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The need for inclusive strategies using global education and
multicultural educational principles**

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**Global villages in the classroom:
The need for inclusive strategies using global education and
multicultural educational principles**

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***Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to examine whether English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors' ethnocentrism could be reduced using multicultural education (MCE) principles. While ESL instructors were conscious of systemic barriers, media stereotypes, and bullying, more diversity training is required in order to improve teachers' attitudes, responses, and instructional strategies regarding integration issues. It was also determined that MCE principles could be effectively employed to raise awareness of issues surrounding integration and assimilation in ESL classrooms. When immigration, human rights, and multicultural policies were critically examined, ESL instructors were able to improve their cross-cultural skills in the classroom to be more inclusive towards diverse ethnic groups. Giving learners greater opportunities to express themselves resulted in the validation of immigrants' knowledge and skills leading to a more meaningful learning experience for students and teachers.*

***Keywords:** global education, multicultural education, English-language education, social justice, immigration*

Increasing levels of cultural diversity have become a common trend in many nations that have been relatively homogeneous for much of their history. Even countries with histories of cultural diversity (e.g., United States of America, Canada) have continued to grow in terms of racial and linguistic heterogeneity resulting in a range of responses from policymakers. Adding to the complexity of linguistic and racial diversity is the relationship of race to nationhood, feelings of entitlement, and racial stratification. Global Education (GE), the study of issues around the world external to a nation, and critical Multicultural Education (MCE), the study of problems internal to a nation (Lucas, 2010), may be effective tools in educating teachers about challenges facing diverse students encountering ethnocentric attitudes in schools today.

Linguistic Hegemony

Changing demographics is an important contributing factor for the creation and implementation of multicultural education policies on a national level. One aspect of these policies can be seen in the laws surrounding language rights. Laws concerning language rights are a way to establish power for ethnic groups. Furthermore, language rights legitimize cultural groups because they are public recognition that is linked to the identity of ethnic groups and the negotiation of cultural expressions. Without a moral obligation of inclusivity for ethnic groups, both longstanding and new, many disaffected immigrants may exercise their exit option. An example of this can be seen in Australia, where national policy was forced to change from proassimilation to multiculturalism due to many immigrants returning to their respective native countries (Spencer, 2008). Similarly, affluent newcomers who have obtained a Canadian passport but are unable to obtain employment or feel as if they truly belong in Canadian society have headed back and forth between their first country and Canada, resulting in the creation of the moniker, "Hotel Canada." It is important to remember the underlying premise of migration is that immigrants who leave their country of origin and nations who accept them, both do so for the perceived benefits (Spencer, 2008). That is why states grant not only economic, racial, and cultural rights to minorities within a nation, but language rights as well.

Spencer (2008) examined two language reforms: Bill 101 in Canada, meant to protect the French language in English-dominated Canada, and the effects of the linguistic policy reforms in the Baltic Republics meant to protect the language rights of Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians. Spencer (2008) concluded, "a deep commitment to cultural diversity also requires that these cultural communities have the capacity to ensure the reproduction of their identities through the process of nation-building" (p. 256). The "how" of cultural expression validates ethnic identities and supports their survival as well as promoting multilingualism for minority groups. Granting legal rights to linguistic expression helps to ensure the continuation of the minority language's survival and perpetuation.

Bill 101 was passed on August 26, 1977 in Quebec to encourage the perpetuation of the French language within the province of Quebec. Bill 101 may be seen as successful since there was the active reproduction of the French language and income disparities decreased in the 1970s between English and French groups within Quebec. In 1984, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously agreed to uphold the rights of

French language minority rights outside of Quebec, which further protected the French language across Canada (Spencer, 2008). Canadian French language laws demonstrate that language rights can be seen as essential to publicly acknowledging minority cultures and promoting the survival of ethnic languages and, consequently, the survival of ethnic identities. Bill 101 has ensured the survival of French culture provincially within Quebec and indirectly across Canada.

The Baltic Republics are another example of how public recognition for language rights perpetuate ethnic identities. During the Cold War, citizens of the Baltic Republics, along with the rest of the U.S.S.R., were required to learn Russian. However, Russian minorities in Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania had less than 50% language proficiency in the host country's mother tongue. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union through Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* reforms, learning Russian was no longer enforced in the Baltic Republics.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania enacted various language laws and citizenship requirements to exert cultural and linguistic control. Similar to the policy in many Western nations of "citizenship by birth in the country" rule, only those who resided in the Baltic Republics prior to Soviet occupation could automatically become citizens. In contrast, those who had migrated to the Baltic Republic while under Soviet rule or were born in a Baltic state during the same period, had to pass a language test. This policy was implemented amid fears that native Baltic citizens would become marginalized in their own country. Worth noting are the shifts in linguistic policies that, implemented in a deliberate and systematic fashion by the newly formed Baltic Republics, were used to counteract the effects of the previously oppressed Baltic majority by the Russian minority during the time of the Cold War. The linguistic reforms can be seen as successful because by 1995, 86% of Russians residing in the Baltic Republics agreed that it was their obligation to learn the language of the host country (Spencer, 2008).

Another example from a European context is that in 1990 when Croatia altered its constitution. However, if democratic states do not give language rights to minorities, the nature of democracy will not permit this kind of exclusionary behaviour for long (Spencer, 2008). Linguistic oppression led directly to feelings of alienation and resentment within the Serbian minority and was one reason that contributed to a Serbian uprising for cultural autonomy. Ultimately, the result was the destabilization of Croatia because the language rights of Serbians were taken away (Spencer, 2008).

National policies implemented in Canada, the Baltic Republics, and Croatia demonstrate that language laws act as public recognition, or lack thereof, for ethnic groups. Recognition of language rights serves to circumvent the idea of nationalism based on exclusivity and supports linguistic inclusivity, leading to greater national engagement by all cultural groups.

The Race to Define Nationhood

Apart from the hegemonic struggle for linguistic rights that occurs in some multicultural nations, there is also a lack of definition between the race and nationhood. *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain* (FMEB) released on October 11, 2000, reveals the complex relationship between race and nation. *The Parekh Report*, as it is popularly referred to, was vilified. Some of the White commissioners on the committee were also spoken against, but because Professors Stuart Hall and Professors Bhikhu Parekh are non-White, it “fed into a racially connotated chain of meaning which appeared to equate non-whiteness with non-attachment to the British nation” (McLaughlin & Neal, 2007, p. 915). Some British citizens felt that Parekh and Hall could not speak to the definition of the implications of being British or to the implications of British citizenship. Defining an individual’s national identity and the relationship to race has become controversial due to the changing colour of nationhood and citizenship.

Tan and Lefebvre’s (2010) study looked at how teacher candidates responded to MCE in Quebec. Firstly, there was “the tension between multiculturalism as equality of all groups and intercultural as the sustainability of Francophone Quebec culture was a constant undercurrent of conflict in the McGill Multicultural Education course” (Tan & Lefebvre, 2010, p. 384). In some ways, bilingualism and biculturalism can be seen as competing with multiculturalism. Some teacher candidates felt that they were being picked on and portrayed as the bad guy because a discussion in the MCE class brought to light the fact that students are a relatively homogenous group within teacher education programs.

Other teacher candidates, who were White but were of a different ethnic origin, did not identify with White privilege. Sofia, a first generation Greek immigrant student teacher, “did not see herself as white because to her whiteness is associated with cultural, political, and economic power – all of which do not apply to her Montreal experience as a working-class Greek-Canadian” (Tan & Lefebvre, 2010, p. 385). Thus, there is an identity that may be required to be negotiated because “a white Quebecois

might visibly look like any other white Canadian or American, but their identity as a white person is different linguistically, historically, and culturally” (Tan & Lefebvre, 2010, p. 385). In this way, there can be a dissonance in terms of looking like an Anglo-Canadian but being heard as a French-Canadian.

On the other hand, establishing a strict definition of nation and negotiating an identity based on race and ethnicity is a concern in diverse settings (Tan & Lefebvre, 2010). For example, Singapore’s multilingual and multiracial policy, established in 1965, did not shy away from defining the nation of Singapore as having four races: “Chinese (74.2%), Indian (9.2%), Malay (13.4%), and ‘Others’ (3.2%)” (Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2011, p. 129). However, the clear definition and delineation of race forced biracial citizens to deny a part of their roots. In addition, the adoption of Mandarin as the language of Chinese Singaporeans also excluded Cantonese and all Chinese dialect speakers from receiving language rights (Alviar-Martin & Ho, 2010, p.129). The creation of the racial definition of postcolonial Singapore resulted in an exclusionary policy as to race and national identification. Both clarity and ambiguity about nationhood and race can be problematic because the blurring of race and ethnicity results in the blurring of traditional territorial boundaries.

If nations in the new millennium do not define themselves by language, race, or ethnicity for citizenship, then what defines a nation? The role of a nation is similar to the ambiguity faced by men during the early years of the feminist movement. Feminists had sought to emancipate women and redefine their roles in society, but they failed to articulate a redefined role for men. In the same way, globalization, while in some ways emancipating citizens from being bound by race and language, can also result in making the idea of nationhood a nebulous concept in the 21st century. There is a “global cosmopolitanism” (McLaughlin & Neal, 2007, p. 911), meaning that very few nations are homogeneous, unilingual, or monocultural, whether there is an official multicultural policy or not. As a result, there may be a need for “cosmopolitan education” (Nussbaum, 1996) that avoids xenophobic vocabulary. Furthermore, if everyone is going to be a global citizen at some point in the future, then how much does the nation that one resides in matter? Should schools continue to promote patriotism or should educational institutions promote global citizenship and multiculturalism?

Multicultural Education: A Pathway to Social Justice

MCE has many dimensions, but critical MCE can be defined as leading to an awareness of systemic barriers within a nation and developing an attitude that will seek to change institutional hierarchies and confront racial and social stratification (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010). Unfortunately many teachers may perceive multiculturalism as the result of an increase in immigration levels worldwide and as a result refrain or limit implementing social justice perspectives. Their pedagogy could remain at the tourist curricula level promoting a “beads and feathers” approach by focusing on the exotic. Ideally, MCE should be delivered using a curriculum that fuses all subjects with equity and occurs in an empowering school culture (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010). There are four curricula approaches: (a) contributive (e.g., vocabulary included in English from various cultures, music from other countries), (b) additive (e.g., Black History Month), (c) transformative (e.g., reading books from other cultures), and (d) social action, (e.g., activities related to social justice).

Although teachers in the Schoorman and Bogotch study claimed to feel positive about diversity, during the research phase an unexpected finding of the power dynamics between new and veteran teachers revealed the established teachers were frequently disdainful of discourse with diverse voices, especially from new teachers. In addition, teachers preferred the tourist curricula and used food, fun, and fair approaches rather than critiquing patterns of privilege, oppression, and systemic barriers. In this study, the established teachers saw social justice as controversial and more appropriate for university settings (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010). Therefore, MCE can be seen as ineffective when it is applied in an isolated, fragmented, and shallow way; it needs a school culture with social justice as a priority for both staff and students. In addition, a high degree of collegiality and collaboration among teachers is required for transforming a school into an equitable place, which unfortunately, did not exist in the Schoorman and Bogotch study. On the surface, the teachers seemed to grasp the idea that diversity was positive but they did not have the cross-cultural skills to support the diverse views presented by their peers or their students.

Multicultural Education in Action

Beyond Today is an American MCE curriculum that attempted to bring together youth from diverse backgrounds, such as Latino, White, and Black, to advocate for social justice and fight against institutionalized racism. The goal of this curriculum unit

is for students to develop a deeper level of understanding of possible systemic barriers that inhibit interactions between cultural groups by critically examining social trends and historical events. The basis of the program is to establish community, cross borders, promote student leadership, and inspire social action.

In a recent study (Epstein, 2010), 22 students from three schools from the same city in the American Northeast experienced the *Beyond Today*. One activity asked students to reflect on media stereotypes and segregation. During the discussions, students showed that they were responsive to socially just ideals, but were hesitant to build interethnic friendships. Instances in society that disempower students of colour hindered interracial friendships in classrooms (Epstein, 2010). Even when students did interact, occasionally they regressed back into their similar groups because students that experience racism find support in racially homogenous groups. Within these groups they have an opportunity to “understand the racist experiences they encounter, protect themselves from additional attacks, and keep the dominant group at a distance” (Epstein, 2010, p. 44). As a result, there is racial segregation even when opportunities to integrate are presented to the students.

Recurrent themes in conversations centered on race, privilege, and power. Students danced around topics, getting closer and pulling away figuratively as well as literally. When one group was practicing a dance move, a student from a different background participated in learning the new moves. But instead of continuing to dance with the new group, she returned to her familiar group of friends and taught her friends the new moves. While boundaries were stretched, they were also reinforced by cultural pride that can foster solidarity in diverse groups, because there is a consensual understanding that “everyone has a different way of knowing” (Epstein, 2010, p. 53). Epstein found that it is possible for teachers, through MCE, to foster antiracist attitudes, especially when not feeling confident about how to approach questions regarding institutionalized racism. This approach highlights the importance of starting conversations concerning prejudice. However, teachers should anticipate conflict and be prepared to manage varied student responses. Epstein’s study demonstrates that youth from diverse cultural backgrounds can engage with each other to foster critical thinking about societal assumptions through MCE.

In a study by Wright and Tolan (2009), adventure curriculum was utilized to bring together a culturally diverse group of university students to reduce feelings of prejudice. Shared wilderness experience, through the contact hypothesis, assumes a

supportive, diverse group will develop because the shared group experience also creates the “opportunity for dialogue on diversity issues that can be more genuine and in-depth because of the supportive community that has been created (Wright & Tolan, 2009, p. 141).

Wright and Tolan focused on increasing self-awareness in order to form a basis for accepting others by discussions about identity. Next, 134 students participated in rope courses, took wilderness trips, and wrote a reflective journal about their experiences. Wright and Tolan’s study is unique because it is a quantitative study, whereas most studies done in the area of MCE are qualitative, the results of which suggested statistical correlation between the MCE taught and prejudice reduction. Participants in the Wright and Tolan study found that “adventure challenges and team development initiatives cemented the bonds of group cohesion whereas group dialogue and reflection encouraged insights about diversity” (p. 150). The researchers concluded that shared adventure experiences with diverse groups might reduce prejudiced beliefs held by individuals.

The Montana Indian Education for All Act was passed after a 38-year reform effort to support a Native American education curriculum. The curriculum promotes inclusivity for Native Americans in Montana, the second largest minority in the state (Carjuzaa, Jetty, Munson, & Veltkamp, 2010). Carjuzaa and colleagues examined how multicultural education was implemented that began with a social justice perspective, promoted respect, responsibility, and mutual understanding. Relationships with group elders in the community were initiated to promote Indigenous cultures and languages. The preservation of Native American heritage was facilitated through stories and there was assent among the diverse groups because Native American histories were seen by both Native and White communities as mutually beneficial. The effects of MCE in the Montana Native American setting have not been studied. Therefore, it is difficult to establish how successful the new curriculum will be in terms of academic achievement. This article demonstrated how the foundation of a new inclusive curriculum could be implemented.

Implementing inclusive curriculum and promoting social justice practices are two aspects of critical MCE and proponents of critical MCE have criticized food, fun, and fair approaches to diverse settings as shallow and superficial. However, Richardson’s (2011) study provides a unique take on the tourist curriculum because he feels that MCE focusing on social justice limits the possibilities for food events. In

Richardson's study, gardens provided food for neighbourhoods and encouraged healthy eating in low-income communities:

Food-centered activities can be shown to foster community building in schools among teachers, school families and the surrounding neighbourhood. Moreover, this article shows that popular discourse around food events such as school gardens also amplify the terms of volunteerism, civic engagement and the development of an environmental awareness among students. (p. 109)

The urban garden concept is growing and "there are more than 500 gardens in Los Angeles Unified School district and 2000 in the state of California alone" (Richardson, 2011, p. 116). Not only do the gardens scaffold learning about becoming environmentally conscious, but growing vegetables also promotes healthy eating. Richardson provides an alternative response to MCE critics who believe that tourist curriculum has no place in MCE because it does not challenge institutionalized racism. American studies (Carjuzaa et al., 2010; Epstein, 2010; Richardson, 2011; Wright & Tolan, 2009) have shown that social justice dovetails within MCE and can be utilized to facilitate cross-cultural interactions with diverse groups of students.

Canadian Multiculturalism: An Oxymoron

Back in the 1930s, Senator Yuzyk proposed that Canadian multiculturalism could be distinguished from the American model of the melting pot through the mosaic metaphor that legally permits newcomers to keep their native culture and the connection to their roots does not hinder their participation in society. Hugh MacLennan's 1945 novel, *Two Solitudes*, depicts the internal and societal conflict of the protagonist as he strives to reconcile his French and English heritage as a symbol of the classic Canadian struggle for cultural identity. Ever since 1971, when Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau famously declared that there is no official culture in Canada except multiculturalism, the "Canadian identity and history has been constructed to celebrate the nation's mosaic diversity" (Tan & Lefebvre, 2010, p. 383). Cynics interpreted Trudeau's Multicultural Act as a divide-and-conquer political strategy between French Canada and ethnic communities in order to subdue Quebec's bid for independence. Canadian multiculturalism has always taken place in the context of balancing English and French heritage.

One study focused on the challenges faced by French-speaking African youth in a small city in Canada. Awad Ibrahim (Ibrahim, date unknown) challenged the notion

that mastering a dominant language can lead to acceptance. Instead, he identified the concept of “deceptive fluency” in which communication in a language that is spoken by the dominant group is treated dismissively when the speaker is from an “illegitimate group.” Ibrahim’s research revealed that educators saw Black youth who spoke French as deficient and their teachers expressed surprise that the students spoke Parisian French fluently. Despite the Black students’ linguistic ability, guidance counselors continued to stream male Black youth into general instead of university level courses and towards athleticism and away from academics. Even the Black female students commented that it was difficult to see boys they had known in Africa succeeding in intellectual pursuits, suddenly declining in Canada in their school performance. Remnants of colonialist mentality by educators were cited as a factor that enabled the othering of French-speaking Black students from Africa (Hall, 1990; Ibrahim, date unknown) and negatively impacted their academic success.

Othering included attitudes of conditional acceptance for Black students who were present in the sense that they were invited to the table by the Canadian host but were not trusted or wanted. Instead, the school staff trivialized the Black students’ concerns. Many of the African students in this study were living alone or were responsible for a sibling and as a result faced adult responsibilities. When problems with paying the bills, such as Hydro, would arise and required a response during school time, school staff was largely unsupportive and unhelpful (Ibrahim, date unknown). Instead, school administrators responded harshly with punitive measures when students were delayed by their non-school related responsibilities and were indifferent towards requests for assistance and understanding. While this study brought to light some of the problems faced by French-speaking African students in Canada, more research on linguistic heterogeneity is needed. More studies need to be done on multilingualism and multiculturalism in the context of the two solitudes and education in Canada.

The battle for linguistic hegemony in Canada is similar to the Baltic Republics’ efforts to establish minority language rights after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. Due to the low birth rate in Quebec there is a fear for the sustainability of the French language in Canada. As previously noted, fluctuating demographics and race can influence the fight for linguistic rights on a national level. In terms of policy responses to racial and linguistic diversity, demographics mostly likely exert the greatest influence on how

nations respond to multiculturalism and the associated struggle for cultural, linguistic, and racial hegemony.

Multiculturalism in Ontario: A Case of Disempowerment

By 1988, multiculturalism had become a defining factor of the Canadian identity, second only to universal health care (Goonewardena, Rankin, & Weinstock, 2004). The Canadian Multicultural Policy mandated that the government was “working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life in Canada [and] ensuring full participation in Canadian society including the social and economic aspects of individuals of all origins and their communities” (p. 9). Towards the national goal of integrating immigrants, federal and provincial governments have put into place various educational structures to facilitate newcomer settlement over the last 25 years. Previously, the federal government under Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) offered English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adults using the Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) curriculum. The grammar-based curriculum was utilitarian in nature using the same ESL texts for Levels 1 to 6 across Canada. Classroom lesson plans were monitored and strict adherence to standardized exit criteria, within predetermined timeframes, were enforced.

In contrast, the provincial government, through the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), partnered with district school boards in Ontario to deliver an ESL Continuing Education Program using the task-based Benchmarks curriculum that offered guidance for both ESL instructors and adult ESL learners. Lesson plans were designed that spiral learning outcomes. Adult learners were encouraged to learn at their own pace through instruction from the teacher. Promotion occurred at any time based on the instructor’s judgment through a mixture of assessments to ensure each student’s mastery of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Also, Ontario Specialized Language Training (OSLT) classes, provincially funded by the MCI and English Language Training (ELT) classes federally funded by the CIC, which fast-tracked newcomers into jobs where there were labour shortages. However, many changes have taken place to harmonize ESL program delivery practices and establish continuity throughout Canada. Although ESL, LINC, and OSLT/ELT classes are utilitarian in nature, many newcomers immigrate to Canada in the hopes of finding a better job and therefore benefit from the more pragmatic focus of English language education.

Nonetheless, there is a need to promote teacher education that develops cross-cultural skills aside alongside various program delivery reforms. While there is diversity in student populations, teachers in Canada do not reflect the cultural demographics in the classroom. In their *Globe and Mail* article, Alphonso and Hammer (2013) cited a memo circulated by the TDSB that the first round of teacher candidate interviews would be granted to males and visible minorities in an effort to bridge the racial divide between a 72% non-White immigrant student body and an 80% White female elementary teacher workforce. Moreover, teacher education programs do not effectively educate prospective teachers on how to deal with diversity in the classroom (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Visser, 2012). By examining policies and structures, it may be possible to determine the various factors that promote the exclusionary nature of cross-cultural interactions in educational settings in Ontario.

The 1960s Hall-Dennis Report is an example of a policy in Canada that promoted social justice. O'Sullivan (1999) provides an historical overview of two global paradigms, utilitarianism and social justice perspectives, to argue that rather than pursuing global competition educational reform should increase awareness of our globally interdependent needs and responsibilities. As stated in the Hall-Dennis Report, "education should promote tolerance and friendship among all nations and further the activities of the United Nations" (p. 313). Unfortunately, the Hall-Dennis Report did not outline exactly how these noble ideals of peace and harmony should be achieved in the classroom or how teachers should implement values associated with social justice. Nor did the Report "provide specific and structural recommendations for operationalizing this kind of global paradigm in the Ontario curriculum or its educational goals" (O'Sullivan, 1999, p. 313). It merely reflected the strong 1960s Canadian belief that the world could be reconstructed through educating learners about social justice "without developing specific culturally relevant pedagogy" (O'Sullivan, 1999, p. 312).

According to Kuchapski (1998), throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the philosophy of ethical liberalism allowed high school study programs to meet learners' needs while the pressure to perform for standardized tests diminished. Teachers' individual instruction was seen as valuable for developing a child's potential and there was a great deal of autonomy for teachers. Furthermore, to promote parent and teacher participation "public education underwent a process of massive decentralization" (p. 537) to encourage grassroots-level involvement and power sharing.

The pendulum began to slowly swing to the other side in the 1970s through the technological liberal philosophy that is influenced by technological changes to the competitive global economy: "Spiraling debt, intractable unemployment, and the increasing ability of transnational corporations to relocate on a global scale, have resulted in a renewed interest in the instrumental value of education as the means for collective economic well-being" (Kuchapski, 1998, p. 539). For these reasons, education has shifted away from focusing on personal development to serving economic interests.

Kuchapski (1998) articulated two types of ideologies, person-centered liberalism and technological liberalism, to show that demands for accountability triumphed over the idea of developing the individual. She concludes by stating that spiral holistic learning may be better suited for multiethnic urban settings than evaluation through standardized exit criteria. Therefore, the curriculum and not the learners' abilities, becomes the prominent guiding factor as mandating the level that should be reached, regardless of the level at which the student enters into that class or whether the class is high or low for that level.

There is great variation in terms of proficiency levels in ethnic enclaves in large urban centres in Ontario. Moreover, the architects of curricula rarely incorporate diverse perspectives found in large urban centres in Ontario into the units studied. Since curricula are usually designed by the upper echelons within educational hierarchies that are far away from the school setting, experientially and spatially, "the issue of whose knowledge and whose voices are embedded in these measures can be answered only as we cross this furthest border between knowing and power" (Moll et al., 2005, p. 42). The curriculum becomes a powerful tool, if implemented by the teacher, to marginalize newcomers who do not have the cultural capital to respond to Eurocentric material. This can also create a disservice for native Canadians because there are few, if any, expectations to learn about the world. Changes in curricula focused on meeting standardized exit criteria can ripple into further marginalizing ethnic communities.

Social justice perspectives in education were further pushed aside when Ontario's 13-person Royal Commission on Learning (RCOL) was established by provincial decree on May 3, 1993. The RCOL was given the task to study and make recommendations for the publicly funded education system in terms of accountability and a vision for the future. *For the Love of Learning* was released to the Ontario Minister of Education and Training in January 1995 with 167 recommendations in a 600-page

report. However, the commissioners had been concerned with distancing themselves from aspects of the minister's agenda concerning the amalgamation of school boards. Despite the RCOL commissioner's efforts, Anderson and Ben Jaafar (2006) argue that although Ontario has had three different political parties in power over the last 15 years, the NDP, the Conservatives, and the Liberals have all moved in the direction of centralizing education. Anderson and Ben Jaafar suggest that through changes in curriculum, governance, and funding, the Ministry of Education was able to wrest control away from a large urban centre in Ontario with seven district school boards and local communities.

Implementing the RCOL's recommendations in terms of curriculum and the centralization of boards may have resulted in sacrificing social justice values in order to educate learners to compete globally in the 21st century. Firstly, the utilitarian nature of the curriculum may have fostered a preoccupation with standardized tests and accountability in the form of data-driven evaluation to allow students to become successful in educational settings without ever having to make local connections, invest in teacher and student relationships, or develop a global consciousness (Dei et al., 2000). Not only that, but because urban schools have greater diversity, more special needs, and more racialized communities, the impacts of standardized testing are greater. Yet how realistic is standardization in ethnically diverse settings? Ironically, as classrooms in Toronto have become more multiethnic, expectations of teachers to show progress through standardized testing have also risen.

When Premier Harris enacted *The Fewer School Boards Act* in 1997, all seven Toronto boards were rendered organizationally powerless by the removal of their abilities to generate income by raising taxes. Consequently, the social connection and local empowerment of residents in neighbourhoods became confined to a fewer number of individuals consisting mainly of established groups (Dei et al., 2000). The Common Sense Revolution effectively used budget cuts to undermine local participation in the school system on the cusp of the influx of minorities into a large urban centre in Ontario in the early 1990s. Thus, over the last 25 years, the original Canadian vision of social justice and an educator's responsibility to transform society to become more equitable may have slowly eroded through changes in curriculum and the centralization of school boards.

While some boards benefitted from the policy changes and few communities retained a voice in the form of the new parent councils, the amalgamation of all seven

boards into one mega-board largely contributed to diverse groups becoming marginalized and even oppressed. There are “two aspects of city process that can contribute to inequality and indeed oppression. First is the decision making process within which interest groups vie for and bargain over the distributive effects of city projects” (Goonewardena et al., 2004, p. 5). Gerri Connelly, the first director of the TDSB, acknowledged that equity and social justice were at the heart of the sustainability for the newly formed school board in 1998 (Bell, 2007). In fact, cultural diversity is associated with social inequality, marginalization, social justice, and a lack of identity (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008; Bell, 2007; Goonewardena et al., 2004). Participation on parent councils may be difficult for parents who cannot speak English and may not be aware of how to navigate through the Western educational system. Within the TDSB, there are more than 80 different first languages (www.tdsb.on.ca/communications), and because many teachers are unilingual, it may be difficult for ESL parents to express their concerns. Since parental involvement is directly linked to student success (Kuchapski, 1998), the lack of structural support for immigrant parents may create barriers for tapping into a student’s potential. Policies and structures of an educational system can create language barriers and, as a consequence, perpetuate patterns of privilege and marginalization (Dei et al., 2000). There can be a potential for racial stratification in the larger context of Canadian society because local schools, following state-mandated curriculum to attain standardized utilitarian expectations, may have become unable to manage cross-cultural interactions and become meaningful centres of connection for communities in a large urban centre in Ontario. There is a correlation between issues related to diversity and the viability and sustainability of maintaining school boards with their connections to local ethnic enclaves.

In terms of classroom practices, it may be possible to foster greater community connections through the funds of knowledge strategy. Moll and colleagues’ (2005) research began in 1990 with 10 teachers as an ethnographic research project in Tucson, Arizona for children of Mexican ancestry. Teachers interviewed children’s parents to find out their skills, histories, and beliefs to base their funds of knowledge into units taught in the classroom such as math or science. Later, the fund of knowledge concept was used in the University of Pennsylvania to educate preservice teachers to teach in low-income, urban settings. Preservice teachers from middle and upper-class homes had to enter low-income, urban, ethnic communities to solicit knowledge from

community members and use it to teach their student, in order to help preservice teachers transform their views from deficit perspectives to focus on the positive aspects of living in lower-income, ethnic neighbourhoods.

Rios-Aguilar's (2010) research sought to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the funds of knowledge strategy and improved scores on standardized tests. Rios-Aguilar used a random sampling of 1,100 Latina/o students from K-12 in a northeastern United States school district to explain variations in academic and nonacademic performance on standardized tests. In this school district, 64% of students were African-American, 20% Hispanic, and 14% White. Eighty percent of these students were on the poverty line as determined by the number of students receiving free or reduced lunches at school. On Sept. 28, 2006, surveys were mailed out and 212 responded. Of these respondents, 88% were female and 77% had been born in the United States. Rios-Aguilar wanted to answer these questions:

- 1) What is the relationship between reading and academic achievement and Latino household funds of knowledge?
- 2) What is the relationship to the bilingual nature of Spanish and English homes and funds of knowledge?
- 3) What commonalities are there for Latino subgroups?

Rios-Aguilar's findings suggest, "multiple regression analyses indicate the existence of a significant association between some component of funds of knowledge and students' academic and nonacademic outcomes" (p. 1). Rather than ignoring the bilingual strengths of students, educators and policymakers should take into account "the cultural basis of instruction and pedagogy, as well as of the evaluation and assessment of processes that are currently in place. They argue education reform should capitalize on household and community resources if it is to succeed" (Rios-Aguilar, 2010, p. 4). However, a causal relationship between the funds of knowledge strategy and better academic performance was not established.

But the Rios-Aguilar study was still significant because prior quantitative studies on Latina/o academic performance on standardized tests have used large-scale data sets that do not take into account "the context in which Latino children and families live" (Rios-Aguilar, 2010, p. 4). Rios-Aguilar also wanted to provide a survey instrument that could be used to find out about the effectiveness of the funds of knowledge in a quantitative research study. No previous research had attempted to quantify the relationship between the funds of knowledge concept to standardized testing.

Rowsell and colleagues' (2007) yearlong research took place in Toronto in an area with a high concentration of members from the Islamic community and explored how to use effective strategies to mediate cross-cultural interactions. They found that it is essential to change the idea that ESL learners are deficient and that instructional strategies should bridge the linguistic and cultural divisions within the classroom. In practical terms, especially in second language learning, teachers need to have strategies that will tap into the learners' funds of knowledge in order to encourage alternate ways of knowing and inter-connectedness among cultures. Rowsell and colleagues asked these questions:

- 1) Why does culture play a secondary role to linguistic competence and language learning?
- 2) What can emergent bilinguals contribute to ESL classroom practices between instructors and students when not viewed as culturally deficient?
- 3) What types of discussions should teachers and teacher candidates have about culturally inclusive practices in diverse classrooms?
- 4) How do we approach a diverse classroom?

Teachers' responses were recorded over a period of one year to these questions that have great implications for classrooms in a large urban centre in Ontario, especially in the field of adult education. In all the above-mentioned cases, the concept of the funds of knowledge was adapted to suit the research. The author's study also adapted the funds of knowledge concept to suit adult ESL classes based on Rowsell and colleagues' (2007) study in which there was an effort made avoid the food and fun fair topics and focus on specific lived experiences of students in the classroom. Learners who are preparing for college or university were surveyed informally through conversation to find out their professional backgrounds and areas of interest. Instructors were taught how to elicit funds of knowledge using an object, talking about religious rites, and sharing daily practices. The timeframe was one term, which consisted of 14 weeks. Findings revealed that ESL instructors need more diversity training in order to provide more inclusive learning and improve culturally democratic practices in the classroom.

Conclusion

Diversity issues constantly challenge educators to keep seeking transformative lifelong learning methods in order to continually meet the needs present in the

culturally diverse students. Creating inclusive communities involves examining systems and ultimately eliminating policies, practices and procedures to infuse educational systems with a social justice perspective (Gause, 2011; Nieto, 2000). Using GE and MCE principles with a social justice perspective moves the focus away from festival multiculturalism to create awareness of how educational communities privilege some students while devaluing those deemed as Others. Nieto (2000) recommends responding to re-segregation trends by changing teacher demographics from White, female, middle class to hiring staff that represent student demographics and even goes so far as to recommend that teacher candidates be fluent in a second language other than English.

Increasingly globalized classrooms, from preschools to universities all around the world, demonstrate that there is a need to use culturally inclusive practices. Canadian educators need to approach the divide between student racial diversity and educator monoculturality with a sober, thoughtful, and respectful attitude as violent confrontations in educational institutions are on the rise domestically and internationally. An example of an extreme violent response to the educational colonial legacy of the past is *Boko Haram*, which can be loosely translated as “Western/spurious/counterfeit education is forbidden or a sin.” The term *Boko* has been translated in many ways but it can be used as a derogatory term for the colonial education imposed in Nigeria in the past which ultimately may have resulted in the economic divisions of prosperity in the South versus the poverty in the North. Similarly, as Canadian education continues to adhere to its colonial roots in terms of curricula and educator demographics, the potential for culture wars to be fought in Canadian classrooms is growing due to the lack of emphasis on diversity sensitivity and cross-cultural training for educators.

Also, given that there are digital spaces that can encourage developing ethnic identities that can connect to any country in the world, the virtual ability to bridge across physical geography creates accessible spaces for global connections worldwide (Gause, 2011). As East meets West daily across digital spaces and in the physical geography in schools, GE and MCE are pathways that can be used to raise awareness of global issues and learn about the implications for local neighbourhoods. As part of building connections between communities, the funds of knowledge strategy can be used to value the cultural diversity represented in classrooms today.

Allowing learners to express their funds of knowledge could be a response to ethnocentrism in diverse classrooms fostering more democratic relationships between a racially diverse student population and a continual predominantly White educator workforce. The author also wanted to find out whether it was possible to help learners construct a global identity that is rooted in their first culture and interconnected with new information for individual and group learning. Perhaps that will ultimately help lead to the creation of the collective global conscious that Marshall McLuhan (1962) optimistically envisioned when he first coined the term the “global village.”

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