ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: PREPARING TEACHERS FOR DIVERSITY.

by

Patricia Corson

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

© Copyright by Patricia Corson 1998
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author’s permission.

L’auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-35397-4
ABSTRACT

ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD:
PREPARING TEACHERS FOR DIVERSITY.

Doctor of Education 1998
Patricia Corson
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

In response to the changing demographics of Canadian society, this thesis proposes that anti-bias education is a key to working with young children and their families to respect and recognize the validity of ethnocultural diversity, and to nurture cross-cultural awareness and understanding. Using qualitative methodology integrating a critical perspective, the study collected data on Early Childhood teacher preparation programs across Ontario to determine what strategies were in place to prepare teachers for working with diversity. Comprehensive data was gathered using a triangulation of interviews, document analysis and focus groups. A content analysis of the documents and the transcripts raised several themes which were discussed in the context of a wide ranging literature review. Verbatim comments from the transcripts give voice to the participants. The findings suggested that while efforts were being made to prepare teachers for diversity there were many barriers to overcome. The thesis concludes with a model for incorporating diversity content into early childhood teacher preparation programs and offers recommendations for implementation.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There have been many people who have supported and assisted me through the doctoral process and I wish to acknowledge and thank them for their insight, patience and perseverance.

First, my sincere appreciation to those ECE faculty who found time in their busy professional lives to participate in my study.

Dr. Jim Cummins, my thesis supervisor, provided a source of support and inspiration during this project as well as constant positive reinforcement and insightful recommendations. Dr. Grace Feuerverger and Dr. Judith Bernhard, my two committee members, seemed to share so openly in my enthusiasm for the project. Their encouragement and superb advice set me on a path that brought a depth to my work that I might have otherwise missed.

Andrea Rowe, my research assistant worked tirelessly assisting me with the enormous task of data collection. Her sense of humour and enthusiasm kept me focused.

My colleagues at work who helped me in so many ways through their support, encouragement, concern and sound advice.

The support I received from the Faculty of Community Services at Ryerson Polytechnic University enabled me to meet my deadlines with as little stress as possible.

Finally to my husband David and my children Tim and Liz whose unending support, encouragement and advice kept me sane throughout the whole process.
Table of Contents:

Abstract ........................................................................................................ ii

Acknowledgments .......................................................................................... iii

Chapter 1 Focusing on the Problem
  1.1 My Journey ......................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2 Literature review
  2.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 13
  2.2 Defining the Terms: From multiculturalism to anti-bias education ........ 14
  2.3 Why Anti-bias education in ECE ....................................................... 25
  2.4 Anti-bias education and language ....................................................... 30
  2.5 Home-school connection ................................................................. 37
  2.6 The preparation of early childhood educators .................................... 42
  2.7 Summary .............................................................................................. 49
  2.8 Conclusion ........................................................................................... 50

Chapter 3 Methodology
  3.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 52
  3.2 The Interview ....................................................................................... 53
  3.3 Focus groups ........................................................................................ 57
  3.4 Document analysis .............................................................................. 58
  3.5 Ethical considerations .......................................................................... 59

Chapter 4 Interviews
  4.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 60
  4.2 Theme #1 The impact of the CSAC standards .................................... 61
  4.3 Theme #2 Understanding the terms .................................................... 67
  4.4 Theme #3 The identification of barriers ............................................. 71
  4.5 Theme #4 A developmental process .................................................. 78
  4.6 Theme #5 Level of knowledge ............................................................ 80
  4.7 Theme #6 The identification of strategies .......................................... 82
  4.8 Conclusion ............................................................................................ 86
**Chapter 5 Document Analysis**
- 5.1 Introduction ................................................................. 88
- 5.2 Inclusive course titles .................................................... 89
- 5.3 Broad course titles .......................................................... 90
- 5.4 Extracts ........................................................................... 91
- 5.5 Conclusion ..................................................................... 95

**Chapter 6 Focus Groups**
- 6.1 Introduction ................................................................. 97
- 6.2 Facilitator's reflections .................................................... 97
- 6.3 Theme A. The identification of barriers ............................. 99
- 6.4 Theme B. A developmental process .................................. 106
- 6.5 Theme C. The identification of intent ............................... 107
- 6.6 Theme D. The level of knowledge .................................... 110
- 6.7 Theme E. The identification of strategies .......................... 112
- 6.8 Conclusion ..................................................................... 113

**Chapter 7 Discussion**
- 7.1 Introduction ................................................................. 115
- 7.2 Issues arising from theme #1 ........................................... 116
- 7.3 Issues arising from theme #2 .......................................... 119
- 7.4 Issues arising from theme #3 .......................................... 122
- 7.5 Issues arising from theme #4 .......................................... 126
- 7.6 Issues arising from theme #5 .......................................... 128
- 7.7 Issues arising from theme #6 .......................................... 131
- 7.8 Issues arising from theme #7 .......................................... 132
- 7.9 Conclusion ..................................................................... 133

**Chapter 8 Conclusion**
- 8.1 Introduction ................................................................. 134
- 8.2 Towards an understanding of anti-bias education ............... 136
- 8.3 A model for teacher preparation in ECE ............................ 141
- 8.4 Limitations ..................................................................... 143
- 8.5 Reforming nature of the research .................................... 144
- 8.6 Conclusion ..................................................................... 144
Bibliography.................................................................................................................. 146

Appendix One: General Interview Guide........................................................................ 159
Appendix Two: Covering Letter..................................................................................... 160
Appendix Three: Informed Consent Form...................................................................... 161
Appendix Four: Definitive Features of an Anti-bias Approach in an Early Childhood Setting .................................................................................................................. 163
Chapter 1
Focusing on the Problem:
My Journey

Their stories, yours, mine - it is what we all take with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them. (Coles, 1989)

As an early childhood educator I believe the first five years of a child’s life provide the foundation for his or her physical, cognitive and affective growth. During this crucial time, children begin to form their first emotional attachments, learn to interact with others, and develop a sense of self. (Chang, 1993; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Gonzalez-Mena, 1992 & 1993; Hall & Rhomberg, 1995; Swadener, 1988). While in the past, parents were almost entirely responsible for a child’s development and socialization, in today’s society most parents share this responsibility with other caregivers, teachers and institutions. For the most part, parents hope that these other caregivers and teachers will honour and reinforce in their children the culture and values that they themselves uphold in the home. With the rapidly changing demographics, child care centres and schools are increasingly becoming a more diverse, ethnocultural microcosm of society. And within this ethnocultural society there are often very diverse child rearing practices and expectations. In a profound way teachers are socializing the children they teach according to their own cultural beliefs and practices. This socialization, although perhaps inevitable, must be recognized and approached thoughtfully, because it can and does create conflicts for children and their families, particularly when the culture of the society and teacher is at odds with the cultural beliefs and practices of the home and family. If teachers are to positively influence a child’s life they must be prepared to ensure that the practices adopted in the home and in the child care facility are mutually reinforcing and complementary. The
topic of my thesis is the preparation of teachers for diversity specifically in the field of early childhood education.

In the search for a thesis topic I was drawn to the work of Connelly and Clandinin (1988) who introduce narrative as a notion that provides a way of understanding how teachers draw on their "personal practical knowledge" to understand life's educational situations. This led me to recognize the need to acknowledge my voice in the central text of my writing and to place in the foreground the unfolding story of myself as a teacher. My conceptual system is derived from my personal, historical, and socio-cultural narrative and plays a central role in defining everyday realities. It structures the way I act in the present and guides my future practices. Connelly & Clandinin (1988), Diamond (1993), and Glesne & Peshkin (1992) all reiterate that the writer and researcher is not an objective, neutral observer standing outside and above the text. If, as a reflective qualitative researcher, I am seeking to make sense of others' experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints and the ways in which they intersect I needed to begin with my story; the story of how I came to be writing this thesis and how my personal experiences informed not only my own perspectives and viewpoints but my interpretation and analysis of the data I gathered. I needed to reflect on the journey that culminated in the writing of this thesis.

The easiest way for me to describe the way I think and the experiences that structure my philosophy and practices as a teacher is through metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life. They state, "Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (p.3). The metaphor I use for my life narrative is a train journey. I am on a train traveling through life. It is my train but I am rarely on it alone. Most often I share it with others; some will travel many miles with me; some board my train for a short time only, some come and go periodically, some leave unexpectedly while others stay too long. At times the train stops at exotic places and I disembark eagerly to explore and experience new situations. At other times I am settled too comfortably on my train and resist the temptation
to explore the unknown. There are times when I am in control of my train and guide it gently forward. These are times of relative calm. There are also times in my journey where circumstances take control and I am forced to disembark for new, unexpected and often unwanted, experiences or I am forced to stay on board, following one direction when I would prefer to travel another track. Thus my journey is both exciting and frightening, with wanted and unwanted experiences, at times I am in control and at times I lose control as my train pushes forward into the unknown.

My train journey began when I was a child and as I had a rich and happy childhood I could write many pages about this part of my journey but for the purpose of this report I will reflect only on my journey as a teacher that led me to this thesis. Early in my life I decided I wanted to be a teacher. I spent many hours as a child with a small chalkboard and easel that my father had lovingly made for me one birthday, “teaching” my toys, my pets and any willing neighborhood children. I enjoyed my own school experiences and was fortunate enough to have had some fine teachers to serve as role models. In my final year at school I applied for and won a scholarship to attend Teacher’s College. After three years I graduated with a Diploma of Teaching and took up my first teaching position as a Grade Four teacher in a small country town called Geeveston in the heart of the apple growing region of Tasmania. Here I quickly lost the arrogance and idealism that is the folly of youth when I was confronted with poverty stricken families trying desperately to save a failing apple industry. During apple picking season the majority of children were kept home from school to assist with the harvest and often when they did attend school they were physically exhausted. It did not take me long to recognize that what I was required to teach them was so divorced from the reality of their lives that it was meaningless. I learned the significance of lived experience with a jolt. Thus began my real journey into teaching as I strove to discover the stories and lives of the children I taught and adapted my teaching to make it relevant to those lives.
After leaving my first school I spent the next few years teaching children ranging in age from 6 years to 14 years in a large inner city school, in a middle class tree-lined suburban school and a small seaside village school. An interest in children with special needs took me back to College where I completed a Diploma in Special Education which resulted in a teaching position with deaf children for some years. This was a fascinating and challenging teaching position, where the smallest success brought great joy. It was also the time I learned to respect and value the support of the parents as they advocated tirelessly for their children. I recognized that as a teacher I was connected not just to the child but the child’s family as well. The family’s experiences and stories were inextricably linked with the child’s.

A series of transitions marked the next few years of my life. A change of direction came with the birth of my son and a career opportunity for my husband which resulted in my leaving Australia and heading to England. There I worked as a Supervisor at an International Nursery School for two years working with a very diverse group of children from countries all over the world. My young son also attended the Nursery School and with the close linking of the two roles of mother and teacher I developed a great interest in early childhood education. On my return to Australia I spent some time teaching in an alternative parent cooperative school, then divided my time between private tutoring, being a supply teacher and staying at home with my son and new baby daughter. When my daughter was three years old another career opportunity for my husband involved our moving to New Zealand. After being a Supervisor at a child care centre for a short while I accepted a full time Lecturer position at a Teachers’ College and shifted my focus from teaching children to teaching adults. To better equip myself for this I returned to studies and became very interested in minority education and issues of equality, particularly within the New Zealand context. Five years later another abrupt transition came when once again my husband sought a career change that brought us all to Canada. My journey as a teacher was at a crossroads. Which direction should I choose to follow? I decided to continue with
teacher education and secured a series of part time teaching positions in Early Childhood Education programs firstly at a community college and finally at Ryerson Polytechnic University. I also enrolled at OISE to continue with my own studies which are now culminating in the writing of this doctoral thesis.

As I reflect on my teaching journey I realize that change has been the constant in my experience – change in my environment, change in my responsibilities, change in my beliefs and understandings, change in my teaching style. Each new experience has had an effect on who I am as a person and who I am as an educator. All of my experiences have influenced who I am as a professional, and while very interesting and rewarding, this diverse background in education left me with a dilemma. What topic for study could I pursue in depth? I had taught a wide range of ages in a wide variety of settings using a wide variety of methodologies. What was it I really wanted to research? After much reflection two stories that occurred almost 40 years apart gave me the answer. Story One occurred early in my life’s journey, when I was a child of about 5 years of age in kindergarten. Story Two occurred almost forty years later while visiting a student teacher in a child care setting, in Toronto.

**Story One.**

When I was about 5 years old I began my formal schooling at our local kindergarten which was held in the community hall, just 15 minutes walk from my home. I loved everything about kindergarten -- the activities, the outdoor play, the “nature walks”, the other children and Miss Tanner, my teacher. However my favorite time was circle time which we had once a week on Fridays. At circle time the teacher would bring out a large red box full of musical instruments. In the box there were triangles, tambourines, whistles, castanets, click sticks and one large kettle drum. How I wanted to play that kettle drum! It did not take me long to realize that the teacher always chose the best behaved person to be the drummer and lead the procession. I was determined to be that person. All week I was on my best behavior. I did nothing wrong. The end of the week came and I waited
anxiously, sure that my impeccable behavior had earned me the right to play the coveted kettle drum. When the teacher chose James, I was devastated. I sobbed loudly lamenting the fact that I had tried so hard to be good. I remember clearly the teacher looking at me in surprise and stating quite categorically that I was being very foolish because only boys were strong enough to play the drum and lead the procession, it was NOT something girls could do!

**Story Two:**

As an ECE Faculty Advisor, one of my roles is to visit students when they are in “the field” experiencing the day to day life of an early childhood educator. On this particular day I was sitting unobtrusively in a corner observing my student’s interactions with the children. The teacher-in-charge had gathered the children around her for circle time. There was much excitement as Christmas was near and because it was a Christian child care centre preparations were well under way for the various celebrations. There was a lot of excited chatter as the teacher explained all the important events that were associated with the Christmas celebrations. “But remember children,” she said. “The most important of all is the Nativity play and every one of you will have a part to play.” As the teacher was explaining this my attention was drawn to a small girl sitting in the circle some distance from the teacher. Her face was radiant with excitement. She was bouncing up and down, thrusting her hand into the air and calling loudly. “Miss . . . ! Miss! . . . !” Finally the teacher turned to her and said, “Yes, Keisha. What is it?” Keisha stood up and said loudly. “I want to be Mary!” “That’s not possible, Keisha,” the teacher stated without any hesitation. “We can’t have a Black Mary. You can be an angel.”

What was the common denominator in these two stories that guided me to my research topic? As I reviewed my journey as a teacher I reflected on the most important insights I had gained through my diverse experiences;

- learning and education must be relevant to the lives of children
- parents play a vital role in the education of their children
• there must be equal opportunity for all children, and
• we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them.

I realized that these two stories embodied all the important insights I had gained through my experiences. These two stories both reflect pervasive biased attitudes that prevented firstly me as a girl from being able to achieve my goal and secondly Keisha as a black child being able to achieve her goal. All children are exposed to these pervasive biases in society -- biases based not only on gender and race but age, disability, language, class and culture as well.

As more and more early childhood care and education centres today begin to have policies of integration and begin to serve children across a wide variety of cultural groups, early childhood educators are faced with dramatic challenges. Challenges in developing programs that provide care and activities that relate to the children's lives; challenges in finding ways to communicate with the children's parents and finding ways to develop comfortable, empathetic, and socially just interaction with diversity; and challenges in recognizing and confronting the systemic bias and prejudices in our society. All children should have the right to achieve their full potential without being denied opportunities due to gender, race, language, culture, physical ability or class.

In our society the positive possibilities in cultural pluralism are only beginning to be understood. Conflict, openly expressed or lying just below the surface, often occurs in schools and child care centres serving the children of ethnic minorities, or children whose values differ from those of the middle class "core" culture. To cope effectively teachers need to understand many perspectives: their own individual perspectives and how they have been shaped by their sex, by their racial, ethnic, religious and social class groups; by the ways they themselves have been brought up, and by their adult experiences: similarly they need to understand the perspectives of people from different backgrounds with different experiences in growing up. Understanding of varied perspectives is essential both for effective work with parents and for the provision of instruction that meets the diverse needs of children. (Almy & Genishi, 1979, p. 2)
This thesis argues that anti-bias education and practices are the key to instruction that meets the diverse needs of children, by offering a rationale for the implementation of anti-bias education and practices at the early childhood level and by examining existing early childhood teacher education programs in order to determine if teachers are adequately prepared to work with diversity. (The emphasis of this thesis will be on cultural and linguistic diversity).

My research objectives are:

- To argue for anti-bias education as a key to working with young children and their families to help them respect and recognize the validity of ethnocultural diversity, to nurture cross-cultural awareness and understanding, and to challenge the existing power ratios in society.

- To determine what strategies are being used in early childhood teacher preparation programs to develop students' knowledge and understanding of an anti-bias approach to teaching young children and to encourage students to recognize, challenge and counter both the personal and institutional behaviors that perpetuate oppression.

My first objective is addressed in the literature review which examines the relevant literature from Canada, Australia, Great Britain and the United States in order to answer the first question:

1. What are the reasons for implementing anti-bias education and practices at the early childhood level?

The second objective is addressed in my research study which examines existing early childhood teacher preparation programs in Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (Community Colleges) in Ontario, Canada by asking the following two questions:

2. What strategies are being used in early childhood teacher preparation programs to:

   (a) develop students' knowledge and understanding of an anti-bias approach to teaching young children,
(b) raise students awareness of their own culturally situated values and assumptions?

(c) develop critical thinking skills that will enable students to recognize, challenge and counter both the personal and institutional behaviors that perpetuate oppression;

3. What are the barriers and sources of resistance encountered by faculty in this process?

The significance of this study for the field of early childhood education is threefold. Firstly, because the racial and ethnic composition of Canadian society has been transformed over the last few decades, schools and child care centres are truly international (Statistics Canada, 1993, Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 1993, 1994). These dramatic changes in the demographic characteristics of Canadian communities have led to the re-examination of existing school practices, policies and curricula. Educators, teachers and parents are recognizing that Canadian society is multicultural and that the education system should prepare our children to cope with national and global realities of living within a multicultural society (Alladin, 1996; Bernhard et al., 1995; Chud & Fahlman, 1995; D. Corson, 1993, 1996; Cummins, 1986, 1995, 1996; Dei, 1994; Potter and Jacques, 1997; Ryan, 1996; Sleeter, 1992).

Secondly, early childhood education programs, like other educational and social programs, have been affected by the changing composition of people groups. Consequently there are increasing numbers of children in preschool programs who bring with them diverse cultural and linguistic heritages. Located at the very nexus between home and school, early childhood programs play a critical role in the child’s learning and socialization process (Bernhard et al., 1995; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Chang, 1993; Davidson & Davidson, 1994; Gonzalez-Mena, 1992, 1993; Jipson, 1991; Katz, 1983; LeGrange, Clarke and Munroe, 1993; Ogbu, 1992; Pease-Alvarez, Garcia and Espinoza, 1991; Saracho and Spodek, 1983; Ramsey, 1989; and Wong-Fillmore, 1991).
Thirdly, there is mounting concern among community members and educators about structural barriers in the education system that devalue minority cultures and languages and that produce inequality of student outcomes (Alladin, 1996; Bourdieu, 1990; Carew and Lightfoot, 1979; D. Corson, 1993, 1998; Cummins, 1986, 1995, 1996; Dei, 1993; Giroux, 1991a, 1993; McCarthy, 1990; Simon, 1991; Sleeter, 1992; Troyna, 1987; Verma, 1993; Vorst et al., 1991; Young, 1987). This thesis suggests that an anti-bias approach to education represents a crucial direction towards resolution of these problems. Anti-bias education is based on Paulo Freire’s “practice of freedom” notion which is “the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Freire 1970. p. 15). Because anti-bias education embraces an educational philosophy as well as specific techniques and content, it is value based. It supports the notion that differences are to be valued while oppressive ideas and behaviors are not. An anti-bias perspective is not just an add-on, it is integral to all aspects of daily classroom life (P. Corson, 1994; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Chang, 1993; Chud & Fahlman, 1995; Hall & Rhomberg, 1995; Massey, 1991; Mock, 1985; Gonzalez-Mena, 1993; Nieto, 1996; Troyna, 1992; York, 1991).

The nation’s children all deserve an early childhood education that is responsive to their families, communities, and racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For young children to learn optimally, the early childhood professional must be prepared to meet their diverse developmental, cultural, linguistic and educational needs. However this is not the case. Recent studies (Barry & Lechner, 1995; Bernhard et al. 1995; Garcia & Pugh, 1992; and Larke, 1990) show that the majority of teachers in the field are currently ill-equipped to work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations, in that they lack cross-cultural competence, have little understanding of the history of oppression and inequities based on race, ethnicity, class, and gender, and have a limited body of multicultural knowledge. Strategies must be in place to equip teachers with an understanding of the power relations in society, adequate cross-cultural competence and
knowledge and the ability and willingness to interact with children and families whose cultural and linguistic background is different from their own.

The thesis is presented in eight chapters including this introductory first chapter which gives an overview of the topic, outlines the objectives, defines the terms and explains the significance of the study. Chapter two is a review of the current literature from Canada and overseas examining the historical development of anti-bias education and discussing the relevance of an anti-bias approach in Early Childhood Education. The literature is reviewed under the following sections:

- Defining the terms: From Multiculturalism to Anti-bias education.
- Why an anti-bias curriculum in Early Childhood Education?
- Anti-bias education and Language.
- The Home / School Connection
- Preparation of Early Childhood Educators

Chapter three discusses the methodology of the research component of the thesis. I selected qualitative methodology integrated with a critical perspective to provide the vehicle for exploring the topic for the study. I saw this as the best research design to enable me to meet my research objectives and to collect and record descriptive data in a way that could be easily interpreted and understood by Early Childhood teacher educators.

Chapters four, five and six present my findings from the collected data. Documents were analyzed and results tabulated. All interviews and focus group meetings were recorded and transcribed, and I used many comments directly from the transcriptions to incorporate the voices of the participants. Chapter seven discusses and analyzes the triangulation of the findings in relation to the discussions in my literature review.

In Chapter eight, my final chapter, I draw some tentative conclusions about what is currently being done to overcome resistance and to develop new approaches and strategies that prepare Early Childhood Educators for diversity. Based on these conclusions, I present a model for incorporating diversity content in early childhood teacher preparation
programs and offer recommendations about how to implement this model. Finally I discuss the transformative nature of the research study and the perceived limitations.

Throughout this study the term Early Childhood Education (ECE) refers generally to all aspects related to the care and education of preschool children from birth through five years of age. In Ontario, students who graduate from Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Early Childhood Education teacher preparation programs work predominantly with children from birth through five in a variety of child care settings.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

Introduction:

When I began the process of undertaking a literature review I struggled to find a starting point. To discuss the ideology of anti-bias education without discussing its "evolution" seemed to place the term in a vacuum. I felt I really needed to place it in a socio-historical context in order to clearly define and understand the term as it related to my thesis. In order to do this I decided to review the literature under several sections. The first section "Defining the terms: From multiculturalism to anti-bias education", discusses the changing conceptions of the role of education in society and the various practices which have been advocated over time particularly towards minority groups within education. The emphasis in this section focuses on defining multicultural education, anti-racist education and anti-bias education with particular reference to the situation in Canada. However, literature from Britain, Australia and the United States is included as well to enable me to explore a wide range of perspectives in order to offer a sound rationale for advocating anti-bias education in early childhood programs as opposed to multicultural education or anti-racist education. The second section "Why an anti-bias curriculum in Early Childhood Education?", places anti-bias education in the context of early childhood. The argument for its inclusion is based on substantial evidence that suggests the early development of self-identity and sense of other impacts the formation of attitudes and bias in children as young as three years of age. The third section "Anti-bias education and language", identifies language as the key to identity formation and discourse and examines the role of language in an anti-bias framework with particular reference to family language maintenance. The fourth section "The home/school connection", examines the literature that discusses the importance of congruency between the home and the school particularly in the early years.
This paves the way to the final section “The preparation of Early Childhood Educators”, which discusses recent trends in the preparation of early childhood educators, concluding with the identification of issues in teacher preparation which are then addressed in the research questions of this study.

Defining the Terms: From multiculturalism to anti-bias education.

The conceptions of the role of schooling in society are clearly reflected in the various practices which have been advocated over time particularly towards ethnic minority groups within education. Along with working class children, ethnic minority students have been singled out as cause for concern in many western countries because of their relative (and continuing) underachievement in relation to majority group children. Initially it was thought that the language(s) and culture(s) of minority children were the cause of their educational difficulties, so a policy of assimilation, with its emphasis on incorporation into the dominant culture and language, was championed as a means of redressing this. This pattern was found in Britain, Europe, Australia, and the United States as well as in Canada (May, 1994; Fyfe and Figueroa, 1993)

In this approach minority cultures and languages were seen as impediments . . . Accordingly, the teaching of English was emphasized, and children were encouraged to, and in some cases, coerced into leaving their own culture(s) and language(s) ‘at the school gate’. (May, 1994, p. 32)

Assimilation, however, did little to ameliorate the pattern of ethnic minority disadvantage in schools, if anything it was exacerbated simply because assimilation specifically demeaned and excluded minority languages and cultures. An increasing disenchantment with assimilationist policies, particularly among minority groups, led in the 1960s to an advocacy for an integrationist model of education. Integration was influenced by the liberal-democratic ideology and the associated notion of equality of educational opportunity and attempted to recognize rather than exclude aspects of minority cultures in the curriculum. While well intentioned, a clear cultural hierarchy continued to underpin the model and minority cultures were still assumed to be somehow deficient, or at least inferior
to the dominant culture (Alladin, 1996; Banks and Banks, 1993; Friesen, 1993; Henry et al., 1995; McCarthy, 1990; Mallea and Young, 1990; May, 1994; Mullard, 1982; Porter, 1975).

The overt ethnocentrism of assimilation simply became a covert aspect of integration, thus making the latter policy's associated advocacy of equality of educational opportunity for minority groups somewhat ironic. Equal opportunity in practice, meant equal opportunity only for those whose ideas and values conformed to the dominant group's white middle-class culture and integration's short lived educational tenure suggests that minority groups were quick to see the inconsistency (May, 1994, p. 34).

More durable, however, has been the subsequent promotion of cultural pluralism and particularly its most popular form of expression, multiculturalism. In Canada in 1971 the Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau, declared an official policy of multiculturalism. In this policy statement he declared that the time was overdue for Canadians to become more aware of their rich tradition of cultural diversity, and that this new policy aimed at ensuring the continuation of that tradition, and it sought to enhance the appreciation of the contribution of the many ethno-cultural groups in Canadian society. In introducing the legislation he criticized the then dominant assimilationist ideology and called for a Canadian society which was proud of its multicultural diversity:

There cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origins and one for aboriginal people and yet a third for all others. For although there are two official languages there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly (Trudeau, 1971, as cited in Rezai-Rashti, 1995, p. 3).

Education was considered the key to minority success, in economic and professional terms so since this declaration of an official policy of multiculturalism and the subsequent endorsement of this policy by provincial governments, Canadian educators have attempted to develop and implement multicultural education policies in classrooms across the country. Special programs were aimed at helping minorities access a dominant
social identity and courses were developed to educate the public about minority cultures to promote tolerance and understanding.

The liberal government's initiative provided the impetus to introduce multiculturalism into selected aspects of Canadian society. This was in accordance with liberal ideas about egalitarianism and social justice. Accordingly, the educational system was targeted as the site from where multicultural ideas, views and principles could be diffused among young Canadians. Students were perceived as the individuals most likely to be receptive to the new programs of educational pluralism and exposure to other, non-Western cultures. They therefore, could easily adapt and respond to the needs of a rapidly changing Canadian cultural mosaic (Rezai-Rashti, 1995, p. 3).

The concept of multicultural education has evolved over the past twenty-seven years and there is an enormous amount of conceptual confusion and ambiguity over the interpretations and associated approaches to multicultural education (Banks and Lynch, 1986; Crozier, 1989; Fleras and Elliott, 1992; Fotiadis, 1995; Friesen, 1993; Giroux, 1993; Henry et al., 1995; Kehoe, 1984; Lyons, 1994; Martin, 1993; May, 1994; Nieto, 1996; Rezai-Rashti, 1995; Sleeter and Grant, 1987). The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education offers this definition:

"Multicultural education is education which values cultural pluralism. Multicultural education rejects the view that schools should seek to melt away cultural differences or the view that schools should merely tolerate cultural pluralism. Instead multicultural education affirms that schools should be oriented toward the cultural enrichment of all children and youth through programs rooted to the preservation and extension of cultural alternatives (in Martin, 1993, p. 12)."

Another North American, Olneck suggests that "multicultural education is characterized by ringing proclamations celebrating differences and endorsing the cultivation and maintenance of distinctive cultural identities" (cited in May, 1994, p. 35). A Canadian perspective is offered by Henry et al., who state:

"Cultural pluralism or multicultural education in its most effective expression, acknowledges the reality of diversity in Canadian society and aims to produce students who are more tolerant, respectful, and"
understanding of cultural differences. The major thrust of the multicultural approach is attitudinal change (1995, p.187).

The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training defines multicultural education as, “creating and enhancing understanding of and respect for cultural and racial diversity” (1992, p. 34). In their analysis of the literature on multicultural education, Sleeter and Grant (1987) found that the term multicultural education is used in a variety of ways by different people. Schools of thought range from a distinct multiethnic emphasis (Banks and Banks, 1993) to a more radical, anti-racist education (Nieto, 1996). In spite of this wide interpretation, multicultural educators are generally agreed that an appreciation for cultural diversity enhances the variety of the social life of a nation and provides a platform by which to promote individuality. When initiated at the level of very young children, it affords them an early opportunity to develop healthy respect for cultural pluralism (Brunson-Phillips, 1988; Carter and Curtis, 1994; Chang, 1993; Chud and Fahlman, 1985; Crozier, 1989; Friesen, 1993; Gonzalez-Mena, 1993; Mock, 1982; Wardle, 1996).

In a society which believes in cultural pluralism, the challenge for teachers is to meet the particular needs of pupils from different religions, linguistic and ethnic sub-cultures . . . All pupils need to acquire knowledge and sensitivity to other cultural groups through a curriculum which offers opportunities to study other religions, languages and cultures . . . At all stages this may enhance pupils’ attitudes and performance at school through development of a sense of identity and self-esteem (Craft, 1982; cited in Crozier, 1989, p. 67-68).

Historically, multicultural education has been predicated on the assumption that prejudice against minorities is the result of ignorance. It has further been assumed that in order to challenge and undermine it, all that is required is that people be made aware of the various cultures that exist in contemporary societies and appreciate that their own has no monopoly on virtue or wisdom (Henry et al, 1995; Kailin, 1994; Short and Carrington, 1996; Crozier, 1989; May, 1994; Bullivant, 1986; Troyna, 1987).
While in its entirety multiculturalism is not a monolithic movement, by and large the perspectives are circumscribed within the liberal discourse. It is for this reason that many of its adherents begin by positing the legitimacy of the different cultural legacies. "Let us respect each others heritage", is the invocation. This dimension often in effect "depoliticizes" various problems, and problems of racism tend to be attributed to a "lack of understanding" (Kailin, 1994, p. 172).

An empirical study of multicultural ideologies and programs in six countries in the 1970s concluded that three key assumptions underpinned multicultural education:

- learning about one’s culture and ethnic roots will improve one’s educational achievement;
- learning about one’s culture and its traditions will promote equality of opportunity; and
- learning about other cultures will reduce children’s prejudice and discrimination toward those from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Bullivant, 1986, p. 236).

The intent of multiculturalism is positive. "Let’s teach children about each other’s cultures, so they will learn to respect each other and not develop prejudice.” However, deterioration into a “tourist curriculum” that focussed on “exotic” celebrations, traditions and behaviors often resulted in reinforcing stereotypes. Teachers bring a multicultural lesson and artifacts into the classroom. They teach about traditions of “this other group of people” in a way that may make them appear exotic, romantic, strange, or objectified. Culture is viewed as a static body of information which can be transmitted easily. It may be fun, but children rarely understand what the lesson is about and the characterization of another group’s identity is often over-generalized or trivialized. This “tourist curriculum” is likely to teach about cultures through celebrations and through such artifacts of the culture as food, traditional clothing, and household implements etc., in a way that often reinforces stereotypes. Critics have pointed out that this approach has failed largely because the curriculum is assimilative in intent and based on premises inherent in a white Anglo-Saxon orientation (Friesen, 1993; Fyfe and Figueroa, 1993, Massey, 1991; Nieto, 1996). Troyna
(1992) argues that such an approach may in fact breed resentment demonstrating just how "strange" and therefore "inferior" other cultures are. Derman-Sparks puts it this way:

Tourist curriculum is both patronizing, emphasizing the "exotic" differences between cultures, and trivializing, dealing not with the real life daily problems and experiences of different peoples, but with surface aspects of their celebrations and modes of entertainment. Children "visit" non White cultures and then "go home" to the daily classroom, which reflects only the dominant culture. The focus on holidays, although it provides drama and delight for both children and adults, gives the impression that that is all "other" people -- usually people of colour -- do. What it fails to communicate is real understanding (Derman-Sparks, 1989, p. 7).

The selection of content for multicultural education is also problematic. Selecting some cultural traditions and celebrations and therefore omitting others can lead to arguments concerning which culture is most important and who is competent to teach about culture. Diverse conservative groups, such as fundamentalists and political conservatives, claim multicultural education is divisive, and that it creates ethnocentric curricula, segregation and alternative histories. Because much of the curricula materials portray a power conflict between whites and people of colour many believe the sole purpose of multicultural education is to devalue the majority culture (Wardle, 1996). Thomas (1984) suggests that proponents of multiculturalism view the cultural diversity of the Canadian population with some ambivalence. On the one hand, diversity is a potential problem because it may threaten Anglo security. On the other hand, proponents of multiculturalism urge the celebration of that diversity. The problem is that the differing cultures which make up Canada are not accorded the same value. Many people who should be enjoying the preservation of their heritage have been and continue to be denied equal opportunity and equal access to programs, training and jobs. The oppositional elements which cause people to resist and challenge those things which hurt and oppress them are usually marginalized in multiculturalism's portrayal of culture. It is evident that diversity per se is not the problem. It is the significance that is attached to differences, and more importantly, the way that differences are used to justify unequal treatment that is the problem.
Some researchers have argued for a more expanded notion of multicultural education that addresses issues of inequity. Martin (1993) argues that Gay (1983) underscores the connection between multicultural education, ethnicity and culture while Drum and Howard (1989), Foster (1989), and Molinar (1989) all include considerations of racism in their definition. Gollnick, also cited in Martin, goes even further and argues for the inclusion of concepts such as “the understanding of racism, sexism, prejudice, discrimination, powerlessness, power, inequality and stereotypes” (1993, p. 13). Nieto (1996) argues that multicultural education cannot be understood in a vacuum, divorced somehow from the policies and practices of schools and from the society in which we live. Rather if multicultural education is to redress the educational disadvantages faced by ethnic minority groups, it needs to directly address issues of stratification, empowerment and inequity. For this to occur, multicultural education needs to be conceptualized as “broad-based school reform” one of the specific elements of which would be anti-racist education.

With mounting concern among community members and educators about structural barriers in the education system that produce inequality of student outcomes (Alladin, 1996; Brandt, 1986; Bullivant, 1986; D. Corson, 1993, 1998; Cummins, 1996; Dei, 1993, 1994; Fyfe and Figueroa, 1993; McCarthy, 1990; May, 1994; Tator and Henry, 1991; Troyna, 1987), the adequacy of multicultural education to redress these problems is questioned. The rhetoric may consist of a number of very positive goals but often these are largely symbolic. Multicultural education places too much importance on cultural and ethnic identity and too little on what it is that determines successful negotiations for ethnic minority groups in their interactions with the dominant group(s) in society and within education. As Olneck observes:

Multicultural education as ordinarily practiced tends to merely ‘insert’ minorities into the dominant cultural frame of reference . . . to be transmitted within dominant cultural forms . . . and to leave obscured and intact existing cultural hierarchies and criteria of stratification (cited in May, 1994, p. 38).
The study of the literature has led me to conclude that the varied discourses around multicultural education have resulted in the lack of a clear and consistent definition and theoretical base. Because issues of power have been neglected in the multicultural rhetoric in Canada, Canadian approaches to multicultural education have taken on a 'tourist approach' and are often symbolized by the mosaic metaphor. The U.S. approach is often symbolized by the melting-pot metaphor. This definitional confusion of the term multicultural education reflects the changing and conflictual conceptual landscape. For this reason many researchers began to define other frameworks in which to address the power relations of the discourses in use in society which privilege certain groups over others. One such framework is ant-racist education.

Zingle, cited in Alladin, states that “multiculturalism is aimed at tolerance; but tolerance is not enough. It is not proactive. What is required is anti-racist action which is directed at transforming power relations” (1996, p. vii). Dêi defines anti-racist education as:

An action-oriented educational strategy for addressing issues of racism and other types of social oppression. It is a call to make the theoretical discourse of “empowerment” real, a call for a fundamental restructuring of power relations in the schools and in the wider society (1994, p.1).

The notion of empowerment, of people having the intellectual and emotional ability to confront oppression and work together to create a more just society, underlies the conceptualization of anti-racist education. According to Cummins:

The term empowerment entails both sociological and psychological dimensions: to create contexts of empowerment in classroom interactions involves not only establishing the respect, trust, and affirmation required for students (and educators) to reflect critically on their own experience and identities, it also challenges explicitly the devaluation of identity that many culturally diverse students and communities still experience in the society as a whole (1996, p. iii).
Other social theorists, Bourdieu (1990), Giroux (1991a, 1991b), O’Loughlin (1993), and Simon (1991) also view schools as social institutions where critical thinking and radical ideas can be developed. The struggles that women, minorities and other oppressed peoples are engaged in within schools open a project of possibility that could have positive repercussions in societal change. Real democracy is seen as the outcome of a critical pedagogy which is essentially political. Developing this critical thinking demands a radical transformation of teaching as presently conceived. Teachers need to heed the voice of those minority students who have been silenced for too long. In legitimizing those voices, and empowering those students, a new voice for liberation and democracy will be produced. It is toward this critical pedagogy framework that anti-racist educators incline in their discussion of the type of education minority students are receiving today. In embracing it, they highlight some glaring differences with the more traditional and liberal approaches associated with multicultural education.

Thomas (1984), Carrington and Troyna (1988), and Mukherjee (1988) argue that multicultural education originated from a liberal-reformist understanding of racism, while anti-racist education emerged from the struggles of racial minorities against imperial, colonial and neo-colonial experiences. Moreover, while the central assumption of multicultural education is that sensitization and celebration of difference can counteract biased and prejudiced attitudes among Canadians, anti-racist education concentrates on examining the histories and practices that prejudice supports. Anti-racist education insists on closely studying, revealing, and informing the sites, institutions and ways in which racism originates. In multicultural education, racism is understood primarily as the product of ignorance which, in turn, is perpetuated by individual prejudice and negative attitudes. Anti-racist education argues that the persistence of stereotypes and prejudice must be met with a comprehensive analysis of their origins by way of questioning existing social and political structures. While the supporters of multiculturalism often look at culture as if it
were a static institution, anti-racist educators see it as a dynamic institution influenced by elements of social class and gender.

Multicultural education is also taken to task for its emphasis on individual ignorance and prejudice rather than on underlying structural factors. Here the concept of institutional racism is central to the anti-racist perspective, transcending as it does individual attitudes and actions, to argue that racial (and class and gender) inequalities are built into the fabric of our society and that the education system both reflects and reproduces them via its organization, content and practices (Fyfe & Figueroa, 1993, p. 41).

The major differences between the multicultural and the anti-racist education movements then, have to do with the extent to which the changes advocated by each go beyond the existing institutional arrangements and the extent to which race, class and gender are seen as central. In this respect, anti-racist pedagogy, as a perspective of educational change is aimed at a much greater degree of the transformation of or opposition to existing arrangements. The focus of anti-racist education becomes the system of dominance rather than difference alone as in most conventional multicultural perspectives (Alladin, 1996; Dei, 1994; Kailin, 1994; Rezai-Rashti, 1995; Brandt, 1986; Carrington and Troyna, 1988).

Yet other researchers (D. Corson, 1998; Bymes and Kiger, 1992; Hall and Rhomberg, 1995; Rios, 1996), while supporting anti-racist initiatives also argue for even more wide-ranging policies and practices of emancipatory pedagogy. Unquestionably issues of discrimination based on race are vital, but issues of discrimination based on age, class, gender and physical ability are also worthy of inclusion in the educational agendas of schools. In any given circumstances we may want to pay particular attention to one type of discrimination but do not wish to be confined to a framework or theory that suggests one is more important than another.

I think that we need more general and wide-ranging anti-bias policies and practices than those usually assumed under the rubric of 'positive discrimination' or 'affirmative action'. As valuable as those social practices may have been, their effects have been patchy to say the least. Often they have given equitable treatment to a few people, while many others remain discriminated against or become new victims of discrimination. In contrast,
anti-bias policies embrace anti-racist, anti-sexist, and all other forms of

Derman-Sparks states, “anti-bias education addresses more than cultural and
linguistic diversity by including gender, class differences, and differences in physical
abilities” (1989, p. 8). It is based on Paulo Freire’s “practice of freedom” notion which is
“the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover
how to participate in the transformation of their world” (Freire 1970, p. 15). In advocating
for anti-bias education and practices, D. Corson (1998) offers several reasons why more
broadly-based anti-bias policies are more likely to work than single dimensional policies.
He argues firstly that because anti-bias policies extend to all the different groups of people
who meet bias in school systems, many more people can be convinced of their relevance.
Children too, who are the targets of bias can more readily see how forms of discrimination
operate against other groups, as well as against their own. Therefore more people will
appreciate the need to reduce bias of all kinds in society, not just the kinds of bias that affect
them. When one group of people are the victims of several kinds of discrimination at once,
the real injustices for them tend to multiply, yet they are sometimes seen as discriminated
against on only one dimension.

These points seem very persuasive on their own, but the most important
point, in summary, is that anti-bias policies and practices all depend on a
single ethical principal that has great generalisability: The 'principal of
equal treatment' maintains that we should treat everyone equally unless
there are relevant reasons for treating them unequally. If everyone as
children learned to respect and apply this principle prudently in their lives,
then many of the biases that affect the human condition might begin to lose
their effect (1998, p. 27).

In reviewing the literature that discusses multicultural, anti-racist and anti-bias
education, it is evident that while there is a core of relative agreement, there are many
differences of emphasis. The study of the literature did not arrive at one definition of
multicultural education that could be abstracted from the body of works reviewed. Due to a
dissatisfaction with multicultural education, advocates of anti-racist education focussed on
racism as the central barrier to emancipatory education, while proponents of anti-bias education argued that issues of age, class, gender and physical ability as well as racism must be addressed. While acknowledging that there are many unanswered questions in the present available literature, this thesis suggests that anti-bias education and practices offer the best possibility for emancipatory education and should be adopted in all early childhood education programs.

Why anti-bias curriculum in Early Childhood Education?

The racial and ethnic composition of Canadian society has been transformed over the last few decades. Since the removal of racial barriers in immigration policy in the late 1960’s, the origin of Canada’s immigrants has shifted from Europe, particularly the United Kingdom and Italy, to Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. This has changed the face of Canada, particularly in large urban centres. Immigrants make up 38% of the population of Toronto, and 30% and 17% of the population of Vancouver and Montreal, respectively. (Statistics Canada, 1993) Schools and child care centres are truly international. These dramatic changes in the demographic characteristics of communities have led to the re-examination of existing school practices, policies and curricula. Educators, teachers and parents are recognizing that Canadian society is multicultural and that the education system should prepare our children to cope with national and global realities of living within a multicultural society (Alladin, 1996).

Early childhood education programs, like other educational and social programs, have been affected by the changing composition of people groups. Consequently there are increasing numbers of children in preschool programs who bring with them diverse cultural and linguistic heritage. Located at the very nexus between home and school, early childhood programs play a critical role in the child’s learning and socialization process. Children are aware very early in their lives that colour, language, gender, and physical ability differences are connected with privilege and power. They learn by observing the differences and similarities among people and by absorbing the spoken and unspoken
messages about those differences. Racism, sexism, and classism can profoundly influence their developing sense of self and others.

Swadener (1988) cites studies by Johnson (1977), Van Payrs (1981), Watson and Fisher (1980) and others that demonstrate children's awareness of differences at a very early age. These studies suggest that children by the age of three are aware of colour and racial differences. Swadener goes on to suggest that at about this age children also begin to obtain "gender constancy", or the knowledge of gender as a stable characteristic of themselves, and of others. A recent experimental study by Le Maner-Idrissi (1996) demonstrated that by as early as 24 months an internal gender system exists in children in spite of the fact that the cognitive capacities are not well established. Le Maner-Idrissi and her colleagues conducted three experiments in order to study the existence of gender behaviors and their stability as a function of the constraints of the environment. From their results they contended that children of both sexes differentiated gendered types of objects, distinguished partners of the two sexes, and showed a preference for behaviors that were deemed specific to their sex category membership.

A related issue concerns the development of racial attitudes. There is evidence that by age three or four colour becomes affectively laden and children demonstrate an awareness of racial hierarchy in line with current adult prejudices, though they lack a highly developed understanding of race due to cognitive immaturity (Aboud, 1988; Crooks, 1970; Davidson and Davidson, 1994; Derman-Sparks et al., 1980; Goodman, 1973; Katz, 1983; Melenchuk, 1993; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994). Katz suggests that there is little support for the argument that racial awareness actually precedes the development of racial attitudes. She argues that the inverse relation may be more accurate:

An important difference between the acquisitions of race concepts and other person concepts is that evaluative components may be more intrinsically involved in early learning with regard to race. Although most theorists suggest that racial awareness precedes evaluation by several years, evidence pertinent to preschool children does not support this. Few children who are aware of racial cues exhibit such awareness with neutrality (1983, p. 127).
Other studies cited by Edwards and Chisholm (1987), Saracho and Spodek (1983), and Troyna and Hatcher (1992), show that children begin to develop attitudes to race and colour in the preschool years, and are very sensitive to the attitudes of adults around them. They suggest that biases not only of peers but also of early childhood educators can have a significant impact on a child’s self-concept. It is clear that along with an understanding of racial awareness an evaluative response towards racial difference begins to grow. Children quickly develop an understanding of who is “in” (white) and who is “out” (black) in terms of their value in society. It was evident during my search of the literature that this is an under-researched area, and much more work needs to be done to further our understanding of how children go about forming the intricate maze of knowledge and values that result in self-identity and attitudes. However we do know enough not to underestimate the power of children to perceive the negative messages in their world or the power of those messages to harm them. According to developmental psychologists, children between the ages of birth to four years are in the midst of forming the core of their identity. The development of this identity occurs in large part by incorporating the view held by the adults who care for them. If the views of those adults are negative and inconsistent with the values of the family and community, the impact on a child’s sense of identity can be devastating.

Identities are not static or fixed but rather are constantly being shaped through experiences and interactions. There are multiple facets to our identities, some of which are difficult or impossible to change (e.g. gender, ethnicity) while other facets may be more malleable or subject to modification as a result of our experiences (e.g. core values, political affiliation, sense of self worth in relation to intelligence, academic achievements, talents, attractiveness, etc.). For young children growing up, the sense of self worth is usually cultivated through interactions with caregivers in the home. Ideally interactions in the school further consolidate students’ sense of self worth but unfortunately this has frequently not been the case for students whose communities are viewed as inferior or deviant in the wider society (Cummins, 1996, p. 16).
The way children feel about themselves depends upon whether children feel that others accept them and see them as competent and worthwhile. If those who work with young children are able to undermine children's self esteem through biased behaviour then interactions have to be evaluated very carefully. Positive action to promote self-esteem should form an integral part of work with children and should be incorporated into everyday curriculum.

Struggling against bias that declares a person inferior because of gender, race, ethnicity or disability sucks energy from and undercuts a child's full development. On the other hand, learning to believe they are superior because they are white, or male or able bodied, dehumanises and distorts reality for growing children, even while they may be receiving the benefits of institutional privilege (Derman-Sparks, 1989, p. ix).

Williams (1991) suggests that when developing programs for young children, there is the added dimension of recognizing the distinctive characteristics of the young child as a learner, the ways that knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors are acquired or constructed. He draws on the work of Piaget (1960) and Vygotsky (1962) to suggest that if children construct knowledge largely through social and linguistic exchanges, the relevance of consideration of culture to understanding the course of child development and to the design of educational experiences to foster that development, becomes self-evident. Culture permeates every aspect of a person's life; it influences one's deepest value systems, affects one's behaviour, and thus determines the content of social knowledge. Culture therefore, provides the building blocks for social exchanges. Through a group's language and cumulative experience, certain dimensions of existence are highlighted for the child's attention. Those dimensions eventually become the frames of reference through which the child interprets new information. In order to make sense to the child, what is experienced in the preschool setting must be seen in relation to those frames of reference, so the content and processes are recognized and aligned with the frames of reference, the culture, the child brings to the classroom.
This view is also supported by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social-ecological theory which argues that the specific contexts or environments that children experience influence their concurrent behaviors as well as their subsequent development; and other studies by Bourdieu (1990), Cazden (1981), Pease-Alvarez, Garcia and Espinoza (1991), Ramsey (1989), Saracho and Spodek (1983), and Wong-Fillmore (1991a), show that a child's culture and home language significantly affect how a child develops.

Williams (1991) proposes that the teacher needs to mediate between the world and the child's understanding of self by building curriculum experiences that will relate to the child's frame of reference. One of the goals of anti-bias education is to enable every child to construct a knowledgeable, confident self identity and this can only be achieved if the frames of reference that the child brings into the classroom are validated and valued not only by the teacher but also by the child's peers. Bourdieu (1990) uses the term “cultural capital” to describe all the cultural and social experiences that shape us as a person. He further argues that schools and teachers recognize and reinforce the “cultural capital” of some groups and not of others. The home culture is the vehicle through which families transmit to their children a sense of identity, an understanding of how to relate to other people and a sense of belonging. The child's culture is part of his or her identity. If that culture is not valued, the person is devalued. In his writings Giroux (1991b, 1993) refers to this as “social reproduction theory” or the “politics of cultural difference” and states:

Schools are deeply implicated in forms of discourse, social relations, and webs of meaning that produce particular moral truths and values. In effect, they both create and legitimate cultural differences as part of their broader project of constructing particular knowledge/power relationships and producing specific notions of citizenship (1991b, p. 507).

Educators at all levels, whether it be ECE, elementary school, or high school, need to question whose history, story, and experience prevails in the school culture. In other words, who speaks for whom, under what conditions, and for what purposes? This thesis suggests that anti-bias education and practices is the framework through which
educators can act as change agents by challenging existing forms of discourse, social relations and practices that perpetuate social injustices.

Because anti-bias education embraces an educational philosophy as well as specific techniques and content, it is value based. It supports the notion that differences are to be valued while oppressive ideas and behaviors are not. It sets up a creative tension between respecting differences and not accepting unfair beliefs and acts. It asks teachers and children to acknowledge difference as fundamental, and to confront troublesome issues rather than covering them up. Based on children's developmental tasks as they construct identity and attitudes, it directly addresses the impact of stereotyping, bias, and discriminatory behaviour in young children's development and interactions. The aim of anti-bias education is inclusion, not exclusion, positive self-esteem for all, empathy and activism in the face of injustice. An anti-bias perspective is not just an add-on, it is integral to all aspects of daily classroom life. The goals of anti-bias education at the early childhood level are:

- to enable every child to construct a knowledgeable, confident self-identity;
- to enable every child to develop comfortable, empathetic and just interaction with diversity; and
- to enable every child to develop critical thinking and the skills for standing up for oneself and others in the face of injustice (Derman-Sparks, 1989).

**Anti-bias education and language.**

According to Corson and Lemay (1996) at least two language issues can be identified in the anti-bias education literature. The first one focuses on the relationship between home and school language use, while the second one is related to the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language.

Culture and identity are intimately bound up with the language one speaks. One views the world, organizes experience, and rationalizes and communicates one's thoughts through the language learned from earliest childhood. Historically, young children who
entered school speaking a language other than English were seen as struggling against an impediment that needed to be eradicated before they could successfully acquire the English language and advance in the graded system. This rejection of a student's language and culture tended to reflect the broader society's subordination of cultures and languages other than those of the dominant group (D. Corson, 1993; Cummins, 1996; King et al., 1994; May, 1994; Ogbu, 1992). In more recent years, however, a shift in thinking has been under way. Instead of regarding the mother tongue as a barrier to learning English, educators are coming to see bilingualism as providing children with a valuable foundation of confidence in using and understanding how language helps us think and reason.

The acquisition of language is essential to children's cognitive and social development. Regardless of what language children speak, they still develop and learn. Linguistically and culturally diverse children come to early childhood programs with previously acquired knowledge and learning based upon the language used in their home. For young children, the language of the home is the language they have used since birth, the language they use to make and establish meaningful communicative relationships and the language they use to begin to construct their knowledge and test their learning. The home language is tied to children's culture, and culture and language communicate traditions, values, and attitudes (Bowman, 1989; Cazden, 1981; Chang, 1993; Cummins and Danesi, 1990; Edwards and Chisholm, 1987; Genesee, 1994).

Today families and communities are faced with increasingly complex responsibilities. Children used to be cared for by parents and family members, who typically spoke the home language of their family, whether English or another language. With the increasing need of family members to work, even while children are very young, more and more children are placed in care and educational settings with adults who may not speak the child's home language or share their cultural background. Studies carried out by Chang (1993) in California and Bernhard et al. (1996b) in Ontario, looked at the linguistic match between childcare providers and the children in their care. These studies were based
on research evidence that demonstrated that linguistic match was a constituent of social-linguistic advantage. From their results both studies concluded that:

- the capacity for home language support was quite limited;
- assuming and imposing a dominant language and culture too early in life may be harmful to most, if not all, minority children;
- what happens in care will have a tremendous impact on the child’s social, emotional, and cognitive development;
- these interactions will influence the child’s values, view of the world, perspectives on family, and connections to community.

This places a tremendous responsibility in the hands of the early childhood community. For the optimal development and learning of all children, educators need to accept the legitimacy of children’s home language, respect and value the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families, including extended and non-traditional family units. (Bernhard et al., 1996b; D. Corson, 1993; Cummins, 1986; Garcia and McLaughlin, 1995; Saracho and Spodek, 1995; Wade-Houston, 1992; Wong-Fillmore, 1991c). However, it appears that in early childhood teacher preparation programs students get very little information about how to value the many different first languages that exist among the families and communities in our society and how to work to give children a knowledge of English without giving prestige to the dominant culture in a way that devalues the children’s own cultures. It is imperative that students have access to courses that give them a basic understanding of regional, social and developmental differences in children’s language and how culture is reflected in thinking styles, learning styles, and language development. They also need to gain an understanding of the nature of bilingualism and the process of becoming bilingual. Saracho & Spodek state:

An understanding of first language and second language acquisition theory, the effects of learning and speaking two languages on the developing child, and the cultural manifestations related to these language systems will help
prospective teachers understand and appreciate the children they will teach. It can also assist prospective teachers to better understand and consider diverse alternative educational theories and methods (in Garcia, and McLaughlin, 1995, p. 160).

However this is not happening. The majority of child care providers continue to have little knowledge or understanding of first and second language issues and many minority children are told to “leave their language at the classroom door”.

This has prompted researchers such as Bernhard et al., (1996b); Chang (1993); Corson and Lemay (1996); LaGrange, Clark and Monroe (1995), Wade-Houston (1992), Wong-Fillmore (1991a) and others to advocate for changing practice that addresses language issues. From their Alberta study, LaGrange, Clark and Monroe (1995) provide the following recommendations as a guide to child care centres involved in providing culturally sensitive programming and an anti-bias curriculum:

- the need for centre management to be based on clear principles promoting culturally sensitive practice
- the need for programs to mediate between cultural discontinuities that exist between the children’s homes and the centre
- the need for professionals to understand the influence of home language and culture on children’s development
- the need for an anti-bias curriculum
- the need for centres to respect family cultural beliefs and practices
- the need to collaborate with families
- the need to recruit culturally and linguistically diverse staff
- the need for professional development in all these areas
- the need for leaders, mentors, and models of culturally sensitive care
- the need to pursue additional research on which to base culturally sensitive practices.
Cummins maintains that educators who view their role as adding a new language to their students' repertoire "are more likely to empower students than those who see their role as replacing or subtracting students' primary language and culture" (1986, p.25). The subtractive or deficit thinking often views the mismatch between home and school language as the failure of minority parents to adequately prepare their children for school. The diverse language experience is not treated as a valuable asset and hence those resources are not tapped. This thinking also triggers "implicit evaluations" from teachers who perceive the language skills of minority children as "less desirable and less appropriate" than those of the mainstream children (Delpit, 1988; Feuerverger, 1997; Lucas and Schecter, 1992; Wong-Fillmore, 1991a). In contrast an additive perspective views both home and school languages as beneficial to the minority children.

The Carpinteria experiment in California indicates that the nurturing of the native language can facilitate the literacy acquisition of minority students in both English and the native language. This bilingual education preschool program was developed in 1980 with the goal of empowering language-minority Latino children and their families cognitively and psychologically through the social and cultural context (Garcia and McLaughlin, 1995). The experiment involved teaching Spanish exclusively to pre-kindergarten Spanish-speaking children who came from low income families where the parents were mostly farm workers with an average education of grade six. The program allowed the children "the opportunity to develop their language skills in Spanish to as high a degree as possible within the structure of the pre-school day" (Cummins, 1986, p. 31).

Compared to Spanish-speaking children from the same area who were taught in a bilingual program with a focus on English, children in the experimental program performed better in school readiness skills by the time they were admitted to kindergarten and a year later at grade one. Equally as important was the evidence demonstrating that "attending to the social and cultural context of learning, specifically in the first language to empower students and their families, did not delay English acquisition or detract from the subsequent
learning of skills in an English language environment" (Garcia and McLaughlin, 1995, p. 45). The kindergarten teachers attributed the success of the program to the total first language environment that provided students with greater awareness of what is happening around them in the classroom, better ability to focus on the task at hand and more self-confidence.

A successful language immersion program in New Zealand, Te Kohanga Reo, demonstrates similar results. (D. Corson, 1993; May, 1994; Kirkness, 1992). This unique program was introduced in 1981 in response to Maori concern over ensuring the continual survival of the Maori language. Many Maori children begin in early infancy and continue in the Kohanga Reo (language nests) until they start school. Te Kohanga Reo aims to recreate the atmosphere of a traditional Maori home. It has no formal structures except opening prayers, regular meal breaks, and occasional ceremonies to greet guests. While the Kohanga Reo has no structured curriculum and little equipment, there is plenty of talking, singing and movement. The children create their own games but they are able to stay close to adults if they choose to, because there are always lots of adults taking part in activities, interacting with the children, and providing language and culture models. The philosophy of Te Kohanga Reo, based on total immersion in the language and culture, promotes learning in an appropriate cultural context, drawing on Maori styles of learning and teaching. When the children move into the elementary school system they are well on the way to active bilingualism and biculturalism, since they inevitably acquire English and the majority culture outside the language nests, where that culture’s dominance is unchallenged.

An additive orientation does not always mean the actual teaching of the minority language. It also includes the subtle ways educators communicate to children and parents about the validity and advantages of minority culture and language within the school context. Whether the heritage language is discouraged by teachers at school sends a powerful message to children. When the home language is not validated by the school,
minority children will gradually believe that their ways of using language are wrong, which will not only lower their self-esteem, but may contribute to the eventual loss of the home language and culture. It is imperative for teachers to demonstrate respect for children’s language and culture which are essential parts of the child’s identity.

The challenge for early childhood educators is to become more knowledgeable about how to relate to children and families whose linguistic and/or cultural background is different from their own. Efforts to understand the languages and cultural backgrounds of young children are essential in helping children learn. Early childhood educators need to understand and appreciate their own cultural and linguistic background, and how that influences the way they interact with young children. The child’s background influences how the child constructs knowledge, responds to discipline and praise and interacts in the early childhood setting. In response to the growing body of research that stresses the connection between language, culture and learning, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) adopted the Position Statement titled “Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Recommendations for Effective Early Childhood Education” (Bredekamp et al., 1995). Some of the recommendations from this statement are as follows:

- recognize that all children are cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally connected to the language and culture of their home.
- acknowledge that children can demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities in many ways.
- encourage and assist all parents in becoming knowledgeable about the cognitive value for children of knowing more than one language, and provide them with strategies to support, maintain, and preserve home language learning.
- provide early childhood educators with professional preparation and development in the areas of culture, language, and diversity.
In Canada, policies of anti-racism and ethnocultural equity developed by The Ministry of Education and Training (MET, 1992, 1993) established the following criteria for “student languages”.

- Students perceive that their first language is being valued by the school.
- Multilingualism is actively promoted.
- Appropriate heritage language and/or native language programs are in place.
- An effective language learning support program is in place.
- Consideration is given to the special linguistic challenges faced by ESL students in using regular curriculum materials (MET, 1993, pp. 14-19).

Within the field of ECE there is a need for more knowledgeable, trained, competent and culturally sensitive multilingual/multicultural early childhood educators. The preparation of early childhood educators should incorporate educational practices that focus on educating children toward the “school culture” while preserving and respecting the diversity of the home language and culture that each child brings to the early learning setting. This is consistent with the additive bilingualism approach endorsed by the above mentioned recommendations of The Ministry of Education and Training (MET, 1992, 1993) and the NAEYC (1995).

The development of children’s home language does not interfere with their ability to learn English. Because knowing more than one language is a cognitive asset . . . early education programs should encourage the development of children’s home language while fostering the acquisition of English (NAEYC p. 5).

**Home/School Connection.**

The importance of parental involvement in helping children succeed in school, especially for low income and minority children, is well documented (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cummins, 1986; Chang et al., 1996; Cheng and Soudack, 1994; Gonzalez-Mena, 1993; Wong-Fillmore, 1991a; Ziegler, 1987). The role of parents needs to be highlighted in the educational milieu because parenting is the key to the socialization process. Today
many young children spend the greater part of their day at a childcare or preschool centre, so it is imperative to incorporate each "home" with its cultural characteristics and expectations into the program as much as possible. This can be done in a variety of ways such as, including a range of familiar everyday household objects, kitchen utensils, photographs, and special toys in the environment; discussing expectations and routines with parents; playing familiar music; having books in the family language and encouraging parent involvement in a variety of ways. Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 25) notes that relations between different institutions (within a particular "mesosystem"), may alter the environment in which a child may be called on to function. In such instances it may be very difficult for children to find their way in the maze caused by the disparity of goals between family and school and their learning may suffer as a result. As Jipson (1991) notes, sociologists view the family as the other critical institution beyond the school that shapes the world of the child and defines the primary processes of socialization and acculturation. Whether or not teachers view the child's family in collaborative or competitive terms, the family is central to the child's development and often critical to the child's success in school. As children enter the school or preschool program their families also come with them. A failure to validate and value the child's family is tantamount to devaluing the child. In the final analysis, the best recipe for the child's success in school is a cooperative stance between the two basic institutions affecting their lives. Teachers need to clarify for themselves the nature of the connections between culture, family, children and curriculum.

How can teachers do this? How can teachers mediate between the school and the child's home environment when much of the child's experience is something that has not been part of their experience? Teachers and parents have a common need for joining together in partnerships, the need to foster positive growth in children and themselves. Teachers need to acknowledge that they can learn from parents as well as parents learning from them. This can be done by sensitively involving all families from cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds, engaging in joint learning activities, supporting each other in their
respective roles, conducting collaborative curriculum projects in the centre, participating in various decision making processes and being advocates for children.

According to Wong-Fillmore, the task facing the field of early childhood education is the development of programs that build on the families' capacity to provide their children with the experiences that will not only facilitate their future functioning in school but will also allow them to become competent members of their own societies in ways that are important to the particular group (in Chang, 1993, p. 21).

When children and their families have cultural, linguistic and racial backgrounds that differ from those of teachers, educators are challenged to establish positive and appropriate adult-child interactions and learning situations (Chang et al., 1996; Coleman, 1987; Cummins, 1995, 1996; Gordon and Browne 1996; Kehoe, 1984; Lightfoot, 1978; Sleeter, 1992; Wong-Fillmore, 1991a, 1991b). As the persons beyond the family who are charged with the responsibility of enculturation, teachers are the major actors in the process of cultural and social reproduction. Teachers will transmit the values, attitudes, and patterns of interaction in their work with individuals and groups. They will interpret for their students the negative and positive sanctions of various orientations and behaviors of the wider society (Francis-Okongwu and Pflaum, 1993).

Recognition of the teachers' role as mediator among children's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in fostering inclusionary practices is essential. Teachers can have a positive or negative influence on children's' attitudes, feelings about themselves and academic performance. Teachers' expectations, attitudes and classroom behaviors can deliver strong messages to children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, concerning their role in school and in society. Since most teachers in Canada were raised and socialized in a Eurocentric educational environment, they are not a product of an anti-bias education. They may unwittingly hold different expectations for children of different races and ethnic groups and interact with them according to those expectations. Though the
discriminatory behaviors are not intentional, the discriminatory effects are real to the children. Areas in which teachers are prone to give differential treatment are teacher-student interactions, the teachers’ allocation of time, rewards and resources, the dispensation of punishment, and teacher expectations for student success or failure, docility or assertiveness, independence or dependence (Delpit, 1988).

As well as teacher interactions, most early childhood materials presume a common body of preschool cultural experiences, including nursery rhymes, stories, foods, popular animals, knowledge of seasons, Canadian holiday celebrations, and even similar patterns of interactions with adults. Most of the planned activities in a preschool setting are conducted orally, requiring listening and discussion skills, and free choice and independent work habits. Rarely does a teacher stop to reflect on how culturally biased are these expectations for the classroom behaviour and abilities of even a very young child (Chud and Fahlman, 1995; Hall and Rhomberg, 1995; Mock, 1982).

Teachers need to examine possible discontinuities among their own attitudes, behaviors and current knowledge as sources of negative or mixed messages to children as they strive to implement inclusionary practices in their classrooms. They need to begin with a deep and thorough examination of what is cultural about their own attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Until there is the recognition that all thoughts and actions are embedded in a cultural view there will be a lack of understanding about the inner structures of one’s own culture and little progress will be made towards recognizing those structures in the children they teach (Williams, 1991).

Curriculum developers who have focussed on multicultural and anti-bias perspectives (Byrnes and Kiger, 1992; Chang et al., 1996; Chud and Fahlman, 1985, 1995; Derman-Sparks 1989; Hall and Rhomberg, 1995; Ijaz and Ijaz, 1981; King et al., 1994; Mock, 1985; Williams, 1991), have advocated the thoughtful study of self as a prerequisite for any attempt to introduce multicultural and anti-bias approaches into work with young children and their families. Inclusion is more than simple representation of
dimensions of diversity. As teachers' understanding of their own culturally influenced inner structures deepens, they may become increasingly able to recognize parallel structures in the children they teach, and in the families of which those children are a part. They can then mediate effectively in the children's emerging formulation of concepts of self and others.

An example of a culturally influenced inner structure is communication. Communication behaviour differs from culture to culture. These cultural styles are important in influencing interactional processes and their outcomes. Thus, each person brings to interpersonal relationships a store of beliefs, attitudes, habits and customs which differs significantly from that of others. Most people are not aware of how much their own communication style is affected by their culture.

Hall (1966) suggests that it is impossible to divest oneself of one's own perception of the world because most of culture lies hidden below the level of awareness. Even when small fragments are elevated to a level of awareness, they are difficult to change because people cannot act or interact in any meaningful way except through the medium of culture. Even though Hall indicates that our culture largely determines our behaviour, others such as Gonzalez-Mena (1993); Carew and Lightfoot (1979); and Carter and Curtis (1994) suggest it is possible for individuals to become aware not only of their own cultural values but also those of others. This is particularly important for teachers working with children from a variety of cultural backgrounds. In order to help the child become culturally as well as linguistically competent, teachers must have some understanding of cultural expectations regarding communication, education and care and the role of the teacher and learner. It is also important for the teacher to be aware of what general behaviors are considered to be appropriate in various cultures. The greater the understanding and awareness one has of one's own cultural behaviour, the more likely one is to be open to differing behaviour in others.
If teachers are to work towards encouraging the development of each child to his or her fullest potential, then the beginning point needs to be self-education that increases one's awareness of one's own attitudes about gender, race, ethnicity and physical abilities; by learning to identify ways that institutional racism, sexism and bias affect the program; by coming to understand how young children develop identity and attitudes; by increasing one's awareness of what cultural variables exist; by adopting an all inclusive philosophy; and by planning ways to introduce anti-bias practices into the program.

**Preparation of Early Childhood Educators**

A growing body of research (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McMahan, 1992; Berreuta-Clement et al., 1984; The Royal Commission on Learning, 1994) supports the value of high-quality early childhood programs for children’s later success in school and life.

One of the key determinants of school readiness is the amount of stimulation infants and young children receive in a nurturing environment. Children who are being readied for future learning (and therefore, for school) are spoken and listened to: have their questions answered; are offered explanations; and are encouraged to try new words and ideas, to imagine, to guess, to estimate, to draw and to observe. (The Royal Commission on Learning, 1994, Vol. 2. p. 14)

Although early childhood programs have the potential for producing positive and lasting effects on children, this potential will not be achieved unless more attention is paid to ensuring that all programs meet the highest standards of quality, the most important determinant of which is the teacher. Early childhood education, like all education, demands well-prepared teachers. In the last decade, the desirability of anti-bias elements in teacher preparation programs has been stressed by several researchers (Aguilar and Pohan, 1996; Banks and Banks, 1989; Fyfe and Figueroa, 1993; Rios, 1996; Sleeter and Grant, 1988; Verma, 1993). In arguing that teacher education has a vital role to play in preparing teachers for the increasing cultural and social diversity of society today, Verma (1993) reviewed the success and penetration of a range of anti-bias programs and initiatives in teacher education in Australia, Europe, South Africa, the U.K., the U.S.A. and Canada.
In ECE there have been some exemplary efforts to reform teacher preparation through publications that have provided tools for ECE faculty to change the way courses have been taught (Chud and Fahlman, 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hall and Rhomberg, 1995; Kilbride, 1990 & 1996; Gonzalez-Mena, 1993). Yet a search for articles and reports in the main databases revealed no overall surveys, reports, or evaluations of the implementation of diversity content in ECE programs. And recent studies by Ahlquist (1991), Armento et al. (1997), Barry and Lechner (1995), Bernhard et al., (1995a, 1997), King, Hollins, and Hayman (1997), Kleinhammer-Tramill (1997), Saracho and Spodek (1992), Goddard (1995), and Ryan (1996) found that the majority of teachers in the field are currently ill-equipped to work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. In their Canadian study, Bernhard et al., found that, upon graduation, 33% of ECE teachers felt unprepared for working with children of diverse backgrounds and “overall, faculty believed there was not sufficient emphasis on diversity in the ECE preparation programs” (1995, p. 65). To understand why this is the case we need to look at the historical development of multicultural education and anti-bias education as it pertains to the preparation of Early Childhood Educators.

In Ontario most ECE teacher preparation programs are offered in Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, commonly referred to as Community Colleges, and are two years in duration leading to a diploma. One university offers a four year degree in ECE, and some private institutions such as the Canadian Mothercraft Society offer training that leads to a diploma. Common "core" courses focus on child development, observation skills, families, curriculum planning, interpersonal skills and field practicum. Early childhood education has had a long-term commitment to fostering respect for diversity and to providing equal opportunities to all children so the articulation of Canada’s multicultural policy in 1971, led to a small number of community college faculties integrating multiculturalism and diversity content into their ECE family courses in the early 1980s. Then in the mid-1980s, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Federal Ministry of Citizenship
commissioned the development and implementation of a multicultural kit of materials for practitioners that was sent out to every licensed child care centre in Ontario (Kilbride, 1990). In order to provide training in the use of the kit, community college faculty were selected as training deliverers and a training program for ECE community college faculties was developed (Bernhard et al, 1995a).


Education should . . . assist learners in developing their commitment to social responsibility and care for the communities in which they live, and respect for cultural integrity and determination of those whose language and traditions may be different from their own (Ontario Council of Regents, 1990, p. 27).

Out of the Vision 2000 work, the College Standards and Accreditation Council (CSAC) was formed in 1993,

. . . with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs (MET, April 1996, p. 1).

To this end CSAC was mandated to develop standards for publicly funded programs at Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario. The ensuing standards that were developed resulted from a thorough consultation process with a broad range of stakeholders of Early Childhood Education programs and represent a consensus view of the essential skills required for program graduates to be successful in the field of ECE. The program standards represent the minimum essential learning that program graduates must achieve and apply to all similar programs offered by colleges across the province. Each program standard includes the following elements:
• Vocational standard (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program in question)
• Generic skills standard (the generic skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of similar length, and
• General education standard (the requirement for general education courses that applies to all postsecondary programs).

Collectively these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge which must be reliably demonstrated in order to graduate from the program. The vocational and generic skills components of program standards are expressed in terms of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified. For ECE programs, nine interrelated vocational learning outcomes were developed with number nine focusing specifically on diversity. It states:

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to act in a manner consistent with principles of fairness, equity and diversity to support the development and learning of individual children within the context of family, culture, and society (MET, 1996, p. 13).

Elements of the performance include:

• recognizing and expressing the value of diversity and commonality that exists among individuals;
• promoting an environment of mutual respect amongst children;
• validating communication initiated by individual children, families and co-workers;
• planning curriculum and developing programs that are responsive to the social and cultural needs of individual children and groups of children.

The expectation is that an Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology ECE Program will prepare graduates to work with children and their families in a diverse ECE community.
in both formal and informal settings, and within the changing social context (MET, April 1996).

Developments in ECE teacher education were also influenced by initiatives in the field. Recognizing issues of racism in childcare programs, the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Race Relations and Children’s Services Division, in 1992 recommended a bureau be established, “where teachers struggling with ‘racial issues’ can go for advice and problem solving; provide training for funders, agencies, teaching and support staff and conduct research on what is taught currently in the ECE programs at the colleges” (Bernhard et al., 1995a, p. 7).

The mandate is clear. ECE teacher preparation programs must address multicultural and anti-bias issues. Yet mandates, policies, and resolutions alone are not enough. Strategies must be in place to equip teachers with an understanding of their own culturally situated values and assumptions; an understanding of the power relations in society, adequate knowledge about diverse cultures and the ability and willingness to interact with children and families whose cultural and linguistic background is different from their own.

In its recent publication, Guidelines for the preparation of Early Childhood Educators (1996) the U.S. based National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) identifies specific outcomes related to anti-bias education. It states:

Programs (should) prepare early childhood professionals who: apply knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity and the significance of sociocultural and political contexts for development and learning; recognize that children are best understood in the contexts of family, culture, and society; and thus

1.3.1 demonstrate understanding of the interrelationship among culture, language, thought and of the function of the home language in the development of young children; and
1.3.2 affirm and respect culturally and linguistically diverse children, support home-language preservation, and promote anti-bias approaches through the creation of learning environments and experiences. (Guideline 1.3. p. 16)
Recent publications by Byrnes and Kiger (1996), Chud and Fahlman (1995), Derman-Sparks (1989), Hall and Rhomberg (1995), and Kilbride (1997) all offer practical guidelines to help early childhood professionals and young children address bias and stereotypes in the classroom before they transform into real racism or are internalized in the form of negative self images and attitudes. These guidelines seek to assist teachers in empowering children to develop positive self images, think critically about diversity and stand up for themselves and others in the face of injustice. They include suggestions not only for helping children to resist stereotyping and discriminatory behaviour, learn assertion and empathy, but also suggestions for teacher self education and the involvement of parents in addressing issues of bias.

In the report, Looking In, Looking Out: Redefining Child Care and Early Education in a Diverse Society, edited by Chang, et al. (1996), California Tomorrow has identified a number of ways early childhood professional education can help to prepare teachers to effectively address issues of race, language and culture. They suggest teachers need an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the following five principles of quality care in a diverse society.

PRINCIPLE ONE: Combat racism and foster positive racial identity in young children.

PRINCIPLE TWO: Build upon the cultures of families and promote respect and cross-cultural understanding among children.

PRINCIPLE THREE: Preserve children's family languages and encourage all children to learn a second language.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: Work in partnership with parents to respond to issues of race, language and culture.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: Engage in dialogue and reflection about race, language and culture on an ongoing basis. (Chang et al. 1996, p. 186)

In response to the results of their Canadian study, Bernhard et al., (1995) made the following recommendation:
Colleges and Universities offering ECE programs should integrate ('infuse') diversity themes throughout core courses in order that students:

a) explore the meaning of culture and understand the diversity of human culture;
b) address issues of bilingualism and second-language development;
c) understand the history of oppression and inequities based on race, ethnicity, class, and gender, and how these factors affect academic performance;
d) respond proactively to bias, prejudice, discrimination, and racist behavior of children or adults; and
e) develop skills for social advocacy.

This should be accomplished both through an infusion of diversity education in all core ECE courses and institution of compulsory courses which focus on diversity issues. (1995, p. 76)

The rhetoric is abundant but what is the reality? To date, in spite of the increasing plethora of recommendations such as these there is little evidence documented that suggests that ECE teachers graduate with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to work effectively with diverse children and their families. A few recent studies suggest that a confounding factor, often not considered in recommendations and policies, is the barrier of student resistance to diversity issues. For example, in her study, Power and Imposition: Power relations in a Multicultural Foundations Class, Ahlquist (1991) studied the resistance she encountered in preservice teachers in a multicultural education class and concluded that the students own educational experiences, "their predominantly dualistic view of learning, lack of familiarity with abstraction and limited experience with multiple ways of knowing," (p. 161) had engendered in them a resistance to a critical examination of alternative possibilities. Other studies (Armento et al. 1997 and Barry and Lechner 1995) also suggest that many students have limited opportunity in their schooling to practice the type of critical thinking that is required of them at college or university and that this often manifests itself as resistance. Suggestions to overcome this focus around innovative teaching approaches and opportunities for the students to examine their own personal and professional beliefs about diversity. Aguilar and Pohan, suggest:
Preservice teachers enter teacher education programs with a particular set of attitudes and beliefs toward their own and other's cultures. Some parts of the belief system are valid, but other parts are based on myths, misconceptions, or ignorance. To help prospective teachers understand, respect, and affirm cultural differences, schools of education must begin where the learner is, targeting both the cognitive and affective levels of each candidate, and build from this beginning point towards a more mature level of multicultural awareness and sensitivity (1996, p.263).

It is important however, that in the process of teaching an anti-bias pedagogy to students, we do not replicate oppressive or dogmatic ways of teaching, for style can be as important as content especially when one is teaching “against the grain” (Carrington and Troyna, 1988). Developing an anti-bias curriculum requires a non-alienating, democratic process, where you must start from the experience of the actors. In this case the actors are students who have likely come from a particular socialization process which has not included an anti-bias approach and which may mean a resistance to change. If students encounter a transmission mode of teaching, an approach that assumes that the task of the teacher is to impart knowledge to students who currently lack that knowledge, and the task of the student is simply to make sense of the received knowledge then students’ experiences are ignored and devalued. Innovative approaches such as “reciprocal interaction” (Cummins and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, p. 143) result in validation of students’ experiences and works to empower students giving them a greater understanding not just of themselves but of others. This approach allows genuine dialogue between student and teacher where the teacher’s role is to guide and facilitate the student’s learning rather than controlling it. Learning is viewed as an active process that is enhanced through interaction.

Summary:

In this review of the literature I have presented and critiqued recent approaches to education such as multicultural education, anti-racist education and anti-bias education as methods of pedagogy aimed at preparing all children for life in a multicultural society. A search of the literature for definitions revealed that there is an enormous amount of
conceptual confusion and ambiguity over the meanings of the terms which has led to conflicting interpretations in practice. The literature revealed that attempts at multicultural education often tended to be superficial, celebrating differences in a way that often resulted in reinforcing stereotypes. Criticisms abounded, not just because it was superficial but because it was grounded in a liberal-conservative ideology and failed to address the very real issues of racism and bias inherent in society. This led to an examination of the literature advocating anti-racist approaches to education which were aimed specifically at challenging institutional and personal racism that perpetuated inequities within society. While supporting anti-racist initiatives to a certain degree I went on to argue for a more inclusive approach to education, with particular reference to early childhood education. To this end an anti-bias approach was deemed to be the most appropriate in that it challenged all forms of discrimination including gender, class, race and ability. I then reviewed the literature relating to the young child’s developing sense of self and other, the connection between home and school for the young child and the role of language, culture and learning, to support the argument that anti-bias education is the key for working with young children and their families. Finally I examined the literature on the preparation of early childhood teachers to ascertain how they were being prepared for diversity. This body of literature helped me identify some key components that were deemed necessary in the preparation of teachers for diversity. These were the need for teachers to critically examine their own culturally situated values and beliefs, the need for teachers to have a sound knowledge base that supports the development of cross-cultural competence and the need for teachers to develop an understanding of the principles of anti-bias education. These needs are further explored in the following chapters.

Conclusion:

The nation’s children deserve an early childhood education that is responsive to their families’ communities, and racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. For young children to learn optimally, the early childhood professional must be prepared to meet their
diverse developmental, cultural, linguistic and educational needs. Unfortunately, as indicated in the relevant literature, the present education system seems unable to deal with the complexities of a changing modern society. Educational practices do not adequately speak to the variety of human experiences or to the diverse history of events and ideas that have shaped human growth and development. Institutional barriers to occupational and social mobility have created a deeply stratified society, in which power relations are defined in terms of class, race, age and gender (Alladin, 1996). In reviewing the existing literature it is evident that the appropriate preparation of early childhood educators to enable them to implement anti-bias practices is paramount. Teacher training programs need to address both theory and practice in multicultural and anti-bias education throughout the curriculum in a comprehensive, long-term manner, so that students can acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to implement emancipatory pedagogy.

It has been said that actions more often than not speak louder than words. And if this is so in the case of child-rearing, then we must be especially vigilant in our actions to shape the values children will attach as they learn about the people in their world. If we don’t, they will learn by default the messages that are already prevalent out there and both we and they will contribute to perpetuating past ideas which we do not want to replicate in our children’s future. (Carol Phillips in Neugebauer, 1987, p. 6)
Chapter 3
Methodology

Introduction

I employed a qualitative research methodology with a critical perspective to frame this study as this would be the best research design to enable me to meet my research objectives and to collect and record data in a way that could be easily interpreted and understood by Early Childhood teacher educators. An underlying aim of the study is an emphasis on the researcher and participants learning together.

In general use, "qualitative research" refers to a particular perspective on the nature of the human realm . . . and is not simply a category of research designs. From the qualitative perspective the richness and profundity of human reality is seen as closely related to the structures and meanings of natural language. Thus in the broad context of research strategies, qualitative is identified with a commitment to the logic of natural language as the preferred form for understanding human affairs. Qualitative research uses natural language descriptions (for example, unstructured interviews) for its data and usually presents the results in natural language (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 45).

In choosing the qualitative approach to research I also decided to use a mixed-method, triangulation of information gathering. Triangulation is broadly defined by Denzin as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (1978, p.291). The triangulation metaphor is from navigation and military strategy that use multiple reference points to locate an object's exact position. Given basic principles of geometry, multiple viewpoints allow for greater accuracy. Similarly, researchers can improve the accuracy of their findings by collecting different kinds of data bearing on the same phenomenon. Triangulation is seen to reduce the flaws of using one method alone, as the use of several methods compensates for the weaknesses of any particular method (Jick, 1979; Mathison, 1988).
In the social sciences, the use of triangulation can be traced back to Campbell and Fiske (1959) who developed the idea of "multiple operationism". They argued that more than one method should be used in the validation process to ensure that the variance reflected that of the phenomenon and not of the method. Triangulation then is largely a vehicle for cross validation when two or more distinct methods are found to be congruent and yield comparable data. For researchers, this would involve the use of multiple methods to examine the same dimension of a research problem. While Jick (1979) supports the view that triangulation is a method of cross validation, Mathison's (1988) conception of triangulation is slightly different in that she does not see it as a method of cross validation. She cautions the researcher not to expect a neat outcome wherein the results of all methods used are a tidy complete puzzle. She contends that this is rarely the case, but she sees great value in the researcher trying to make sense out of the different findings of the various methods. From either of these perspectives it is clear that triangulation enriches the data, and encourages new ways to look at the same issue (Jick, 1979; Mathison, 1988). The three methods that I decided on, as being most appropriate for meeting my research objectives, are the semi-structured interview, focus groups and document analysis.

The Interview

As a research method the interview represents a direct attempt by the researcher to obtain reliable and valid measures in the form of verbal responses from one or more respondents. The interview is probably the most widely used method of data collection in educational research. Anderson defines the interview as "... a specialized form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter" (1990 p. 222).

The interview has a number of advantages. First, the interview is flexible and applicable to many different types of problems. It is flexible in the sense that the interviewer may change the mode of questioning if the occasion demands. If responses given by a subject are unclear, questions can be rephrased. Respondents have the freedom
to enlarge upon, retrace or question items presented to them as well as having the opportunity to ask for further information. A second advantage of the interview is its usefulness in collecting personal information, attitudes, perceptions or beliefs by probing for additional information. Another advantage of the interview concerns motivation. Almost all interviews attempt to develop rapport between the interviewer and the respondent. Once the respondent accepts the interview as a non-threatening situation, respondents are more likely to be open and frank. This openness adds to the validity of the interview. While flexibility in the interview can be an advantage, it can also generate special difficulties especially if the interview is unstructured. As respondents are encouraged to interpret questions as they see fit, problems may arise when it is time to summarize, categorize and evaluate responses since each respondent may interpret the meaning of questions differently.

Interviewers take an active role in the data collection process and care must be taken so that personal values, beliefs and biases of the interviewer do not influence responses. Although within the interview situation it is likely that power is vested primarily in the questioner, respondents may also take the opportunity to rationalize their own standpoint or to convey their views to others through the researcher, rather than directly. Hughes notes interviews still depend on language "of meanings and understandings already available within the culture" (1980, p.123). Seidman states that "interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry" which if opened up to include an interpretative view or research, provides a rich resource for accessing "the context of people's behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour" (1991, p. 2).

As it is important to ensure that subjects who are chosen as interviewees are able to function as informants by providing rich descriptions of the experience being investigated, my population comprised faculty who taught in ECE programs in Community Colleges throughout Ontario plus one faculty from a private institution. While some interviews can be highly structured, I chose a semi-structured format for this research to allow the
respondents to define the world in their own unique way while still addressing the targeted research objective.

In the semi structured interview, certain information is desired from all the respondents. These interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (Merrim, 1988, p. 74).

Patton describes the semi-structured interview as the “general interview guide approach” (1990, p. 283) which involves outlining a set of issues to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins. He suggests the issues need not be taken in any particular order and the actual wording of questions to elicit responses about those issues may vary. The interview guide provides a framework within which the interviewer can develop questions, sequence questions and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth. It presumes there is common information that should be obtained from each person interviewed but allows flexibility within the context of each interview.

The advantage of an interview guide is that it makes sure that the interviewer/evaluator has carefully decided how best to use the limited time in an interview situation. The interview guide helps make interviewing across a number of different people more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting in advance the issues to be explored (Patton, 1990 p. 283).

I chose to use this approach and subsequently drew up a “general interview guide” to assist with the collecting of data from the interviewees. This is presented as Appendix 1.

Letters were sent to twenty-two English-speaking Ontario community colleges that offer an Early Childhood Education diploma program. The letter (Appendix 2) was addressed to the coordinator of the ECE program and requested volunteers from the ECE faculty to be interviewed by telephone. The selection process of participants was therefore a self- selection process. Details of the study and the nature of the interview questions were included in the letter as well as two blank consent forms. (Appendix 3). Of the 22 letters
sent out, 14 replies were received and 13 of them were positive. One expressed regret at being unable to participate (no reason given) but the thirteen positive responses contained signed consent forms from self-selected faculty willing to be interviewed. The responses were a representative sample of city, suburban and rurally situated colleges. One private institution, was also approached and one faculty agreed to be part of the study, giving me a total of 14 participants. The purpose for including this institution was twofold. Firstly this institution is foremost in providing anti-bias early childhood education training programs and secondly, although privately run, this institution offers an ECE Diploma program that is approved by the Ministry of Education and Training and generally follows the recommendations and standards of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Council.

Each interviewee was given a code number and contacted by phone to set up convenient interview schedules. At this point one volunteer elected to withdraw leaving me with a final total of 13 interviews. The interviews were conducted over a period of one month. Each interview was tape recorded using a device that connected the phone directly to the recorder thus eliminating any outside noise or interference. The length of the interviews ranged from 23 minutes to 58 minutes with the average length being 45 minutes. At the conclusion of each interview I asked for volunteers to be further involved in the form of a focus group. However due to challenges of distance and time only those in southern Ontario were able to be considered for focus group participation. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and a copy of the transcription was sent to each respondent for verification. Only one respondent requested some minor changes.

I then conducted a content analysis of the transcripts with the purpose of identifying salient categories and themes. To do this I read each transcript several times and highlighted points that appeared to indicate a barrier, a concern, or an issue that related to the objectives of the study. I also asked a research assistant to scrutinize the transcripts in the same manner which allowed for a high level of interjudge reliability. The advantage of analyzing
the transcripts in this way is that it gives prominence to the voices of those interviewed. Smith et al. call this method of organizing the data “multivocality” (1995).

Focus Groups

As early as the 1930s, social scientists expressed concern about the interviews as a data collection technique. Interviews were judged to be overly dominated by the questioner, and criticized as not allowing the true feelings of the respondents to emerge. In response to this criticism various approaches were developed and among them was the Focus Group, defined by Anderson as “. . . a group of individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussion on a given issue or topic” (1990, p. 241). One of the strengths of the focus group as a methodology is that it creates a setting in which individuals are comfortable in self-disclosure and where group dynamics create a chain of reactions designed to exhaust the views on the issue or topic.

The focus group not only discloses what is important to individual respondents, it attempts to provide a situation where the synergy of the group adds to the depth and insight. Thus the group strives to provide in-depth qualitative data which could not be obtained as efficiently in any other way (Anderson, 1990, p. 241).

Following the interviews, a focus group of five faculty volunteers was set up to further develop their ideas and suggestions and to act as a support group for developing their ideas. As with the interviews the selection process of focus group participants was a self-selection process. I decided to conduct the focus groups after the completion of all interviews so that I could have the benefit of redirecting emerging data from the interviews into the focus group discussions. This enabled several pertinent issues to be further debated and clarified. The small group of five participants allowed for easier management and offered participants greater opportunity to speak. The group met on two informal occasions over coffee and discussed various issues for two hours at the first meeting and for one and a half hours at the second meeting. I initially planned three sessions but it became evident at
the second session that new insights were diminishing and I got the sense the topic had generally been exhausted.

All conversations were recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Once again I conducted a content analysis of the transcripts with the purpose of identifying salient categories and themes. As with the interviews I read each transcript several times and highlighted points that appeared to indicate a barrier, a concern, or a new insight into issues that related to the objectives of the study. It was evident from the amount of data that the focus group situation allowed participants a forum for expanding their views and reacting to the views of others in the group which allowed for greater insights to develop. In spite of attempting to be as objective as possible, it needs to be noted that when working with recorded data from focus groups, as with interviews, there is a risk of researcher "interpretation" (Hughes, 1986; Seidman, 1991).

Document Analysis

In interviews and focus groups, data is gathered specifically for the purpose of the investigation. Documents, on the other hand, are usually produced for reasons other than research and are therefore not subject to the same limitations (Merriam, 1990). My purpose in examining the Calendars (schedule of programs and courses) of those colleges offering the ECE diploma program was to determine whether the course titles and course descriptions represented a viewpoint of commitment to issues of diversity. Because the Calendars exist independent of a research agenda, they are non-reactive, that is, unaffected by the research process. They are a product of the context in which they were produced and therefore grounded in the real world (Merriam, 1990; Carney, 1972).

Firstly I reviewed the calendars of all ECE programs in Community Colleges in Ontario plus one private institution. I studied the titles of core courses and categorized them according to the descriptors "anti-bias", "multicultural" or "cultural diversity" (herein referred to as "inclusive course titles"). I then reviewed the core course titles a second time placing courses offered into categories under the broad headings of family, community,
and children with special needs (herein referred to as “broad course titles”). It was noted that all programs have a strong field experience component, usually in a range of diverse settings. Once I had identified the inclusive course titles and the broad course titles, I examined the course descriptions of all the identified courses and finally examined the descriptions of all core courses offered in each program. Once again my purpose was to determine what viewpoint or philosophical value was represented.

Following the collection and collation of all the data by interview, focus groups and document analysis, I triangulated the information by identifying similarities, discrepancies and common themes. I then discuss these in relation to the findings from the literature review thus enabling me to draw some tentative conclusions and offer some recommendations for practice and for further research.

**Ethical Considerations**

Anonymity and confidentiality were addressed in a variety of ways. All participants were sent a covering letter containing an explanation of the study (Appendix 2) and were required to sign a written consent form (Appendix 3). They were advised about their right to refrain from responding to an item as well as their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished. Participants were also made aware of the fact that if they did choose to withdraw then none of the data already collected from them would be used. All participants were assured that any data collected would be held in confidence. Prior to the interview each participant was given a code and any raw data was seen only by the researcher, her assistant and her supervisor. Transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants for accuracy verification and to allow participants to veto any comments if they wished. Any information cited directly in the report is done so in a way that allows the participant to remain anonymous. and the institutions to which the participants are affiliated are not noted in any way. Finally, all participants will be offered access to the final report.
Chapter 4

Interviews

Introduction

After the tape-recordings of all thirteen interviews were transcribed, I sent a copy to each respondent for verification. I received only one request for some minor changes and after incorporating those changes I conducted a content analysis of the transcripts with the purpose of identifying salient categories and themes. I also arranged for a research assistant to do the same, to allow for a greater level of interjudge reliability. Independently of each other we read the transcripts and generated a list of key words and phrases expressed by respondents to see the patterns and interrelationships between the objectives of the study. From this list I generated themes that allowed for an organizing framework of the data while also addressing the objectives of the study. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), this particular method of data analysis reflects intentions to accommodate trustworthiness and authenticity of the data. As a result the following six themes emerged:

1. The impact of the CSAC standards on diversity content in ECE programs.
2. Understanding the terms, multicultural education and anti-bias education.
3. The identification of barriers and sources of resistance.
4. The understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process.
5. The level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues.
6. The identification of successful strategies.
Theme #1: The impact of the CSAC standards on diversity content in ECE programs.

This first theme evolved directly from the opening question which specifically asked the respondents to discuss firstly their reaction to the CSAC standards which were adopted in all Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in April 1996; and secondly to comment on the impact the document had on their program. In particular, respondents were asked to focus on vocational learning outcome number 9 which states:

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to act in a manner consistent with principles of fairness, equity, and diversity to support the development and learning of individual children, within the context of family, culture, and society. (CSAC, 1996. p. 11)

Reactions to the CSAC standards were mixed. While the majority of respondents felt very positive about them, suggesting they were encouraged to make a greater attempt to address diversity issues using the standards as a guideline, others viewed them with some ambivalence, suggesting that they were insufficient and were really just rubber stamping what was already in place. All agreed that as a result of the document some changes were made to existing programs to accommodate the standards. It also needs to be noted that three of the respondents were involved in the process of developing the standards. In the following extracts from the transcripts, the respondents are talking about their reactions to the CSAC standards document in general and also in relation to vocational learning outcome number 9.

I thought the standards were very good. I was happy about the coordinating of the exit outcomes. I thought they were well done... I thought they were clear, and I thought they were universal enough that they could apply to a variety of communities. (#6)

I think that the general consensus is that this is a standard, at least a minimum that all colleges could address and should address. It’s a good place to start and in some cases we probably surpass what’s required. (#9)
My reaction was to, to... whole-heartedly, to support it because I was one of the people who put this particular one in on the team of developing them. So my reaction is positive. (#7)

I was really delighted to see that in there. We’re in the process of going through programs now using the standards. And I am also delighted to know that everybody else is going to be following the standards. There is some formal document that identifies that this is what a graduate should have in terms of outcomes. So I’m delighted. I think it’s a really good start for those people who perhaps have not recognized it before now. (#12)

We really like the CSAC standards. I really think it is a culmination of what we’re all about and it finally came to print, which I think is good. And the powers that be can now look at it... And our community, it, it was very important for our community to see that. (#11)

We now have firm guidelines... so meeting that CSAC document is very important to us, and we show that we do, (#4)

I felt it was something of a diluted version of the original. So that the sum total of the standards didn’t reflect what we had felt through the process that it was going to be. We felt that it was going to be more detailed and that it was going to reflect those concepts in #9 in all of the others and we didn’t feel that that was the case. (#13)

Six of the seven responses show support for the CSAC standards and offer several reasons for their support ranging from the idea that the standards offer firm guidelines for program outcomes which makes it easier to plan courses, to the notion that having a common set of standards reflects the acceptance of a range of certain skills, knowledge and attitudes that all ECE graduates need. An added advantage according to respondent # 9 was that the standards are regarded as minimum standards so programs can strive for even higher standards, “... in some cases we probably surpass what’s required”. One respondent stressed the importance of the standards not just for the colleges but also for the wider community. Recognized standards from both the community and “the powers that be” would likely give college graduates greater acceptance and credibility. While the majority of these responses support the standards, respondent #13 expressed her disappointment. Her view was that the final standards were not as detailed as they might have been and she had hoped to see the commitment to diversity spread throughout all the outcomes and not limited to just the one.

An issue that emerged in the discussion of the impact of the CSAC standards was the dilemma of which approach to use in order to meet vocational learning outcome number
9. The options were to continue to offer separate courses that specifically addressed diversity or to integrate (infuse) diversity content throughout every course. Since the late eighties all ECE programs had included a course on Multicultural Education in some form or other and many faculty had attended a training program at Ryerson Polytechnic University on how to use a multicultural kit of materials for practitioners that was sent out to every licensed child care facility in Ontario by the Ministry of Community and Social services and the Federal Ministry of Citizenship (Bernhard et al., 1995; Kilbride, 1990). However as educators and researchers began to challenge the policies and practices of multicultural education, program developers in ECE also began to question the effect of their multicultural courses. Respondent # 13 put it this way.

    I think we were gung-ho on having a separate course and then that seemed to be not politically correct. So we, we actually lost it as, as a separate course because it was decided that it should be integrated with every component of the program. (#13)

Respondent # 8 raised the question of the hidden messages in the approach that is used. She asks:

    And if we do something on it's own, what impression is that giving someone; what are they going to take away from that? If it’s thread throughout, what does that say? Each gives an entirely different message. (#8)

Recognizing that offering separate courses continued to marginalize diversity issues many colleges adopted a more integrated approach and developed courses with diversity themes infused throughout. With the decision to adopt the integrated approach many programs discontinued the separate specific courses. The adoption of the CSAC standards served to further the view of the integrated approach as being the most suitable. However, several respondents aired their uncertainty as to whether the infused method was a better approach than having a separate course as these comments show.

    We deliver the program with those concepts firmly imbedded in every course, rather than having a separate course, but it’s still, it’s hard to be consistent and I think, I think it gets lost, diversity I mean, gets lost at times. (#13)
Inclusive in all of our courses so every course and every model should reflect class discussion, it should be somewhere evident through some of the work, the written work that students are doing, certainly through classroom discussion. The course outline doesn’t necessarily have to indicate that the topic would be in the area of diversity. (#8)

When asked which approach was used by their respective programs, the results from the interviews showed that eight programs offered the integrated only approach, two offered separate courses only and three offered a program that included both the integrated approach and a separate course.

### Approach: Integrated and/or separate courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Int. #</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>integ.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sep.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the two respondents who indicated they incorporated both a separate course and an integrated approach respondent # 1 offered this explanation for their decision.

We did major curriculum review a few years before this CSAC standards came out and we recognized at that point in time that our training program was missing that vital link of multicultural approach to early childhood. So, we developed a course that was originally called Multiculturalism in the Early Childhood Setting. We have just recently changed it because we recognized that it needs to be more all-encompassing than multicultural, so our course is now called Anti-Bias Approach to Work with Young Children. So we have that as well . . . . and still infuse diversity throughout all other courses.

A second issue that emerged concerning the impact of the CSAC standards related to the evaluation of the attitudinal component of the learning outcomes. As respondent # 12 stated,

I am working on how to assess . . . . how to evaluate learning outcomes because that's a huge issue now with all the CSAC standards. (#12)
According to CSAC, "Learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified" (1996 p.2). In ECE many of the vocationally specific learning outcomes, for example number 9, (referred to in this study) relate to attitudes. While it is relatively easy to evaluate learning outcomes related to skills and knowledge through traditional forms of assessment such as essay writing, tests, and presentations, evaluating those dealing with dispositions are much more difficult, often relying on the subjectivity of the evaluator. The majority of respondents voiced their concerns about the evaluation process, suggesting the tendency for subjective judgment led to inconsistency of evaluation, as the following extracts from the transcripts show.

It is very much a personal perception and if our teachers who are supervising our students in placement don’t really know how... what it means to be fair and equitable in a diverse culture then they don’t know how to evaluate it. (#1)

One level of evaluation is by watching body language in the class. But that of course is very subjective. (#3)

I am not really clear what kind of accountability mechanism we have in place to ensure in fact that it is happening and how it’s happening in the different courses. It’s just up to individual instructors I guess. (#5)

Other respondents focussed on observable behavior as the indicator particularly when the students were doing their field experiences in child care settings. These extracts from the transcripts discuss some of the strategies faculty were using to evaluate vocational learning outcome number 9.

We have such a challenge with this. I guess I’m going to see it in behaviour. We do video-taping, so I’m going to see it in the books you read to the children; I’m going to see it in who you spend more time with in terms of, if I go out on a field placement visit and I see the student sitting there with a particular child, and every time I go, this child’s on their lap, or I see them always playing with a certain gender, or whatever it may be. (#12)
This whole participation in this study made me really think about how do I actually measure that... where does it all come together? ... It probably most comes together in their field placement. In our field evaluation forms we have these... um... for example - recognizing the effect of one’s own behaviour on others, displaying a non-judgmental understandings of parents and family systems” And then there’s another called respond appropriately to negative racial, cultural and gender attitudes. We can see the application of these as opposed to them being stand-alone piece by piece. But again, we don’t have criteria, it’s judgment down through that. (#7)

The next response from respondent # 4 also suggested that field placement was the venue for the demonstration of the required learning outcomes of demonstrating “a sensitivity to cultural and familial practices”, however, she did not give details on how the students were “marked on that”.

We clearly have identified in all of our field placements, that our students have to demonstrate a sensitivity to cultural and familial practices. It’s right in our field placement, and they’re marked on that. (#4)

Respondent #13 mentioned a particular assignment that she believed was a relatively accurate way of evaluating the attitudinal learning outcomes.

A requirement for students is to make... create what’s called a contextual questionnaire where they actually think about what kind of questions they might ask parents that would in some way help to appreciate the context of the child’s living and being, and... and I think through that assignment there is in fact a good amount of evaluation of those learning outcomes. (#13)

In contrast to these comments other respondents admitted they were having difficulties with the evaluation process as the next two extracts demonstrate.

I don’t know exactly how we measure it, and certainly we can look at it by way of assignments and see if students are able to reflect that broad understanding of different values, but I’m not sure. Are all outcomes measurable? (#8)

So we’re very much trying to get into things like exit outcomes and exit testing or evaluating to know that they’ve reached the level that they should, whatever that is... and setting up matrices for tests and assignments to see where the students are, and then trying to tie them very closely in with the provincial competencies. (#6)

It is clear from the varied reactions to the issue of the development of a sound evaluation process that many faculty and programs are struggling to clearly identify a valid, objective, evaluation process.
In summary, results from the interviews suggest that the general reaction to the adoption of the CSAC standards was positive, although there was not a consensus on this. There was consensus however, on the fact that the CSAC standards had impacted all programs in some way or another. Two issues that emerged were:

(a) the dilemma of which approach to use, and
(b) the problems of developing a sound evaluation process.

Theme #2: Understanding the terms “multicultural education” and “anti-bias education”.

All interviewees were asked to define the terms “multicultural education” and “anti-bias education” in order to determine the consistencies and inconsistencies in their understanding of the two terms. The majority of respondents identified culture as the key factor in the concept of multicultural education, prefacing it with terms such as, “recognizing”, “understanding” and “accepting”. For anti-bias education there was the general recognition that it was a more inclusive term and referred to a wider range of differences that included gender, class, family constellation, and race. Several respondents acknowledged there was a lot of inconsistency in the interpretation of the two terms. The following extracts represent a sample of the responses from the respondents firstly defining ‘multicultural education’ and secondly defining ‘anti-bias education’.

On defining multicultural education.

In response to being asked to define “multicultural education” the majority of responses included many similar concepts such as, accepting of all cultures, celebrating differences, a mosaic, understanding cultural heritage etc. as the following extracts from the transcripts show.

Multiculturalism to me applies just to the approach of recognizing, understanding and working with cultural and ethnic backgrounds in early childhood settings. (#1)

It means being accepting of all cultures, creeds, nationalities, colours equally (#4).
I think the meaning of it is to be that each of our cultures combine to make a richness, to make a mosaic. (#6)

The knowledge around the various cultures and ethnicity that is found not only in Canada but all around the world. So to me, multicultural education really means more, means... being able to understand cultural heritage and the meanings of everything that has to do with living as it applies to particular cultures. (#10)

To accept and celebrate diversity within people in regards to race and culture. (#12)

However some respondents placed a different emphasis on their definitions of multicultural education. The next two extracts from respondents #5 and #13, for example, also show they included the same sort of concepts as listed above, but they both qualified their responses further by adding in the first extract, the notion that multicultural education was not “all inclusive”, and in the second extract the notion that multicultural education was a passive response to diversity.

Multicultural education to me, is a program aimed at an acceptance of the different cultures that exist in our community. I don’t think that it’s all inclusive, by any means. (#5)

I think it’s somewhat of a passé sort of term. I think in many ways we’ve moved beyond multiculturalism. I think of multicultural education as being an approach to enabling people to live and be, and accept differences and accept diversity, but in almost a passive kind of way. (#13)

Respondent #3 was very brief and to the point in her definition. She stated simply that multicultural education was “the holiday curriculum”. When asked to explain her response further she added that in her experience multicultural education in early childhood education was viewed largely as, “A fun way to keep the children happy. There was always plenty of interesting things to make and do such as Chinese lanterns and so on”. (#3)

On defining anti-bias education

In response to being asked to define “anti-bias education” the majority of responses once again included many similar concepts. For example, it was generally acknowledged that anti-bias education included other differences such as class, race and gender and was
not solely concerned with just culture as multicultural education was perceived to be.

Respondent #1 put it this way,

Anti-bias takes a much broader perspective and it looks at all types of differences, in terms of special needs of children, cultural differences, differences in family constellation, differences in any way shape or form. So, we have taken a much broader perspective and that’s what we see as anti-bias approach. (#1)

A similar response came from respondent #12

So that’s the way I see the difference between multicultural being centered around race and culture and diversity and acceptance, and anti-biased being, ... I guess recognizing that there are differences within the world, not necessarily race and culture, but in sexuality, size, family composition, how we live, SES, and that doesn’t make you less or more a person, it just makes you unique or different. (#12)

However the majority of respondents went much further with their definitions, emphasizing that an anti-bias perspective recognized that bias was a barrier that needed to be recognized and that strategies needed to be put in place to overcome those biases. The following four extracts from the transcripts illustrate a clearly articulated understanding of the term anti-bias education.

Anti-bias to me, is working towards a program and working towards relationships that are free of biases, that have to do with sexism, racism, and class, and family status, and culture. So it’s more inclusive to me than is multiculturalism. (#5)

What the notion is to me is to look at some of the inequities and to look at the balance of power and to ensure that there are policies, practices, curriculum, ... everything from structure to delivery, and a real demonstration of values that actually counteract any imbalance in power. (#13)

I look at anti-bias education, what I think that means to me more is making sure that nothing that we do would put anyone at a disadvantage in either having the opportunity to practice religion, culture or in their understanding of information, in our accepting them as being equal regardless of anything, regardless of their sex, regardless of their culture, regardless of their race, and that I look at anti-bias policies as meaning policies that are put in place to make sure that there is equal recognition for who people are. (#8)

Anti-bias to me is going beyond multiculturalism. It’s really doing something against biases; doing something against unfairness, rather than only being exposed and being aware of, and knowing something about all of that. Not being passive. (#10)
A subtly different view was aired by respondent #3 who focussed her definition inward to 'self'. She stressed the importance of being able to recognize one's own biases and the need to overcome them. She said:

You have to be aware of your biases, to me, and you have to overcome them, which is the 'anti' part. If you are not aware of your biases, because biases are built on values and learning and they are ingrained in your family and your way of life, then you won’t . . . can’t be accepting of others who have different values. (#3)

In sharp contrast, respondent #7 and respondent #4 appeared to be defensive in their comments and were adamant in their opposition to the term anti-bias. Their responses suggested they would prefer to ignore the implication, inherent in the term, of there being a problem.

I don’t like the term anti-bias because then it sounds like there’s some kind of problem and we’re in reaction to it. (#7)

You are talking about being biased, you are talking to me, about racism; it’s a negative term to me, more of a negative term. You are talking about racism; it’s more of a strong term. It connotates something to me more negative. Multicultural is, to me, just a beautiful term. (#4)

Responses to defining anti-bias education were in general, more detailed than those defining multicultural education. While all of the respondents appeared to be comfortable offering their views on multicultural education there was some hesitation and a degree of discomfort displayed by some respondents when offering their views on anti-bias education. In spite of the fact that some respondents were able to offer clear understandings of the two terms a certain amount of confusion over the terminology was in evidence and articulated by some of the respondents. The following extracts from the transcripts acknowledge that confusion.

So we had different people talking different terms, and in actual fact there was a difference, a subtle difference of opinion embedded in those terms. (#2)

You know all of our definitions around diversity are quite different. (#5)

I don’t have a real appreciation for the term ‘multicultural education’. I guess I often take it from our Canadian government’s policy use of the term, and I don’t find it a particularly helpful term because I think it is very vague. (#7)
Everyone attaches a different meaning to things. When I use the word culture, I use it really broadly, like race, class, gender, age; not narrow to race and ethnicity, or what country you’re from. (#7)

At times there is more than just confusion over the terms. This extract from the transcripts describes a situation where the understanding of the term anti-bias is actually erroneous leading to inappropriate practice.

Well there is a controversy in our community as people are jumping on the bandwagons and using the term to mean whatever they want it to mean. They will accept what is “anti-bias”, but “anti-bias” to them says that you shouldn’t see anything; that when you walk in, and if you don’t see anything that smacks of male/female or anything, where everyone is equal, then that’s a wonderful program. (#11)

In asking the respondents to define the terms multicultural education and anti-bias education I hoped to gain an appreciation of their understanding of the two terms. While there were several similarities cited in their definitions it is clear that even within a small sample of respondents such as this there appears to be confusion over the two terms. The implications of this will be explored further in Chapter seven.

Theme #3 : The identification of barriers and sources of resistance

One of the prime objectives of the study was to identify existing barriers and sources of resistance encountered by faculty in preparing students for diversity. The following table lists all the factors that respondents identified as barriers and records the number of respondents who cited them. This is followed by samples of comments made by respondents for each of the identified barriers. Only one respondent stated she had encountered no barriers or resistance at all.
### BARRIERS/ RESISTANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers/Resistance</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student attitudes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed community</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff/Faculty attitudes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training and support</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own values</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politically correct behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opportunity for professional development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interaction with diversity</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of accessibility to resources</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of equal representation among faculty</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power issues</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student attitudes

Student attitudes appeared to be the greatest barrier with ten of the respondents citing it. Of those ten, eight referred to it first, with one respondent citing it as the only barrier she could think of. Comments ranged from citing a specific area where students showed insensitivity, as these comments from respondents #9 and #8 show;

First I’ll talk about the students. I don’t think they’re sensitive to the needs of families. I don’t think they’re sensitive to issues around sexual orientation. (#9)

We have a lot of subsidized families in our day care and they don’t seem to care about their kids”, those kinds of very broad statements of class come out as well. (#8)

to claiming students’ attitudes were narrow;

Sometimes there are beginning students who are very much “black and white”, in terms of their attitudes. They are very rigid, no shades of grey, and quite judgmental. (#2)

and even reactionary;

We’ve had resistance, we’ve had impressions, we’ve had racism, we’ve had sexism, we’ve had homophobia. Yes, we have. Because they are coming from a situation of
lack of knowledge, it produces ignorance. They have extremely . . . reactionary ideas. They have anti-women ideas too. They have anti child-care ideas and they’re in the ECE program. (#6)

Other respondents acknowledged there was resistance from students but discussed it more from the perspective of the students in relation to their experiences, their general lack of awareness and where they were currently at in their own development.

It is very difficult for them to recognize that there’s a whole world out there and that whole world has just as much value as their own small world. So we do, not a lot, but we do end up with a lot of resistance to working with, let alone learning to understand and communicate with people who are different. (#1)

I find most of our students are coming in with biases but they don’t realize their biases and they just have the predisposed ideas. (#11)

They don’t, in many cases, recognize themselves as having to deal with cultural diversity and issues of fairness and equity. . . . You know, that adolescent view of - this won’t happen to me. . . . so you get comments like “How much more of this do we have to do?” or “What’s this got to do with being in ECE?” (#1)

**Closed community**

The second most frequently mentioned barrier related to the wider community. As part of the ECE program all students are required to have field experience and this usually occurs in the local community. Concerns were aired around community demographics;

In my community, we are very ethnocentric (#3)

community attitude;

Most of the people we are sending our students to, and so many of them are so narrow; have the little blinders on and are hung up on whatever. (#11)

and community ECE teachers as role models;

We get so isolated sometimes and sometimes very frustrated that we are not seeing a lot of what we teach happen out there. (#1)

**Lack of resources**

The third barrier mentioned with the most frequency was the lack of appropriate resources in particular Canadian resources as attested by the following two extracts.
We don't have a lot of resources, especially Canadian resources. They're just beginning now; it's really tough to find equipment; (#11)

I don’t think there are sufficient resources. I would like to be able to have more specific resources that would fit what I’m trying to teach. One of the problems is that most of the textbooks that we have in my area of development come from the States. Partly that they have a different political angle, but they also talk about different cultural groups, and have different perspectives. (#13)

In contrast to these views two respondents felt that lack of resources was not the barrier, per se, but lack of accessibility to resources was the barrier as respondents #8 and #10 reported respectively;

There are lots of resources, what is missing is the stepping stones for people finding out the information. (#8)

The literature is very, very difficult to get a hold of. (#11)

Staff/Faculty attitudes

It was interesting to note that while three respondents mentioned faculty attitudes as being a barrier, two respondents gave unsolicited mention of the fact that there was no resistance from faculty or staff. For example respondent #7 stated,

I haven’t found any resistance in terms of co-workers and management; (#7)

Respondent #12 was unsure in her response and declined to elaborate further on her rather non-committal answer to the question.

Resistance? Um . . . I have, from students. From faculty not so much . . . yes and no. (#12)

On the other hand respondent #9 was very open in declaring attitude in faculty a barrier. Her concern centered around the example given by faculty in their own behavior. She states:

Faculty that are involved in teaching diversity are the very people who don’t accept diversity within their own colleagues; somebody’s fat, they get made fun of and so on. (#9)
**Lack of training and support**

Three respondents identified lack of training and support for faculty as a barrier as the comments from #1 and #11 demonstrate.

There isn’t a lot of ongoing and continued support and training for faculty who are involved in teaching these kinds of things. This makes it really hard. (#1)

Some of us haven’t had much training other than books so we really need to support each other but we don’t . . . we just don’t have the time. (#11)

**Own values**

Three respondents discussed the way in which individual values and beliefs often became barriers. Respondent #13 suggested that many people are struggling with their own identity and this itself creates a barrier.

Some of it is natural resistance; some people take time to change; some people really worry about diluting whatever they perceive to be Canadian culture, and I think part of grappling with who it is, or what it is to be a Canadian is a barrier. (#13)

Respondent #8 gave a similar response when she suggested many people are struggling to come to terms with their own values. She went on and raised the issue of the tendency to impose one’s own values on others. She saw this as a potential barrier.

And the other thing really are values; people’s own personal values are such an emotional topic that sometimes it’s extremely difficult for someone to come to terms with their own values and then to be able to, at the same time, cherish their own values, but not impose them on others. I think that not imposing your own values on someone else is the really, really big challenge and it can be a big barrier. (#8)

**Politically correct behavior**

Two respondents identified a less tangible source of resistance. They suggested there was a discrepancy between what people were saying and what people were actually doing and this was so because of the present political climate. There is so much rhetoric within the field of education around matters concerning diversity that many people are careful to demonstrate that they are “with it” so rarely admit their confusion or lack of
understanding. According to respondents #9 and #13 this “political correctness” constitutes a barrier.

In terms of faculty and being able to deal with anti-bias or multicultural . . . and to address that, I certainly think that it’s not part of the personal experience for many of these people who simply don’t know how to address it. And you nod your head and say ‘whatever; I can handle it’ because it is politically correct. (#9)

I think that people think they’re doing the thing that’s politically correct but in fact there is some real resistance. (#13)

**No opportunity for professional development.**

Lack of opportunity for ongoing professional development was cited as a barrier by two respondents. With decreasing budgets many colleges are forced to find ways to make cuts in their spending and for many programs this has meant a loss of moneys for resources and for professional development. As respondent #1 said,

There’s no money available so we haven’t been able to do a lot of workshops and in-service training around this whole area of an anti-bias approach. (#1)

Respondent #7 also echoed the need for professional development.

I think we as instructors need some of our own professional development and discussion of how we measure this . . . and it’s just not happening. (#7)

**Lack of interaction with diversity**

Lack of interaction with diversity was cited by two respondents as being a barrier. They suggested:

(a) it was difficult for faculty to “teach diversity when you don’t see it around”. (#11) and

(b) difficult for students to understand the importance and relevance of anti-bias practices when they had little experience of diversity themselves.

Some of our students go through their placements without really experiencing contact with families from different cultures. (#1)

**Avoidance**

Avoidance was also cited by two respondents as a barrier as the following extracts show.
And then, they don’t want to talk about it anymore. That would be a barrier. So avoidance, that’s a barrier. The avoidance and the generalizations I see as great barriers. (#12)

But there was still the attitude, ‘I don’t want to hear about it.’ (#9)

Lack of equal representation among faculty

Also cited by two respondents was the lack of equal representation among faculty. Respondent #13 and respondent #6 shared similar concerns in that they recognized that with faculty members being predominantly white and female it created a poor model.

One of the other barriers is the fact that we’re really Euro-centric in the faculty group. And that doesn’t mean I want to lose my job, but I don’t think we represent diversity adequately. I think that in some ways that presents a barrier and reinforces resistance because we’re not demonstrating what we’re talking about. (#13)

That is pretty good except we are extremely poor in representing a diverse community ourselves; like most community colleges, we’re all forty year old white women for the most part, which is a real concern. (#6)

The barrier of power issues was mentioned by one respondent as a barrier. She felt that often students graduated with a sound knowledge of multicultural education and anti-bias practices but met resistance in the field and because they were not in positions of power they tended to adopt the existing practices rather than attempt to implement what they knew.

And of course once they get out there it is easy to say you keep training these people, this is our fifth year of multicultural, and they’re getting jobs out there but the new grads are more assimilating with the other ones, because they have more power. (#11)

The final barrier of Inaction was mentioned by one respondent only. She claimed that often it was inaction rather than actual resistance that created a barrier. She contends:

I don’t think resistance, but I don’t see very much of an indication to pursue the matter actively either. That it’s left out ... and I very strongly support autonomous work in teaching, but I think that there are some issues that need to be addressed, and this is one of them. (#5)
The interview respondents identified a range of barriers and sources of resistance that they had encountered. Many of these were identified by more than one respondent with student attitudes emerging as the most frequently mentioned barrier. It was evident from the range of responses that the majority of faculty are challenged in some way by these barriers that they encounter as their programs strive to prepare teachers for diversity.

Theme #4: The understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process.

The fourth theme that I identified from the interview transcripts was the notion that the understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process for everybody, whether student or faculty member. The majority of respondents suggested that change in attitude, understanding and acceptance of difference is based on personal experiences that include exposure to difference and gaining accurate knowledge about difference, and that this develops over time. A few respondents felt that some of the faculty they worked with were struggling with their own development of awareness and were in fact not ready to work with students as this extract from respondent #7 suggests.

Some of our staff are on continuums of their own development, some are very, very thoughtful and responsive and others are working through some of their own prejudices and some are probably at the generally unaware stage. (#7)

Another respondent pointed out that everybody was at different stages and when teaching students it was often difficult to know where to begin. She suggested the need to begin with a knowledge base and from there students should be able to integrate the information at whatever stage they were at.

Because it's such a personal thing and everybody walks in the door with their own baggage, I guess all we can do is begin with a knowledge base, so you present the knowledge and then you go to the next level where you try to help them to integrate the information. (#9)
One respondent mentioned that she began with herself by acknowledging to the students that she had biases and was continuously struggling to overcome them. She went on to say that this often made it easier for students to begin looking at their own attitudes and biases in a non-threatening way.

I am the first person in my class to say, “I’ve got biases too.” And that’s what it’s all about, being aware. (#11)

Respondent # 8 suggested that most people are willing to admit that they come with their own biases and she too saw this as a good starting place. From here students can explore where they have come from and move forward in their development of awareness and understanding. She stated,

Most people are willing to admit that they come with their own biases, and I see that as such a starting point, so that I think that once people have reached that level then what they can begin to do is look, “What are the steps that I have taken”, and “What are some of the steps that people need to take” to finally reach this stage of understanding their own biases and then begin to think about how once you’ve understood these, what you can do differently to, not necessarily erase the biases but to work within the biases, work with them: (#8)

Respondent #13 felt that acknowledging bias and increasing awareness was only part of the process. She suggested people need to feel comfortable enough to be able to take risks. She put it this way.

Maybe it’s a degree of awareness and maybe even the ability to take risks that helps. I mean . . . people will remain resistant until they feel comfortable to be able to take some risks, you know . . . be able to examine their own biases and beliefs without feeling too threatened. (#13)

Another respondent suggested that the development of awareness wasn’t just a personal one but was influenced by political and social factors as well. She suggested the development of awareness began with the introduction of multiculturalism and evolved to the more inclusive approach of anti-bias awareness.
I think if multiculturalism had never been addressed, had that not come up, then we probably wouldn't be at anti-bias where we are now, because that was the beginning of awareness of differences and the differences related more to culture which everybody could very easily identify. (#10)

These extracts from respondents suggest that the development of awareness and understanding of issues relating to multicultural education and anti-bias practices is a developmental process and this developmental process applied to everybody, faculty as well as students.

**Theme # 5: The level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues:**

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the level of understanding of ECE faculties in relation to language issues in ECE, in particular the importance of mother tongue or first language maintenance. When asked to comment on the concept of “mother-tongue maintenance”, seven respondents replied that they were not familiar with the term or did not know anything about it. The remaining six revealed a range of responses often focusing on different aspects.

**Number of “don’t know” (X) responses to Mother-tongue Maintenance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Int.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># don't know</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent #3 admitted she was not familiar with the term but guessed at the meaning suggesting that teachers should learn some of the child’s language in order to help the child feel comfortable in the setting.

I am not aware of that term but what I teach them is that they should learn some of the languages of the new children that are coming in, and that it is their language and that we can learn from their language and their families more than we can teach them. (#3)
One respondent felt this was a specialist area that would probably be covered in the child development course. Another talked about heritage language programs which she saw as being quite separate from ECE in that they were usually the responsibility of school boards. Another respondent spoke at length of her experiences with parents who viewed the development of English as a second language as being the responsibility of the child care staff and the maintenance of a home language as being the responsibility of the parents. She states,

And I know in child care where families and the families speak Chinese, parents are usually quite adamant that children are not encouraged to speak Chinese that they are encouraged to speak English because they feel that they can balance the language development of Chinese, what they can't do is teach their children to speak English. (#13)

Two respondents questioned the term itself suggesting other terms, such as first language or primary language would be more self explanatory. Several distinct points were made by those respondents who demonstrated some understanding of language issues. These included:

(a) the recognition of inappropriate practice in a child care setting as reported by respondent #12 and respondent #13;

I know a young child in a day care who speaks Spanish and has very little English, and the way the day care handles that is just shocking, it's just total immersion. And even if a day care worker can speak some Spanish, they won’t allow that to take place. (#12)

When I visit child care centres I see children who tend to go back to speaking Chinese and I see staff saying, “Say that in English” (#13)

(b) the fact that present practice placed an emphasis on facilitating English language development because it was recognized that children needed to be proficient in English to be successful in the school environment as respondent #8 suggested:

Our school systems tend to try to get children to move out of their mother-tongue and into speaking English . . and so most of our course work aligns itself to those children, and . . and how to help them to work towards mastering English as a second language as opposed to maintaining their own language. (#8)
(c) the role of the ECE in educating parents as respondent #10 states:

I think in some ways our role is to really make parents aware of the importance of it; a lot of parents tend to think they're confusing the child. (#10)

The majority of respondents, seven in all, admitted they knew little about "mother-tongue maintenance" as the table illustrates. Among those who appeared to be more informed responses elicited a range of aspects related to language issues from heritage languages to the development of English as a second language. The diversity of responses suggest that this was a relatively untouched area in ECE.

Theme # 6: The identification of successful strategies

The final theme to emerge is the identification of successful strategies used by faculty to raise student's awareness of their own culturally situated lives, to develop knowledge of diversity issues and to prepare them with the necessary skills to teach within an anti-bias framework. Because an underlying aim of the study is an emphasis on the researcher and participants learning together I feel it is important to document all the ideas outlined by the respondents who were keen to share ideas. I have generated a list of ideas taken from each respondent and have also included many direct comments from the transcripts to illustrate the strategies more fully. The intention is to pass on this information to the participants so they can benefit from the study directly. From the many ideas suggested by faculty I identified two key concepts. Firstly, the concept of self-discovery, the notion that all students need to discover who they are and where they come from before they can begin to be aware of the 'other'. Secondly, the concept that all students need opportunities to learn about cultures and gain a broader perspective about the world in which they live. This sound knowledge base is needed to help them to respond appropriately to critical issues such as stereotyping, bias and injustice. The following table lists all the ideas mentioned during the interviews.
TEACHING STRATEGIES

Writing self narratives.
Developing a personal portfolio
Developing a professional portfolio
Becoming reflective practitioners through journal writing
Sharing personal experiences
Reading books about others’ experiences
Small group discussions.
Large group discussions.
Whole class discussions
Case studies.
Role plays
Simulations
Presentations
Defining terms.
Developing objectivity in observations
Designing and making anti-bias materials
Bringing in guest speakers
Using appropriate films and videos
Role modeling anti-bias practices
Discovering own roots/heritage
Critiquing journal articles
Evaluating children’s books, toys
Using thought-provoking questions
Using cards to write anonymous questions to instructor
Using self-discovery games
Doing small research projects
Co-operative learning
Home/family visits
Developing a Child Portfolio
Building up a resource file
Distributing informative handouts
Interviewing people from a variety of communities
Using experiential games and activities

Using suggested activities from a range of resource books such as The Affective Curriculum, by Hall & Rhomberg; Include me Too, by Kilbride; The Anti-Bias Curriculum, by Derman-Sparks; Roots and Wings, by York and Honouring Diversity, by Chud & Fahlman.
As I mentioned above, many of the strategies that respondents disclosed focussed on ways to develop students' self awareness. The concept of self-discovery came through strongly as the ideal starting point. The ideas offered emphasized the importance of students reflecting on their own biases and developing an understanding of their own culturally situated values and experiences as these extracts from the transcripts demonstrate.

We look at prejudice, developing an awareness of their own personal prejudice and personal biases, and a lot of these kinds of things are done through class discussion, interaction in the classroom between students and between the faculty and the students. (#1)

It in the parenting courses, that really gives us more of an opportunity to look at where your values came from, what your traditions are, and recognizing other peoples' values and traditions, and then I will often do lots of different exercises in the area of communication: (#8)

We've begun with classes where journal writing is done and we have students look at themselves and then go out to their own family and then out beyond that, just as you would with a young child. . (#9)

And with thought-provoking questions, some working in groups, where they switch around a lot and writing things down and the presenting them to their peer group, I find that the best. It gets out their bias and it also lets them listen to other people's point of view, how other people were raised, and they get to set some checks and balances. (#11)

A second concept that emerged amongst the strategies discussed by respondents was the importance of students gaining a sound knowledge base. Strategies for accomplishing this included:

(a) gaining a clear understanding of definitions as respondent #8 suggested.

We talk about what is anti-bias; there's a lot of definitional work, examining goals of anti-bias approaches and relating those principles to their role as an early childhood educator. (#8)

(b) engaging the students in experiential games to give them a broader perspective about the world in which they live as respondents #7 and #12 suggested.

I like to give them case studies which they role play and... to see how they would handle that. (#12)
In particular I do that game, *Baffa Baffa* with the students, where they role play ambassadors and visitors from imaginary countries and so. I always spend one whole class doing that, and that’s probably the most significant experience for students to understand really why it is that people behave the way they do towards different groups; to try and get some break through in understanding. (#13)

(c) building their knowledge through discussions, the use of videos, listening to guest speakers from different communities, reading about others’ experiences, and actually going out into the community as the following extracts from the transcripts show.

In the *Human Diversity* course they keep a journal, they do mapping, they interview people from a variety of communities . . . there are some really good videos out today. We’ve had guest speakers, we’ve had sharing in the class of other peoples’ experiences, read books . . . all of those sorts of things. (#6)

I use a video called *Ten Steps to Culturally Sensitive Care*, and I use that in a way to explore how it shapes our very interactions in a fundamental way. (#7)

We use books that look at many different cultures and students do presentations on a variety of different cultures usually beginning with themselves and looking at their own background. (#9)

We do a lot of discussions and the more I get them to discuss, I see more change. (#11)

Identifying the various strategies they used with students allowed the interview respondents to move away from the barriers, issues and concerns and to focus on the positive experiences they were having. Many respondents spoke at length discussing their strategies and expressed the importance of focusing on successes and sharing these successes with others.

The final question from the general interview guide was to discover which textbooks students were required to purchase for their courses. The purpose of this question was to ascertain what sources students accessed for their information and what importance was placed on particular books that addressed diversity. The responses were inconsistent. Three respondents admitted that as their program had adopted an integrated approach there was usually no specific text book assigned, although many titles were recommended to students. Two responded that they were unable to answer the question because the
selection of a text book was the prerogative of the instructor teaching the course and often altered from year to year. While several mentioned the titles of two or three texts that they knew students had access to, seven clearly identified the following text books as those that their students were required to purchase. (One respondent identified two required text books for her students.) The table lists the identified texts and the number of respondents that cited it. Of the four texts listed two are Canadian and two are from the U.S. The most popular choice The Affective Curriculum: Teaching the anti-bias approach to young children is a relatively recent Canadian text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT BOOKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Conclusion

The analysis of the data from the interviews resulted in the identification of six themes. The first theme was the impact of the CSAC standards on diversity content in ECE programs. Results showed that the majority of respondents viewed the document favourably. Two issues arose related to the document and these were which approach best met the learning outcomes of the document and how best to evaluate those learning outcomes. Results in the second theme, understanding the terms, multicultural education
and anti-bias education, showed there was a degree of confusion related to the use of the terms and a range of interpretations of the terms. The third theme was the identification of barriers and sources of resistance. A range of barriers were identified with student attitudes being cited most frequently. The fourth theme, the notion that the understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process, looked at extracts from the transcripts that demonstrated a general consensus that everybody is on a continuum of development in their awareness and understanding of diversity-related issues. The level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues was the fifth theme. Results showed that many faculty had limited knowledge with regard to language issues. The final theme, the identification of successful strategies, listed all the teaching strategies employed by faculty in their efforts to prepare students for diversity. In Chapter Seven I discuss the implications of these findings from the interviews in relation to the findings from the document analysis, the focus groups and the literature review.
Chapter 5
Document Analysis

Introduction

All of the ECE Diploma programs at Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology are of two years duration, usually offered over four semesters. The programs include a number of compulsory core courses plus some general education courses offered as electives. The number of core courses vary slightly from college to college and semester to semester, ranging from six to nine per semester. Most students are also required to take an Introduction to Psychology and/or an Introduction to Sociology and some English courses. Many of the sociology courses examine current issues such as Canada's immigration patterns, changing demographics, and problems facing minority groups. Students who are enrolled in programs that require a sociology course may be introduced to diversity issues from a sociological perspective. These psychology, sociology and English courses are usually offered by their respective faculty and are not under the auspices of the ECE faculties. For this reason I have not included them in this study. It also needs to be noted that at some of the colleges there are opportunities for students to take diversity-related general education electives such as Living and Working in a Diverse Society and Diversity in Canadian Families, for example. However, there is no consistency with general education electives as these courses are often dependent on the availability of instructors and are different from college to college. For this reason I have not included them in this study.

For the purposes of the document analysis I examined the 1996/1997 calendars (schedule of programs and courses) from twenty-two of the English language Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology that offer an ECE diploma, plus one private institution, concentrating only on those courses considered core ECE courses, thus excluding General Education electives, English courses and psychology or sociology courses. I coded the calendars numerically from 001 to 023. (While all 23 calendars listed
course titles it needs to be noted that course descriptions were not included in three of the calendars and while I managed to obtain these directly from the college in one case, I was unsuccessful in obtaining the remaining two.

My first task in the examination of the calendars was to review the titles of all the core courses in the two year ECE programs to determine if I could identify those courses that addressed issues of diversity by title alone. The descriptors I was looking for were "anti-bias" as a precursor to education or curriculum or approach; "multicultural education" or "multiculturalism"; "diversity"; and "culture" or "cultural". Of the 23 programs reviewed by course title alone, 2 courses included the term anti-bias; 2 courses included the term diversity; 2 courses included the term cultural; and 7 included the term multicultural or multiculturalism. (See Table 1: Inclusive Course Titles) Examples of titles were: An Anti-bias approach in the Preschool; Multiculturalism; Human Diversity & Interactions; Multicultural Curriculum; Multicultural Perspectives; Social & Cultural Issues in Infant/Toddler Care and Role of the Teacher -- Multi-diversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Relevant Descriptors in Course Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My second task was to examine the courses for broader terms that may incorporate the inclusion of diversity related content. The descriptors this time were "family" or "parents"; "community", "special needs" or "exceptional children". The numbers were significantly higher. 25 course titles included the term family or parents; 3 included the term community; and 16 included courses using the terms special needs or exceptional children. (See Table 2: Broad Course Titles). Examples of titles were: Understanding Families;
Parent, Teacher and Child Relationships; Focus on Families; Contemporary Canadian Families; Parents as Partners; Home/School and Community Relations; Children with Special Needs; and The Exceptional Child.

**TABLE 2: BROAD COURSE TITLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family/Parents</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Special Needs/Exceptional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All but two of the colleges offered at least one course whose title indicated that it dealt with family or parents, some offered two and one college offered three family related courses. The majority of colleges included specific courses related to children with special needs. These courses had been in place since the adoption of Bill 82 in 1985 which gave children with special needs the right to be placed in regular classrooms and child care settings. With the adoption of this Bill it was recognized that many children with special needs would be integrated into regular child care settings and therefore early childhood educators would need to be prepared to meet their needs.

Finally I examined the course titles for reference to language issues searching for descriptors such as “language development”; “bilingualism”; “English as a Second Language” (ESL) or other references to language issues. The only reference to language I found in course titles was one isolated course titled American Sign Language.

The next step in the document analysis was reviewing the course descriptions of firstly the 13 inclusive course titles and then the 44 broad course titles. On close examination of the course descriptions of the 13 inclusive courses it became evident that conceptions of anti-bias, diversity, and multiculturalism are often very different, as the
following extracts illustrate. The first extract comes from a courses that claims an anti-bias focus.

Extract #1

"This course will explore the nature of the anti-bias approach for children in the preschool setting. Personal attitudes and values will be explored. Educational practices and materials will be examined for developing anti-bias in young children." (001)

This description clearly indicates there is a body of knowledge related to the principles of anti-bias education. It also suggests that students will be actively involved in exploring their own biases and values so there is recognition of the student needing to develop awareness of the nature of bias as well as gaining knowledge. Equipped with increased awareness and knowledge the student should be in a position to develop anti-bias practices and appropriate materials for working with preschool children.

Extract #2

"In this subject students will explore and develop an understanding of the historical development and issues relating to Canada's rich and ethnically diverse culture. They begin a personal exploration of their cultural inheritance and develop skills which enable them to interact more effectively with children and adults of various cultural backgrounds."

(018)

The description of this course also acknowledges the student as an active learner who brings into the classroom their own cultural heritage. Cultural diversity is examined not in a vacuum but in an historical context suggesting the view of culture as dynamic and a part of the lived, everyday experiences of people. There is no specific mention of either an anti-bias focus or a multicultural education focus.

Extract #3

"This course is designed to allow students to explore their own values as they relate to multicultural issues in the field of early childhood education and to discuss differing values in society regarding the upbringing and education of children. The student will learn to develop culturally sensitive curriculum." (023)
As with extract #1 and extract #2 this course acknowledges the student as an active learner. In this case there is the suggestion that through discussion the students will come to recognize there are other ways of knowing and doing which will allow them to be more sensitive in their planning of curriculum activities. In referring to multicultural issues there is also the suggestion that there are different perspectives to be considered.

Extract #4

"The student will identify that all people are unique but share certain commonalities. This course will be considered an anti-bias course and should enable the student to see bias and implement inclusive practices. Professional early childhood educators are seen as enhancing the cultural background of children and supporting their cultural and linguistic identity." (003)

This description suggests a very different approach to the previous ones. The stress here appears to be one of viewing people as individuals who share many commonalities. The description claims the course is an anti-bias course suggesting students will learn to "see bias and implement inclusive practices". There appears to be an assumption here that bias is something outside the student and therefore able to be acted upon by the student. The role of the educator is presented as being one of enhancing and supporting "cultural and linguistic identity".

Extract #5

"This course explores the role of multiculturalism within the educational process. Emphasis will be placed on an awareness of the cultural diversities and similarities. Students will be able to plan and implement multicultural curricula for young children." (010)

This description demonstrates a clear acceptance of the notion of multiculturalism as an ideology and focuses on the student developing the necessary skills to celebrate diversity through appropriate curriculum activities.

Extract #6
This course is designed to broaden the students’ awareness of culture and to increase their ability to provide developmentally appropriate activities for children. (015)

This course description differs from the others in that it presents two quite distinct concepts and links them together. The first concept is "culture" and the notion that students need to "broaden" their awareness of it. The second concept is developmentally appropriate practice. The description links them by suggesting a broader awareness of culture can be operationalized into developmentally appropriate activities for children. An obvious omission in all the above extracts from the inclusive course descriptions is the mention of power relations in society and the systemic nature of bias. While this does not exclude the possibility that these issues are incorporated in some of the courses, their omission in the descriptions suggests they are given little importance.

Of the 44 courses identified as containing the broad key words, 8 of the family/parent courses outlined their intention to deal with issues and matters pertaining to diversity as the following extracts show:

Extract #7

"Major emphasis is on styles of family functioning with exploration of topics that consider the family in a cultural context." (012)

This description alerts the student to the fact that there are a variety of ways that families operate and clearly acknowledges the context of culture as an important factor in the way families function in society. Extract # 8 (below) also presents this viewpoint but extends the influences on family functioning to include social and economic factors. This course also places the student in context suggesting an understanding of self will enhance understanding of others.

Extract # 8

"Through open discussions of family experiences and through study of the social, economic and cultural influences on families, the student may gain a better understanding of self and of the children and adults we work with. An appreciation of the effects different
family backgrounds have on child behavior will increase tolerance and will aid in supporting children and families in ECE.” (020)

Extract #9

“The variety of family experience in Canadian society is the focus of this course. . . . Students will have the opportunity to gain factual knowledge and examine their own beliefs and values related to family functioning.” (022)

There is an emphasis in this course that echoes aspects of the above extracts. There is the notion of the need to acquire “factual knowledge” concerning the variety of ways that families function. This description also encourages the students to examine themselves within a context of family in order to recognize their own “beliefs and values related to family functioning “.

Extract # 10

“The student will study various aspects of parent-teacher, parent child relationships including an understanding of parents’ values, goals and individual backgrounds.” (010)

This course description varies from the others in that it does more than recognize the different “values, goals and individual backgrounds” of parents. It contains a strong message concerning the connection between the home and school by placing an emphasis on relationships between teachers and parents.

The three courses that included the term “community” in the title dealt with advocacy issues and the availability of community services for families and young children. There was no specific mention of diversity in families or communities. The major components of all the courses that identified “special needs” or “exceptional children” were:

- the identification of “special” conditions in children which may impact their learning and development,
- information regarding what services are available for parents and children, and
- programming -- how students can develop individual programs to meet the special needs of these children.
While all these courses concentrated on informing students of the various physical and intellectual conditions that could and do affect children, two of the course descriptions included the study of poverty and its impact as a 'special need'. It was not clear from the course descriptions if fostering anti-bias attitudes toward "disability" was a component of the various courses.

The descriptions of all the remaining ECE core courses were also examined and two contained reference to diversity. One, a child development course suggested that the contexts of culture and society impact all aspects of growth and development.

Extract #11

"This course examines the growth and development of the child from conception to adolescence with an emphasis on the socio-cultural context of development." (007)

The second description, this time from an interpersonal skills course, places an emphasis on the importance of cross-cultural competence in working effectively with parents of young children.

Extract #12

"Examined are; self awareness and personal growth and interpersonal communication across cultures as the main tenets in building non-judgmental, accepting, honest interactions with young children's parents." (001)

Conclusion

The theme that emerged from the document analysis was related to the identification of intent in course titles and course descriptions as results from the document analysis showed that only 12 of the 23 ECE programs examined offered a core course with the intent of anti-bias, diversity or multiculturalism clearly designated in the title of the course. (It needs to be pointed out that Table One above indicates a total of 13 due to the fact that one program offered 2 such courses). An examination of the descriptions of all the courses revealed an additional 10 more references to diversity. Apart from the one course on American Sign Language, the descriptors relating to language were not found in any course.
titles or descriptions. In this chapter I have presented several relevant extracts from those course descriptions that refer to diversity in an attempt to demonstrate the variety of approaches and ideologies underpinning the courses offered.
Chapter 6
Focus Groups

Introduction

At the end of the interview session I asked for volunteers to be part of a focus group to further pursue some of the questions and issues raised in the interview situation. Five interviewees agreed to be involved and the group met on two separate occasions. The meetings were very informal. Coffee was served and after obtaining permission from the participants to tape-record the proceedings, the tape recorder was placed on a table in the centre of the room. I acted as facilitator to the group by opening up the discussion with a question and intervening occasionally when the group moved too far off topic. For reasons of confidentiality I have given the five members pseudonyms. Of the five participants, Carol and Anna knew each other very well and were close friends, Beth was acquainted with Carol and Mai as ECE professionals but Ellen knew none of the others prior to the focus group meeting. All of the focus group members were women ranging in age from 29 years to 54 years, and all were white with middle class backgrounds. Four were full-time faculty members and one was a sessional (contract) faculty member.

Facilitators Reflections:

As facilitator of the focus group meetings certain group dynamics became evident as the process proceeded. It appeared as if there was a tacit collaboration between Carol and Anna. They frequently affirmed each others’ comments and often reiterated what the other had said. They were more vocal than the other three group members and sat next to each other at both sessions. At times their attitude towards Ellen tended to be patronizing. Ellen was perceived very much as the “new kid on the block.” It became apparent that four of the participants were considered the “expert” in this area within their own colleges and had
volunteered to be involved because of that. Ellen was the only group member to reveal that she had volunteered in order to learn more. While all group members acted in a very professional manner at all times they were quite defensive of their respective colleges. This may have prevented the disclosure of some pertinent points that would have further informed this study. In spite of this all participants left the final session agreeing that it had been a worthwhile experience and were determined to fight even harder for changes within their own colleges.

After explaining the purpose of the focus group meetings I began the first session with the following open-ended question: “During the interviews the majority of faculty mentioned that the introduction of the CSAC standards had had an impact on their programs. Could you elaborate on this further?” This question served the dual purpose of focusing the group onto the topic as well as informing them of a commonality they shared from the interview in which they had all recently partaken. The second time the focus group met I presented the group with a brief overview of the previous meeting and discussion flowed from there.

Discussion was generally lively, although dominated by the two more vocal members. Throughout the focus group sessions I arranged for an assistant to operate the tape recorder so that I could concentrate on taking detailed notes of the relevant material to further supplement the recordings. In taking notes I endeavoured to observe and take note of body language and posture which I thought might illustrate the dynamics of the group. However, this proved difficult and it needs to be noted that these notes were often inconsistent and certainly subjective. At the conclusion of each session I began the process of transcribing immediately using the notes to illustrate points where applicable. In exploring the completed transcripts I generated a list of key words and phrases as I had done with the interviews and from these generated themes which allowed for an organizing framework while also addressing the objectives of the study. As a result the following five themes emerged.
A: The identification of barriers and sources of resistance

B: The understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process.

C: The identification of intent in course titles and descriptions.

D: The level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues.

E: The identification of successful strategies.

I have endeavoured to present the results as objectively as possible using the voices of the participants by citing directly from the transcripts. (Although the transcriptions were verbatim, in using the direct citations I have elected to delete the pauses and meaningless "ums" and "ers" to make for clearer reading of the extracts used in text.)

A: The identification of barriers and sources of resistance

It was evident that the issue of dealing with barriers was high on the agenda throughout the discussions in the focus group. All group members revealed their need to discuss and find ways to overcome these barriers. Of the barriers mentioned the following five emerged as being of greatest concern to the group.

1. "Talk the talk."

The issue appearing with the greatest frequency in statements generated by the group in the early part of the discussion was the notion of "political correctness" in espousing a philosophy committed to issues of diversity and inclusive practices. The members spoke quite candidly of the inclusion of multiculturalism initially as predominantly a curriculum area which was easy to implement as these comments by Carol and Anna show.

Multiculturalism was easy because you could do the tourist thing and have lots of colourful displays so everyone could see that you were doing the right thing. (Carol)

It's easy to introduce students to the notion of doing multiculturalism because you can do fun activities such as Chinese New Year and Hanukkah and so on. But to move beyond that is much more challenging. And not many people have. For the most part every body "talks the talk but they don't walk the walk. (Anna)
The group acknowledged that students are generally preoccupied with learning the "how to" of teaching. They want lots of curriculum ideas. And the early courses in multicultural curriculum did just that. As Beth said,

It gave them what they wanted because they got lots of ideas for things to do with kids and it gave them the idea that anyone could sit down and make Chinese lanterns without reflecting on their significance or meaning. . . . Doing multiculturalism also gives the message that we are showing we respect all the different cultures in our centre. So we are doing the right thing and it's easy. Let's face it multiculturalism is safe. Anti-bias is not. (Beth)

In her comment Beth alluded to the fact that to be seen to "doing the right thing" was important. Having multicultural activities was an overt way of demonstrating that. The group expressed their belief that it was difficult to get a real sense of what was happening because it was so political that everyone was very defensive and taking care to say what they thought they should say as Mai noted,

As soon as you mention anything about diversity everyone is quick to say things like -- of course I deal with that; or it's in the course outline as a learning outcome and so on. (Mai)

Carol agreed and stated,

There's a general climate of commitment to diversity but it's generally up to the individual to follow it through and as we are all so heavily committed in our various programs there is little opportunity to meet together to plan and discuss what we're doing. The real problem is that we all say we are committed to this but very few really act on it. They put in a learning outcome in their course outline and think that's all there is to it. (Carol)

At this point two of the group members raised the issue of wider institutional rhetoric. They mentioned the fact that even though the CSAC standards had included diversity they wondered if it was just there for show. They agreed that there was little tangible evidence in the way of support or resources or money. As Anna said,

Yes. It makes you wonder if this is political. I mean we are told that this is very important yet we are not given the sort of support we need to make it successful. I mean there is just no money for this -- mind you there's always money for new computers and stuff. (Anna)
2. Professional Development.

The second barrier appearing frequently in statements generated by the group in the early part of the discussion was that there was inadequate opportunity for professional development. Many expressed the view that faculty required ongoing mandatory training in order to understand the philosophy of an anti-bias approach and more importantly to learn how to address culturally diverse students’ teaching and learning needs within the college setting. They saw this as a major barrier to developing and teaching a sound fully-integrated program. Two of the group members agreed that they also needed more information on how to develop instructionally sound and culturally responsive strategies to meet the needs of the diverse student populations they taught at the college level, as Beth said in the following extract.

What I really want to know is how to deal with students from different cultural backgrounds. I’m not aware or sensitive to cultural issues and I need to be in order to support students from different cultures. (Beth)

Ellen also stressed the need for opportunities to learn more. She stated,

I see that as a real problem because I’m new you know and everyone just assumes I know all this diversity stuff and I am banging my head against a brick wall. I don’t know anything about anti-bias. How can I implement something when I don’t know about it. (Ellen)

These comments were supported by Anna and Mai who said respectively,

Absolutely! I would love to see more opportunity for Professional Development in this area -- more time -- opportunity to educate myself. (Anna)

And others! I would like to know that the rest of the program is talking about context issues as well. If it’s only done in one course it seems like a marginal thing. . . . It has to be a philosophy that permeates so we need professional development for the whole faculty. Not just interested faculty. While this is a great opportunity being here like this -- it’s still preaching to the converted. I mean I don’t see some faculty whose names I won’t mention here. Yet they are the ones that should be here! (Mai)

Mai raised an interesting point in her comment when she acknowledged that often only those who were interested became involved in learning more, yet it was probably more important for those who lacked interest to attend meetings or workshops. Carol summed it up by announcing,
The bottom line is we all have to be accountable and we all have to be trained. This has to be mandatory and it's not happening. (Carol)

It is clear from the above results that all the faculty are in agreement about the need for opportunities for professional development. This lack of professional development is viewed as a major barrier because of the implications of having poorly informed, untrained faculty. As Ellen bluntly stated, "I don’t know anything about anti-bias. How can I implement something when I don’t know about it?"

3. Lack of Resources and Support.

Another barrier identified by the group was the lack of support and general lack of available resources. This is linked closely with the lack of professional development as one impacts the other in several ways. If faculty had the opportunity to attend workshops, conferences, etc., they would have an opportunity to learn more, to find out about and access resources and to meet others who would be able to form a support group. In their comments concerning the lack of resources and support, Carol and Anna stressed the need for support,

What I’d really like is support in the form of time to access and evaluate resources, time to attend conferences and workshops. (Carol)

What I would like to have is more networking support and sharing of ideas. (Anna)

Beth and Mai stressed the need for more Canadian resources,

We need more resources that are Canadian, particularly for human development. Ones that really do have a reflection of diversity in every area. (Beth)

Yes, generally there is a lack of Canadian resources especially text books - The only books available are American - with a Western perspective on major child rearing and developmental issues. (Mai)

And Ellen stressed the need for “more resources that give information on different cultures”.

In discussing the lack of support and resources there were several comments concerning other vital issues for the field of ECE such as the struggle for recognition as professionals, the poor salaries, the low status, the governments’ undermining of child care
in Ontario, and the threat of job loss. These were seen as major barriers that were often all consuming to the extent that other important issues such as the topic of this study were being sidelined. As facilitator, I acknowledged the importance of these concerns and agreed there needed to be more advocacy and more research done but pointed out that they were beyond the scope of this study.

4. The issues of appropriate evaluation.

Another barrier that had been identified during the interviews was the difficulty in evaluating the attitudinal component of the courses. It was suggested that most traditional evaluation, such as testing and essay writing addressed the students' knowledge of the course content and the skills in applying the knowledge but not necessarily the students' attitudes. When this finding was presented to the focus group, there was general consensus that behavior of the students, particularly when they were in the field, was the best available indicator of attitude. However, when discussing how this behaviour was actually measured, there was disagreement. Three group members felt it was possible to objectively measure behaviour, two disagreed. Carol mentioned the measurement instrument they used was a field manual containing various competencies worded as learning outcomes that clearly stated the sorts of behaviors the student needed to demonstrate in order to be successful in that field placement. However she maintained this was still problematic as it usually meant a rather subjective judgment and therefore was often inconsistent.

It's still very hard to objectively evaluate those learning outcomes which relate to attitude. In fact I think it's almost impossible. (Carol)

Mai voiced her disagreement, suggesting the use of professional judgment as a means of evaluating the outcomes was not subjective.

I disagree. I do see results. I see it as our students in field change all the time. I witness changes in attitude and ability to think more openly. It's very evident in some students asking questions or making statements and comments that they are being influenced. I see it in the centres in their interactions with children -- they are more accepting. I don't see it as being subjective rather it's a professional judgment that's being made. (Mai)
Anna and Ellen both agreed with Mai insisting that behavior was observable and measurable and it was relatively easy to make sound objective evaluations as long as the criteria were clear. Beth intervened to say that the whole debate around objectivity and subjectivity was a moot point as it was impossible to be totally objective. Ellen stated that her college also used a field manual with clear learning outcomes that were evaluated on a rating scale. She felt this was most effective and reasonably objective. Anna added that behavior observed in the field wasn't the only indicator used. She stated,

I agree to a certain extent because not only do I see it in the field in their evaluation of programs and the things they say, like -- we are miles ahead of the field, they don't know what to do. ... I also see it when they write comments about having to acknowledge cultural uniqueness and sensitive caregiver strategies. (Anna)

In discussing issues around evaluation of attitudinal learning outcomes there were mixed reactions with three group members suggesting existing evaluation processes were adequate and objective while the other two members felt they were too subjective and therefore inadequate. However there was general agreement that the uncertainty over the evaluation process constituted a barrier to the success of the programs and needed to be continually reviewed to sort out the wrinkles.

5. Student attitudes.

Evidence from the interviews in Chapter 4 identified student attitude as a major barrier. In the focus groups student attitude was also identified as a barrier and was viewed as problematic. The ensuing discussion focussed on the ways student attitudes manifested themselves and the problems faculty faced in dealing with them. For example, Ellen referred to the sorts of comments made by students and questioned how to respond to them. She stated,

Well students often say things like -- we do this diversity stuff to death. Or things like -- well THEY chose to come to Canada. THEY need to learn to fit in. How do you deal with that? (Ellen)

Beth and Carol both admitted they were concerned about student attitude and struggled with getting students to even begin to think about various issues.
I find student attitude my greatest barrier. It really takes time to just to get them to think about their own values and beliefs. (Beth)

Yes, you have to find out where they are at before you can begin to present a variety of viewpoints to the students. It’s so hard for them to see that there are different ways of knowing and doing and all these different ways are valid. (Carol)

Anna tended to disagree a little. While she acknowledged that many students did show resistance in the ways discussed by the others, she also suggested many students quickly learned to say and do the “right” thing. She reintroduced the issue of politically-correct behavior in suggesting,

You can never be sure whether the students are playing the PC (politically correct) game or are for real. (Anna)

Mai, Beth and Carol all agreed with this as the following extracts show.

Yes. I sometimes sense that students say what they think I want to hear. I mean they know I’m into this so it’s easy for them to just play it my way in order to pass the course. (Mai)

I agree. Grades get in the way. I don’t know if students are just writing what they know I want to hear. (Beth)

Exactly! Students are pretty canny when it comes to knowing what they need to do in order to get a good grade. They quickly catch on and write . . . and say, what they think you want to hear. (Carol)

Anna went on and suggested that there were some issues where students’ true feelings came through. She said,

What about the students feelings towards things like poor people and, and sexuality. Many students tend to be very judgmental especially round class issues and they are definitely homophobic. (Anna)

All group members agreed vehemently that the subject of sexual orientation always brought forward very strong biases and all agreed it was the most difficult to deal with and for that reason was often left untouched. The ensuing discussion involved a sharing of anecdotes involving particular students or situations concerning incidents when the topic was mentioned in class. One group member admitted she also felt uncomfortable with the whole notion adding that she had strong religious convictions. Carol concluded the
discuss the comment; “I see homophobia being the last bastion and we have many others to conquer before we can begin to grapple with that one.”

**B: The understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process.**

The second emerging theme was the notion that the faculty themselves were at various stages of a developmental process in understanding and implementing anti-bias practices and it was therefore difficult for faculty to teach the students. It was agreed that each person had to work through various stages and because everyone was an individual, they were all at different stages. It needs to be noted that the majority of ECE faculty in colleges of applied arts and technology are white middle-class women who are themselves products of a Eurocentric education system, with limited knowledge or experience of diversity. To teach in an anti-bias framework involves a major shift in their own thinking. Mai acknowledged this in her statement,

>You also need to acknowledge your own biases and assumptions. I mean we all are products of our own socialization and I know that I have had to work really hard to challenge some of the values that I was brought up with. (Mai)

At this point the group spent some time sharing anecdotes from their childhood that illustrated some of the biases that their parents, teachers and church leaders had modeled. These ranged from stereotyping of groups to extremely derogatory remarks. All group members agreed that increasing awareness and shedding these views could only be achieved through experience over time. Mai put it this way.

>It does take time to break away from those influences and different people do it in different ways. I enjoy people and over many years I've just enjoyed meeting a wide variety of people and talking to them and listening to them and gaining personal experience with them. I also learn a great deal from my students. (Mai)

Beth agreed with Mai but added that having accurate information was necessary as well in order to break down stereotypes.

>You also have to have some basic knowledge about what makes everyone different otherwise you can't even begin to... I mean, stereotypes exist because people are ignorant or misinformed.
Anna raised an interesting point by suggesting that politically correct behavior could be a starting point for changing attitude. She suggested that if people continue to say what they think they should say then perhaps this behavior will eventually lead to a change in attitude.

Actually, come to think of it . . . although we said PC (political correctness) was a barrier I think it can also be turned to advantage. I mean, P.C. is a good starting point because no-one is actually going to say that they disagree even if they do. It’s just not on in this climate. So they’re going to start thinking and . . . then I think comes an awareness and a personal commitment and then you act on what you believe. (Anna)

While the rest of the group didn’t disagree they were unsure whether that would be the case. Carol stressed that the process was a gradual one and that certainly everyone had to start somewhere in their thinking and subsequent behavior. She suggested demonstrating respect for others was as good a starting point as any.

The process is gradual but we’re heading in the right direction. I find valuing the diversity within my classroom is powerful as it sets up an atmosphere of respect and the students like that. And we can move forward from there. (Carol)

The above comments from the participants demonstrate that there is a general agreement that the process of understanding diversity issues and anti-bias practices is a developmental one. It was acknowledged that the majority of faculty are products of a Eurocentric socialization process and often have to go through the process of challenging many of the views and values that they had learnt as children. This was a gradual process and as Mai said, “different people do it in different ways”.

C: The identification of intent in course titles and descriptions.

When the focus group met for the second time I opened the discussion by presenting my tentative findings from the document analysis on the discrepancy I had found concerning course titles and course descriptions. The issue of the lack of ‘up front’ terminology in course titles and course descriptions was discussed at length. Two of the group were surprised at the news and expressed concern that that was the case. The following piece of discourse is an extract from the group discussion that took place as a
result of my opening disclosure. I find it a particularly powerful extract as it touches on so many issues in one small section and all group members were very animated and emotionally charged at this point.

Mai: “It’s interesting you should say that. I hadn’t really noticed the omission”.

Anna: “You’ll find that valuing diversity is mentioned in all ECE course outlines as a learning outcome because we have a philosophy of infusion”.

Ellen: “Yes it’s part of the new curriculum now that we have learning outcomes. It’s usually mentioned in most course outlines. It doesn’t need to be in course descriptions. It’s an unwritten goal”.

Carol: “But who knows it’s there if it’s not up front? We need to declare our intention. Anyone coming into our program should be able to look at our calendar and say; ‘this program shows a clear commitment to the development of cultural understanding’ or whatever. I am really shocked at what you’ve found. I must speak to the faculty to change this”.

Mai: “Me too. I’m annoyed at myself for not noticing it”.

Ellen: “Sure, but it is there in most of the course outlines so once the students are in the program they know what to expect”.

Anna: “I think there’s a different issue here. Course titles and course descriptions are sort of in the public domain . . . but course outlines are different, They are a kind of contract between the student and the instructor and there is, there is ownership of the course outline”.

Carol: “Absolutely. I get angry when I have to pass over my course outline to some part-time instructor, not that I’m judging them or anything but, but, I’m the one who has done all the work developing the course and sometimes if someone else takes it and just runs with it they don’t, they lose my perspective and . . .”

Anna: “Oh, I know. We have so many part-time people now that nobody knows who’s doing what!”

Mai: “This is why I have a problem with just infusion and not a specific course. If we take the infusion method it really is left to the individual instructor to include or to exclude whatever they want. But if it’s clear in the course title or description then they won’t be able to exclude it”.

Anna: “Yes, but if it is stated in a learning outcome then theoretically the student can’t pass the course because that outcome isn’t met”.

Beth: “That brings us back to the whole evaluation thing. How can we evaluate it adequately?”

Carol: “It’s also a problem associated with the lack of understanding of outcome based education. It’s like so much of what happens. New ideas are brought in. You must teach multiculturalism. You must teach anti-bias. You must change your
courses to accommodate this and that. You now need to write learning outcomes and not learning objectives. And most of us get no opportunity to learn about these new things fully ourselves. We are just thrown in the deep end and everyone wonders why it doesn't work!”

Mai: “And that brings us back to the barriers we talked about earlier. Lack of professional development opportunities leads to lack of information and understanding which leads to inadequate teaching. It’s a Catch 22 situation.”

Carol: “Exactly. It’s just what you said earlier, Ellen -- if you don’t mind me saying so -- how can you be expected to teach anti-bias when you don’t know anything about it.”

Within this short discourse several of the issues that had been discussed throughout the focus group discussions were raised and differing opinions were voiced. Both Mai and Carol were surprised to hear that course titles and descriptions did not mention diversity and voiced their concern at this. Carol was adamant that course titles should give a clear indication of “commitment to the development of cultural understanding”. Both Carol and Mai indicated they intended to take some action to change the situation. Ellen, on the other hand, was of the opinion that it was of little consequence because individual course outlines would indicate the necessary learning outcomes related to diversity and “once the students are in the program they know what to expect”. However it was noted by Anna that course outlines were different in that they were a form of contract between the student and the instructor whereas course titles and descriptions were in “the public domain” and gave an indication of the program philosophy. As the discussion evolved other underlying issues came to the surface. Some full-time faculty appeared to be disenchanted with the increasing number of part-time faculty in their programs, others were angry at the amount and rate of changes that they were expected to deal with and others attributed many of the problems to the lack of professional development opportunities.

The above discourse that resulted from the disclosure about course titles and course descriptions was highly emotional with the group members voicing many related and non-related concerns. It was evident that two participants felt strongly about the lack of “up-
front" terminology, one participant saw it as insignificant and the remaining two were non-committal.

**D: The level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues**

Another issue that had emerged during the interviews was the level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues. I mentioned to the group the fact that the majority of faculty had difficulty answering the question on mother tongue maintenance and the interview results showed a general lack of knowledge and understanding around bilingualism, second language acquisition and first language maintenance. As argued in the literature review the connection between language, culture and identity is extremely important and teachers and caregivers need to know that. There is also a strong connection between anti-bias practices and language use so uninformed teachers and caregivers often unwittingly devalue a child by insisting on the child using English or by not being able to respond to the child’s attempts at communication. The group acknowledged this was a little discussed area and I sensed an increasing recognition of it’s importance as the discussion evolved.

Mai related the experience of having a deaf student in her class one year and that had been a great opportunity to present to the group the notion of sign language as another language. Three of the focus group participants volunteered that they spoke another language fluently, while the other two mentioned they were fairly comfortable using French but didn’t consider themselves bilingual. All five group members stated they value bilingualism amongst students as the following extracts show.

*We try to show we value linguistic diversity among our students.* (Anna)

*I tell them I speak two languages. I remind them that Canada is a bilingual country.* (Carol)

*Yes, there is also an emphasis placed on valuing bilingualism/trilingualism in our program... there is tremendous community support for ESL students in our college too.* (Beth)
Carol mentioned that she was not surprised at the lack of knowledge as she viewed it as a specialist area and said that in general faculty were "jack of all trades" rather than specialists.

I’m not surprised really. It’s rather a specialist area and colleges don’t usually have specialists like universities do. I guess it would be covered most probably in the human development course and indirectly in curriculum courses by way of activities for facilitating language. (Carol)

Ellen and Beth both admitted that they taught human development courses and discussed language development and some language issues. The two responses show quite a difference in the level of knowledge displayed by each respondent.

I stress the importance of language in early childhood certainly from a developmental point of view. I relate this to curriculum by discussing ways to facilitate language development. I also talk a little about bilingualism but I must confess I don’t know a great deal about it. (Ellen)

I address a lot in terms of language development. We discuss language acquisition and the importance of first language. I weave in how a child defines herself or himself with language We talk about ESL and stress the importance of maintaining one’s own language. We discuss strategies for working with parents who don’t speak English and so on. Our students have a lot of situational contact with linguistic diversity, you know, among peers and in field placement. (Beth)

When Beth mentioned the situational contact with linguistic diversity I decided to ask the group if this was the same for all of them. Two of the other respondents noted their student population was linguistically diverse, one noted that her students came into contact with linguistic diversity and one acknowledged the ethnocentric nature of her community. The following extracts were the responses.

Students come into contact with children in centres whose English is not their first language and also from the child study and family visit assignment. But the majority of peers all speak English as their first language. (Mai)

There is not much contact with linguistic diversity. It is an ethnocentric region, they don’t think that others can think differently. (Ellen)

Our student population is linguistically diverse -- there is an expectation to accept diversity. I really encourage the students to talk to each other in their other language so sometimes we get the Greek girls or the Italian girls talking to each other and that shows the students that being bilingual is a real asset. (Carol)
Anna also said her students were a diverse group and added that she was becoming more aware of the importance of language and the role of language in the life of the child. She mentioned she had read some recent articles discussing the connection between language and cognition and thought it was an area that needed to be included. She stated,

I think it's really important that we try to make students aware of the advantages of bilingualism and the incredible dangers in not speaking the language of the family. Most of our students are not really accepting. There is still very much the attitude of -- well we're in Canada now and if they don't like it then they can . . . (Anna)

The other group members voiced their agreement and Mai offered some ideas for increasing students' acceptance and understanding of bilingualism. She suggested,

Exposure to strong supportive first language teaching would help in building greater acceptance. For example, showing them dual language books or visiting a bilingual centre. Even just sitting on the subway and listening to all the languages being spoken makes you realize how much language is tied to who you are. (Mai)

E: The identification of successful strategies.

In reviewing the data for salient themes that related to the objectives of the study and keeping in mind the notion of this study having some benefit for the participants, I endeavoured to conclude the focus group meetings on a positive note. So I asked the group to identify successful strategies they used in their programs and in their classrooms to encourage students to recognize the personal biases and to develop students' knowledge and understanding of an anti-bias approach to teaching young children. Each group member spent a few minutes sharing some of their strategies with the group and I have recorded a sampling of the comments here.

I ask them questions getting them to think about their own background and how that background has an impact on who they are and on their development. I want them to understand as an individual in this class they differ in terms of understanding things and that everyone has a different perspective on things. I cover special topics -- child rearing practices, family expectations around discipline and so on. I encourage students to role play to give them an understanding of what it's like to be different and we have discussions to raise awareness particularly around sex stereotyping and racism. I use discussion a lot as I think talking is the best way to learn. (Carol)

I use discussion all the time too. Discussions around exploration of biases, sharing of personal experiences, discussions of videos, journal articles -- Actual contact with children and families and child care practices from diverse cultures and diverse
classes. Highlighting own cultures and personal experience -- comparing amongst themselves -- there are so many cultures within the class. You name it we do it! (Anna)

Yes, definitely discussions. Also visiting speakers, case studies and sharing of personal experiences; use of current journal articles and films; videos, special assignments, for example our students have to do a child study of a child in their placement and this involves visiting the child and family at home... interpersonal skill development and learning about your own identity. Stressing the importance of one's own life experiences. They love that, talking about their own experiences growing up. (Mai)

I address issues of diversity whether it arises in conception or parenting skills. I note that students should look at cultural or ethnic differences or I word it as, "explore" or "be sensitive" to but it is to get them started thinking and to get them to explore why we do things differently. For parenting style I ask them to go back and think about what parenting style they think their parents used and then what style they believe they would use. I ask them to try and relate that to the society in which they grew up. To see whether or not they can make a connection between how parenting styles are part of how we prepare children to belong in our society. (Beth)

As with the interviews the focus group participants were keen to share and discuss the many approaches they used to raise students' awareness of firstly, their own personal biases and values and secondly, to give the students a sound knowledge base to enable them to develop greater understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Conclusion.

The results from the focus group meetings showed many similarities to the results from the interviews. As a purpose of the focus groups was to further explore some of the issues that arose in the interviews and as all the focus group members had also been interview participants it was no surprise that similarities occurred. Four of the five themes were the same as in the interviews. These themes were, the identification of barriers and sources of resistance, the notion that the understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process, the level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues, and the identification of successful strategies. Only one new theme emerged as a direct result of the document analysis. This was the identification of intent in course titles and descriptions. The groups' reaction to the discovery of the lack of diversity related titles
in core courses in all ECE programs was varied. In the next chapter I discuss in greater detail the triangulation of all the data from the interviews, the document analysis, the focus groups, and the literature review.
Chapter 7
Discussion

Introduction

The three previous chapters recorded the results of the qualitative triangulation by organizing the findings into themes. In Chapter 4, six themes were identified, in Chapter 5, one theme was identified and in Chapter 6, the emergent themes from Chapters 4 and 5 were explored in greater depth. In all there were seven distinct themes identified. These are

1. The impact of the CSAC standards on diversity content in ECE programs;
2. Understanding the terms multicultural education and anti-bias education;
3. The identification of barriers and sources of resistance encountered by faculty in the preparation of teachers for diversity;
4. The understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process;
5. The level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues;
6. The identification of intent in course titles and descriptions;
7. The identification of successful strategies.

In addressing these seven themes this chapter explores and discusses the salient issues arising from the themes and examines the implications these have for the future preparation of early childhood teachers. I have made no attempt to prioritize the issues but have organized them into separate headings drawing information from the interview, focus group and document analysis data where applicable. Each issue is discussed within the context of the literature review.
Issues arising from theme # 1: The impact of the CSAC standards on diversity content in ECE programs.

In the discussion of ECE teacher education in Chapter 2 it was acknowledged that recent initiatives had been advocated in order to prepare teachers better for a diverse society. One of these initiatives was the adoption of the CSAC standards in 1996 by all programs within Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. As a result many early childhood education programs within colleges underwent a review in order to ensure that their programs did in fact meet the requirements outlined by the CSAC document. Not all programs needed to do this as many had already been through the program review process in anticipation of the final draft of requirements as interview respondent #2 said, “I was one of the ones working on the CSAC standards so we’d already done a review because we knew what to expect”. However, as recorded in the interviews, all respondents agreed that as a result of the document some changes were made to existing ECE programs to accommodate the standards and the majority of respondents expressed their support of the standards as this extract from interviewee #9 demonstrates.

I think that the general consensus is that this is a standard, at least a minimum that all colleges could address and should address. It’s a good place to start and in some cases we probably surpass what’s required. (#9)

Two issues related to the impact of the CSAC standards document emerged. The first of the issues arising from both the interview responses and the focus group meetings was the dilemma of deciding which approach best enabled the program to meet the CSAC requirements, in particular vocational learning outcome number 9 which states;

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to act in a manner consistent with principles of fairness, equity, and diversity to support the development and learning of individual children, within the context of family, culture, and society (Appendix Number Five).

Should the approach be one of full integration of diversity content throughout all core courses, or the offering of a separate course which addressed diversity issues, or the
maintenance of a separate course as well as integrating diversity content throughout all the courses? In both the interviews and focus groups respondents suggested if programs offer only one separate course then it often becomes marginalized and the hidden message is one of “this is just an add-on”, or “this is not very important”. If diversity themes are integrated throughout, the message suggests that diversity is valid and indeed part of the “normal” context of family, culture, and society. However, interview respondents and focus group participants also suggested there is the risk that in an integrated approach, the diversity thread can easily be left out by individual instructors who may not be comfortable dealing with diversity themes or who may not have the necessary knowledge. In this likelihood many students would graduate with very little exposure to diversity themes. It was noted that prior to the introduction of the CSAC standards most ECE programs did offer separate courses which focussed on diversity issues. However these courses were often viewed as marginal and it was recognized that there was a need to integrate diversity throughout so as not to perpetuate the marginalization of diversity issues. As noted by Cummins (1994);

Teacher education institutions continue to treat issues related to minority students as marginal and send new teachers into the classroom with minimal information regarding patterns of language and emotional development among minority students and few pedagogical strategies for helping students learn (p. 150).

As a result of CSAC standard number 9, many programs opted to use the integrated approach which resulted in the loss of the separate course. The results from the interviews showed that eight programs offered the integrated only approach, two offered separate courses only and three offered a program that included both the integrated approach and a separate course. A study of the 1996/97 calendars in the document analysis revealed that only ten of the 23 programs reviewed offered a separate course. (I was unable to ascertain from the documents whether programs offered an integrated approach as only a few course descriptions included reference to diversity) It was suggested from the
interview and focus group data that to offer core courses with diversity integrated throughout, as most of the ECE programs are doing, may not be enough because often the diversity content gets treated marginally or left out completely depending on the particular course instructor.

These results are similar to the findings of Bernhard et al., (1995a) who recommend that not only should ECE programs integrate diversity themes throughout core courses but compulsory courses which focus solely on diversity issues should also be offered. This is further supported by Larke (1990), who studied the effectiveness of a single multicultural education course in shaping student attitudes and promoting sensitivity toward culturally diverse students. Her results suggested that, “the single course approach had little effect on pre-service teachers’ deep-seated feelings of discomfort with students and parents whose cultures differed from theirs and who used non-standard English” (p. 151). Aguilar & Pohan (1996), in discussing how to prepare effective teachers for a more diverse society and classroom, also state, “It is undoubtedly naive to expect that a single course in multicultural education or diversity could accomplish such a monumental task” (p.260). The evidence points strongly to the need for programs to use the approach of incorporating both separate core courses and other core courses with diversity content integrated throughout.

The second issue emerged from faculty responses in the interviews indicating that uncertainty about the most appropriate approach would remain as long as the evaluation process was inadequate. It was suggested that sound evaluation tools were needed in order to ensure that the course outcomes of demonstrating the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude to work with diversity had been met by graduating students. While the evaluation of skills and knowledge lent itself aptly to traditional evaluation methods, the evaluation of attitude was seen as problematic. It was all very well to include learning outcomes requiring students to demonstrate certain attitudes such as “respect for the individual”, but ultimately the evaluation of the demonstration of that attitude relied on subjective judgment. However
there was disagreement about this in the focus group discussion. In suggesting that student behavior, particularly when in the field, was the best available indicator of attitude, three group members felt it was possible to measure that behavior objectively while two disagreed. These oppositional views were recorded in Chapter 6.

Summary.

The above results show that while the CSAC standards were viewed favorably by the majority of faculty their adoption has impacted ECE programs in the following way. It has raised the issue of which approach is the most appropriate way to incorporate diversity content in courses -- an integrated approach, a separate course approach or a combination of the two. The evidence from the literature points strongly to the need for programs to use the approach of incorporating both separate core courses and other core courses with diversity content integrated throughout. A second issue raised concerns the need for a sound evaluation process to determine how best to evaluate learning outcomes number 9. As the implementation of the CSAC standards is a recent requirement, some problems are to be expected. Faculty will be faced with the ongoing development of appropriate evaluation “tools” and the ongoing revision of the programs and courses within the programs.

Issues arising from theme # 2: Understanding the terms, multicultural education and anti-bias education.

In the literature review, confusion over the interpretations of the terminology was debated at length. Banks and Lynch (1986), Crozier (1989), Fleras and Elliott (1992), Fotiadis (1995), Friesen (1993), Giroux (1993), Henry et al (1995), Kehoe (1984), Lyons (1994), Martin (1993), May (1994), Rezai-Rashti (1995), and Sleeter and Grant (1987) all argued that there is an enormous amount of conceptual confusion and ambiguity over the meaning of multicultural education. In view of this I asked each interviewee to define firstly, the term multicultural education, and secondly, the term anti-bias education to
determine how they interpreted the two terms. Nine of the respondents stated clear
differences in their understanding of the two terms, but voiced their concern that both terms
were open to different interpretations as the two comments from respondent #5 and #2
illustrate.

You know all of our definitions around diversity are quite different. (#5)

So we had different people talking different terms, and in actual fact there was a
difference, a subtle difference of opinion embedded in those terms. (#2)

Four of the respondents were more hesitant in defining the terms and hinted at their own
uncertainty about the meaning of the terminology. As #7 said;

I don’t have a real appreciation for the term multiculturalism . . . and I don’t find it
a particularly helpful term because I think it is very vague.

The issue created by this confusion in terminology is that this tends to lead to
confusion especially in the field, when students encounter the different interpretations and
the resulting manifestations of the different understandings. For example, one respondent
discussed how many caregivers in the field in her area actually had quite an erroneous
understanding of anti-bias education.

Anti-bias to them says that you shouldn’t see anything; that when you walk in, and
if you don’t see anything that smacks of male/female or anything, where everyone
is equal, then that’s a wonderful program.” (#11)

This approach suggests that differences are insignificant and is exemplified in statements
such as; “We are all the same” or “A child is a child”. The danger of this “colour blind”
approach is the serious error of assuming that the issues of development are the same for all
children and that they share similar contexts for growth. It ignores the fact that differences
are the grounds on which many groups and individuals are accorded unfair treatment. An
anti-bias approach requires that differences be acknowledged and the resulting unfair
treatment challenged. This view is well documented in the literature review.

Two of the interviewees argued there was little difference between the two terms,
with the exception of the notion that anti-bias education included a range of differences
such as culture, gender, class and ability as opposed to multiculturalism which focussed solely on culture as the difference. One also suggested the faculty at her college were more comfortable with the term “multicultural education” as this had positive connotations whereas “anti-bias education” had negative connotations, putting the emphasis on “what we’re against rather than what we’re for”. Traditionally multicultural education in ECE has been a comfortable presentation of traditions, artifacts and celebrations of different cultures in a non threatening manner as Carol stated in the focus group meeting, “Multiculturalism was easy because you could do the tourist thing and have lots of colourful displays so everyone could see that you were doing the right thing”.

As demonstrated in the literature many educators and researchers (Alladin, 1996; Brandt, 1986; Bullivant, 1986; D. Corson, 1993, 1998; Cummins, 1996; Dei, 1993, 1994; Fyfe and Figueroa, 1993; McCarthy, 1990; May, 1994; Tator and Henry, 1991; Troyna, 1987) questioned the adequacy of multicultural education because it focussed mainly on building a respect for diversity while ignoring the structural barriers in the education system that produced inequity of student outcomes. Anti-bias education on the other hand requires increased awareness and activism in challenging observed unfair practices and situations. This is not easy to do as few early childhood educators have been prepared to confront these issues and because anti-bias education is about social change it is often met with resistance from other teachers, parents and administrators as well as one’s own ambivalence and discomfort (Derman-Sparks, 1989). A comment drawn from the focus group sums up the situation quite succinctly;

Let’s face it. Multiculturalism is safe. Anti-bias is not. (Beth)

Summary

Understandably the definitions of multicultural education and anti-bias education have evolved. However, a large part of the problem, as highlighted in the literature, the interviews and the focus groups, is that there are so many contradictory and competing
definitions. This conceptual confusion and ambiguity can lead to different interpretations and different practices that are often labeled the same, further adding to the confusion.

**Issues arising from theme # 3: The identification of barriers and sources of resistance encountered by faculty in the preparation of teachers for diversity.**

One of the aims of this research was to identify barriers and sources of resistance encountered by faculty in the preparation of teachers for diversity. As recorded in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6 several barriers and sources of resistance were identified by the participants in both the interviews and the focus groups. Of those barriers the following three appear to be the most significant in their impact on the preparation of teachers. They are student attitudes, professional development and political correctness.

**Student attitudes**

The most frequently cited barrier in the interviews was student attitudes and this was also discussed at length in the focus groups. The majority of faculty stated they encountered resistance from students in the form of apathetic and at times negative attitudes as this interview respondent said.

We’ve had resistance, we’ve had impressions, we’ve had racism, we’ve had sexism, we’ve had homophobia. Yes, we have. (#6)

Possible explanations for student resistance are offered in the literature by Aguilar and Pohan (1996), Ahlquist (1991), Armento et al. (1997) and Barry and Lechner (1995) who suggest that students often arrive at university or college with limited experience of the type of critical awareness and thinking that is expected of them and this often manifests itself as resistance. Other researchers (Cummins and Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hall and Rhomberg, 1995; Friere, 1970) suggest students need the opportunity to examine themselves in order to gain a greater understanding of themselves before they can
begin to understand others. It was further suggested that this needs to be done through innovative teaching approaches.

In Chapter 4 and Chapter 6 I recorded the many innovative and successful strategies discussed by the interview respondents and the focus groups participants. These attest to the commitment and enthusiasm with which many faculty are attempting to challenge student attitudes. Several resources that offer innovative ways to prepare teachers for diversity are also available. These books offer suggestions for classroom activities, individual tasks, teaching strategies, ideas for countering bias, and lists of resources that are available for instructors, as well as information on a variety of related topics. Some examples referred to in Chapter 2 are Carter and Curtis (1994), Chud and Fahlman (1995), Gonzalez-Mena (1993), and Kilbride (1990).

**Professional development and support:**

The second identified barrier that is pertinent to the preparation of teachers for diversity was directly related to faculty themselves who lamented the lack of professional development opportunities, the lack of support and the lack of accessible resources. Many comments such as those recorded below from both the interviews and the focus groups stressed the importance of ongoing faculty development.

We haven’t been able to do a lot of workshops and in-service training around this whole area of an anti-bias approach. (#1)

The bottom line is we all have to be accountable and we all have to be trained. This has to be mandatory and it’s not happening. (Carol)

An extensive commitment is needed on the part of faculty members to educate themselves and their students about diversity issues and much of the literature reiterated this. (Aguilar and Pohan, 1996; Bernhard, et al. 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Francis-Okongwu and Pflaum, 1993; Kailin, 1994; Locke, 1992; Rios, 1996; Sleeter and Grant, 1988; Williams 1991). Locke (1992) proposed that teachers must develop certain levels of cross-cultural awareness to be effective in teaching about diversity. Among the levels noted in his cross-cultural continuum are self awareness, awareness of racism, sexism, and
poverty; awareness of individual differences and awareness of other cultures. If ECE faculty are denied the opportunity to develop these levels of awareness and the necessary skills and knowledge to teach about diversity, then future early childhood practitioners will, in turn, continue to be ill-equipped to work with diversity. This was voiced strongly by Ellen at the focus group meeting, when she stated, “I don’t know anything about anti-bias. How can I implement something when I don’t know about it”.

The importance of professional development for faculty cannot be over emphasized. Any recommendations for the adoption of programs and courses that foster a commitment to diversity in students cannot be implemented if the faculty who are to teach them lack the necessary knowledge and skills. For example, remarks, both those of the early childhood teacher educators and ones they attributed to their students, strongly suggest that there is little understanding of the importance of maintaining the primary language among ECE practitioners at all levels. Given the linguistic diversity in Canada’s growing immigrant population for teachers to be ill informed can be hazardous in the extreme as reported by Cummins, (1986); Garcia and McLaughlin, (1995) and Wong-Fillmore, (1991a). Mai’s summative comment in the focus group meeting says it succinctly:

And that brings us back to the barriers we talked about earlier. Lack of professional development opportunities leads to lack of information and understanding which leads to inadequate teaching. It’s a ‘Catch 22’ situation.

Political correctness:

In dealing with all matters related to diversity, inclusion, multiculturalism and anti-bias education, to use just a few of the related terms, it was evident from the comments recorded by interview respondents and the focus group participants that “political correctness” was a major barrier that in itself was difficult to identify because it is so intangible. Issues for ECE centered around the fact that faculty, students and educators in the field are engaging in the rhetoric because it is “the thing to do” but very little real action is taking place. The comments by Anna and Carol recorded in Chapter 6 and the
comments from several of the interviewees recorded in Chapter 4, illustrate that while there is a great deal of discussion about diversity issues, there is little evidence of this discussion being translated into practice. This becomes a barrier in the sense that attempts to incorporate inclusive practices and anti-bias curriculum are often superficial. For example, the majority of interview responses emphasized that core courses in ECE programs espouse an integrated approach and as all courses are required to include one or two relevant learning outcomes in the course that reflect the required CSAC vocational learning outcome number 9, it is easy for courses to appear as if they are meeting those requirements. Yet individual instructors have the academic freedom to teach the course as they wish and with inconsistency within the evaluation process it is hard to determine what is really happening. A search of the data bases revealed that this was a relatively untouched area in the literature but one relevant comment came from Edwards, who suggests that "multicultural policies are motivated primarily by political considerations and that their major significance is symbolic" (in Cummins 1994, p. 149).

**Summary**

The barriers identified by faculty and discussed in the literature review offer real challenges in the preparation of teachers for diversity. Student attitudes appears to be a barrier encountered frequently by faculty. Reasons offered in the literature to explain the possible origins of student resistance, focus on the education process that students have experienced and the notion that developing awareness and understanding of diversity issues is a developmental process. Suggestions such as innovative teaching approaches that begin with ‘self-discovery’ are offered as a way to counter student attitudes. Two other barriers mentioned reflect the present political climate. These are the lack of professional development opportunities for faculty to educate themselves and to become fully acquainted with the document and its implications for practice and the existence of politically correct behavior that camouflages the real situation. This issue makes it very difficult to obtain an accurate picture of “reality” as most people are defensive and carefully respond to
questions in a way that is deemed politically correct. In undertaking a study of this nature, for example, I am aware that results may be compromised to a certain degree because of this.

Issues arising from theme # 4: The understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process.

Just as children learn about diversity and develop awareness through a process over time, adults too need time and opportunity to develop anti-bias awareness and knowledge. Much of the literature acknowledges that as individuals we are all products of our own sociocultural upbringing and are all at various stages of developing anti-bias awareness and knowledge (Ahlquist, 1991; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Marshall, 1996). If we view this process as a continuum, we can see that each person’s entry point on the continuum would vary based on their previous life experiences and educational experiences. This suggests that both faculty members and students are all involved in the same process. The issue for faculty is that in order to recognize and assist the students in the process of developing awareness and understanding they need to be further along on the continuum. As interview respondent #7 said;

Some of our staff are on continuums of their own development, some are very, very thoughtful and responsive and others are working through some of their own prejudices and some are probably at the generally unaware stage.

Given the historical absence of multicultural issues, perspectives or content within mainstream educational settings, it is not surprising that most teachers’ multicultural knowledge bases are quite limited as Ahlquist (1991) says

Most teacher educators never received an education that was empowering, anti-racist, problem-posing, or liberatory. If we teacher educators ourselves were taught no other way, how can we expect to provide alternatives to our students? (p. 168)
As discussed earlier in this chapter, there needs to be sufficient opportunity for ongoing professional development courses for all faculty to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable them to structure the process for students in such a manner that they meet students where they are and then facilitate student growth to where they need to be.

In Chapter 2, it was noted that teachers must begin with an examination of self if they are to implement inclusive behaviors in the classroom. Faculty need an opportunity and forum for developing their multicultural competence. Integral to the development of multicultural competence is the possession of beliefs that are consistent with and supportive of anti-bias education and practices and the acquisition of a broad, well-grounded multicultural knowledge base. This is necessary for faculty to be able to recognize that each student who comes into an ECE program brings with them different levels of knowledge about diversity, and different prejudices and beliefs.

The challenge facing faculty then is not only to increase their own awareness and knowledge but to recognize the current, existing reality of the students and proceed from there. As recorded in Chapter 4, one interview respondent mentioned that she began with herself by acknowledging to the students that she had biases and was continuously struggling to overcome them. She went on to say that this often made it easier for students to begin looking at their own attitudes and biases in a non-threatening way.

I am the first person in my class to say, “I’ve got biases too.” And that’s what it’s all about; being aware. (#11)

Another respondent put it this way;

Most people are willing to admit that they come with their own biases, and I see that as such a starting point, so that I think that once people have reached that level then what they can begin to do is look, “What are the steps that I have taken”, and “What are some of the steps that people need to take” to finally reach this stage of understanding their own biases and then begin to think about how once you’ve understood these, what you can do differently to, not necessarily erase the biases, but to work within the biases, work with them: (#8)
Summary

The notion that the understanding of and implementing of anti-bias practices is a developmental process is well documented. All faculty need to be aware that this process of developing awareness and knowledge of diversity issues is an ongoing developmental one. Each person, whether student or faculty member begins with an initial reality based on their own personal life experiences. With each new interaction, new knowledge acquisition and each new experience there is an opportunity for a transition to a reconstructed reality that incorporates different ways of knowing and doing. However in order to do this there needs to be the development of critical thinking skills that allow the reconstruction of reality. Without the critical component it is unlikely that experience and knowledge alone will bring about change. In understanding this process in ourselves it is easier to recognize and understand the same process in the students we teach.

Issues arising from theme # 5: The level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues.

The connection between language, culture and identity is explored at length in the literature review. Cazden (1981), D. Corson (1993, 1994), Corson and Lemay (1996), Cummins (1986, 1996), Cummins and Danesi (1990), Edwards and Chisholm (1987), Garcia and McLaughlin (1995), Pease-Alvarez et al. (1991), Saracho and Spodek (1983) Wade-Houston (1992) and Wong-Fillmore (1991c), all stress the importance of nurturing and maintaining a child’s first language. They emphasize, among other things, intense use of the home language in order to conserve a child’s improvement in overall language development, to enhance cognitive development and to develop a solid and broad foundation for learning English. And because the survival of a language is greatly affected by the support it receives in the 0 to 14 age bracket the implications for ECE are great. There is also a strong connection between anti-bias practices and language use so uninformed teachers and caregivers often unwittingly devalue a child by insisting on the
child using English or by not being able to respond to the child's attempts at communication as these comments from two interview respondents show.

I know a young child in a day care who speaks Spanish and has very little English, and the way the day care handles that is just shocking, it's just total immersion. And even if a day care worker can speak some Spanish, they won't allow that to take place. (#11)

When I visit child care centres I see children who tend to go back to speaking Chinese and I see staff saying, “Say that in English”

There is a great need in early childhood education for teachers to understand the importance of bilingualism, second language acquisition and first language maintenance. Yet results from this study and others discussed in the literature review (Bernhard et al., 1995a; Wong-Fillmore, 1991a) point to the general lack of knowledge and understanding among early childhood educators. This constitutes a significant barrier in the preparation of teachers for diversity. Of the 13 faculty interviewed in this study, seven had not heard of or did not know anything about “mother tongue maintenance”. Others admitted they knew a little but felt inadequate in this area. In the focus group meeting, all five participants acknowledged that this was a little discussed area. The document analysis revealed that there are no courses offered that relate specifically to language issues. A comment from the focus group pointed out that language issues such as bilingualism, second language acquisition and first language maintenance were viewed as a specialist area and usually only addressed in human development type courses. In Chapter 4 it is noted that in curriculum planning courses emphasis was on facilitating English language development because it was believed that children needed to be proficient at English to be successful in the school environment. Second language acquisition during early childhood is often viewed with suspicion and is the subject of much controversy among the population at large and among educators. This can be particularly true among speakers of international dominant languages where the populace comes to regard monolingualism as the norm and therefore “normal”. In such situations, early bilingualism is sometimes viewed as undesirable
because it is believed to threaten children's language development and even their intellectual skills. For example, some English-speaking educators in North America argue that English should be used in the homes of immigrant children as much as possible, to the exclusion of the home language, in order to prepare children for an all-English education. Such views often reflect sociopolitical attitudes such as the desire to assimilate newcomers to the dominant culture, rather than a knowledge of the true course of second language acquisition in young children (Garcia and McLaughlin, 1995).

It is important that educators working with children who come to school knowing more than one language or who are in the process of mastering a second language understand these children's language development so that their work with the children is not based on false assumptions and misunderstandings. It is also important for educators to understand that the ways in which language is used in different situations vary from one culture to another. For example, the way parents and other caregivers use language with infants and children is closely related to their cultural beliefs about the status and role of children in society, to the social organization of caregiving, and to conceptions of how children learn language (Genesee, 1994).

Summary

The issue of the level of knowledge of faculty regarding language issues that surfaced in the data, although not directly referred to as a barrier, also impacts the preparation of teachers and as such constitutes a barrier. Due to the general lack of knowledge and understanding that faculty possessed concerning language issues, students appeared to get very little information about how to value the many different first languages that exist among the families and communities in our society and how to work to give children a knowledge of English without giving prestige to the dominant culture in a way that devalues the children's own cultures. It is imperative that students have access to courses that give them a basic understanding of regional, social and developmental differences in children's language and how culture is reflected in thinking styles, learning
styles, and language development. They also need to gain an understanding of the nature of bilingualism and the process of becoming bilingual.

**Issues arising from theme # 6: The identification of intent in course titles and descriptions.**

The final issue I wish to discuss centres around the fact that an examination of the 1996/97 calendars in the document analysis revealed that less than half of the ECE programs offered core courses whose title suggested that the course addressed diversity in any way. The results from a study of the calendars showed that only ten of the 23 ECE programs examined offered a core course with the intent of anti-bias, diversity or multiculturalism clearly designated in the title of the course. I would suggest that this constitutes a barrier in that it is evidence of the fact that, unintentionally or otherwise, the majority of ECE programs are still embedded in a universalistic-assimilationist model of education that serves to transmit a body of knowledge that will ensure a continuation of the status quo.

When I presented this finding from the document analysis to the focus group, there was a mixed reaction. As I stated in Chapter 6, two of the group members were surprised at the news and expressed genuine concern that that was the case. The other three participants presented more conflicting comments suggesting that it was not important, or that it was an "understood" concept that didn't need to be articulated. I find both these views alarming and suggest they further reinforce the need for professional development at the faculty level. One argument supporting the lack of inclusion of specific terms in course titles was that individual teachers identify the areas of diversity in their own course outlines in the form of learning outcomes, assignments, content etc. and that that was sufficient.

However, counter to this was the comment that if intent was not clearly stated in course titles and descriptions then individual instructors could choose to teach the course however they wished which could result in no mention of diversity at all. While the extract from the focus group that I presented in Chapter 6 illustrates the mixed reaction and gives
an insight into the attempts to rationalize the situation I was still left with a most inconclusive situation. The only reference I found about this in the literature were some broad comments referring to the general marginalization of diversity in teacher preparation found in Cummins and Cameron (1994). I would suggest that this is an area that should be researched further by closely examining the philosophies of ECE programs and the underlying biases that are tacitly evident in the absence of clear intent stated in course titles and descriptions. I offer Carol’s comment from the focus group meeting as an embodiment of my sentiments regarding this issue.

But who knows it’s there if it’s not up front? We need to declare our intention. Anyone coming into our program should be able to look at our calendar and say; “this program shows a clear commitment to the development of cultural understanding,” or whatever.

Summary

It is evident from the examination of the calendars that issues related to diversity do not have a high profile in the terminology used in reference to ECE programs. While some programs offer the odd course related to anti-bias education or multicultural education, the majority of programs appear to offer a traditional conservative approach to early childhood education. This is an approach that focuses on equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge that will enable them to plan appropriate activities that will meet the individual needs of each child. This approach is problematic in that it does not address the impact of class, culture, and gender and the way in which these have been socially and politically constructed to perpetuate inequities in education. These are the issues that need to be clearly articulated in course descriptions, otherwise these issues will continue to be marginalized or omitted altogether.

Theme #7: The identification of successful strategies

One of the main objectives of this study was to determine the sorts of teaching strategies faculty members employed as they prepared teachers for diversity. This theme
resulted as a direct response in the interviews, and follow-up discussions in the focus groups, requesting respondents to list those strategies they deemed to be successful in a) developing students' knowledge and understanding of an anti-bias approach to teaching young children, b) raising students awareness of their own culturally situated values and assumptions, and c) developing critical thinking skills that will enable students to recognize, challenge and counter both the personal and institutional behaviors that perpetuate oppression. These strategies are listed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6. While there are no obvious issues arising directly from this, the issue of student attitudes listed elsewhere relates directly as many of the listed strategies are aimed specifically at challenging student attitudes.

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed issues that emerged from the seven themes previously identified through the analysis of the triangulation of the data. In consultation with the review of the literature I identified issues that related to the objectives of this study. In discussing these issues it became apparent that with the exception of the identification of strategies used by faculty, the remaining issues were barriers to the preparation of early childhood teachers within an anti-bias framework. Operating with the notion that barriers can be overcome I concluded each section with the acknowledgment that strategies must be in place to deal with these issues. In my final chapter I draw some tentative conclusions and offer some suggestions for addressing these issues in the preparation of future early childhood educators.
Chapter 8
Conclusions

Introduction
In arguing for the implementation of anti-bias education and practices in early childhood education this study undertook to identify the factors that play a significant role in the preparation of teachers for diversity. These factors are identified in the literature review in Chapter 2, in the results of the research data as recorded in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, and as discussed in Chapter 7. In this concluding chapter I attempt to draw some tentative conclusions concerning how the lack of a clear understanding of the terms, “multicultural education” and “anti-bias education”, confounds the preparation of teachers for diversity. I also propose a model for teacher preparation in Early Childhood Education based on key components identified in the research as being necessary in the preparation of teachers for diversity. Finally I discuss the transformative nature of the research study and the perceived limitations.

How lack of a clear understanding of the terms, multicultural education and anti-bias education confound the preparation of teachers for diversity.
A study of the relevant literature as discussed in Chapter 2, revealed many contradictory and competing conceptualizations of the terms “multicultural education” and “anti-bias education”. Results from the interviews and focus groups also revealed definitional confusion. This was evidenced particularly in the field, when students encounter different interpretations of the terms and the resulting manifestations in practice of the different understandings. I would suggest that rather than trying to resolve contrary definitions of the terms which are, after all, embedded in different socio-political and historical contexts, students and professionals need to develop an understanding of the nature of the conceptual contexts. This would allow teachers to move beyond labels and
definitions to develop an understanding of what is required to implement social justice in a culturally, linguistically and developmentally diverse context. It is my opinion that this is one of the most important steps towards actualizing anti-bias education and practices in Early Childhood Education.

In an attempt to begin to reach a clearer understanding of anti-bias education and the contexts in which it is embedded and interpreted, I have developed a table (see Diagram A) attributing general characteristics to the approaches of multicultural education. This diagram presents multicultural education as a continuum ranging from multicultural education perceived as “tourist curriculum” on one end and multicultural education perceived as “anti-bias education” at the other end of the continuum. Banks and Banks (1993), Sleeter and Grant (1987) and other researchers mentioned in the literature review, also found that interpretations of multicultural education ranged from a distinct multiethnic emphasis to a more radical, transformative, anti-racist approach.

The purpose of Diagram A is not to present a dichotomy of “good” versus “bad” but rather to illustrate the perceived limitations of a “tourist curriculum” approach to multicultural education and to present the broader transformative possibilities of an anti-bias approach to education.
# DIAGRAM A

**Towards an Understanding of Anti-bias Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multicultural Education as “Tourist Curriculum”</th>
<th>Multicultural Education as Anti-bias Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebration of difference</td>
<td>Exploration of the dynamics of difference when dominant and minority groups interface and the resulting power differential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference (culture) as grounded in the country of origin.</td>
<td>Difference (culture, gender, class, etc.) as grounded in daily lived experience within the context and structures of this society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture viewed as static</td>
<td>Culture viewed as dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on ‘exotic’ celebrations, traditions, and behaviors</td>
<td>Focus on lived everyday responses of people to the circumstances and social formations in which they find themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks harmony through understanding of difference</td>
<td>Examines sources of disharmony and initiates actions to move toward equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy = apolitical</td>
<td>Pedagogy = Critical; acknowledges socio-political context and purpose of education and seeks to transform that context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views learner as passive recipient of information</td>
<td>Views learner as active change agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Analytical / Emancipatory / Transformative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of existing practices</td>
<td>Challenge to existing practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Model for teacher preparation in Early Childhood Education.

A close examination of all the data resulted in the identification of key components deemed necessary in the preparation of teachers for diversity. These key components are essential not just for student teachers but for the faculty who teach them. Results from both the research and the examination of the literature on the preparation of early childhood teachers pointed strongly to

- the need for teachers to critically examine their own culturally situated values and beliefs
- the need for teachers to have a sound knowledge base gained through experiencing views from other cultures to support the development of cross-cultural competence and
- the need for teachers to develop an understanding of the principles of anti-bias education.

Also, as discussed in Chapter 2, much of the anti-bias literature emphasizes the extensive commitment needed on the part of faculty members to educate themselves. Teaching in and about an anti-bias framework requires personal and professional risks. Faculty members are faced with a challenge to the way they think, prepare and deliver their teaching materials. They need to incorporate a more pluralistic form of teaching so that the future teachers will be better prepared to work with their diverse clientele.

I suggest that opportunities must be in place for faculty to identify their own personal views on cultural diversity, gain cross-cultural competence, access knowledge about the principles and practices of an anti-bias approach to education and gain information about important issues such as the role of language and working with parents. Equipped with this faculty will be better able to examine how these views may be passed on to their students and will also become active in making their classrooms more culturally sensitive.
The results from the triangulation of the research data identified several barriers that inhibited the preparation of teachers for diversity. These are discussed in the preceding chapters. In considering the findings from the literature and as a means to countering those barriers I have identified four interconnecting components that I believe are necessary in the preparation of future teachers in ECE. These components are:

- **Self discovery;** examining and becoming aware of one’s own culturally embedded values and beliefs.
- **Cross cultural understanding;** experiencing views from other cultures and acquiring information that leads to knowledge and understanding of “other”.
- **Critical thinking skills;** developing the ability to reflect on and critically examine all issues relating to diversity including the power relations in society.
- **Principles of anti-bias education;** acquiring the knowledge of the principles and practices of anti-bias education.

In considering these four components I propose the following model for incorporating an anti-bias framework in Early Childhood teacher preparation programs. The model illustrates the relationships among the four variables of self-discovery, cross-cultural understanding, critical thinking skills and the principles of anti-bias education. Using Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model as a guide I demonstrate the interconnectedness of the four components (see Diagram B). I have placed self discovery at the centre, suggesting that becoming aware of one’s own culturally situated beliefs and values is a sound beginning point. From the interviews and focus group discussions, it is evident that the concept of culture is seen by students, and by some of the participants, in relation to others, and particularly in relation to those who are different from themselves, but never as a characteristic of themselves. For this model I use the common definition of “culture” -- the patterns, norms and framework for living of a group of people that share a common national or ethnic origin. Included in this understanding of the word “culture” are
beliefs and values, customs and rituals, rules, expectations and taboos, roles and behavior, material goods and aesthetic creations. For each of us, the cultural framework or context that we exist within shapes our conceptions of reality and our everyday activities, interactions and sense of self and others. Culture governs our behavior, creates our meanings and is the lens through which we see and understand the world (Chud and Fahlman., 1995). Through an exploration of our own cultural perspective we gain a greater understanding of self in relation to context and in relation to others. We are more able to incorporate into our understanding, new experiences with others and new information about others leading to the development of cross-cultural competence. Cross-cultural competence enables educators to work effectively with diverse families and involves educators being knowledgeable about their own cultural background and acquiring general knowledge of specific cultures’ beliefs, child-rearing practices, and expectations. It also involves being aware of the verbal and non-verbal communication styles used in various cultural contexts and understanding how one’s own cultural beliefs and values have an impact on interactions with others. Interconnected with self discovery and cross cultural competence is the development of critical thinking skills which are required to enable one to reconceptualize one’s beliefs and values allowing for a greater acceptance of other ways of knowing and to recognize both institutional and personal barriers that perpetuate oppression. A knowledge of the principles and practices of anti-bias education will equip one with the necessary skills to become an active change agent and begin to work within an anti-bias framework implementing social justice and working towards the removal of existing barriers that oppress minority groups in our society. From the results of the interviews and focus groups in this study it is evident that one of the core areas of anti-bias education that needs attention is in regard to the current understanding of language development and bilingualism. Given the linguistic diversity in Canada’s growing immigrant population, mother tongue maintenance (primary language development) in early education should be made a core concern in teacher education. As has been found in
research, preschool children are especially susceptible to primary language loss when the school promotes a societal language to the exclusion of a minority home language. As language development also plays a critical role in the cognitive, social and emotional development of young children early childhood educators need an in-depth understanding of first and second language acquisition, of the connection of culture and language, of the consequences of emphasizing the school and societal language over the language of the home and family and what kind of linguistic skills they need in order to work with children and families from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

While I have placed self discovery at the centre, suggesting that becoming aware of one’s own culturally situated beliefs and values is a sound beginning point, it is important to recognize the dynamic (back and forth) nature of the model rather than view it as a sequential process of understanding.
Towards an Understanding of Anti-bias Education:

A Model for Teacher Preparation in ECE.

DIAGRAM B
For teacher preparation programs this model could be implemented in a number of ways. Programs could simply offer a series of separate courses beginning with any component. For example, a self-discovery workshop, a series of courses on developing interpersonal skills around cross-cultural competence, exercises in critical thinking and a course on the principles of anti-bias education. Or it could be implemented by offering a single course or sets of courses related to the principles of anti-bias education and/or the development of cross-cultural competence with opportunities for student self-discovery and the development of critical thinking skills integrated throughout all core courses. There is also the possibility that this model could be fitted into existing programs simply by weaving all the components into existing courses using many of the strategies espoused in the interviews and focus groups. Based on the evidence garnered in this study, however, the most effective use of the model would be for programs to offer a series of separate courses related to each component and complement this by having the four components integrated throughout all other courses. In this way diversity content is not marginalized or trivialized and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students develop will be applicable to every situation.

Taking into account the findings in this study that pointed to the need for faculty to be better trained in preparing teachers for diversity, I suggest that the same model could serve as a basis for professional development programs. The intent is that the model should lend itself easily to a range of variations.

The tentative conclusions I have drawn limit themselves to the discussion of implementing anti-bias education and practices within the existing institutional arrangements of our society. Inherent in this model is the notion that the individual teacher is the primary agent of change and that this specific role does not acknowledge the barriers to, and need for, change within the educational institution as a whole. Of necessity such a model is fraught with a number of contradictions. Insofar as the education process
continues to reproduce existing relations of domination, and is thus part of the problem (Bourdieu, 1990; Cummins, 1994; Giroux, 1991a, 1993), this anti-bias approach at reform is aimed at creating a rupture in this process of social reproduction.

Limitations of the Research

Any research design bears certain weaknesses, and the design for this study is no exception. The following points, open for foreseeable criticism, explain the limitations of this particular study. The major limitation concerns the self-selection of participants for the interviews and focus groups. In asking for volunteers it is evident that the majority of respondents will be people who have an interest and commitment to the research topic. This in itself is noteworthy as the results have demonstrated a lack of awareness of many of the participants in spite of the claims of many to be the “diversity expert” within their respective colleges. Another factor in this self-selection process was that the research participants felt they needed to represent their institutions in a favourable way, particularly in the focus group meetings where it was known from which institution each participant came. This may have inhibited some of the discussion.

Another limitation in the selection of participants was the fact that the majority of faculty in ECE programs in Ontario are white, middle-class women and while these demographics are slowly changing, all participants in this study identified themselves as white, middle-class women. It is not insignificant that two respondents in the interviews nominated this as a barrier in the preparation of teachers for diversity as recorded in Chapter 4.

A second limitation in this study is due to the nature of the research topic and the present political climate. As this study progressed it became evident that some participants were generally guarded in their responses and several even admitted that the present political climate affected people’s responses to certain questions and issues. This becomes a limitation in that the ‘politically correct behavior’ does not allow for real insights or views
to emerge. It is therefore impossible to gain an accurate picture of reality. This suggests that the findings of this study may be compromised to a certain extent.

A third limitation of this study relates to the document analysis. Results from the document analysis are limited due to the fact that I was unable to access specific course outlines which would have added to the findings by enabling me to examine not just course titles and descriptions but also learning outcomes and details of content. This would give a more accurate view of the ways in which programs are addressing diversity issues.

**The Reforming Nature of the Research**

As I stated in Chapter 3, an underlying aim of the study is an emphasis on the researcher and participants learning together. It was exciting therefore to find that as a result of taking part in this study several participants acknowledged a gain in learning. Two participants in the focus group meetings who were initially surprised to hear that few course titles incorporated diversity related terms, left the meetings determined to examine this issue further in order to instigate changes. One participant took part in the focus group process specifically in order to learn more about diversity issues and stated she had learned a great deal. Several respondents acknowledged the continuing need to advocate for greater recognition of the importance of initiatives such as the inclusion of diversity related outcomes in the CSAC standards and anti-bias education. It was acknowledged that these initiatives were just the beginning and it was important to continue pushing forward. As interview respondent #2 said, “. . . that seems to me the beginning of the intent to recognize change, uniqueness or diversity, but I hope we are not going to get stuck there”.

**Conclusion**

This study represents a continuation of other studies aimed at suggesting ways to prepare early childhood teachers to be more responsive to the needs of a culturally, linguistically, racially and developmentally diverse society. Although there is still much to be done, it is encouraging to see initiatives such as the CSAC standards acknowledging diversity in the required learning outcomes, and to meet and talk with faculty members who
are committed to educating themselves and to finding innovative strategies for preparing future early childhood educators. It is hoped the suggestions made in this study will further inform the challenge of preparing teachers for diversity.
Bibliography


Ng, Roxana., Staton, Pat & Scane, Joyce (1995). (Eds.) *Anti-Racism, Feminism, and Critical Approaches to Education.* Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.


Wong-Fillmore, Lily (1991b) A question for early childhood programs: English first or families first? Education Week, June 19, 32-34.


APPENDIX NUMBER ONE

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What was your reaction to the CSAC standards (April 1996);
   - in general,
   - specifically in relation to vocational learning outcome number 9:

   "The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to act in a manner consistent
   with principles of fairness, equity, and diversity to support the development and
   learning of individual children, within the context of family, culture, and
   society."

2. What changes did you make/are you making to the program to address vocational
   learning outcome number 9
   - new courses
   - course outlines
   - learning outcomes
   - assignments
   - special topics

3. How do you evaluate learning outcome number 9:

4. What does the term multicultural education mean to you?

5. What does the term anti-bias mean to you?

6. What do you know about the mother tongue maintenance issue?

7. What do you do to develop students’ abilities to teach children from cultural and
   linguistic backgrounds that differ from their own?
   - knowledge?
   - skills?
   - attitudes?

8. Can you identify some of the sources of resistance you’ve encountered in the process of
   preparing early childhood educators for work with cultural and linguistic diversity?
   - management
   - admission processes
   - student attitudes
   - colleagues
   - resources (lack of, inappropriate etc)

9. What texts related to diversity, multiculturalism and anti-bias education are your students
   required to buy?

10. Any further comments you’d like to add?
Dear Co-ordinator,

My name is Patricia Corson and I am a graduate student in the Centre for Teacher Development at OISE/UT. I am presently conducting a study for my doctoral thesis which examines the strategies used in ECE programs to prepare teachers for working with cultural, linguistic and racial diversity. I am particularly interested in researching how your program has addressed the recent CSAC standards (April 1996); in particular vocational learning outcome number 9:

"The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to act in a manner consistent with principles of fairness, equity, and diversity to support the development and learning of individual children, within the context of family, culture, and society."

It is my hope this study will help us prepare our students more effectively for working with diverse children and their families. I would greatly appreciate it if you and/or other faculty would be prepared to take part in a telephone interview of 20 - 30 minutes to answer some questions related to the strategies you use to determine if the students have indeed demonstrated this ability. Your contribution will provide a unique and valuable perspective on the issue. With your permission the interview will be tape recorded to ensure accuracy and the interview would be conducted at a time convenient to you.

I assure you that all information will be kept confidential. No individual person or institution will be identified. Only composite, unidentified information will be the result of the work and only the researcher, her supervisors and examiners will have access to the research data. As a participant you will be granted access to the final report. If you are willing to participate please fill out the attached consent form, return it to me in the pre-stamped envelope as soon as possible and I will contact you shortly. Should you have any questions you can reach me on (416) 979 5000 Ext. 7636 during the day or on (416) 789 0814 during the evenings. Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,
Patricia Corson
APPENDIX NUMBER THREE
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INVESTIGATOR: PATRICIA CORSON
Doctoral Candidate OISE/UT

TENTATIVE TITLE OF STUDY: "Anti-Bias Education in Early Childhood: Preparing teachers for diversity."

I, ______________________________ agree to be a participant in this research project. I am aware that the interview will be recorded to ensure accuracy. I understand that my involvement in this research is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any question or provide any information as I choose. I also understand that the confidentiality of my participation will be honoured and will not be revealed to anyone without my written consent, and that I may withdraw at any time.

I understand that after the research is completed, the researcher will offer me access to the results of the study.

Signature ______________________________ Date ______________________________

Phone Number ______________________________
APPENDIX NUMBER FOUR
DEFINITIVE FEATURES OF AN ANTI-BIAS APPROACH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Chang (1993) profiles the Child Development Centre at Cabrillo community college. This centre serves as a teacher training program for those working with toddlers through five year olds, and has as its particular focus anti-bias curriculum and commitment to families.

The goal of the anti-bias curriculum is to promote a strong sense of pride in self and family, to support young children’s natural interest in difference in order to counter “pre-prejudice”, and to help children identify stereotyping and bias and be able to take stands, alone and with others, on their own and others’ behalf.

The anti-bias curriculum advocates that part of early childhood education must be to help children have appropriate language to talk about and appreciate age, gender, racial, ethnic, and physical ability differences among people. Children also need specific age-appropriate skills to stand up for themselves and others in the face of injustice.

Another assumption in the Cabrillo anti-bias approach is that parents are children’s first, best and lifetime teachers, and that any attempt to change the lives of children must include a mutual education process between the parents and the centre staff. Parents participate in hiring committees, a classroom “parent co-op”, parent meetings, conferences and home visits.

Parents and teachers work in partnership to combat stereotypes and appreciate diversity. There is a recognition that prejudices and stereotypes are a tangible and serious problem and adults need to always be specifically looking for and thinking about ways to address these issues. Interactions with children encourage language use and problem solving skills to appreciate diversity and challenge unfair treatment.
In addition the anti-bias curriculum recognizes that visual cues are important to children’s development. Classrooms are covered with the children’s own artwork to demonstrate to the children that they are valued and this is a place where their world, their families can be fully represented. Visual images to break down social stereotypes whether they are about ethnicity, gender, physical abilities or age are abundantly displayed. The classroom walls are covered with posters of children of color, children of different physical abilities, girls and boys in non-stereotypical roles (e.g. girls playing with blocks and tools, boys dancing, fathers cuddling babies) and play areas incorporate ethnically diverse “tools”.

Every child’s first language is valued and parents are encouraged to maintain use of the first language in the home as much as possible. At the same time English language skills are being developed with bilingualism as the ultimate goal. The program seeks to not only acknowledge and respect differences in others, but to embed the child/family culture into the day to day life of the centre.