles-Schwen & Fazio, 2001; Vaughan, 1987), social identity (Nesdale et al., 2004; Nesdale, Maass, Griffiths, & Durkin 2003; Verkuyten, 2003), and developmental explanations, including those that focus on children’s perceptual and cognitive abilities (Aboud, 1988; Biggler, Jones, & Loblimer, 1997; Murray & Mandara, 2002; Spencer, 1982; Quintana, 1998).

Each of these explanations has added to the current understanding of children’s attitudes, attributions, and beliefs about multicultural issues. Nesdale et al. (2004) argue that while each explanation justifies a portion of the research findings, together they are unable to justify all of the research findings about how children develop attitudes, beliefs, and attributions about ethnic groups and ethnicity.

Researchers have also developed a number of paradigms or techniques that are used to assess the development and application of children’s attitudes, attributions, and beliefs as well as to test the theorized explanations for their development. Many research studies (i.e. Aboud & Doyle, 1996; Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Nagata, 1985; Nesdale et al., 2003; Rosenfield & Stephen, 1981) have examined in-group and out-group biases either independently or through forced-choice techniques. These techniques often involve the sorting of dolls or photographs according to certain characteristics identified by the
Researchers. Other studies have focused on children's reactions to scenarios in which the situation remains the same but the ethnicity of the protagonist changes (i.e., Verkuyten, 2003) or in which children are given choices about the way they would respond (i.e., Coleman et al., 2001). Still other studies have considered children's reactions to in vivo situations such as changes from segregated schools to more integrated schools (i.e., Skuy et al., 1997). Regardless of the technique or approach that is used, inherent in the research is a desire not only to unravel the manner in which these attitudes develop but also to attempt to obtain an appreciation of how such concepts are perceived by children. The research is founded on a desire to see through the eyes of a child and understand how such concepts are interpreted by the child's perceptual and cognitive structures.

**Children's Drawings - Perceptions and Cognitive Structures**

One of the methods that researchers have utilized in their quest to see through children's eyes has been to study children's drawings. Most of the research associated with children's drawings falls into three main areas, namely a focus on the technical aspects of drawing (see Barlow, Jolley, White, & Galbraith, 2003; Toomela, 2002), developmental perspectives (see Ferrara, 1991; Gardner, 1980; Kellogg, 1970; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), projective analysis (see Thomas & Jolley, 1998; Veltman & Browne, 2002), and combinations of the areas (i.e., Coates, 2002; Toomela, 2003). Each of these areas continues to be researched and one, projective analysis, is more controversial than the others.

Research on the technical aspects of children's drawings concentrates on how children physically draw, however, much of this research also includes a developmental component as children's motor and cognitive development are closely associated with their physical drawing strategies. Many studies include both technical aspects and developmental elements of drawing. Costall's translation of Georges-Henri Luquet's, "Le Dessin Enfantin" (Luquet & Costall, 2001) provides a classic example of how the consideration of technique and development become entwined. Other examples include Braine & Schauble (1993) who looked at how children represent depth in their pictures and Laws and Lawrence (2001) who examined how spatial representation within the drawings of children with Down's Syndrome is connected to language and motor development. Researchers like Toomela (2003), in examining the stages exhibited by children drawing a target object, chose to focus on the developmental sequences associated with specific drawings tasks.

Toomela (2002) has also focused on the neurological components of drawing and considers drawing to be a complex integrated system as opposed to a unitary skill. Toomela built on van Sommers (1995) work that described drawing as a complex system involving motor output, imagery, perception, and memory. He has supported van Sommer's (1995) contentions and added two verbal components to the complex system that van Sommer's outlined. The intersection between neurological components and development continues to be examined as researchers attempt to understand how neurological aspects and developmental patterns influence the stages of drawing that many researchers (see Coates, 2002; Luquet & Costall, 2001; Piaget & Inhelder, 1971) have proposed to exist.

More developmentally based considerations of children's art often draw on the work of Piaget and Inhelder (1956; 1969; 1971) as well as Georges-Henri Luquet (Luquet & Costall, 2001), and more specifically, their views of children's drawings as being reflective of children's underlying cognitive structures, and their claims that children draw what they know not necessarily what they see. Other
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Researchers have built on this foundation (i.e. Gardner, 1980; Kellogg, 1970) by considering how children's drawing abilities develop and how their drawings can be interpreted. Some researchers (i.e. Barlow, Jolley, White and Galbraith, 2003; Coates, 2002; Hawkins, 2002; Karmiloff-Smith, 1990) focus on children's representations within their drawings and consider how well children are able to alter or adjust those representations or construct meaning.

Projective analysis is one of the ways that researchers have developed to interpret children's drawings. The research on projective analysis concentrates on using children's drawings, usually human figure drawings as a way of assessing a child's psychological state and personality characteristics (for a review see Thomas & Jolley, 1998; Veltman & Browne, 2002). According to psychologists children's art provides information about ethnic identity, gender, intelligence, ego, concepts of others and their relative power in the world (Payne, 1996).

The use of projective analysis primarily focuses on human figure drawings which are seen to be a reflection of the child's perception of their own and of other people's status and power (Cox, 1993). There is some argument over the validity of applying projective analysis to children's drawings to infer a child's psychological state (Di Leo, 1978; Klepsch & Logie, 1982; Lewis & Greene, 1983; Roback, 1968) with some researchers adamantly opposed to the approach and others defending its validity. For example, Thomas and Gray (1992) argue that there may be a tendency to infer that the sizing of figures within a drawing is related to the child's perception of the individual's power or role, without giving due consideration to other situational factors or production factors, such as the child not making good use of space or planning appropriately. Still many researchers continue to perceive a relationship between the size of the figure and the figure's perceived role and status (i.e. Anderson, 1995; Aronsson & Andersson, 1996; Burton, 1972; Deren, 1975; Isaacs & Levin, 1984; O'Brien & Patton, 1974; Payne, 1996; Payne, 1990; Reznikoff & Reznikoff, 1956; Lawton & Sechrest, 1962; Thomas and Grey, 1992). However, some researchers have suggested that while the assessment of a given child's psychological health may be unwise, projective analysis is useful for examining societal values and trends in the drawings of groups of children (Dennis, 1966; O'Brien & Patton, 1974; Payne, 1966).

Researchers have argued that children's drawings provide insight into how children perceive their social world (Rubenstein, Feldman, Rubin, & Noveck, 1987), the active and social representations that children hold about their daily lives (Court, 1989), and provide glimpses into the way children develop and conceptualize their environments (Coates, 2002). It is not surprising that researchers have used children's drawings as a way of examining many aspects of children's lives.

The study of children's art is a very engaging way of attempting to appreciate how children perceive the world and how their current level of cognitive development might influence both the expression of those perceptions and the perceptions themselves. It taps into multiple domains by considering both how children represent and how they perceive their world. It is an approach that has been used successfully to investigate a number of different aspects of children's environments such as attachment, health, taboo thoughts and feelings, and sociocultural issues.

In terms of attachment, Anning (2002) looked at the impact of conversations children had with significant others, demonstrating that significant adults influenced children's drawings and that drawing was used by children as a way of making meaning out of their world. Dunn, O'Connor & Levy (2002) also found that children's connections with others in their families were reflected in drawings, as young children were likely to use biological connection in deciding who to include in their family pictures. Children from single-parent families and step-families were more likely than children from intact families to exclude people from their pictures, and those individuals who were excluded were
usually those with whom the child did not share a biological connection. Attachment within the classroom setting has also been examined and Cugmas (2004) found that kindergarten students’ drawings were reflective of their social behaviours and the quality of their relationship with their teacher.

Several studies have examined children’s perceptions of their own health. Rae’s study (1991) asked children to draw pictures of themselves at different stages of their hospital stay including initial entry, treatment, and recovery phases. Rae discovered that children’s drawings were a valuable technique in assessing the adjustment level of ill children when used by qualified health professionals. In addition, researchers found that children were able to accurately depict their pain from migraine headaches through their drawings and that these communications may be more effective than verbal descriptions (Stafstrom, Rostasy, & Minster, 2002). Both studies underscored the point that children may draw perceptions and representations that they have difficulty verbalizing.

Lucca and Pacheco (1986) also found that children’s artistic expression may give voice to content that children do not always verbalize. The researchers examined the use of graffiti as an early way for children to communicate with each other visually and symbolically. Lucca and Pacheco found that within the medium of graffiti, children often expressed feelings that are taboo or socially unacceptable. Children also expressed thoughts about identity, sex, religion and relationships but tended to express more concrete than abstract concepts. The researchers argued that children’s artwork provides an opportunity to gather information about their cognitive level, social development, values and culture.

While Lucca and Pacheco (1986) only touched on sociocultural aspects of children’s drawings, other researchers (i.e. Court 1989; Oliverio, 1973; Paget, 1932) have found that children’s drawings are a useful way of examining sociocultural influences. Paget collected artwork from non-European cultures and was fascinated by how cultural influences found expression in children’s artwork. A growing body of literature has built on Paget’s observations and these cross-cultural studies suggest that children’s drawings, particularly human figure drawings, demonstrate cultural variations (e.g., Alland, 1983; Court, 1989; Deregowksi, 1980; Oliverio, 1973; Wilson & Wilson, 1977, 1984, 1985).”

Culture and Children’s Art

Approaches to drawing or styles used in drawing may be influenced by culture in a number of ways, Paget (1932) found that some variations in drawings were associated with stylistic elements of the culture’s art expression while other variations such the expression of aspects of the human figure and other elements of the drawing (i.e. pots, animals) were connected to cultural norms and perceived importance within the culture. Furthermore, Cox (1993) has argued that even when drawing the human figure there seem to be no universals as, cultures often differ on what is considered necessary in the drawing of a human figure. For example, the number of body parts, size of body parts, overall assembly of the parts, and the way each part is drawn often differs across cultures.

Cultural differences have been found between the drawings of Japanese and British students (Cox, Koyasu, Hiranuma, & Perara, 2001), Chinese and British students (Cox, Perara & Fan, 1999), students from Tanzania and Sweden (Anderson, 1995), Scottish and American students (Hague, 2001), and Japanese and American students (La Voy, Pedersen, Reitz, Brauch, Luxenberg, & Nofsinger, 2001) as well as many others. In considering how cultural influences or representations are expressed in children’s drawings, it is important to consider children’s
environments as well. Griffiths (1975) found that when comparing two groups of children of the same age, the age groups were similar in terms of developmental level but differed in content included in the drawings based on their location and socioeconomic status. Payne (1996) looked at Barbadian children and discovered that the cultural norms and values of their surroundings influenced their drawings. Specifically, the one quarter of the Barbadian children who were known to be living in non-nuclear families drew pictures that depicted their families as nuclear. This suggested that while the cultural norm was accepted that there were many single parent families, the cultural values still emphasized having an intact, two-parent family. Similarly, Farver, Ghosh, Garcia (2000) found evidence of the influence of cultural norms when they examined elementary students’ perceptions of their neighbourhoods through artwork. The artwork demonstrated that the amount of violent content in children’s pictures was associated with the perceived violence of the children's neighbourhoods. Often, cultural values and norms are complexly intertwined with the environment.

For example, McLernon & Cairns (2001) examined how children in Britain and two areas of Northern Ireland conceptualized war and peace in drawings about each concept. Unlike the concept of war, peace does not tend to be defined within a child’s environment. In addition, the children's environments differed in terms of the amount of violence. Northern Irish children were more likely than British children to draw multiple pictures of peace. Cultural differences in how Northern Irish children and British children are socialized to conceptualize peace were apparent. Northern Irish children were more likely to conceptualize peace as an absence of war than were British children. However, what was less clear was how the influences of culture and environment could be teased apart and whether they should be isolated. I would argue that the environment, particularly when it is stable across generations, is both influenced by and influences the culture.

This position is supported by many researchers (i.e. Adkins, 1978; Cox, 1998; Pinto, Bombi, & Cordioli, 1997; Teichman, 2001) who find that children's drawings provide insight into their representations of concepts and their perceptions of the culture and microculture in which they live. Adkins (1978) examined Chinese school children's drawings and found that they were closely tied to the cultural norms within China. There were recurrent themes throughout the drawings that closely resembled the political ideology that has been reinforced through school instruction. Chinese students are taught to draw by copying model pictures and along with the artistic model they internalize and copy the political messages that are embedded in the art. Similarly, Teichman (2001) demonstrated that Israeli children between the ages of 4-15 who identified themselves as Jewish had a distinct perception of what constitutes a typical Jew and a typical Arab. Furthermore, they held generalized beliefs about their own ethnic group and the other ethnic groups and these beliefs tended to be both polarized and generalized. Pinto et al (1997) found that there were cultural differences between children in terms of the concept of friendship. For Lebanese children, friendships that involved either protecting someone or being protective were more prominent than among Italian or Bolivian children. Children who straddle two cultures also showed interesting differences. Cox (1998) looked at the drawings of Walpíri children in Australia. She found that Walpíri children mixed traditional Walpíri symbols with more Western artistic styles in their drawings suggesting that children's cultures and environments interacted in very interesting ways.

One of the ways to examine this interaction is to consider concepts that are close to children such as daily events, cultural values, or the
relationships between individuals. Court (1989) found that Kenyan children drew pictures that focused on representing important aspects of daily life. Similarly, Anderson (1995) found that cultural variations existed in children's drawings in terms of how they depicted their families and how they focused on the minutiae of daily life. Children from Tanzania tended to depict their families as closely aligned groups with little social distance and also focused their decorating activities on family clothing and not the surroundings. In contrast, Swedish children tended to place children's figures at a distance from parental figures and were more likely to decorate surrounding objects than the figures. In a later study of Tanzanian and Swedish students, Aronsson & Andersson (1996) found that students in Tanzania drew themselves and classmates as small and the teacher as a large figure dominating the classroom while Swedish children's drawings often showed the teacher turned towards the student with both the teacher and the students being of similar sizes. Previous research (Kalvesten & Odman, 1979) had found that groups' values are reflected in children's art as Swedish children were more likely to draw child-centered drawings than were children from Algeria, Ethiopia, Israel, or Spain. An earlier study (Smart & Smart, 1975) had compared the drawings of children from England, America, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia and had also found that cultural differences in children art were often expressed as the group values from the individual cultures.

Children's drawings can be a rich source of information about how children view their own nation and nationality. Investigating children's sense of nationality can be particularly interesting during periods of change. For example, Zaidi (1979) found that Nigerian children's drawings were indicative of a shift away from traditional values and norms towards more "modern" values and norms in some areas while upholding traditional values and norms in other areas. The drawings showed a marked tendency towards depicting modern instead of traditional clothing as well as change in women's roles, and change in status of genders. However, the drawings tended to uphold the traditional value of emotional closeness within the family.

The ways in which children address events or situations that they may find challenging to their sense of nationality are also evident in their drawings. For example, Gamradt (1995) examined how Jamaican elementary students viewed tourists. While the vast majority of Jamaican students viewed tourists positively, children from more urban areas were less likely to depict tourists stereotypically than children from rural areas. Children's sense of nationality can be evident in their drawings even when it is not identified. During their assessments of children's drawings judges who are blind to children's nationalities can identify differences in children's sense of nationality. In this regard, Cox et al (1999) found that while there were no differences in the standard or technical quality of the drawings, there were marked differences in style and the judges were able to distinguish between those drawings that were done by Chinese children and those done by children from the United Kingdom. On a slightly different note, Hague (2001) found that stereotypical representations of a particular nation can be shared across countries but that children from the nation are much more likely to demonstrate how these representations become entwined with personal experience. For example, a child who lived near Edinburgh Castle was more likely to depict the castle in connection with a personal experience such as a family picnic or a family member who was a guard than just to depict the castle as a national symbol.

Investigating the interconnections between representation of concepts, stereotypical beliefs, environment, and personal experience was the purpose behind creating a secondary dataset of the submissions entered into the Multicultural days School Contest. On November 13, 2002, the Canadian Government announced that Canadian Multiculturalism Day would be held every year on June 27, as part of the "Celebrate Canada!" schedule of events. As a way of creating awareness about
the new day, a contest was created in which students from kindergarten up to grade twelve were challenged to answer the question of “What does multiculturalism mean to you?” The kindergarten students were asked to submit a drawing, the children in elementary grades (grades 1-8) were asked to submit a picture and a short piece of writing (250 words or less), while the children in senior grades (grades 9-12) were asked to submit a short essay (500 -1000 words). In addition to entering the contest, students and their parents were given the option of allowing their submissions to be entered into a secondary data set. The contest information was distributed to schools and was available on the contest website. Schools chose whether or not to participate and organized the form that the participation would take within the contest guidelines.

The method of asking children to draw in response to an open-ended question has been used in a number of other studies (i.e. Gamradt, 1995; Hague, 2001) and was chosen in order to place the least amount of structure on children’s responses. Other methods such as human figure drawing and specified task drawing were considered and it was decided that those methods were not ideally suited to tap into children’s representations of multiculturalism. Instead, this research employed a combination of the two methods. The children were not asked to draw a traditional figure drawing nor were they given a specified task. Children were asked to draw their own response to what multiculturalism meant to them. The principles of human figure drawing in terms of projective analysis and interpretation of drawings was employed. In keeping with what other researchers have found (i.e. Dennis, 1966; O’Brien & Patton, 1974; Payne, 1966) when analyzing children’s drawings, the analysis of the pictures in the secondary database considered themes that are apparent across pictures. This approach was ideally sited to the research as it placed minimal structure on the children’s responses while drawing upon the well documented methods of analysis used in human figure drawing approaches.

The comparison of these two groups not only illustrates developmental differences but also considers whether or not pictorial representations are sufficient to tap into children’s representation of concepts.

Researchers have identified several factors that could be responsible for differences in children’s drawings and these potential explanations must be considered when interpreting drawings. Developmental differences offer explanations for variations found in children’s drawings and many researchers have examined children’s drawings specifically in related to developmental differences (i.e. Gardner, 1980; Kellogg, 1970; Piaget & Inhelder, 1956). Thomas and Gray (1992) have also called attention to factors such as children’s ability to plan their drawings and make good use of space. In examining children’s drawings to discover how well they reflect children’s representations of complex concepts, care must be taken to consider alternate explanations for patterns and variations in the drawings.

All of the drawings were examined based on themes that were
identified by two examiners. Two individuals were asked to examine all of the drawings in each age group and identify themes that could be compared across drawings. The examiners were provided with a list of themes such as use of colour and proximity of figures that had been used in studies of human figure drawings and specified task drawings. Based on this list the examiners identified themes to be included from the list and defined themes that were not on the list but present within the artwork. The examiners defined the themes and created scoring sheets that were given to two independent raters who were blind to the purpose of the study. Given the importance of considering alternate explanations, during the exploration of theme analysis the identified patterns were considered in terms of developmental differences, gender differences, and other factors such as artistic ability. This approach helped isolate those patterns or variations that could not be explained by alternate factors but instead were associated with children’s representations of multiculturalism.

Kindergarten Students

The kindergarten students ranged in age from five and six years with the average age being five and a half. There were eleven girls and nine boys who submitted drawings. The teachers assisted their students by asking them to answer the question “What does multiculturalism mean to you?” by depicting how “We are all one family under the same sky.” The teacher provided them with white paper, a blue circle to represent the world, the cut out title, markers, and scrap paper. The students were then responsible for combining these materials into a pictorial representation of what the term multiculturalism meant to them.

The following five points of focus identified within the children’s drawings: use of colour, orientation of figures, size of figures, connections between figures, and figure details. The use of colour was examined both in terms of the variety of colours that children used and whether or not the colours were used to indicate differences between the figures. Figure orientation focused on the spatial location of the figure on the page, whereas figure size entailed the consideration of the size of each figure in relation to the other figures. In considering connections between figures, both the proximity of the figures and any connections made between them were evaluated. Figure details pertained to how much detail was drawn in respect to each figure, and items such as facial expression and the presence of hands or clothing were considered. In the evaluation of the themes, two independent raters blind to the purpose of the rating were provided with rating guidelines and scoring sheets. The intra-rater reliability for each rater was 96% and 97% and the inter-rater reliability ranged from 86%-100%.

The children’s drawings varied in terms of artistic skill and the composition of the human figures ranged from stick figures to completely clothed figures (see Figures 1-2). Boys were more likely to draw stick figures or figures with less detail while girls were more likely to draw figures complete with clothing and accessories like ponytails. These differences were primarily seen to be developmental and gender based in nature as they were reflective of patterns in the development of manual dexterity. The drawings all included a blue “earth” with white, brown, and green pieces of paper stuck onto the earth. Somewhere on each picture was the title “We are all the one family under the same sky” and the figures were drawn near the earth.

To examine the theme of “colour use” two independent raters counted the number of colours that were used in the drawings. This count did not include the colours of the scrap paper used to create the world but instead focused only on the marker colours that the children selected independently. Nineteen of the twenty students used seven or more colours in their depictions of figures. One student used only four colours. All of the students drew figures of different colours and eleven students used colour to indicate the skin colour of the figures.

The themes of figure orientation and connections between figures were considered together. In

Figure 1 - Cassidy, Age 5

We are all one family under the same sky.
fifteen of the drawings the figures were spatially located in proximity to the earth, creating a ring of figures with either joined or outstretched hands that encircle the earth. Those fifteen drawings had figures that were connected as a whole, circling around the earth. In five of the drawings the figures were more unevenly spaced but still in close proximity to the earth. Three of the five drawings showed the figures grouped together on one side or half of the globe with their hands joined. Another of the drawings showed the figures grouped by two’s with their hands outstretched and one grouping at each of the compass points around the globe. The last drawing had two groups of two people with hands outstretched on either side of the globe.

The variations in the drawings seemed to be reflective of differences in the conceptualization of multiculturalism. Fifteen drawings reflected a conceptualization of the world joined in multiculturalism while the other five drawings showed distinctive groupings that suggested that parts of the world were connected and reaching out to connect with other parts. In terms of the connections between the figures, each of the five drawings was rated as having a high level of connectedness between the figures that were in contact. While these drawings did not have all of the figures connected, those that were connected followed the same pattern of joined hands or outstretched hands as the other drawings demonstrated. Thus, it would appear that all of the children conceptualized multiculturalism as involving some level of connection between different groups of individuals.

The last two themes that were assessed examined the figure size and the amount of details included in the drawings. Size differences were evaluated by measuring the figures. In six of the drawings there was very little variation between the figures. The largest and smallest figures in these pictures varied in size by less and 1.5 centimeters. In the remaining fourteen pictures there were much larger variations in the figure sizes. On average, the largest and smallest figures varied by 4.6 centimeters with a range of difference from 3 centimeters to 7 centimeters. What is particularly striking about these differences is that the drawings with size differences seemed to depict children and adults while those drawings with little size variation seemed to only depict children. In addition, those drawings that had substantial size variations were drawn by children of all artistic abilities and of the full range of ages present in the classes. They were also fairly evenly distributed across gender as eight were drawn by boys and six were drawn by girls. Thus, the tendency to depict figures as children and adults based on variations in size seemed to reflect a difference in conceptualization with some children indicating the role of adults in multiculturalism and other focusing only on children.

Developmental level and artistic ability played more of a role in the consideration of the amount of detail that was included in the drawings. Seven boys and one girl drew figures that could best be described as stick figures that were characterized by round heads with stick arms and legs that protruded from round bodies. While the seven boys varied in age across the full range within the classroom, the girl was one of the youngest in the classroom. The remaining twelve pictures demonstrated more advanced figure development and included features such as necks and shoulders as well as more defined torsos, arms, and legs. All of the drawings included figures with arms and legs. Fourteen of the drawings included figures with some representation of hands and eight included some representation of hands and feet. Both genders were represented in all three groupings but the younger children were less likely to draw feet in addition to hands. In eighteen of the drawings the figures were drawn with facial expressions and 95% of the facial expressions were happy with one figure drawn with a negative expression and the others with neutral expressions. In two drawings, the faces contained no facial expressions or details and were coloured using solid colours. Eleven students used colour in a way that seemed to be indicative of skin colour, as a single colour was applied to the face and to other parts of the body such as hands, arms, or legs. Twelve drawings included greater detail as they included clothing and accessories such as hair,
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Hair bands, and clothing details (i.e. striped shirts).

Overall, developmental differences were seen in the artistic abilities of boys and girls as girls were more likely than boys to include more detail in their drawings and demonstrated more advanced drawing skills. Colour use was fairly consistent across both gender and age with all students using four or more colours and the majority using more than four colours. Variation in the size of figures was also unrelated to development or gender and thus may be more related to children's perceptions and representations. Similarly, all of the drawings had high levels of connectedness. While some drawings did not connect all figures in one big group, they did include smaller groups of connected figures and no isolated figures.

What does this say about kindergarten children's representations of multiculturalism? The drawings offer some insight into children's representations. The drawings express a sense of connectedness across colours as well as a predominant sense of happiness. In over half of the drawings, there was an indication of both adults and children being involved. However, without access to the children's descriptions of their drawings, the kindergarten children's pictures provide only limited glimpses into their representations.

Grade Six Students

The grade six students ranged in age from eleven to twelve years with the average age being eleven and a half. There were ten girls and six boys who submitted drawings and writing. The students were asked to address the contest question by drawing a picture and writing under 250 words to describe their answer to the question. The teacher supplied white paper and lined paper and each student was responsible for creating a pictorial and written representation from those materials.

The five points of focus identified within the kindergarten children's drawings were also applied to the drawings submitted by the grade six students. In addition, the grade six students' work was examined in terms of the presence of symbolism and the connection between the drawing and the writing components of the submissions. The same operational definitions were used for the themes previously identified with the younger group of students. Symbolism was defined as the use of any recognized symbol (i.e. flag, peace sign, contest logo) or symbolic use of a natural object (i.e. people, rainbows, earth, tree). The level of connection between the drawn and written components of each student's submission was based on the number of elements within the pictorial representation that were also represented in written format. In the evaluation of the themes two independent raters who were blind to the purpose of the rating were provided with rating guidelines and scoring sheets. The intra-rater reliability for each rater was 94% and 93% and the inter-rater reliability ranged from 83%-100%.

Whereas all of the drawings by the kindergarten children included figures, only ten of the sixteen drawings by grade six children included figures. Five of the girls and five of the boys included at least one face or figure in their drawings. In two cases (one girl and one boy), the figures were represented as rough stick figures of one solid colour. In two of the boys'
Multiculturalism as Reflected in Children's Artwork

Drawings, only faces were depicted. In the remaining six drawings, full or three quarter depictions of figures were represented and colour was used to indicate varying skin colours. The girls' figure representations were more detailed than those of the boys and in the boys' drawings not all of the depicted figures were human. In terms of figure sizes, there were no significant variations within any of the drawings. Figures also tended to be connected through joined hands, close proximity to each other, in a joint task, or as part of a symbol. In six of the drawings that depicted figures, those figures were located in close proximity to the earth and in one drawing figures of different nationalities circled the earth with joined hands. While all of the drawings by kindergarten children included a depiction of the earth as part of the structured task, ten of the grade six students spontaneously included a depiction of the earth as part of their drawing.

Girls tended to include more details in their pictures in both their depictions of figures and of the drawing as a whole. Girls were also much more likely to include decorative elements in their pictures such as borders, coloured outlines, and accent colouring. The use of symbolism was present to some extent in each drawing and girls were more likely to draw more detailed symbols than boys. Many drawings included recognized symbols such as the peace sign (10 drawings) or national symbols like flags (5 drawings). Other drawings included natural items as symbols. These symbols took the form of people, the earth, a tree, and a rainbow. Grade six students were more adept than kindergarten students at employing symbolism in their drawings. This could be due to developmental differences in the ability of grade six and kindergarten students to use symbols to represent complex concepts. Grade six students are in the process of transition from Piaget's concrete operations stage to the formal operations stage are able to think more abstractly than the kindergarten students who are in the preoperational stage of Piaget's theory.

The written component of the contest submissions was strongly connected to the drawn component in each of the submissions by grade six students. Regardless of age or sex, all of the written components made reference to a minimum of three elements that had been depicted in the drawn component. In the majority of the submissions, the written component was an elaboration of the symbolism contained in the drawn component. As in the drawn components, the written components demonstrated a strong link between multiculturalism and peace as well as national identity and multiculturalism.

For many of the students, the concept of multiculturalism was tied into concepts of peace and identification with multiculturalism as being an important component of being Canadian or living in Canada. For example, in Figure 3 the drawing included the peace sign superimposed on and around the earth. The accompanying text talked about “people of all different races living and working together” and stated that “living in a multicultural country is the best kind of country”. Similarly in Figure 4, the earth included a peace sign and the accompanying text stated that “Peace is the perfect word to describe multiculturalism” and that “Canada is a great example for a multicultural country”.

Conclusion

The combination of a written and drawn component within the grade six students’ contest submissions provided more insight into how multiculturalism was conceptualized and represented. Other researchers (i.e. Cox, 1998; Gamradt, 1995; Hague, 2001; Payne, 1996) have stressed the importance of combining either a written component with the drawing activity or of having children describe their drawings. Adding such a component not only provided a larger window into how children represented the target but also minimized the possibility of attributing symbolism or meaning to children's drawings that was only in the mind of the evaluator.

The examination of the contest submissions of the kindergarten and grade six students provides further support for the work of others (i.e.
Perspectives on Multiculturalism

Adkins, 1978; Anderson, 1995; Teichman, 2001; Zaidi, 1979), that has children’s drawings to be a useful method for examining how children represent a variety of concepts. Clearly, children’s artistic expressions do offer researchers a glimpse not only into how children conceptualize multiculturalism, but also demonstrate how children’s conceptualizations of multiculturalism have been shaped by cultural influences. In the case of the contest submissions, the influence of formal education was evident in both groups but there was insufficient cultural variability to look at the differential effects of culture. This medium proofed to be an effective method and future studies should examine how best to capitalize on its promise by investigating how pictorial representations can be combined with verbal or written descriptions and how such methods might be used in conjunction with more standardized kinds of measurements.

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The ATAPTIE Program

Understanding the Challenges New Immigrants Have in Their Teaching Practicum: Perceptions of Associate Teachers

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Author’s Disclaimer: All the photographs inserted by the publisher are for illustrative purposes only. They are in no way connected to the ATAPTIE candidates and their students reported in this paper.
The research reported in this paper is based on the ATAPTIE program (the Alternative Teacher Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience) funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for three years (2002-2005). This is a special Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program to provide immigrant teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to re-certify and find jobs in Ontario elementary schools. Through the data collected from the focus group discussions with the associate teachers who supervised and mentored the ATAPTIE candidates during their teaching practicum in elementary schools, this paper delineates, from the perspectives of associate teachers, the qualities that successful ATAPTIE teacher candidates should have, and the challenges that they have faced during their practicum. By documenting associate teachers' perspectives of the teacher candidates' experiences, more assistance and support for the candidates' learning and acculturation into the teaching profession in Ontario can be provided.

**Background**

The project reported in this paper is the Alternative Teacher Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience (ATAPTIE) at Queen's University. It is a special Bachelor of Education program funded for three cohorts of teacher candidates (2002-2005) by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). This one-year B.Ed. program is designed as one of nine bridging training programs to provide foreign-trained immigrants with the skills and knowledge needed to practice their profession in Ontario and to have their professional qualifications originally earned in their home countries (re)certified in the province. The first cohort of ATAPTIE consists of 27 candidates who have degrees and/or qualifications from 17 different countries. They enter the program with different cultural orientations and prior teaching experiences. During the one-year program, candidates need to integrate the theoretical and methodological features of Canadian teacher education into their own philosophy and pedagogy and demonstrate this learning to their professors, associate teachers, the Ontario College of Teachers, and potential employers. The candidates whose ideas about teaching and learning are very different from those of Ontario schools can face significant challenges in demonstrating appropriate professional practice in their teaching.

An evaluation of the ATAPTIE program has been administered by the Assessment and Evaluation Group (AEG) at Queen's Faculty of Education on an on-going basis with the aim to provide evidence for program improvement. The evaluation has included a systematic and continuous gathering of information on the candidates' knowledge, skills, experiences, characteristics, and professional beliefs, which may be useful in defining their success or lack thereof. This paper examines the data collected through focus group discussions with the associate teachers who supervised and mentored the first cohort ATAPTIE candidates during their teaching practicum in Ontario elementary schools. The purpose of conducting the focus group discussions was to understand, from the perspectives of the associate teachers, the qualities that successful teacher candidates should have, and the challenges that they have faced during their practicum. By documenting associate teachers' perspectives of the teacher candidates' experiences, more support for candidates' learning and acculturation into the teaching profession in Ontario can be provided. This will in turn support the learning of all parties involved in ATAPTIE.

**Introduction**

Ontario is becoming an increasingly ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse province. Canada attracts the “brightest and best” of immigrants, and about half the country's newcomers settle in Ontario each year (Citizenship and Immigration Statistics, 2000). However, due to the fact that foreign credentials are not recognized by professional governing bodies like Ontario College of Teachers
(OCT), many foreign-trained professionals cannot find employment that utilize their experiences and talents. They end up with low-paying jobs or become part of the “brain drain”, and move on to other jurisdictions where they perceive themselves to encounter fewer barriers to local licensing or accreditation in their chosen professional fields. Their over-representation in low-paying services and manufacturing sectors and under-representation in white-collar occupations (Duff, Wong & Early, 2000) is not only a waste of intellectual resources on the part of immigrants but also a heavy loss in Ontario and Canada.

In response to this above situation, in April 2002, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) invested $3.6 million in nine bridging training programs in the province. As one of the funded projects, the Alternative Teacher Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience (ATAPTIE) is designed for three cohorts (2002-2005). This project is a partnership between the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), and LASI (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants) World Skills Ottawa. This special B.Ed. program is also intended to enhance the profile of the teaching profession to more closely approximate the diverse student population in Ontario elementary schools. The ultimate goal is determined based on the ATAPTIE candidates acquiring (a) a degree in education, (b) an Ontario teaching certificate, and (c) employment in an elementary school. The one year B.Ed. degree in education consists of a successful completion of eight academic courses and 70 days of school-based practicum. The teaching practicum is by far the most essential element as it contributes directly to the accomplishment of the other two goals.

The success of ATAPTIE candidates depends, in large part, on their ability to examine and integrate the theoretical and methodological features of Canadian teacher education into their own philosophy and pedagogy. They are also required to demonstrate this learning to professors, associate teachers in the schools, the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) (through the Teacher Qualifying Test) and potential employers. One of the key elements in this learning process is the successful completion of the 70-day school-based practicum over 14-23 weeks, during which time the candidates work closely with their associates in two Ontario elementary schools. The success of the practicum directly affects their future teaching career.

For those ATAPTIE candidates whose practices have been guided by constructivist notions of learning and child-centered pedagogy, the practicum experience is likely to be rewarding – an opportunity to reinforce their beliefs about education. However, many candidates come from countries in which teaching and learning in the primary education remains centered around the decontextualized transmission of knowledge (Ackers & Hardman, 2001; Arthur, 1998; Bassopo-Moyo, 1997; Sharp & Ning, 1998). The ATAPTIE candidates whose backgrounds and teaching experiences reflect the latter approach may face significant challenges both in conceptualizing new expectations and in identifying and demonstrating appropriate professional practices in Ontario. The first cohort of ATAPTIE candidates come from 17 different countries, many of which have education systems that adhere to a decontextualized, teacher-centered approach to learning (see Cheng, Ren & Wang, 2003 for such an example). Therefore, the candidates would required support to help them adapt to conventional academic and practicum expectations of their role. While some of these adaptations are similar to those of B.Ed. candidates in general, others will be particular to the ATAPTIE candidates in that they will involve adaptations of cultural, teaching, and personal beliefs.

Similar studies (Bascia, 1996; Dennis, Bascia, & Goodson, 1996; Flores, 2001; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Phillion, 2003) have also demonstrated that new immigrant teachers like those in ATAPTIE have tremendous challenges in and barriers to their teaching careers. Phillion (2003) explored the experiences of five foreign-accredited teachers from India, Jamaica, and Somalia as they went through the
process of becoming certified teachers in Ontario, Canada. Through formal interviews and conversations with each participant in the class and outside the class, the author revealed that systemic, social, and general obstacles were the three levels of obstacles faced by these immigrant teachers. These three levels include such primary challenges as the process of having their qualifications evaluated, cultural conceptions of teaching, and language barriers in pursuing teaching profession and in the actual classroom instruction (Bascia, 1996; Cheng, Myles, & Wang, forthcoming; Flores, 2001; Mawhinney & Xu, 1997; Sutherland & Rees, 1995). In Bascia’s study (1996), the teachers interviewed in the study believed that “their immigrant [or foreigner] status, the ways they spoke, and their visible differences from other teachers” (p. 157) were important factors influencing the particular teaching positions they attained, their attempts to advance their careers, and their ongoing treatment by individuals and institutions. As a result of their isolation, they consistently turned to individuals outside of the schools in which they worked for moral support and practical help. The authors suggest that in schools where minority teachers have been organizationally marginalized and subordinated in status, it is essential for policy makers to consider the differences that underlie teaching and administrative school practices in Canada.

The Context

The evaluation work of the Assessment and Evaluation Group (AEG) as the internal evaluation team for the ATAPTIE program feeds directly into the efforts of the Berkeley Consulting Group (BCG). The BCG is the external evaluator hired by the MTCU to judge the outcomes and impact of the nine MTCU-funded bridging programs created to accredit foreign-trained professionals in many professions in Ontario. In this role, AEG is responsible for providing all ATAPTIE program stakeholders (candidates, MTCU, Berkeley Consulting Group, the OCDSB [associate teachers and principals], LASI World Skills, and the Faculty of Education) with evidence about program implementation and successes as well as an appraisal of the program’s potential for sustainability. Accordingly, much of the evaluation work during the first two and a half years will be improvement-oriented (Patton, 1997) and context-based (Lynch, 1996) with the latter half of the third year being more summative in nature (Scriven, 1972).

It is highly important to track and understand what these new immigrant teacher candidates experience especially during the practicum because it may be revealing of their performance as elementary teachers in Ontario. A close look at the relationship candidates develop with their associate teachers will contribute to our understanding of the qualities that candidates could bring into the classrooms and schools in Ontario where there is an increasingly diverse student population. The kinds of challenges that candidates have faced in adapting to the teaching philosophy and pedagogy in Ontario elementary classrooms will also help us to modify the ATAPTIE program to better meet their needs.

It is under this mandate that the AEG research team conducted focus
group discussions with the associate teachers while the ATAPTIE candidates were on their school practicum. The purposes were twofold. One was to discuss ATAPTIE candidates’ adaptation and acculturation experiences in the practicum as well as the challenges they face that contribute directly to their success and/or failure from the associate teachers – potential employers’ points of view. The other was to explore the experiences of the associate teachers and principals who have been actively mentoring these teacher candidates. Focus group discussion was chosen as the method of data collection as this is the best way for a group of people who have similar experiences to voice their ideas, concerns, questions, perceived roles in the program. Associates can offer recommendations for future changes to the ATAPTIE program (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990).

Focus group discussions were conducted in March 2003 toward the end of the candidates’ practicum. Twenty-two associate teachers met for the discussion on March 5, 2003 at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. It was arranged by the program coordinator and lasted one hour and fifty minutes. Two researchers associated with the AEG facilitated the focus group discussions.

Focus Group Discussions

The associate teachers were divided into 2 groups of 11 people with a moderator (a researcher) for each group to specifically discuss the following questions about the teacher candidates on their practicum:

1. What qualities do successful ATAPTIE candidates have?

2. What challenges have the ATAPTIE candidates encountered in your classroom and school?

Flipcharts were used as the method of recording responses. The points that associate teachers had made were subsequently entered into a computer as a list of qualities, challenges, and recommendations to the program. The list under each question was then categorized and reorganized into sub themes by the researchers.

1. What qualities do successful ATAPTIE candidates have?

At first, the associates mentioned several qualities that would pertain to any teacher candidate in a regular Bachelor of Education program. These were: enthusiasm, flexibility, organizational and communication skills, classroom management, and the ability to multi-task and manage time effectively. They should also be excellent team players and problem solvers. Qualities more particular to the ATAPTIE candidates were as follows:

• Willingness to accept constructive criticism and feedback from their associates

Some associate teachers felt that ATAPTIE candidates tended to get defensive when they were given suggestions for ways they could improve their teaching. This reaction may have to do with the fact that many candidates had been successful in their own countries – academically and professionally, and consequently may not be accustomed to receiving criticism of this kind or the way it was given in Ontario, especially from someone who was younger than them or from a female teacher. Some candidates also viewed criticism as something negative – not leading to self-growth, but as a threat to their practice and potential for employment. When given feedback, some of them either tended to disagree with their associate teachers and challenged the suggestions or became less confident with their abilities. The reason pertaining to these outcomes could be that candidates were very much concerned that the suggestions for improvement would also appear on the evaluation form, which was something...
with which they were very preoccupied. They tended to take evaluation as a reflection of themselves as a person not on their teaching skills, which may be a reason why some candidates became offended and upset when receiving criticism from their associates. Clearly giving and receiving practicum evaluation feedback demonstrates a point of value difference between the associates and teacher candidates.

- **Willingness to be reflective practitioners and good observers**

These qualities are connected to the candidates’ reactions to feedback. The associates felt that in order for candidates to learn from their practicum experience, they needed to keep reflective journals and do more self-assessments. Here again, systematic reflection based on teaching and self-assessment is something that may be new to many ATAPTIE candidates. In addition, associates mentioned that candidates needed to be better observers – to watch what the associate teachers were doing and incorporate associate teachers’ practices into their own teaching style.

- **Willingness to put in time and be involved “beyond” the classroom**

Teaching requires a great deal of time commitment in terms of preparation and classroom instruction from the point of associate teachers. Extracurricular activities are also key elements in elementary schools. Associates commented that many candidates had not realized that this would be the case. Some candidates had not recognized the necessity of getting involved beyond the classroom and felt surprised when they were asked to take responsibilities outside of their immediate classroom (e.g. yard duty) or participate in extracurricular activities. Associates recognized that many candidates have more family and work commitments compared with teacher candidates from regular B.Ed. programs. However, associates felt these should not deter from the work required of them during their practicum. In addition, because of these other non-practicum commitments, there was often not enough time for some candidates and the associates to discuss classroom progress in any great detail.

- **Using common sense**

This quality was related to classroom management. Associates felt that sometimes they would ask the candidates to do something or wait for the candidates to take the lead in something, perhaps intervene when a child’s behavior is inappropriate, which was completely obvious to the associates but not to the candidates.

- **Understanding child-centered approaches to teaching**

Many candidates have had teaching experiences in their native countries but these experiences might have been based on more teacher-centered approaches to learning. They were not familiar with the more child-centered approaches as reflected in the Canadian school system. This resulted in more teacher talk and less interactive student activities in the classroom.

- **Understanding child development**

Associates felt that many candidates were not aware of theories of child development. Many of them have had more teaching experiences with adolescents in secondary school or adult learners in university. As a result, they were sometimes oblivious to the children’s needs and learning level, producing materials or instructing curriculum contents in a way which was much too advanced for elementary school children.

- **Adequate command of English**

Associates all agreed that effective communication skills in the English language were essential, such as fluency, accuracy, expressive language, and oral and written ability. These skills were not only important in delivering the content as outlined in the
elementary curriculum, but also necessary to developing a desired rapport with students, parents, and fellow teachers within the school community.

All the above qualities, except the last two points, illustrate differences between teaching and learning in Ontario elementary schools from the associates’ perceptions and what teaching and learning means to the ATAPTIE candidates based on their prior experiences in their home countries. Potential cultural differences also exist, for example, in the way the assessment of the teaching practicum is conducted. In fact, the assessment has been one of the major sites of conflict between the associates and the candidates of this first cohort. On the one hand, the stakes are high as the practicum evaluation determines the success of the candidates on the practicum. On the other hand, it also demonstrates a critical point with regards to how assessment has been interpreted by both parties within the teaching context in Ontario.

2. What challenges have the ATAPTIE candidates encountered in your classroom and school?

When the associates began to address this question, some of them started talking about the challenges of being an associate. One important point was that they had not expected that there would be so much time and emotional commitment in offering their support to the candidates from the ATAPTIE program compared with their former experience working with other B.Ed. candidates from the University of Ottawa and other universities. This concern was raised again and again and some of them were adamant that unless there were changes to the program, they would not volunteer to be an associate again with this particular group for next year. The reason for this, as some associates suggested, is that although many ATAPTIE candidates have a lot of international teaching experience in their home country before immigrating to Canada, they failed to see the huge differences between Canada and their home country with regard to their respective philosophies and approaches to education. Moreover, it was felt that they were not sufficiently psychologically prepared to be working in a Canadian school environment at the time when this focus discussion was conducted due to the lack of knowledge about Canadian schools. Many of the challenges faced by the ATAPTIE candidates are directly related to the qualities they need to be successful in their practicum as discussed above. Two main challenges were mentioned:

• Responding to feedback

Again, it was felt that there was a lot of confusion about the practicum evaluation procedure, the evaluation form itself, and the role of the faculty advisors. Some candidates seemed to fall apart or get angry when they were presented with feedback and suggestions for improvement. A concern was if they react so defensively to these, how would these candidates react to students or parents who may be upset with a particular mark or a decision in their future teaching?

• Understanding the Canadian educational system and philosophy

Associates felt that candidates had been introduced to a whole new
cultural climate to teach in and thus needed to be not only more culturally aware of and knowledgeable about the Canadian educational system but also more accepting of its philosophy. Many of them come from countries where there is much more teacher-directed and textbook learning, as well as extensive standardized testing. It is a challenge for them to adapt to a whole new way of instructing students using, for example, co-operative methods and assessments with rubrics and a more “process oriented” teaching and learning focus.

Summary and Recommendation

The focus group discussion with the associate teachers from the ATAPTIE program revealed to us the complexity of the responsibilities, expectations, and roles that both the associates and candidates have in completing their school-based practicum as discussed in Bascia (1996) and Phillion (2003). The main issues were about candidates’ practicum assessment, their responses to feedback, participation in tasks beyond the classroom, application of common sense approaches to handling children, understanding a child-centered philosophy of education characteristic of the Canadian educational system, and English language proficiency. It is felt that these issues indicate the necessity for further negotiated communications and adjustment between the associates and the candidates, and suggest areas for the ATAPTIE program to improve.

Accordingly, recommendations on ways to improve the program were presented by the associates. Due to the fact that associates believed the candidates needed more knowledge

about educational practices particular to the Ontario school system into which they will be entering, it was recommended that the ATAPTIE program be a two-year initiative rather than one year. Candidates would therefore have more time to attain knowledge and acculturate to the new system and consequently begin the practicum as informed practitioners. It was also suggested that all practicum be 5 days per week for a set period of time for continuity in their instruction. In addition, the candidates should have more contact with the associates before the practicum. They could first spend time at the schools for guided observations and orientations, and the associate teachers and principals could also be present during the academic courses of the program to inform candidates about their respective roles and responsibilities in schools.

Since the ATAPTIE program was only at the first cohort when this focus group discussion was conducted, the issues raised by the associate teachers would provide reference and direction to the subsequent cohorts. For example, the qualities that successful ATAPTIE candidates should have are anticipated to be communicated to the second and third cohort teacher candidates through informal workshops and meetings as well as through formal teaching by Queen’s Faculty of Education course instructors. Also, the challenges the ATAPTIE candidates have encountered in the classroom are expected to be better understood by all the partners and stakeholders associated with the ATAPTIE program. By so doing, more assistance and more support for candidates’ learning and acculturation into the teaching profession in Ontario can be provided. In this way, these teacher candidates will be better prepared for securing a job in Ontario elementary schools. The associates will also be in a better position to support those candidates in the subsequent cohorts. As the practicum is the key to ATAPTIE candidates’ success in the program, the understanding of their experiences from the perspectives of their associate teachers is critical to improving the program. The intention is to best support new immigrant teacher candidates so that they can continue their teaching profession in Ontario.
Notes:

1. Liying Cheng (Ph.D.) is an Assistant Professor in English as a Second/Foreign Language, and Member of the Assessment and Evaluation Group (AEG) at the Faculty of Education, Queen's University. She is the Principal Investigator on the project - Evaluating the Challenges Foreign-Trained Teacher Candidates Face in ATAPTIE - funded by the Ontario Ministry Of Training, Colleges and Universities. Johanne Myles and Hong Wang are Ph.D. candidates and experienced ESL/EFL teachers of many years. They are both part of the research team on this evaluation project at Queen's Faculty of Education.

2. Telephone interviews were also conducted with the ATAPTIE candidates on a one to one basis during the same period of time in 2003. This part of the data is reported in a separate paper (see Cheng, Myles, & Hong, forthcoming).

References:


Abstract

Mentorship has long been recognized as a way to foster leadership, employability and life skills. In today's competitive business market, mentorship is being formalized and integrated into many corporate work environments to help upgrade Canada's talent pool (Mobilizing Mentoring, 2002). The literature suggests that the majority of mentoring models established by organizations are aimed at facilitating succession planning, and staff recruitment and retention. Other mentoring programs are based on the principles of commitment to corporate citizenship, and are generally designed to involve their staff in providing direct mentoring to young community members through youth mentorship programs. Recognizing that the workforce in Ontario is increasingly more diverse, the Inner City Health Program at St. Michael’s Hospital identified the need to utilize existing models to develop a mentoring model specifically for internationally-trained professionals. As a result, St. Michael’s Hospital became the first employer in Canada to implement a mentoring program that provides career development opportunities for internationally-trained professionals.

The Pilot Project

Internationally-trained professionals have a wealth of skills and knowledge that is often not fully utilized when they come to Canada. In 2002, 60% of immigrants to the Toronto region were independent skilled immigrants with 50.25% having a university education. The top five source countries for skilled immigrants are India, China, Pakistan, Philippines and Iran with 42.8% with a professional/managerial background. But in 2003, fewer than a quarter of immigrant professionals in Ontario are actually employed in their professions. Sixty percent are working in a different occupation after immigrating. Sixty six percent indicate capacity in English (Maytree Foundation, 2003).

There are a number of employment barriers faced by newcomers. They include:
- Lack of Canadian work experience and references;
- Lack of familiarity with Canadian business practices;
- Lack of Canadian accreditation;
- Sense of loss with respect to their professional identity;
- Presence of systematic barriers to employment;
- Profession-specific language and cultural barriers;
- Lack of business and social networks and related supports.

In May 2000, St. Michael’s Hospital Inner City Health Program (Toronto, Ontario), working collaboratively with community organizations, identified the need to address some of the barriers faced by internationally trained professionals. Funding was received from The Maytree Foundation to develop a three-year pilot project (Hospital Mentors for Foreign Trained Professionals Project). Two years later, in 2002, Human Resource Development Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities joined the team by providing additional funding for the development and distribution of the “Making Connections” how-to-Manual. “Making Connections” documents best practices, captures concrete strategies, and highlights approaches and resources useful for other organizations in setting up and implementing similar mentoring programs. The examples outlined in the manual can assist other organizations in taking a leadership role in establishing their own mentoring programs for internationally-trained professionals so that they can fully use their skills, capitalize their potential and maximize their contribution to the Canadian economy.

Background

The Hospital Mentors for Foreign Trained Professionals Project fits with St. Michael’s Hospital’s Inner City Health Program’s history of
leadership in the development of unique programs, interventions and local innovative diversity initiatives. St. Michael’s Hospital with the Inner City Health Program address the broad determinants of health while upholding its mission, values and acknowledgment that this mentoring program provides an opportunity to practice this commitment.

The primary objective of the program is to develop a transferable mentoring model for internationally-trained professionals within the hospital setting. In this mentorship program, interested mentors (senior management and directors) are matched with mentees (internationally-trained professionals) who are screened and referred by partner community agencies offering employment counseling services to new Canadians. The program is intended to facilitate access and create opportunities for newly-arrived professionals and trades people and to encourage other institutions to sponsor and support the implementation of similar programs across the country. In addition, the project provides opportunities for tapping into a diverse pool of talent and expertise that reflects a multicultural patient population while providing staff opportunities to further develop their cultural competencies through participation as mentors.

One might wonder why an acute care hospital would choose to play a leadership role in a program that is not about the actual delivery of health care services. The hospital identified the following incentives for its involvement in this program:

- The proven effectiveness of mentoring programs for internationally-trained professionals.
- An innovative diversity initiative;
- The opportunity for staff to further develop their cultural competencies;
- The impact of underemployment and unemployment as a determinant of health;

Preventing the Organization

The implementation of a mentoring program requires the investment of time and resources. Before a successful mentoring program can get off the ground, time and energy must first be devoted to securing commitment from the organization that might sponsor the mentorship program. It is critical to engage the organization in a process to assess how the program goals fit with the organization’s mission, values, and goals. It is also important to carefully consider both the costs and benefits related to program implementation.

Engaging an organization in mentorship requires key strategies and approaches. Specifically, assessing the program’s strategic direction within the organization; identifying internal champions; presenting a proposal model to senior management; exploring linkages and partnerships with community agencies; identifying who will oversee implementation; identifying key professions; estimating cost and resources; and developing an advisory committee.

There are many benefits and opportunities that organizations gain through mentoring. Mentoring provides access to skilled internationally-trained professionals, enabling organizations to take an innovative approach in attracting and retaining the best and brightest employees while simultaneously remaining competitive in an ever-changing economic environment. Through mentoring, organizations gain the opportunity to demonstrate corporate leadership, further contributing to organizational branding by creating positive perceptions of the organization within the community. Mentoring is not only cost effective, because it capitalizes on existing skills and resources of internationally-trained professionals, but in addition, builds capacity on how to work with and enhance services to people from different cultures.

Developing Community Partnerships

The success of the model of mentoring is due, in large part, to the...
partnerships that St. Michael’s Hospital was able to establish, develop, and maintain with local community agencies that provide employment preparation programs for newcomers. These agencies work to initiate connections, and build relationships with internationally-trained professionals (potential mentees) who are referred to the project.

The following are the agencies that signed on as community partners and were actively involved in the initial design and implementation of the program:
• ACCES – Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services;
• CET/ERC – Centre for Education and Training – Sherbourne Employment Resource Centre;
• COSTI Immigration Services;
• Dixon Hall;
• Fred Victor Centre – Employment Resource Centre;
• JobStart;
• Skills for Change;
• Regent Park Community Health Centre: Pathways to Employment Project;
• WoodGreen Community Centre – Employment Resource Centre.

Active participation in the program by community agency partners is essential for success. Organizations who work with internationally-trained professionals not only serve as a key referral source for mentees, but also have considerable expertise to share in developing and implementing the program. In addition, they are able to provide additional counseling and support to the mentees.

Moreover, mentoring provides community agency partners with numerous beneficial opportunities. They are better able to offer mentoring assistance to new Canadians, thereby reducing the barriers to the range of professions available to these individuals. Adopting a mentoring program provides community agencies with an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships with employers and opportunities to collaborate on other programs/initiatives, essentially expanding current networks and enhancing future funding opportunities.

Implementation

Once St. Michael’s Hospital committed to the development of a mentoring program for internationally-trained professionals and partnerships with key community agencies were established, they were ready to move forward with program implementation. Implementing this type of project involved identifying key staff responsible for the coordination of the program. This key person(s) became responsible for organizing advisory committee meetings, developing a terms of reference for the program, facilitating shared goals and objectives, and leading program implementation.

The “Making Connections” model recommends that the mentoring program have a maximum of three cycles per year, and each cycle should consist of six to 10 mentoring matches. Each cycle should include the recruitment of experienced managers/staff (mentors) who are matched with internationally-trained professionals (mentees). Ideally, these internationally-trained professionals will have completed an employment preparation program, are “job ready”, and plan to enter the Canadian workforce in the near future. In smaller centres, mentee candidates may be referred from less formal service providers and may not have had the opportunity to participate in employment preparation programs, however, they should be “job ready.”

Both Mentees and Mentors receive benefits from the program. For Mentors it:
• Facilitates the mutual exchange of ideas, information and resources;
• Provides opportunities to participate in an innovative program and to enhance their skills, job satisfaction and future opportunities;
• Enhances their understanding of settlement issues and barriers for new Canadians;
• Encourages them to think creatively about how they might do things differently.

For Mentees it:
• Provides exposure to the Canadian workplace and opportunities to learn about Canadian business practices from a manager working within the same profession in Canada;
• Enhances mentees access to coaching within the workplace, which can assist in the job search process;
• Provides advice, moral support and
encouragement that they need to persevere until they are successful in finding employment within their profession;

• Facilitates access to in-house organizational events that can promote skills development and enhances an understanding of internal processes and perspectives.

The match between mentor and mentee is made on the basis of compatible educational background, similar work experience and common career goals. Prior to being matched, both the mentor and mentee receive training preparing them for their respective roles. After the training is completed for both mentors and mentees the person/persons coordinating the program introduce each matched pair to one another.

The training sessions are designed to provide both the mentor and mentee with skills to assist them in negotiating the goals they want to accomplish through their mentoring relationship, while establishing a mentoring agreement. Over the duration of the mentoring relationship it is recommend that the mentor and mentee work together for at least six hours per month over a six month period. They decide on other ways they will maintain regular communication (i.e. e-mail, phone). Both the mentor and mentee access additional training and professional development opportunities through various workshops and group activities offered by the hospital and participate in ongoing evaluation of the mentoring program.

Results

Mentorship of internationally-trained professionals provides mentors with a better understanding of the obstacles that new Canadians face when looking for employment. It also facilitates professional development, skill’s enhancement, and peer learning opportunities of mentors. For the internationally trained professional or the mentee, working with their mentor provides them with the opportunity to learn about the Canadian work environment, to enhance their skills, and to increase their network of contacts to other professionals and potential employers. Mentees also share information about business practices in their country of origin as well as potential links to global markets.

As a result of continued support and active participation of both mentors and mentees, in May 2003, 61 mentees from 28 countries and 21 different professions have participated in the program. Eighty percent of mentees have been in Canada for less than one year. Seventy percent of mentees have found employment or pursued education in their profession.

Mentees involved in the mentoring program at St. Michael’s Hospital originated from many different countries including Albania; Argentina; Bangladesh; China; Hong Kong; Hungary; India; Iran; Jamaica; Nepal; Nigeria; Pakistan; Philippines; Romania; Syria; Turkey; Ukraine; Venezuela and Zimbabwe. These mentees were suitably placed within the supporting hospital departments most closely matching their professional skills, namely, Administration; Corporate Communications; Diagnostic Imaging; Engineering; Finance; Food and Nutrition; Health Sciences Library; Hospital Foundation; Human Resources; Information Technology; Inner City Health Program; Laboratory and Diagnostic Imaging; Leadership and Staff Development; Logistics; Risk Management; and Fire and Security Services. These departments encompass a range of professions from which mentors were consistently active throughout the program, specifically, Accounting/Finance; Auditing; Biomedical and Chemical Engineer; Clinical Research; Community Development; Food and Nutrition Inspection; Health Research; Hospitality; Human Resources Generalist; Information Technology; Laboratory Technology; Public Administration; Public Relations; Interpretation/Translation; Fund Raising; Risk Management; Social Work; Staff Training and Development and Personal Support Work.

Mentoring provides many opportunities and benefits to the Ontario workforce. It provides investment in the future workforce at a time when the shortage of required skills is expected to increase. It stimulates the provincial economy
when internationally trained professionals are gainfully employed and able to fully use their skills and training in the workplace. It contributes to ensuring that in the future, Ontario has a vibrant, knowledge-based economy. It strengthens communities at the local level by providing links to employment for internationally trained professionals so that Ontario’s communities continue to be magnets for investment and opportunity. In addition, organizations involved in mentoring for internationally trained professionals gain the opportunity to access, learn from and build a more diverse labour force. This in turn allows organizations to address current skill shortages and respond more effectively to an increasingly diverse customer/client base.

Finally, the “Making Connections” how-to-manual provides a set of transferable tools and best practice guidelines. The first of its kind in Canada, this model of excellence is a creative and innovative mentoring model. It demonstrates opportunities for collaboration between the hospital and community which can be used in other settings. It is one way to directly respond to growing human resource demands.

“Making Connections: A New Model for Mentoring for Internationally Trained Professionals” can be obtained free of charge from:

www.stmichaelshospital.com
St. Michael’s Hospital, Inner City Health Program
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"Get over it Mom!"

Ideologies of Resistance and Change in South Asian-Canadian Family Life Styles

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The question to be addressed in this paper is what happens to the South Asian family system when it is transplanted to a Western country, in our case, to the metropolitan area of the City of Vancouver, on the West Coast of Canada.

To set the stage we begin with a story about a Vancouver department store's window display.

Earlier this year the Hudson Bay Company, a national department store chain, installed a window display in its Vancouver store to advertise its wedding service. The display featured a bride in a flowing white wedding gown and groom in his black tuxedo, both mannequins, of course, standing against a plain white backdrop (McMartin 2001). Surrounding them, and lined up behind, was a continuous stream of small brides in their white wedding dresses and grooms in their formal black tuxedos. It looked like a traditional wedding display, until you look closer, and follow along the receding line of little mannequin couples (McMartin 2001: B1):

Male-female … and male-female, and another male-female, and then … Hey! Male-male! Two little grooms in tuxes hand-in-hand! And then, after a few more conventional male-female couples, a female-female couple! Two little brides in wedding dresses hand-in-hand! And then, farther along the line, a white groom and a black bride hand-in-hand! And then, interspersed along the line, more permutations of race and sex.

This display could be read as a political statement by one of Canada's largest department store chains: that all family lifestyles are now acceptable. The store's motivation was more market-oriented, however. According to the Bay's special events manager (McMartin 2001: B8), the store was only making a "merchandising statement," not a political one. "We do bridal services, and we do them without prejudice." The message implied by this display is broader, however: that our individual freedoms can be expressed, and our most personal desires satisfied, through the consumption of mass-produced commodities including wedding attire. Other clothing stores in Vancouver are also adopting more inclusive displays.

We will return to the role of the market place later. We next want to explore what may happen to the internal dynamics of South Asian families who are exposed to this public celebration of diverse life styles. To proceed it will be necessary to narrow the question to a more manageable size. We will not consider the history of this topic, nor all South Asian family systems, nor even all of the internal dynamics of family life. Our focus will be on how relationships between genders and generations influence the formation of personal identity among two small samples of South Asian Canadian women who live in the metropolitan region of the City of Vancouver. We choose in this report to consider the role of women not only because they constitute a critical focus for family dynamics and family relations, but also because we can draw upon two recent field studies carried out by anthropologist Gurjit Sandhu, co-author of this paper. Research still needing to be done would include male counterparts and comparative studies. Our samples are small; a handful of divorced or separated South Asian Canadian women, on the one hand, and a dozen younger not-yet-married women, on the other hand. Their experiences nevertheless allow us to speculate about the kinds of transitions and transformations traditional Asian family systems undergo when transplanted to new settings.

Before proceeding with our case studies we want to dispense with several terms that frequently appear in discussions of Asians who settle abroad: “diaspora” and “hybridity.” We find these two concepts both too general and too specific for our analysis. They imply a uniformity of conditions at both home and abroad, in contrast to the diversity of sites and histories found on both sides of the equation. These concepts also devalue the agency of immigrants or transplants who individually construct their imagined selves out of their diverse geographical and cultural histories. For example, consider how one young South Asian Canadian woman described her own identity:

I came to Vancouver three years ago without my family. I will soon be 27
years old. My father is Hindu, my mother is Christian, and I myself converted to Christianity when I was thirteen. I’m Bengali, but I grew up in Delhi... I think that every Bengali is very aware of his or her identity because of the Bengali culture and ethos, which is like nationalism with a bit of cynicism. I do consider myself an Indian, and will forever. At this point I’m busy trying to discover Canada.

The concepts of diaspora and hybridity are also limiting because they imply an unequal relationship between home and abroad. Diaspora refers to an estrangement from the authenticity of a homeland that often is more idealized or imaginary than real, while hybridity suggests a departure from the purity of race and culture. There is a need to rethink the relationships between population, territory, and cultural meanings (Hannerz 1996:20). The recitation by recent immigrants of an idealized homeland, for example, may be more about asserting the dominance of age over youth and males over females than about attempting to transplant the actual practices from an imaginary homeland. Many of those who claim a South Asian heritage are, in any case, generations removed from the continent of South Asia itself. Like most other parts of the world, populations have been moving in and out of South Asia for centuries. Homelands under these circumstances become any number of imaginary places, and thus also their diasporas. The purity of the homeland can be cited when it is needed, and ignored when it is not. Distances in space or time are less important now. “Our imagination,” Ulf Hannerz writes in his Transnational Connections (1996: 4), has no difficulty with what happens to be far away. On the contrary, it can often feed on distances, and on the many ways in which distance can suddenly be close.” Globalization is the celebration of the death of distance. The two separate worlds of home and abroad, of South Asia and Canada, do not exhaust the possibilities for imagining and constructing identity. It is the inbetween places – Homi Bhabha’s (1996: 54) “cultures ‘in-between,’ bafflingly both alike and different”—that offer multiple possibilities arising “within the folds where cultures merge, the merging of horizons in different and diverse ways” (Sandhu 2000b: 6).

It is true that concerns about cultural purity and idealized homeland enter into how the South Asian Canadian women in our samples negotiate their identities in the context of their current Canadian locations. Their concrete references are more to the values of their own families and local communities in Canada, however, than to the traditions of a distant homeland, whether it be South Asia, Africa, Fiji, or somewhere else. What is most important to them is what is present: the communities in which they now live and where they seek their future possibilities.

Next we need to describe the social context for our case studies. The population of the Vancouver metropolitan area – Vancouver City and its suburbs – is about two million. Vancouver City has about half a million. Some 59% of the school children in the City speak home languages other than English (Jimenez 1998: 2). About a third of Vancouver metropolitan residents are referred to as “visible minorities” (Mitchell 1998), though they are hardly minorities in some of the areas, and certainly not in terms of world populations. Fifty-six percent of these visible minorities are of
East Asian ethnicity, mostly Chinese, and 21% are South Asian (Roach and Berdahl 2001: 36-37). Many have resided in Canada for three or more generations and are as “Canadian” as anyone else. The Asian presence on the streets, in businesses and cultural activities, and in the media and politics, has become a notable feature of Vancouver. Ten percent of the candidates elected to the provincial legislature this past spring were equally divided between East Asian and South Asian ethnicities. The outgoing premier was a Punjabi Sikh immigrant.

The ongoing integration of Asian Canadians into the mainstream is not happening easily, of course. Canada shares with other Western nations a long history of prejudice against non-whites. There were race riots and legal attempts to restrict Asian residents and exclude others from immigrating up to the middle of the last century at least, including the dispossession and incarceration of Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry early in the Second World War. Incidents of discrimination and racism continue, as they do of course in all ethnically diverse societies.

What is different today is that public expressions of racism have become less acceptable, and in certain manifestations illegal. The emergence of Asian states as economic and political powers after the second World War, their increasing importance as trading partners, the global reach of the media, and the growing numbers of Asians emigrating to the West have all impacted upon North American consciousness. Canadian governments and businesses now actively pursue trade with Asian states. It is also widely claimed in the media that Canada’s growing cultural diversity and its policies of multiculturalism are enhancing its competitiveness in the emerging knowledge-based global economy. All these factors probably encouraged the formulation of multicultural policies, the establishment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the proclamation of the Canadian Human Rights Act of 1976-77. This act prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, and disability. Practice always falls short of the ideal, of course.

The growing economic success of immigrants and people of colour and their increasing presence in particular areas and schools still leads to resentment on the part of whites and references to another “Asian invasion.” It is suggested by some that ethnic clusterings reduces interest on both sides for a closer integration and represents a negative consequence of multicultural policies (Dolphin 1994). For those in minority positions, however, ethnic concentrations can serve as protection against racism and for their own cultural distinctiveness. Minorities seek economic and political integration, as is their right in a democratic state, but do not necessarily accept that the Canadian policy of multiculturalism should require cultural assimilation as well. It nevertheless is still possible to state that official and public attitudes towards people of colour and other minorities in Canada have been undergoing changes towards more inclusivity since the 1950s.

Our first study cases are of young married women who reported their struggles for gender equality and personal freedom within the context of their traditional South Asian family systems. Gurjit Sandhu collected the reports in 1997-98 from South Asian Canadian women who recently separated from or divorced their husbands (Ames and Sandhu 2000). We do not suggest that these women are representative of all South Asian Canadian women or their families. Quite possibly they may be the exceptions. Their circumstances nevertheless serve to highlight one of the structural points at which family change is likely to occur if it occurs at all; that is, in gender relationships. Relations between genders represent a second critical point of conflict, and
will be the focus of our second set of study cases.

It can be a desperate act for a South Asian wife to leave her husband. As a mother reminded her daughter who was contemplating separation, there is more honour in death than in divorce. But as the daughter could have reminded her mother, ideas about gender equity, separation, and divorce are no strangers to the countries of South Asia, either, nor to the rest of the world.

The first example in the study of divorced women is with Jeevan, a 24-year-old Canada-born university graduate who entered an arranged marriage when she was 20 years old, partway through her BA degree. She divorced three years later.

There were times when I was growing up when I pushed for opportunities to go out with friends. My parents responded by telling me that those activities could wait until after marriage, at which point I would be free to do as I pleased. What they failed to mention was that upon marriage, I would have to behave according to the rules of my husband and his family.

Thinking in terms of what was best for the family always reigned supreme over what I thought was best for me. Listening and adhering to the needs of the individual would mean that I was being selfish. I would only be pleasing myself; yet if I acted in the best interest of the family I would be pleasing many more people.

Jeevan’s marriage did not go well. She said she disapproved of her husband’s family, friends, activities, behavior, goals, and most other things about him.

Nevertheless, I agreed because I had assumed that my father had my best interests at heart. I knew that I would never love this man but was that really important? I didn’t see my parents as having a particularly loving relationship and they were still together.

It was not long, however, before Jeevan concluded that the arrangement was not going to work. Her husband appeared to be no happier about their marriage, began drinking heavily, and became more openly abusive and aggressive towards her.

I was ridiculed and belittled by my husband for the dreams I wanted to follow and for the way I thought a marriage should be. He told me I was acting white and needed to get back to a true Indian reality.

I was embarrassed by how I let myself get into this situation. Here I was, a woman born and educated in Canada and yet living the life of traditional Punjabi wife back in an Indian village. I knew that I wanted to leave the marriage but didn’t think I had anywhere to go. The fear that nobody would ever want to have a relationship with a divorced woman kept me in the relationship longer than I ever should have been.

Eventually, her husband humiliated her so badly in public, Jeevan said, that she knew she had to leave the relationship. She considered the public humiliation was actually a blessing in disguise because it proved she was in an abusive relationship.

I am not quite sure how I managed to find the strength or courage to leave, but I did. I stood up to my husband and his family. I told them that I had had enough and was leaving. They pleaded to give it another chance. I was adamant and left.

My parents supported me for leaving and taking a stand. They assumed that I would remain separate for about a week or two, just enough time for him to learn a lesson. They never anticipated that I might not go back at all. When they realized that this was what I had intended, they completely rejected my actions and me. By denouncing my behavior they were illustrating to my younger siblings that such behavior would not be tolerated.

Jeevan’s parents slowly came to
terms with the separation, though even a year later her mother still insisted she should return to her ex-husband. Her father meanwhile lost no time in searching for a new husband for her, though she refused all prospects.

We report on this first case at some length because it catalogues the conflicts young South Asian Canadians experience between the pull of family honour and responsibility and the attraction of popular ideals about independence, self-reliance, and romantic love.

Mina, a 26-year old India-born government clerk, immigrated to Canada as a three year old child along with her parents and three siblings. Mina remarks:

*When I think back to the expectations and the dreams I had for my life, I realize they were very different from one another. My dreams were what I wished my future to be. The common thread in them was freedom, something I’d always lacked in my life. My expectations, on the other hand, fell far short of my dreams as they were laced with a large dose of reality considering my East Indian heritage…. Doing the socially acceptable thing was more important than my happiness.*

Mina moved out of her husband’s home after a few weeks of marriage, she said, because of his abuse and lies. She talked about her feelings of relief and anxiety.

That was the first time in my life that I had done something truly selfish. I had put myself and my own needs and desires before those of my family. For once I wasn’t doing something that was culturally sanctioned. I gained my freedom that day, but I had a lot to pay for it: my family ties.

My leaving was the scariest and most important thing I have ever done in my life. I told myself that I WAS important, that MY happiness mattered. No one had ever told me this before. No one had told me that I had a choice. No one had told me that I was strong enough to do this. I had been raised to be dependent on others. I was raised to defer my opinion to that of my parents and my husband.

I’m learning a lot about who I am. I am learning to treat myself better. I am learning to love myself which is something I was never taught. I have more control now. Control over my life. I choose who can enter my world now. I like that feeling, but I still have to overcome my feelings of guilt. I don’t know when that will happen, but for now I take life one day at a time.

Our third example comes from Rupa, a 30-year-old India-born financial assistant, who came to Canada as a bride. She and her husband had one daughter. Rupa left the marriage after ten years, taking her daughter with her, and filed for divorce.

I was taught to always put the needs of others before my own. The realization that I might actually have my own wants and needs didn’t come until many years later. My husband was abusive, so I finally decided to leave. It would make life easier for my daughter. I have shown my daughter that she has a choice. She will learn that she doesn’t have to put up with an abusive partner. A woman can do more than cook and clean and be submissive.

The fourth example is from Anu, a 43-year-old African-born financial administrator who immigrated with her family in the early 1970s. She and her husband had one son.

My husband became abusive and began to carry on an affair with another woman. I told my mother what was happening, however, she said that a woman should not walk away from a marriage. A woman’s beauty is expressed in silence, my mother said. A woman should keep her mouth shut no matter what goes on. She cannot behave like a man.
Anu nevertheless rejected her mother’s advice and sought a divorce after three years of marriage.

Back in Africa, people did not use the word “divorce.” It was a dirty word. Even the elders in Vancouver find it difficult to change. My own generation is beginning to come around to the idea, however. They see that in Canada divorce is not such a rare thing. I believe Asian children born and raised in Canada are even more open minded about these matters.

Opportunities for contradiction and conflict can be anticipated by anyone familiar with immigrant experiences. These experiences are not always homogenous, however. They can vary between and within countries, and even within single metropolitan areas according to the distribution of compatriots (Sandhu 2000a: 84). Immigrant situations may differ according to generation of arrival, class, caste, occupation, language, religion, place of origin, ties to the homeland, and the host country’s policies and practices (Sharma 1999, Ng 1999: 129f). Once again we cannot account for variations within this paper. Even a small, relatively uniform sample nevertheless can pose useful questions. Gurjit Sandhu, in her study of a dozen Canada-born South Asian women 16 to 21 years of age (2000a & b), set out to discover how they were negotiating their own accommodations to conflicting cultural expectations and attractions. In the course of her research she reflected upon choices facing her as a 25-year-old first generation Punjabi Canadian. “How can I,” she asks in the introduction to her study (2000a: 6; also Sandhu 2000b), “experience my every day as female, as a brown body, as a child of immigrant parents, as a South Asian Canadian woman?”

North American culture promotes the ideals of equality, individualism, independence, and self-reliance, whereas South Asian cultures favour stronger ties to extended family and community and to sharper divisions of responsibility and authority according to gender and age (Sandhu 2000a: 83). Immigrants and their Canadian-born children are aware of these contrasting principles, and struggle to negotiate ways between them. “On the one hand I don’t want to hurt my parents,” Sandhu reports in reference to her own experience (2000a: 155). “And on the other hand I don’t want to hurt myself.”

Family relations are both important and a burden to these young women. Jasmine, a 21-year-old, for example, complained about her lack of autonomy (Sandhu 2000a: 133):

My family is always judging expecting and wanting me to be so many different things and it’s not just my immediate family. It’s the whole family – aunts, uncles, cousins, anybody who thinks they might have any connection to you at all, and that’s pretty much every brown person. You have to be so many different things, live at home, be educated, be the good wife, live with the in-laws, work, and the list goes on. And all of these things we have to be perfect at because we are constantly compared. There is so much we have to worry about.

Young Canadian-born women appear less willing than older generations to accept marital arrangements where it appears that the possibilities for subordination and abuse may outweigh the opportunities for equality, respect, and romance. Twenty-one-year-old Alison spoke about her mother’s discomfort when she broke off an engagement with a man who began drinking heavily and to boss her about (Sandhu 2000a: 91-2).

It’s sad how you have to stay in certain situations for your reputation’s sake. I fought with my mother so many times and kept on telling her that I did not want to end up in divorce … Sure our moms lived in harsh circumstances but we have choices. Sometimes in life you have to disappoint a few people in order to make the best choice yourself.

Choice is the operational value. These young women pick and choose
“Get over it Mom!” — Ideologies of Resistance and Change

from their varied cultural and geographical backgrounds. Smokey, a 16-year-old (Sandhu 2000a: 10-11):

I don’t like the fact that you have to go by the caste system and I don’t like a whole bunch of rules. I don’t like so many of the double standards like guys can go out and date but girls can’t, or that kids should respect their elders but elders don’t talk with respect to kids. No matter what you are parents always control what you can do and what you can say. But I pick and choose. I like the fact that we’re symbolic and I like the fact that we wear a kara (steel bands Sikhs wear on the wrist), and the fact that we’re just so family- oriented. I love my family. I know it’s bad, but I pick and choose what I like and what I don’t like.

Stacie, another 16-year-old, chooses to accept her family’s tradition (Sandhu 2000a: 15).

My mom, she’s always talking about marriage. Oh, we have to get you married and stuff and, oh ya, you can’t have a boy friend and we’re going to have an arranged marriage and all this stuff. At first I was like No! But I guess I’m okay with it now because you know it’s our culture and stuff.

We all would like to choose our own rules. The significant factor here, because of the possibility of economic independence and the Canadian emphasis given to individual autonomy and self-reliance, is that many young South Asian Canadians have real opportunities to make choices. What it means to be a young South Asian Canadian woman in the Vancouver metropolitan area, then, appears to be a matter of personal negotiation, not so much with, but between, each of their worlds (Sandhu 2000a: 13, 66). And those worlds, as we noted in our introductory remarks, are conditioned by each person’s geographical space, history of migration, and particular ethnic heritage. Gurjit Sandhu writes about her own personal “inbetweeneity” (Ibid., p. 138) in the Canadian multicultural context:

By reconciling and embodying my contradictions I realize myself as a patchwork of possibilities (Ibid., pp. 67). The inbetween struggles of life … inbetween Canadian and South Asian, tradition and modernity, religious and secular, selfish and guilt, family and individual, home and distance, reproduction and resistance, marriage and education, romantic love and arranged marriage, experience and [cultural] contamination…(Ibid., p. 86).

It is reasonable to expect that younger generations, not just in Canada but everywhere, will seek more degrees of freedom and expect more equal treatment, for those are powerfully attractive value orientations with universal appeal. Nevertheless, it is also clear that for older people the family ideology associated with a homeland provides the standards they use to judge themselves, their children, and others in their local communities. Disjunctures, conflicts, feelings of remorse, and rebellions are therefore always possible. Ethnic media, web sites, and conferences often focus on these issues. Because of the growing Asian presence in Vancouver, discussions also increasingly take place in general media.

Vancouver has become a popular venue for Asian cultural performances and events, with regular visits of popular performers, artists and intellectuals, religious leaders, and other notables from Asia. Traffic goes in the other direction as well, Asian Canadian families and performing artists regularly visiting Asia. Local ethnic media have also expanded. Canadian Punjabi writers, for one example, reportedly have published more than 350 books with “purely Canadian” settings and themes (Wigod 2001). Youth-oriented literary publications and web sites are particularly vocal. They introduce new
terms and slogans, often playing off of earlier racist ones. One group of young people established a web site under the name of “Banana,” using what is widely held as a derogatory term (yellow on the outside and white on the inside) to celebrate their combined Canadian and Asian identities. A panel staged during this year’s fourth annual citywide “Asian Heritage Month” addressed how Asian-Canadians are progressively moving into the Vancouver mainstream. The panel was titled “The Asian Infusion of Vancouver” to contrast with earlier media references to the Asian “invasion” (NAAP 2001). A flyer handed out at this panel referred to “The next generation,” suggesting that because the Asian population in Vancouver is younger than the non-Asian it will increase at a more rapid rate, making Vancouver even more Asian within the next decade or two (McCullough 200). A family workshop concerned with children of mixed marriages fused the words “Caucasian” and “Asian” into the single combined “Cauc/Asian” to refer to themselves. “Eurasian persuasion is a worldwide trend,” reported a Vancouver daily newspaper last May, claiming that entertainers of mixed European and Asian ancestry are enjoying “star status” (Mossop 2001).

The central issue for youth is how can they choose their own lifestyles in ways that respect their different cultural traditions, those from which they originate and those within which they are situated. They want the best of both Asian and Canadian, preferably on their own terms. Shachi Kurl (2000), who contributes to Vancouver’s major daily newspaper, last year addressed one of her columns to all South Asian parents:

I make, as your daughter, this one plea: Give us the freedom, the love and the encouragement to seek our own destinies…. It is not as though we have no regard for your guidance and values. But we grew up here. We’ve tried hard to blend both cultures, some more successfully than others. We also know that you have tried…. We may or may not marry according to your wishes…. But try to look at whether our partners are people capable of providing the love, support and companionship we’ll need in our lives…. You’ve given us your love, your support, the benefits of more than one language and culture. Now, let us fly.

Shachi Kurl offers a radical proposition for resolving conflicts of age and gender in transplanted Asian families: let the experts work out the solutions. She does not mean the kind of experts we profess to be, however. We are, many of us anyway, too old or too distanced from the situation to be of much help. It is her own generation, she argues, the “inbetweens,” actively living the disjunctures of transplantation, who are the best positioned to work out their own futures. “Now, let us fly,” was her advice. “Being a transnational allows loyalties to two homelands without guilt,” Manpreet Grewal, another Punjabi Sikh contributor to the same newspaper, wrote last year (Grewal 2000).

While my attachment to Canada grows each day my interest in my country of birth is kept alive by flying back and forth, as well as the telephone lines and the Internet. Also, because my ethnic community is large … here, I have access to ethnic groceries, music, clothing and plenty of imported entertainment …. Without question, my future generations will belong here more. But let me belong in both places without guilt.

What Kurl, Grewal, and others appear to be saying is that they want to live within their differences, rather than to conform to a common denominator, whether it is Canadian or Asian. Questions of identity, Stuart Hall (1996: 4) states, are less about who we are or where we came from than about what we might become, how others represent us, and how we want to represent ourselves.

For our conclusion we want to explore a little further the direction suggested by Kurl and Grewal. We offer you two images to think about. The first concerns several public
demonstrations that occurred in a Vancouver suburb last year. In early March 2000 the B.C. Teachers Federation executive announced that it would recommend support for gay-straight social clubs in secondary schools at its forthcoming meeting of British Columbia teachers. The purpose of these social clubs is to combat homophobia and to support gay students who face discrimination from their classmates. A week before the meeting about 300 parents, many of Asian descent, gathered together in a local hall to denounce the teachers’ proposal with “a fervour akin to a religious revival” (Sacharias 2000). They waved placards linking homosexuality to alcoholism, drug dealing, and violence, and they warned they would pull their children out of any schools that formed these clubs. A week later a group of students, also including those of Asian heritage, rallied to protest the protesters (Smith 2000). “We support Gay/Straight Alliances in School,” a placard held by one student stated in English and Chinese. “We are the people our parents warned us about!” read another held up by a young man. “Get over it Mom,” proclaimed a third placard.

Valentine’s Day is for everybody, the Birks vice-president of marketing said. “These displays are a modern way of speaking to people, and they’re a reflection of the reality of life.” “Let’s treat all Canadians the same,” a gay activist was quoted by a national newspaper approving the window display. “Let’s get over it,” he said.

Let’s get over our fear of cultural differences, people are saying, and respect our right to live within those differences rather than to resolve them. Young Asian-Canadians are claiming the right to define their own identities constructed out of their own mixed backgrounds. They want to be both different from and the same as other Canadians. They want both their own communities and other Canadians to accept them as they are and wish to be.

Birks & Sons, long respected as a conservative retailer catering to older people, suffered serious financial problems in the early 1990s, was sold to an Italian company in 1993, and has since set about to attract younger clientele. Birks introduced television ads last year for the first time in its history. “Birks is for everybody,” said the vice-president of marketing.

People of colour, other minorities, gays and lesbians not only now have their basic human rights enshrined in Canadian legislation, they are also attracting increasing attention from consumer industries. Businesses retain “diversity experts” (Mossop 2001) to advise on marketing strategies. The Hudson Bay and Birks window displays serve to remind us that the individual’s struggle for autonomy and equity runs parallel with the market’s struggle to attract individuals as consumers. The two streams intersect when individuals learn to express their identities and satisfy their inner most desires through consumption.
We are not saying that the consumer marketplace is inspiring the pursuit of personal life styles, or even more improbably, that human rights legislation shapes the market. What we are suggesting is that underlying both social and economic pursuits are the values of private property and sovereign individualism. These two powerful ideals that are spreading around the world lead to noble sentiments about the universality of human rights, and also to the darker sides of possessive individualism. Most of us, including those reported on in this paper, would like to negotiate pathways between the extremes. The choices available, however, are always limited by the conditions of time, place, and circumstance, including those stubborn realities of ethnicity, gender, class, and the prevailing structures of inequality, authority, and domination. It is nevertheless apparent, and ironic, that the growing individualism of young people often marches forward hand-in-hand, even if sometimes unwillingly or unknowingly, with the expansion of consumer capitalism.

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3. There is no standard or universally accepted terminology for referring to Canadians of South Asian heritage. We choose this term because it is more inclusive than others. Other terms used in Canada are more politicized, for example “immigrant,” “minority,” “visible minority,” and “people of colour.” The latter term is sometimes used as a self-identifier, similar to Gurjit Sandhu’s reference to “brown bodies,” whereas “visible minority” is preferred by government and the media (Creese and Dowling 2001: 4).

4. All participant names cited in this paper are pseudonyms.

5. All quotations are taken from Gurjit Sandhu’s field notes. See Ames and Sandhu 2000 for information on the first study.

6. This phrase was borrowed from a presentation to a management symposium in 1994 by University of Massachusetts professor of management Marta B. Calás (1994).

7. Quotations about the Birks’ example are from MacDonald 2001.
Psychological Perspectives on the Promotion of Multiculturalism

The Role of National Identification and Group Power

Antoinette H. Semenya and Victoria M. Esses

University of Western Ontario
Abstract

Although the study of ethnic, racial and religious minority experiences has recently increased, there is little research examining the attitudes and behaviour of members of these groups toward other groups. Increases in the visible minority population in Canada, and Canada’s multiculturalism goals, indicate that this is an important area of investigation. In a series of studies involving Chinese and Black individuals living in Canada, we examined the relations among individuals’ strength of Canadian identification, perceptions of group power, and attitudes and behaviour toward other groups. The implications of these studies for understanding the intergroup attitudes and behaviour of ethnic minority groups, and the promotion of multiculturalism goals and positive intergroup relations, are discussed.

Psychological Perspectives on the Promotion of Multiculturalism: The Role of National Identification and Group Power

Although the study of ethnic, racial and religious minority experiences has recently increased, there is little research examining the attitudes and behaviour of members of these groups toward other groups. Increases in the visible minority population in Canada, and Canada’s multiculturalism goals (Canadian Heritage Multiculturalism, 2000) indicate that this is an important area of investigation. The psychological perspective presented here focuses on perceptions of identity and group power in the prediction of positive intergroup relations. In a series of studies involving Chinese and Black individuals living in Canada, we examined the relations among individuals’ strength of Canadian identification, perceptions of group power, and attitudes and behaviour toward other groups.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model and Processes in Multiculturalism

There are two common ways in which individuals and nations may represent their national identities. Canada subscribes to a civic/cultural conception of national identity. A civic/cultural national identity is based on a voluntary commitment to the laws and institutions of a country and a subjective sense of belonging (Jones, 1997). In this way, the conception of who is Canadian, and what it means to be Canadian, can be quite broad. Our multiculturalism mandate is consistent with this perspective. This is in contrast to a nativist identity in which national identity is based on birth in the home country, kinship, or a common ethnic heritage (Jones, 1997).

One of the key goals of Canada’s multicultural policy is the maintenance of a common Canadian identity along with a heritage cultural identity among individuals of diverse backgrounds. In addition, it is hoped that such a melding of identities will promote tolerance and positive relations among groups that differ on racial, ethnic, religious, or other dimensions (Angus Reid, 1991). One psychological theory which directly examines the effects of such identities on intergroup relations is the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1993).

The Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1993) suggests that the development of, or salience of a common group identity among individuals from different backgrounds will promote positive intergroup relations. In addition, intergroup positivity is promoted by the creation of this identity even among those who simultaneously identify with another group. Researchers suggest that the development of a group identity that includes members of other groups can change the cognitive representation of the ingroup. That is, members of other groups psychologically become part of the ingroup, leading to more positive intergroup attitudes and behaviour toward them.

The relation of a common ingroup identity to positive intergroup attitudes has received support in various contexts (see Gaertner et al., 2000 for a review). For example, Gaertner et al. (1994) found that among majority and minority students at an interracial high school, perceiving the school as “one group” was related to more positive emotions toward members of other racial groups. Furthermore, minority group members who reported a minority and American identity (a superordinate identity), showed more positive emotions toward members of other racial groups than those who reported only a minority group identity.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1993) is extremely useful in examining intergroup relations in a multicultural society, one in which subgroup memberships are not easily or willingly shed and the goals of multiculturalism often include the development of an overarching national identity. Extending the model to national identities, individuals who belong to
different ethnic groups could also see themselves as all part of a national group, such as Canadian. If the category “Canadian” is conceptualized as encompassing a variety of ethnic and racial categories, feeling Canadian may be related to more positive intergroup attitudes and behaviour toward others who are ethnically or racially distinct from an individual.

**Group Power, Identity and Intergroup Attitudes**

What factors may relate to identification with a national group or identity among members of minority groups? Among minority groups in particular, identification with the national identity may be related to the characterization of that superordinate category. Among minority group members, perceiving that one’s group is part of the superordinate category will likely increase one’s identification with it. We suggest that the perception of oneself and one’s group as part of the national category may be related to perceptions of group power (one’s group influence or status within the nation in question). In other words, one’s sense of being Canadian and the positive intergroup effects associated with it, are heightened to the degree that one perceives and believes that one’s group participates in the larger society, and is part of what characterizes this national identity.

Previous studies suggest that a group’s sense of power, encompassing a group’s perceived access to resources, may play a role in willingness to have intergroup contact, as well as the quality of intergroup contact. For example, Corenblum (2001) found that among Native Canadians, the larger the perception of a status differential between Whites and Natives in Canada, the greater their level of intergroup anxiety. Stephan and Stephan (1989) obtained the same result among Hispanics residing in the United States. Also, Lambert, Mermigis and Taylor (1986) found that positive perceptions of the ingroup’s economic success, cultural longevity, and political role in Canada were related to more positive attitudes toward various majority and minority groups among Greek-Canadians.

**The Present Studies**

Using a Common Ingroup Identity framework (Gaertner et al., 1993), the current research addresses the following questions,

1. How does national identity (as a common ingroup identity) relate to attitudes toward other groups among minority group members?
2. How do perceptions of group power relate to national identification and attitudes toward other groups among minority group members?
3. What are the implications of these relations for the promotion and success of multiculturalism?

To investigate these questions, we conducted a series of questionnaire studies in which Chinese and Black individuals living in Canada were asked questions regarding their ethnic identification, national identification, perceptions of group power, and attitudes and behaviour toward ethnic groups living in Canada. The target groups rated were White, Chinese, Black and East Indian people, and were the same for all studies.

### Study One

In Study One, our participants were 95 Chinese and 74 Black students recruited from cultural clubs at the University of Western Ontario. Their average age was 20 years. Approximately 59% of our sample was male and 41% was female. Thirty-four percent of participants were born in Canada, while 66% were born outside of Canada. Using a questionnaire format, we asked participants questions about the strength of their ethnic identification, national identification, and attitudes toward other groups.¹

Ethnic identification (i.e., how strongly a respondent identified with being Chinese or Black), was measured so it could be compared with national identification in its utility in predicting attitudes toward other groups. Participants’ levels of group and Canadian identification are shown in Table One. We found that Chinese and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Ethnicity</th>
<th>Strength of National Identification</th>
<th>Strength of Ethnic Identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Possible range of scores for national and ethnic identification = 1 to 7*
Black respondents had similar levels of ethnic identification, but Chinese participants reported more Canadian identification than Blacks. Among both groups of respondents, strength of ethnic identification was not significantly related to attitudes toward members of other ethnic groups. In contrast, we obtained evidence (as shown in Table 2), that the strength of Canadian identification was related to more positive attitudes toward other groups. For Chinese respondents this was related to more positive attitudes toward White people, and for Black respondents, more positive attitudes toward White and Chinese people. Consistent with the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner et al., 1993), these results provide some evidence that feeling Canadian is related to more positive attitudes toward different ethnic groups. Therefore, in Study Two we focused on national identification as our primary measure of group identification.

### Study Two (a)

In Study Two (a), participants were 38 Chinese and 29 Black students recruited from cultural clubs at the University of Western Ontario. Their average age was 23 years, 48% of the sample was male, and 52% were female. Seventy-four percent of the participants were born in Canada and 26% were born outside Canada. Study Two (a) involved the measurement of strength of national identification, perceptions of one’s ethnic group power in Canada, and willingness to have intimate contact with members of other groups. Among Chinese participants, both the strength of Canadian identification and perception of their group’s power in Canada were related to increased willingness to have intimate contact with other groups (see Tables 3 & 4). That is, the more Chinese individuals felt Canadian and perceived that Chinese people have power in Canada, the more willingly they were to be close friends, date and marry members of different ethnic groups.

In addition, a very strong relation between the strength of Canadian identification and perceptions of group power emerged, such that among Chinese individuals, feeling Canadian was related to perceiving more ethnic group power in Canada. Given this relation, further statistical analyses were performed for Chinese participants, demonstrating that when the strength of Canadian identification and perception of group power were considered together, it was the perception of group power that was the key predictor of willingness to engage in intimate contact with members of other groups. In other words, perceptions of group power were a stronger predictor of willingness to engage in intimate contact in comparison to strength of national identification.

### Study Two (b)

To examine more clearly whether perceptions of group power cause an increase in willingness to engage in intimate intergroup contact, we present here the results of an experimental manipulation embedded in the Study Two questionnaire. Because the correlational analyses of Study Two (a) were most consistent for Chinese participants, we examined the results of the experimental manipulation for Chinese participants only. In this manipulation the power of participants’ ethnic group in Canada was made salient or not salient, and perceptions of their group’s power, and willingness to have intimate contact

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**Table 2.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Ethnicity</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>East Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *p < .05

**Table 3.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Ethnicity</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>East Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: **p < .01
with members of other ethnic groups were subsequently measured.

To manipulate the salience of their ethnic group’s power, we had Chinese participants read either a “neutral” editorial discussing ethnic groups in Canada, or a “power” editorial that described the increased role and status of their ethnic group in Canadian society (both of which were created by the experimenters). After reading about the power of their ethnic group in Canadian society, Chinese participants were more willingly to engage in intimate contact with East Indians and Blacks, more so than those who read the neutral editorial (see Table 5).

### General Discussion

The results of these studies suggest that the strength of national identification and perceptions of ingroup power are important predictors of attitudes toward other ethnic groups, and willingness to have intimate contact with these groups, among ethnic minority groups. Willingness to have intimate contact goes beyond tolerating diversity and reflects actually embracing it. Multicultural policy and initiatives that strive to create a common sense of what it means to be Canadian are clearly focusing on an important factor in the promotion of positive relations among different groups in Canadian society.

These results also suggest that group power may play a unique role in the attitudes and behaviours of ethnic minority groups toward other ethnic groups in Canada. Believing in the successful participation and role of one’s ethnic group in the larger society is related to stronger identification as Canadian, and more positive intergroup attitudes and behaviour.

This suggests that the construction of a multicultural Canadian identity is possible and beneficial, but in the absence of real individual and group experiences that confirm participation and acceptance from the larger culture, these messages may not take hold among the groups that may need to believe them most.

Another important conclusion drawn from these studies is that the role of these variables in predicting attitudes and behaviour toward members of other ethnic groups may vary, depending on the minority group in question. Results for Black participants in these studies were not as strong or consistent as they were for Chinese participants. If our samples were expanded to include other minority and majority groups, it is likely that similar variability would be observed. Such differences underscore the variability in the ethnic minority experience in Canada. Groups that may appear similarly disadvantaged can nonetheless experience their ethnicity and race in different ways, affecting the manner in which they function and succeed in Canadian society.

For example, being Black in North America is associated with a salient history of prejudice and discrimination, particularly in the United States (Sellers et al., 1997). This may make it more difficult for individuals from this group to construe a national identity that includes them, in comparison to individuals from a Chinese background. Black Canadians report personal experiences of discrimination (Dion & Kawakami, 1996) and perceive bias in social institutions (e.g., criminal justice system) to a greater extent than Chinese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Ethnicity</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>East Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.44*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editorial</th>
<th>Target Groups</th>
<th>East Indian</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Possible range of scores for willingness to have intimate intergroup contact=0 to 8
living in Canada (Wortley, 1996). Furthermore, perceiving group power may not impart the greater sense of security that may make one more likely to engage with members of other groups because this power may be understood as more unstable, and potentially always inadequate among Blacks. The Chinese in Canada also have a history of prejudice and discrimination, but it may not be as salient in popular consciousness. This is one possible explanation for the variability in results among our Black and Chinese participants.

Future studies with participants of different ethnicity, race and religion can help to document the nature and consistency of the potential variation in predicting attitudes and behaviour toward members of other ethnic groups. In conclusion, multiculturalism research can benefit from examining how sociocultural features of Canadian society are experienced among minority and majority group members, and translated into psychological beliefs about what it means to be Canadian.

Notes:

1. Strength of National Identification – e.g., “I feel I fit in well with other Canadians.”
2. Measure of Perceived Group Power – e.g., “How much power does your group have in Canada?”
3. Measure of Willingness to Have Intimate Intergroup Contact – e.g., “If given the opportunity, I would be willing to marry an East Indian person.”
4. Neutral Editorial Excerpt – e.g., “…recent evidence suggests that immigrants to Canada are representative of immigrants to many western countries. They do not differ substantially from immigrants to our neighbour to the south…”

Power Editorial Excerpt – e.g., “…More than ever before, visible minorities make up an important part of our legal, political and economic systems. It is important to note that this increased representation has not come at the expense of heritage values and culture…”

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Restorative Justice:

Re-thinking Policy for Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples
by Walid Chahal
Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately over-represented in Canada’s adult prisons and penitentiary system. While constituting only 3 percent of the general Canadian population, Aboriginal peoples make up 17 percent of federal penitentiary inmates. The percentages reach alarming levels in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where Aboriginal peoples account for close to 70 percent of those incarcerated (Wilson 2000; Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, 1996: V. 5; see also Trevethan, Moore, and Rastin 2002). On the basis of the current demographic trends, social scientists assert that this over-representation is likely to continue unless there are fundamental changes in the way Aboriginal peoples are treated by representatives of the criminal justice system and improvements in the economic opportunities and living conditions of Aboriginal peoples (Boe, 2000:7; Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, 1996: V. 5). Alternatives to incarceration are urgently needed to rectify the situation Native peoples are facing. In line with this thinking, alternatives that are based on restorative justice are becoming increasingly popular (Achtenberg, 2000:320).

There are several reasons for this popularity, most notably the increasing cost of incarceration, the failure of institutional programs and policies to rehabilitate offenders, and the dissatisfaction with a justice system that does not take into consideration the needs of the victim and the community.

In this paper, I show the significance of adopting policies and alternatives that are based on restorative justice philosophy and practices. I demonstrate that understanding restorative justice principles is of tremendous significance for lawmakers and law enforcers of the criminal justice system. Adopting and implementing restorative justice principles will enable representatives of the criminal justice system to focus on the social context of offending and to put emphasis on cooperation, healing and rehabilitation. Consequently, they will be able to effectively reduce crime and its cost. In order to shed more light on the causes of Aboriginal criminality and social economic positions of Aboriginal peoples (Wotherspoon and Satzewich 1993:185).

From a political economy perspective, mapping out a demographic overview of Aboriginal peoples is essential. Collectively, Aboriginal peoples in Canada occupy disadvantaged positions socially, economically and politically. Aboriginal peoples are worse off on any socio-economic and political aspects in relation to the national average. The figures are appalling. After studying the findings of several studies and the different Royal Commissions on Aboriginal peoples, Henry, Tator, Mattis and Rees (2000:138-39) provide us with a good summary. They indicate that the jobless rate among Aboriginal peoples is around 70 percent, and out of the Aboriginal people living on reserve 62 percent are dependent on social assistance. Aboriginal infant mortality rates are more than double the national rates. Aboriginal suicide is three times the national average. The percentage of functional illiteracy among Aboriginal peoples is 45 percent compared with a national average of 17 percent. Other statistics pertaining to longevity rates, criminality, and the health and living conditions of Aboriginal peoples are worse than national averages.

The situation of Aboriginal peoples is, in part, embedded in the practices of the Canadian criminal justice system. It should be indicated that, in Canada, we follow a punitive approach to solving the crime problem. Over the years, the rate of incarceration has been on the increase. Between 1995-96, Canada’s rates of incarceration for the adult population was 151 per 100,000 people...
The crimes of the majority of offenders are of non-violent nature. Out of 2.5 million criminal code offences (excluding traffic violations) reported in 1997, 12 percent were violent crimes, 58 percent were property crimes and 30 percent were other Criminal Code offences such as mischief, prostitution, arson, bail violations, and disturbing the peace (The Juristat Reader, 1999:119). Many studies have shown, over and over again that punitive measures do not rehabilitate offenders nor reduce the rates of recidivism (for further discussion see Winterdyk 2000:514).

Within the cost inefficient, punitive and unsatisfactory context of the Canadian criminal justice system lies the particular situation of Aboriginal people. Aboriginal peoples make up around 3 percent of the general Canadian population, but are disproportionately over-represented in federal and provincial prisons. In federal prisons, they accounted for 9 percent of the inmates in 1984, 11 percent in 1991 (Wotherspoon and Satzewich, 1993:181) and 14 percent in 1996 (Boe, 2000:7). By 1999, they were even more over-represented as the proportion had increased to 17.5 percent (Boe, 2000:7). At the provincial level, they represented 15 percent of the total inmate population in 1991 (Boe, 2000:7) and 17 percent in 1996. In some provinces, the percentages of Aboriginal inmates are exceedingly high. For instance, in Alberta 78 percent of Aboriginal men and 35 percent of Aboriginal women have a record of arrest (Nielsen, 1992:4). Overall in Canada, the situation of Aboriginal women is worse than that of the men. Marianne O. Nielson (1992) tells us that prior to the 1960s this over involvement went unnoticed. Subsequently, in 1967 a report on Native incarceration, “Indian and the Law: the Canadian Correction Associations,” was published by the Canadian Correction Associations.

This initial report was followed by others which manifested clearly the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in federal and provincial correctional institutions. Between 1967 and 1991 close to 30 major reports emerged. These reports reflected the extent of the mistreatment of Aboriginal people by representatives of the criminal justice system and the police. The authors of the reports referred to the wretched socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal peoples and made recommendations to the governments to seriously examine the causes of the over-involvement of Native peoples in the criminal justice system and in correctional institutions (Nielson, 1992).

In the early 1990’s, three major reports looked further into the mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples by the police and various members of the criminal justice system: The Report of the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall (1990); The Report on the Criminal Justice System and its impact on the Aboriginal and Metis people of Alberta (1991); and The Report of Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba (1991). All these reports showed evidence of racism and the fact that the justice system fails Aboriginal peoples. The conclusion of the report on Manitoba’s Aboriginal peoples reveals that Aboriginal criminal behaviour is an effect of the protracted history of discrimination and of the social inequality that has produced Aboriginal poverty and marginality.

Analysis of Aboriginal criminality

Several perspectives have been developed over the years to account for crime among Aboriginal peoples, their disproportionate over representation in
the criminal justice system, and their disadvantaged social, economic and political position. The main perspectives are the genetic or biological model, the cultural or “culture of poverty” and assimilationist interpretation, and the political economy perspective. In the following section, I provide a brief overview of each interpretation, and then show the suitability of a political economy perspective in understanding Aboriginal peoples and the justice system.

**The Biological Explanation**

Adherents of the genetic or biological explanation indicate that behaviour stems from the biological makeup of the individual. Structural factors and social context are perceived as having nothing or little to do with how people behave or the predicaments they find themselves in. Supporters of this model argue that certain racial groups have greater propensities for criminal behaviour. A modern variation of this explanation concentrates on the psychological traits of individuals. While there is no denying that biological/genetic or psychological explanations can be useful in analysing specific circumstances or certain unique cases, these factors cannot however explain the majority of cases. To date neither biologists, geneticists, or social scientists have been able to marshal any evidence which would suggest that the biological makeup of a group of people makes them behave in ways that are resistant to modernization or would otherwise keep them from enhancing their quality of life. People with unexamined racist beliefs still uphold that the biological makeup of people (usually the colour of skin) determines their behaviour. However, it is clear today that there is no evidence to support this reductionist theoretical explanation (Frideres, 1993: 545).

**The Cultural / Assimilationist Explanation**

Adherents of the cultural explanation point out that crime among Indigenous people, as well as their social problems, are the result of traditional cultural behaviour. The work of theorists who subscribe to this school of thought view the subordinate status of Native peoples mainly as a problem of race and ethnic relations, or merely as a problem of difference in cultures or the “culture of poverty.” For these theorists, Aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples constitute two relatively homogenous groups whose cultures are different. In other words, the problems that Native people face emanate from their different and inadequate culture, which is often viewed as homogenous and static, as well as from their inability to assimilate into the larger white culture (Nagler, 1975). There are several problems with this line of reasoning (see Wotherspoon and Satzewich, 1993:3-6). First, Aboriginal peoples do not belong to one culture. They come from diverse groups with many different cultural aspects, from codes of behaviour to issues concerning justice. Second, the problem with this kind of analysis is that it does not take into consideration the dynamic nature of culture and the link of culture(s) to a range of material aspects and economic factors which affect and shape culture (Yancey, Erickson, and Juliani, 1976). Third, cultural differences on their own can not explain inequality, poverty, unemployment or criminality. In order to understand criminality and the disadvantaged position of Aboriginal people, cultural differences must be viewed in the context of power relations. To further elucidate the necessity of drawing on an interlocking grid of power relations, I refer to the following quote by Charles Reasons (1977:255):

*The order/assimilationist perspective minimizes the significance of power and coercion in everyday life between subordinate and superordinate groups, emphasizing [instead] the social psychology of individual and group adaptation to dominate group values and the practices .... While attention is given to problems of the few dominant group...*
members who are prejudiced and discriminate .... specific attention [is] given to the characteristics of natives [and is] interpreted as evidence of their lack of adequate socialization and assimilation, anomie, etc. (cited in Havemann et al, 1985: x-xi).

As Reasons’ quotation makes clear, the cultural interpretation reduces complexity by minimizing the power relations of the larger society and highlighting individual behaviour.

In both the biological and cultural/assimilationist models, the blame then is placed on the individual. William Ryan expands on how both perspectives culminate in a focus on the individual:

Blaming the Victim is, of course, quite different from old-fashioned ... ideologies. The latter simply dismissed victims as inferior, genetically defective, or morally unfit; the emphasis is on the intrinsic, even hereditary, defect. The former shifts its emphasis to the environmental causation. The old-fashioned [ideologies] could hold firmly to the belief that the oppressed and the victimized were born that way—that way’ being defective or inadequate in character or ability. The

new ideology attributes defect and inadequacy to the malignant nature of poverty, injustice, slum life, and racial difficulties. The stigma that marks the victim and accounts for his victimization is an acquired stigma, a stigma of social rather than genetic, origin. But the stigma, the defect, the fatal difference—though derived in the past from environmental forces—is still located within the victim... (1971:7).

The Political Economy Explanation

Unlike the biological/psychological and cultural/assimilationalist perspectives, the political economy model is a macro approach. It is important to note that employing a macro approach does not exclude an analysis of the individual. Recently, political economy analysts have started to address the role of agency, that is, the role individuals play in the making and shaping of their lives and their resistance to policies and structural factors. Adherents of the political economy approach focus on a wide range of issues including gender, class, and race, as well as ethnic inequality, poverty, control, and social and economic development. Their analyses also incorporate regionalism, nationalism, and globalization. Political economy as a definition refers to “An interdisciplinary and historical style of social analysis, which draws upon economics, political science, and sociology in attempting to understand power in modern market societies (Carroll, 1988:129). Rather than a focus on the individual, then, a political economy perspective maps out complex and multiple intersecting social, economic, and historical relations. Because of its acknowledgement of power relations, this paper relies on the political economy approach to analyze the situation of Aboriginal peoples within the criminal justice system and looks at the relations of history and economics as they interlock with political and cultural phenomenon.

Analyses from the political economy perspective, then, explain criminality and socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal people by examining the relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples in the context of colonial history, discriminatory policies and power relations. Such an approach enables us to locate Aboriginal criminality, and their experiences and resistance in the larger Canadian capitalist structure with its history of racism, classism and sexism (for further explanation of this approach, see Wotherspoon and Satzewich, 1993:1-14; and Comack, 1996:28-34). Additionally, the political economy approach addresses the perpetuation of discriminatory policies by examining the construction and reconstruction of specific negative images and ideologies concerning Aboriginal peoples and the conception of crime which are often manifested through the media and educational institutions (for further explanation see Schissel, 1997:103-113). Hence, to
render analysis complete, all the aforementioned factors of the political economy should be included; however, due to the length parameters of this paper, I will select a few of these factors to develop.

**Historical overview of the Aboriginal peoples**

The destructive impacts of government regulation, dispossession of lands, and forced adoption of foreign cultural systems, are felt widely throughout Aboriginal communities in all regions of Canada (Turtle/Aki-Kwe, 1992:81). The contemporary socio-economic problems of Canada's Indigenous peoples are rooted in historical relations. The early historical contact in the 17th century between Aboriginal peoples and the European settlers can be characterized as relatively peaceful (Frideres, 1998:14-16). The mode of production at that point revolved around the fur trade. Aboriginal people were needed for trading and they taught the European settlers the skills necessary to survive in the new harsh climate. By the 19th century, with the decline of the fur trade and the establishment in Canada of European people with an agricultural mode of production, Aboriginal people were no longer economically important. They were seen as pests by the newcomers (Nock, 1979). Many of the new settlers thought that the Native people constituted a homogenous entity belonging to one culture. Also, many of the colonizers assumed that Aboriginal ways of life, their "cultures," and their religion were inferior (Frideres, 1993). The hunting and gathering mode of production of Aboriginal peoples became replaced by a wage economy through the creation of a system of economic dependence (see Kellough, 1980). By and large, prior to the 1850s, the policy pursued by the British settlers assumed the role of protecting the Native peoples as guaranteed under the British Royal Proclamation of 1763 (for a good discussion of the latter see Wotherspoon and Satzewich, 1993:20-26).

By the 1850s, however, the policy shifted from protecting the Aboriginal peoples to coercing and controlling them. For instance, the Act of 1857 called for the gradual "civilizing" of the Native people. Through this policy, the teachings of white values and Christian religious beliefs were imposed upon Aboriginal peoples. Between the 1850s and the 1920s Native people were placed on reserves. On the reserves, schools were established that reflected Protestant and Catholic values. In 1876, the Indian Act was created. The Indian Act marked the beginning of institutional racism. In the Indian Act, Aboriginal peoples were referred to as Indians. The Act codified divisions by providing a definition of who was and who was not an Indian, that is, who was status and who was non-status. As a result of the Indian Act, Native governments were replaced by band councils. Aboriginal peoples were given small territories of unarable land. When it was later discovered that the land had minerals or was needed for building bridges or dams, the Indigenous inhabitants were displaced from their land. Examples of government expropriation includes the Cree along the James Bay in Quebec, the Metis in Saskatchewan, and the Lubicon in Alberta. (for an explanation of these cases see Anderson, 1992:471-72, 475-477). Often, Aboriginal peoples were not allowed to play a role in the economic projects that were developed on their land or around their settlements. In the 1920s, residential schools were established and Aboriginal children were forced to leave their communities and enrol in these schools. The children were forbidden to speak their mother tongue language (Nock, 1979), and the values and the Christianity of the dominant society were imposed upon them. Through
their forced assimilation, Aboriginal children were taught the gender specific roles of the politically dominant. Moreover, many of the children suffered from sexual, physical and emotional abuse in these schools. In the 1960s, residential schools were terminated. The Indian Act also resulted in Aboriginal women losing their status when marrying non-native men. This was the case until the 1980’s (see reference to the Loveless case in Li, 1990:83). Furthermore, prior to the 1960s, Aboriginal people were not allowed to vote at the federal or the provincial level.

The aforementioned factors are just a partial listing of the socio-economic and political relations shaping the lives of contemporary Aboriginal peoples. To understand Aboriginal criminality and the social problems they face, one has to include the centuries of injustices, racism, and the discriminatory and exclusionary policies they have been encountering. The legacy of centuries of dispossession, oppression, and exploitation directed at the Aboriginal peoples of Canada is reflected today in Aboriginal peoples' high rates of physical and mental illness, suicide, homicide, incarceration, unemployment, and poverty—which are, as Henry et al point out, the direct result of pervasive and intractable racism (2000:139).

Despite that since the last two decades Canada has been moving in the direction of eradicating racism and sexism by adopting anti-racist and anti-sexist policies (e.g., employment equity), racism and sexism are still manifested in our society. In the following section, I refer to the existence of racism by summarizing the main findings of some of the studies and the different Royal Commissions on Aboriginal peoples.

The following refers to some of the most important recurring themes in all these studies and the above mentioned Royal Commissions:

- The first one points to the manifestation of racist attitudes and acts by police officers. For instance: Aboriginal people were more likely to be charged with multiple offences by four or more charges, compared with only 13 percent of non-Aboriginal people. Once arrested, Aboriginal people were found to be 1.34 times more likely than non-aboriginal people to be held in jail before their court appearances and once in pre-trial custody. Aboriginal people spent 1.5 times longer in custody before their trials (Henry, 2000:184).

- The second theme refers to the issue of over-policing and under-policing. Aboriginal areas are watched more by police which usually results in more arrests. Under-policing means that Aboriginal peoples are protected less by the police. The following statement illustrates the under-policing of Aboriginal peoples:

If a woman calls the police because she is...
being assaulted, she is not always treated in the same manner as a non-Aboriginal woman making the same call. When we talk to women about calling the police for assistance, very often the response is, ‘Why bother, they will probably just ask me if I was drinking’. Our women get this treatment from all aspects of the system. (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal people, 1996, cited in Henry, 2000: 185).

- The third and the fourth themes show the existence of poor police-community relations and the presence of biased jury-selection procedures.
- The fifth theme indicates that many of the representatives of the criminal justice system assume that the law is neutral; however, as Henry et al clarify, “laws robbed Aboriginal people of their Land, history, and culture. Law cannot, therefore, be understood as a neutral construct” (2000:148).
- The sixth theme refers to the existence of sentencing disparities.
- The seventh theme states that minorities are perceived to be guilty before they are tried.
- Continuing with this critique of the entire criminal justice system, the eighth theme points out to the following 4 aspects:
  1) lack of professional competence;
  2) lack of accountability;
  3) lack of representation;
  4) lack of services and programs.
- The ninth theme shows the manifestation of racist attitudes and behaviour by some judges, jurors, lawyers and other court officials, and disparaging remarks made by judges (for examples, see Henry et al, 152).
- The tenth and last theme deals with the lack of communication between Aboriginal people and all levels of service providers within the justice system.

For instance, according to the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its impact on the Aboriginal and Metis people of Alberta, 1991, lack of communication was identified as one of the major flaws in the justice system. It was also pointed out by this task force that the representatives of the criminal justice system in Alberta are detached from the people they are supposed to serve, due to their preoccupation with legalistic matters and the high centralization of the system (cited in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Report of the Round Table on Aboriginal Justice Issues 1993:20). The wrongful conviction of Donald Marshall, Jr., a Mikmaq of Nova Scotia who spent eleven years in prison for a crime he did not commit (for detail see Joy Mannete, 1992), is another example of the mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples by representatives of the criminal justice system. A Commission (The Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr., Prosecution, 1989) was appointed by the Nova Scotia government to investigate the wrongful conviction and imprisonment of Marshall. Summing up the findings of the commissioners, M.E.Turple/Aki-Kwe (1992) says:

a two-tier system of justice exists in Nova Scotia—a system that responds differently depending on the status, wealth and race of the person investigated …. Donald Marshall Jr., as a Mikmaq was on the bottom of the second tier. The commissioners concluded that the Canadian criminal system failed Donald Marshall Jr., “at every turn,” from his arrest and wrongful conviction in 1971 up to—and even beyond—his acquittal by the court of appeal in the Reference decision in 1983 …. because Marshall is Mikmaq (91).

As the numerous examples referred to above show, the differential treatment of Aboriginal peoples and people of colour in Canada’s criminal justice system is thoroughly documented. The biased treatment of Indigenous peoples is evident in the pervasiveness of discrimination...
throughout the justice system. The findings of the various studies indicate that minorities are treated differently at every stage of dispensing justice. Differential treatment is meted out by the police, through the courts, and in the correctional system. Growing evidence confirms that the different assessments of Aboriginal peoples and minorities lead to differential treatment throughout the criminal justice system, and thus, starts at the point of entry into the system and continues to the point of exit (Turkle/Ake-Kwe, 1992:147-8).

Recommendations of the Royal Commissions

Commissioners of the different Royal Commissions mentioned earlier in this paper have come up with significant recommendations to resolve the mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples by the criminal justice system. I included below ten of these important recommendations which were reiterated in the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples.

- First, there should be more Aboriginal advisory groups at all levels.
- Second, there should be more recognition of Aboriginal culture and law in the criminal justice service delivery.
- Third, there should be more focus on crime prevention programs.
- Fourth, self-determination must be considered in the planning and operation of the criminal justice system.
- Fifth, there should be cross-cultural training for non-Aboriginal staff.
- Sixth, more Aboriginal staff should be employed by the criminal justice system.
- Seventh, there should be more community-based programs in corrections.
- Eighth, there should be more community-based alternatives in sentencing.
- Ninth, there should be more special assistance for Aboriginal offenders.
- Tenth, there should be more Aboriginal community involvement in planning, decision-making and service delivery.

The multiple recommendations of the Royal Commissions reveal the extent of the failure of current policy and practices to adequately address Native peoples interactions with the criminal justice system. The recommendations indicate a pressing need to redress policy and implement fundamental changes to Canada’s criminal justice system, its practices, and its representatives and practitioners. Restorative justice based on traditional Aboriginal justice provides a viable option to the present inadequacies.

General Characteristics of Traditional Native Justice System

The main characteristics of traditional Aboriginal justice systems put emphasis on the social context of the offence, the relevance of the offence to the welfare of the community, reconciliation between offender and victim, and justice as an integral part of the community (for further characteristics see Appendix A). These characteristics are the direct opposite of the contemporary Canadian criminal justice system which is a lengthy, formalized, legislated process that employs outside “experts” to mete codified punishment (for a listing of its main characteristics see Appendix A). Restorative justice, however, provides...
an alternative to conventional criminal justice processing and enables the implementation of the recommendations of various commissions and researchers, as well as those of Aboriginal peoples themselves. Ron Claassen, the co-director of the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno Pacific College and founding executive director of the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) of the Central Valley defines restorative justice and its main principles as:

[a] whole system … based on the purpose of restoration of victim, community, offender, families, friends, restorative justice officials and any other individuals or relationships that might have been damaged by the crime. In a restorative system, the primary focus would be on the human violations and need for healing and restoration of individuals and relationships. Focusing on the violation of law would be a backup for those unwilling to be cooperative (2000:1 online).

The aim of restorative justice according to Claassen and other advocates is to correct the wrongs committed, to compensate for losses, and to rehabilitate the offenders. For the advocates of restorative justice, crime is conceptualised as a violation of one person against another, rather than as a violation against the state (Umbreit and Carey, 1994). Restorative justice principles entail face-to-face interactions between offenders, victims, relatives, respected members of the community and others. At the core of restorative justice is the active involvement of the victim and other members of the community in the process. The victim and the offender are expected to be active in resolving the problem related to the offence. Mark Umbreit and Mark Carey (1994) explain further the concept of restorative justice:

Severely punishing offenders is less important than providing opportunities to empower victims in their search for closure through gaining a better understanding of what happened and being able to move on with their lives, to impress upon offenders the real human impact of their behavior, and to promote restitution to victims (47).

Restorative justice, as Umbreit and Carey explain, stresses accountability and seeks re-integration of the offender in her/his community rather than punitive isolation. Hal Pepinsky cites criminologists Nils Christie and Birgit Brock-Utne, who, like himself, subscribe to the peacemaking perspective, on the impracticality and ineffectiveness of punishment: “Punishment is an act designed to establish that I’m up here, and you’re down there, and you’ll do as I order you or else I’m going to hurt you like this (Christie 1981). It is strictly a command for obedience and loyalty (Brock-Utne 1989)” (1994:21). By codifying power over others, punishment reinforces the unequal power relations that structure society.

The way our current criminal justice system operates does not take into consideration the social context in which crime and disorder occur. As a result of this decontextualization, the people involved become marginalized in the process. Hence, to ensure that social rather than merely legal goals are achieved, advocates of restorative justice put great emphasis on the social context. Restorative justice has been slowly emerging within the Canadian justice system. The ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system to settle disputes, rehabilitate offenders, or address the concerns of victims and communities, as well as its inability to satisfactorily reduce crime has resulted in sceptical attitudes and losing confidence in the criminal justice system, and hence, signals an opportunity to explore—and implement—alternatives.

Sentencing Circles (Canada)

Sentencing circles are an essential part of restorative justice for Aboriginal peoples. Sentencing circles in Canada are based on traditional Indigenous healing and talking circles. Although Native peoples in Canada have been using restorative justice for centuries, only recently have sentencing circles been incorporated in the Canadian Criminal Code (see reference to the Cladue decision, section718.2, in Achtenberg, 2000: 32). The emergence of these circles evolved from the failure of the criminal justice system in
Aboriginal communities. Currently, throughout Canada, there is no formal territorial guiding principle to conduct the circles. Unlike the formal courtroom setting, the circles are characterized by informality. Under the sentencing circles, offenders are directly accountable to the community rather than the larger criminal justice system. Sentencing circles are composed of inner and outer circles. In the inner circle, participants are immediately involved in the discussions regarding justice, whereas the outer circle consists of people who act as observers and participants in the discussions. The organizers of the circles invite family and community members to play a role in this informal justice process. The aim of the members of the circle is to achieve consensus concerning the sentencing plan for the offender. Healing is sought only after the completion of the circle. Under such a restorative approach, the members of the community encourage offenders to change their lives. Adherents of the sentencing circles argue that the victim-offender reconciliation strengthens communities (La Prairie 2000:278-279). As Carol La Prairie explains: “by empowering community members to resolve their own issues, sentencing circles restore people's sense of collective responsibility. Sentencing circles ‘Restore a collective pride in communities’” (2000:279). In this light, sentencing circles are in line with the current thinking of government policy makers under the new public management approach (NPM) which looks at cost effectiveness and emphasizes cooperation, partnership with the community and decentralization (Pal, 1996: 156-172). La Prairie cites commentators who stipulate that circle sentencing “forges a partnership between community and government in re-creating the justice system; addresses the underlying causes of criminal activity and fosters feelings of trust, esteem, respect, understanding, and commitment through the direct involvement of the community with the issues” (279). Circle sentencing for Aboriginal peoples is a restorative justice principle that enables an holistic approach to crime and punishment through situating the individual offender within her/his collective community.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I used the political economy approach to explain the causes of Aboriginal socio-economic conditions and Aboriginal peoples disproportionate over involvement with the criminal justice system. I argued that in order to deal effectively with the social problems that Aboriginal peoples encounter and which underpin their engagement with crime, restorative justice alternatives need to be sought out and implemented. Aboriginal peoples in conflict with the law and their interactions within the criminal justice system are constituted through the power relations circulating through Canadian society. These relations of power are embedded in a history of racism, racist policies, and ineffective and destructive practices. Policy makers and law enforcers must adopt and implement restorative justice principles that emphasize cooperation, integration, healing and rehabilitation within a community context. As pointed out by numerous researchers and Royal Commissions, the present system fails Aboriginal peoples in multiple ways. Furthermore, the cost of incarceration is exorbitant. Although the rectification of the social problems faced by Aboriginal peoples also entails significant financial expenditures, effecting far-reaching change benefits not only Aboriginal peoples, but also all Canadians. The Commissioners of the Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal peoples—Renewal: A Twenty-Year Commitment (1996: Vol. 5) make the case that both the financial costs of ameliorating the socio-economic conditions and of incarcerating Aboriginal offenders are tremendous. The commissioners of this report are worth quoting at length on the need to redirect our policies to not only redress the injustices inflicted on Aboriginal people, but also to better meet the needs of all Canadians:

If Aboriginal peoples had more and better jobs, they would be capable of meeting basic needs from their own incomes …. Expenditures on remedial programs…pay for activities that could be eliminated if conditions changed for the better and services were more sensitive to Aboriginal needs and cultures. If Aboriginal people were healthier of body and spirit and their families less troubled, they would
require less in the way of health care and social services, and there would be fewer cases of Aboriginal people in conflict with the law. As well, remedial services, especially the justice system, could be far more effective in dealing with Aboriginal people than they are now. Each of these improvements would mean that real productive resources could be freed for other uses. Many of the public sector employees now delivering remedial services could be redeployed to produce valuable goods and services. That these goods and services are not being produced now imposes accost on Aboriginal people and all Canadians. (1996: 46)

Restorative justice recognizes the welfare of the community, both the Aboriginal community and the larger Canadian society. Real solutions for Aboriginal peoples start with the application of the principles of restorative justice. Law makers and enforcers need to recognize the failings of the present system and examine viable alternatives; social goals need to be brought to the forefront. Rather than looking at Aboriginal issues in a polarized way, that is, through an “us and them” dichotomy, participants and representatives of the criminal justice system should critically examine the racism embedded in current policies and practices and put emphasis on eradicating biases, ensuring cultural sensitivity and cooperation, integrating offenders in their community, and dismantling discriminatory aspects that result in the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in the system. Rectifying the economic and social problems of Aboriginal peoples and employing models such as sentencing circles which emerge from Aboriginal justice systems, are restorative justice principles that offer challenges to current policies and practices in the Canadian context. Rather than shifting the focus on the individual and blaming the victim, restorative justice situates an individual in her/his community, and recognizes the multiple relations that constitute the social, economic, and political context.

In other words, in order for the restorative justice model to be successful in addressing and resolving the issue of Aboriginal criminality, the main elements and philosophy of this model should also be followed and implemented by policy makers, as well as other state representatives as an approach to effectively deal with the social, economic and political (including the issue of self-rule and autonomy or lack of them) problems faced by Aboriginal peoples. Policies based on restorative justice principles benefit not only Aboriginal communities, but also have the potential to strengthen the larger society.

References:


Schmallegger, Frank, MacAlister, David, McKenna, Paul F., and


Appendix A

General Characteristics of Traditional Native Justice System

a) Situational factors are important in considering the offence.
b) Punishment is immediate.
c) "Laws" are verbally communicated.
d) The relevance of the offence to the welfare of the group determines the seriousness of the punishment.
e) The Band only intervenes in individual disputes if the demands that are made are irresolvable or unreasonable.
f) Conformity is more important than retribution, etc.
g) The "punishment" benefits both the victim and the group.
h) Justice is an integral part of the group’s functioning and is understood by all.
i) Positive reinforcement and punishment are both present.
j) Enforcers have positions and power through popular consensus.

Contemporary Justice System

a) Sentencing is formalized, legislated and written in various sets and codes. Situational factors are taken into account only as part of the criminal justice system personnel’s discretion.
b) The process takes time, sometimes over a year, before trial and sentence.
c) Laws are written and codified.
d) The seriousness of the offence depends on current morals, on the value of property involved, or amount

of physical harm to the victim. There are very few "system" offences treason, unlawful assembly, obstructing justice and a few others,
e) The system is immediately involved.
f) Conformity is usually irrelevant except as an influence on the criminal justice system personnel's discretion.
g) Punishment seldom benefits the group, and benefits the victim only if restitution is ordered.
h) Justice is a separate institution, completely understood only by specialists.
i) Punishments are emphasized.
j) Enforcers are hired, and do not depend directly on popular consensus for actions.
(Quoted in Silverman and Nielsen, 1994: 248).