

**PERCEPTIONS AND ROLES OF EDUCATORS IN AN ETHNOCULTURALLY
DIVERSE SCHOOL**

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative single-site case study was conducted within a large, ethnoculturally evolving secondary school in the Greater Moncton Area of New Brunswick, Canada. Using a constructivist framework, the purpose of this research was to gain insight into the perceptions educators have of this ethnoculturally diverse school context, the roles educators believe they have in this setting, and how supported they feel as educators within this new reality. Ten educator interviews were conducted with additional data collected that included observations of the site and documental evidence. It was found that participants held mostly positive attitudes of ethnoculturally diverse newcomers and have worked to build connections and implement strategies to work with these students. However, challenges do exist with language emerging as a critical theme. There is a need for further professional learning opportunities for educators, additional supports from higher-ups, and systemic considerations to be made.

DEDICATION

For Benjamin, Noah, and Christa

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List of Abbreviations

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CRA – Canada Revenue Agency

EAL – English as an Additional Language

EECD – Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

ELL – English Language Learner

ESL – English as a Second Language

FTE – Full-Time Equivalency

MAGMA – Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton Area

NBTA – New Brunswick Teachers' Association

NBCC – New Brunswick Community College

PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

PD – Professional Development

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNDESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The world has changed. Demographically, the number of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds living, working, and coming in contact with one another globally has increased significantly. Social research has indicated that as of 2015, there were nearly 244 million international migrants worldwide, which signifies a 41 percent increase since the year 2000 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 2016). Most of this immigration has occurred in developed nations with about 71% of all international migrants living in highly developed and technological societies (UNDESA, 2016). Even among developed nations, Canada stands out as an attractive destination for immigrants. As of 2015, Canada's foreign-born population was the highest in the G8 at 22 percent (UNDESA, 2016). The percentage of immigrants living in Canada has nearly reached the record-breaking number of 22.3 percent set in the 1921 census, and projections are indicating that this percentage will continue to increase (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

Patterns of international immigration generate ethnocultural diversity in countries across the globe. Ethnocultural diversity can also increase when foreign-born newcomers start families in their new countries (Kymlicka, 2007). The term "ethnocultural" is utilized by a variety of scholars including Baker, Arsenault and Gallant (1994), Goddard and Hart (2007), Kymlicka (2007), Lund (1998), and Varma-Joshi, Baker and Tanaka (2004). Ethnocultural traits are characteristics shared by groups of individuals. Among these traits are "cultural traditions, ancestry, language, national identity, country of origin and/or physical traits" (Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), 2005, para. 3). Ethnocultural

diversity occurs when these distinct groups come in contact with each other. A goal of this research project has been to discover if the school studied reflects this evolving social diversity, and if so, to examine how educators are responding to this reality in their school and classrooms.

1.1 Increasing Ethnocultural Diversity in Rural Canada

Urban centers have traditionally been the most ethnoculturally diverse areas in Canada (Akbari, 2014). Large cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal have considerably higher immigration rates than other regions in Canada (Varma-Joshi, Baker & Tanaka, 2004, Statistics Canada, 2017a). Although this trend continues, less populous rural regions are certainly diversifying as well (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Atlantic Canada, for instance, has become home to a growing number of new immigrants (Akbari, 2014; Akbari, Lynch, McDonald, & Rankaduwa, 2007, Statistics Canada, 2017a).

This study is set in the Greater Moncton area, which has a population in excess of 100,000 (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In 2016, a reported 7955 individuals living in the area were foreign-born representing about 5.6% of the population. Although this is a relatively small percentage, it is the quick immigration increase in the Greater Moncton area that is striking. Of the 7955 reported immigrants living in Moncton in 2016, 2840 had arrived within the previous 5 years (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In other words, nearly 36% of the immigrants living in the Greater Moncton area in 2016 arrived between 2011 and 2016. It is perhaps more striking to consider the past decade. Of the entire immigrant population living in Moncton, over 52% have arrived in the last 10 years (2006-2016) (Statistics Canada, 2017b). This represents one of the quickest increases in immigration

numbers in the Maritimes. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the number of immigrants settling in Moncton averaged about 100 per year (City of Moncton Economic Development Department, 2014). As of 2015, this number had increased to about 750 immigrants per year. By 2017, Moncton is hoping to settle 1000 immigrants per year (Choi, 2015).

It is also important to note that there has been a shift in who is immigration to the Greater Moncton area. People arriving from the United States and Europe made up the bulk of newcomers before 2006. The past 10 years has seen a shift in this trend with the highest number of immigrants coming from Asian and African nations (City of Moncton Economic Development Department, 2014). As of 2016, Asian-born newcomers represent the highest percentage of immigrants living in the Greater Moncton Area (Statistics Canada, 2017b). According to the City of Moncton Economic Development Department (2014) “Greater Moncton’s recent immigrant population is younger, well-educated and from a more diverse background than previous immigrants” (p. 16). Profoundly, immigration to the Greater Moncton area has evolved in the past decade.

Moncton is an example of an ethnoculturally diversifying community, and there is no indication of this diversification slowing down. City leaders in Moncton are encouraging immigration to grow. As stated in the Greater Moncton Immigration Strategy 2014-2018, “The attraction, retention and integration of new immigrants is a key priority in support of Greater Moncton’s vision of being a growing and inclusive community” (City of Moncton Economic Development Department, 2014, p. 2). The New Brunswick government shares in this population growth strategy (New Brunswick,

2014a). Further, the New Brunswick Government has welcomed over 1,400 refugees displaced by the Syrian war (Government of Canada, 2016).

What I hope to have made clear from the above statistics is that the Greater Moncton area, and New Brunswick, has become increasingly ethnoculturally diverse in a short period of time. The implication here is that the ethnocultural majority living in this region may be unaccustomed to this increasing ethnocultural diversity. Varma-Joshi, Baker and Tanaka (2004) noted that Canada is “predominantly white” and that New Brunswick “is one of the least visibly diverse provinces in [Canada]” (p. 177). It is also the case that educators within Western nations tend to be a part of the white ethnocultural majority (Castro, 2010; Gay, 2010, Goodwin, 2010; Haberman, 1994; Nieto, 2002/2003; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Santoro 2009). This is also the case in New Brunswick (Varma-Joshi, Baker & Tanaka, 2004). Therefore, it is important to gain insight into how educators of a school in this region perceive of this evolving reality in an effort to better understand this phenomenon and support them.

1.2 Research Question and Key Terms

Using a constructivist lens, which posits that individuals create their own realities based on their experiences and background (Creswell, 2013), the central research question of this single site case study is: *How do educators perceive increasing ethnocultural diversity within one ethnoculturally diverse school?* I conducted interviews, observations, and collected documents within one school in Greater Moncton, New Brunswick. The focus of this case study is on learning about the perceptions constructed by participant educators in regards to evolving ethnocultural diversity within their school

and community, how participants have received this demographic shift, the roles these educators understand themselves to have within this changing context, and the preparedness/support participants have had and would like to receive. Due to these specific foci, the following subquestions of this study include:

- *What are educator perceptions and attitudes of their evolving ethnocultural school?*
- *What do educators understand and perceive their roles to be within this ethnoculturally diverse school?*
- *How prepared and supported do the educators perceive themselves to be in their ethnoculturally diverse school setting?*

I invited participation from both teachers and administrators in one secondary school in the Greater Moncton area of New Brunswick. My aim in gathering data from both teachers and administrators was to allow for richer data to emerge, as these educator roles within the school, although related, are unique in regards to perceptions and actions within an ethnocultural diverse setting. I interviewed each participant in an effort to learn how their story could offer insights and thoughts and enable me to address my research questions. I also conducted observations, took field notes and collected relevant documents at the school site. Gathering a variety of data from the school environment in regards to ethnocultural diversity allowed me to triangulate data and gain a deeper understanding of the operations within the school.

The philosophical thinking of Thomas Greenfield (1973, 1977) has influenced my research project. Greenfield argued that the school as an organization is built upon the perceptions and actions of the individuals within it (Bailey, 2010; Greenfield & Ribbins,

1993). Each perception of a phenomenon, Greenfield noted, is a subjective and individual endeavor (Bush, 2003). My research is interested with the phenomenon of a school that is becoming more ethnoculturally diverse, and it is the subjective perception that teachers and administrators have constructed in regards to this phenomenon that I have explored. I have aimed to gain an understanding of the meaning that participants have given to this phenomenon and how that meaning has shaped and continues to shape their context and actions. From these perceptions, I was also interested in the attitudes (positive, negative, indifferent, or combinations of these) that educators have formed in regards to this phenomenon. The role these educators see themselves as having within this ethnoculturally diverse context is another interest that this study has focused on. Are the externalized behaviours and interactions these educators exhibit shaped by their perceptions of ethnocultural diversity? I also aimed to investigate how prepared and supported teachers feel for this emerging phenomenon. Insight can be gained by investigating any training or professional development opportunities that educators have had in regards to ethnocultural diversity, and how successful such opportunities have been. This may offer valuable learning opportunities regarding support for this school environment, other teachers and leaders within the community, and educators across our province.

Ethnocultural diversity in Canada is complex. I adhere to the work of Kymlicka (2007) who has placed ethnocultural minorities in Canada into three distinct categories. These include Indigenous (those who originally inhabited this land), Francophone, and immigrant (Kymlicka, 2007). It is the latter group that this study focuses on. In Canada, school systems are often organized based on these three historical groups. Although

immigration is certainly not the only factor driving ethnocultural diversification, a great deal of ethnocultural diversity within the English-school sector is created through immigrant enrolment. It should also be noted that the technical definition of the term “immigrant” is used to denote foreign-born Canadians (Kymlicka, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2017b). Ethnocultural diversity, however, may also stem from those ethnic and cultural minorities who are Canadian-born but descendants of a minority ethnocultural group. Many “second-generation” Canadians would fit this description as would many Canadians whose families have lived in this country for multiple generations (Kymlicka, 2007). Certainly, there are also those who fall into this category who would place themselves within the ethnocultural majority (Kymlicka, 2007). To put it simply, this study focuses on the ethnocultural diversity that stems from students who are foreign born or descendants of immigrants, do not identify as a part of the majority, and have enrolled at the school site.

I should also note that it is not only culture and ethnicity that makes one diverse, but many other factors as well, which include ability status, gender, sexuality, and class (Gay 2013; Santoro, 2009). I also recognize the social prejudice that has existed and continues to exist with ethnically and culturally diverse groups that have called this region their home for as long as or much longer than Anglo-Europeans like me. However, with such a vast topic, it is important to be narrow and focused. There is also a lack of research focusing on ethnocultural diversity in schools in New Brunswick. These are some of the reasons (along with my interest for this particular topic) for having chosen to focus on this topic.

1.3 Placement of myself into the Study

The late 1990s and early 2000s was a time when I came in contact with few ethnoculturally diverse minorities. During this period, I was a secondary student in a small town in Atlantic Canada where my friends, classmates, teachers, administrators, and staff shared not only a language, but other ethnocultural characteristics as well. Nearly all of us were white, European descendants who spoke English as our first language. In 2002, I began my university career. It was during these years that I first began to make significant contact with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For one reason or another, the all-male residence wing I found myself in was not only home to ethnoculturally similar students like me, but also to students from Turkey, China, and the Bahamas. Of the fifteen or so of us living in this residence wing, most of us were of the same cultural background. However, we were known as the “International Wing”. This reality is another example of how little ethnocultural diversity there actually was in the region. Nonetheless, this was a time when I began to appreciate and gain an interest in ethnocultural diversity. Classes I attended during this time were similar to those of my secondary school years; they consisted mostly of individuals of similar backgrounds to me. Upon entering my post-graduate education program, I again found myself in a similar context. All my co-students were white, and apart from the few that would become French teachers, all were English. Not only were these future teachers of a similar cultural background, many of them had likely grown up in cultural contexts similar to my own.

I graduated with an Education degree in 2007. Due to limited teaching employment opportunities in the area, and an interest to experience the world, I moved to

South Korea to teach. It was in that country that I found myself as the ethnocultural minority. I looked different, spoke another language, and had a significantly unique background from the perspective of the majority of Koreans. There were times when I struggled to fit into the society due to my language and other ethnocultural norms. However, as a white individual speaking English, I was privileged. I found myself living free of charge in an affluent area and making a high wage. I was held in high regard because of the value citizens in the country placed on learning the English language. Certainly, I considered myself an effective and hard-working teacher, but it was clear that my ethnocultural background gave me an advantage. This became all the clearer after moving to Hong Kong to teach in 2009 and while travelling to numerous countries in Asia. Being a white, heterosexual, English-speaking male, gave me a privilege that others simply did not have.

I returned home to Atlantic Canada in 2011. Now I was a privileged, white, heterosexual, English-speaking male within an ethnocultural majority and in a society that catered to people similar to me. I had a greater interest in ethnocultural minorities living in this region. What I also noticed was the fact that the region, although still predominantly white, had become more ethnoculturally diverse. I began to reflect on my time overseas when I was the ethnocultural minority and began to question how prepared the people of this region were for this evolving ethnocultural reality. I wanted to understand the meaning the ethnocultural majority attached to this new reality. As a teacher, my interest focused on the educational context.

I should also note, that I am troubled by the negative attitudes many people hold in regards to immigration and ethnocultural diversity. In Europe, there has been an

emergence of many far-right political groups and what the UN refugee chief has called a “climate of xenophobia” (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2016). In January of 2017, American President Donald Trump, with support from a number of Americans, signed an executive order that aimed to temporarily ban individuals from seven majority-Muslim countries and deny all refugees from entering the United States (BBC, 2017). Individuals who hold such attitudes live in the communities that form school systems. Invariably, such attitudes have implications for teaching and learning. In the next section, I will introduce and describe the purpose and aims of my research study.

1.4 Purpose and Aims of the Study

I am constantly wondering about the perceptions educators have of ethnocultural diversity. More importantly, I am interested in learning what this knowledge means and how it may contribute to helping educators prepare themselves to respond more effectively to the challenges and opportunities they may be encountering in their diverse schools and classrooms

Ethnocultural diversity is an evolving reality in New Brunswick, and understanding how educators perceive this reality may have implications for what happens in schools and communities. I agree with Deardorff (2006) that the perceptions and attitudes held by individuals, in regards to ethnocultural diversity, form the foundation for these individuals’ actions and behaviours. In ethnoculturally diverse contexts, these behaviours must include the “abilities to adeptly navigate complex environments marked by a growing diversity of peoples, cultures, and lifestyles” (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2013, p. 5) Such

abilities, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2006) are “a new kind of literacy, on par with the importance of reading and writing skills or numeracy” (as cited in UNESCO, 2013, p. 5).

Through my research, I have worked to describe what educators think about ethnocultural diversity and how it impacts their roles within their school and community. The research provides details on how teachers and administrators are responding to the demographically changing environment. By gathering and analyzing data on this topic, I hope that this research may provide insight for not only the participants of this study, but also other educators, policymakers, and teacher educators. Practical applications for teachers and administrators may stem from such insights.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Ethnocultural Diversification

Although there is a vast amount of literature focusing on ethnocultural diversity within educational contexts, finding clarity among the numerous theories and practices that are best suited for working in such settings can prove difficult. However, the literature on this topic clearly outlines that schools in Western nations have and continue to become ethnoculturally diverse (Banks, 2008; Castro, 2010; Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011; Dei, 1993; Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Gay, 2010; Goodwin, 2010; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Ryan, 2006; Santoro, 2009; 2014; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Further, many teachers in Western settings represent the ethnocultural majority and lack experience with or education about ethnocultural minorities (Castro, 2010; Gay, 2010; Kyles & Olafson,

2008). This literature review will examine scholarly theory and noteworthy research conducted on educating in ethnoculturally diverse contexts.

2.2 Multiculturalism in Canada

Prior to an examination of educational theories and frameworks related to ethnocultural diversity, I will follow Peck's (2003) lead and provide a brief synopsis of the emergence of multiculturalism as a political approach in Canada. As Peck (2003) notes, the multicultural political approach laid the foundations for multicultural approaches within educational contexts as well.

Before 1945, it was assumed that immigrants to Canada would ethnoculturally integrate into Canadian society (Kymlicka, 2007; Peck, Sears, & Donaldson, 2008). This meant that minorities were expected to become like the majority in regards to "speech, dress, recreation, and general way of life" (Kymlicka, 2007, p. 5). In fact, visible minorities were often denied entry into Canada if assimilation seemed unlikely (Kymlicka, 2007; Peck, Sears, & Donaldson, 2008). It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that the landscape began to shift considerably. In this era, the idea of cultural relevance emerged, and with it (at least in theory) a greater acceptance of ethnocultural minorities into Canadian society (Kymlicka, 2007). Greater numbers of visible minorities began to immigrate to Canada, and, in 1971, the federal government created an official multiculturalism policy. With this policy, there was the acknowledgment of ethnocultural diversity within the public sector and a directive to incorporate multiculturalism into policy and procedure (Kymlicka, 2007). This is not to say that this change in the political landscape made it easy for ethnoculturally diverse new immigrants. As Peck (2003)

noted, minorities were still expected to conform to the majority. Still, she noted, “the decision to adopt a policy of multiculturalism was received either positively or passively by most Canadians” (p. 7).

The Multiculturalism Policy was a federal mandate, which led to inconsistent provincial multicultural policies and procedures emerging across the country (Peck, 2003). Such inconsistencies also became apparent within school systems, and as Peck (2003) argued, researchers and educators continue to see these inconsistencies play out in educational settings across the country.

2.3 Multicultural Education

As early as 1888, Wilhelm Dilthey wrote that the “historical ethos” of a people must be considered in educational contexts (in Kandel, 1955, pp. 6-7). Emile Durkheim also maintained this school of thought in the early 20th century where he argued against a universal theory of education and for the consideration of community culture in teaching contexts (in Kandel, 1955, p. 7). The idea of background and culture having a bearing on the field of education has existed for some time, but little headway focusing on cultural relevance was gained until Canada adopted the Multicultural Policy described above (Kymlicka, 2007; Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994; Peck, 2003).

For many scholars, “multicultural education” only scratched the surface as a theory seeking better education for the ethnoculturally diverse (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994; Sheets, 2003). However, as Kehoe and Mansfield (1993) noted, by the 1970s and 1980s multicultural education had moved beyond simplistic approaches, such as “food, clothing, song, and dance” (p. 3) and started to focus on factors such as, the valuing of

cultural backgrounds, having an understanding that diversity plays a role in how one learns, and the creation of ethnoculturally diverse school materials. However, criticism continued, and with that criticism “Anti-racist education” emerged. “Anti-racist education”, according to Peck (2003) focused on the unequal dynamics of race within society and schools with an aim to reform these systems. Dei and James (2002) for example, argued that, “An integrative anti-racist agenda addresses the disparities of power associated with the whole of adolescents’ identities, moving beyond the mere appreciation of particular differences” (p. 66). To the anti-racists, multicultural education theorists were not digging deep enough into the societal inequalities that the education system was built upon. “Anti-Racist Education” became the theory synonymous with multicultural critique (Mansfield & Kehoe, 1994; Sheets, 2003). Lund (1998) noted that some scholars have looked at this relationship as “dichotomous” (p. 3), with academics affiliating themselves with one group or the other. However, as is set out below, multicultural, anti-racist, and numerous other theories and frameworks that concentrate on educating in ethnoculturally diverse settings share many similarities.

The multicultural/anti-racist debate was divisive. Lund (1998) argued that, for the most part, scholars interested in ethnocultural diversity jostled between the fluidic boundaries existing amongst these theories. In many cases, Lund (1998) noted, there was a “remarkable agreement” among scholars focused on education and ethnocultural diversity in educational systems (p. 3). For instance, Jenks, Lee, and Kanpol (2001), categorized multicultural education into three distinct groups: conservative, liberal, and critical. The latter category offered some strong parallels to anti-racist education with Jenks, Lee, and Kanpol (2001) asking, “How can equity and excellence be achieved in a

society in which historically the dominant culture has determined their meaning?” (p. 93).

Acknowledging the similarities between multicultural and anti-racist education, Lund (1998) placed these theories under one umbrella term, which he called “Education for Ethnocultural Equity” (p. 3). My study focuses on education for ethnocultural equity.

Further to the multicultural/anti-racist theories discussed above, a number of additional theories and frameworks focusing on educating in ethnoculturally diverse contexts have emerged that I also place within Lund’s (1998) Education for Ethnocultural Equity definition. Some of these frameworks are listed below:

- “Intercultural Competence”, which Deardorff (2009) explains is a “lifelong process” (p.14) where an individual works through stages in becoming interculturally competent. These stages include Attitudes, Knowledge and Comprehension, Internal Outcomes and External Outcomes.
- “School-wide Cultural Competence”, defined as, “How well a school’s policies, programs, practices, artifacts, and rituals reflect the needs and experiences of diverse groups in the school and outer school community” (National Center for Cultural Competence 2005 in Bustamante, Nelson, and Onwuegbuzie, 2009).
- “Citizenship Education”, which, according to Banks (2008), “helps students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to function effectively within their cultural community, nation-state, and region and in the global community” (p. 129)
- “Global Competence”, defined by Hunter (2004) as “having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment” (p. 1).

- “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Teaching”, which Ladson-Billings (1995b), called a “pedagogy of opposition” focusing on students having academic success, acquiring cultural competence, and developing of critical consciousness (p. 160).

It is no surprise that experts have used various terms and have had unique interpretations of what educating in ethnoculturally diverse contexts should look like. Clearly, it is difficult to define a term that looks at how people understand, accept, and behave in diverse situations and amongst diverse groups. However, I agree with and Mansfield and Kehoe (1994) who argued that scholars working within the field of ethnocultural equality, of whom many differ in regards to theoretical positioning, often share a common goal. They strive and focus their work toward an ethnoculturally “just society” (p. 16). In the next section, I will focus on these theoretical similarities and the views that have emerged on how education for ethnocultural equity may be achieved.

2.4 Education for Ethnocultural Equity

Scholars have generated a variety of terms that focus on education for ethnocultural equity as well as many arguments on how such equity may be achieved. Such inconsistencies do create challenges, but there are certainly similarities in regards to scholarly thought on educating in ethnoculturally diverse contexts. Although there have been some strides forward (Gay, 2010), many scholars have taken a critical viewpoint of what is happening in educational settings in regards to ethnocultural diversity (Banks, 2008; Castro, 2010; Dei, 1993; Gay, 2010, Glanz, 2006; Haberman & Post, 1998; Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Santoro, 2009; Sheets, 2003; Sleeter 2004). Ladson-Billings (1995a) stated that much focus has relied on

accommodating culturally diverse students in educational systems that have catered to the ethnocultural majority. Irvine (2010) agrees stating that “Many teachers have only a cursory understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy and their efforts to bridge the cultural gap often fall short” (p. 57). Perhaps most disheartening is Goodwin’s (2010) assessment that, “it does not appear that education has come close to characterizing quality teaching in/for a global context” (p. 20). With society becoming increasingly diverse, this lack of quality education could prove harmful.

Quality education for a global context is imperative, and there is merit in discussing factors that scholars have identified as important in regards to education for ethnocultural equity. Categorizing these factors could be done in a variety of ways, but I have elected to loosely follow Deardorff’s (2004) Process Model of Intercultural Competence, which suggests that individuals work through stages on the path to becoming educators for ethnocultural equity (p. 198). The first stages of the Process Model of Intercultural Competence include internal attributes that individuals can possess, while the later stages include the outcomes that emerge from these internal attributes. In Deardorff’s (2004) model, individuals work progressively through stages towards what she calls “Intercultural Competence” (p. 198). These stages include, “Attitudes, Knowledge and Comprehension, Internal Outcome, and External Outcome” (p. 198). Gay (2013) has also noted the importance of starting with internal attributes stating that, “beliefs and attitudes always precede and shape behaviors” (p. 49). As Deardorff (2006) clarifies, individuals may take unique paths when working towards education for ethnocultural equity. However, these stages can provide a basic understanding of how one develops as an educator for ethnocultural equity. I will respect

Greenfield's (1973) advice that we must "first seek to understand schools in terms of the subjective rationality of those involved with them before we strive to transform them" (p. 28).

Based on the literature that I have reviewed, my interpretations, and relevance to my research question, I have outlined particular factors below that I consider important to consider in ethnoculturally diverse schools. I do not contend that the factors I have chosen to include are the only ones to consider when it comes to educating in ethnoculturally diverse contexts or that there is no room for debate about the inclusion or exclusion of particular factors. These factors include attitudes, worldview, cultural knowledge, reflection, listening and observing, interaction, instruction, and structures. I will briefly discuss each of these below.

2.4.1 Attitudes. The attitudes that educators hold are important and without a positive attitude towards ethnocultural diversity, an educator may be unable to educate for ethnocultural equity (Deardorff, 2009; Gay, 2010; Gay, 2013; Hunter, 2004; Lund, 1998), Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Deardorff (2009) stated that positive attitudes towards ethnocultural minorities are the "foundation" for further competency in this area (p. 5). Based on her study of 20 scholars and administrators working on intercultural competence, she noted that educators must elicit "openness, respect and curiosity" and that valuing diversity is imperative (p. 5). In a study conducted in the western United States by Bustamante, Nelson, and Onwuegbuzie (2009), they found that some educators held negative attitudes of ethnocultural minorities. Educators holding negative attitudes of ethnoculturally diverse students are unable to educate for ethnocultural equity.

A less notable but also destructive attitude is the “colour-blind” approach held by some administrators and teachers (Deardorff, 2009; Dei, 2002; Gay, 2013; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Shields, 2004). Such educators argue that children are children – they are all the same. Those who follow this apathetic approach believe that viewing everyone the same, regardless of the actual diversity that exists, is the best way forward (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). However, by ignoring the fact that difference does indeed exist, a disservice is done to education for ethnocultural equity. Shields (2004) noted, “This approach does not increase tolerance but shuts down the dialogue, making it impossible to address potential tensions and misunderstandings” (p. 40). If educating for ethnocultural equity is a goal for teachers and administrators, difference must be accepted. A colour-blind approach may leave ethnocultural minority students under-recognized, marginalized and isolated in their school (Shields, 2004)

A further damaging attitude held by a number of educators is what Villegas & Lucas (2007) have called a “deficit perspective” (p. 31). When teachers have minimal faith in a student’s ability to achieve, they are “more likely to have low expectations for the students and ultimately treat them in ways that stifle their learning” (Villegas & Lucas, 2007, p. 31). In a study conducted by Santoro (2014), she found that pre-service teachers viewed those of different ethnocultural backgrounds as “exotic” and requiring “charity” (p. 440). The diversity of students should not be confused with their ability.

A number of scholars promoting education for ethnocultural equity have noted the importance of having a positive attitude in regards to the ethnocultural minority. Attitude is a foundation for a number of other factors that shape education for ethnocultural equity. In the next section, I will explore another vital internal factor that

builds toward educating for ethnocultural equity: worldview.

2.4.2 Worldview. How individuals perceive the world and reality is shaped by many factors including their ethnocultural background and experiences (Gay, 2010; 2013; Irvine, 2010; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Villegas & Lucas 2007). No two worldviews are the same, and educators must understand that their own worldviews, and those of their students, are unique (Haberman & Post, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Santoro, 2009; Yuen, 2010). Worldviews within ethnocultural diverse contexts can be vastly different. In Deardorff's (2006) study, the only factor agreed upon by all of her participants was "understanding 'others' worldviews" and 19 of the 20 agreed that "cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment" were key components in educating for ethnocultural equity (p. 249). It is vital that teachers accept that their students have unique perceptions, and as Gay (2013) stated, "[teach] diverse students *through* their own cultural filters" (p. 50).

Allard and Santoro (2006) stated, "While policies and theoretical literature emphasize the importance of teachers engaging with students' cultural and class identities, we know too little about how teachers and future teachers make sense of this imperative" (p. 116). Research on educating for ethnocultural equity requires an investigation into whether or not teachers and administrators accept this concept of worldview. This entails educators acknowledging that their own perceptions and identities, as well as the perceptions and identities of their students, have been shaped by their unique ethnocultural backgrounds (Allard & Santoro, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Santoro, 2009) For example, Shields (2004) noted that although

Eurocentric views are still taught in schools, Columbus' "discovery of America" is not the reality for the Indigenous peoples of North America (p. 40). A teacher who is educating for ethnocultural equity would understand that students have their own worldviews and acknowledge their realities. Educators who believe their own worldview is standard or intrinsically right lack the capacity for educating for ethnocultural equity (Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Santoro, 2009). In one of the very few studies conducted on educating for ethnocultural equity in New Brunswick, Varma-Joshi, Baker and Tanaka (2004) found that educators lacked the ability to consider racism from the perspective of minority students. Exploring how educators perceive the ideas and implications of worldview is a valuable piece of this research.

An understanding that each individual has a unique worldview is an internal attribute that teachers and administrators focusing on educating for ethnocultural equity must possess. Increasing their knowledge of diverse cultures is also vital for educators. I will explore this concept in the next section.

2.4.3 Cultural knowledge. An understanding of other cultures, especially those in the community, is a vital piece of educating for ethnocultural equity (Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Gay, 2010; Haberman & Post, 1998; Irvine, 2010). It is important that cultural knowledge is deeper than what Nieto (2002/2003) called "ethnic tidbits" (p. 8), which are superficial practices that simply touch on ethnocultural otherness. For example, in a study conducted by Cooper (2009), she found that educational leaders had not moved beyond "rudimentary strategies, such as organizing celebratory multicultural events" (p. 716).

Educating for ethnocultural equity compels educators to have knowledge of other cultures and ethnicities and to have an interest in continuing to gain cultural knowledge.

It is also important to take a setting's ethnocultural composition into account when exhibiting cultural knowledge (Gay, 2013; Haberman & Post, 1994; 1998). In one study conducted by Parhar and Sensoy (2011), they found that teachers educating for ethnocultural equity intentionally applied and related curriculum to their diverse student contexts. One participant noted, "I have students research about the significance of Diwali or Ramadan, so not just the fun, food and frolic parts of multiculturalism, but also the other aspects that you can integrate so that students see themselves" (p. 200). Having and teaching about profound cultural knowledge might also help to inform students about the more conspicuous aspects of diversity they likely come across in their day to day experiences. For example, if students are taught why some Muslim women wear a hijab and/or a burka, they gain additional cultural knowledge for living, learning and interacting with people in contemporary Canadian society (Hamm, Peck & Sears, 2017).

Cultural knowledge is an important piece of educating for ethnocultural equity. Having a deep understanding of diverse cultures, especially those of students within an educator's particular context, will allow for better instruction and relationships within education systems.

2.4.4 Reflection. Critical reflection is another factor that is important in education for ethnocultural equity (Deardorff, 2009; Freire, 1970; Gay, 2010; Haberman & Post, 1998; Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001; Irvine, 2010; Milner, 2006; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Santoro, 2009; Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010). Tied to an understanding

of one's own cultural self, reflection on one's own culture and educational background can form an understanding of how educators differ from students of other backgrounds.

Educating for ethnocultural equity requires educators to partake in what Haberman and Post (1998) called "self-analysis" (p. 99). By not doing so, educators run the risk of inadvertently employing strategies that may create educational barriers for ethnocultural minority students (Hamm, 2009). In Varma-Joshi, Tanaka and Baker's (2004) New Brunswick study, an ethnic-minority student stated, "I've just learned from my experiences. They [Whites] don't know. They haven't got those experiences" (p. 193). Educators reflecting on their particular experiences with acknowledgement that these have shaped who they have become is an important piece of educating for ethnocultural equity.

Further, educators must reflect on their lessons as well as on their pedagogical approaches and strategies and even on how they have acted during their instruction (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Hamm (2009) argues that educators must "engage in their own critical reflection on their teaching methodologies and personal pedagogy" (p. 26). Simply, educators must "re-examine themselves constantly" (Freire, 1970, p. 60).

Educating for ethnocultural equity requires educators to engage in reflection upon their perceptions, actions and understanding of the world. By doing so, teachers and administrators will gain a deeper understanding of why they think and act in particular ways, and the implications that these thoughts and actions have for ethnoculturally diverse contexts. Another behavior that educators must perform includes listening and observing, which I discuss next.

2.4.5 Listening and observing. Deardorff (2009) has argued that listening to and observing ethnoculturally diverse students is something that educators must do in ethnoculturally diverse contexts. Many teachers do not take the time to listen to their students. By doing so, much can be learned about all students, including ethnocultural minorities, in schools. Villegas and Lucas (2007) stated that educators might have students discuss their backgrounds, hopes and dreams and make connections with their parents and the external community. Such practices will allow for teachers to gain a deeper understanding of their students and what they may require to succeed. I agree with Ladson-Billings (1995b) that teachers are also learners in culturally diverse classrooms (p. 163). For example, Villegas and Lucas (2007) wrote about the life of an 8-year-old girl named Belki who was more than a student. With her parents working minimum-wage jobs, Belki was also responsible for her younger siblings throughout much of the day. Furthermore, she helped her mother at a market on weekends and took on the role of translator for her Spanish-speaking parents. Belki appeared to her teachers as an incapable and dispassionate student, but had they listened to Belki's story, her teachers may have learned a great deal about the Belki that existed outside of their classrooms. From this understanding, educators may have been able to work with Belki in more suitable ways. All students come to class with a life story. Listening to these stories can give educators a clearer understanding of the struggles their students may face, the interests they hold, their strengths and weaknesses, and who they are as individuals.

Taking the time to observe students might also prove fruitful for educators and provide explanation for why students are failing to learn specific content or behaving in particular ways. In a study by Varma-Joshi, Tanaka and Baker (2004), an ethnocultural

minority student participant shared their experience of attending a school where some other pupils wore swastikas on their clothing. Most would likely agree that a teacher observing such behaviour would be expected to act. However, the student explained that the educators at this school ignored these racist symbols instead of taking action. An educational environment with examples of this type of dehumanizing symbolism in any of its spaces runs the serious risk of negatively impacting the teaching and learning process (Hamm & Cormier, 2015). Educating for ethnocultural equity would see an educator genuinely observing students, recognizing harmful behaviour and acting appropriately. Thus, close observation and awareness provides educators with opportunities to uncover overt discriminatory issues and disrupt them and have courageous conversations with their students about them. Acting on such observations, may allow for significant change in schools and help all students feel more welcomed, safe and accepted.

2.4.6 Cultural interaction and behaviour. Building relationships with ethnocultural minorities is imperative (Gay, 2010; Haberman & Post, 1998; Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1995b; Nieto, 2002/2003; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Deardorff (2006) noted in her research that “communication and behaviour in intercultural situations” were agreed upon by over 85% of those surveyed. In a Canadian study of ten teachers identified as practicing education for ethnocultural equity, Parhar and Sensoy (2011) found that all of the participants noted the importance of building connections with ethnoculturally diverse students (p. 195). Many also noted the importance of building community connections (pp. 203-204). A community is not only built on shared

attributes but also upon the individual differences that each member of that community brings (Shields, 2004). It is vital for these differences to be respected. Shields (2004) called for mutual respect and understanding in a “community of difference” (p. 38). Schools reflect the community, and educating for ethnocultural equity involves making connections with all aspects of the ethnocultural diverse community (Shields, 2004). This can be done by building relationships with the families of our ethnocultural minority students, community groups, and the students themselves.

Shields (2004) discussed a student that she taught named Sonny and his lack of drive in school. Once she was able to build a strong relationship with Sonny, he began to turn things around. From this relationship, Shields (2004) learned things about the student that were not clear from simply having him in her class. This relationship also built rapport between teacher and student. Building such relationships with all students is valuable, but it is especially important for ethnocultural minority students and their families who are playing a part in the shifting diversity within the school and community. These students may feel particularly disconnected from the school and community or be living in situations that educators have little familiarity with.

2.4.7 Instruction. How and what educators teach is vital. As Villegas and Lucas (2007) have stated, the goal in ethnocultural diverse settings should be to create equitable schools. This should not be equated to making everything the same or equal (Shields, 2004). For example, educators should aim to work with lessons and materials that are more likely to be relevant for students of both the ethnocultural majority and minority (Gay, 2013; Haberman & Post, 1998; Irvine, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). With this in

mind, one can understand how standardized measures used in some educational contexts have put ethnocultural minorities at a disadvantage (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001). Gay (2013) calls such practices a “resistance to culturally responsive teaching” (p. 63). We can see this in practice through a study conducted by Santoro (2009) where a pre-service teacher was surprised when her lesson on the Crusades from a Western perspective was not engaging for students from diverse backgrounds.

It should also be noted that instruction should not only be what Gay (2013) calls “safe” (p. 57), but also include the more complex and discriminating issues. Discussions about cultural capital and social justice in regards to ethnocultural diversity should be included in instruction. This will allow for students to think critically about ethnicity, race and society. Ethnocultural minority students may begin to feel more accepted and understood with such instruction, and ethnocultural majorities may gain an understanding of privilege and become what Starratt (2005) has labeled “active citizens of the global community” (p. 124).

Educating for ethnocultural equity requires instruction that is relatable to both the ethnocultural minority and majority. It requires that more substantial topics are covered in classes that reflect the reality of society (Shields, 2004). Educational structures that form a foundation for instruction must also be considered in educating for ethnocultural equity. In the next section, I will discuss these structures.

2.4.8 Structures. Parhar & Sensoy (2011) reported that there are considerable structural constraints when it comes to educating for ethnocultural equity. This includes a lack of funding and resources, bureaucratic systems (such as standardized tests),

curriculum barriers, and biased materials. Nieto (2002/2003) claimed, “school policies and practices – specifically, curriculum, pedagogy, tracking, testing, discipline and hiring – can also either promote or hinder learning among students of different backgrounds” (p. 8). Ethnocultural minorities, unfortunately, tend to be hindered by these factors in their learning (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011).

School structures often promote tokenistic approaches when focusing on ethnocultural diversity. In Varma-Joshi, Tanaka, and Baker’s (2004) New Brunswick study, participants noted both the lack of coverage and authenticity in regards to diversity found within the curriculum. One Indigenous student noted, “I’m tired of being seen like an artifact. I don’t wear feathers and I don’t live in a teepee” (p. 202). Inauthentic portrayals of ethnic minorities within school structures are problematic, as these do not allow for a realistic understanding of ethnocultural minorities. Such portrayals can also reinforce the notion that ethnocultural minorities are all the same and simplistic. A strategy recommended by a number of scholars in regards to structures involves asking students to analyze and critique school curriculum or materials for ethnocultural bias (Dei, 1993; Gay, 2010; 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; 1995b; Parhar and Sensoy, 2011; Villegas and Lucas, 2007).

A one-size-fits-all approach to educating in ethnoculturally diverse contexts will also leave ethnocultural minority students behind (Starratt, 2005). If educators are to provide ethnoculturally diverse students with the most appropriate learning opportunities, it is important that our educational structures and materials are as accessible to them as to our majority students. This does not mean that these structures will be uniform, which would be akin to the colour-blind approach discussed earlier. This means that some

students may be provided with something extra or an alternate way of doing something in an effort to support their individual needs (Shields, 2004). The goal should be to encourage success for all students by providing them what they require to learn and be successful (Shields, 2004).

2.5 Gaps in the Literature

Although there have been many studies assessing the ability of educators to work in ethnoculturally diverse contexts, few have actually explored the perceptions educators have of this phenomenon. Of the studies that do look at this topic, many are focused on how prepared pre-service teachers are for teaching in ethnoculturally diverse contexts (Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Milner, 2006; Santoro, 2009, 2014; Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010; Sleeter, 2001; Smith, 2000). I do not deny that this is an important target. However, I agree with Haberman and Post (1994) that there is also a need to step into schools and gain an understanding from practicing teachers of how they perceive and understand increasing ethnocultural diversity in their communities and schools. Teachers serving in rapidly changing demographic contexts can offer valuable insight about what it is like “on the ground”. These insights will be valuable for a variety of stakeholders, including teacher educators. Sleeter (2001) noted, “Research in teacher education needs to follow graduates into the classroom, and our work needs to extend beyond preservice education” (p. 102). I agree that this is important as current teachers and administrators can also develop as educators. Additionally, gaining insight directly from an ethnoculturally diverse context may enlighten educators within schools, those soon to enter schools, and district and provincial leaders who conceptualize policies

that impact schools.

Of the studies that have been conducted on more experienced teachers, most have relied upon quantitative approaches to assess educators' ability to teach in ethnoculturally diverse contexts (Bustamante, Nelson and Onwuegbuzie 2009; Cooper, 2009; DeJaeghere & Zhang, 2008; Westrick & Yuen 2007; Yuen, 2010). For example, some researchers have utilized Hammer and Bennett's Intercultural Development Inventory, which is a quantitative measure used to assess educators (DeJaeghere & Zhang, 2008; Westrick & Yuen 2007; Yuen 2010). Quantitative approaches have their merits. I have chosen to use a qualitative approach to investigate the perceptions teachers have of ethnocultural diversity because I want to communicate directly with educators and leaders in order to understand their social worlds. A qualitative approach allows for a deep understanding of teacher perceptions. Qualitative studies that have helped to inform this research include a study conducted by Coronel and Gomez-Hurtado (2013), which focused on teacher perceptions and behaviours regarding ethnocultural diversity in Spanish schools and Parhar and Sensoy's (2011) research, which studied teachers who utilized culturally relevant pedagogies in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Very few studies on education for ethnocultural equity have been conducted in this province in Atlantic Canada. Varma-Joshi, Baker, and Tanaka (2004) conducted research in New Brunswick and reported that many teachers had varying perceptions of what racial name-calling meant. Another study conducted in New Brunswick by Peck, Sears, and Donaldson (2008) focused on the understanding of diversity held by Grade 7 students. Hamm, Massfeller, Scott and Cormier (2017) conducted a collective case study within five schools in New Brunswick and found that participants in their study lacked a

solid understanding of ethnocultural diversity and that curriculum standards dealing with ethnocultural and intercultural topics were in need of revision. The scarcity of research conducted in New Brunswick indicates that there is a need for additional studies that focus on educating for ethnocultural equity. In particular, research with a focus on the perceptions, attitudes, and roles held by teachers and administrators will allow for insight into how the growing ethnocultural diversity in the Canadian Maritimes is playing out in schools.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks

I have conceptualized a constructivist interpretive framework to guide me in this research project. At its root, this paradigm posits that individuals construct their own realities. However, as Palinscar (1998) has indicated, constructivism comes in many varieties. Therefore, I believe it is vital that this concept is unpacked and explored more deeply, so that I can provide the reader with a clear understanding of what constructivism means to me as a researcher and how it informs the framework for this study.

Constructivism is about meaning and truth (Gray, 2014). Each individual constructs meaning from their senses, interactions, and perceptions, and through these meanings are borne unique realities. Realities between two or more people can be similar, different, or somewhere in between on an almost unending continuum. On constructivism, Gray (2014) argues that,

Truth and meaning do not exist in some external world, but are created by the subject's interactions with the world. Meaning is *constructed* not discovered, so

subjects construct their own meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. Hence, multiple, contradictory but equally valid accounts of the world can exist. (p. 20)

It is important to reiterate that constructivism is about meaning and perception. Starratt (2001) suggests, “Holding onto this position [constructivism] does not deny the existence of an exterior reality ‘out there’. Rather it asserts that what we know about the external world is always and necessarily contingent” (p. 342). What this reality is contingent upon are countless factors such as one’s background, ethnicity, race, gender, ability, language, class, knowledge and the connections between these factors. The meanings people construct from reality “are products of their *values, background and experience*” (Bush, 2003, p 116). Schools, according to Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) are “cultural artefacts” (p. 5). They are organizations that exist through the constructed meanings of individuals and are often built upon values and perceptions of the ethnocultural majority. The implication here is that ethnocultural minority students are enrolling in schools that have been constructed through the multiple realities of an ethnocultural majority, realities that are often different from their own.

3.1.1 Constructivist epistemology. The view that the reality each person holds is socially constructed is significant in my study. In the first sense, it is my view that it is imperative for educators to recognize that they construct their own reality. Educators must have an understanding that their ethnocultural background, which includes their ethnoculture, influences their reality. At the same time, educators must recognize that each student’s ethnocultural background has shaped that student’s reality. As I described

earlier, this is a vital piece of education for ethnocultural equity. The second role that constructivism plays in my study is in regards to the methodology I have utilized. This is discussed in more detail below.

3.1.2 Constructivist methodology. I have employed the constructivist paradigm as an approach to gain an understanding of how the educators in a particular school perceive or understand ethnocultural diversity within their particular context. By utilizing this methodology, I am following in Greenfield's footsteps (1977) when he stated, "The task of those who would explain social action and social forms therefore becomes the 'interpretation' of human meanings" (p. 8). Gaining insight through interpretation is constructivism, which is why I have chosen to use this methodology.

How a school actually operates as an organization relies on the meaning constructed by its stakeholders (Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993). Ribbins, Jarvis, Best, and Oddy (1981) stated that each educator constructs their own school reality (as cited in Bush, 2003, p. 115). The experiences, values and backgrounds of each individual construct the reality of the organization for that particular individual (Greenfield, 1973). These constructions and perceptions the participants of my study have created is vital to my research.

3.1.3 Constructivist axiology. As a researcher, it is important to admit that I have biases and values that play a part in how I will understand, build and analyze my study. This is known as axiology (Creswell, 2013). The constructivist paradigm is greatly associated with axiology. Therefore, my own construction of an epistemological understanding plays a part in how this this study has been formulated. The reality is that

my analysis and interpretation is not universal. As researchers, the interpretations we make of reality are based upon our own experiences (Greenfield, 1977). I have made an effort to minimize bias within this study by aiming to gather rich data from participants and the site. Aiming to gather comprehensive insights from participants and clarifying information can reduce bias. I have also aimed to manage this by working to understand others from their points of view and context.

3.2 Approach

This research reports on a qualitative single site case study that was conducted in 2017. Deardorff (2006) noted that case studies and interviews are appropriate approaches for assessing intercultural competence. Creswell (2013) writes that the case study approach allows for one to gain an “in-depth understanding of a single case or explore an issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration” (p. 96). Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggest that case study researchers “seek to understand the larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case” (p. 104). In my case, the phenomenon being studied is the increasing ethnocultural diversity in New Brunswick. The specific case or bounded system that I have researched is a high school in the Greater Moncton region.

My study is an *intrinsic* case study (Creswell, 2013). According to Stake (1995), an intrinsic case study is a study that a researcher is interested in because there is something to learn from a particular case. This case study is significant; there is increasing ethnocultural diversity in the Greater Moncton region of New Brunswick, and little research has been done on this phenomenon in this province. There is much to learn

by conducting research on ethnocultural diversity within a specific school in New Brunswick. It is important to learn how educators respond to their new realities. Rossman and Rallis (2003) believe that the reader of a case study may come to their own conclusions in regards to how the specific case study applies to their context. If another context is comparable to the specific site studied, there may be applicability or resonance. This has been called reasoning by analogy (Kennedy as cited in Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 105).

3.3 The Site

The Moncton region is in close proximity to me as well as being a centre that has exhibited an increase in cultural diversity. Public schools in the Greater Moncton area fall within one of two districts; they are Anglophone East or Francophone South. As an English speaker, I wanted to gain access to an Anglophone school. After getting permission to conduct my study from the Research Ethics Board at the University of New Brunswick, I reached out to the Superintendent's office of the Anglophone East district. I sent along my research proposal and a letter (Appendix A) that explained what I hoped to study and what the benefits of such a study may be. I also provided information on ethics and confidentiality and inquired about the possibility of gaining entry into a particular school. I was open and honest about my research throughout and indicated that I would share my completed study. Rossman & Rallis (2003) have provided guidance in the selection of an ideal site. The first step in site selection is being permitted access to the place of study, which the office of the Superintendent provided me in December of 2016. My proposal was then sent to a secondary school that they considered an ideal site. This

site fit my parameters, and I reached out to the principal in January of 2017. The Principal granted permission for me to conduct my study, and I visited the school soon after. The site is a large secondary school in the Greater Moncton area. It is a site that has undergone a significant evolution in ethnocultural diversity in recent years. During an interview, one educator noted that international students made up about 20 percent of the student population. The educator went on to state, “I would say a quarter of our population is of different skin colour, ethnic background, and so on” (E10). In a region with historically less ethnocultural diversity than other areas of Canada, such a high percentage of ethnoculturally diverse students is significant.

3.4 Participants

According to Stake (1994), when selecting cases and participants, “balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance” (p. 244). When proposing my study, I was motivated to acquire information from various perspectives. For this reason, I hoped to implement maximum variation sampling. With maximum variation sampling, a researcher attempts to study a broad group of individuals. Palys (2008) stated that maximum variation sampling allows for the researcher to study a “spectrum of positions and perspectives in relation to the phenomenon” (p. 697). My recruitment of participants took a different path, which can occur when conducting qualitative research. One’s perceived research path can be altered by numerous factors including the nature of the study site, bureaucratic frameworks, and the source of data. However, I was able to engage with participants working in a variety of roles and diverse subject areas. This allowed for various perspectives to be studied.

In this case, I worked with the principal of the school to send out a letter to staff (Appendix B) outlining the study and asking for volunteers. A number of educators got back to me with interest. The principal also connected me with a staff member who I met with at the school. With this individual's assistance, I was able to speak with a number of educators about my study. Many of them showed interest and agreed to be interviewed. In the end, I conducted interviews with every educator who volunteered to participate. Three educators who initially showed interest, however, did not end up completing the entire volunteer process and were not interviewed.

In all, 10 educators participated in this study: seven female and three male. Five of the educators were in their 30s, three in their 40s, and two were 50 or older. Educator experience ranged from 10 to 27 years. Nine of the ten participants interviewed were from the Maritimes, with eight being from New Brunswick. Six of those participants were from the Greater Moncton Area. One interviewee was from Central Canada. All of the participants were white. The participant sample was fairly monocultural, but this is representative of the school site. The roles of the educators who were interviewed were considerably more diverse. Interviewees included both teachers and administrators. The teachers who participated came from a variety of departments.

All of the interviewees were closely linked to the phenomenon this study focuses on. Such participants provide the greatest amount of information on the phenomenon. This has allowed for "thick description", which Hamm (2009) quoting Stake (1995) noted, provides readers "with good raw material for their own generalizing" (p. 5). I member-checked my data by going back to participants with their interview transcripts seeking any clarification. By doing this, the misinterpretation of a participant interview

was less likely and there was the potential opportunity for further data collection in this follow-up meeting. Each of the interview participants has been identified by a code for confidentiality reasons.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

Extensive data collection techniques should be utilized when conducting case studies (Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I conducted interviews, observations with written field notes, and document analysis when conducting this study. However, with a major focus on the perceptions held by educators, I relied heavily on interviews as a method of data collection. This should not undermine the other data collection methods that were utilized, as these methods have helped to uncover significant data and have played a part in triangulating data that was collected during interviews. Below, I will provide a brief description of each of the interview, observation, and document collection methods utilized.

3.5.1 Interviews. In-depth interviews were utilized in this research project. In-depth interviews allow a researcher to best explore the perspectives of the participants and gain a deep understanding of their viewpoints (Boyce & Neale, 2006). I followed Creswell's (2013) advice and utilized an interview protocol, which included my semi-structured interview questions (Appendix C). This interview-guide approach allowed for participants to do most of the talking and frame their responses based on their own perspectives. I aimed to be open-ended with my questions, to allow for the participants' views to emerge (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

3.5.2 Observations. Observation and field noting was another data collection method used. As Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated, “Through observation, the researcher learns actions and infers the meanings those actions have for participants” (p. 195). I aimed to follow Rossman and Rallis’ (2003) framework for my observations, which begin with unstructured observations leading to more narrow and focused observations occurring later in the research (p. 195). I observed the school site itself and was given permission to take pictures of the physical environment. I also observed areas with staff and students present, which provided insight on the internal workings of the school. These areas included hallways, the cafeteria, and other gathering points. Field notes were taken from my observations and used as data for analysis.

3.5.3 Document collection. Rossman and Rallis (2003) have written about the importance of material collection within qualitative studies, as documents can provide vital information about the site or participants that can augment the other data collection methods used (pp. 197-198). As noted above, photographs of the physical environment were taken and were itemized as documents for analysis. For example, wall displays, laminated posters, and school structures were photographed. Additional documents were collected and included emails, letters, the student handbook, public meeting minutes, website materials, and information on general student demographics. Such documents have offered insight into how cultural diversity is viewed and acted upon in the school setting. I also invited participants to bring a document or artefact to their interview that they could speak to in regards to ethnocultural diversity. The aim of this strategy was to provide insight into how participants perceive ethnocultural diversity or their role as an

educator in an ethnoculturally diverse setting and to stimulate deeper discussion on education for ethnocultural equity. A number of educators did bring or speak to an artefact during interviews. This will be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data was collected for this study through interviews, observation and by gathering documents. I transcribed interview data from recorded interviews. These transcripts made up the bulk of the data to be analysed. Observations and documents were also textualized. Photographs and documents not already in textual format were described with text and observations were textualized through field notes.

Interview transcripts were read a number of times to be sure that I had a solid understanding of the interview data. At this stage, I also wrote a number of short memos to help in my analysis. I then started to compile codes of salient words, phrases or ideas from the transcribed data and memos. Data from field notes and document collection were also coded with the interview data. The next stage in the process was to organize these codes into larger themes by looking for commonalities between codes. These themes provided a picture of the data, which could then be interpreted, addressed, and discussed in the reporting stage of this research. Variants of this strategy are used by many qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2013).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Considering potential ethical issues is important through all stages of research (Creswell, 2013). Prior to conducting any research, my proposal for this study was approved through the University of New Brunswick Research Ethics Board (UNB REB

206-134). Following this approval, the Anglophone East School District and the school site granted me permission to conduct this study. Interview participants were informed about the nature of my research and signed consent forms (Appendix D) prior to being interviewed.

All reasonable steps to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants was maintained throughout this study. During the entire process, I aimed to be respectful of all individuals and the setting (Creswell, 2013). I have followed the Panel on Research Ethics by respecting humans following the three core principles of “respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice” (Panel on Research Ethics, 2015).

Any identifiable data collected during the study was locked in a secure environment or electronically stored and password protected. Participants have been identified using a code in this report to protect confidentiality. Other than myself, only my thesis supervisor and I have access to view the identifiable data. Summary findings of my study will be made available to participants, as I have strived to be open during the entire process.

3.8 Delimitations and Limitations

As discussed above, this research employed a single site case study. Because of this, any generalizability to other sites or contexts must be assumed with caution. Furthermore, the participants in the study are each unique individuals with their own perceptions and behaviours. Qualitative research is, by its very nature, interpretive (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Therefore, it must be recognized that my interpretations are my own.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Themes that emerged from data analysis will be discussed in this chapter. Ten educators were interviewed for this study. For confidentiality reasons, each educator is identified by a code consisting of the letter “E” (Educator) and the number 01 through 10. Documents discussed are identified in a similar format by using the letter “D” (Document) and a number. Data discussed from observations has been identified by the acronym “FN” (Field Notes). From my data analysis several themes emerged. These themes include The School Environment, The Role of the Educator, Obstacles, The Education System, and Support and Resources. Each of these themes will be discussed below.

4.4 Theme 1 – The School Environment

Educators interviewed for this study spoke on the school environment extensively. Positive and negative dimensions emerged with subthemes including the school being a welcoming environment, how scary it must be for newcomers to come to the school, problems with school location, mental illness, and positive environmental influence. Each of these topics relating to the theme of school environment will be described in more detail below.

4.4.1 A welcome environment. Based on my work in the school, a key idea that emerged was that the school is a welcoming place for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. Interview participants spoke about the level of acceptance from both staff and students. Some educators made note of unwelcoming elements within the school environment. However, consistent and numerous data suggest that the school is a welcoming

environment for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. One educator noted, “We [the school staff] are really open-minded. I really do believe that” (E03). The same educator also spoke about the students in the school and stated, “My experience has been, from having worked in a few other places and [having] talked to teachers that have been in other places, they [students] seem to be more accepting of difference” (E03). Most of the other educators interviewed shared these sentiments, which the following statements show:

“What I see is most of them are welcomed, and kids are good, because most of them are” (E04)

“We’ve always been known as the school with the big heart” (E06)

“We are very welcoming here” (E08)

Another participant spoke of today’s students having more acceptance than students had in the past. The educator said, “I find that my students are much more willing to accept difference” (E01). One participant spoke to the welcome attitudes of the student body towards newcomers. Regarding the welcoming process, the educator noted that students are “always very willing to help” (E02). Interview data analyzed for this study, suggest that the environment is a welcoming one for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers.

The findings discussed above correspond with data collected through other techniques. For example, posters and boards showing acceptance towards ethnocultural diverse others were found near the entrance to the school, in and around the Guidance Department, and in a classroom that was visited. Most notable was the inclusion of various languages in the titles of some departments and areas around the school.

It is important to note that the welcoming nature of the school is not absolute. One participant interviewed voiced concerns over the environment noting, “This school has never felt warm to me. It doesn’t feel warm and welcoming, and I don’t think that is a teacher fault” (E05). The same participant was asked if they thought the student population was welcoming to newcomers. The response was, “No. I don’t” (E05). Further, negative issues within the school environment have occurred. One educator revealed that, “It’s not all lovely” (E04). They also noted that, “There is always that element [group of students] that is not going to be [accepting and welcoming]” (E04). Other educators interviewed spoke on this topic as well. Responses included, “I know we have had some negative hateful things happen” (E03) and “there are still some that are very, ‘I can’t believe these people are here. What are they doing here?’” (E09). Although the data, when considered in its entirety, suggest that the school is a welcoming place for newcomers, it is clear that exceptions do exist. It is important that unwelcome occurrences are addressed to keep the environment as welcome as possible for newcomers.

Many educators provided examples of negative behaviour during discussions. It is interesting that, from my perspective, many of these educators seemed to be speaking of the same events that had happened recently. These included a group of students telling a minority group to go home (E04, E06, E10) and students making bomb sounds (E04, E06). These negative behaviours are concerning. However, this might also suggest that there are relatively few incidents that arise in the school environment. School administrators have made it clear that negative behavior is unwelcomed within the school. This is evident based on a number of documents analyzed for this study. For

example, A post on the school's website regarding dress and behaviour noted, "Hard-toed boots and any other insignia or symbols which may be thought of as threatening, intimidating, or promoting hatred of any person or group are not permitted" (D8). Another statement to students in a handbook noted that "Clothing that includes designs and logos that carry racial overtones" (D9) are not allowed on school premises. It is unclear how well these rules are enforced. Some educators revealed that the school administration publicized negative incidents through emails (E03) and announcements (E04). There are suggestions that the school is taking steps to address and deter negative behavior, which is positive.

The data suggest that the school environment is a welcoming one. However, there are concerns over some issues that have a negative effect on the environment. The school can be a scary place for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers even if school personnel and students are generally welcoming. This will be discussed in more depth in the section below focusing on the intimidating nature of the school.

4.4.2 A scary environment. Data suggest that the school is a welcoming place. However, educators interviewed for this study also noted the fact that the school environment could be a scary and intimidating one for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. When asked what it must be like for a student entering the building for the first time, participant responses included such things as "scary" (E01, E10), "terrifying" (E01, E06), and "intimidating" (E01, E09, E10). As one educator elaborated, "I could only imagine being a student coming in from another country not speaking the language or understanding the culture" (E09). Another participant noted, "I tell my students every

day that, ‘if I was in your position, I would curl up on the floor and I would cry’” (E07).

When asked to elaborate, the educator said,

I can’t imagine how overwhelming it must be for some of our students who have never been outside of their country. They have no language whatsoever.

Everything is new and different, the whole school system, the bells, everything is so overwhelming and you are constantly processing all day long in another

language that you don’t understand, and you have no one to turn to. (E07)

Participants also spoke about the environment being scary for newcomers due to the size of the school. One participant noted, “I think it would be pretty scary for a lot of kids especially because this is such a big building” (E09). Another participant stated, “I think it might be overwhelming. It’s a very big school” (E02). During my walk-throughs of the facility, I took note of the size of the school. The size of the building could present challenges for all students who are new, particularly those who have arrived from outside of Canada. (FN).

Participants also noted school behavioural issues during discussions in regards to the environment. A participant spoke to this issue by giving an example of working with some parents and stated, “I’ve had parents come in and say, ‘Well, I never learned anything in school either, so it doesn’t matter’” (E05). One educator noted the troubles in the school regarding “drugs, and the alcohol, and the attendance issues” (E06) The educator elaborated on the behaviour issues within the school being intimidating, as described below:

Yeah, it’s not as regimented as it should be, so I think that must be a shock for a lot of them and then, you know, even the music and the language and like, you

know, vulgarity. Even the way they treat, you know, I'm talking about the kids who are struggling, treat their peers and treat their authority figures. (E06)

Many schools can be an intimidating for newcomer students, and this school is no exception. Many participants in the study reflected on what that can mean for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. This school has also implemented some strategies in an attempt to ease the transition for newcomer students. This will be discussed in more detail in a later section. The next environmental challenge to be examined is the location of the school.

4.4.3 Problems with school location. The school is a large one with a large catchment area. Although one participant called the school “inner-city” (E06) in regards to the demographic it serves, it happens to be located a few kilometers outside of the city itself. Participants discussed the issues with this in regards to ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. One of these issues related to the difficulty it creates for newcomers and their involvement with extracurricular activities as a city bus does not travel to the school. One educator summed up this issue well when she revealed, “It is hard to get them to the school for different events, and it is also a struggle to get these students home to have them involved in extra-curriculars” (E02). Speaking of holding an event, another participant stated, “maybe not to do it after school because our location and our clientele find it difficult to come back” (E03).

Another issue that emerged was the problems the location created in regards to community connection. An educator noted, “It's hard to be part of the community when you are not in a community, and we are really not in a community” (E05). This same

educator elaborated when discussing public speakers being invited to their class, and stated, “It’s not like they can drop by the school and then go back to work you know” (E05). This connection also becomes an issue when trying to connect with parents of newcomers. For instance, one educator stated, “A lot of our parents don’t have their own transportation, so they rely on others or public transport” (E07).

The school’s location in regards to the demographic it serves is a unique challenge for this school. My own observation from travelling to this location is that it could indeed pose a problem for people without their own method of transportation, such as for some newcomer families to Canada. This issue is compounded with no city bus travelling to the school. Next, I will discuss matters concerning the school environment and mental illness.

4.4.4 Mental illness There are concerns within the school environment in addition to the influx of ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. The educators that were interviewed spoke about mental illness as a challenge within the school environment. Speaking about what the school’s biggest challenge is, one participant stated, “It would be anxiety and mental health” (E10). Other educators noted this as well with statements such as:

“We have an increase mental health in our classrooms as well. We are not getting as much support for those kids as well.” (E09)

“We have a lot of kids with anxiety and depression who can’t be in a typical classroom.” (E03)

“I am seeing a very every year an increase in anxiety and mental health concerns

and with that is, you know, throwing in an extra element of people that are entering your class who don't speak English.” (E02)

Related to this challenge, is the number of students requiring academic accommodations. One educator noted, “In the last 5 years there has been more students on educational plans. Like, it has gone through the roof” (E06).

Mental illness is a concern within the school environment, and educators are confronting it. Mental health was also noted in meeting minutes analyzed for this project where discussions were held regarding professional development focusing on mental wellness and other mental health programming (D4). It was also noted during interviews that many of the ethnoculturally diverse newcomers entering the school are experiencing mental illness and war-related trauma. This may, in some cases, be due to the backgrounds that newcomers have come from. Regardless, it is an additional obstacle that educators face. This will be discussed in more detail in a later section. In the final section regarding the school environment, I will discuss the positive influence ethnoculturally diverse newcomers have on the student body as a whole.

4.4.5 Positive environmental influence. The school has seen a major increase in the enrolment of ethnoculturally diverse students. Another major environmental factor brought up in the interviews with educators was the positive effect that these newcomers are having on the ethnocultural majority within the school. One participant spoke about this in regards to why this influx is good for the majority Anglophone and Francophone students. They noted, “Their worldview is sometimes very limited so they don't always have exposure or access to people of different cultures, religions, whatever it happens to

be” (E07). They went on to note, “It’s been beneficial for [this school] to have all of our newcomers, because it’s giving our own students who have very limited, in some cases, perspective, a lot more awareness” (E07). Another educator spoke to this emerging reality as well, noting,

I think it allows our students to be diversified with, because they may have to go out and live in these other countries too, to get jobs on the world stage. So, it allows that we are not in our own little bubble in our own little world, and we are naïve to what goes on. (E10)

It was also noted during interviews that presentations on ethnocultural diversity were being held in classes.

Educators in the school may also benefit from the evolving diversity within the school. Some of the participants spoke about the ethnocultural makeup of the educators. For example one participant noted, “We don’t have a very ethnoculturally diverse staff” (E01). Another stated, “We are mostly Caucasian and Canadian born teachers in the school, so they [the educators] may have limited experiences with, you know, different cultures” (E02). Preparing educators for these new realities is imperative, as is working towards better representation of diversity within school environments.

4.5 Theme 2 – The Role of the Educator

The second theme that I will discuss in this chapter is regarding the role that educators have within the school. A research question guiding this study asked about the roles participants have as educators in the ethnoculturally diverse context of the school, and many of the discussions with participants were related to this topic. Categories that

will be discussed in more detail below and regarding educator roles include busyness, remedial education, and strategies.

4.5.1 Busyness. Educators at this school are busy. This is apparent not only from speaking with educators, but from making observations at the school and collecting documents such as emails. The data suggests that the increasing number of ethnocultural diverse students, among other factors, plays a part in this. This busyness also makes it more difficult for educators to work with newcomers and other students, which compounds the issue.

It became evident to me that the educators in this school are busy simply from the email correspondence I had with them when trying to set up interviews. This was also evident during some of the interviews. The first interview I held had two interruptions. Before beginning another interview, a participant asked how long it would be as they had another task to complete. When conducting my fifth interview, a teacher was working to finish something up as we started and stated, “We only got 3 things on the go here. Sorry” (E05). Another indication of educator busyness came from email responses that I received from participants after reminding them that I would be picking up transcripts. These were: “I have only had time to skim it” (E03) and “Yikes! I haven’t read it yet. I’ve been busy marking exams and calculating marks” (E04).

Much of this busyness that educators described revolved around their already incredibly busy schedules and job-related responsibilities, in addition to the school environmental factors, such as those discussed earlier. The following educator statements illustrate this:

“Teachers seem very receptive to trying to help the students out even though you know they already have another twenty students in the class that they are trying to serve.” (E02)

“Teachers who are so busy and so stressed out meeting the needs of all our diverse needs.” (E03)

“This is 1 more thing that’s added to the pile.” (E04)

“They are already pulled in so many different directions.” (E07)

“We have so many diverse individuals, not just ones coming here from other countries but even the ones in front of us now.” (E09)

“So imagine a teacher with no resources, ‘You got to give this one enrichment, this one is at a grade 2 level, this one is a grade eleven level, and these are the international students in the class.’” (E10)

Some of the educators discussed the level of busyness and how it has become unmanageable. For instance, educators noted:

“We’re maxed out you know.” (E03).

“You tell yourself, ‘I can’t do it all,’ for your own sense of wellbeing.” (E06)

“I don’t have any more overtime hours to give.” (E05)

“You are putting stresses on a teacher that are not really manageable. They are not. I am just being quite honest.” (E10)

“We are at a point even in the last 4 years where it is just too much for us to sustain this.” (E06)

It is clear from participant data that educators are busy. Challenges that can come with working with ethnoculturally diverse students can increase this level of busyness. There

are concerns among educators around the time that they can give to their students with a recognition that a growing number of newcomers are enrolling at the site.

4.5.2 Remedial education. Educator roles at this site have become affected by workload. Part of this is due to the remedial work that educators in the classroom are required to do, and this has increased with the number of ethnoculturally diverse newcomers enrolling in the school.

Speaking about newcomers, one educator stated that, “most of the immigrants that I have had into my classroom are at a significant different level than what I am teaching to usually” (E01). They went on to note, “It’s a lot of remedial help. It’s a lot of checking, double-checking, making sure explaining things individually. It’s ... yeah ... more remedial. That’s it” (E01). Another educator spoke of remedial help with an understanding of diversity noting, “Give whatever extra support I can to get them there and to know what they know and what they don’t know based on their past educational experiences or their culture” (E04). One educator spoke to the topic with regards to newcomers that have had fewer years of schooling in their home countries. The educator noted, “They have some major gaps, so it’s added to the amount of kids that need that extra help” (E06). Participants spoke of the need to remediate for many of their ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. This is a role that many of these educators have not prepared for in their professional learning.

Much of the remedial work done by the educators interviewed for this study pertains to the challenges associated with English-language acquisition. An educator illustrated this with the example, “I can say ‘Oh, here’s an apple, apple, bite apple,’”

(E05). Speaking about a refugee student, another educator noted, “Here is a boy who has come from a war zone; has been in a refugee camp, and we are showing him pictures of, like, it’s for little children” (E04). The participant went on to note, “but we have to start somewhere” (E04). Another, speaking on what had to be done, stated, “a lot more simplifying of things” (E09). Such responses illustrate the level of English-language support that educators are having to provide in some cases. There are newcomers enrolling in the school who are at the very beginning stages of English-language acquisition and educators are having to remediate in an effort to reach these students.

The role that educators have within the school has changed with the evolving ethnocultural diversity of the student body. Educators, who are busy for a variety of reasons, have also had to put extra work into helping newcomers. In the next section, I will discuss some of the strategies that these educators have implemented to work in this evolving context.

4.5.3 Strategies. Educators at the school have utilized and developed various strategies to work with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers attending the school. Many of these strategies have come from the school level.

One such strategy is the use of technology in the classroom and beyond. Specifically, educators are relying on cellphone translators to help students who are in need of English-language support. One educator chose their cellphone as the artefact to discuss in an interview. About the artefact, they said, “It’s quick for me to look up things to translate for them, but they really use those devices as translators and they are

constantly on Google looking at concepts and stuff in their own language” (E06). Asked if they were open to students using translation devices, the educator replied,

Yeah, I am open to it definitely with our cultural students, definitely open to it, but we talk before about the regulations of it. When they should and shouldn't be using it, yeah, so I am really open to that. It's really the only way to do that. (E06)

Many other educators noted the use of technological translators as a strategy to bridge language development too. One stated, “we really do use a lot of our translators from cellphones” (E02). Another mimicked students asking to use their cellphones to help translate in class, stating, “Do you mind if I use my phone to look up this word in this language of this person?” (E09). The same educator spoke about using Google as translation software. Speaking of its limitations, they noted, “Typing into Google translate, and I don't even know if it's right” (E09). The importance of these devices was also noted by an educator who said, “We helped the staff fundraise some money at that time to help buy them translators and you know some little things for the family” (E03). Electronic translators have become a vital piece of technology at the school. Educators are relying on these devices to overcome language challenges that they are facing when working with students. It seems as though this strategy has come from necessity, and it is positive that this technology is readily available. The use of such devices in complex environments does show a level of remediation.

Educators also spoke of other technologies available at the school, such as iPads and Arabic software. A notable piece of technology that a participant used as a strategy was text-compacting software, which a participant described. “Basically, it would shrink the text down into simple paragraphs as opposed to being a few pages so that key points

are found” (E09). They elaborated on this use of software by stating, “Hopefully, towards the end, they can be getting like 50 – 60% in terms of content” (E09). From this exchange, it is clear that some technology is being used to remediate. Again, this may come from necessity, but over-modification is a concern. A number of ethnoculturally diverse students may require language support but be academically capable.

A further strategy implemented by educators within the school deals with welcoming newcomer students. One of the educators I spoke with discussed Ambassador Students in detail, noting,

Primarily they are the welcoming students. So different grades, different genders...they will bring them to teachers: Maybe the band teacher if they've expressed an interest in music. We have a whole presentation with pictures; it is a welcome to (this school) presentation. It goes through all of the events and stuff. How many students are here, how many teachers are here, you know what our school colours are, you know how our day runs, and they have their schedule. They walk them to and from their classes. We give them a free lunch. We give them a (school) t-shirt, a bunch of gear to welcome them, make them feel that they are a part of this school... maybe we will introduce them to someone that comes from the same country that they do, so that they can have that connection. (E02)

An additional strategy that this school has implemented is through the Reading Tutor program. This program was originally designed by the province to help any student in need of extra support. However, the school staff tweaked the program to focus on language support. One educator, speaking on the reworking of the program, stated, “The

course was designated to teach students who are struggling in grade 9 and 10 but we've made it a 2nd language, an EAL [English as an Additional Language] focus" (E04). The Reading Tutor program at this school involves training Grade 12 students to work with newcomer students requiring English-language support. Meeting minutes that I obtained as part of the document evidence in the project and that I analyzed noted, "15-17 of our top students will be reading tutors for these students" (D6). One participant provided a more detailed description of the program stating,

Just this year we have taken our Reading Tutor program and [made] it explicitly for our ELLs [English Language Learners], and we have grade twelve students who are taught how to be a tutor. It is a rigorous curriculum that they are following. They create lesson plans, the whole shebang. They are paired up usually on a 1 to 2 or 3 ratio with, again, some of our lowest level students, and they are working through a guided approach to build up their language levels. So, those are great things. Unfortunately we could do that 5 periods of the day for some of these kids. We need to do it and we just don't have the resources to do it. (E07)

The tweaking of the Reading Tutor program suggests that educators at this site are thinking innovatively when considering how to best support ethnoculturally diverse students needing language support. There are some concerns with this in regards to the educational system, which aims to avoid the segregation of students. This will be discussed in more detail in later sections.

Another strategy that was noted during interviews involved sending ethnoculturally diverse students to the Flex Centre. One educator described the Flex

Centre by noting, “When it started, it was for kids who had mental health issues and could not cope with a 5 period day, so they would have at least 1 hour in there to get some extra help” (E03). However, this educator went on to state that teachers who do not know what to do with some newcomers in their classes have, at times, sent them to the Flex Centre. About this strategy, the educator noted, “Right, and it probably shouldn’t be... I personally think that when you show a person that you value them and you show that I’m ready for you, I’m happy you are here, I’ve got a plan” (E03). This educator has an understanding of the need have strategies with a solid structure and design.

The role that educators have within the school includes implementing strategies in an attempt to work better with the large numbers of ethnoculturally diverse students enrolling in the school. Some of these strategies are well thought out and will benefit newcomer students. Others may do more harm than good. This will be explored further in a later section of this study. Most of these strategies are in place to help with English-language acquisition, which is a challenge within the school. This will be discussed in the next theme I have described as obstacles.

4.6 Theme 3 – Obstacles

While working in the school, it became clear that educators are faced with obstacles in regards to the evolving ethnoculturally diversity in the school. The most apparent challenge that educators described while working with many newcomer students is regarding English-language acquisition. Academic ability and newcomers entering the school with trauma and mental illness are other barriers faced by educators within the school.

4.6.1 Language acquisition. Educators interviewed for this study spoke at length about the language levels that ethnoculturally diverse students come to the school with.

These language levels, according to the participant interviews, can range greatly.

Educators noted:

“Everybody is coming in at a different level.” (E01)

“Some come with a stronger language than others.” (E06)

“There is quite a diversity between them.” (E10).

“Could be off the charts, or it could be very, very low functioning.” (E08)

The wide range of English-language skills may be a specific challenge, as consideration needs to be made for things such as placement and resource management. Most educators, however, spoke about the challenges associated in working with students who are at the early stages of English-language development.

In school meeting minutes from April of 2016, it was noted that, “Presently at (the school), there are 200 students as English language learners” (D4). This number represents nearly 17% of the student body. Several educators spoke about students in need of extensive English-language support. Responses from educator interviews included:

“Students that are arriving with zero English. As you can imagine that is a struggle for the individual student and for the staff.” (E02)

“They’ll get a kid in their room who doesn’t understand English at all.”(E03)

“I have a number of students who are illiterate in their first language who are trying to learn English.” (E07)

“His English language is very, very low even, like, simple ‘hello, goodbye,’ like, simple sentences is still a struggle for him.” (E09)

“They didn’t speak any English.” (E10)

“They are coming in not even knowing what our numbers look like” (E06).

The stage of English language development can also lead to unfortunate incidents. One educator provided an example describing that, “A student that just got left on a bus because they couldn’t verbalize to their bus driver where they lived and they didn’t know where to get off” (E02). These responses illustrate the number of newcomers entering the school in need of English language support. This is a new reality for educators in the school.

Many educators have little experience or training in working with students who are learning the English language, which intensifies this challenge. One participant revealed in an interview that educators “have very little to no training on how to teach your subject level area to a student who doesn’t speak English” (E02). Responses from other interviewees included, “I am a literature teacher, not a literacy teacher” (E04), and “Even though I am a teacher, I don’t necessarily know how to teach people how to read” (E10). Participants also spoke to the types of instruction many of these students require. For instance, educators stated, “We are starting with letters and phonemes and sight words” (E04) and “Our high school English Language Arts teachers, they don’t have the training to teach someone to read from, you know, ABC sounds consonant blends all that sort of thing” (E07). These exchanges illustrate the gap that exists between what educators are trained to do and what they are faced with in the school.

Students who are at the early stages of English acquisition was a frustrating topic to some of the educators interviewed. One participant voiced concerns from the students' perspectives noting, "They must be horrified to be sitting in classes where they don't know what the hell is going on, because they don't know the language" (E03). Others shared these sentiments when noting, "I also don't want them sitting in my class for two days not understanding more than maybe 20% of what I am saying. It must be so hard" (E05), and "I can't stand being up there teaching and knowing that they're sitting there the whole time not understanding what I am saying" (E06). One of the participants spoke about a newcomer student in the early stages of learning English. Speaking about a unit on Shakespeare, the educator said, "Can you imagine somebody who doesn't have a high language skill in there? It would be like me sitting in Mandarin class" (E10). There is a realization amongst a number of educators as to the difficulty many newcomers are faced with entering the current system. To some, this comes with frustration.

A number of educators spoke about language challenges creating an issue for those students who are academically capable. One educator stated, "They are not understanding the linguistic part of it. They might be your best, top Social Studies, Modern History [student] in there if they knew the language" (E10). Another educator agreed with this suggestion noting, "They are very smart, and they might have a great academic future, but the language is the hurdle, and in my mind, we are not doing enough" (E04). Another participant argued against "pushing them through on a watered-down program because they can't speak our language, because they do have the capabilities" (E06).

Language was noted to be a major challenge for the educators working in the

school. From the data collected, it is suggested that ethnoculturally diverse newcomers to the school come with a wide range of English-language skills. The chief issue arises with those students who are in need of extensive English-language support. Teachers at this school do not have the adequate experience or training to work with these students and many have become frustrated. It was also pointed out that some are academically capable but falling behind due to their English-language skills. This leads into the next obstacle that will be discussed which is in regard to ethnoculturally diverse newcomers with academic challenges.

4.6.2 Academic imbalance. A challenge that educators are dealing with at this school pertains to the diverse academic levels that a number of ethnoculturally diverse newcomers arrive with. Like language, there is a wide range of ability. As an interviewee said, “Some students find it very, very easy because they are coming from a more academically rigorous six days of school, four hours of homework every night, and [there are] other students who have never been in a formal school setting” (E07). As noted previously, there are a number of students attending this school that have come as refugees, many with little experience in the formal schooling environment. A participant stated, “Some of them haven’t received schooling in 4 or 5 years because of the refugee situation, so they have huge gaps” (E06). Speaking of a student in their class, one participant revealed, “He’s never had formal schooling” (E04) One of the educators interviewed for this study described a student in their class whose academic understanding of science topics was of concern.

I had a student last year, we were doing grade 9, we were doing space, and on iPads, we had, we have a program where you can actually use the iPad and it clicks up to satellites and it shows you where the planets are, the constellations, and he literally fell off of his chair, because I was showing him. He had heard about the planets before, like I showed him ‘Saturn is right there like underneath you right now’ and he was just, like, it blew his mind, like, he just didn’t know what to say. He kept asking to see the program. (E06)

The same educator later noted, “It really showed me, like, how much the difference is there that they see versus what our students have seen coming all the way through the system” (E06). Language is not the only challenge that educators face when working with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. It is also apparent that students from diverse backgrounds are entering the school with unique academic experiences. It will no longer suffice for educators to anticipate that they will be working with school populations of students from similar academic backgrounds.

Like the language obstacle, there is some frustration with how academic imbalances are being dealt with. An educator stated, “We have students who are sixteen, seventeen, never been in school before. We can’t just plop them into an English Language Arts class or a Math 11 class that they need as a graduation requirement” (E07). Another noted, “The way of dealing with it is giving them a modified program, which I don’t agree with because they are very intelligent people; they just have gaps” (E06). These responses suggest that educators in the school are not ready for the influx of ethnoculturally diverse students. Some educators are frustrated with the current strategies

being utilized, as these strategies may be detrimental for these newcomer students. I will discuss one final obstacle that emerged in my data – Mental Illness and Trauma.

4.6.3 Mental illness and trauma. Mental illness is an issue for many students within the school environment. This issue, along with trauma, can also be placed within the Obstacles theme, as many educators spoke about ethnoculturally diverse students enrolling in the school with these mental health challenges. Throughout my conversations with educators, terms such as “PTSD [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder]” (E01, E03, E05, E07), and “trauma” (E02, E04, E05, E07, E09) were described. Many students are experiencing these challenges according to interview participants. Interviewees noted, “Students are coming to us and they come from some pretty traumatic situations” (E05) and “There are some in particular who have a PTSD diagnosis” (E07). Mental illness and trauma is a challenge that educators are faced with in regards to newcomer students. Many of these newcomers have likely been involved in traumatic circumstances that educators have little understanding of or training in.

Educators also spoke to this challenge noting that they had little understanding of what to do. For instance, one interview participant speaking about needing professional development said, “I definitely think that especially dealing with students who are coming with not necessarily just language barriers but with some trauma” (E09). Other educators also spoke to this point. One noted, “One big thing that I wish I had was training on PTSD” (E01). Another speaking of what they would like to see, stated, “more trauma-informed practices” (E02). These topics will be discussed in more detail in the Support and Training theme. Prior to that, I will discuss The Educational System.

4.7 Theme 4 – The Educational System

Addressing the professional learning needs of educators within the school, an interview participant stated, “They are working within a system that is flawed” (E10). Other participants voiced similar concerns throughout interviews, such as, “I think personally as a school we are doing as much as we can but it’s more a more systemic thing” (E07). Many discussions related to the system failing to evolve to meet the needs of ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. Specifically, discussions regarding systemic flaws focused on inclusion and standardization. Each of these topics will be discussed in greater detail below.

4.7.1 Inclusion. A major principle of Inclusion, according to The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) (2013) states, “The provincial curriculum is provided equitably to all students and this is done in an inclusive, common learning environment shared among age-appropriate peers in their neighbourhood school” (p. 4). This policy has been put in place for many good reasons, and many educators I spoke to noted just that. For example, a participant stated, “We do a really good job, I think, in my opinion, including the special-needs students. That was a huge part of inclusion when it started” (E10). Speaking to the importance of social connections for newcomers, another participant stated, “I also want to be able to see them in the regular classes, in my class, because that way they are going to feel more connected” (E09). Another also noted the importance ethnoculturally diverse families put on their children being involved by stating, “The parents usually ask more questions about how [the students] are integrating” (E01). Data suggest that participants understand the

benefits of inclusion. However, as will be described below, there is concern about the policy of inclusion in regards to how it was working for students needing significant English-language support.

Many participants voiced criticisms of the inclusion policy during my discussions with them. One educator, for instance, noted, “I say it with reservation, but part of me thinks, we, our system of all or nothing isn’t great” (E10). Another educator speaking of English-language learners and inclusion stated, “You have to meet their needs in the classroom because of inclusion.” They went on to state, “but it’s not helpful and it’s not kind” (E03). Another stated, “If you get ten students from Syria, three from Korea, four from that speak Mandarin, like, it’s very difficult because those are very different” (E09). The following narratives illuminate this reality for educators in the school:

You have very little to no training on how to teach your subject level area to a student who doesn’t speak English, so I feel like that’s very overwhelming, and, like, ‘they are a sweet kid but what I am supposed to do? Are they really supposed to be here right now?’ And with Inclusion, It is like ‘yeah they are’. So is your student that is doing 50 % of the curriculum, and so is your student doing whatever their individualized plan, and so are your students that you are expected to accommodate, and so are the students that are expected to be, you know, average learning, and so are your students that you are supposed to be enriching, and all 29; all in the same class. (E02)

You can't have 22 English Language Learners, five of whom have never been in a school before, in the same classroom with one person and expect that you are going to have the same results as if you could take those 5 kids and have a dedicated class with them or even 6, 7, 8 classes in a dedicated classroom. (E07)

You mean to tell me they only have one class a day with a special program for them than you got to put them in regular classes?... teachers (were) in tears, and 'What do [we] with them? I can't even communicate'. (E10)

Another interviewee provided some details on what this might mean from a student perspective. The educator stated, "[Student] will not be able to get a diploma, let's face it, unless he is very clever, he will be mid-20s, maybe 30, before he will be there" (E04).

The above statements illustrate that a number of participants understand that the policy of inclusion, as it currently exists, may be detrimental to some students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds.

Educators also spoke on the inclusion policy creating an additional burden for educators. Educators stated, "Inclusion used to include just learning plans, but now it is including this other step" (E06) and "You cannot create for 120 kids, 120 individualized plans. You need to rethink this" (E05). Another participant added:

Quite honestly, I don't know if that is fair to do to our teachers, nor fair for those kids. We make it happen, and I think they are happy here. They are glad to be in the school, but do we fail them a little bit? I think we do. I think we fail our teachers, but this is something that's evolving and it's going to get bigger. (E10)

Another participant summed their feelings on this issue up concisely noting, “It’s pretty near impossible to be reaching everybody” (E06). A teachers’ report reinforced such sentiments. It noted that, “Class composition is a concern for teachers” and that there was a “discussion on inclusion and comparison with other provinces” (D7). Data from my research suggests that there are a number of educators concerned with inclusion. There is concern in regards to how the current set-up with inclusion is affecting ethnoculturally diverse students and the educators who are working with them. There needs to be a consideration for how this current system can be improved for these students while also acknowledging the benefits of inclusion.

A number of the participants interviewed provided their thoughts on what should be done to better serve particular students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds in regards to inclusion. Statements included:

Help them in intensive English program; Government is not coming up with that, like, how are they not coming up with that? How are they not seeing that there is a need? (E02)

If they had a stronger base or more training like for English conversation and things like that ahead of time, they would probably feel more confident in participating in class. (E09)

The adults go through an English-language program before they are placed or before they go out to interview or to get jobs. I almost feel as though we need something like that for kids too. (E03)

There should be a program where they are there for like a year, to get basic language, to get basic culture, and it doesn't matter their age, and it needs to run where they are comfortable. Throwing them into the majority, you know, adds a whole other kettle of fish when it comes to their social stuff and all that. So, I never want to exclude, but there is no way of doing it properly unless you give them the supports they need long before they are thrown in the mix. (E06)

Let's say they have a school; they have a centre, and they have different people with a low student teacher ratio, and work with them, and build their skills up, and say, 'Boom they are ready. They understand basic English.' ...and then you bring them in for Phys. Ed. and Art and Music, and the part that is inclusionary where they are with their friends and learning, working with kids of our ethnic background, and I think it's important, but it's all or nothing right now for us. (E10)

Half their day, you know, when we are doing hands on things, maybe that's when they go to the kitchen or to Gym or to Art, you know, but the rest of the day could we not be working at bumping language? (E03)

These numerous exchanges illustrate several educator mentalities on how to better work with some of the ethnoculturally diverse newcomers to the area. The major challenge identified by these participants centres around English-language acquisition. Educators are observing these challenges first hand. A number of these comments also demonstrate

that educators acknowledge the need for these students to be included. This is vital, as segregation in any form can be negative and lead to discrimination. It can also negate many of the benefits that come with inclusion. As I will discuss in the following chapter, we should be striving for the inclusion of all students, but there may need to be some consideration and deeper dialogue on how ethnoculturally diverse students are included in classrooms.

I will end this section by quoting two participants who took issue with what inclusion actually means in an educational context and what the goal of the policy is. One noted, “Okay, but it is not inclusion if they are just sitting in the desk either. Sticking somebody in a room is not inclusion” (E06). The other called the policy an “oxymoron” (E10). They clarified, “By including everybody, it’s become non-inclusionary” (E10). Educators need to think about what inclusion really means and what they are trying to achieve with this practice. The current system is one of the means justifying the ends, which may be harmful. This finding will be discussed further in the following chapters.

4.7.2 Standardization. A number of interview participants also spoke about standardization as a systemic flaw during my discussions with them. A major focus with these discussions related to the unique demographic of the school and how standardized processes and policies were a detriment to their particular setting in regards to resources. Speaking to this topic, one educator noted,

I don’t know where the money goes, and maybe it is going places and we can only do so much, but we are sure as hell not doing a good job when they get here, and I don’t think [this school] is unique to that, nor do I think all of the schools

are getting the same numbers that [this school] is getting, so I don't think we can always fall back on what is fair. (E03)

Another educator stated, "Our needs are very different from [other school's] needs. We don't have the same clientele" (E07). In regards to how resources should be allocated, they went on to say, "targeted to the need of the school and not just as a blanket" (E07).

A number of the educators also spoke to the problem of standardization in regards to educational practice. For instance, one educator noted, "If I don't have creative license, why am I a professional?" (E05). The educator later went on to state, "When you try to think about what would be a good system for delivering that education, I don't think that's a centralized system" (E05). Another participant reiterated this idea, stating, "Give us some money and some professional trust that we are going to, you know, use it how we feel as a unique situation here it could be best used" (E03). Another educator was asked what they would want from policy-makers and mentioned, "More autonomy" (E10).

A further issue with standardization is regarding the curriculum and assessment. A number of educators spoke to the disadvantage such practices have placed on ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. An educator stated, "I've seen some of these kids write assessments, like, we have some of our standardized testing. I've seen some of these kids absolutely break down" (E09). Another stated, "How silly is that? Like for them to be constantly told, "Oh your mark is 20%," whereas I could give them a modified test and say, "Hey good on you, you got 75% in language acquisition now" (E05). Another educator spoke about the curriculum stating, "Does our curriculum relate to

those people? Not really” (E10). A letter from the New Brunswick Teachers’ Association (NBTA) to the Minister of EECD echoed these educator concerns. It asked, “What about assessments, report cards and credits for the newcomer students? For example, what are the expectations for a Syrian student placed in an 112 English class who has no English speaking or writing ability?” (D10). Standardization may be disadvantageous for many ethnoculturally diverse students. We must acknowledge the fact that many of the documents used in schools have been created with the majority in mind (Gay, 2013; Irvine, 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). The data also suggests that there are elements of standardization that may disadvantage students that have the academic ability but require English-language support.

Some of the educators interviewed spoke to a suggested remedy being to place ethnoculturally diverse newcomers on an officially modified program. One participant provided an example of a discussion they had about this strategy and spoke to the dangers of such a strategy. The educator said,

One of the things that came up in the conversation was maybe they just can’t handle 11-2 English, and they said, “Well what about switching level 3?” and I say, “Whoa, whoa, whoa. Can’t switch them to level 3. Level 3 is good for some of our students based on their testing and where they are at, but level 3 students, for the most part, can go to NBCC [New Brunswick Community College], go to community college, but they can’t go to university. It’s level 2.” I said, “These kids might be our brightest kids in the school, but they are struggling in English because of the language barrier, not because of an intelligence area.” They might

be the most intelligent student in school, so if you put them in level 3, you are going to close doors to university. (E10)

Another educator spoke to this strategy as well noting, “It seems to be their way of, the way of dealing with it, is giving them a modified program, which I don’t agree with, because they are very intelligent people; they just have gaps” (E06). The educator went on to add,

I think there is this big push on pushing them through when I think even if you talked to them and their families, they would rather it be slowed down by the time they do graduate so it’s like a legit thing. (E06)

Many of the educators interviewed for this study perceived standardization as problematic for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. More autonomy to work with ethnocultural students would be welcomed by a number of these educators. This will be discussed further in the following section on support and resources.

4.8 Theme 5 – Support and Resources

Support and Resources is the final theme to be discussed in this chapter. Many discussions with educators touched on this subject. Topics that fall into this theme include resources, disconnect and professional development.

4.8.1 Resources. The lack of funding provided to the school for working with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers was identified as an issue within this research. One educator noted, “We certainly don’t have the resources, money, to really be doing the best job that I think we could” (E02). Another educator provided a similar statement and said, “I think we need more money if we are going to do a good job” (E03). In the NBTA

letter to the Minister of EECD (2016), a question regarding funding with a focus on Syrian refugees was put forth. It asked, “While we are aware that several million dollars of additional funding has been designated to support Syrians in our schools, we would like to know details about how that money will be utilized?” (D10). There is a need for more money at the school to support ethnoculturally diverse students. More transparency in regards to the funding provided and how it is utilized could prove useful.

It was not only money that was identified as a need at the school. For example, educators also spoke to the need for more expertise. Educators noted:

“I think we need more specialized teachers and the money to have a full-time teacher.” (E04)

“The biggest problem is we don’t have enough people. We need money, we need resources, and we need bodies on the ground.” (E07)

“Staffing across the board... across the board, and I think, you know, based on language, based on comprehension, based on all of those things.” (E08)

“I think we need to have more individuals in the school helping them learn the simple English.” (E09)

A specific resource that participants discussed was pertaining to Full Time Equivalency (FTE). FTE relates to the number of educators and support staff that schools receive. FTE is provided to schools based on a standardized ratio, which was noted as a problem for some of the participants interviewed. A participant noted, “We are allotted FTE through a ratio: We have this many kids, divide that by this many kids in the class, equals this many teachers” (E07). Asked if that standardized ratio is problematic, they answered, “Exactly. It doesn’t work” (E07). Another educator, speaking to the FTE provided noted, “I don’t

want to sound like I'm not gracious, but you should be giving us FTE, not matching it. Secondly, it hasn't changed even though our numbers have increased markedly in 10 years" (E10). A section of the NBTA letter to the Minister of EECD reiterated these attitudes stating, "Be it resolved that NBTA lobby the Employer to employ additional teachers (FTE's) to support English as an Additional Language students" (D10). The number of ethnoculturally diverse students enrolling in the school has increased. Many of these students require additional support, which additional educators may be able to provide.

There are some standardized resources that would be welcomed in the school by many educators. One resource would involve having standards in place to credit international students for courses taken abroad. An educator spoke to this possibility by noting, "We would love to give them some credits from their host countries that they have been doing some work in and we have no consistent policies on that even" (E02). An EAL curriculum would be another welcome resource. According to participants, this document does not exist. One educator stated, "Our EAL classes that exist have no curriculum" (E02). The "curriculum" that is being used in these classes has been created in house. Speaking about the EAL teacher in the school, an interview participant stated, "[They have] basically created the curriculum" (E10). Another educator also noted this, stating, "There is no actual curriculum document. We are creating it from scratch" (E07). A curriculum could prove to be a beneficial resource for educators working to support students with language in EAL classes. Educators indicated that leaving the creation of this document to the teacher is unsatisfactory.

4.8.2 Disconnect. The lack of presence and connection in regards to policymakers and educators at the school level was discussed as a concern amongst participants. This should not be confused with standardization being a flaw within the school system as described in the previous section. Standardization was discussed as a systemic flaw, whereas disconnect relates to support, or lack thereof, from decision makers above. For example, one educator spoke to the message from above being “Make it work for these kids” (E10). Related responses from educators include:

“Government isn’t fully telling us and isn’t giving us direction so we are kind of like the lone wolves left to make our own decisions here, and we are doing it all in the best interest of the child.” (E02)

“I have had to look for ways to support myself” (E01).

“Nobody has ever been in my room” (E05).

Disconnect also exists in regards to the information educators are given on ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. In one exchange with a participant, I asked if they were provided much information on ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. The response was, “No. None at all” (E06). I later followed up by asking if they were provided with the nationality of ethnoculturally diverse students entering the school. The educator responded, “Not usually” (E06). The same educator also spoke to this issue with busyness in mind. They noted, “They don’t have time to make up packets for each kid and say, ‘This is what it is’, which I think they should” (E06). One participant gave an example, stating, “Sometimes it is, ‘Here is this person, [who] is going to be in your class, and welcome’, and then I had to figure out where [the student] was on my own” (E04).

One educator spoke more positively about the information provided on students. The participant said, “I think the district and the school have done a great job trying to get as much information out to us” (E08). This same educator, however, also noted, “Let’s test these kids, you know, earlier on to see where they actually are” (E08). It is also notable that this same participant, speaking of students, said, “It’s important for me not to have any preconceived notions or judgments.” (E08). It may be difficult for educators to work with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers when they are provided with little information. Information on the English-language abilities and academic backgrounds of students are beneficial for educators who deal so heavily with communication and academics. Information on where students come from may provide educators the chance to gain cultural knowledge. There may also be benefit in providing educators with some information on student life histories when suitable. This may provide a better opportunity for educators to connect with ethnoculturally diverse students.

There was an indication that educators can look through students’ cumulative files, but the general consensus was that little information on ethnoculturally diverse students is made available. For instance, one educator speaking about how they learn about newcomer students stated, “Any information that I have on the students is usually from me asking” (E01). Another said, “There should be more background info on themselves and their family and their culture and their schooling before they even reach the classroom” (E06). Leaving educators uninformed in regards to the students they are working with may be disadvantageous for both the educator and the student.

Educators also spoke to disconnect in regards to the lack of understanding policymakers have with what is actually happening “on the ground” at this school. One

educator's statement illustrates this. They stated, "District doesn't like to hear it, but I'm in the trenches" (E10). This participant went on to state, "I don't know if they always really truly understand the realities that are taking place" (E10). Another participant discussed this issue as well, stating, "I haven't seen them in the schools to see what's going on" (E02). They went on to state, "They need to work in the schools. They need to ask the opinion of the front-line workers" (E02). It is not only a lack of understanding with those "on the ground" that participants discussed, but also the way that these policymakers are disconnected when dealing with these issues. For instance, educators stated, "I don't want someone from the district coming in. I want in-house to give us a full-time teacher who is amongst us who knows our population and knows our staff" (E03), and "Often these jobs that exist at the district level are with good intentions but they act as consultants. Teachers don't need consultants" (E02). A number of educators are asking for support in the form of additional personnel who can build connections with other staff and students. They believe that more educators "on the ground" will be of benefit to the school that has seen an influx of ethnoculturally students.

4.8.3 Professional development. Professional development (PD) was another topic discussed around support and resources. One educator spoke to the lack of professional learning about ethnocultural diversity. They noted, "I've done in the last 10 years as an educator, I think, one session on teaching EAL students" (E02). Asked if they felt supported, another participant said, "No I don't, because I think that if we were truly supported we would have more professional learning around the issue, more understanding" (E03). Another interviewee spoke to the lack of support they receive in

order for them to participate in professional learning on ethnocultural diversity. The educator said,

We get invited to go to certain conferences and things like that, but they are not covered as far as costs go or, you know, even having a teacher come into your classroom; that's not covered so you can attend these things" (E07).

Such responses illustrate that little PD has been provided to educators regarding ethnocultural diversity. PD on such topics is certainly available and, as will be discussed, has been provided. There is, however, a need for further PD opportunities for educators at the school.

A number of educators discussed one session of professional development put on that focused on learning with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. Describing this training, educators noted:

"It was all about the whole culture thing like you don't realize you have a culture, you know." (E06)

"We did bring in some people to do some training with our teachers to talk about cultural norms and cultural diversity." (E10)

"It was kind of talking about different worldviews and lenses and, you know, you have this Christian, you know, Anglo lens." (E04)

The consensus on this professional learning session was that it was a positive learning experience, and that more of this would be beneficial. For instance, educators noted, "It was excellent" (E04) and "I'd love to see that like the whole student body everywhere get

that same conversation” (E06). The descriptions of this PD session are positive. It is also clear that there is a thirst for further development on these topics.

The general consensus from educators was that more education and training on working with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers and English language learners would be beneficial. One educator spoke to this topic in detail noting,

I think that if we were truly supported we would have more professional learning around the issue; more understanding. I would like to see a map, and I would like to see ‘how many from here, and how many from here, and how many from here, and this is what has happened in this country, this is maybe why they are here, this is the language, this is the culture, this is the religion, this is the food, these are things to look for.’ We haven’t had anything like that. (E03)

Other participants also spoke on this topic. A sampling of statements include:

“I don’t think I’ve been trained well enough” (E01).

“I would like to know more” (E04).

“How do you work with students? So there is a component there that we need to do professional learning” (E10).

“I think as a staff we’ve done a great job. Is there some more areas where we can become more, you know, educated and more aware? I think so.” (E08)

A participant also spoke to such professional learning as being a responsibility for educators in the current context. They stated, “We have a responsibility to [learn about education for ethnocultural equity]. Ignorance is not bliss... You don’t want to know? Well, it’s part of your responsibility.” (E10) Ignoring the reality that is in front of educators is detrimental. Additional knowledge, training, support, and resources are

required if we are to expect progress in regards to education for ethnocultural equity at this site.

Data collected for this study provided valuable insight into the perceptions educators have of ethnocultural diversity in their school, the roles they see themselves as having, and the support they are receiving. A discussion pertaining to the themes that emerged will be provided in the following chapter.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THEMES

The themes that emerged in the data analysis stage of this study included: The School Environment, the Role of the Educator, Obstacles, the Education System, and Support and Resources. In this chapter, I will discuss these themes in relation to the research question and subquestions that were asked at the outset of this study. Before doing that however, I will discuss what I have interpreted to be a central theme running through this study and one which has also had an impact on each of the other themes: Language.

5.1 Language as a Central Theme

While working through this study, it became clear that language was perceived as an obstacle for educators in regards to ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. As such, I believe that language deserves its place within the Obstacles theme discussed in the previous chapter. What also became clear, however, is that language plays a significant part in a number of the other themes that emerged. The prevalence and importance of language throughout the data collection and data analysis stages of this study makes it a central theme. Figure 1 provides an illustration of the themes discussed in the previous

chapter and shows that language challenges run through each of these themes. A brief discussion on how language ties in to other themes will be discussed below.

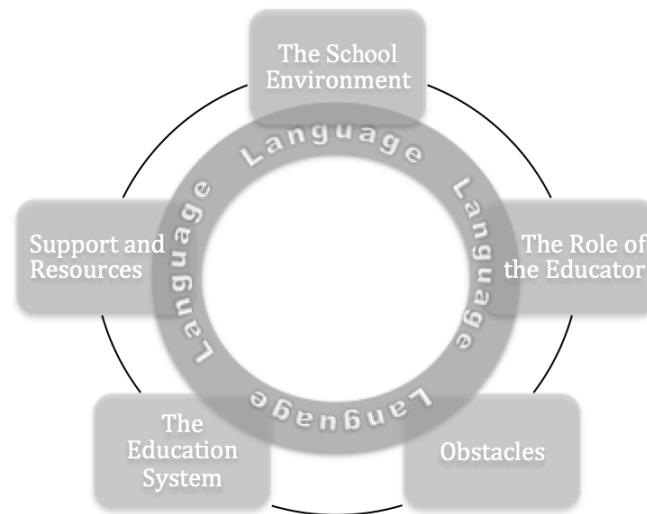


Figure 1. Language as a central theme. The figure illustrates that language plays a part in all of the themes discussed.

5.1.1 Language and the school environment. Many ethnoculturally diverse students in need of English language support have enrolled in the school in this case study. This is apparent when focusing on the school environment. For instance, educators have considered the school setting itself in regards to these additional-language learners. Walking through the halls on my first day in the field in early 2017, I noticed departmental signs written in various languages. Educators who were interviewed as a part of the study also made note of these signs. In addition to the physical setting, participants spoke about the English-language learner enrollment in the school and how intimidating attending this school must be for many of them. Another connection between language and the school environment related to the positive influence

newcomers are having on other students when it comes to learning English. An educator spoke to this during an interview stating,

When my students see kids who've come in, and they don't speak the English, and they don't use this alphabet... and they see how much effort they put into learning... that it is a challenge for them to rise to that as well... They just get to know more about the world and they get to know it isn't like this everywhere.

(E05)

The number of students enrolling in the school and requiring English-language support has had a significant effect on the school environment.

5.1.2 Language and the role of the educator. Language has had an effect on the role of the educator in this school. This is mostly apparent with the busyness participants described as part of their lived experiences in the school. Educators perceive themselves as already overworked with the number of students and diverse learners in their classrooms and the expectations placed on them. With the number of students needing English-language support, this issue is intensified. Educators spoke to the remedial support for these students who need more language support, and many have become frustrated with this additional role placed upon them. It is also apparent, though, that educators, in the face of challenges and constraints, are employing strategies within their roles to work more effectively with English-Language Learners (ELLs). For example, many educators spoke about utilizing electronic translators in the classroom. The modification of the Reading Tutor program is a positive strategy implemented by educators at this school site. Such strategies have allowed educators and students to

connect and work with a number of ethnoculturally diverse students.

5.1.3 Language and obstacles. Educators spoke to language as a major obstacle when it came to working with some ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. Language can also complicate other obstacles that are apparent in the school. For instance, educators noted the possible difficulty in grasping what many ethnoculturally diverse students who require English-language support might be struggling with when it comes to the learning environment. One educator noted,

It is hard for us to know where they are, and to just, let's say, give them an article, and say, 'Well do you understand that?' and it's very difficult for us to go up to them and say, 'Well how much help do you really need?' (E08)

Another educator stated, "I know she can do this part, but she can't do this part. Is this a language issue or is this an issue with understanding the content?" (E07). Gaining a clear understanding of what type of support ELLs require may be difficult, and work needs to be done to clarify this for educators. With clarity, educators may be better able to utilize resources and strategies to the benefit of the student.

A number of students who are learning English may also be struggling with trauma or mental illness. This can be a significant challenge for educators. For instance, one educator spoke about the difficulty of completing a suicide-risk assessment on a student who spoke another language. Another educator stated, "Some of them [the newcomer students] do have learning disabilities, but we can't even diagnose them.... We have no testing that is done in their own language" (E06). Mental illness and trauma were noted as significant issues within the school environment when language is not a

challenge. Working with students with mental illness or trauma may be significantly more difficult when language is an additional challenge.

5.1.4 Language and the education system. As was noted in the previous chapter, a number of educators spoke to the policy of inclusion and its possible flaws when relating to English-language learners. There was also a level of frustration shown among a number of educators regarding inclusion and working with students having English-language challenges. For instance, an educator stated, “They can’t understand what the hell is going on, but they are sitting there because we don’t have anything special for them” (E03). There is a suggestion that educators are struggling to meet the needs of students requiring language support while also complying with the policy of inclusion.

Language plays a role in regards to the standardized education system as well. Students new to the English language may have the academic ability to keep up, but are unable to understand the content being taught. A number of educators noted this in discussions. Assessments are also often written with the English First Language student in mind, which may leave a number of ethnoculturally diverse students behind (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). The suggestion of modifying curriculum for these students is a potentially limiting one, as students, who may have the academic ability, are forced along an academic path which creates a disadvantage. Standardized practices need to be considered when working with students needing English-language support.

5.1.5 Language and support and resources. Educators spoke to the need for more support and better resources in regards to English-language learners. This was

especially apparent with the Reading Tutor program that educators at the school had implemented on their own accord to help with the issue. One educator spoke about the lack of support for this program. They noted, “Okay, they are not giving us FTE to run these. How are we going to help them? Let’s take some of our top students and give them a credit for it” (E10). However, this is not enough. Another educator, speaking about Reading Tutor, went on to state, “Unfortunately, we could do that 5 periods of the day for some of these kids. We need to do it, and we just don’t have the resources to do it” (E07). Another program created within the learning context is called Reading Workshop. An interview participant spoke about this stating, “We have, on our own, developed another course, a reading workshop course, for those students who are at the very beginning stages, so it is a small class where they are targeting specific language goals” (E07). Although there are some strategies that educators are implementing, there is a suggestion that more needs to be done to support a number of students with language needs. For example, some educators send ethnoculturally diverse students to a flex centre that was not designed or intended for these newcomers. To serve ethnoculturally diverse students properly, educators and policymakers must design clear plans collaboratively that are implemented appropriately (Nieto, 2002/2003).

A number of interview participants noted that interpreting services had been provided in some circumstances. However, the reliability of these services is questionable. For instance, some educators spoke to instances where interpreters were involved in parent-teacher interviews, while others gave examples of interviews where no language translation was available. One participant noted that an interpreter that they worked with was a volunteer, which may explain the uncertain availability. Another

participant noted that, “Depending on the language, we may or may not have an interpreter” (E02). More reliable translation services for educators would allow them to exchange information with students and their parents. It would also allow for better connections to be made with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers and the community.

Educators also spoke to the need for there to be more information provided on ethnoculturally diverse students, including language levels. For example, one participant noted,

Maybe if all of the teachers who teach the student could meet with someone who’s tested their language skills, or I would like to know, like, which of my students have come from refugee camps and what is their experience? (E03)

Educators who are not given information on students’ English language ability must figure it out on their own. These educators may have little professional learning or experience in assessing English-language ability. They also may have little time to do so effectively, which could leave the student behind.

Language is a central theme running through this research. It is a challenge in and of itself, but it is notable that it also runs through each of the other themes discussed in this study. The role that language has at this site deserves a significant focus when looking to address the findings of this study. Next, I will discuss the findings in relation to the questions posed at the outset of this study.

5.2 Discussion around Research Questions posed.

In this section, I will discuss my research findings in relationship to the research questions in this study. The general research question that was asked prior to entering the

field was: *How do educators perceive increasing ethnocultural diversity within one ethnoculturally diverse school?* In order to better organize the discussion around findings and the questions posed for this study, I will organize this section around the three sub-questions that were asked which stemmed from this overarching question.

5.2.1 What are educator perceptions and attitudes of their evolving ethnocultural school? It is important to gather information on educator perceptions to gain a solid understanding of the school site operations in regards to ethnocultural diversity. As noted previously, it is the people within the school who define how the school functions (Bailey, 2010; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). Learning about the subjective constructions educators have is vital.

Attitudes. The literature review from Chapter 2 in this study placed a significant focus on the attitudes educators held in regards to ethnoculturally diverse peoples enrolling in schools. I wrote about the importance of positive attitudes in the pursuit of education for ethnocultural equity. My sense was that attitudes held by educators would be less positive than the data has suggested. This suspicion may have arisen, in part, through the literature reviewed. I did not anticipate that educators would hold blatant negative views of ethnoculturally diverse others but that views may be indifferent at best. It was refreshing to find that the educators interviewed, for the most part, were open-minded and positive in regards to the evolving school. The educators interviewed for this study verbalized positive attitudes when asked about how they felt about ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. Throughout the discussions I had with these educators there was little said to give an impression otherwise. There was however, a story told by one educator illustrating a negative attitude. The educator said,

I have also encountered a teacher telling a big group of teachers how one of her students was eating an apple and ate the whole thing core included, and this teacher, trying to be funny, told her not to do that; that wasn't right, and the student said, 'Well in so and so', wherever she was from, 'that's what we do', and she said, 'You're Canadian now. You don't eat an apple like that anymore', and I was aghast. It's, like, what the hell? You can't say that to a kid, you know, and the attitude of 'You're Canadian, and we're not going to', you know, and it's such a silly thing. Who cares how she eats a piece of fruit? It wasn't a behavioural, and it wasn't a reaction to her religious convictions or anything, her dress. It was how she was eating a piece of fruit, but the message to the whole class who heard that was, 'You are Canadian now; do it like Canadians do it', and that she was so comfortable in that assertion that she told a group of 6 teachers, myself included, that that happened. (E03)

The negative attitude of the teacher in this short narrative is of concern and illustrates the effects of a negative attitude. It would not be surprising if the student in this story felt ashamed. It could also have created a poisonous environment in the classroom targeting difference as wrongfulness. There was little data collected otherwise that pointed to blatant negative attitudes of ethnoculturally diverse others amongst participants. This does not mean that negative attitudes do not exist, as one's attitude can be well hidden. Further, educators holding such negative views may have chosen not to volunteer to participate in this study. It is my sense that the educators interviewed held positive attitudes of the school and region becoming more ethnoculturally diverse. A number of participants, however, did speak to negative attitudes existing in the community as a

whole. Some participants spoke of family members or friends holding negative attitudes, and the media attention that negative attitudes are given. Such attitudes do exist and educators will be tasked with cultivating positivity and global awareness in schools well into the future.

It was reassuring to find that there was little data to suggest that educators hold blatant negative attitudes of ethnocultural diversity. However, less conspicuous damaging attitudes and perceptions were found to exist. For instance, a few indications of a deficit perspective were found. When asked about their feelings of the evolving ethnocultural diversity in the Moncton area, one educator responded, “I think that it is great that we are a country that is willing to help out other countries with, you know, the struggles they are faced with” (E02). Another stated, “They feel that they’ve been given a great opportunity, that they embrace it” (E10). Such data suggests that some educators may see ethnoculturally diverse students as a disadvantaged group. However, it is important to note that there likely are students who do fit these descriptions. For instance, as has been noted, a number of students who have come from traumatic situations are enrolled at the school. Educators must be careful not to group all minority students together with the belief that they are in need of help. Such an attitude may, as was noted earlier in this study, create a scenario where educators are “more likely to have low expectations for the students and ultimately treat them in ways that stifle their learning” (Villegas & Lucas, 2007, p. 31). Many educators have chosen the teaching profession to help students, but we must be careful with how we understand students and their backgrounds. This is another reason why more information on each student entering the school would be beneficial for educators.

In the Literature Review chapter of this project, I also wrote on “colour-blind” attitudes that may be held in regards to ethnoculturally diverse peoples. This attitude, like a deficit perspective, is less conspicuous than outright negativity, but can still prove damaging (Deardorff, 2009; Dei, 2002; Gay, 2013; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Shields, 2004). Some indications of this attitude did emerge through my discussions with educators. One educator spoke to colour-blindness in a discussion. Giving an example of what they had heard another educator say, they stated,

So, you know, sometimes it’s just best if you don’t understand, just look the other way, and just ignore that it’s happening. So, if someone is wearing a thing. What do they call those things? Just look through that, and don’t ask about that. (E04)

This educator went on to provide a more positive outlook on student attire stating, “It’s, like, no, maybe you do ask about that. Maybe you know a little bit about that” (E04). The response this participant provided showed a better understanding of diversity and the need for more education on the topic. If approached correctly, such a strategy may also allow for an educator to have a better understanding of ethnocultural perspective. Colour-blind attitudes are of concern. This attitude often comes with good intentions, but people are not all the same (Shields, 2004). Further, our structures and programs are often built upon societal values and ideas of the majority (Dei, 1993; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Treating everyone the same or viewing everyone as fundamentally equal in an unfair world does not amount to equality (Ullicci and Battey, 2011).

Worldview. Earlier in this project, I wrote about educators having to understand that worldviews are unique, and that educators must acknowledge their own worldview as being distinctive from the worldviews of their students (Haberman & Post, 1998;

Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Santoro, 2009; Yuen, 2010). A number of participants spoke to the subjective realization of their own perceptions. Statements such as, “That is just my perspective” (E02) and “I don’t know what people are really thinking” (E03) were noted. Asked if the education system worked for ethnoculturally diverse students, another participant stated, “I don’t know. I’d like to ask them” (E04). This shows some realization of the need to understand the perceptions and insights of our ethnoculturally diverse students if we are to educate properly. There does exist, however, a need to better educate school personnel on constructivist ideas and to discuss educational strategies that put greater focus on diverse worldviews.

Educators also spoke to this concept with the realization that unjust attitudes may affect a worldview. For example, one participant noted, “I know that I do have ingrained prejudices, but I’m also trying not to let that [influence me in making] a judgment” (E04). This educator’s realization and acceptance of their worldview, and what has gone into forming it, is refreshing. It is also positive that this educator spoke about having that recognition when making decisions. It would be beneficial for all of us to acknowledge such truths. Considering the worldviews of different people is another important piece of perception recognition (Deardorff, 2006; Haberman & Post, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Santoro, 2009; Yuen, 2010). One educator spoke to this and the importance of creating conversation around such ideas. The educator noted, “It’s their perspective. It is not ours, and I think that is really important to talk about and to really have that conversation” (E08). Such discussions are a very important piece in education for ethnocultural equity. It is worth reiterating a positive exchange that I had with an educator on this topic who stated,

How do I approach that student? Do I talk to them the same way? Do I, you know, how do I make them feel like they are part of the group even though they are a minority in the classroom, so that they volunteer information? You know, how do you work with students? So, there is a component there that we need to do professional learning, plus we have a responsibility to, ignorance is not bliss, to educate teachers to say, you know, just say you don't want to know, well it's part of your responsibility. (E10)

This conversation hits on a couple of important topics. The first is the importance for there to be professional development around this subject. The second is the significance that this educator placed on this learning being a responsibility. Here we can also appreciate the importance of educator attitudes. It is hard to imagine an educator that would agree with such a responsibility while also holding a negative attitude.

Cultural knowledge. Discussions with educators pointed to there being a need for more knowledge about people from ethnocultural backgrounds different than themselves. A response from an interviewee illustrates this sentiment well. They said, "I know I don't know enough and I think we make judgements and use stereotypes to fill in the gaps where our knowledge is lacking" (E03). This educator's statement also touches on the danger that can come with an absence of cultural knowledge. An observation from my field notes may illustrate this further. During one of my visits to the school, I noticed a group of 5 or 6 girls wearing hijabs in the cafeteria area and again outside of the front doors. With a solid understanding of this dress, we would expect there to be more acceptance. My earlier mention of an educator asking others what these were and advising them to pay no attention is troubling. Without cultural knowledge, comes

ignorance and misunderstanding, which can lead to an environment that is not conducive to ethnocultural diverse students and may even become toxic. A number of educators touched on this when they spoke about the positive effect that ethnoculturally diverse newcomers might have on the school demographic as whole.

These data suggest that participants in this study described mostly positive attitudes of ethnocultural diversity and that there exists some understanding of worldview. However, there is work that needs to be done. Colour-blind attitudes and deficit perspective, for instance, were noted to exist. A number of educators interviewed accepted that they need more education on ethnocultural diversity. Such education could benefit these educators and other school stakeholders. Attitude and perception influence the roles that educators have within the school (Deardorff, 2006; Gay, 2010; Hunter, 2004). These roles will be discussed next.

5.2.2 What do educators understand and perceive their roles to be within this ethnoculturally diverse school? The roles that educators have in an ethnoculturally diverse school must be considered when working towards education for ethnocultural equity. Findings from this study suggest that the roles of educators have evolved as the school has become increasingly ethnoculturally diverse. These roles will be discussed in this section.

A new reality. Educators face challenges as the school evolves ethnoculturally. Participants spoke a great deal about working with students needing English-language support. Busyness is another norm for educators who are not only working with a large, and relatively new, population of ethnocultural diverse students, but also due to the

increasing number of students with educational plans due to mental illnesses and other factors. Educators are expected to provide a great deal of individualization when working with students, which has become difficult for them to manage. The increasing number of ethnoculturally diverse students at the school has intensified this expectation. The role many of these educators seem to see themselves as having is keeping their head above water, a concern voiced by a number of participants.

In the recent past, educators might have expected that the vast majority of their students had worked their way through a school system similar to the one at this site. This can no longer be assumed. The reality is that there is a great deal more complexity in regards to students' academic backgrounds. Educators noted that there are ethnoculturally diverse students attending this school who have come from academic backgrounds that are more rigorous than this school's academic programming. On the other hand, there are a number of ethnoculturally diverse newcomers that have gaps in their academic pursuits due to various circumstances. There are additional factors to consider, such as trauma. Educators are now working within these complex realities, which may prove difficult for them. It is an evolving reality for educators that must be considered, as well as supported.

Curriculum and academic materials. Educators must consider their roles in regards to the curriculum, lessons, and assessment when working with ethnoculturally diverse students. Various scholars have written on the disadvantage that curriculum documents and forms of assessment may place on ethnoculturally diverse students (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Teaching the curriculum was noted to be a priority among some educators. One participant stated, "Curriculum is definitely number one" (E01). There is no doubt that teaching curriculum is a vital role that

educators have, but there must be awareness in how ethnoculturally diverse students connect with curriculum. One educator, for instance spoke of “find[ing] satellite themes from all different kinds of cultures” (E05). Another stated, “I definitely consider, or try to consider, their backgrounds...well we talk a lot about cultural norms” (E07). However, there are concerns as well. One participant noted, “If my superiors want me to include more ethno-diverse curriculum, I haven’t been instructed on that” (E01). Another interviewee, speaking of a student in her class, stated,

She is in my class because she can handle the curriculum, and if she can’t then that is something I have to disconnect myself from, and say ‘Okay, she can’t be in this class, I can’t help her. There has got to be somewhere else where she can go.
(E04)

There are many reasons why a student may be struggling in a class beyond their ability to handle the curriculum. For instance, the student’s language may be a barrier. The teacher’s pedagogy may also be a hindrance to this student. Perhaps the curriculum material is significantly disconnected from the student’s background. This exchange suggests a potential colour-blind approach to this student’s learning needs and little recognition of curriculum shortcomings. However, we might consider this educator’s statements in regards to the support issues discussed in this project as well. The student in this case may have been placed in a class that they are unable to take part in, and with a lack of support, an educator may be able to do little.

Remediation. When educators spoke to their role in working with ethnoculturally diverse students and their lessons, much was centered on remediation or simplification. A participant’s statement helps to illustrate this. They stated,

It was basically making sure that the books that I was able to put them with were easier text, like they are not reading a book that is 470 pages long; they are reading one that is 180 pages long. (E09)

This strategy was likely employed due to language struggles, and it is hard to fault the educator for this. This statement does, however, point to remediation being used as a strategy, which may hinder the education of students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). One educator provided a more positive response in regards to an assignment. They stated,

Another student from Russia, she read her novel that I assigned her but wasn't really connecting to it, so she said, 'I have the read The Idiot by Dostoyevsky. Can I use that as my text?... I feel the Russian is easier for me to understand...' I said, 'absolutely.' (E04)

The student in this case was able to build a better connection with this choice of novel. Educators need to recognize that students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds may have interests and perceptions that are diverse and build this into their lessons (Irvine, 2010; Santoro, 2009).

A number of educators in this study noted that they are working with students in areas that they may not be ready for. There is a suggestion that there is a message to push these students through. For instance, an educator stated, "Don't tell me, 'Just don't worry about giving this kid a mark' because he sits in my class every day, and I am not okay with that poor child sitting there everyday, you know, completely confused" (E06). This is a problematic strategy and deserves consideration. Pushing students through may not

prepare them adequately for future education or employment. This may also hinder students that would be capable of achievement with proper supports or placement.

Student connections. Many educators interviewed for this project spoke about connections they have made with ethnoculturally diverse students. This is a positive finding; these connections may give an educator a better understanding of a student's worldview, background, and situation (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). It can also lead to a student becoming more acclimatized to the school environment and engaged with learning. One educator told a story that illustrates such a connection.

I ask him how his school was where he went to school in his native country. He said that his family wasn't well off and that he didn't go to a private school. There was a private school in his village and he didn't [attend it], they couldn't afford that, so he would have to travel to school, which was essentially an hour and a half walk. It took him 3 hours to get to school every day and it was uphill, very difficult terrain, and at that point he rolled up his sleeve and said, 'this is where a snake bit me, and I almost didn't make it.' (E08)

The same educator went on to speak about how this story and the connection they made with the student affected them when they noted, "That has left a lasting impression on how I approach teaching different cultures and that type of thing" (E08). Other participants also shared stories of connections they have made with their newcomer students. There does need to be some caution regarding the impressions these stories can make, as a deficit perspective can be easily formulated. However, it is positive that educators are working to make connections with their students by listening to their stories.

Data suggest that there are instances of educators at the school making connections with ethnoculturally diverse students within the evolving context. A number of educators acknowledged that they play a major part in the lives of their ethnoculturally diverse students and do have a responsibility to make such connections. The level of frustration that some of the participants exhibited in regards to students that are difficult to connect with or reach may also suggest that educators do want to embrace this role but require more tools to do so. Many educators in this study do not want these ethnoculturally diverse students to become what Merchant (1999) has referred to as “ghosts in the classroom” where students become “invisible” (p. 164). Speaking of an educator in her study who was struggling to communicate with a student, Merchant (1999) noted, “[The teacher] could no longer cope with the constant frustration that accompanied the recognition of her [student’s] presence in the classroom” (p. 164). It is clear that more can be done to allow for stronger connections to be made. There are also systemic changes that need to be addressed to allow for better connections.

Community connection. Earlier in this project, I wrote about connecting with all aspects of the ethnocultural community in what, Shields (2004) called a “community of difference” (p. 38). Educators must work to make these connections a part of their role within ethnoculturally diverse contexts (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). An issue that has already been pointed out is with the location of the school, which makes such connections more difficult. This must be addressed if a stronger connection with families and the community is to be created. A number of educators discussed the challenges of connecting with parents due to language differences. These challenges were mostly noted when discussing parent-teacher interviews. There was little discussion on connecting

with parents of ethnocultural-diverse students beyond these interviews, which would likely be a benefit for all stakeholders. A number of participants interviewed for this project did speak to a connection with the Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton Area (MAGMA). It was noted that this organization has worked with both educators and students in the school. Participants spoke about how positive this connection with MAGMA is and how more connections like this would be beneficial. This will be discussed further when I focus on support and resources.

Educators are also listening and observing in an effort to address negative behaviour in the school. This was noted in the findings chapter when it was found that some students were making negative comments towards ethnoculturally diverse students. This was also found within documents that made note of unacceptable behaviours targeting diversity. Educators have a responsibility to address negative behaviours within a school environment (Varma-Joshi, Tanaka, & Baker, 2004). With the influx of ethnoculturally diverse newcomers at this school, there is an increased need to acknowledge this responsibility, as difference can create fear and negativity. A number of educators in this study recognize this. Taking a more positive approach, several educators noted the responsibility they have in providing a welcoming environment for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. Newcomer students need to know that they have a place within the school (Nieto, 2002/2003; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). It must also be apparent that the school site is open and welcoming to diversity. Educators must listen to and observe the environment. They must also reflect on their own ideas and practices, which I will discuss next.

Reflection. Hamm (2009), wrote about the importance of having educators “engage in their own critical reflection on their teaching methodologies and personal pedagogy” (p. 26). Educators will be better able to reach students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds by employing such strategies. Educators did speak to the need to learn more about working with ethnoculturally diverse students. Educators must also begin to reflect on pedagogy and consider how they are (or are not) reaching and connecting with ethnoculturally diverse students (Irvine, 2010). If educators are expected to consider and reflect upon their roles within evolving ethnocultural diversity, more support must be provided for them. This will be discussed in the next section.

The role of educators at this school has evolved with the increasing number of ethnoculturally diverse students that have enrolled in this school. Educators are working to provide ethnoculturally diverse students with the opportunity to learn in this new context. They are also working to build connections with these students, their families, and other external groups. There is, however, room for improvement, reflection, and further education on this topic. There is also a need to consider the current system that these educators are working within.

5.2.3 How prepared and supported do the educators perceive themselves to be in their ethnoculturally diverse school setting? During my discussions with participants and time spent at the site, it became clear that educators need better support and professional learning for working with ethnoculturally diverse students. This is not to say that these educators should be blamed for this lack of preparedness, as there is a need for

additional support and resources. Most participants spoke about their colleagues within the school environment and school administrators as having their hands tied.

Transparency. Educators at this school are given little information on ethnoculturally diverse students entering the school. Without information, these educators are often on their own when it comes to understanding the academic level of a student and what a student's background may be. There is also little information provided on English-language level. Better and more in-depth information may allow for educators to effectively reach and make a greater number of connections with their ethnoculturally diverse students. Connecting with students is a vital piece of education for ethnocultural equity. For an educator, this allows for a better understanding of where the ethnoculturally diverse students they are working with are coming from and how to best work with them. For the student, there is an appreciation for their story and background, as well as an acceptance into the community (Shields, 2004).

There also seems to be little transparency when it comes to the path ethnoculturally diverse students have taken prior to ending up in front of educators in the school. Newcomers land at the school throughout the academic year, which means that educators are given little time to consider who is in their school or classroom. It is my understanding that newly arrived immigrant students go through a welcome centre when they arrive in the Anglophone East School District, but educators need more knowledge on this process. For example, when asked about the Welcome Centre, one educator said, "I don't even know if they are doing that anymore" (E06). Having such knowledge may give educators a better chance in building connections with students, consider student needs, and reflect on their pedagogies.

Professional learning. A support resource that a number of educators spoke about in interviews was MAGMA. This group provides assistance to newcomers and has a connection with the school. For instance, there is a connection with MAGMA and the school. Educators have been provided professional development through MAGMA, but it was noted by a number of participants that more professional development and learning opportunities focused on working with ethnoculturally diverse students is required, especially in regards to understanding of worldview and cultural knowledge acquisition. It was noted previously that there have been cases of negative behaviour within the school. Educational sessions from MAGMA or other experts may be useful in this regard as well.

A number of participants spoke about a need for opportunities to gain cultural knowledge. For instance, one participant speaking of information that would be beneficial, stated, “Here’s who has come to your school. This is what it looks like on a map. This is a little bit about the language and the culture” (E03). The same educator provided another example of what they thought may be useful. They stated, “Have a Q and A box, honest to god, say, ‘Don’t be ashamed to ask a question and next time we are going to answer some of these.’ You know, and have a real open conversation” (E03). Other educators also spoke to having a lack of knowledge in regards to ethnoculturally diverse newcomers and a need for more professional development. A number of educators also noted that they would like more knowledge on how to make connections and work with many students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds. A particular area that educators could have more professional learning on is with trauma. For example, an educator stated,

I am not sure how far I should be asking. I did ask one of my students a little bit of information about her family and she got quite emotional, so again, is this part of PTSD or am I supposed to ask, am I not supposed to ask? How am I supposed to bridge these subjects? I don't really know. (E01)

Educators could also benefit from additional education on working with ethnoculturally diverse students needing English-language support. It was noted during interviews that many of the students requiring language support need to start at a basic level, which educators at this level have little training in.

For the most part, participants were open about their shortcomings on this topic and want to learn more. Another noteworthy concern was around PD and how difficult it can be for educators to take part in it. It can be difficult to acquire funding to attend PD sessions, and there is a lack of support for the provision of supply teachers for those who would like to attend PD during school hours. If we are to expect our educators to educate for ethnocultural equity, we must provide them the opportunity to learn when opportunities arise.

Resources. Participants spoke about the lack of resources that are provided for working with ethnoculturally diverse students. One obvious resource that is lacking is time. With more time, educators may be able to reflect and consider their knowledge and pedagogy. There is also a lack of money being provided to the school to work with newcomers. The greatest need, according to the participants interviewed, is people. These educators want trained people and experts in the school to be working with students, educators, and additional stakeholders. It was noted by a number of participants that these experts must be in the school and not consultants with little knowledge of the context of

the school. It was noted that there are not enough classes available to help students struggling with language, and this is something else that additional staff could help with. More people on the ground would provide educators with more time to work with students. Additional staff with training on working with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers may also allow for the creation of more and better resources, such as assessments tools. They may also be able to provide better support by working closely with educators to target the specific needs of students and provide targeted expertise. As was noted earlier, the standardized ratio of educators to students may be problematic when considering the number of ethnoculturally diverse newcomers enrolling at this particular school. The context of the school environment should be taken into account when considering the amount and type of support and resources that may need to be provided (Gay, 2013; Haberman & Post, 1994; 1998). Providing standardized support in different contexts may not be the best way forward.

One educator did note that, “[A] MAGMA worker is meeting with all of [the new to Canada students]... we are making sure their needs are being met and how we can help them” (E02). Others also spoke to some positive change. A participant, speaking of the EAL class said, “The fact that we have these classes is a nice change. [It is nice] that we have a teacher who is dedicated to this” (E01). Another stated, “We are getting there. We are at least taking some baby steps” (E04). This indicates that there is some progress in regards to support and resources. The general consensus, however, was that there continues to be a need for additional support and resources.

On-site strategies. The lack of support from higher up is apparent, as school personnel have developed their own the strategies to support ethnoculturally diverse

students at the school level. One such strategy that has been employed out of necessity is the use of electronic translators. A number of participants spoke to the utilization of such devices and how they have come to rely on these translators. Another strategy created by educators within the school is the Reading Tutor program that the school has modified to assist newcomer students that need better language support. School leaders, in this case, worked around the issue and systemic challenges to provide students with what they require: English-language acquisition. By coming up with this strategy, it is clear that educators within the school do have an interest in helping ethnoculturally diverse students with English-language needs. It is positive that these educators have come up with such a strategy. They have identified a specific need and considered how they might target that need within the current system. This strategy was created with little direction from above, which suggests a level of disconnect. The strategy utilized by some educators where students who are struggling with English-language acquisition are haphazardly sent to a flex centre is also of concern. This strategy may be used by educators who are at a loss as to how they should be working with some ethnoculturally diverse students in classes. Such an unstructured strategy must be re-envisioned. In discussions with educators, it was also revealed that there is little support for employing strategies and programming that does not fit within the official policy of inclusion, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

Inclusion. There is a need for more support. That is clear. However, a potential barrier for educators in this school and working with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers pertains to the education system. Inclusion is a practice that has created benefits for many students, and this has to be acknowledged. Caution must be taken when considering an

alteration to this strategy to avoid the alienation of any students, including those who are ethnoculturally diverse. However, a participant's response previously quoted is worth reiterating. They said, "I say it with reservation, but part of me thinks, we, our system of all or nothing isn't great" (E10). This "all or nothing" approach was criticized by a number of educators who spoke to programming that would find more of a middle ground for these students. Educators interviewed for this research suggested that the policy of inclusion may be more detrimental for ethnoculturally diverse students than it is beneficial. Inclusion, a number of educators noted, is actually an exclusionary practice for students in need of English-language support, as they are being left behind in the classroom. What would work better, according to a number of educators, would be to have language support provided prior to students being included in classes where strong language skills are needed. For instance, an educator noted, "Getting them to a certain point and then including them would be better" (E06). Another, speaking to the "middle ground", said, "Now, in areas where we can mix them, we will mix them" (E10). This might include having students in the same class for less language intensive classes, such as Physical Education or Art, until the appropriate language level is reached.

The suggestion is that there needs to be some thought regarding flexibility within the inclusion policy. Targeted support for ethnoculturally diverse students who require it may be of benefit to students and educators. This may also allow for a greater number of ethnoculturally diverse students to integrate into the regular system prepared to succeed. Further, it may mean less modification for these students. A better support system for these students should be considered with an acceptance that total inclusion may not be the answer.

In this chapter, I first discussed the central theme of Language that emerged during this study. I discussed the findings based on the research questions posed at the outset of this study. My hope is that this discussion may allow for the reader to gain an understanding of the primary research question I posed for this study: *How do educators perceive increasing ethnocultural diversity within one ethnoculturally diverse school?* It is also my hope, that the reader can take away what they consider important based on the findings and discussion in this project. In the final chapter, I will provide recommendations for the educators and leaders in the school, school district leaders, teacher educators, and policymakers.

6.0 CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethnocultural diversity has evolved. Individuals across the globe are seeing demographic changes within their communities. Now more than ever, people must learn to live in a world that is ethnoculturally diverse, and understand the civic responsibilities they have within these new realities. This study explores one school within one such community. In this final chapter, I will briefly summarize the earlier chapters in this study, provide recommendations based on the findings and discussion, and provide my thoughts on where further research may be focused.

6.1 A brief summary of the report

The Greater Moncton Area is a community that has become increasingly ethnoculturally diverse in a short period of time. The increasing rate of immigration to the city has played a significant part in this evolution. When looking at who is immigrating into the Moncton area, we also see an increase in the number of visible

minorities calling this city home (City of Moncton Economic Development Department, 2014). The ethnocultural makeup of the community is not the same as it traditionally was; the same can be said of the student population of the school researched in this case study. Educators are working with a significant number of ethnoculturally diverse students, and these educators must evolve to be effective within this new context. These same educators are also working with students of an ethnocultural majority who are part of this current school, community, and global reality. Schools in this region were built on educational foundations with a vastly different student population in mind. Delivering a status quo education will not do. Reaching the school population effectively requires education for ethnocultural equity.

Numerous scholars have written on the need for educators and policymakers to consider ethnocultural diversity within school systems and to pursue educational reform in an effort to operate appropriately in such contexts (Banks, 2008; Castro, 2010; Dei, 1993; Gay, 2010, Glanz, 2006; Haberman & Post, 1998; Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011; Santoro, 2009; Sheets, 2003; Sleeter 2004). A variety of theories and frameworks have been formulated around these ideas, each being unique in its own right while also sharing similarities to these other frameworks and theories. I reviewed literature discussing these concepts and amalgamated what I perceived to be some of the salient ideas put forward while also embracing Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence (2004). Using a term originally coined by Lund (1998), I have called this amalgamated framework "education for ethnocultural equity" and utilized it as an outline in the design of this research study.

Based on the education for ethnocultural equity framework and my adherence to the constructivist paradigm, much could be learned by considering educator perspectives within the school. This led me to want to communicate with educators about their perceptions of the context they find themselves in. Beyond perception, I aimed to address some of the other topics considered within the education for ethnocultural equity framework by asking questions around educator roles within the school and support and preparedness.

I collected data for this research project through interviews, observations and document collection. When this stage of my research was complete, I began to analyze the compiled data and organize it into codes and eventually themes (Creswell, 2013). The themes that emerged consisted of the School Environment, the Role of the Educator, Obstacles, the School System, Support and Resources. The data has suggested that educators at the school hold mostly positive attitudes regarding the ethnocultural diversification of the school. The data also suggest that educators recognize the importance and positive effects of an ethnoculturally diverse environment. However, there is a need for more professional learning to address the viewpoints some educators hold and the knowledge they have regarding ethnoculturally diverse students. Educators also voiced concerns around how their roles have changed within the system and the amount of support provided.

Language is a sixth and central theme running through each of the other themes discussed in this report. Educators discussed the vast increase of students requiring English-language support in the school, which has created a new reality for these educators. There is some frustration around the current responsibilities that educators are

tasked with and the systemic setup that these educators are working within. People within the school, however, have implemented a number of strategies in an effort to better reach students requiring language support. There continues to be a desire among educators to learn more about education for ethnocultural equity, becoming more effective educators within this context, and pushing for change that they believe will be beneficial.

The case study that was conducted for this research provided some valuable insight into the perceptions and roles of educators within a school that is becoming increasingly ethnoculturally diverse. There are concerns, frustrations and gaps to be addressed, but there are also positive attitudes regarding ethnocultural diversity, strategies being implemented to address the new reality, and a thirst for more knowledge among many educators at the site. A number of educators interviewed spoke to the importance of this study. For example, speaking of my study, participants stated, “give it to the government right?” (E06) and “I think I feel pretty nice. A voice to be heard” (E02). Another educator stated, “Thanks for doing this, I think it’s important research” (E03). I hope that this study has given these educators a voice and that it can promote some positive movement regarding this topic. In the next section, I will provide a number of recommendations to participants, school and district leaders, and the EECD based on my research.

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and analysis from this case study and are built upon my own constructions. My hope is for these recommendations to be taken into consideration by those who have the ability to take

action at this particular school site. Educators in other contexts may also consider this study and these recommendations in regards to their own setting, but this should be done with caution. The recommendations that I believe should be considered include Professional Learning and Development, Pre-service Teacher Education, Community Connection, Transparency, Support, and Inclusion.

6.2.1 Professional learning and development. Many of the educators interviewed for this research noted that there is a need for more training and professional development within the school in regards to the increasing ethnocultural diversity. A number of the educators noted this about themselves, and that recognition is positive.

Many of the educators that I spoke to did have an understanding of worldview and the construction of individual worldviews. Some of them spoke about a professional learning session that addressed these concepts. It is positive that this took place, as it is a valuable piece of education for ethnocultural equity. However, it was noted that this session was only for one-half day, and many of the educators noted that they would like to learn more about this and similar topics. It was also clear from the data that there are educators that need more training on this topic. Educators at this site may also benefit from learning opportunities regarding colour-blind attitudes and deficit perspectives, as there was a suggestion that these attitudes do exist. Regular learning opportunities around worldview and perception would be beneficial for educators at this school site.

Another valuable aspect of education for ethnocultural equity is cultural knowledge (Deardorff, 2006, 2009; Gay, 2010; Haberman & Post, 1998; Irvine, 2010). A number of participants noted that they would like to learn more about other cultures or that there exists a need for learning in this area within the school. Having an

understanding of diverse cultures and ethnicities will mean that educators will be better equipped to teach students from ethnoculturally diverse backgrounds (Deardorff, 2006). Knowledge may also allow for a greater connection with students. It is also important to remember the influence that educators have on all of their students; being knowledgeable and understanding of ethnocultural diversity may go a long way in promoting acceptance, peace, and understanding among all people in the school. There is a need for more cultural learning opportunities for educators at this site.

It was noted in the Findings chapter of this study that many educators do not feel educated enough to work with students who are at the beginning stages of learning the English language. If students needing significant language support are going to be in classrooms, educators must be provided adequate training to reach them. Perhaps teacher education programs could provide better learning opportunities in this area. There may also be more training and resources made available to educators that are currently working with these students in need of language support in the schools. More people to assist in this area or a reworking of the system may also be considered. These ideas will be discussed in a later section.

Many educators that were interviewed for this study spoke to the need for more training surrounding mental illness, trauma, and PTSD. These are significant concerns throughout the school population, but there may be additional training required when it comes to working with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers. As was noted previously, a number of ethnoculturally diverse students enrolling in the school have come from traumatic situations. Stewart (2015) noted,

Teachers need to know what to do when students disclose difficult information. Sometimes trauma comes out in writing or in pictures. Teachers need to be ready for it, to understand where these kids are coming from and what to do with the information to support these kids. (as cited in Dufresne, 2015, para. 4)

There may also exist a cultural or linguistic gap when educators are faced with these concerns with an ethnoculturally diverse population. More education and training, especially for counsellors that may work with these students regularly, is recommended.

Educators must be provided with opportunities to take part in professional development. There should be a better system in place to allow educators the ability to attend training sessions. Supply teachers should be made available and a reasonable amount of costs covered. Educators deserve the opportunity to learn about becoming better professionals, especially in a rapidly changing context.

6.2.2 Pre-service teacher education. A number of studies have noted that pre-service teachers must learn about teaching in ethnoculturally diverse schools (Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011; Kyles & Olafson, 2008; Milner, 2006; Santoro, 2009, 2014; Schussler, Stooksberry, & Bercaw, 2010; Sleeter, 2001; Smith, 2000). Many of these pre-service teachers will be entering schools that are ethnoculturally diverse, such as the one explored in this study. As has been discussed in this work, these students should be given the opportunities to consider their attitudes and perceptions. I would also recommend that pre-service teachers are taught about the constructivist paradigm as it is a vital component within education for ethnocultural equity. These educators will need to gain an understanding of worldview and perception to be effective teachers (Santoro, 2009). Recognizing that their personal experiences, backgrounds, and characteristics have

structured their perceptions is required. They will also need to accept that their students will have unique worldviews and work to appropriately consider this within their practice.

Pre-service teachers will need to consider the roles they will have in ethnoculturally diverse schools. They will need to examine their behaviours as they have been shaped by their worldviews and reflect on how they act in educational settings (Hamm, 2009; Irvine, 2010; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Pre-service teachers will have to listen to and learn from their ethnoculturally diverse students. They will have to interact with these students and connect with them.

It is also important that pre-service teachers explore societal structures and recognize that schools that are built upon these structures. The teaching materials used in our educational systems are often built upon majority values, as are the institutions themselves (Dei, 1993; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Exploring how such structures affect the students in classrooms and considering strategies that can be utilized in these environments will be beneficial (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011).

Pre-service teachers should have opportunity to learn about the theories influencing education for ethnocultural equity. Research studies on this topic should also be examined. Studies on ethnocultural diversity and research on ethnoculturally diverse school contexts will inform these students. A study like this one, which aims to learn about teachers in such a context, could be valuable. Pre-service teachers must be prepared to enter schools that are ethnoculturally diverse. They must endeavor to be educators for ethnocultural equity.

6.2.3 Community connections. The school in this study lies in the outskirts of Moncton, which can create problems for building community connections. The location of the school can be especially problematic for ethnoculturally diverse students and their families. Many of these newcomer families are without their own form of transportation, and without a bus or other transportation strategy, students may be unable to attend extracurricular or after-school activities. This can also affect the parents and family-members of these students who may have a difficult time getting to the school for educational or extracurricular reasons. Community members and organizations that may be able to provide staff or students with a valuable connection or opportunity may also be hindered by the school location. It is important that schools make community connections, and it can be especially important when connections can be created for ethnoculturally diverse newcomers and their families (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Shields, 2004).

An interview participant noted that they had requested there be an agreement put in place for the city bus to add the school to their route, which did not go through. A recommendation would be for this strategy to be revisited. A city bus stopping at the school throughout the day and into the evening may allow ethnoculturally diverse students, their families, and community members the opportunity to build a connection or attend school programming. If this strategy cannot be implemented, perhaps an agreement can be made with a local taxi company to reduce rates for individuals travelling to the school. Ideally, a fund would be set up to cover costs for students, family, or community members that require transportation to take part in approved school programming. Another potential strategy would be for the school to set up a ride-share

program where individuals could request a ride from another person travelling to the site. This could be especially useful for extracurricular activities or school events.

Building a connection to the school through transportation opportunities would be beneficial for many stakeholders. It would also be recommended that the school promote additional connections with families and community organizations. It is positive that there is a connection with MAGMA. Additional connections with ethnocultural organizations or family members that would like to be involved in school programming would allow for more specific learning opportunities. The MAGMA website provides contact information of specific ethnocultural groups in the Moncton area.

6.2.4 Transparency. Data from this study suggest that more information should be provided to educators to help in working with ethnocultural diversity. There is also a need for clarity regarding procedures and resources. Educators often seemed in the dark regarding the backgrounds of their ethnoculturally diverse students, the paths that they took before enrolling in the school, and their academic levels. Based on interview conversations and analysis, there is some confusion on what student information is available to educators. There is also a lack of transparency when it comes to resource allocation. For instance, data suggest that educators do not know where money allocated for supporting ethnoculturally diverse newcomers is being used. There was also some confusion regarding available resources in this area, for example with the Welcome Centre.

Educators are working closely with students, and building connections with newcomers is vital with education for ethnocultural equity (Ladson-Billings, 1995b;

Shields, 2004). Educators at this site should be provided more information on the ethnocultural diverse students that they will be working with as well as information on how to access this information. Academic and language levels should certainly be made available to educators that will be working closely with ethnoculturally diverse newcomers, as should basic demographic information on these students. Comprehensive information on student backgrounds may be beneficial as well, but educators will also need to be given the tools and knowledge to help work with students that may have come from traumatic situations (Stewart, 2017). Confidentiality and privacy may be of concern, and there is good reason for that. There may, however, be room for consideration in this area as well.

There should also be more transparency on the supports available to educators and ethnoculturally diverse students and how resources are being utilized. There was some confusion from educators regarding translation services, and one educator did not know whether or not the Welcome Centre was still running. Educators seem to know little about the system that is in place for ethnoculturally diverse students entering the school system. Data suggested that there is also little information provided on where money is being used to help newcomer students. It is recommended that these processes and practices are more transparent. Educators should know what is available to them for working with ethnoculturally diverse students, such as what translation services are available. They should know the system that newcomers enrolling in the school go through. A breakdown of the available resources and their allocation would also provide educators valuable knowledge. Ideally, this kind of information would be available in one place, such as from a website or handbook.

6.2.5 Support. Educators at this site need more support for working with ethnoculturally diverse students. Many of the educators interviewed for this research spoke positively about the assistance that other educators within the school provide. However, there is a consensus that a more support is needed. It is recommended that educators at this school be provided with a better support system for working with ethnoculturally diverse students.

A recommendation is that additional full-time educators be hired to work in this school with a mandate to support staff regarding ethnocultural diversity. Participants spoke to this need extensively. Having more people in the school with expertise on working with ethnoculturally diverse students would allow newcomer students more direct assistance in areas such as language acquisition. With additional staff, classroom teachers may also be able to create stronger lessons and reflect on pedagogy that will benefit ethnoculturally diverse students. Additional staff with specific training may also be able to train educators directly. Money and other resources can only go so far. It is additional staff that this school requires if we are to expect educators to effectively work within the ethnoculturally diverse context.

Educators at this school must have better access to interpreter services. Technology has been useful for many educators at the site and should continue to be used. There are, however, times when technology is not sufficient. Interpretation may be required in a number of instances, such as when students are initially enrolling at the school site, working with guidance counsellors or therapists, and during parent teacher interviews. Ideally, interpreters would be available in-person, but this may not be realistic. A more reasonable strategy may be to make telephone or Internet interpretation

available. Educators that require interpretation should be given information on how to contact such service providers.

A notable finding from this research is that there is no district curriculum document for EAL courses. Expecting classroom teachers to create a curriculum will not do. It is recommended that an EAL curriculum document be created. People with extensive expertise should be tasked with creating an EAL curriculum that educators within schools can consult. There is certainly a place for classroom teachers to have input with such a document, and there should also be an allowance for flexibility depending on the context. This school has seen a rapid increase in the number of students requiring English-language support. If we are expecting these students to succeed, there is a need for a solid curricular foundation.

A further recommendation regarding support is for there to be more opportunities for dialogue and collaboration between schools in the region, province, country, and internationally. Although each site is unique, it is very likely that educators at this site could learn from other educators in different contexts. A number of interview participants noted this during interviews. Educators at this school should be encouraged to make connections with educators at other schools in the district and across the province. They should be supported to contact and visit other sites and to collaborate with other educators in an effort to serve ethnoculturally diverse students better. Large-scale collaboration should also be promoted, for instance with EAL curriculum development. International experiences may provide learning opportunities for educators. Interviews suggested that a number of educators at this school site have little experience in diverse ethnocultural contexts. A well-travelled participant noted, “Certainly to be a minority

really opened my eyes a lot to the differences and to the customs and having to respect the different customs that exist in other parts of the world” (E02). Providing the opportunity and funding for teacher exchange may be beneficial. There must be caution taken, however, in how such a practice may be implemented. Santoro (2014) found that deficit perspectives may be reinforced when educators are given international experience opportunities.

Working with groups and individuals external to the school may be beneficial. Some standardization, for example with curriculum, can also be positive. However, there must also be recognition that every school is unique. It is recommended that there be an allowance for flexibility in regards to how schools work with ethnoculturally diverse students. Educators on the ground often have greater insight regarding specific needs than people creating policy. Educators are professionals and should be provided a level of autonomy in how students in their schools are educated. Standardized assessments and other programming can hinder ethnoculturally diverse students (Nieto, 2002/2003; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Flexibility should be considered.

Support can be a hard sell as it often comes with a price tag. We must, however, consider what this support will help to achieve and where we might be heading without it. Ethnoculturally diverse students are a part of our communities and many will continue to live in the region or country and contribute to society. It is vital that we work to support these students and the educators who are working with them.

6.2.6 Inclusion. Inclusion is a positive policy for many students in the New Brunswick school system. Some of the positive aspects of inclusion include providing students equal opportunity and valuing diversity. However, this policy may require

additional flexibility or exception for students that are in the beginning stages of English-language acquisition. A number of educators made note of this during conversations. They spoke about ethnoculturally diverse students sitting in a classroom and having little understanding of what is happening. They spoke empathetically about the difficulty these students may have in classes that contain material requiring complex English-language skills. Some educators thought about how they might feel if roles were reversed and they were in advanced classes using a language of instruction that they were only beginning to learn. Because of this, it is recommended that we take a very close look at inclusion with students that are just starting to learn English. The positives and negatives should be considered. This is not an all or nothing scenario. Perhaps there exists a way forward that is flexible and adaptive, which will allow ethnoculturally diverse newcomers better integration within the school system.

A number of educators interviewed for this project suggested that students be given the opportunity to receive extensive language training in separate classes while also being included in courses with other students where there is less reliance on language. This flexible approach would aim to provide additional language instruction to students needing support while also providing a level of inclusion. Perhaps students given this opportunity, although integrating more slowly, would be better prepared to take part in classes with a significant reliance on English. The Burnaby Board of Education (2017) in British Columbia, has implemented such a strategy. Their website states,

E.S.L. [English as a Second Language] students in the beginning stages:

- are placed in multi-grade E.S.L. classes until they are ready to move to regular classes.

- may be able to move from one E.S.L. level to another during the school year.
- take regular classes that do not require full fluency in English, such as Math, Business Education, Physical Education, Music and Art. (para. 6)

This suggestion should be further considered and researched. If implemented, this extensive-language training should be on-site to allow for these students to be included within the school environment as much as possible.

Excluding students can be harmful, and educators have to be careful. Students should be provided the same opportunities as their peers. They should also feel that they are as valued as their peers. Educators should always have that end-goal in mind. In this case, students requiring English support would begin to enter other classes when a sufficient level of English acquisition has been achieved. Perhaps a procedure where these students gradually attend these advanced-language classes could be put in place. The goal would be for these students to be included in all classes entirely, although this might not happen entirely from the beginning. When a solid understanding of the English language has been achieved, students could be included in classes while being able to understand content and participate. As Merchant (1999) noted about the influx of immigrant students in a small American town, “despite the teachers’ best intentions, maintenance of traditional instructional policies and practices did, at times, render these students invisible” (p. 164). Considering further flexibility within the school system may better serve students requiring extensive English-language support.

Communication is vital to the practice of learning. It is possible that placing students in need of extensive language support in advanced-language classes is hindering their learning. Educators want to provide the best possible education for ethnoculturally

diverse students. They owe it to these students to consider how the inclusion policy affects them both positively and negatively, and it is recommended that educators take a close look at the inclusion policy with this in mind.

6.3 Future Research

The research conducted for this study yielded some valuable results for educators and other stakeholders to consider. However, we must recognize that the data collected relied heavily on the perception of 10 educators in the school. There are other stories to be told by other stakeholders. Ethnoculturally diverse students, for example, would be a significant group to conduct similar research with. The family members of these students may also provide a great deal of insight. Interviewing students or families within the ethnocultural majority may also prove to be valuable. There is certainly room to learn more from this specific site regarding education for ethnocultural equity. Research conducted with additional educators or with other stakeholders in mind would offer additional learning opportunities. Governmental funding and support for such research would be beneficial.

This particular study was conducted in one school within one community. The findings and discussion may be valuable for educators within other contexts but there is a great deal more to be learned from educators within other ethnoculturally diversifying schools. Future research at other sites in the Greater Moncton Area, within other schools in New Brunswick, and across the country could prove valuable. Research within elementary and middle schools would also add perspective. Researchers should continue to conduct research with educators regarding ethnocultural diversity. Such research is

never complete. There are endless opportunities to learn about the perceptions and roles of educators, students, families, and community members who are involved in schools across the country.

Comparative research focusing on the perceptions, roles and support in ethnoculturally diverse schools internationally could also yield beneficial results. Schools around the world are evolving ethnoculturally and there is likely much to be learned from educators and other stakeholders with diverse backgrounds and within contexts that we are less familiar with. Education for ethnocultural equity has a place in all schools, and there is much to be learned from each other.

6.4 Concluding remarks

I have learned a great deal throughout this research process. Perhaps most significant is the realization that there is still much for me to learn regarding education for ethnocultural equity. The educators I spoke to provided insight that has enlightened me. I hope that my report can do the same for them and other individuals reading this report. It is encouraging that educators wanted their voices to be heard and recognize that they have a great deal to offer to educators, researchers and policymakers. I am hopeful that researchers will continue to conduct studies focusing on ethnocultural diversity with an aim to better education for ethnoculturally diverse students, the evolving community, and the shrinking world. Education has always played a vital role in how society operates. There is no time more important than the present.

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Appendix A

LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Matthew Maston, and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at UNB. As a part of my research-based degree, I would like to conduct research at a school in the Anglophone East school district. I would greatly appreciate discussing my proposed research with you and for you to consider granting me permission to conduct my study. Below, I have provided some information on my proposed research. Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider my proposed research.

The Greater Moncton area has seen an increase in immigration and has undergone significant demographic change in recent years. The study I am undertaking will ask if a group of educators within a school view it as reflecting this demographic change in the community. If so, I would like to learn from these educators. Specifically, I would like to discover how participants perceive the evolving ethnocultural diversity within their school and what attitudes they hold in regards to this phenomenon. Further, I would like to learn about any impact this has had on educator roles within the school and how prepared and supported participants feel for this phenomenon within this context.

The research I am proposing to conduct is a single-site case study. Data will be collected through educator interviews, general observations and field notes, and document

collection. All data will be kept strictly confidential. The names of participants and the school will be changed in my report and any articles or conferences extending from my research. Identifiable data will only be available to my supervisor or myself. This data will be secured on a password-protected computer. Any physical copies of identifiable data will be locked in a secure location. Participants may choose to withdraw from this study at any point within the research process. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study, they will have the opportunity to request any data provided be withdrawn from the study. This proposed research has been reviewed through the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Education Graduate Unit and the UNB Research Ethics Board.

Interviews will be audio recorded. Interview transcripts will be shared with participants using a technique known as member checking, which will allow them to clarify and modify responses to interview questions. The goal of this process is to collect data that is a clear reflection of participant thoughts. Participants will be kept informed in regards to the research process and how the research is progressing.

The anticipated length of this proposed research is 5 months. I will conduct 1 interview with each participant that will last around 60 minutes. As noted above, I will then member check responses with each participant. During the 5 months, I will also conduct general observations of the school site and collect school documents for analysis.

My final report will be shared with the school. Other researchers, educators and policy makers may also read this study. Again, any identifiable information in the report will be

changed. My hope is that this study will inform educators, researchers and leaders about the realities of evolving ethnocultural diversity in schools.

More information on the scholarly aspects of this study, risk, or confidentiality may be directed to my supervisor, Dr. Lyle Hamm or the University of New Brunswick Research Ethics Board. I declare that I do not hold any conflicts of interest as the primary researcher of this study. If you would like to contact someone not associated with the study to ask questions or raise concerns, please contact Dr. Dave Wagner, Associate Dean – Graduate Studies, faculty of Education, UNB, dwagner@unb.ca, 506-447-3294.

I would like to thank you for your consideration in granting me permission to conduct this study.

Sincerely,

Matthew Maston, MEd student

Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick.

Appendix B

LETTER TO EDUCATORS EXPLAINING THE STUDY

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study. The Greater Moncton area has seen an increase in immigration and has undergone significant demographic change in recent years. The study I am undertaking will ask if a group of educators within this school notice your school reflecting this demographic change in the community. If so, I would like to learn from educators within this school, like you. Specifically, I would like to discover how participants perceive the evolving ethnocultural diversity within your school and the attitudes they have in regards to this phenomenon. Further, I would like to learn about any impact this has had on educator roles within the school and how prepared and supported participants feel for this phenomenon within this context.

This research is beneficial to the field of Education as it aims to provide information from educators who are engaged in new demographic trends. This may provide benefits to you and your school directly or to other educators that can learn from participants that are a part of a changing school. Little research has been done in this particular region on this subject. Information from my study may also impact policy, practice and training, as educators who are directly involved in schools undergoing evolving patterns of diversity may allow those not directly involved to better understand this new reality. Although every research project entails some level of risk for participants, steps will be taken to minimize risk as much as is reasonably possible.

The research I am conducting is a single-site case study. Data will be collected through educator interviews, general observations and field notes, and document collection. All data will be kept strictly confidential. The names of participants and the school will be changed in my report and any articles or conferences extending from my research. Identifiable data will only be available to my supervisor or myself. This data will be secured on a password-protected computer. Any physical copies of identifiable data will be locked in a secure box in the researchers home. Participants may choose to withdraw from this study at any point within the research process. If a participant chooses to withdraw from the study, they will have the opportunity to request any data provided be withdrawn from the study. This proposed research has been reviewed through the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Education Graduate Unit and the UNB Research Ethics Board.

Interviews will be audio recorded. Interview transcripts will be shared with participants using a technique known as member checking, which will allow them to clarify and modify responses to interview questions. The goal of this process is to collect data that is a clear reflection of participant thoughts. Participants will be kept informed in regards to the research process and how the research is progressing.

The anticipated length of this proposed research is 5 months. I will conduct 1 interview with each participant that will last around 60 minutes. As noted above, I will then member check responses with each participant. During the 5 months, I will also conduct general observations of the school site and collect school documents for analysis.

Included in the final report will be my interpretations of the data including themes that have emerged from the various collection methods as well as agreement or variation noted between these various collection methods. The final report will also include quotes that illustrate the case. Direct quotes will allow readers to make their own interpretations of the case. As noted above, all names will be changed in the final report.

My final report will be shared with your school. Other researchers, educators and policy makers may also read this study. Again, any identifiable information in the report will be changed. My hope is that this study will inform educators, researchers and leaders about the realities of evolving ethnocultural diversity in schools.

More information on the scholarly aspects of this study, risk, or confidentiality may be directed to my supervisor, Dr. Lyle Hamm or the University of New Brunswick Research Ethics Board. I declare that I do not hold any conflicts of interest as the primary researcher of this study. If you would like to contact someone not associated with the study to ask questions or raise concerns, please contact Dr. Dave Wagner, Associate Dean – Graduate Studies, faculty of Education, UNB, dwagner@unb.ca, 506-447-3294.

I would like to thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Matthew Maston, MEd student

Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick.

Appendix C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date: _____

1. Turn on recorder (confirm with participant)

2. Interview details

i. Participant:

ii. Gender:

iii. Age:

iv. Position of interviewee:

v. Grades/Subj. taught:

vi. Experience (in years):

vii. Time of interview:

viii. Place:

3. **Brief description of study (nature and role of participants)**

The Greater Moncton area has undergone significant demographic change in recent years. My study is a single-site case study that aims to discover whether or not your school is evolving demographically, your perceptions and attitudes regarding any demographic changes, the role you see yourself as having within this context, and how supported and prepared you are for this reality.

This interview is formatted to be in-depth and semi-structured. I would like you to respond openly to the questions I give you. I am trying to gain a deep understanding of your perceptions so please respond freely and thoroughly. The main purpose of my questions is to help to guide the discussion. The discussion may take many directions. There are no wrong answers.

4. **Go over and sign consent form**

5. **Questions**

1) *I am interested in learning about you and your background. Can you tell me about yourself?*

- a) Can you describe the community you grew up in? Was it ethnoculturally diverse? Did you notice how ethnoculturally diverse it was or was not?
- b) Did you personally have contact with individuals or families from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds? Can you provide any examples?
- c) Did you travel when growing up? Where? Did you recognize ethnocultural diversity when travelling?
- d) What about the schools you attended? Were they ethnoculturally diverse? How so? Did you have any personal connections with people from diverse backgrounds in school?
- e) Is there a particular time or event that you can remember when you first began to notice ethnocultural diversity or think about it? If so, can you explain?
- f) Do you remember noticing any tension or division in regards to ethnocultural diversity when growing up? If so, can you please elaborate?
- g) *What ethnocultural group do you identify with?*

2) *I asked you to bring a document or artefact that represents ethnocultural diversity to you. Could you show me this and explain its significance for you?*

3) *How long have you lived in this area? Have you noticed a change in the ethnocultural makeup of the area in your time here? Please explain.*

a) Can you provide an example?

4) *Did you know that 1 in 5 Canadians are foreign born and that immigration into the Moncton area has increased significantly since 2006? If so, where have you learned this mostly?*

a) What are your personal feelings on this evolving diversity?

b) What is your sense of how other Moncton citizens perceive this phenomenon?

c) Are the people in this region prepared for this? What leads you to believe this?

5) *Would you say that your school's ethnocultural makeup is evolving like that of the community? How so? Please explain?*

a) If evolving, what are your personal feelings on your school diversifying?

b) Is it changing the school? How so? Can you provide an example?

c) How do you feel about that?

d) What are the implications for other students, staff?

e) Positive/ Negative?

6) *What do you consider your role to be as an educator in the current ethnocultural context of your school?*

a) Has your role changed?

b) How about in your particular classroom or day-to-day work?

c) If applicable, can you provide an example of how you have changed in your role as an educator in the school due to the ethnocultural context?

d) What about in the community or in extracurricular activities?

7) *I'd like you to put yourself in the shoes of an ethnoculturally diverse newcomer*

enrolling in your school and, if applicable, one of your classes. Can you explain what you think that might be like?

- a) What might the student notice about the school as a physical place?
- b) What might they notice in regards to students, teachers, and the social aspect?
- c) What about lessons and academic content?
- d) What kinds of support do you think this student would need?
- e) Do you consider the ethnocultural backgrounds or perspectives of your students in your role? Can you give an example?
- f) Looking to the future of your ethnoculturally diverse students, does the current system work for them? What are we doing well? What can be done better?

8) *Do you feel that you are supported as an educator working in the current ethnocultural context of your school?*

a) Have you been directed toward PD on topics related to diversity in schools in any way? Please explain

b) Would you like to learn more about how you might be a better educator in this context? What would you like to learn? Please explain.

c) Do you think the school and district leaders are doing enough in regards to the evolving ethnocultural diversity in the area? What can they do better?

d) Do you hear others speaking about this phenomenon? What are they saying?

e) What about community and provincial leaders? Are they doing enough?

f) If you were in a room with school, district, and governmental leaders that could address any concerns to in regards to the evolving ethnocultural diversity in your community/school, what would you say?

9) *My research is looking to gain insight into your personal perceptions and attitudes in regards to ethnocultural diversity in your school. Is there anything else you can tell me that would provide me with such insight?*

10) *I am also looking to gain insight into what you see your role as within this context, how it may have changed, and any support you are receiving or feel you should be receiving. Is there anything else you can tell me that would provide me with such insight?*

6. **Thank you**

Appendix D

TEACHER/ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Perceptions and roles of educators in an ethnoculturally diverse school

Primary Researcher: Matthew Maston, MEd Student, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick, matthew.maston@unb.ca

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Lyle Hamm, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick, lhamm@unb.ca, 506-447-3152

Contact for Concerns: Dr. David Wagner, Associate Dean of Graduate Programs, Faculty of Education, University of New Brunswick, dwagner@unb.ca, 506-447-3294

Information for participants: By consenting to participate in this research, participants understand the following:

- That participation in this study is voluntary.
- The nature of the research and the role participants have in it.
- The foreseeable benefits and risks involved with participating in this research.
- That participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.
- That, if choosing to withdraw, participants can request any data they have provided be removed from the research.
- That the names of all participants and the site will be changed in the final report of this study.
- Who may be contacted to request more information on the study or to voice concerns.

CONSENT:

I, _____, **understand the information provided on**

(Please, print your name)

this form, have read the Research Summary, and agree to participate in this study.

Signature:

Date:

For a summary of the results of this research, please provide your contact information below:

Curriculum Vitae

Candidate's full name:

Matthew Thomas Deane Maston

Universities attended:

University of New Brunswick: Master of Education (2018)

St. Thomas University: Bachelor of Education (2007)

St. Thomas University: Bachelor of Arts (2006)

Publications: N/A

Conference Presentations:

Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference (Jun. 24, 2017)

Works in Progress Sessions, University of New Brunswick (Mar. 22, 2017)

Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference (Jul. 9, 2016)