ADMINISTRATOR VIEWS OF, AND STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH, CONFLICTS INVOLVING NEW CANADIANS

by

Grace Darling Robinson

A Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this research was to determine how high school administrators view conflicts involving new Canadian students, i.e., students in Canada for five years or less. I wanted to discover what types of conflicts administrators were experiencing, who were involved in these conflicts, the issues around which the conflicts revolve, and what strategies were being used in conflict resolution. Fifteen administrators participated in this research: Principals, Vice- Principals, and Heads of E.S.L. Departments. I met with each one for an hour or more, in a semi-formal, taped interview at their schools. We had telephone conversations to clarify the intent of this study, and possible usefulness to the schools. Participants were very co-operative, and data collection was concluded in September, 1998.

The data reflect a number of issues. All schools involved in the study have an increasing number of students from different ethnic and language backgrounds. Administrators maintain that the diversity is great, and many students experience many conflicts, especially during the transition phase, when old and new cultures meet and struggle to find compatibility. Some students are often not prepared for the new majority
culture, and the home culture is often inflexible, leading to conflicts. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents are involved in conflicts from time to time, but mainly conflicts are between students and their peers. Administrators report that they use various strategies to deal with conflicts. These include proactive measures such as orientation sessions to increase the students’ awareness of the school culture and environment.

Administrators also indicate that they encourage ethnic clubs for same language interaction, and international clubs to foster respect for all cultures. International concerts, food fairs, and fashion shows display the many talents of the students and are also believed to foster respect and cultural understanding. Reportedly, when conflicts occur, strategies such as arbitration, consensus decision-making, and mediation are used. Peer mediation is the strategy that administrators believe is most useful, especially with new Canadian students who need advice and understanding rather than punishment. The system of punishment is used with much restraint to allow the students time to gain a foothold in the system and come to terms with their bicultural existence.

The findings in this study on conflicts mirror the types of conflicts suggested in the literature by researchers such as Gay (1981), Ghuman (1994), Phelan et al. (1993), Ryan and Wignall (1994), among others. Conflict resolution strategies by researchers such as Schrump (1997) and Margolis and Tewell (1998), reflect some similarities with those being used in the schools involved in the study. Strategies by Follet (1993) and Fris (1992), while not being very useful for peer mediators, can be used by adults with some measure of effectiveness.
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Doctors Ryan, Townsend, Begley and Davis carefully prepared me through the required courses prior to the thesis stage. Dr. Ryan’s classes, and work on minority students, and Dr. Begley’s classes and writings on administrator values helped me develop my thesis topic. I’m grateful to them all.

The participants in the study are busy people, but they willingly and graciously gave of their time and energy to provide the data I needed. No one cancelled an interview, and everything went as planned. The names of the participants have been changed to protect their identity, and, therefore, not provided here.

My family, which includes my husband, Hector, and four children, Rosemarie, Audrey, Sandra, and Nadine, some of whom had to fill in for me in various situations, and there were times when I could not be there for them. Their love, thoughtfulness, and encouragement, put me deeply in their debt. My thanks also to Joe Lawrence, of TOPS Typing Services, for his assistance with the typing of this thesis.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This study explores how school administrators view and deal with conflicts involving new Canadians. Ideally, education should meet the needs of all students; unfortunately, however, schools are often geared towards meeting the needs of the students of one particular culture. Today, few schools in Toronto are without a multicultural student body. The result is that problems, and even conflicts can occur if these schools focus on the needs of the traditionally dominant groups. This study seeks to determine administrator views of, and their strategies for dealing with, conflicts. This chapter looks at the problem, the significance of the study, the framework for its development, as well as its limitations.

Background

New Canadians make up a good portion of the student body in our schools today. They represent the diverse racial and ethnic composition of the country. The numbers have continued to grow due to favourable and less discriminatory immigration laws. In the 1960s Canada repealed its discriminatory immigration policy which had favoured Europeans. This change, along with the permeability of national borders, improvement of transportation, and ethnic violence in many places, have acted as incentives for people from non-European countries to come to Canada (Ryan & Wignall, 1994). Since 1989
the majority of immigrants from these countries have outnumbered Europeans two to one. They have come from such diverse countries as China, Vietnam, Taiwan, Korea, Iran, Israel, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South America, among others (Metropolitan Toronto School Board, 1998).

A brief look at the following numbers will demonstrate the diversity and the level of immigration to Canada. In 1989, 191,015 people entered Canada (Stats. Can., 1990). The quota since 1994 has been approximately 250,000 for each year, and approximately 230,000 arrive yearly. Fifty-five percent of all immigrants to Canada, since 1986, have chosen to live in Ontario. Sixty to 70 percent of immigrants to Ontario, or 35 percent of all immigrants to Canada settle in Metropolitan Toronto (Metropolitan Toronto School Board, 1997). Refugees also make up a high proportion of temporary residents whose children are eligible to enter the school system. As Cole (1998) states, dramatic changes have occurred in the pattern of migration, with the increase of refugee applicants. Forty-four percent of all refugees to Canada settle in Metropolitan Toronto (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1993).

Difficulties arise not only because of the large numbers of people but also because of the many different language groups represented. Thirty-three percent of families in Metro Toronto report a first language other than French or English. In one day high school in Toronto, the student body comprises students from 42 countries, 45 different language backgrounds, and four or more very different religions (Toronto Board of Education, 1997). This underscores the number of world views and value systems
represented among these groups. It also points to potential conflicts they will experience as they try to settle in the majority culture of the school. Bettmann and Moore (1974) posit that schools are microcosms of society, so the same conflicts, fears, prejudices, and inequities that exist in the world are also found in school communities.

Schools, especially in big cities such as Toronto with its multiracial mix, must, therefore expect conflicts. As a teacher of English and E.S.L. (English to speakers of other languages), and, as an administrator in a school with many students of E.S.L., I am aware of this changing situation. In order to speak with administrators about my research topic, I visited them in their schools where the student bodies are larger than in mine. I was somewhat surprised at the large numbers of backgrounds and languages being spoken in any one school. Many students were wearing their national dress and gathered in their own cultural groups, or so it seemed. Adult students were also in adolescent schools, and I thought of the conflicts that must occur in these schools as a consequence. I concluded that teachers and administrators would have to work very hard to provide a calm, supportive environment for all these students, especially in schools with large student bodies and many cultures.

Statement of the Problem

Canada is a pluralistic society with people from various cultural backgrounds. The juxtaposition of the cultures often results in conflicts, stemming from different ways of doing and knowing, in the old versus the new countries. Some students are also from very rural settings, with limited experience of the outside world. They come to the big
city with its infrastructure, and experience culture shock. Although some students try to conform to the norms of both school and home, they create more personal conflicts because school norms are often in conflict with those of home (Corson, 1992). Some students, in rejecting the norms of home in order to embrace the new culture, make friends, and achieve a sense of belonging, create more conflicts for the family. Exchanging one’s culture for another is difficult, if not impossible; even developing coping skills to deal with the differences is no easy task. As Huntington (1993) indicates, differences among civilizations (cultural entities) are basic, deeply rooted, and difficult to change. This presents real conflicts for these new Canadians, because the cultural differences are many. Differences involve history, language, culture, traditions, expectations, aspirations, and most importantly, religions.

I employed the definition of conflict provided by Deutsch (1973) (in Joe Fris (1992)), because it mirrors my own definition of the term. He defines conflicts as incompatibles that interfere with the accomplishment of objectives, cause injury, and reduce effectiveness. I would expand the word injury to include feelings of hurt, shame, discomfort, deprivation, inferiority, isolation, low self-esteem, and so on. The conflicts being referred to are limited to those experienced by some new Canadian students, with their families, friends, peers, teachers and administrators. Conflicts that involve organizational culture are only included to the extent that students experience conflicts with "the way we do things around here" Deal and Kennedy (1982, 6).
Alladin (1994) suggests that in pluralistic societies ethnic groups are believed to share aspects of the common culture, while retaining a unique ethnic culture in their networks, residential enclaves, churches, and languages. There are, however, impediments that prevent people who are not of the majority culture from sharing in the common or majority culture. For example, value systems are often different and patterns of social action that appear to be similar can be quite differently constructed involving different elements. Another impediment is the language of the new culture. Many immigrants, especially those in the country for five years or less, have little or no facility with the English language, and must attend school to acquire some measure of competence in this area. Learning English as a second or third language is not the only issue involved, but it is an important factor in the adjustment of immigrant and refugee students. Second language acquisition must be understood in a social context, since it provides a bridge for socialization and schooling in the new communities (Cole, 1998, p.40). Some students have had no formal education in their first language, and some have experienced trauma in war and have interrupted or limited academic background (the Public School Board of Metropolitan Toronto, 1997). Therefore, not only school age students, but also adult students with different needs enter the school system, requiring adjustments in program, program delivery, and attention to personal, social, and economic needs.

People of different cultures often have different views on the relationships between God and man, the individual and the group, husband and wife, the rights and
responsibilities of individuals and groups, liberty and authority, equality, hierarchy, and so on. (Huntington, 1993). The tension lies in the coming together of these different views. Aspects of our culture change over time (Beck, 1993), but, as Ogbu (1995) says, we all live in our own cultural worlds. Appleton (1983) posits that all people become "encapsulated" during childhood, and as the process of socialization continues, one learns to accept the assumptions of the community, its values, world views, taboos, misconceptions, stereotypes, and lifestyles. This concept of acculturation is supported by Beck (1992), Bettmann and Moore (1994), Corson (1993), Macpherson (1992), Rokeach (1973), and Schein (1985), so culture is something people have, as well as a process that they experience, and when cultural systems are different, there is the potential for conflicts. New Canadians not only face differences in societal culture but also in the organizational culture of the school. The impact of school culture on the various aspects of school life has been the topic of much research (Hargreaves, 1994, 1995; Fullan, 1991, 1993, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Lieberman, 1990).

Organizational culture has been defined by many researchers. Schein (1985), for example, describes this culture as the basic assumptions and beliefs, invented, discovered, or developed by a given group to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. These shared beliefs regarding such matters as the nature of time and space, human nature, view of the world are considered to have worked well enough and,
therefore, valid to be taught to the new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel. As Schein states:

To really understand a culture and to ascertain more completely the groups values and overt behaviour, it is imperative to delve into the underlying basic assumptions, which are typically unconscious but which actually determine how group members perceive, think and feel. Such assumptions are themselves learned responses that originated as espoused values. But as a value leads to a behaviour, and as that behaviour begins to solve the problem which prompted it in the first place, the value gradually is transformed into an underlying assumption about how things really are.

These do not change quickly or easily. Deal and Kennedy (1982) define organizational culture as "the way we do things around here." Turnstall (1983) calls it a general constellation of beliefs, mores, value systems, behavioural norms, and ways of doing business that are unique to each institution. Hargreaves and Earl (1990) have added form, i.e., relationships among members, and content, which is what members think, say, and do. The emphasis in all these definitions is that these values and beliefs are shared, and they are shared, but only by people of a particular culture. But there are many new people moving into the system, and many of these "shared" beliefs are not shared by them, because, although similarities exist between cultures, there are fundamental differences (Beck, 1993), which result in conflicts for students. It is very disconcerting for many new Canadian students to display the expected student posture, especially in
conventional schools, where the context for learning is not congruent with the culture and experience of many minority students (Corson, 1992).

Students' learning can be impeded during these periods of turmoil, and in some cases students have even abandoned the learning process by choosing to drop out of school. When cultural differences are less of a problem, students feel more included and validated in the classrooms. Schools deal with conflicts daily, and while organizational conflicts can be time consuming and engaging, cultural conflicts are often compelling concerns. Efforts to reduce, if not to eliminate, cultural conflicts among the student body, will not necessarily result in greater educational achievement, but they will help to ease the transition of students to the new environment, and reduce fear and tension.

Conflicts can best be solved by the efforts of administrators who are sensitive to the issues and who seek solutions through an informed decision-making process that is guided by research, training, as well as experience. Administrators have the ultimate responsibility for discipline throughout the school. It is also their responsibility to provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning for all students. It, therefore, behooves them to become informed of the various cultures in the schools, despite any lack of formal training in this area.

My own experience, as an administrator in high schools in the greater Toronto area, underscores the dilemma of lack of information about the different cultures among many administrators who must deal with conflicts resulting from cultural diversity. Quite often, the strategy is mostly one of muddling through and learning by experience, because
of a lack of formal training in cultural differences. Useful win/win strategies must be found to help administrators maintain acceptable behaviour among students and help students deal with their environment and develop a comfort zone within which to operate.

Significance of the Study

The study intends to discover how school administrators identify and deal with conflicts involving new Canadians, i.e., students in Canada for five years or less. Administrators are involved in schooling based on the same set of rules handed down to them by the Ministry of Education, and the Board of Education in their jurisdiction. Despite this suggestion of sameness, each administrator has his/her own perception of how things work in the school. As constructivist theories of learning tell us, individuals see the world through their own perspective, based on a particular set of experiences, beliefs, and knowledge (Banks, 1993). Administrators' own values, beliefs, and ethics come into play in their daily decision-making (Begley, 1988; Campbell, 1992), not the least of which is their view of conflicts and resolution of the same.

Conflicts are difficult to identify because many are personal, and psychological, and rooted in culture and value systems that are different from the main Canadian culture. There is a variety of cultural groups in the schools, most of which are almost always unfamiliar to administrators. I wanted to get the collective experiences of 15 administrators, in order to heighten awareness of best practices regarding conflicts, in terms of identification, prevention, and resolution. I also hope that my research will contribute positively to the literature on the topic of conflicts and conflict resolution; and
will benefit administrators, particularly of schools in Toronto, and in other major cities where schools experience a similarly tremendous diversity of cultures.

The findings on conflicts and conflict resolution will inform administrators' practice, reinforcing what is being done or providing new strategies. This study has much in common with others that have investigated the topic of conflicts and conflict management (resolution). Phelan et al. (1993), Gay (1981), Van Balkam (1992), Freslan (1993), Ghuman (1994), Robertson (1995), and Delgado-Gartan and Trueba (1991), are among those who have looked at migration, adaptation, and conflicts. Conflict resolution has been investigated by Treslan (1993), Thomas (1976), Margolis and Tewell (1988), and Kearns (1993) among others.

Framework

A synthesis of the related literature identified four areas around which I focused the research. These four areas are listed below, and reflected in Figures 1a, and 1b (overleaf). These four areas are chosen (1) because they have been focused in the literature on conflicts, (2) my study is about conflicts, and these are areas of conflict that I wanted to investigate as being central to my research question:

1) types of conflicts;
2) issues around which conflicts revolve;
3) people involved; and
4) strategies for resolution.

Figures 1a and 1b reflect the four areas around which the study is focused. In Figure 1a, the largest circle represents the main goal of the study, i.e., to determine
administrators' views of conflicts. The largest circle in Figure 1b shows that conflict resolution is also an important goal of the study. The areas depicted in the other circles of both Figures are the same. In addition to the framework provided in Figures 1a and 1b, questions to determine demographic changes were also asked. Gay's three-dimensional classification of conflicts, into procedural, substantive, and interpersonal, was also used in the chapter on conflicts (Chapter 6), as an organizer for reporting the types of conflicts discovered in the study, and, therefore, becomes part of the framework.
Figure 1a

A Guide For Questioning Participants

Types of Conflicts

People Involved

Issues around which conflicts revolves

Administrators' Views of Conflicts

Figure 1b

Types of Conflicts

People Involved

Issues around which conflicts revolve

Administrators' Conflict Resolution Strategies
Demographic questions are important to determine the level of diversity in the schools, and provide the context for conflicts. Questions on types of conflicts are developed around Gay’s (1981) three-dimensional classification. The definition of these categories are provided later in the study. Questions on conflict resolution were influenced greatly by the conflict resolution strategies found in the literature. For example, typologies of conflict resolution strategies by Follet (1975), Thomas (1976), Fris (1992), and Margolis and Tewell (1988) help to determine the questions. Not only did they guide my thinking in developing the questions but also my expectations of responses, as well as my probes, when necessary, to get at the required information. These typologies are representative of others found in the literature, so responses that do not fit these may necessitate the formation of new categories for reporting.

Purpose of the Study

As previously stated, the purpose of the study is to determine administrator’s views of, and strategies for dealing with, conflicts involving new Canadians. I intend to provide administrators with a resource regarding conflicts involving new Canadians, which conflicts to anticipate, how the participating administrators identify the various areas of conflicts, their efforts to prevent some, mediate some, and punish others. To achieve this, I read, widely, the literature available, and developed the research questions. The research method I used is geared to answer the questions, covering as many aspects as possible.
I have identified four central questions:

1) What is the nature (i.e., procedural, substantive, and interpersonal) of the conflicts being seen?

2) Around what issues (e.g., gender, religion) do these conflicts revolve?

3) Who is involved in these conflicts?

4) What actions do administrators take to deal with these conflicts?

Limitations of the Study

This study explores administrator views. Whether these views represent the facts of the prevailing realities in the school or not, is beyond the scope of this study. I accept the information as provided, with some probing questions, but no challenges; therefore, the data represent the views of administrators as they provided them. It is possible that if I had spent several days, instead of a few hours in the schools, I would have seen more and probably asked different questions. I could possibly also have received different responses to the questions I asked. It is possible that some of the responses I received could have been designed more to be "politically correct" than on existing realities. In spite of this, I must be satisfied with what is presently achieved. My experience, as an educator, makes me aware of the plight of the immigrant student, and it is possible that to a small extent my interpretation of the data may be influenced by my own experience and knowledge in this regard, because I had to make certain choices.
Outline of the Dissertation

- Chapter 1 presents an introduction of the study, its background and the statement of the problem. A framework, significance, and purpose of the study are also offered.
- Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature.
- Chapter 3 outlines my methodology and design of the study, as well as methods of data collection and analysis.
- Chapter 4 gives the data on demographic changes. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present the data as analysed, according to the four dimensions indicated in the conceptual framework.
- Chapter 8 also furnishes data but is somewhat outside of the framework. It reports administrators' views on out of school support systems and desired changes.
- Chapter 9, presents a discussion of the findings their implications for educators, and chapter 10 concludes the study.

Summary

This chapter (1) introduces the study, and its background; a statement of the problem is also sketched. A framework is indicated along with the purpose, significance, and limitation of the study. An outline of the dissertation is also provided. The next chapter reviews the literature on conflicts.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Conflicts have long been seen as important challenges to human affairs primarily because of the negative aspects associated with them (Fris, 1992). Many definitions are provided in the literature, but whether conflict is defined as a behaviour, situation, or process, the underlying understanding is that one party or group causes hurt, or interferes with the well being of another. This oppositional aspect permeates all the definitions. For example, Brickman (1974) defines conflict as a behaviour by one party that damages or injures the interest of another; and Deutsch (1973), one of the most often quoted authorities on conflicts, similarly characterizes conflicts as incompatibles that interfere with the accomplishment of objectives, that cause injury, and that reduce effectiveness.

Isherwood and Achoka (1992) define conflict in lighter terms, as a situation, where people in interaction in a social system, fail to fit or function together harmoniously. Isherwood and Achoka also suggest that conflict is a natural byproduct of social situations. The more complex the social system, the more roles and statuses in interaction, the more likely conflicts will occur. Robertson (1995) adds a more developmental aspect when she defines conflict as a situation that evolves when individuals, groups, or organizations believe that their interests are incompatible. Thomas (1976), on the other hand, sees conflict as a process which begins when one party
perceives that the other has frustrated or is about to frustrate a concern, with anger as an emotional response to this belief. By defining conflict as a process involving perceptions or self-generated objective constructions of reality, Thomas provides a focus for the administrators' intervention to help the parties concerned, to develop more realistic perceptions of the situation, and to improve the process to meet their school-related needs.

The literature provides a wealth of information on conflicts. However, many of the examples provided are from small and often remote areas that are very different from Canadian society and its education system. Some examples are also more suited to small mono-cultures and not the mix of cultures found in Canada. This chapter describes three conflict theory perspectives as well as the views and findings of many researchers on conflicts. It also explores who is involved in conflicts, the issues around which conflicts revolve, the types of conflicts and the conflict resolution strategies.

A Conflict Theory Perspective

Conflict theory focuses on conflicts as a source of change. It assumes that there are opposed interests among the various groups that make up society (Murphy 1979, p.85). This perspective also seeks to discover contradictions and sources of disequilibrium, or what causes conflict in society, and suggests that this conflict brings about change. For the most part, the theory on conflict is not only an over-simplification of the problems, but is superficial and outdated. Societies all over the world are changing, but change is not always the result of conflicts.
The Marxist Perspective

The Marxists maintain that there are two classes in the capitalist mode of production: the bourgeoisie (or those who own the means of production), and the proletariat (those who do not). These classes are assumed to have antagonistic interests which provoke conflict and change. This characterization fits better with some societies of the 18th and 19th century Europe, and in situations where rulers own the sources of production. Critics of this theory argue that there are more than two classes in capitalist societies (Ryan, 1998; Blackledge & Hunt, 1993). Any economic organization theory must, at least, include a middle class, and a look at industrial societies reveals this. Immigrants and refugees to any industrialized country do not usually become part of the middle class soon after arrival. They have few economic opportunities, and are usually unemployed or underemployed. Poor economic conditions also affect students’ academic achievement as well as their emotional and social development.

Yet immigrants are not necessarily antagonistic to society and some even find conditions here, as bad as they may be, better than those where they left. Marxists also claim that the ideology of the dominant class is promoted by schools, leading to conflict and alienation of the dominated class because their needs are not being met. Students, culturally and linguistically different, must fit into a system developed for the students of the majority culture, resulting in conflicts caused by a negative impact on their ability to function well in school. For these students it is not a class conflict but a cultural one based on differences that affect new Canadians in schools, but it can also be said that
some schools are making much effort to be inclusive of all students in the teaching/learning process, regardless of class (Cole, 1998). A major weakness of this theory is that it reduces conflict to economics. Conflicts are caused by various other issues such as religion, cultural traditions, and others that have little or nothing to do with economics. In addition to this, and, as mentioned earlier, this theory reduces society to two distinct classes. Contemporary society cannot be thus divided. Ownership of production is not the domain of any one group. Some people, of course, own more than others, but there are various levels of ownership. There are small, medium and large enterprises owned and operated by people at different social and economic levels. None of this necessarily brings conflicts. The economic reality of capitalist societies today does not support the Marxist theory, so my study will mention economics on a micro level, as a source of conflicts only in so far as it relates to individual student’s needs and the conflicts that this produces.

The Functionalist Perspective

Functionalists also have a concept of society, which posits a theory on conflict, but it suggests that conflicts are reduced because of the common values taught in society through the socialization processes. They conceive of society as an integrated whole, even though its parts, for example, its education system, work to the detriment of some groups in society. It is a fact that not everyone succeeds in the education system, but it is difficult to blame the system entirely. The functionalists resemble the Weberians in that they stress cultural factors and do not focus on economic substructures which they see as
secondary. Primary to them is interrelatedness of all the social institutions. The education system is one of the institutions and is essential in order to teach self-discipline and to bring about social stability (Durkheim, 1956). The functionalists argue that societies are held together by a consensus of values, and are therefore, stable entities in which all have has a clear conception of their role in the various social institutions (Blackledge & Hunt, 1993). Critics such as Moore (1969) for example, argue that, while a value consensus is one possible solution to the problem of order, it is, by no means, the most usual. Moore further suggests that frequently powerful groups use the police, and army to impose order on a population by terror or threats, coercing or eliminating any opposition. Stability, therefore, may be the result of manipulated or false consensus. As Moore (1969, p.18) expresses it:

To maintain and transmit a value system, human beings are punished, bullied, sent to jail, thrown into concentration camps, cajoled, bribed, made into heros, encouraged to read newspapers, stood up against a wall and shot, and sometimes even taught sociology.

Blackledge & Hunt (1993) suggest that societal stability is more reflected in substantive consensus, genuine or engineered. This idea suggests that the conflicts of values, beliefs, and interests, typical of the pluralistic societies of the West, do not produce disruption and chaos, because they are held in check by an agreement to settle differences by means of agreed procedures. It assumes an acceptance by all parties concerned to use one set of rules rather than another in settling conflicts. This level of
acceptance should not be assumed, for example, in Western societies this consensus is really more engineered than genuine.

Functionalists also argue that education is the transmitter of values to the society, but only the values of the dominant group (Bourdieu, 1973). The education system reproduces the structure of the distribution of cultural capital which is closest to the culture of the dominant group (Bourdieu, 1973). While this is still true to some extent, Western societies now constitute a series of social groups, with diverse value perspectives, despite some possible overlapping. Hence, there is a conflict of values, beliefs, and interests in society. Such conflicts will, in all probability, be reflected in the education system (Cohen, 1968), and they are, as observed in the schools involved in the study. These diverse groups are not always inactive. Within the school communities they vie for recognition and legitimacy (Ryan, 1996), and conflicts arise. Functionalists also believe conflicts bring change and that change in society comes from outside brought on by occurrences such as war, but changes do occur from within the society as well, evidenced by the women's movement, for example (Blackledge & Hunt, 1993). This is also obvious in the case of new Canadians because, for them, change also comes from within, despite the fact that a shift begins from the outside, as immigrants make the decision to leave their countries. Once these immigrants are in the country, the education system is forced to make changes towards accommodation, so that their values, beliefs, and interests can be respected. These values, beliefs, and interests do not result in change because of conflicts. The change comes because people want to be responsive to the needs
of others. On a more micro level, conflict can clear the air among individuals and small groups, in places such as schools and some workplaces, but hardly in the wider society.

The Weberian Perspective

Weberian sociology concentrates on the process of conflict and domination in society (Collins, 1977). For Weberians, social life is an arena in which various "status groups" struggle with each other, in an attempt to obtain wealth, status, power, dominance, and, in so far as a particular status group controls education, it may be used to foster control within work organizations (Collins, 1977). On this basis, schools will be used by employers to select people with "appropriate" cultural attributes. The use of the term status groups suggests that contest and conflict are rampant in our schools, but this may be somewhat overstated. According to Weber's theory, the differences in social class, cultural position, ethnic background, religion, education, and so on are some of the basic causes of conflict. Weberian conflict theorists obviously attach more importance than Marxists to the role of cultural factors in group conflict, and rightly so. For each individual there is an objective reality that has to be reckoned with, and the social system of which we are a part shapes our ideas, beliefs, and values as well as controls our actions, thus influencing our conception of the world; in other words, our culture influences much of what we are, think, and do (Ogbu, 1995, Li, 1990).

The Weberian theory analyzes social life in terms of power, authority, and domination; the conflict over economic resources and rewards, the competition of status and prestige, the struggle for political control; the role of bargaining, negotiation and
compromise (Blackledge & Hunt, 1985). The Weberian perspective, however, with its attention to cultural influences on behaviour, suggests a source of conflict that is more appropriate than the Marxist or the Functionalist to the new Canadian experience. This attention to cultural factors as sources of conflicts is well taken, and the literature on conflicts supports this view, as well. This is one of the issues that this study will investigate.

What all the above theories have in common is the acknowledgement that there is conflict among groups and across groups in society, and that economic and social power is unevenly distributed, to the detriment of some members of society. As mentioned before, school is a microcosm of society, so society’s conflicts are to be found in the schools as well. However, some conflicts in schools are not only the conflicts of this society but also of the newcomers, who are trying to bridge the cultural gap, and not all conflicts bring about changes. These conflict theories, therefore, do not really address the immigrant phenomenon per se, failing to see society as the complex structure that it is. They do not address the personal and psychological conflicts that many immigrants experience, and bring to the school setting. They, however, provide a beginning point to discuss some conflicts in society and in the schools.

Many new Canadian students of these newcomers are in conflict with their families, and their cultural groups, while grappling with their own problems. So, by and large, they become involved in conflicts with others in the schools, thus, increasing the difficulties of administrators to provide a safe and calm learning environment for all
students. This is not an easy task, and administrators do not all have the same leadership style. Some may need to be better informed of leadership styles that are appropriate for diverse contexts. Inclusive leadership is one such style.

Leadership in Diverse Contexts

Administrators are required to make decisions on all aspects of school life. To do so they draw upon their experience, training, Ministry of Education guidelines, Board of Education procedures provided to them, as well as their own value orientations. Administrators' responsibility is made more challenging because of the diverse context in which they work. As Ryan (1999) maintains, administrators of our schools face many challenges these days, perhaps the most pressing of which involve responding to increasing levels and qualities of diversity. Ryan also suggests that many of these challenges revolve around race and ethnicity. The conundrum for administrators is that school curricula, and activities do not always acknowledge the background, perspectives, values, voices, and knowledge of all students, and community members, and these must be addressed to meet the needs of all students. Old leadership styles have become inadequate to achieve effectiveness in diverse contexts (Ryan, 1999).

The role of administrators, the Principal in particular, has been defined and redefined throughout the years of school administration. He or she has been measured by how well the learning resources are managed, success as an orchestrator of social subsystems, the innovator, expediter, motivator, facilitator, evaluator, supervisor, and leader of instruction (Thomas & Fitzhugh-Walker, 1998). Administrators need to have all these
skills, but in the diverse settings of today, they need more. The challenge administrators face is to make decisions for the provision of inclusive educational practices to generate equal opportunities and outcomes for all students. To do this, administrators need to practise inclusive leadership.

Research should provide some help to them in this regard, but unfortunately, research has just begun to address this area of leadership. As Ryan (1999) notes, inquiry into inclusive leadership practices in racially/ethnically diverse settings is decidedly limited. Scholars (Reyes & Capper, 1991; Valverde, 1988; Anderson, 1990, 1996; Ryan, 1997; Ryan & Wignall, 1996; Maxcy, 1998; and May, 1994) (in Ryan, 1999) are beginning to develop a useful body of knowledge on the subject. Inclusive leadership is viewed as being less the result of remarkable or unremarkable individuals than the consequence of interactions and negotiations among members of communities (Ryan, 1999).

Foster (1989), for example, believes that those who have been exemplary leaders are able to accomplish what they do, not exclusively by virtue of their individual attributes, but by the fact that they are able to take advantage of what might be called a "corridor of belief" that exists in their communities or constituencies at the time.

Leadership ... is just not the property of enlightened individuals. The idea that leadership occurs within a community suggests that ultimately leadership resides in the community itself. To further differentiate leadership from management we could suggest that leadership is a communal relationship, that is, one that occurs in a
community of believers. Leadership then is not a function of position but rather represents a conjunction of ideas where leadership is shared and transferred between followers and leaders... leaders and followers become interchangeable (Foster, 1989, p.49).

May (1994) provides an account of the inclusive leadership practices of Principal Jim Laughton, of Richmond Road School, in New Zealand. The account highlights such practices as power-sharing, community education, and dialogical aspects to the inclusive practice of this leader (Ryan, 1999). Literature shows that an important part of leadership in diverse contexts revolves around relationships with the various constituents and communities (Ryan, 1999). The Principal of Richmond Road School, Jim Laughton, established helpful relationships with his teachers, parents, and the community. He established dialogue with the community regarding the nature of schooling. As Tierney (1993) maintains, inclusive schools can only become established and sustained through the enablement of mutual dialogues of respect and difference. Dialogue in this regard is the communicative relation into which two or more people enter (Burbules, 1993). Such relationships are important for the benefit of the students as well, particularly minority students with little or no ability to speak English, but must function in a setting where English is the language of learning and of social relationships outside of their group. My interest has been sparked by the community aspect of Jim Laughton’s leadership practice, and my study will attempt to explore any links between the schools involved in the study,
and community agencies, and try to determine how these links assist the administrator to deal with diversity and conflicts.

People Involved in Conflicts

The inevitability of the occurrence of conflict has been demonstrated throughout the literature on conflicts, and among the people shown to be usually involved are teachers, administrators, and students (Ryan & Wignall, 1994). Classroom teachers are usually the first to develop a relationship with students, especially new Canadians. Given the diversity of cultures in the schools, the classroom is where students experience many conflicts because of cultural differences and unfamiliarity with classroom procedures. As reflected in the literature, conflicts often involve others, such as teachers and parents, administrators and teachers, administrators and parents, students and parents, student and student from different cultures as well as from the same culture and/or from the majority culture; whenever there is interaction, there is the possibility of conflicts (Gay, 1981).

Issues Around which Conflicts Revolve

As the literature reflects, conflicts occur over various issues, such as cross-cultural misunderstanding, language and communication barriers (Corson, 1992), differences in conceptual knowledge, differences in teaching and learning styles (Ryan & Wignall, 1994), cultural hegemony, and differences in cultural frames of reference (Ogbu, 1995). These issues are all somewhat interrelated. For example, differences in cultural frames of reference include attitudes, behaviours, and speech styles. These differences are usually stigmatized by the majority group (Ogbu, 1995), and this sets up language and
communication barriers, which makes the crossing of cultural boundaries difficult. Evidence of differences in teaching and learning styles are also well documented in the literature. For example, Ryan (1992) indicates that there is much evidence to show that individuals and groups learn in different ways.

When there is a discontinuity in the traditional teaching and learning styles, the students’ learning is adversely affected (Ryan & Wignall, 1994). Ogbu (1995) argues that enough is not being done to address these problems, because the majority culture seeks to maintain cultural hegemony over the minority group. One of the ways in which this is done is the inadequate representation of minority cultures in the curriculum and other areas of education. Other conflicts such as those due to religious contentions, interactional conventions, family relationships, gender, and school culture are usually among the first tensions to be observed. These issues will not be dealt with in detail at this point because they are closely related to causes reflected below in types of conflicts.

Types of Conflicts

In the literature, types of conflicts are often referred to in terms of their underlying causes, and a number of typologies of causes are presented. Some, however, are more appropriate to industry and private sector business organizations than to schools. Fris (1992) surveys many of these typologies and arrives at a similar conclusion regarding relevance to school settings. He provides his own typology of causes that he believes
reflects the conflicts that school administrators are likely to encounter. Fris's typology is as follows:

1) Differences in values and goals: disagreement over what to do, i.e., the ends.

2) Incongruent role expectations: disagreements over how to proceed, i.e., the means. This class includes disagreements over how to organize a group of people for a collective enterprise, disagreements over the particular methods that various individuals will use to perform specific tasks, and disagreements over moral and ethical standards of behaviour.

3) Disagreements over the distribution of limited resources: the rationing of the wherewithal: "shortages" in money, material and equipment, time, space, status, influence (power and authority), and knowledge (p. 10).

All of these elements are quite relevant to the new Canadian experience and underlie many of the conflicts in which they are involved.

Other researchers have suggested causes that also relate to the immigrants' experience. For example, Au (1994) and Neito (1992) maintain that among immigrants, there are conflicts due to mismatches in lifestyles, values, experiences, and socialization practices in the school and home cultures. Gay (1981), Boykin (1994), Ryan and Wignall (1994) suggest that many of the conflicts involving new Canadians are rooted in the discontinuities they experience, particularly in pluralistic classrooms, the dissimilar codes, value systems, and background experiences. Ogbu (1995) and Li (1990) also support and emphasize the role of culture in the occurrence of conflicts. Ogbu indicates that people live in different cultural worlds and that conflicts result when cultures are not compatible. Li agrees and further suggests that culture represents a way of life that a group of people develops in order to adapt to a set of external and pre-existing conditions. Culture
includes values, language, religion, and social institutions, therefore, to avoid cultural misunderstanding, and to be knowledgeable about some of the conflicts experienced by different groups, one needs to look at the differences in cultures.

The impact of culture in conflicts is also supported by Margolis and Tewell (1988) when they argue that people come from different cultures and family experiences that are dissimilar. They perform disparate roles in society, act on dissimilar information and assumptions, hold different expectations, and often have very different dominant needs. They view the world differently and voice contrary opinions, and thus cultural conflicts are inevitable. Phelan et al. (1993) maintain that many conflicts result from the patterns of adaptation that new students face in their multiple worlds, while making transitions between these worlds or two cultures. In short, students deal with a lot of problems. These include psychological, socio-cultural, socio-economic, linguistic, gender, and structural considerations, and these problems can cause stress, anxiety, poor school performance, and conflicts, as students try to establish for themselves a pattern of adaptation. A study by Phelan et al. (1993) presents the following illustration of a pattern of adaptation, which is a very poignant aspect of settlement for immigrants in the majority culture. This illustration also reflects the kinds of struggles and the conflicts assumedly seen among new Canadians in the schools.

Patterns of adaptation

These include:

Type 1) congruent worlds/smooth transitions
Type 2) different worlds/border crossings managed
Type 3) different worlds/border crossing difficult
Type 4) different worlds/border crossing impenetrable

Type 1: Congruent worlds/smooth transitions

By and large (and there are always significant exceptions), students of European background, middle socio-economic level, and high achieving, fall usually into category one. Their values, beliefs, and goals of education, are presumed to be more or less congruent with those of school, peer group, family, and their Canadian teachers. The majority of Canadian teachers also are thought to belong to this group, and there are few, if any, transitional conflicts for this group.

Type 2: Different worlds/border crossings managed

When there are differences in culture, race, socio-economics, or religion, more difficulties emerge for students along with more situations of conflict. Some students fall into the type two category, managing the crossings but only with great difficulty. For them, home and school worlds are so different that students must make major adjustments in order to make a quality of crossing. To adapt to the pattern of behaviour required at school, students sometimes devalue aspects of the home or family setting. This can lead to loss of cultural identity and very personal conflicts. Delgado et al. (1991) call this "internalized oppression." Some students adapt to many mainstream situations in school, but return to family patterns of behaviour at home. They do not all devalue their home cultures, but they also very much want to embrace the new. This is difficult to do without experiencing conflict.
Type 3: Different worlds/border crossing difficult

In the third category, students see their world as dissimilar and distinct, and a student may be unsuccessful at school because class dynamics are very different from the student's traditional world. Border crossing is difficult and involves conflict, friction, and discomfort, because adaptation is always a struggle.

Type 4: Different worlds/border crossing impenetrable

For some students, the values, beliefs, and expectations are so different and conflicting in the respective worlds that border crossing is almost impossible. They sometimes refuse to interact with mainstream students, or they go to the extreme of refusing to be part of the school world, finding it irrelevant, in which case, efforts at adaptation fail and the student is the worse for it (see Figure 2).

The literature also shows that conflicts arise over religious conventions, interactional conventions, and other family relations. Religion has a very strong influence on many of the students, because it dictates all aspects of their lives, and can be a major source of conflicts, when students discover that religion plays little or no role in schooling in Canada, outside of the Roman Catholic and some private schools. The myriad types of conflicts suggested in the literature can be confusing to report, but Gay (1981) presents a three-dimensional type classification that allows a measure of organization. Although
Figure 2 is a model of the interrelationships between the students, their families, peers, and school worlds, and in particular, how meanings and understandings derived from these worlds combine to affect students' engagement with school and learning.

this classification is somewhat dated, I have not been able to find anything more recent or as useful. Gay suggests that conflicts can be classified as procedural, substantive, and interpersonal. These categories are not as discrete as the terms might suggest, probably because they involve human interaction which is difficult to compartmentalize.

Procedural Conflicts

This first category, procedural conflict, is usually between teacher and student, and results when a student does not follow the established behavioral protocol for a given situation in the classroom or when students follow their own ways of knowing and doing against the wishes of the teachers. Some conflicts in the classroom are also interpersonal so it is sometimes difficult to differentiate. An example of procedural conflict is provided by Corson (1994) who reports a situation of conflict between culturally different students and their teacher in a majority culture classroom. The minority culture students’ approach to the assigned activities was according to the norms of their own culture, but inconsistent with the teacher’s instruction and expectations.

Such conflicts are limited to procedures, as they affect interaction in the classroom setting and get in the way of how things are done, thus affecting the teaching and learning process. A student’s refusal to work in a group, to maintain eye contact with the teacher, to participate in class or group discussion, and to go against the dictates of the norms of the classroom for any reason, are examples of procedural conflict between teacher and students. Usually the students do not set out to be disobedient or disruptive; rather, they
simply do not understand the established norms or the pedagogical styles, language, and language use in the new classroom, although they may be penalized for such behaviour.

Another example of procedural conflict is provided by Philips (1983) who looks at the children in primary and junior grades, from the Warm Springs reservation in Oregon. She found that these Native children learn socially appropriate norms for paying attention, and regulating talk encounters in home and community that are culturally distinctive from those learned by Anglo-American middle class children. They are also distinctive from the norms used in the classroom interaction but never taken into account in classroom situations. Philips argues that this incompatibility made it difficult for the minority children to understand verbal messages conveyed through the school’s Anglo-middle class modes of organizing classroom interaction.

Other conflicts stemming from cultural differences also fall into this category. For example, a number of students of the Islamic religion requested that their teacher in a majority classroom, preface all lessons with "In the name of God." When told that such was inappropriate, they were dissatisfied and conflict ensued (Robinson, 1995). This was the way lessons were begun in their homeland and students wanted continuity. They did not understand the separation of church and state in Western cultures. One very important observation which was not a procedural conflict, but provided useful information, was also made at the time, regarding Islamic students. Adherents of the religion, who were from different countries, did not have the same belief system regarding the religion. Muslim students from the Caribbean, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and England, for example, did
not embrace all the beliefs and practices of the faith, at least, not in the same way, because the cultural differences influenced the way religion was practised in this instance. The Muslim students from the Caribbean had no expectation of the lessons beginning in the way stated above. This is but one example of some of the differences faced by some students that often result in conflicts between religious groups and their teachers.

Finally, another example of procedural conflict involves the case of the Inuit high school seniors were given scholarships to a Washington University (Allameh, 1986). They failed after their first semester. High school counsellors went to Washington to investigate the failure of such promising students. The counsellors found the students cowering in their dormitory rooms. They discovered that they had been terrified by the ringing of bells, classes ending in a flurry of activities, and the rush of students to other classes to be on time. No one in their village had owned a watch or clock so they were unprepared for a university situation which valued time (Allameh, 1986). This highlights the necessity for classrooms in the majority culture to allow extended periods for orientation to classroom procedures for the new students and to ensure that students are not bewildered by the "newness."

Substantive Conflicts

Gay's second category, substantive conflicts, stems from incompatible goals, and this seems to be more discrete than the others. In this, the academic goals and expectations of teachers are often at odds with the social and personal goals of their students. Often, teachers take it for granted that their goals of education are shared by
everyone and those goals fit the needs of all students. This is not at all so, as evidenced by the following example. The descendants of the Amish people, who migrated to the United States two centuries ago in search of religious freedom, established communities and segregated themselves from the rest of society. They continue to maintain a different culture, one in which their children are not allowed to attend school beyond the elementary age. This is linked to a belief that schooling violates the religious teachings which take precedence over education. Schooling for the wider community is compulsory and the Wisconsin government argued that the parents should be charged with violating the law (Appleton, 1983). This is a clear conflict of values between two sides. However, in Toronto no one is in search of religious freedom because all are free to practise their religion. Also among the religions there is none that limits the level of education. However, there are parents and students who do not have particularly high goals for education, but this is based more on customs and traditions than on religion. It highlights the possibility of people having different goals yet are somewhat removed from the new Canadian experience.

The following example, from areas that are not represented in the school system in Toronto, is still informative. In Polynesian culture, the group takes precedence over the individual in status and in public achievement. There is an expressed deference to the group as the true source of one's success (Corson, 1992). In Western culture the reverse is true, individual achievement is the source of one's success, and this is an important goal of education, but would be a source of conflict for such minority students in the
majority culture. Christie (1988) reports a similar potential for conflict among students of the Maori culture of New Zealand and of the Koori of Australia. These cultures insist that the school curriculum pay attention to the harmony and unity of the life of the group. Each person is unconditionally accepted and the culture places great value on doing things in response to the total and physical environment. Individualism and personal achievement bring a sense of shame as in the Polynesian culture, and are subservient to collaboration. But these are highly valued in the majority culture of Canada or North America. Students from those areas would experience conflicts in Toronto, and these reports support the view that cultural differences result in conflicts.

Another example of cultural differences causing substantive conflicts is provided by Corson (1992). He indicates that oral language interaction, adult to child and child to child, is the central pedagogy of Maori schools. The forms of evaluation that are desirable are co-operation, group benefit, and the relative absence of competition (Corson, 1992). Conversely, competition is valued in the majority culture, and this leads to a conflict of values. Prophet (1990) indicates that one of the goals of education in Western culture, today, is to develop and encourage a spirit of inquiry and creativity through student-centred teaching, but this is frowned upon in South Asian cultures. Students are expected to obey and conform to the tradition of teacher-centred teaching, with the text book as the basis of the curriculum, and rote learning as the process. The style of teaching and learning is possibly a result of British colonial influence on Asian
education. For example, the British education system was established in India, Hong Kong, and as far west as the West Indies, among other areas (Marcais, 1993).

I was also a product of that system for some years, in the Caribbean, where the textbook was the curriculum, and the teacher was the centre of the teaching process. Although some attempts are being made at modernization, in some areas change comes slowly or is not desired (Marcais, 1993). This type of teaching methodology and passive learning is no longer acceptable in the Western culture, and some administrators indicated that some students from South Asia experience conflicts with the interactive teaching styles of today in Toronto schools.

The goals of education are sometimes different among minority groups, and this results in conflicts. Researchers such as Fordham and Ogbu (1986) categorize minority groups into voluntary and involuntary, as a basis to explain their different attitudes to mainstream educational goals. Voluntary minorities are classified as those who came to North America voluntarily. Involuntary minorities are mainly those who have came against their will and are permanently incorporated into the society. Another category of involuntary minority is the Native people in the Canadian society. They were not brought here involuntarily and although they were possibly the first settlers, they lost control of the right to govern themselves as they wished. They are forced to accept the hegemonic control of the majority culture.

The above researchers claim that voluntary minorities see mainstream education as a means of advancement in the society and so pursue it. Marcais (1993) provides an
example of this, when he suggests that some Asians see education in the United States as being better than in their own country, and make use of the opportunity to achieve success. Involuntary minorities, such as the African-Americans, are said to see mainstream goals of education as a threat to the maintenance of their own cultural traditions. They see mainstream education as a means by which the majority culture continues hegemonic domination, or control, and as a way by which that culture defines the social reality of the African-American (Ogbu, 1995). This is somewhat true in the American culture but as more people (although still comparatively few) from the African-American culture join the ranks of the middle class, the closer their goals are to those of the mainstream culture. A case in point is the recent controversy regarding the teaching of black underachieving students through the use of "ebonics" a language spoken mostly by uneducated African-Americans, rather than English. The parents of this group wanted to see their children given the chance to meet the standards set for school achievement. The books needed for such achievement, however, were not written in "ebonics," hence the outcry from many people in the African-American community and others against its use. It is obvious that most African-American parents believe that a working knowledge of English will help to ensure success, so not all involuntary minorities see mainstream goals as a threat.

One educational goal held, especially by some involuntary minorities of African descent, in the United States, and some voluntary minorities in Canada, of similar heritage, is that their history be included in the curriculum of the schools. Small efforts
are being made in this regard but full implementation is a way off. Academic achievement is also highly supported by people of African decent, who make up the majority culture of the Caribbean Islands. They, too, would also be categorized as involuntary minorities because of their history (Ogbu, 1986). They were involuntarily brought from Africa to the Caribbean and North America and had colonialism forced upon them. They have since become the majority group in their countries, and since the 1960s have become self-governing, for the most part. All the same, the relics that colonialism has left behind, for example, the class system, still bring conflicts.

As a group, people from the Caribbean have a keen respect for education, and their earliest educators were from their own group, as we were told by our elders. Education is seen as a means of economic and social mobility in a class conscious society. Students from that society, and especially from the middle and upper socio-economic groups, who enter the majority North American society, usually share the mainstream goals of education. Racism and poverty are often barriers to their achievement, but many students develop what Fordham (1988) calls "racelessness," which is also a source of conflict for them, as they strive to be successful in the dominant society. Parents from all socio-economic groups in the Caribbean embrace prevailing goals of education in their culture, and in the North American culture but some, especially those parents from the lower socio-economic group, are assumed to find them harder to achieve (Ogbu, 1994; Cole, 1998).
**Interpersonal Conflicts**

Gay's third category, interpersonal conflicts, results when different sets of attitudes, beliefs, and values are held by different groups and individuals. Gay suggests that interpersonal conflicts have the most consequences for the students, probably because attitudes, beliefs, and values are cultural, deep rooted, and difficult to change. The interaction involved in this category is different from that in the procedural category as it does not relate directly to procedures in the classroom or the school. Another difference is that, while the procedural is mostly teacher-student, the interpersonal category brings with it other dimensions of student-student, parent-student, parent-teacher, and other interactions. Gay (1981) puts the student-student conflicts in a racial, ethnic, and social context in which students' efforts to retain their ethnicity or to make the difficult crossing into the mainstream are stymied by the reaction of other students and even teachers. An example is the conflict between the home cultures of the ethnic groups and the culture of the school.

Gay suggests that the ethnic students are caught in "double edged" conflicts because their personal need-dispositions are sometimes different from the institutional expectations of both the classroom culture and their respective native cultures. For example, Mexican American students are labelled "gringos" and "tacos" by other Mexican Americans because they are not *ethnic enough*, and, therefore, rejected by Anglo-students and teachers because their "Mexican Americanness" is not valued. Afro-American students are labelled "Afro-Saxons," "oreos," or "Toms" by some of their own;
they endure racial slurs from the Anglo students, and find it difficult to relate and adjust successfully to school norms and expectations (Gay, 1981). This is true of some ethnic groups in the schools in Toronto, when they try to make the crossing by embracing white students and becoming part of their group at the expense of their ethnic counterparts. "The Italian students are "wops" to other Italians as well as to Anglos. These students can become marginal individuals, accepted neither by their ethnic groups nor by the majority group, and thus experience major conflicts" (Gay, 1981).

Differences in language and communication practices account for many interpersonal conflicts. Cazden (1998) reports a situation concerning Hispanic students and their teachers. The concept of closeness and responsibility is a characteristic norm of culture and has become a norm of language used in discourse practices. One manifestation of this is the quiet smile, at times accompanied by an approving nod used by Hispanic teachers to indicate praise. Verbal praise reverses that closeness and creates embarrassment and conflicts in the students. Scollon and Scollon (1995) also present a case in which cultural values and cultural norms in language use can result in interpersonal conflicts. They identify an ancient and enduring value in Northern Alhabaskan culture of Sub-Arctic America. Here people display a high level of respect for the individual world view of others, and this translates into Alhabaskan norms of language behaviour. This means that all individuals are free to make their own sense of the world and would be disappointed and ashamed to be told that their ideas are wrong, as they would often be told in the majority culture.
Cultural norms in language are very important, particularly to some groups. Allemeh (1998) posits that language reflects the culture of the people who speak it, and presents the Marshallese Islanders who have sixty terms for the coconut, and Inuit speakers who have divided snow into seven different categories and with seven different labels. In a majority classroom a vocabulary lesson involving such words would create conflict for the students as well as the teachers, but these communication practices probably would not be included in the teaching/learning practices in the schools of Toronto. These practices are also more suited to mono-cultures and not to the Canadian multi-culture.

Many minority students experience conflicts when learning English, because their first language is so very different from English. Timm (1994) reports from a study done on Laotian Hmong speaking students in the United States. The problems arise mainly from major differences, syntactical and otherwise, between English and Hmong. For example, in the Hmong language there is no verb equivalent for the verb "to be," no plural modification of nouns, no possessive case or possessive pronouns, no differentiation among him, her, or them, no gerunds, no adjectival forms of numbers and no tenses, and so on. Hmong expressions are seen as errors to the teachers and frustrate them. The language is tonal and this influences meaning. One teacher, using Hmong words and believing she was telling the Hmong students to "sit down," was in fact saying "green vegetables." Another student, asked to get the audio-visual trolley, was seen outside wandering around the parking lot looking for her car. Directions given to
minority language speakers in a majority classroom are not necessarily what they hear or respond to, resulting in conflicts both for teachers and students. Teachers of E.S.L. know that this poses a major hurdle.

Directions given to students must be spoken, written down and checked on for comprehension. Timm's point is, therefore, well taken and very pertinent to the new Canadian experience. The above cases could be referred to as being mainly from relatively recondite sources, and the generalizability under-recognized since they usually deal with relatively small second language minority groups in single countries (Corson, 1992). However, Cantonese speaking students also face a similar dilemma as the Hmong students, in that Cantonese differs from English in grammatical and phonological structures that appear to interfere with the learning of English and especially given the variety of Cantonese dialects spoken by Chinese immigrants. For example Cantonese verbs are not conjugated, so tenses, subject-verb agreement, and number agreements are absent. Also absent are definite and indefinite articles, as well as prepositions.

In addition to this, English is a "stress language" while Cantonese is "tonal." For example, the syllable "man" spoken in a low-level tone means "to ask," when spoken in a low-rising voice, it means "to kiss," and it means "smell" when spoken in low-falling tone. Therefore, mispronunciation can result in misunderstanding, confusion, and conflict (Ogbu, 1995). This may all seem somewhat inconsequential, but there is evidence that teachers do make incorrect assessment of students' ability because of language differences and especially when the teacher is of the majority culture (Corson, 1992). Given the
number of Cantonese speaking students in the schools of Toronto, their difficulties learning the English language are obvious.

Discontinuities in terms of content, teaching style, and learning styles have also resulted in interpersonal conflicts (Ryan, 1992; Ryan & Wignall, 1994). Gay (1981) writes of conflicts caused by differences in learning patterns, cultural values, and classroom teaching. She reports that a growing body of research and theoretical literature is emerging on the interrelationship between learning styles, cultural values and interpersonal relations, and their effects on student-teacher behaviours in the classroom. Two major categories of learning styles are suggested: the analytical or field independent, and the relational or field sensitive. Significant discrepancies have been found to exist between the predominant teaching style (analytical) and the learning style of many immigrant groups (relational).

Razack (1995) reports from a study which indicates that some Chinese traditions, beliefs and values do not fit into Western educational practices. She suggests that the schooling problems of Asians arise from cultural incompatibility with the dominant culture. Chinese students from traditional family backgrounds tend to be verbally passive in the classroom and prefer mechanical instructional tasks over verbal and expressive tasks. Such students would tend to perform poorly on expressive tasks and receive poor grades, when in fact it is a cultural norm for them. As Gay (1981) holds, teachers need to understand that ethnic group communication styles are both linguistic systems and expressions of cultural systems and that they impact on the teaching/learning process.
Studies of groups in the United States indicate that learning style preferences or inclinations are closely related with family structure, child rearing practices, and cultural patterns of interpersonal relations. For example, individuals who have been socialized in cultural communities which prioritize group achievement, co-operation, obedience, and deference to authority, tend to be externally motivated, and dependent upon praise and reinforcement from others. They are more readily responsive to human interest, socially oriented curriculum, and learning situations. Other communities which emphasize individualism, assertiveness, personal initiative, and material well-being in socializing their young are likely to produce students who are analytical, competitive, impersonal, individualistic, and task oriented in their learning behaviours, although social class, experience, and intellect can cause individual variations within a group’s learning style (Stodolsky & Lesser, 1981). For example, Mexican-American students may be caught between a home culture that advocates compliance and co-operation with authority, and a school culture that values independence and competition, resulting in teacher-student conflicts.

Fukuyama and Coleman (1992) also suggest that cultural values may be a strong determinant of personality variables that affect self-expression and levels of assertiveness. Chinese family communication patterns require children to be obedient and respectful allowing little opportunity to develop assertiveness. Teachers are likely to misinterpret or discount the responses of Chinese students despite the fact that some Asian minorities are often seen as good students. Cultural values are also said to influence communication

This narrative style has some distinctive characteristics: contrapuntal and overlapping speech, voluntary turn-taking used as a major structuring device and often carried over from one setting to another. Co-narration is similar to responsive reading, and a speech contour resembling chanting is used for joint construction of the story. Au (1978) reports that by structuring reading lessons this way for periods of two or more years, lasting reading achievement scores resulted among this group. This improvement is thought to occur because the innovation is more consistent with communicative context created by Polynesian adults for their children. The students seemed liberated by these changes and teachers began to adapt to the more natural styles manifested by the children and abandoning the stereotypes they had held about them. This strategy caters to one group of children but classes in big industrialized cities do not have that level of sameness.

More related to the new Canadian experience is non-verbal language or body language communication style that can result in conflicts. English speakers use it often, even with reckless abandon when speaking or dealing with speakers and non-speakers of the language, giving no thought of the room it allows to misconstrue, or to give it meaning within the context of their own language. As Gay (1981) says teachers must have an understanding of the full impact of different ethnic and cultural communication styles on interpersonal relationships and instructional processes as well as the cultural messages
embedded in language structures and communication habits of various ethnic groups. Porter (1981) takes it further and suggests that teachers should be familiar with seven critical communication factors beyond linguistic structural characteristics, such as attitudes, social organization, patterns of thought, role prescriptions, use and organization of space, time, and non-verbal nuances.

Hurt, Scot, and McLroskey (1978) also suggest giving greater attention to non-verbal factors in cross-cultural communication such as proxemics, touch, body movements, gestures, differentiations in response-time patterns, use and quality of voice, eye behaviour, and usage of objects. Eye behaviour is a source of conflict for many teachers and students. Teachers expect students to pay attention by maintaining eye contact with them. Some Asian students, West Indians, Mexican-Americans and students from Indian cultures, in order to show respect, would not engage in direct eye contact. Instead, they look down in the presence of superiors. This is normal behaviour in their own culture but considered dishonest and ill-mannered in the majority culture: teachers often have conflicts regarding this with their students, not realizing the cultural roots of the problem.

Students from Sri Lanka, parts of India, and some areas of Bulgaria use head movements to signify "yes and no" but in the reverse of its use in the majority culture. Teachers are often confused because the "no" signal is given to mean "yes." Understanding non-verbal messages is crucial to creating a constructive environment to facilitate productive teaching and learning in pluralistic classrooms. As the above
researchers explain, many of the cues students often use to make judgments about a teacher's competence or character are gained by observing the teacher's non-verbal behaviour. Most people, including students, believe that our non-verbal communication is under less conscious control than our verbal. Therefore, our non-verbal messages are seen as more honest reflections of what we are really thinking or feeling at a particular time. Non-verbal or body language reveals a lot about the speakers, but it is nearly impossible for teachers to know the communication styles of all ethnic groups and incorporate these in the teaching/learning process.

Parents also experience interpersonal conflicts with their children as well as with the culture of schooling in the majority culture. Van Balkam (1992) reports, from studies done on South Asians, that parents experience conflicts with their children's views about proper behaviour, dating, and the value of education. Naidoo (1992) reveals the complex duality of the self-identity and behavioral expression of the South Asian female, entrenched in traditional values, but trying to fit into the new culture, and the conflicts they create for themselves and with their parents. Parents do not want their daughters to attend school dances, date, or develop friendships outside their own culture. Religious differences and some social traditions are the main reasons for rejecting association beyond the superficial level. Religions such as Islam, Sikhism, and Hinduism, have particular traditions and practices, regarding, for instance, food, dress, prayer, dating, and marriage, all of which parents believe will be eroded through assimilation. These conflicts are definitely being experienced in the school requiring the intervention of
administrators. Parents believe that the schools are at fault by not enforcing the type of strict discipline that their students experienced in their original countries, i.e., the schools accommodate religions and most of their practices, but cannot be watchers or enforcers of religious traditions.

Gibson's (1987) report on a case study of Punjabi Sikh families, who settled in California, also reflects conflicts that the parents experience. That Punjabi community advocates a strategy of accommodation and acculturation but resists assimilation with the dominant society. Parents encourage their children to adapt what they perceive to be good, in terms of what they value, from the majority culture but reject assimilation. This creates conflict in students who want to belong and to interact with their classmates but at the same time please their parents. Parents are usually not prepared to be disobeyed, and, when they are, there are conflicts between them and their children.

Ghuman (1994) examines the problem of schooling of 25 Indo-Canadian students from Vancouver schools. He looks at what happens when core values of Asian cultures come up against core values of the dominant society. He suggests that at the secondary level of school, students start to question all forms of authority so there is a greater rift between home and school values, resulting in interpersonal conflicts between parents and children. Either the process of identity formation leads to role confusion or the students are able to successfully synthesize the values of the two cultures to develop a bicultural identity. This is a source of conflict for parents and students in the schools in Toronto as evidenced by my own experience.
All of the above point to an understanding that conflicts are an integral part of schooling, and interpersonal conflicts do affect most aspects of the students' lives, as Gay (1981) suggests, particularly minority students new to schools in a majority cultural setting. As suggested by some researchers, conflicts can sometimes lead to useful and valuable changes. But the negative consequences of conflicts can be detrimental to the emotional, academic, and social survival of the students involved, particularly new Canadians. As mentioned earlier, many students come from countries in which church and state are indistinguishable, and all aspects of life are influenced by religion, including personal interactions, gender grouping, eating habits, and clothing. Classroom teachers who, for example, attempt to enforce mixed gender grouping too early, or to deny or disregard the students' religious practices, can create procedural and interpersonal conflicts for themselves and their students.

Administrators and teachers should be aware of both individual and group characteristics, and how they influence classroom activities and interpersonal activities. It is important that classroom climate and student-teacher interaction be considered as major factors in the learning process particularly in pluralistic classrooms. It should be noted, however, that teachers cannot always include every form of cultural difference in the teaching and learning process. Some things must get overlooked without malice. Administrators also need to be knowledgeable about effective conflict resolution strategies that can help such students become integrated successfully into the school community.
Conflict Resolution

The literature on conflict management (resolution) is somewhat extensive but focuses mainly on non-educational organizations, and is often linked to organizational effectiveness (Green, 1998; Leithwood, Cousins, & Smith, 1990; Owens, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1987; Wynn & Gudtus, 1984; Moore, 1996). Quite often, conceptualizations of conflict and its management come from studies done in such settings as private sector collective bargaining, and national and international politics with little obvious applicability to school settings (Owens, 1987).

Conflict resolution is described as a process whereby the disputants in a conflict situation are actively and co-operatively involved in solving the conflict. Kearns (1993) sees conflict resolution as being very positive and suggests that it presents an opportunity for growth when used effectively, to enhance the quality of life for individuals, groups and society, as people learn to deal with their problems in better ways. It is often said that conflict can bring about change, but for that to happen there must be honest examination of how one currently handles conflict. Beyond this awareness there must be commitment, a willingness to try new approaches and, perhaps, experience new harsh realities. It is sometimes necessary to change a personal value and belief structure, and have an openness to look at conflict in a new light. Another ingredient involves skills. If one is willing to embrace the concept of conflict resolution, one must acquire the necessary training in mediation techniques that are fundamental to effective conflict resolution (Kearns, 1993).
Resolving conflicts that involve teachers, students, and parents is part of an administrator’s job. How administrators respond reveals their attitudes and values, and helps determine the future of their schools. When viewed as an opportunity, conflicts can improve the education of students, develop creativity, improve interpersonal relationships, forge alliances, reduce stress, and stimulate healthy interaction, interest, and involvement in the real problems and their solutions (Margolis & Tewell, 1988). Robertson (1995) concurs with this positive view, when she says that conflicts may have the impact of raising awareness about issues, and can bring about a clearing of the air that can lead to change and some much needed fresh air.

There are various strategies for conflict resolution. These include negotiation, consensus, decision making, and mediation. Mediation, however, is the one that is being used in many schools by different groups to solve conflicts associated with students (Johnson & Johnson, 1987, 1991, 1996; Anticoli, 1997). Mediation is a human response to both intra- and intercultural disputes requiring peaceful mutually acceptable solutions (Blades, 1984). Mediation is described by Schrumpf (1997) as a communication process in which the individuals with a problem work together assisted by a neutral third party, to solve the problem. The mediator is the neutral third party who facilitates the problem-solving process and helps the disputants negotiate an agreement. The mediator also creates and maintains the environment that fosters mutual problem-solving. Conflicts include verbal harassment, name calling, verbal arguments and insults, rumours, gossip, physical fights, and relationship issues (Schrumpf, 1997). Peer mediators are students
trained in mediation skills. One administrator in the study indicated that these skills include:

1. Communication: active listening or listening to understand, summarizing, and clarifying.
2. Creative thinking — contemplating the problem from a variety of perspectives, brainstorming to create, elaborate and enhance a variety of options.
3. Critical thinking, recognizing and developing criteria, establishing objectives, applying criteria as a basis for choosing options and planning future behaviours.

Other administrators in the study have also indicated as much, and have also added that in their schools, students are usually taught to be respectful of others and other cultures, to embrace diversity, maintain a demeanour of calm and control, and display the posture of a peacemaker, be focused on the problem while not blaming anyone, and be accurate in stating the feelings of others. As Schrumpf (1997) indicates, the strengths of mediation are the built-in respect for differences, the practice of being non-judgemental and the promotion of new ways for communicating. This is so because the desired result of mediation is respect, relationship building, acceptance, and behaviour change. This strategy of peer mediation appears to be working well in high schools, mainly for the following reasons:

1. Students are able to connect with their peers in ways adults cannot.
2. They are capable of framing disputes in the perspective language and attitudes of youth making the process age-appropriate.
3. They perceive peer mediation as a way to talk out problems without fear that an adult authority will judge their behaviours, thoughts or feelings.
4. They are respected because they honour the problem-solving process and their peers in the dispute, by the way they conduct mediation sessions.
5. The self-empowering aspect of the process appeals to youth and fosters self-esteem and self-discipline.
6. When students come up with their own solutions, they feel in control of their lives and committed to the plans of action that they have created to address their problem (Schrumpf, 1997)

However, many of the conflicts experienced by new Canadians, are internal, psychological, and often not expressed. These are difficult to resolve, very damaging to the students and usually need more in-depth consideration than peers can usually offer. Sponsoring teachers of peer mediation must be careful of the conflicts handed over to peer mediators.

The following are some models of conflict resolution found in the literature and which seem relevant to the school setting. While they are all suitable for adult mediators, some are quite unsuitable for peer mediators. Follet (1993), for example, advances a three-method model for dealing with conflicts. The first is domination, whereby there is victory for one side over another (a win/lose situation); the second is compromise, whereby each side gives up something in the process (a lose/lose situation); and the third is integration, in which each side re-focuses its efforts so that neither side loses anything and, in fact, each gains (a win/win situation).

1. domination -- win/lose
2. compromise -- lose/lose
3. integration -- win/win

Follet (1993) suggests that domination should be avoided by the administrator because of its long-term side effects. Compromise has the potential for more conflicts because each side loses something despite the gain. Integration is the favoured strategy because both parties can be satisfied and the problem can be solved. Integration, however, is not easily
attained but worth trying for. A step by step process is not very obvious, and the terminology makes it less accessible to peer mediators. A strategy that is directed only to administrators does not take into consideration the reality of the mediation program in the schools. It is more directive on when to use which style rather than how to resolve the conflicts.

A contingency approach to conflict management, is presented by Thomas (1976) (see Table 1) and resembles Follet’s in some of its terminology. Thomas identifies five major styles which are: (1) avoidance, (2) compromise/sharing, (3) competition/domination, (4) accommodation, and (5) collaboration/integration. Avoidance is often a form of flight which also suggests withdrawal, indifference, evasion or isolation. Compromise/sharing involves splitting the difference or giving up something to get something. Competition/domination reflects a desire to win at the other’s expense, a win/lose power struggle where the opinions and interests of others are given little concern. Accommodation often involves an appeasement or submission to others at your own expense. Sometimes it represents generosity, or even conserving energy and resources, by giving up a few battles in order to win the war.

Collaboration-integration represents a desire to satisfy the interests of both sides. It is described as a mutually beneficial strategy based on trust and problem-solving. Thomas maintains that the use of each strategy is situational, and he matches the five styles with appropriate situations given below. Administrators can take from this model whatever fits their situation rather than just the one suggested as the most beneficial.
Despite this, the model is not easy to follow as no step by step process is suggested. The process suggested by the headings is also somewhat complicated. It is not very likely that administrators will take the time to match the conflict at hand with this model to determine appropriateness. Peer mediators would hardly find this model very useful, because of the somewhat complicated vocabulary, as well as the situational matching that is needed.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate situations for each Conflict Resolution Strategy.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoidance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when the issue is trivial</td>
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<tr>
<td>• when the costs outweigh the benefit of resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>• to let the situation cool down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when getting more information is imperative</td>
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<tr>
<td>• when others can solve the problem more effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when the problem is a symptom rather than a cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compromise/Sharing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when the objectives are important but not worth the effort or potential disruption likely to result from assertive behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when there is a standoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>• to gain temporary settlements to complex problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• to expedite action when time is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when collaboration or competition fails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competition/Domination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when quick, decisive action is essential as in emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when critical issues require unpopular action, as in cost-cutting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• when issues are vital to the organization
• against individuals who take unfair advantage of others

**Accommodation**

• when you find you have made a mistake
• when the issues are more important to others
• to build goodwill for more important matters
• to minimize losses when defeat is inevitable
• when harmony and stability are particularly important
• to allow subordinates a chance to learn from their mistakes

**Collaboration/Integration**

• when both sets of concerns are so important that only an integrated solution is acceptable; compromise is unsatisfactory
• when the goal is to learn
• to integrate insights from individuals with different perspectives
• when consensus and commitment are important
• to break through ill-feelings that have hindered relationships (Thomas, 1976, pp.101-102).

Another model is advanced by Margolis and Tewell (1988). They provide a five-point process, emphasize the demeanour and skills of the administrator, and suggest the atmosphere most conducive to successful conflict resolution. They suggest that administrators be objective, calm, supportive, and direct all energies to the problem in ways that avoid confusion. Administrators should also have high levels of interpersonal skills, a reputation that engenders trust, excellent listening skills, and the ability to formulate empathetic responses which capture the essence of the involved parties’ viewpoints and emotions. These are all very useful skills in mediation, and administrators and
all mediators should have them. The five steps, portrayed as being quite useful, particularly when dealing with parents are:

1. active listening;
2. problem definition;
3. analysis of the problem;
4. generating and selecting solutions; and
5. evaluating and adjusting the selected solution (Margolis & Tewell, 1988).

Active listening is the step in which the administrator obtains accurate information regarding the needs of each party and why they feel as they do. This first step is one in which to build trust, communicate respect, enhance the administrator’s power and social influence, and eliminate anger. The next step, problem definition, involves identifying the problem and writing it down, with both sides in agreement with it. This increases participant ownership, and helps to refine the focus and the relevancy of the definition. Analysis of the problem is the step in which the problem is broken down to manageable sub-components and an examination is made of how these relate. This is also another information-getting opportunity which can reinforce or change the information gathered in the problem-definition stage. Generating and selecting solutions is a stage to be reached only after careful attention is given to the first three stages. Brainstorming helps in generating solutions, and the purpose is to generate as many as possible regardless of merit. Step five which is evaluation and adjustment is a difficult one because individuals, especially parents, expect perfect solutions.

As Fisher and Ury (1981) indicate, at this stage there are often deadlocks caused by rigid insistence on a perfect or permanent solution. The above researchers advocate
the use of weaker solutions on a temporary basis if stronger ones are not possible. A provisional agreement or a partial one may suffice allowing both sides time to develop more satisfactory possibilities. This is a very useful, easy to follow model that could be used by peer as well as adult mediators, because it involves aspects of the training provided to peer mediators, and the other steps are self-explanatory.

Fris (1992) reports on a study done on 15 elementary and secondary school Principals in Western Canada (see Table 4). Detailed descriptions of non-routine conflicts that the Principals had encountered and a variety of tactics used in dealing with them are reported. The Principals most often attempt to manage conflicts by improving the shared information base, by censuring dysfunctional behaviour, and by managing the organizational climate. This strategy shows that the Principals prefer an integrative rather than a distributive approach. The following table reflects a list of conflict management strategies used by the Principals, as well as the number of Principals who used them. The model is somewhat complex because each category requires analysis, and so I do not believe it is very suitable for quick peer mediation. Adult mediators have indicated that they do many of the elements suggested as the situation requires, without following a written pattern.
Table 2

Conflict Management Strategies Used by the Principals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Categories and subcategories</th>
<th>Number of Principals</th>
</tr>
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</table>

1. Manage the information base (51 references)

   a. Influence others' understanding of the situation 8
   b. Gather information 5
   c. Verify information 4
   d. Contradict 4
   e. Impede the flow of information 4
   f. Critique information 3
   g. Try to change others' beliefs, actions 3

2. Censure unacceptable behaviour (25 references)

   a. Set or reaffirm basic parameters 9
   b. Put people in their places 3
   c. Restrain, constrain 2

3. Manage climate (21 references)

   a. Provide moral support for others 8
   b. Control the emotional pitch 3
   c. Communicate particular values, model behaviour 2
   d. Emphasize the importance of others' personal growth
   e. Provide opportunity for saving face (Fris, 1992)
A strategy suggested by Schrumpf (1997) is also useful, especially as it is directed to peer mediation. This involves six steps as follows:

Step 1 - agree to mediate
Step 2 - gather points of view
Step 3 - focus on interests
Step 4 - create win/win options
Step 5 - evaluate options
Step 6 - create an agreement.

These are easy-to-follow steps because six or seven steps are easier to remember than the more extensive typologies, and are within the training lessons provided to peer mediators, as seen in the training manuals. There is also close resemblance to those in the study.

A number of other models are available in the literature but they are either similar to those mentioned in this paper, or, as Fris suggests, they have internal inconsistencies. Examples are typologies by Abdennur (1987), Corwin (1969), French et al. (1985), Sexton and Bowerman (1979), and Boyd (1989). Often the differences are only in the terminology employed. However, an added dimension to conflict resolution is provided by Hodgkinson (1991), who contends that administrators face value conflicts on a daily basis, and in attempting to manage these conflicts they draw on their own value systems, thus influencing their decisions. Hodgkinson presents an analytical model of the value concept in which he identifies three types of values in a hierarchy or a value paradigm for analyzing their usefulness to administrators. He suggests that his trilogy of values will serve in all situations of problem solving and is capable of solving real conflicts especially conflicts of values in practical situations. The Type Three values represent affective or
personal preference rooted in the emotive structure and are self-justifying. The administrator can make use of these values but at the expense of moral imperatives.

Higher up on the hierarchy are Type 2b, rational and based on a quality of consensus which is very difficult to achieve. Type 2a, is also rational but lower than Type 2b and is grounded in consequences. Very often administrators make decisions based on consequences even when this is not the best alternative for the situation. For example, if a ‘too vocal and politically aware’ parent is expected to cause problems, a student who is to be suspended might be given another undeserved chance to remain in school. It is little wonder that Hodgkinson finds level two values to be pervasively employed in conflict management in schools. Quite often, administrators rely on level one values, i.e., Board Policy and Standard Procedure, which provide a step-by-step process for solving a number of stated conflicts, especially those resulting from human rights contravention, or the criminal code, tradition, and school rules, but these strategies are often thwarted by such factors as newness to the school, poor language ability, and cultural differences. However, in the experience of this researcher, Board policies and procedures also involve consequences, and are the basic decision-making or problem-solving tools for administrators.

The finding, that administrators’ values and ethics influence their decision making, has been supported by other researchers such as: Marshall (1992), Beck (1992), Begley (1988), Begley and Leithwood (1990), and Campbell (1992), among others. Begley reports that there is a relationship between administrators’ orientation to their role and the
values they use in decision making. Beck posits that spiritual values challenge administrators to practise love, gentleness, humility, and integration. Moral values such as carefulness, responsibility, courage, self control, reliability, truthfulness, honesty, fairness, and unselfishness can only strengthen the hand of administrators in solving conflicts and in securing the well-being of the whole school population. Administrators should be aware of the influence of their values on conflict resolution and try to be as objective as possible. While this does not provide a step-by-step process, it can help administrators to reflect on their decisions or order them into making more objective ones.

As indicated earlier in this study, there are various suggestions and models for conflict resolution in the literature. Due to the diversity of the groups in the schools and the value systems that abound, administrators can no longer rely on traditional and/or universal standards to guide their actions (Ryan, 1996). It should be assumed that administrators have their own set of tried and probably effective strategies in use in their schools and may or may not be influenced by those provided in the literature. However, administrators need to be aware of the provisions in research that could inform their conflict resolution methods. In this regard, this study also seeks to determine what strategies are being used in the schools, whether they fit and reinforce any of the typologies mentioned above, or provide new ones that can be added to the literature in the area of conflict management.
Summary

This chapter is a review of the literature available on this topic. It examines three conflict theories, namely, the Marxist, the Weberian, and the Functionalist perspectives on conflicts in society. These theories do not really address the contemporary world with its multicultural population, and are somewhat simplistic in their assumptions regarding the role of education in society. Various types of conflicts are reviewed, and Gay's (1981) classification of conflicts into procedural, substantive, and interpersonal categories is used to organize the various conflicts found. Various researchers have provided many studies that demonstrate situations that result in conflicts, and these are included. A number of conflict resolution strategies are also provided. The next chapter explains the methodology used to conduct the research study.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Design

This research study explores the views of administrators, regarding conflicts involving new Canadians. I was motivated to do this research, after examining the literature on the topic of conflicts among immigrant students from minority cultures. Some of these conflicts occur because of the meeting of minority cultures with the majority culture, thus bringing cultural differences into focus. I decided to find out how administrators in the schools view these conflicts and how they deal with them. I felt that the way to achieve this was to go into the schools, interview administrators, and report my findings in a way that would be helpful to them, to other administrators, and other educators who are involved with immigrant students. Because the immigrant school population is so large and varied, and has been in Canada for different lengths of time, I chose new Canadians, i.e., students in the country for five years or less. This worked well, and I conducted the interviews with 15 administrators, i.e., Principals, Vice- Principals and Department Heads in 11 high schools in Metropolitan Toronto. I recorded the data during the interviews on cassette tapes. These tapes were transcribed, after which I picked out emergent patterns and themes.

The data from these interviews reflect the views of administrators, but it is the researcher who decides on what and how to report it (Stake, 1994). To this extent my
training and experience could have come into play and could have thus influenced my study. I believe that the reader should be aware of this. I also support the view taken by Merriam (1988, p. 194) that qualitative research should include aspects of the researcher's "training, experience, philosophical orientation and bias." I will not go as far as Merriam suggests, but will offer a window on my career as an educator, and my immigrant experience. This chapter, therefore, begins with a brief account of my career, in order to establish my subjective reality in this study. Also, included in the chapter, are discussions on research design, the methods I used for participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. What follows, directly, is an attempt to describe some experiences that have helped to shape my world view.

**Researcher's Educational and Career Profile**

I was born, raised, and educated in Jamaica. I was trained at the Mico Teacher's college as an elementary school teacher and worked in that capacity for some years. At one point the Ministry of Education wanted to introduce the Comprehensive School concept to the Island. I was fortunate to be sent on scholarship to the Institute of Education, University of London, England to learn about this type of school. On my return to the Island, I was one of three on a committee that established the first comprehensive school in the Island. After working in this school for three years, I won a full scholarship to the University of the West Indies where I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and History. After five years working in another high school my family joined the group of people who became immigrants to Toronto, Canada.
I, therefore, have first hand knowledge of the immigrant experience, the feeling of loss of personal and close relationships, familiar surroundings, the way of life, and the comforts of home. Coming to a new society requires transition from the former to the new setting. My family experienced this transition, but we were fortunate that English is our mother tongue. We had a quality of transition that equalled the type one level of adaptation suggested by Phelan et al. (1994) (Levels of Adaptation, chapter 2, p.29).

There were similarities in our cultural values, beliefs, educational goals, and academic achievement to those of the majority culture, and my family came into the new society with a lot of confidence in our abilities. However, I have been made painfully aware of the plight of some immigrant students who have had a much different experience. Three of my children entered the high school system at the grades 10, 11, and 12 stages, and continued to achieve academic excellence. Two of these are now in the early years of their career as corporate lawyers and the other is a chartered account with a Master's degree in Business Administration. My last child who is much younger than the others is now completing her final year of a degree program at the University of Toronto. My husband, an engineer, also holds a doctoral degree in his chosen field.

Education is obviously highly valued in my family and I have always felt a pressing need to continue my education. This led me to York University, where I obtained a Bachelor's degree in Education, and then on to OISE for a Master's degree in Special Education. I had always wanted to seek education at the doctoral level, but found it difficult due to the constraints of my work. I am extremely grateful to the
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, for instituting the Administrator's Doctoral Program (ADP), and I grasped the opportunity to achieve that goal.

Professionally, I spent the last twenty years working as an educator in the high school system of Toronto. For eight years, I taught English and E.S.L in two high schools. I then became head of an Immigrant Assessment Center which assesses students' prior learning and places them in the appropriate schools to learn E.S.L as part of their program. My next career step was as Head of E.S.L Departments in two schools, followed by a Vice-Principalship for four years in a school where all the students were newcomers to Canada. I have resolved many of the conflicts experienced by immigrant students myself, or in collaboration with other people. My own experience as an immigrant has provided me with much sensitivity and understanding of the conflicts the students have had to deal with. It also helped me to ask very probing questions during the interviews whenever I thought that relevant information was not forthcoming in certain areas. This resulted in very useful information being added to the data. Because of my immigrant status and my experience with new Canadian students, I made every effort to distance myself and report the data as provided by the very capable participants.

Design of the Study

A qualitative research design was chosen as the most appropriate for this study. The study focuses on human behaviour, and, as Borg and Gall (1989) suggest, it is the preferred method for studying this particular type of topic and is also the ideal choice for
dealing with complex situations best explained by those personally involved. Administrators are personally involved in dealing with conflicts involving all students, and this topic is also one involving human behavior which can be quite complex. Qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect, seek to know people personally, and try to discover the sensitive dimensions of human experience (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, Husband & Foster, 1987). This study seeks to make sense of human behavior.

The qualitative research approach allows administrators to tell their stories that emanate from their experience with the students. In so doing, administrators reveal a measure of their sensitivity to the plight of the students, and in their dealings with them. I got to know the participants more personally as they provided information about their own inadequacies and their wishes for a more informed practice. As is typical of qualitative research method, no hypothesis is formulated before data collection, and there is no puzzle being presented, whose picture is already known (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992). In this kind of study the picture takes shape as data are collected and examined, and changes made if necessary, because during the process of analysis there is the possibility of discovery and necessity for reconceptualization of the research questions.

The Semi-Structured Interview Approach

I chose semi-structured interviews as the means of collecting data because it allows both the researcher and the participants to explore both the meaning of the questions and the answers provided (Brenner, Brown, & Canter, 1985). Misunderstandings can also be
checked immediately, as opposed to questionnaires or tests. In the semi-structured interview there are set questions to be asked by the researcher, but the sequence and wording of these questions can be redefined to match the situation. Even some digression from the question or the main theme can be accommodated in order to gain valid information. This spontaneity should even be encouraged (Ghuman, 1994). Assumptions, motives, reasons, goals, and values of the respondents are of interest to this study. This type of interview allows the researcher to gain such perspectives and pick up on nonverbal cues, such as tones of voice, facial expressions, reluctance to answer particular questions, and the researcher can use probing questions to determine reasons for any such behaviour.

As mentioned earlier, this study is aimed at exploring how administrators view conflicts involving new Canadians. The study focuses on four main areas identified in the literature, i.e., types of conflict, the people involved, issues around which conflicts revolve and strategies for conflict resolutions. Sub-questions and interview questions were developed around these areas for data gathering for the qualitative enquiry. The interview questions were piloted and refined with two administrators. My proposal committee also helped in a final refinement which enhanced my efforts to develop relevant questions.

**Ethical Considerations**

In the study the schools are named by letters of the alphabet and participants are given new names to honour the confidentiality aspect. Participants were assured that their responses would not be repeated or divulged in any way that would result in their being
identified. The tapes and transcripts will be carefully stored in my house for at least five years, safeguarding all participants' responses and personal information. It was also made clear, to all participants, that their involvement was voluntary and that it was entirely up to them if they wanted to revoke their decision before the interviews were done. If there were any questions that made them uncomfortable, they could say so and refuse to respond.

Participant Selection

Since this research deals with the views of administrators, it stands to reason that the sample studied would involve them. The sample, therefore, consisted of 15 administrators: five Principals, six Vice-Principals and four Heads of E.S.L. Departments from eleven schools. Schools with a very large population are represented by two participants, i.e., Principal and Vice-Principal or Vice-Principal and Head of Department. Three such schools are involved. The participants were all chosen from high schools in the Metropolitan Toronto area. Heads of Departments are part of the school's management team instead of administrators, but for this study they are considered as administrators. They are included because teachers often report conflicts to them for solutions. Of the participants 12 were from the majority culture, and 3 from different minority cultures.

I excluded teachers, despite the fact that they are often the first to identify conflicts, because the majority of conflicts, especially the more involved ones, including those that involve parents, are dealt with by the administrators. Another consideration for
inviting administrators only, is that the research questions solicited the actual experiences of administrators as the primary decision-makers in the school. The administrators were seven males and eight females, with no particular ratio in mind since no comparative analysis was intended. The schools were chosen for the size of their new Canadian population, the kind of program, and whether technology was involved. Schools with a mix of adolescents and adults, or adults only, were also chosen.

The criteria I used to choose the administrators for this study were that they should have been in their present position for at least one year so that they would be familiar with all aspects of their school. In order to make the above decisions, information was provided by the Board of Education. I received this information after a telephone call to the Board, requesting it. An earlier research study that I carried out was done with the assistance from the Board’s research department so I am well known to the people involved there. I was, therefore, able to get the information without sending a formal request.

The process of enlisting the administrators’ participation was made easy by my previous acquaintance with them. I had become acquainted with them while working in various schools in the same Board. One Principal and I taught E.S.L. courses to teachers at York University for some time. Another Principal I met while doing the Principals’ Certification courses; the others were Principals on whose staff I had worked either as head of a department or as Vice-Principal. The Vice-Principals in the study have been colleagues of mine for many years. We attended the same meetings and conferences, and
thus became well acquainted. The Heads of Departments were once my colleagues, or were Department Heads in schools where I had worked. I asked 15 administrators, and they all agreed to participate, no one declining. I reflected on the pros and cons of having been so well acquainted with all the participants. On the one hand, it could mean instant rapport and trust. On the other, they might want to take time out for jokes, talk about old times, or matters that would be irrelevant to the study. They might also not want to talk about issues with which they feel awkward. I decided to pre-empt any such behavior by being businesslike and on-task to establish the importance and integrity of the research, and their part in it. I also advised them that they could refrain from answering any questions with which they were not comfortable. No such problems surfaced. They all said that there was a need for this kind of research and it would be helpful to them in dealing with the diverse groups in their schools.

Procedure

I telephoned the administrators to inform them of my study and to invite their participation. I then followed up with a formal letter. They all responded by phone, communicating their willingness to participate. I then visited the schools to provide any further information or clarification, and to set up interview dates as well as to observe what I could of the student body and the school culture. Close to the arranged dates, I again telephoned and verified the logistics. For reasons of confidentiality, neither the schools nor the administrators are named in the study, and I advised the participants of this. I selected the schools as the sites for the interviews because I felt that context was
important and because I support the position, taken by Bogdan and Bilken (1992) that human behaviour is influenced by the setting in which such behaviour takes place. I also explained to the participants the possible usefulness of my study to them, because as Sarason (1971) suggests, school practitioners require research results that are useful to them.

Table 3

Participant Schools' Profiles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Approximate number of new Canadians</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2199</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1597</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1459</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1299</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1262</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 reflects the numbers and percentages of new Canadians in the schools. These numbers seem more overwhelming in the smaller schools, but they are no less challenging in larger schools. Eleven schools were involved. It became necessary to interview more
than one administrator in three very large schools, in which one administrator was responsible for only some grade levels.

Table 4
Participants' Career Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Department Head</th>
<th>Consultant</th>
<th>Years as ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annabell</td>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deidre</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennie</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garno</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishwa</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimer</td>
<td>45-50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kini</td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samson</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>60-65</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nindra</td>
<td>55-60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ransford</td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reflects the career profiles of all 15 participants, four Heads of Department, six Vice- Principals and five Principals who kindly participated in the interviews.
Data Collection

The research was conducted over a period of four and a half months, from mid-May to September, 1998. This period included the summer break, when I hoped to get some administrators between the end of school and the start of vacation. It worked, and they were very co-operative. Three interviews were left over from the summer, and were done early September, despite the busy time for all schools. However, these administrators made the time, and I was very grateful to all participants for their cooperation.

In collecting the data, my intention was to acquire both primary and secondary data. The secondary data involved the information received from the Board to help me determine the schools to choose; I also wanted to see the Board’s policies on sexual harassment, safety, equity, and procedures regarding suspensions, expulsions, zero-tolerance, and so on. This was mainly to determine the Boards’ position on these, and whether they were appropriate, given the diverse groups in the school. Implementation of top-down policies is hard enough, and becomes more complex with students just learning the language and culture of a new organization in a new society. I also looked at mission statements, as well as some school calenders showing times of cultural celebrations that help to validate all groups. These were provided to me by the schools. Primary data were collected through one-time, one-hour, semi-structured interviews, and only once was it necessary to telephone a participant for clarification of a point. She graciously obliged.
Some interviews took place during the school day, because some administrators were involved in after-school meetings during this time of rapid changes to the system. Other interviews were held after school hours by those who were able to work around the interview date and be available. Six of these interviews were between one hour and ten minutes, and one hour and twenty minutes long. None was less than an hour, because there were many questions and probes. All interviews took place in the administrators' offices, and they allowed interruption only for emergencies during the interviews. The administrators had given permission, in advance, for interviews to be taped, and I reminded them of that. I also repeated the confidentiality aspect and informed them that they were free to ask for clarification, or to offer information not asked for by the questions, if they thought such information was valid to the study.

As I asked the questions and received answers, I found it necessary to use probes to focus and get more direct answers. I found this to be a useful strategy in all the interviews. I also found the participants, as they answered the questions, to be forthcoming with the information, and even more so when probed. They were fairly uninhibited, hesitating only to ponder the question. They provided some information that was not requested, sometimes personal, but very useful to the study. Such areas I pursued using probes. The atmosphere was one of trust between the researcher and the participants who saw me as a trusted colleague. As Woods (1986) suggests, participants must feel that the researcher can be trusted, and that there should be a relationship which transcends the researcher, resulting in a bond in which all persons seek the same end. I
had such a relationship with them over the years, and that helped to set the tone of the interviews, and establish rapport between researcher and participants.

I allowed, at the beginning of the interview, a few minutes for greetings and chit chat. However, I soon explained again what the research was all about, the semi-structured format of the interview, and what that allowed on both sides. All participants were very businesslike, and conducted their part with much poise and grace, providing an enormous amount of data. A wealth of information was also provided on the diversity in the schools, and the changing patterns administrators observed.

**Document Analysis**

The documents provided to me by the school were mainly Board documents relating to policies and procedures. They reflected a measure of inclusiveness in that they targeted the entire school population, and in some cases, naming the immigrant population. Some documents also showed the punitive measures in place to deal with all kinds of anti-social and dysfunctional behaviour for all students. I also observed agendas and minutes of meeting of an affirmative action committee provided to assist students, mainly minorities. Posters on affirmative action and notices regarding new Canadian club meetings were also posted at strategic locations of the school. Calenders, showing minority groups’ cultural celebration dates, were also posted in many schools. Board policy documents imply an allocation of values that help to determine school culture, and these were carefully examined. I read the mission statement for each school to determine how inclusive they were of the minority groups in the school, and established that they
were. Examination of the secondary data reflects the level of support administrators receive from the Board and the efforts at inclusiveness of all the cultures in the life of the school.

Data Analysis

The primary data came from the interviews which were tape-recorded, and, after each interview, I listened to the tape, which was then transcribed. Participants said that they stood by what they said and did not need to see the transcribed data, despite my invitation to have them do a review, to determine the accuracy of their responses. I read each transcript fully. A measure of data reduction took place (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p.439), because there was so much similarity, and a few irrelevances. Analysis followed the unitize/categorize method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each utterance or thought that seemed to be significant was recorded on separate three by five inch cards regardless of the number of words or the fit to the focus questions. The major themes were grouped, according to the framework and research questions, but other themes emerged as well as categories and sub-categories. An example of a response that was outside of the focus question is when Daniel mentioned that:

It is enormously difficult to understand why people behave as they do, unless you have some concept of what they were taught when they were younger. As Vice-Principal, very little training is ever provided to me.
This provides insight into respondents' own concept of some of the problems they face, and speaks to the difficulty in carrying out the Board's direction for the assessment of prior education in newcomers. This was the first such reference made which suggests this feeling of inadequacy and lack of training among administrators, and this was heard several times more in other interviews. This uncertainty of action became one of my probing areas, as I felt the necessity to see how others felt in the matter. The responses from others confirmed Daniel's concern. I was surprised at the kind of honesty with which participants spoke about this. I reminded them of the confidentiality of their responses, but they were unconcerned and continued to elaborate.

In my analysis, I was aware that I was not looking at verifiable facts, because, as Guba and Lincoln (1994) observe, epistemological beliefs lean towards the assumption that knowledge is socially created and understood, rather than being objective, verifiable facts and laws. I looked at the number of administrators providing similar responses to the same questions, and used that fact to aid in establishing a measure of objectivity. At the same time, I was also aware of the fact that administrators' thoughts, actions, and decisions are influenced by their own life histories, their own ideological framework, and their own limited world views, which are culturally imposed for the most part (Ryan and Wignall, 1994).

The unitizing process produced 500 cards. I then sorted the cards into categories based on similarity of themes and patterns according to the four focus areas, i.e., types of conflict, issue around which conflicts revolve, people involved, and conflict resolution
strategies. Demographic questions were also part of the questionnaire because of demographic impact, particularly the numbers it generates and its tremendous effect on the schools.

Some sub-themes involve inadequate administrators’ preparation for diversity, overall scepticism of the amalgamated Board, the negative impact of the reduction in number and quality of support systems available, and the changes administrators would like to see. All these sub-themes became obvious as the cards were being shuffled and reshuffled. Ten sets of cards emerged for the final reporting, providing a wealth of information. These data are reported in five of the chapters, and include direct responses from all fifteen participants. Chapter four presents demographic changes in the schools, chapter five, the issues around which conflicts revolve, chapter six, conflicts organized according to Gay’s three-dimensional classification, chapter seven, conflict resolution, and chapter eight, out-of-school support systems and desired changes.

Limitation of the Interview Technique

Interviewing is very time consuming, and this limits the number of participants that can be involved in the research. The logistics of the interview sessions require a lot of planning, and, for me, a lot of travelling from school to school. The interviews must be sufficiently long, and questions detailed to provide the rich quality of data for a useful study. The data once taped, necessitate a lot of time to listen to and be transcribed. The researcher must always be on-task to ensure that any digression from the topic, by
participants that is not useful to the topic, be cut short respectfully, and attention refocused to the topic.

**Trustworthiness of the Data**

Writers who address the topic of trustworthiness in qualitative research suggest that qualitative research should have different conceptualizations about validity and reliability (Merriam, 1998, p.166), because those terms are associated with quantitative research. Trustworthiness is a more appropriate term for qualitative research. Trustworthiness suggests a different set of assumptions about multiple realities, and judgments about validity are up to the researcher, who should demonstrate adequate care and integrity in carrying out the research (Kinchelele, 1991). Triangulation aids trustworthiness (Merriam, 1998). Although this study has not employed that strategy, it has used document observation, and analysis, in addition to the interviews, which are also quite effective.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I have had some experiences that could be seen to influence the study. However, participants were already known to me, so I could concentrate and attend to what was being said. All responses were interesting, engaging, and straightforward. Responses regarding diversity were quite similar from all participants. Administrators focused either on the richness that diversity has brought to the schools and/or the challenges it poses for teachers and administrators. Responses regarding conflicts were also similar, and some administrators provided personal stories involving themselves with students and parents. Responses to questions on conflict resolution were also similar. The programs in the school involved mediation, and the
sponsors were all taught at workshops by the same people. This probably accounted for the similarity in the responses. The measure of similarity to the responses in all the areas of the interview makes it easy for me to vouch for the integrity of the data. All participants were unaware of the questions and were interviewed individually and in different places. The responses revealed considerable relevant information which was sufficient in itself to attest to data integrity.

Summary

This chapter describes the methodology and design of the study. It also provides perspectives on the semi-structured interview approach, ethical considerations of the study, participant selection, and the procedure that I followed. Profiles of the participants and the schools are also included as well as data collection methods. Analysis of primary and secondary data as well as perspectives on the limitations of the interview technique, and trustworthiness of the data are also provided. The following chapter will begin the presentation of the data, and will focus on demographic changes in the schools.
CHAPTER FOUR

New Canadians in Toronto Schools: Changing Patterns

Immigrant students have been present in the schools of Toronto for some time now. Waves of immigrants from England and Europe have resulted in large numbers of students coming to our schools. More recently, and since the Vietnam War, other ethnic groups have swelled the ranks of students; they provide a colourful racial mix and a different quality of school culture in transition. English as a second language (E.S.L.) is offered in nearly all schools, creating a large number of teaching positions. Many of these E.S.L. students have long since graduated and taken their places in the Canadian society. Their places in the schools have been taken by others from the same areas, but mostly from other parts of the world.

This study focuses on these immigrant students now in the schools for five years and less, and are referred to in the study as new Canadians. Anyone can easily affirm that school populations in Toronto are multiracial but that school goes on as usual. However, a closer look reveals that changes are occurring. The new Canadian population in Toronto schools reflects some changes, as evidenced by the data produced in this study. The major areas of change involve

1. demographics: quantity of change, countries of origin;
2. socio-economic levels;
3. age range;
4. academic orientation;
5. gender composition; and
6. diversity.

Demographics

Many schools have reported a change in the number of new Canadians over the past 4 or 5 years. This points to the larger number of immigrant students in the schools, and many of them are older, adding a large adult component to the new Canadian school population. All the schools in the study report increased numbers; for example one school in which new Canadians numbered approximately 500 students earlier, now reports over 800. Most of these have been in the country for less than three years. Annabell, for example, an E.S.L. Department Head, observes:

We now have a very large new Canadian population up from 500 to over 800. And quite an increase in staff for English to speakers of other languages.

In another school the numbers have literally doubled from just over 300 to 600, including many that have recently arrived. Ransford, a Principal, also observes:

We have been allowed to increase our numbers. In the past we were just over 300. Now we can take 600. Our numbers fluctuate between 560 and 600.

An increase is also reported by a school in which the difference is not as dramatic as those mentioned above, but is still significant. The numbers rose from 300 to approximately 450. Jennie also reports an increase in numbers of new Canadians in her school this year to about 450 students, from 325.
While an increase is reported by all the schools, it is more so in the schools that are allowed to have an adult component as a complement to their adolescent numbers. A look at the lunch time crowd in the cafeteria, student gatherings in the hallways, and outside the doors, attest to the vast number of immigrant students in the schools. The various languages heard also reflect the multitude of countries and cultures from which the students come.

**Countries of Origin**

The students arrive from various parts of the world, but they do not come mostly from Europe as they did. Crises in different parts of the world affect immigration patterns. The war in Vietnam led to thousands of refugees coming to many industrialized countries, including Canada, which received many. The war in Cambodia also resulted in many immigrants emigrating from that country to Canada. Surrounding countries in that region also saw some of their people leave for Canada and other countries. The Tamil situation also produced immigrants for Canada, and other such countries. China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Poland, Greece, and Portugal are still some of the recent feeders of students to the Canadian School system, as evidenced in the data. They are, however, not arriving in the numbers that they once did. For example, Benjamin, a Vice-Principal, states:

> Traditionally our students have come from Greece, China, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. Some of these groups have graduated
and become smaller as we are getting less today from some of these areas.

Deidre, an E.S.L. Department Head, notices the changes in countries of origin in her school and responds:

We have always had Vietnamese, Chinese, Indians, Iraqis. We still have these groups but in smaller numbers.

Nindra, a Principal, is experiencing similar changes. She says: "In my school the trend has been heavily Asian, Indian and Tamil, but not as many of these are coming in now."

Other conflicts in Africa, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, the war among drug cartels, and political instabilities in some of the countries of South and Central America, religious problems in Turkey etc., have resulted in immigrants and refugees from these areas coming to Canada. These areas have not only added to the countries of origin, but also increased the number of ethnic groups in the schools in Toronto.

Administrators have not only noticed the decline from the above countries, but also the new areas from which their students come. Deidre, for example, says: "More recently our new Canadian students come mainly from Central and South America, Somalia, Ethiopia, other African countries, and Sri Lanka." Lorna, a Vice-Principal, also recognizes the change and says: "We are now getting students mainly from Sri Lanka, African countries and from some European countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia." Kini, a Vice-Principal, announces that, "Instead of our large Asian
groups that we were used to, I think that now we have the largest group of Somalis in the system and quite a number from Ethiopia."

In Toronto, immigrants tend to go to areas where others from their ethnic groups have settled. The school population in the different areas reflect this. William, a Principal, observes:

My school is mainly Anglo-Saxon because they live in the area, but we do have a large group of Ethiopians, Somalis, and Indians who have now moved into the area as well. Some Chinese and Vietnamese, Sri Lankans are also here but in smaller numbers than before.

Samson, a Vice-Principal, also concurs with the idea that the schools draw students from the surrounding area. He says,

We still have a large Greek population because a large percentage of that group lives in this area. We also have Spanish and Tamil students who also live in the area.

While the Asian population is smaller in some schools, in others it remains high. It depends on the location of the school, the number of students living in the surrounding areas, and the program offered by the school. Nindra says:

We have a large group of Asians still because so many live in this area. There are about 503 from China, 106 from Vietnam, Tamils from Sri Lanka 10, and from Korea 15.

Even when certain ethnic groups are declining in numbers, in some schools, the schools in the areas where they live, still get a comparatively large number of them. Some
students may not live in the area, but they are drawn by the school program, and are willing to use the transit system to get to the school. Martin, a Principal, says: "We still have a good number of students from China, Vietnam, and Taiwan. They live in this area or have easy access by subway and they like our technology program." A few schools have been designated adults only (19 and over) and the government has mandated a reduction or complete removal of adult students from adolescent schools. This will, in the near future, if not already, reduce the number of students in adolescent schools, but the overall numbers will remain high as adult schools increase.

Socio-economic Levels

In schools there are certain markers used by teachers and administrators that help to determine economic need or the well-being of students. Some of these markers are appearance in terms of dress, application from students for breakfast vouchers, and for small bursaries to purchase school materials, and the number of students who are welfare recipients. Using these markers administrators have been able to observe, for the most part, the changes in the socio-economic levels of the students. Garno, an E.S.L. Department Head, observes the change in the socio-economic level of his students, which he has seen over the years. He says:

Well, I think the major change I have seen is in the socio-economic levels of the students. In the past we had many students from Iran and Iraq, who drove expensive cars, dressed in designer clothes, and lived in their own condominiums. Now we are getting more and more refugees
and people from the lower socio-economic group. Students come from Eastern Europe, India, Ethiopia, Somalia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and a lot of them are refugees without financial resources.

Annabell has made similar observations, and suggests that her students now come mainly from areas with fewer resources, resulting in fewer economically independent students.

She states:

We no longer are getting students who are well off financially. Most of our new Canadian students are over 18 and are refugees so they immediately have to apply for welfare assistance just to survive. Many of our students are on the breakfast program as well, because subway fares and rent take most of the money they get from the welfare program. We have to direct many to the food banks. Very few of our students can afford to be fashion setters as in the past. We are just not getting that wealthy group from the gulf states and from Hong Kong. Our present students come from areas where they have fewer resources, and where there is war, so these students are more needy.

Administrators have said that this level of poverty affects attendance because those students who do not live in the school area but need the program, cannot afford to purchase subway passes, and must buy tokens which makes travel even more expensive. The passes, as well as single transit tokens are costly, so some students do not attend school due to their inability to afford these transit fares. Changes in the Canadian weather
also add to the cost of living for these students, and many arrive at school in the winter
months without the proper protective clothing. Some schools have put on bazaars selling
used clothing very cheaply so that students can get the clothes they need. Deidre, for
example, explains:

Each year we hold a bazaar to which teachers bring in good
used clothing that we sell to our students for a dollar or fifty
cents. We charge this rather than just give them to avoid the
charity label. Students get full outfits -- warm coats, lamps,
dishes, children’s clothes, books, and a lot of necessary things
and many students make use of the opportunity.

Age Range of Students

There has also been a change in the ages of the students. The data reveal that many
are arriving at an age that is older than usual. Many of the refugees tend to be older and
are on their own. In the past, whole families came, but this is less so today when it is
mostly individuals with no family ties in this country. Nindra observes: "We used to get
students mainly between the ages of 13 and 17. Now most of the students are in the 18
to 21 age range and on their own."

Deidre, an adult school Department Head, reflects that they have to follow the
Board’s mandate for the change in age of students to the adult school. She says:

We are a designated adult school, so all our students are over
19. We are no longer allowed to take them at a lower age as
we did before so our students are older and mainly on their
own.
Martin, from an adolescent-only school, worries about the diminished time that students spend in the school, because of the cut off for adult schools, and that fewer younger ones are coming in. He responds:

Most of students we are now getting are older, at least 17 and above and we can only keep them until they reach 19 when they go to an adult school. Fewer of the younger ones are coming; maybe fewer families are coming in, we are not sure why.

This older age range in adolescent schools has its own problems. These students are close in age to adults and sometimes feel out of place in classes with younger students. They also tend to take longer to learn the language and slow progress discourages them.

The students are coming in older. They seem to take longer to learn the language and feel awkward in classes with younger people in other subject areas than language. They often become terribly frustrated, even embarrassed, leading to all sorts of conflicts.

Administrators in the adult schools suggest that the students feel much more comfortable in schools for adults rather than in the adolescent schools because of the similarity in age, immigrant experience, and language learning difficulties experienced by all. Ransford, a Principal, maintains that:

because all our students are adults, experiencing the same sorts of things the comfort level is better than when they mix
with adolescents. They are more comfortable sharing their problems and dealing with situations among themselves.

**Academic Orientation**

Many of the students have come with varying levels of prior education. Some have completed elementary school, some high school and some college, and others university. Their main educational need, especially for those with secondary and post-secondary education, is to learn English quickly and go back to college or university to upgrade their skills and degree in the new language so that they can work in their fields and have a better future. Deidre, for example, has seen this among her students and reports:

There is an increase in people who are well educated and highly skilled; a lot of engineers. I find that most of the people coming here are academically oriented. They want English to go on to college or university and to work in their fields of training.

It is not unusual to find in the adult schools a number of doctors, lawyers, engineers, pianists, singers, computer programmers, accountants, et al., who have already practised their craft in their countries of origin, and are highly motivated to meet the standards required for their fields of learning, in this country. Daniel, another Principal, has also experienced this motivated, educated group, and says:

Some students learn very quickly. We must understand that they have had the experience of another system. They are highly motivated and have earned diplomas or degrees. They are anxious to improve their English so they can get jobs. In
response we have to gear their program to accommodate their educational needs.

In earlier years one adult school, in particular, which now gets a more educated group, used to have students mostly with elementary education or less, many of them having been small farmers who were more interested in jobs than in education. Ransford suggests that, in terms of programs for students, this disposition is not usual:

The type of students determine the program. We have a different kind of clientele now for whom we must design appropriate programs. Accelerated English language program, career information, and English for the different professions must be provided, because our students have a higher prior education level.

Gender Composition

A gender component to the demographic shift has also been revealed in the data. Not all schools experience this shift, but some administrators report that males tend to outnumber females, which is a reversal of past trends in some schools. Samson, for example, says:

For some years we were predominantly female. Now we are about equal and the male students are younger adults, late 20s early 30s in that range.

This trend is not true in all schools. For example, Martin, a Principal, says that more females are requesting computer programs and enrolling in his school in larger numbers than before, thus outnumbering males. He believes that girls see technology as being
important to their future, and go where the program is available. He observes that:
"Traditionally this school attracted more boys than girls, but as women realize that they can obtain jobs in technology we seem to be getting more females wanting to learn English and to get computer skills."

Diversity

Students are from various countries, cultures, speak different languages, and have different needs and educational expectations. These students create a high level of diversity that requires a lot of administrative attention. Some students, from the traditional areas, remain, but there are now many others, from Central and South America, Eastern Europe and some African countries. From the data on diversity, a number of themes have emerged, involving:

1. the numbers involved;
2. attitudes to diversity;
3. challenges of diversity;
4. aids to diversity; and
5. responses to diversity.

Numbers Involved

Diversity in the school involves more than new Canadians. There are immigrant students who have been in the country for more than five years, learning the English language and achieving academic success in other subjects as well, but the new Canadians among them are many. A look at some statistics conveys a sense of the numbers. In one school of 600 new Canadian adult students, 95 percent are new Canadians, representing 51 countries and 44 languages.
In another school of 1,597 students, 45.2 percent are new Canadians, speaking 50 different languages. Another school of 1,299 reports a 35 percent new Canadian population and 42 language backgrounds. A school of 1,459 documents 35.5 percent from 37 countries and language backgrounds, and another school of 1,996 students with 41 percent, who are new Canadians, report 29 languages. A school of 570 has a 95 percent new Canadians from 27 language backgrounds, and another with 715 has 52.6 percent new Canadians from over 40 language backgrounds. It goes on and on. It should also be noted that these numbers represent more than just the counting of people. They also represent culture, in terms of behaviour patterns, values, dress, religion, and so forth, thus making the diversity more noticeable and more challenging for administrators. One has only to visit a high school today and observe the diversity especially when compared to high school population of the 1960s and early 1970s. Diverse clothing, head wear, etc., have become a normal part of the landscape.

Attitudes to Diversity

The data reveal not only the attitudes to diversity held by administrators, teachers and students, but also the reasons for such attitudes. Some administrators suggest that diversity has a very positive impact on schools, that the mix of students prompts people to learn together and learn about each other’s cultures, how to get along, respect others, and how to live in a multicultural setting. Administrators are not closing their eyes to the
negative impact, but, by and large, they feel that the positive outweighs the negative and that the benefits are worth striving for. Marie, a Principal, says:

In this school one of our founding values is diversity. It permeates everything we do. We talk always about empathy and diversity. Because we make such a big thing about it, I think it affects the school certainly, so that all the teachers make a point of building a very inclusive curriculum. We try to incorporate the students' needs and cultures into the courses, so students learn about different cultures, and this fosters respect and tolerance.

William, a Principal, also sees diversity as a positive thing. He suggests that diversity enriches his school with knowledge about other cultures. He suggests:

Diversity adds a wonderful dimension to our school, because we learn about other cultures. Students bring their customs, food, celebrations, etc., into our school, so diversity enriches our school.

Annabell also concurs. She believes that diversity allows teachers and students to learn about each other. She opines:

Teachers learn a lot of things about the various cultures. Students for different cultural backgrounds join each other in discussions in the classroom about their culture so that teachers and students alike learn from one another.
Elimer, a Vice-Principal, sees the multicultural mix as a positive thing, adding a quality of richness to the school. She says:

Because we have a variety there is not that sameness anymore. We celebrate the various cultures and this adds richness to our lives.

One administrator who came to Canada as an immigrant student, reflects a positive attitude to diversity because, as she said, diversity had a good influence on her when she came as a child, even if Toronto was not as multicultural as it is today. Marie says:

I came to Canada as a child from a very homogeneous culture in Europe, where essentially everybody looked the same, and we all spoke the same language. When I came to Toronto I was really impressed with the different cultures that I saw here, even though they were fewer than now. I went to public school in Toronto where I got very close to students from different parts of the world. It was wonderful for me to make friendships among them, learn about them, and now as adults some of these people are like part of my extended family.

*Challenges of Diversity*

In order to achieve the positive from diversity, challenges must be met head on and overcome, and administrators clearly understand what they face. The challenges involve the need to understand the cultures and the expectations of the students, to determine the level of prior learning, to engage in building curriculum to meet the needs of these
students, as well as to develop an inclusive school culture. Daniel, a Principal, remarks on these challenges. He says:

Well, diversity does present a lot of challenges for the teachers in the classroom, and for administrators as a by-product of that, to understand the ways in which these students can best be taught. It also means that there are considerable divergences in background knowledge. It is not always possible to assume that people have had the same kind of experience in their countries that the so-called Canadian who grew up here had in our school system. So when they arrive you can expect that you are going to have a group of intelligent people, but not with the same backgrounds, which produces difficulties in trying to prepare a curriculum for them.

Benjamin, a Vice-Principal, agrees that there are challenges and suggests that a number of adjustments must be made to meet the needs of all students and teachers thus adding to their work load. He says:

Diversity in the school poses a challenge to the entire staff in terms of the adjustments that must be made to provide for the needs of the students, and sometimes for members of the staff from immigrants cultures. This means more work for administrators and staff.
Kini sees the challenge in terms of requests for religious activities that some students make and the adjustments needed to be made to prevent exam schedules and tests from clashing with religious holidays. She says:

Diversity means that consideration has to be made with respect to religion: to provide a prayer room for some of our students, especially providing facilities where rooms are scarce, developing exam schedules and mid-term tests around religious holidays, fasting periods and Friday prayers.

One of the challenges voiced by almost all administrators is having to make daily decisions without any training regarding the various cultures. Many report the limiting influence that this has on their efforts to address the needs of immigrant students. Administrators say that they strive for equity and impartiality in dealing with students, but they often misinterpret behaviours that are culturally motivated, for rudeness or lack of interest. One of the mistakes often cited by administrators, due to lack of cultural information, is the tendency to see all students of a certain ethnic group as having the same culture. The tendency, also, is to treat these students alike, assuming that they understand and respond to situations in the same way. In the absence of this knowledge, administrators cope as best they can with the help of community leaders, multicultural staff members, and students. Marie, for example, says:

We have to learn it all ourselves and we shouldn’t be making some of the mistakes we make. A usual one is the tendency to see all students, say from Africa, as culturally similar, or
seeing them as being culturally similar with students from the Caribbean.

Administrators also make mistakes in trying to accommodate religious behaviours. They tend to see all Muslims the same way, with the same needs, following the tenets of their religion in the same way. But this is not always so. Nindra, for example, maintains that:

It took me a while to realize that Muslim students from Africa are different in some ways from Muslims from the Caribbean. We cannot take anything for granted.

Benjamin also experiences difficulty recognizing some of the differences among some groups. He says:

I have only recently realized some of the differences within ethnic groups. Some come from different regions of the same country and are markedly culturally different and have some needs that are different.

People tend to behave in the cultural ways they are used to. In the absence of this knowledge the tendency is to give it a meaning that may suit the situation, but not the person. Daniel thinks that this lack of knowledge leads to poor decisions. He says:

It is enormously difficult to understand why people behave the way they do unless you have some concept of their background. Decisions we make about those people often are superficial and sometimes damaging.
Marie also voices her concern regarding this lack of knowledge about the cultures she serves and suggests:

As administrators I think we need to develop a language that allows us as educators to deal in a comfortable manner with all students. We often rely on Board policies but these are not culture specific and sometimes are even inappropriate for the situation at hand.

The job of the administrator sometimes necessitates visits to the homes of students, to involve parents in matters of schooling regarding their children. Where the culture of the home is different from that of the administrator’s, a challenge is posed. The administrator wants to please and to avoid tensions resulting from his or her ignorance and must seek help to be culturally correct. Garno, for example, says:

If I have to visit the home of one of these students I try to avoid doing or saying anything that would offend the parents. I call on a social worker or community leader of that culture to help me out; sometimes they are amazed at how little we know of these cultures.

Some religious beliefs and customs also pose a challenge for administrators. It is difficult somehow to accommodate the expectations of some students. As Samson points out:

We do have a Muslim population, and they expect religion to take greater prominence in the things we do. We have to explain the difference in attitudes to religion in this system. They still find it hard to reconcile the demands of the credit
system with the time they need to visit the mosque or to spend in prayer.

Classroom teachers try to be sensitive but cannot always accede to the requests of some students, as in the case of requests for gender segregation. As Benjamin suggests:

Some of our new Canadians have no problems with being in a co-education class but others do. Some males do not like being with females or want to work in groups with females. It takes a while for them to realize that they have to adapt, that the class dynamics are not going to change significantly for them, so that’s a challenge for them as well as for the teachers and administrators.

Challenges are not only faced by administrators but also by students. The challenges faced by students involve understanding and respecting students of other cultures, starting over, getting oriented to the new surroundings, learning and socializing in this unfamiliar setting where rules and regulations are often different from what they were used to, and where religion does not play a central role. This is not an easy task, given the difficulties students encounter in trying to bridge the home and school cultures which can be quite different. However, the schools try to help the students meet these challenges as best they can. Martin says:

Most students have a difficult time getting comfortable in this school because we have students from over 50 countries. It is easy to become confused with the differences, so we have to
allow students the time to make the adjustments and provide people to help them.

Aids to Managing Diversity

A number of situations come together to assist administrators to make diversity work for all involved. Among them is the presence on staff of teachers who represent many of the students' cultural and language backgrounds. Even members of the secretarial staff have this quality of representation in some schools. This helps students to feel more comfortable, because they can be heard and understood in their own language and that their problems can be better addressed. Parents are also more comfortable speaking in their own language with the school. Martin speaks of how this helps in his school. He says:

The thing that is really quite unusual about this school is that the teaching staff is also extremely multicultural. Although we have so many different backgrounds, students see themselves represented for the most part. There are teachers here who speak Greek, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Farsi, Urdu, Spanish, among others. Some people on the secretarial staff also speak several of the languages. This is also of immense help when you need to contact the home and be able to speak to an adult in their original language.
Assistance from outside the school is also an aid, and is highly valued by administrators in their quest to get it right. Deidre, for example, speaks of her appreciation of the help provided by people from outside the school.

We do have social workers and community leaders from various cultural language backgrounds who visit the school and speak with students in their own languages and advise teachers and administrators, when appropriate, on student matters. These workers are also available on call.

Another asset is the presence in the school of students from various cultures who have been in the country for longer periods, and have greater facility with the English language. These students have become comfortable with their surroundings and are able to assist in the orientation of students new to the system. Benjamin speaks of how new students are helped by those who came before them. He says:

When students come to this environment they find other people like themselves, they become more comfortable because they can talk with these people about their concerns. They can wear their national dress with pride because they see earlier arrivals doing so. This helps them to settle in and feel more grounded in the new setting.
Martin suggests that students whose behaviour and attire are dictated by their religion, are no longer as intimidated as those who came before, because they find their own kind in the system comfortably keeping their traditions. He observes:

It is much easier for a Hindu student to live as Hindu or a Muslim student to live as a Muslim. They can wear their clothes because they see others doing so; there are also many students from the different religions and cultures who have come earlier and for whom strategies have already been developed to orientate them to the system. They can help the new Canadians to understand and to feel less intimidated.

Workshops provided by the Board of Education also help teachers with strategies to deal with diversity, to develop inclusive curriculum, and to identify grammatical markers in some languages that cause interference with the learning of English language. Elimer addresses this and appreciates Board provisions of workshops to assist teachers in understanding the problem. She states:

Students from some language backgrounds find it harder to learn English because of certain grammatical and tonal differences in their language and English. We sometimes attended workshops that point out these differences so we can help the students overcome their difficulties.

Responses to Diversity

Administrators are well aware of the directives from the Board of Education that curriculum be inclusive of the needs of all students. Not only curriculum, but the whole
concept of school culture is required to reflect inclusiveness. Administrators must devise ways to respond to the diverse population in order to achieve a learning environment in which students can feel a sense of belonging, can learn and contribute to the learning of others. The newness to the country, the problems inherent in trying to make the crossing from their own cultural setting to the present one, low proficiency with the new language, among other things, are enough to erode the students' self-concept in the school environment.

Some of the activities, undertaken in response to diversity and the needs of the students, involve adjustment to school times, to facilitate working schedules of students. Students from each culture form clubs to celebrate and share their culture. They are also encouraged to form international clubs, and share in various cultural events and classroom activities. Involvement in student government as class representatives also gives students a sense of belonging and self-worth. School calendars showing religious days and activities keep celebrations in focus. These celebrations also provide a way to involve the community, especially parents and community leaders in the school. The school often contributes to the celebrations by purchasing soft drinks, and staff and students join in to celebrate different cultures at different times. The various celebrations are posted in school calendars as reminders. Daniel says:

Because we are very conscious of the various cultures we encourage each cultural group to hold its own celebration. We purchase the pop so they have a party to celebrate any of their
religious occasions. They invite other students and staff to the cafeteria where students do food and dances which raise the consciousness of the cultures. Parents and people from their communities often attend. Our school calender comes out every month listing the religious activities for the different religious groups, making us more conscious of all the celebrations during the year.

Lorna speaks of the value to the school of student government, and efforts to involve all ethnic groups to participate. She says:

Each of the ethnic groups is encouraged to have its own representative on the student government, which plays a big part in organizing celebrations and other activities, as well as being a liaison among students, the student council and the classroom.

Annabell talks of efforts to raise the level of understanding of all cultures through celebrations by different groups. She says:

Various cultural groups hold celebrations. Just last week the Spanish group had a week-long celebration in which they made Spanish food, held dances, taught us how to do the salsa and even provided Spanish lessons. Such things raise the understanding that each student has for each other’s culture.
Garno also encourages these celebrations in his school, because they educate everyone regarding the different cultures and foster respect as well. Garno says:

We encourage students who are always ready and willing, to present various aspects of their culture such as dress, in fashion shows, food displays, songs, dance, national symbols such as their flag, money, national anthem, etc., each celebration educates the rest of us in the particular cultures and the students' pride is reflected in the presentation, which fosters respect for the different cultures.

Special events, to highlight particular cultures as a learning experience for others, are undertaken in many schools. There is now little or no doubt that schools in Toronto have undergone many changes, the most obvious being the nature of the student population. The various ethnic groups with all that such entails, i.e., multi-religious and all the traditions and customs of the various groups.

Summary

School populations tend to change with shifting immigration patterns. Wars, and social or political unrest usually result in immigration from the areas involved, to the more stable and industrialized countries such as the United States, Australia, and Canada. Over the years the unfavourable conditions mentioned above have resulted in large numbers of students coming from Vietnam, China, Soviet Union, India, Pakistan, Portugal, Greece, the Middle East, Poland, and other European countries. Some students have come because of political uncertainties and in search of a better life. Students from
these areas continue to arrive but in smaller numbers. In more recent times and in larger numbers (over the past 10 years) students tend to come from areas of more recent unrest, such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Central and South America, India, Sri Lanka, and Turkey among others. The groups are divided among the schools, but each school hosts the ethnic groups that settle in the surrounding areas. The above changes have brought an increase in numbers, as well as in some ethnic groups. African students now constitute a large portion of the student body. The numbers of new Canadians have increased in all the schools requiring more teachers and more inclusive programs.

The socio-economic levels of these students have also changed. Formerly, some students were financially independent. Today a large number of the students are refugees who are dependent on government assistance such as welfare, bursaries, and food programs for survival. They also travel more by public transit than by cars. There has also been a change in the age range of the students. Formerly the majority were in the 13-17 age range. Now they are older and in the 18-21 range, although some are still older than that. This has increased the numbers requiring adult education delivered either in adult or adolescent schools.

Changes in the academic levels of the students are also reflected in the data. In the past, fewer students were educated beyond the high school level and many only had an elementary education. Now, and probably because the students are older, many have already earned college diplomas and university degrees in various fields of study. Many have already worked in their areas of expertise and are highly motivated to learn English
and to acquire Canadian equivalency for their certificates. Gender patterns have also changed but the significance of this is lessened as each school reflects a difference. Some schools have more females than males and vice versa. However an important change is that the schools with technology programs report an increase in the number of female students, and in those wishing to get involved in that program.

There is also a change reflected in the level of diversity of students. The numbers are greater generally, and this means that there is also greater diversity among some ethnic groups. The increased numbers are reported in all the schools. The differences in cultures and religion are obvious, as reflected in clothes, head dress, and languages, giving the schools an international character. Some countries are represented by very few students but it is not uncommon to find schools with over 50 countries represented. Administrators, by and large, demonstrate an affirmative attitude to diversity. They see staff and students of various cultures learning together and from one another, fostering respect, understanding, and tolerance of differences. Some see diversity as adding a wonderful dimension to school, providing flavour and removing sameness.

In getting this diversity to work for all, administrators are aware of the challenges involved. Among these challenges is the one to develop an inclusive curriculum for all students. There is also the challenge of determining the prior educational levels of students and the equivalence to Canadian standards. Another challenge is the lack of training about the different cultures that stymies the administrators efforts to make informed decisions. A knowledge of the behaviours associated with certain religions and
cultures are considered to be crucial, by administrators, if they are to satisfactorily accommodate the needs of the students. Administrators claim that they now learn by experience and from the assistance of others.

The students also face challenges, which involve getting oriented to the new setting, dealing with their own adaptation efforts, and the large mix of cultures, practising their religions and dealing with intolerance. Despite these challenges for administrators and students, there are situations that aid them in their efforts to deal with this diversity. Administrators can draw on the advice of social workers, community leaders, teachers and older students from the different cultures. These students would have been in the country for some time and are usually ready and willing to help the newer students understand the system and adjust.

The response to diversity, in most of the schools, is fairly similar. Administrators say that they encourage involvement in the affairs of the school, in student government, in the multicultural clubs and events to which parents and members of the community are invited. Cultural celebrations include food fairs, fashion shows, international concerts, and other musical events. Many of the students are extremely talented in various artistic and skills areas, and often use these talents to entertain and teach others in the school. Students, by and large, embrace Canada as their new home but they are proud of their original homeland. They are quite willing and ready to educate others in this regard, and this helps them to settle down and to learn the English language more quickly as well. Administrators say that they are comfortable with, make efforts, and go to great lengths
to accommodate the diversity of cultures, the conflicts that result, and the large numbers of new Canadians in their schools. The next chapter addresses the issues around which conflicts result.
When people, and particularly those of different cultures, religions, and languages live, work, or learn together, conflicts occur. The high school population in Toronto today is this kind of a mix. In some schools the mix includes adolescents and adults. Each group has its own unique problems, as well as problems they share with others. The conflicts of transition can be similar for both groups, yet at times quite different. Adults are often in the country by themselves and are plagued by loneliness, homesickness, and financial hardship. Adolescents are more likely to be here with their families. However, both groups must come to terms with the surroundings by establishing a bridge between the cultures of home and school, and herein lie the roots of some conflicts. The data from this study reflect a number of issues around which conflicts revolve. Among them are seven:

1. Transition: culture shock, personal, emotional psychological problems, the juxtaposition of cultures;
2. Gender preference;
3. Religion;
4. Heritage;
5. Adolescent behaviours; and
Transition – Culture Shock

Culture shock occurs when the new culture is very different from the original, and students, especially those from rural settings, feel somewhat overwhelmed by the newness. The newness often involves, not only language, dress, food, religion, social relationships, and schooling, but also the infrastructure of their surroundings, the large buildings, the subway system, the voluminous display of consumer goods in glassy malls, among other things. Some students experience conflicts and difficulties while trying to find a level of comfort with these sorts of surroundings. Gamo, for example, says:

Some students are shocked at the tall buildings, wide streets, large houses, the subway system, etc. Some, at first, are even too frightened by the subway trains to travel on them; often we have to get them a buddy from that culture who feels more confident.

This is particularly true of students from rural areas who have probably not even seen a big city. They need buddies more than others, as well as extended orientation periods, as Nindra says:

Some of my students are from small villages, and have hardly visited a small town, much more a city like Toronto. They become very uncomfortable, even withdrawn for some time. We usually focus on this during the orientation period and team them up with buddies until they get used to their surroundings.
The prevalence of culture shock is somewhat underestimated by some administrators who said that television has created this huge window on the world, so they believe that many students come to Canada with some knowledge of what a major, industrialized city looks like. It is true that news, television, magazines, movies, and other media disseminate news as it happens, with pictures of infrastructures of cities. Martin, for example, believes,

Over the past ten years, the world has become a smaller place especially since the Persian Gulf war. News from around the world is seen shortly after it occurs, on television, especially CNN. American magazines and movies are available in many countries so students coming today are more aware of Canada.

It is also true that many students are from industrialized cities. Garmo says:

Some of our students come here via Spain, Italy, Hong Kong, and other industrialized countries. They come with some ideas about the way big cities look, so they are not as overwhelmed as students of earlier times.

However, adult schools do have students from farming areas who have seen very little of cities. Some adolescents fall into this category. So some students are not accustomed to seeing cities, and experience conflicts in travelling on public transportation, asking for and following directions, especially with their very limited ability to speak the language. They need help to feel comfortable moving about in Toronto.
Transition: The Personal, Emotional, and Psychological Issue

While a few adolescent students show mental instability, this is mainly a problem for adult students, and this creates its own conflicts, making transition that much more difficult. Some adults (adolescents as well) have experienced war in an active way, been tortured, seen members of their families killed, and have fled leaving loved ones behind. Some experience guilt at being safe, while the families exist in constant danger. Because of such problems, which are often compounded by fear and loneliness, many students are incapable, for the most part, of making rational decisions, dealing with school work, their teachers and classmates or their general surroundings in a civil way and must be provided medical attention. Some are put on medication and kept away from the schools until their condition improves. Samson had a few cases in point that reflect the fragile condition of some students and the help needed. He says:

This year I had five students who escaped war. They could not settle down or accept their new surroundings. News of the death of a brother in the war greatly devastated one. A social worker had to get them medical attention.

Elimer reports that some students had became so anxious about family members left back home, that they were happy to return home when refugee status was refused them. She says:

We had students who were refugees and were unsuccessful in obtaining a permit to remain here. Some were actually happy
to return to their country because of their anxiety over family members at home, and their own guilt for being away.

Previous traumatic experiences also render some students unable to cope with schooling, and engage in anti-social behaviour in class. This sometimes results in their removal from the school. As Annabell explains:

I have had students who were tortured and traumatized by the war in their original country. They come to class, but are totally out of it. They sometimes verbally abuse other students and their teacher, sometimes in their own language. Some engage in pushing and shoving and had to be excluded from the school until they receive medical help.

As mentioned before some students are plagued by loneliness because they are here without families. They lack money, as well as workable facilities with the language. The school must provide the needed help. Deidre maintains that:

Some students have no family in Canada, so loneliness and their inability to speak English, lack of money or knowledge of where to get it are settlement issues that students must deal with. They become worried and confused. Fortunately, there are social workers from their cultures to assist them.

Transition: The Juxtaposition of Cultures

The meeting of the cultures can be very difficult for students and the efforts at bridging them can lead to many conflicts. The students in these schools come from diverse cultures with different languages, religious customs, and traditions. The students
enter a school system in which most of the students are from the major culture and tend mostly to avoid or ignore them. For many of these new Canadians, religion permeates their life, but in the new school setting it is not an important focus. Classroom activities are organized differently and do not begin and end with God or religion. Their old schooling traditions are neither known nor valued by students of the majority culture, and this discontinuity leads to distrust of teachers and classmates, disrespect for the teachers and the system, and a lack of interest in or dislike for school.

At home the old traditions must be adhered to: dress, food, relationships, and the tenets of religion, are to be strictly followed. Children are required to leave school and go directly home soon after school is dismissed, with little chance to socialize or make friends. Some students like some of the customs of the Canadian culture and want to adopt them, while adhering to their own customs, but they experience problems conforming to both cultures. Where there are extended families living in the home, the pressure to conform to the home culture is even greater, and some students leave home to live with friends, sometimes giving up school. Potential for conflict is sometimes greater when there are older people living in the home. Daniel maintains that:

In cases where grandparents are living at home and contribute to the family, the pressure for children to obey the rules of the home are greater. Sometimes grandparents are the ones who worked and sponsored their children and grandchildren. They will not tolerate girls wearing high hemlines, boys with
stylish hair cuts, or children wanting to date the Canadian way, hence conflicts.

For most of these students, home is very rigid, very inflexible. School is less so, and, therefore, they use school time to do as they please. This, sometimes, results in abandonment of home, or school or both. As Ransford suggests:

School is the only flexible source for the students, so they take time from that, and roam the streets sometimes getting into trouble. Some find it difficult or impossible to reconcile school and home cultures so they give up and leave home and even give up school.

Adaptation to the new culture causes much pain for some students. They try to be true to both cultures, but are not very successful, and they see their parents as hindrances to their life in a new country. As Kini observes:

Students seem always to be trying to bridge the cultures of home and school. Some try to adapt during school hours, then go home and be very traditional. They feel guilt over the deception of their parents, but see the parents as old fashioned and/or a hindrance in their new life.

**Gender Preference**

In the homes of many new Canadians, there is gender inequality which stems mainly from religious beliefs. The religion dictates the separation of the sexes even when the women are of high rank. This was very obvious during recent events in Jordan when even the wife of the president of the United States could not accompany her husband as
would otherwise be expected. The wife of the king could also not mingle with the men even at the grave of her husband. This highlights the value placed on the religious dictates, and the difficulties Muslim male students face in the co-educational system here. After a period of orientation, they may adjust, at least in certain contexts. Elimer says:

It is very difficult, at first, to get males to sit with females to do group work. If a girl leads the group it’s much worse. But we let them understand the culture here and that it won’t change for them. After a while the males settle down, but only in class. Outside the classroom they revert to their different gender groups.

In the home, females bend to stricter rules from the parents and are generally seen as being inferior to males. Even at school they seem to be under strict rules by their brothers or other males from their culture. As Lorna indicates:

Some of the boys see the girls as being inferior to them, and treat them likewise. Parents restrict the contacts that girls can make, especially with people from other cultures, especially males.

Females must do certain chores before and after school, while males do not, and females are not allowed to go on dates or to attend night dances unchaperoned, if at all. Ransford says:

Females are not allowed to date. Attendance at school functions, dances in particular, is not allowed except when it can be appropriately chaperoned by parents or big brothers.
This results in a number of conflicts in females who see their Canadian counterparts as being much freer to make their own decisions regarding what to wear, with whom to socialize and when. Marie remarks:

These girls want to maintain some of these traditions but they also want to conform to some of the ways of the new culture, especially of the school. Their strict home life retards their efforts to make the transition between the cultures of home and school.

This makes it difficult for them to develop friendships and establish links with people from other cultures that could be helpful during the transition period.

Some girls rebel against the home culture by developing male/female relationships at school unknown to the parents. They use lunch time for visits to the park, lunch dates, and so on. These girls are aware that if this becomes known to their parents they could be sent back home to an arranged marriage. Yet they are willing to take the chance because their social life is either non-existent or greatly restricted by the dictates of home. However, they experience guilt and fear of being found out, and often ask teachers not to reveal their relationships to their parents. Ransford, for example, maintains that:

It is not difficult to observe very close relationships between girls and boys even from different cultures, especially if they are in the same class. The girls, especially Muslim, ask us not to reveal this to their parents or they will be severely punished especially by the father.
Some girls also want wider choices in the clothes they are allowed to wear. When they first arrive, they usually wear traditional clothes but soon find ways to go against their parents wishes by carrying extra clothes and changing at school, then back again for home. Their desire to conform to the new is so strong that they go to such lengths to deceive their parents. Marie says:

Some girls want to dress as the locals do. This creates tension and guilt. They come to school in traditional clothes and then change to skirts especially if there is not a brother in the school. The girls then change again after school back to their traditional dress.

Religion

There are some issues which result in conflicts of transition but which can also stand by themselves. Religion is one of these. Religion has been mentioned earlier but, at this point, another aspect is explored. It is not difficult to realize the hold that some religions have on the adherents, given the dictates of dress, food, daily worship, celebrations, and fasting. Due to the lack of focus on religion in the schools some students want to bring attention to it, so they speak up about it in their classes. This is often done to the irritation of teachers and other students. They make their special requests known, such as times out to pray or to visit their meeting places, and times of fasting. Requests are also made to change some class organization patterns for various activities. Some students request same gender groups based on religious tradition and are
critical of the "Godless" system they find themselves in. This results in conflict with other groups, especially Christian, which are less assertive about religion.

Resentment by teachers and students is also shown to those students who are considered to be too fanatical, seeking to talk about their religious beliefs and to impose their values on others. A quality of resentment seems obvious in the following statement by Deidre, who says:

A problem in Canada is that we do not push our religion, our Judeo-Christian religion, so others see us as having no religious values. They see themselves as righteously superior in a country and a school system void of religious values.

Students and teachers of the majority culture are sometimes seen as lacking in values. The system is seen as permissive, and teachers also as incompetent. Elimer says these students do not understand why religion is not more central in this system. Annabell sees their problem as one in which fanatics of different religions try to instill their own values in others, including their teachers. She says:

Students of particular religious groups are very vocal about teaching values of their religion. They do not understand why this is not so for other students and the teachers. They see us lacking in values, the system as too permissive in discipline, and the teachers incompetent for not focusing on religious values. Within the school community there are students who are fanatical about their religions, and create conflicts with other students and myself. I have a young man who does
nothing but give long Bible readings and quotes constantly from the Bible. He clashes with fanatics from other religions and they see me as some sort of working Satan without values.

Intercultural conflicts also occur between students who want to follow their tradition, especially the religious traditions to the letter and those who are more liberal. This is mostly between males and females. Some females wear the traditional clothes at all times to school, cover their heads, and avoid speaking to boys or dating them, especially boys of other cultures. Some girls wear mostly Canadian style clothes. The males from that culture often see this as inappropriate and want to put an end to it. The girls resent this, therefore, conflicts ensue. Some students, from certain cultural groups, have their own ideas about courtship. To some of the males it is appropriate to touch girls, and to disregard the word "no" in their pursuit of them. Some girls do not accept such behaviour and conflicts result. William suggests:

A lot of the cultural conflicts have to do with sexuality and religion. Interracial dating is frowned upon. Certain behaviours by some males in different groups cause problems. For example, some of the black boys tend to do more touching than others. A Tamil boy tends to pursue a girl relentlessly to show his interest. These behaviours are not tolerated by some groups, especially Muslims from Asia and Africa and the males try to protect their females from such, whether the girls want to be protected or not
Each culture has its own traditions and customs and, while there are some similarities, there are many differences. It is the differences that usually result in conflict in schools where so many cultures come together. Some conflicts can revolve around heritage. There is a somewhat disconcerting situation in many of the schools where heritage is often seen to determine culture and value systems. There are often differences for each group with respect to music, movies, sports, dating and marriage customs. Cricket is the beloved game among Indians, Sri Lankans, Pakistanis, and people from the Caribbean but not for most people from other places. Marriage is arranged in some groups but not in others. Music is very special to the different cultural groups, and any kind of disrespect to the music of other groups results in cultural conflict.

In some of the schools time slots are allowed different groups to play their music in the cafeteria, at lunch. The audience is, at times, very small, depending on whose music is being played. Each culture may reciprocate in kind by not listening to the other’s music. Benjamin maintains that in his school:

We allow students to play their music in the cafeteria on different days, at lunch, in an effort to foster cultural respect, but it doesn’t seem to work. As soon as the music from some cultures begins the cafeteria begins to clear, leaving only students from that culture; few others remain.

Some often assume that heritage, and in particular physical characteristics, are markers for culture, and this can be quite misleading. Some students have the same physical
characteristics, but come from very different regions and cultures. They are perceived to be similar and expected to behave in the same way. For example, some students from Africa and the Caribbean, in particular, have the same skin colour and facial appearance. This results in conflicts because students do not want to be misrepresented or misjudged.

As Annabell observes:

Students from some parts of Africa, and the Caribbean, tend to look the same physically, but their culture is different. I have seen situations in which students from Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria, etc., have conflicts with students from the Caribbean. They actually tell you "I am not like them."

Even students that are Muslim from these two groups practise their religion somewhat differently. Students from different parts of Africa are also often culturally different, and students from different parts of the Caribbean are not all culturally alike, despite their many similarities. Conflicts also revolve around racial prejudices. Often students arrive here with prejudices already developed from their own countries, and tend to characterize and treat some students according to the stereotypes they internalize, as seen in their essays.

Annabell also expresses her concerns regarding racial prejudice. She says:

It is distressing to me when I read a student’s essay, the disdain they hold for other cultures and racial groups, that they brought with them. Usually the students from a homogeneous society have already selected certain races and groups to be racist against and they come with that baggage.
Respect for authority of parents is a value held by most, if not all, of these students. Sometimes the burden of doing what their parents want, what the school wants, and what the students themselves want becomes too heavy. Some students’ way of dealing with this is to leave home, be on their own, and leave parents unaware of their whereabouts, while blaming the schools. The school usually finds itself in the middle, searching for solutions. Nindra says:

Some students leave home because the parents are too hard on them. The parents hold the school responsible for being too lax in discipline so their children learn evil ways. We often try in vain to get students and parents together. The students will not return. The odd time, we are successful.

Students also want to select their friends and determine their own relationship whether from their own culture or another. Parents are usually against this, especially for their daughters. These students see these kinds of relationships among other students mainly of the majority culture and want this for themselves, in an effort to belong, and to grasp the English language quickly. Friendships develop but cannot go beyond the school. They cannot exchange phone calls after school, meet on weekends, or go to the movies with their friends, and this is a source of conflict because parents see their children as rejecting the values of their culture. Some students accept the arranged marriage just to get away from their parents. As Elimer notes:

Many of these students would rather make friends, invite them to their homes and go out on weekends, but they can’t.
Some students try to do what the parents want but some just move out of the home. Some say they even accept the arranged marriage just to be out of the home.

Adolescent Behaviour

Some administrators report that conflicts revolve less around culture, heritage or religion, and more around adolescent behaviours such as gossip, bullying, intimidation, boy and girl relationship, and "dissing" (disrespecting). Kini says:

Conflicts here, are about what somebody said and who is going to shut that person up, getting up a group from one culture to intimidate another group, teaching someone to respect, through intimidation.

The usual conflict about smell and curry on certain groups have all but disappeared, as revealed by some administrators. Some students, especially adolescents, from the larger Canadian culture also understand very little about the other cultures and tend to ignore, show disregard, mimic or engage in name calling based on prevalent stereotypes. These students perceive differences as being less and this causes conflict and resentment from the other groups. These also retaliate with inappropriate behaviour involving name calling, obscenities, or physical confrontations. Lorna reports that some of her Chinese students, have experienced prejudice. Lorna remarks:

Some Chinese students, while standing at their lockers, have had white students come up to them, mimic their language, laugh, and walk away, leaving the students frightened of them.
However, some of the old reasons for conflicts seem to have disappeared. As Martin suggests:

I cannot tell the last time that anybody singled out any group or anyone for smelling badly because of what they eat or for not bathing. We all cook with curry or eat at restaurants that do.

**Educational Expectation**

Another issue reflected in the data, as one around which conflicts revolve is educational expectation. Administrators endeavour to provide an inclusive curriculum but some students from different cultures opt out of classes, in their belief that some classes are not important to their education. Any deviation from the academic, the textbook, or notes is regarded by some as unproductive, and thus disregarded because these subjects do not measure up to their expectation. Physical education, swimming, track and field are some of these subjects. Marie, for example, maintains that:

We build an inclusive curriculum and expect that all students will participate and benefit. I have more headaches convincing students, especially from a particular culture, to go into track competition, swimming, physical education, etc. We get the obstinate refusal "I will not go, I want to study."

Many new Canadians are very educationally motivated and want to move on from high school to post-secondary institutions. They want accelerated English classes, sometimes requesting a whole day of English classes at the expense of other subjects. When
their request is not acceded to, conflicts result. Inability to grasp the language in a short time is interpreted by many students as a result of incompetent teachers, and of too few classes in English available to them each school day. Annabell states:

Some students come here with high levels of education. They tell you that they only want English; so they want four classes of English only. When their time table shows otherwise they reject it and sometimes become abusive.

Research has shown that it takes five to seven years to gain proficiency with the English language (Ministry of Education Curriculum Guidelines, E.S.L., 1992). Some students refuse to accept this. It’s easier to blame the teacher. Lorna suggests that:

Some students believe that in one year, they can learn enough English to gain entrance to university or college. They refuse to accept the fact that it takes longer to achieve that level and they think it is the teacher’s fault.

Then there are those students who come with less than an elementary education, and are more job oriented. Despite their poor facility in the language, they look for work and often find it in low communication type jobs, such as dish washing. They recognize their poor or non-existent communication skills and some try to attend school and work. Attendance at school is erratic, causing conflict between teacher and student. Often when parents are contacted, they are ambivalent because they want the student to learn English
but they also need the financial assistance that the student provides, thus finding themselves "between a rock and a hard place." Daniel, for example, says:

Many parents work for the minimum wage and are in need of any financial help from their children just to put bread on the table. In some cases the student withdraws from school, learns English by osmosis, and concentrates on work, instead.

Administrators and teachers continue to face the problem of getting all new Canadian students to adhere to the prescribed demands of the credit system. Some adult students think that they do not need high school credits because they have post-secondary diplomas and degrees. This seems reasonable, but the high school system is based on credits and therein lies the conundrum for administrators. Such students must go to non-credit schools and run the risk of being rejected by universities, so it is very difficult for administrators to please all students.

Summary

The issues around which conflicts revolve are varied and complex. The issue of transition, a blanket term for efforts to bridge the original and the new cultures, is difficult to describe as many of the problems are unspoken by the student, and thus difficult to pin down and to resolve. While culture shock may not be as prevalent as in earlier times, it is still being experienced by students from rural areas where television has not yet penetrated. Students also tend to fight their own battles, as they try to overcome the problems of dealing with the demands of school and home. For the most
part, the cultures of home and school are very different, and in trying to satisfy both, some students are said to experience much difficulty and distress, and may end up giving up on home or school or both.

Gender preference seems to be an issue in many cultures as male children are valued over females. However, in some cultures, this is taken to extremes. Girls must do chores before and after school while the boys do not. Girls lead very limited social lives often under the supervision of their brothers. The level of obedience required of the females to the males render the girls inferior. Another area of conflict is religion. Most of the immigrant students follow a religion, that is other than Judeo-Christian. The issue of religion is important in their lives as it permeates all aspects, dictating behaviour, choices, and social relationships. Students try to satisfy the requirements of their religion but sometimes that runs against the requirements of the credit system, particularly, in terms of the number of in-class hours mandated by the Ministry of Education. Students also want to participate in the out-of-class activities of the school that are not in keeping with their religion to achieve a sense of belonging, and this results in conflict. Schools, however, make special efforts to accommodate the practice of these religions as best they can, but some students from the majority culture are not so accommodating and conflicts can result. Some students from these other religions defend them strongly and view the system as morally bankrupt. This causes resentment and conflicts.

Cultural and "racial" differences are important issues. It is very difficult to reconcile one's culture with others especially when a new and majority culture is
involved. People sometimes behave in ways that are appropriate in their culture but not in another, in which their behaviour may even be totally inappropriate. Administrators admit that they do not know enough about the different cultural backgrounds and do not always feel that they can make informed decisions. As a consequence, they often seek the help of social workers and community leaders.

Students belonging to one group may come from diverse regions and cultures but are often mistakenly treated as being the same. As mentioned earlier, students from various parts of Africa, by and large, are physically similar to some students from the Caribbean and tend to be treated as such. Yet, they are culturally different, speak different languages, and see the world differently. In the schools, when there is negative behaviour involving one group, the other goes to great lengths to affirm its differences. This mischaracterization is a source of conflict between the groups and among other groups and teachers alike.

Adolescent negative behaviours such as name calling, intimidation, gossip, dirty looks, disrespecting, "dissing," and jealousy are not the domain of any particular group - - they are practised by all adolescent students, including new Canadians. Many of their conflicts, especially in all adolescent schools, revolve around such issues. The issue of curry and smell purportedly is no longer a problem as other students have become used to and eat food cooked with that spice in their homes and in the many restaurants that now provide such food in Toronto.
Another issue which causes conflict mainly between administrators and students is the educational expectation of the students versus the requirements of the system. Students from some cultures have little or no respect for subjects such as physical education, swimming, track and field, all of which are part of the curriculum. These subjects are not considered to be academic enough by the students to warrant their time and so they simply refuse to take them. As a result, this new system is seen as inferior to the one they left behind and so they become disenchanted with it. Other students who come with diplomas and degrees, want to learn English in the high school, but only English throughout the day. They do not want to go to non-credit schools, but do not want to be involved in the credit system.

Administrators experience difficulty and say that they expend much time dealing with the conflicts that revolve around the various issues of transition, gender preferences, religion, culture and race, value systems, adolescent behaviours, and educational expectation. However, administrators say that they are aware that they cannot solve all the problems by themselves, so they seek the help of others from inside and outside of the school in their efforts to deal with conflicts. The following chapter deals with some of these conflicts.
CHAPTER SIX

Types of Conflicts

The administrators involved in this study identified various conflicts. There are many similarities and differences, and not all conflicts are experienced by all administrators in their schools. In order to avoid being repetitive, this paper, in reporting conflicts, will employ the three-dimensional classification of conflicts offered by Gay (1981), and will also look at the characteristics of the most conflict-involved students. Gay classifies conflicts as procedural, substantive, and interpersonal. She suggests that procedural conflicts result when students from minority cultures refuse to follow instructions of their teachers and act in their own traditional ways. These conflicts also occur when students refuse to follow the procedures of the class and the school. Substantive conflicts occur because of differences in educational goals between the home and the school. Interpersonal conflicts are those outside the above two categories, and stem from interactions between the student and any other person.

Conflicts related to transition, the bridging of the home and school cultures, are discussed in the preceding chapter, and tend to fit into all three categories of Gay’s classification. In short, the reason is that most conflicts, transitional or otherwise, among new Canadians tend to occur largely because of the students’ incompatibility with their new surroundings. The discontinuity of various aspects of the original home and school
cultures, such as the teaching and learning process, curriculum requirements, and social relationships, make efforts to bridge the cultures very difficult and conflict laden. The conflicts in each of Gay’s categories are not totally unique to that category because it is arduous to fit such a wide phenomenon into such abstract groups without some overlapping and a bit of confusion. Thus, conflicts of transition will not be addressed in this chapter, but will be dispersed appropriately through the categories.

**Procedural Conflicts**

Conflicts in this group occur when students act against the rules and regulations of the classroom, and the direction of the teaching staff. Such conflicts are detrimental to the teaching and learning process, and upset the equilibrium of the class. For example, when students do as they want, instead of as the teacher directs; when students refuse to work in groups as directed by the teacher, or refuse to stand for the national anthem, procedural conflicts result (Gay, 1981). Administrators reveal conflicts between teachers and some male Muslim students in their attitudes to females. Many of these men do not like being in the same class or group with females, resent having female teachers, are inclined to be disobedient, and to disregard the teacher’s authority. Samson, for example, maintains:

The procedural conflicts that I deal with are mostly between teachers and students. They stem from males of the Islamic religion who want to dominate the female students, even the teachers. These males often refuse to listen, to do the work
assigned, or to work in groups. They do not respect the gender equality fostered in this culture.

One administrator reports personal conflicts with a male student, who is unaccustomed to the ways of teaching and learning in this system. He told her that she should be standing in front of the class lecturing to them, instead of getting them working in groups, and that she would not be permitted to teach in his country. The administrator reports that there is sometimes much tension in the classroom because of such attitudes. As Nindra says:

I have had male students tell me that I am incompetent and not fit to teach them. Occasionally, there is the student who refuses to stand for the national anthem and is asked to leave the room for the duration of the opening exercises.

Administrators suggest that female teachers of adult students from immigrant cultures seem to have more teacher/student conflicts based also on gender. For example, adults have problems, particularly, in terms of health classes that offer teaching on sexuality. Some, especially males, do not want to participate in such classes, especially if they are taught by females, thus creating tension.

Some procedural conflicts are related to differences in expectation of the teaching and learning process as played out in the classroom. Some students do not want to
participate in debates, class presentation, or discussions. They do not like to talk about issues. Daniel, for example, states that:

I think the Chinese and Vietnamese kids would rather learn by being shown what to do rather than from talking about it. They do not like to participate in debates, but teachers cannot always avoid such strategies.

Administrators also report that teachers have difficulties getting some adult students to do homework. It is not what they are accustomed to; they see no value in it and refuse to comply. Teachers insist on getting the work done, and conflicts occur. Ransford opens with a term from the questionnaire:

Procedural conflicts are related to educational expectation. Homework, for example, does not seem to be valued very highly by some groups and they, therefore, do not have any incentive to do it. This results in conflicts because in our system homework is expected to be done.

A few administrators blame the school culture of timetables and deadlines for some of the procedural conflicts between students, teachers and administrators. The suggestion is that inflexibility is problematic. One administrator suggests that some of her adult students were nomads before coming to this country. Here they are put into classes that do not meet their needs but they cannot change timetables because deadlines are past, thus creating an incredible amount of conflict. Annabell states that:

Schools now have concrete deadlines. Some students come here from nomadic backgrounds. You say I am going to put
you in keyboarding. They get to class and do not want the subject but you say to them, "Too bad you have missed the deadlines for change. I think that’s irresponsible."

Prior to leaving their own country, some students have traumatic experiences related to persecution or life-threatening events (Cole, 1998). Annabell has seen some such students and declares that:

Some of our students are people who made it from war torn countries, from poverty, jail etc. They didn’t make it by following the rules of the game, so if people appear to be pushy, aren’t following rules, that is why they are alive today, so they need more flexibility from us.

Some administrators allude to the difficulties of trying to determine prior education. This sometimes results in poor placements of students into classes. Benjamin, for example, remarks on this and suggests that it is not always possible to accommodate changes in placements. He says:

The difficulties we have are in the area of poor placements. Students want to get their programs changed and when they perceive a lack of flexibility by teachers and administrators they react negatively in the classroom.

Another area of procedural conflict reported by administrators is when students perceive teachers as being less traditional in their teaching style than teachers in their original country. Some students expect teachers to use the lecture method and provide
opportunity for notetaking and rote learning. They reject the participatory hands-on inquiry method that teachers use in this system. Elimer suggests that:

Some students rate teachers according to their teaching styles, and are more comfortable with teachers who use more old-fashioned or traditional methods. They show their disdain for the more collaborative strategies often, by refusing to participate.

One administrator was involved in family studies during her days as a teacher in the area of food preparation and serving. Her experience of procedural conflicts was mainly rooted in the gender separation, endemic in certain cultures. Some male students from certain cultures refused to prepare foods, and even when they were persuaded to comply by preparing it, they flatly refused to serve it, especially to females. This gender separation is so ingrained in their culture, they just would not deviate. As Jennie says:

Some of these students would make an effort to prepare the food after much coaxing. However, they just would not serve the food to a woman, even after seeing other boys do it.

Another administrator reported an interesting basis for procedural conflict related to social class. She suggests that some students enjoyed upper class status in their countries, where teachers are considered to be servants. They are, therefore, offended
when a teacher gives them direction, and they react with insubordination. Lorna maintains that:

I have had a few students from a very rich country. They came from upper class families and regarded teachers, especially women, as holding a lower social status than themselves. They resented any directions given to them by the teachers. It took them a while to understand the culture and what was required for them to get an education.

Procedural conflicts are sometimes related to the value placed on "time" by some students from some cultures. Students from all cultures are often late for various reasons. Some understand the repercussions, but others do not. They do not see the importance of being on time, and so pay little attention to time allotted for assignments, time for the start of classes, and are always in conflict with their teachers. Garno, for example, has noticed these differences and says:

I have situations where an examination for final evaluation is set. Students walk in an hour late and see nothing wrong with that. They expect to do the exam whenever they come, disregarding the fact that the exam must be supervised by the teacher. When they are requested to hand in the papers even after extra time is allowed they are upset, and conflicts often occur.
Substantive Conflicts

Substantive conflicts constitute the second group of conflicts in Gay's classification, and relates to conflicts which occur because of differences in the goals of education between the school and the home. Some students are from homes where only academic subjects are worth pursuing, teachers must be lecturers, and the textbook must be the curriculum. Male and female students learning together is also taboo, and religion should take precedence over all else. This is not so in the schools of Toronto. Religion is not central, teachers are facilitators not lecturers, a specific curriculum is followed, and classes in public schools are co-educational.

The School Boards in Toronto mandate the goals of schooling, compulsory subjects, optional ones, the credit system, and hours required in class. The ways to achieve these goals and some of the strategies to be employed to aid the teaching and learning process are also mandated. Physical education is compulsory at some grade levels and art and family studies are part of the curriculum. These subjects are not viewed as useful or worthwhile subjects of study by many parents and students, and they want them removed from their program (see also chapter 5). Even technology is often viewed as a time-wasting pursuit, especially by older students and their parents who did not experience it before leaving their original country. Teachers who do not heed the request
by parents and students, for dropping such subjects are viewed as "dumb" and
incompetent, so conflicts result. Daniel states that:

Some subjects are seen as wayward and should be avoided, e.g., Physical Education, Art, and Family Studies. Some
students have no notion of technology, although it has been
the platform of delivery of information for many years.

Teachers, who do not heed the request by parents and students for dropping such
subjects, are viewed as "dumb" and Samson, for example, maintains that:

In some cases teachers are called dumb, incompetent, stupid.
The school system is described as lax and poor by parents
who are overanxious about their children.

Not all administrators experience substantive conflicts to the same extent, because some
parents are quite flexible and go along with the provisions of the system. As Lorna says,
most of her parents support the high standards set by her school:

For the most part, this is not a problem. The cultural groups
that we have here tend to regard education fairly highly and
see the school as having and maintaining a high standard.
There are some who may not regard a subject as being
worthy of study but these are few.

Many parents have specific goals for their children. They want to dictate to the
school how these goals should be attained, and even the time frame within which to
achieve them. Some select the careers for their children whether the children agree or not.
Some of these parents have had the benefit of higher education and are relentlessly
pushing the children to succeed. In some cultures the success of the children is very much a source of family pride, more so than it is in North America and parents want the children to make them proud. Teachers dislike such overbearing parents, and this leads to conflicts. Martin, for example, indicates that:

Parents from particular cultures, who have achieved a good standard of education, but have come here and fallen back in status, drill into their kids some of their ambitions. Success of the kids will enhance the family status here so they try to dictate to the school what is to be done.

For some administrators substantive conflicts occur that also are related to the gender issue. Swimming is part of the program and mandatory for the most part. Some girls reject the clothes required because these clothes do not cover enough of their bodies. The girls are also required to change in a room with other girls and that is frowned upon by girls from particular groups and religions, and they are supported in this by their parents. This creates conflicts with teachers and administrators because students are required to wear specified gym clothes. Marie says:

We have seen a number of substantive conflicts with parents who do not want their daughters to do physical education. Even when we get them to agree, they request separate classes for females, and different clothes for them, other than those required.
As mentioned earlier, not all schools have the same experience. Some schools, with a large population of Muslim girls, do not experience any substantive conflicts with them or their parents. Elimer notes that in her school:

We have a large group of Muslim girls, but what we hear about what a Muslim girl is required to do is not evident here. Those who we have are interested in learning, they keep their traditions but they are interested in going to college and university. The gender problem is not a factor in getting their education.

Nindra also suggests that, although some of her students tend to reject some subjects, most students and parents support the school because of its good record in terms of those who seek post-secondary education. She states that:

In this school, I would say that most parents, regardless of culture, want a good education for their children. Ninety percent go on to college, and parents tend to respect the goals of the school. However, there are some students who do not want to do Art, Physical Education, Swimming etc., because they don’t see them as being academic enough.

Administrators also report that some parents also do not see the need for field trips which, in the Canadian school system, are an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The parents’ concern is that the reputation of their daughters is at stake, because the students are not individually chaperoned. Some chaperones, selected by the parents, cannot always be accommodated, especially on overnight trips. Because of this, many
girls have to be excluded from trips by the school, and are deprived of the educational benefits that accrue from such trips. Samson, for example, contends that:

Sometimes parents will not allow their daughters to go on field trips, especially overnight trips with a co-educational class. Sometimes members of the community will intervene and even go on the trips as chaperones for particular girls, to allow them the experience.

Another area of substantive conflicts is some parents’ perception that post-secondary education is not an important aspect of their children’s life. Some students are required to go to work at the completion of grade 10, while some are allowed to complete grade 12. Beyond that, however, and especially for girls, there is no need to proceed. Marriage and home-making are what these girls are expected to embrace, and be cared for by their husbands. The boys are expected to learn the family business or the skills of the father’s trade which usually does not require much academic ability. Marie contends that:

We try to encourage our students, and particularly the young women, to develop themselves to their fullest potential. But there are some cultures with different standards. Even when the student is very bright and could do well in college or university, the parents say they are needed in the family business.
Ransford concurs with Marie, and suggests that these are differences in educational goals among some immigrant groups. He suggests that:

There are parents whose goal for their children are not the same as ours. Many of these parents are Portuguese and West Indians (Caribbean). Students are pulled out of school after grade 10 to go to work.

Benjamin speaks of his experience with a particular group whose educational goals, especially for females, are different from those of the majority group:

It has certainly been my experience as Vice-Principal in a certain school with a large Portuguese community that, in many cases, parents did not want their daughters to proceed past high school regardless of their ability and desire. Sometimes the boys may be allowed to, but not always. Some boys must go to work.

While some parents do not see the need for their children's education beyond certain levels, there are those whose goals go in the opposite direction. One of the goals of education in the Canadian system is that students be allowed the opportunity to reach their potential. Administrators indicate that there are those parents who refuse to accept that the potential of their children does not include university study. These parents are always in conflict with the school in their desire to have their children do courses at the advanced level in order to achieve university entrance requirements. Even after successive failures by the students at the advanced level, some parents refuse to let their children study at the general level, even when the teachers and the students understand that the
students' abilities are better suited to that level. Several examples of this are evident. Kini provides a case in point when she states that:

A mother wanted her son to be a doctor. The son wanted to be a physiotherapist. The student is being dragged through the advanced level courses as dictated by his mother. He has not been able to achieve a mark over 55 percent. When the mother insisted on advanced grade 11 math, the son became frustrated, dropped out of school, and left home. She refused to accept that he was better suited to a college education to achieve his goal.

**Interpersonal Conflicts**

Gay (1981) describes her third category as the most consequential for students. Interpersonal conflicts involve those that do not seem to be procedural or substantive. Interpersonal conflicts usually occur between teachers and students, administrators, parents and students, as well as between students and students. This group of conflicts stem from different aspects of the student's life and from various issues, some of which are as follows.

1. attitudes, beliefs and values;
2. intercultural problems;
3. erosion of self-esteem pride and dignity;
4. gender preferences;
5. old conflicts;
6. social relationships;
7. adolescent problems;
8. language difficulties; and
9. socio-economics.
Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

Conflicts resulting from differences in attitudes, beliefs, and values are most often between students and their parents but they also occur at school in other interactions. Parents want their children to continue to follow the tenets of their original culture but the students want to adapt some aspects of the new culture, make friends, and establish a comfort zone for themselves. The majority culture usually has a strong impact on the new students. Lorna, for example, suggests that:

Some students begin to change as they attend school, watch television and listen to radio. They begin to feel less strongly about their traditions and want to embrace some aspects of the new culture—dress, music, friendships, etc., and this brings them into conflict with their parents.

Administrators report several cases of girls who are forced back to their original country and into arranged marriages for trying to reject the old traditions and embrace the new. Martin tells of a case in which he was personally involved. He says:

There is the case of the father who I introduced to this country. He wanted to educate his children here, but after the death of a member of the family, the children began to change too quickly: the boys going out with friends, the girls dating boys from other cultures. The father returned them all to the original country, arranged marriages for the girls, and only a month ago did he return the boys here to be educated.
Religious intolerance is suggested as a basis for interpersonal conflicts. One administrator suggests that interpersonal conflicts result from religious beliefs due, mainly, to a perceived lack of respect for other cultures and religions, particularly by students of the majority culture. Benjamin maintains that:

For some students, religious beliefs are front and centre. Students, particularly of the majority culture, do not see it that way, or do they always act with respect to adherents of those religions or religious behaviour.

However, some administrators report a decrease in such conflicts. Schools have had time to develop strategies to accommodate the requirements of such students to enable them to practice their religions freely. Time has also allowed other students to get accustomed to these religious behaviours and be more tolerant.

**Intercultural Problems**

Interpersonal conflicts are sometimes the result of intercultural issues. Some students do not want close relationships with people from other cultures. The males from certain cultures often want group loyalty from the females and males alike. Tamil males believe that they must stick together, and the girls must follow suit. If a member from another cultural group attempts to infringe upon that group, in any way, then the group sees the need to defend itself. Daniel states that:

Students from Pakistan are friendly with their own. Tamils with their own. If a male from another cultural group tries to befriend a girl from these groups, there's trouble.
Some students of each culture take their religions less seriously than others and attempt, at times, to break the rules. Some of the male students see themselves as purists, guarding against any infractions of these rules. Conflict usually develops and often escalates to involve parents and religious leaders. Benjamin, for example, declares that:

Some students of certain cultures are not as religious as others. They want to do their own thing, but are not being allowed to by those who are almost fanatic about their religions. Some of these conflicts are so serious that we sometimes have to call in the religious leaders to speak to the students.

**Gender Preferences**

Interpersonal conflicts also result from gender preference, which may or may not relate to religious beliefs. In some parts of the world, parents tend to prefer having boys over girls, but parenting patterns do not always reflect this overtly, in most places. Among many of the cultures in the schools, the girls are well aware of this. For example, where there is one boy in a family of girls the boy is the focus, is doted on, and lives by different rules. The girls must do chores before and after school, not the boys. Often, the girls resent "serving" him, and experience conflicts of rejection and low self-esteem. The boy is usually aware of his preferred status, and brings this attitude to school where he expects to be coddled by the teachers. When he is treated like everyone else, he has
conflicts and complains to his parents who see the teacher as being unkind. Nindra has
had to deal with this kind of situation and reports that:

One of the biggest interpersonal conflicts that I have had to
deal with has to do with the single male child in a family of
girls. He expects to be the focus in class, as he is at home,
and teachers get annoyed. This often brings the parents out
complaining that their son is being picked on by the unkind
teachers.

Marie also speaks of boys who believe that they have preferred status and can do as they
like. She says:

Greek boys, by and large, tend to get into conflicts with their
teachers. They think that they can do absolutely no wrong,
because this is the way they are at home. They are highly
valued by their parents and their sisters. The parents come to
me complaining that teachers do not like their sons. Whatever
their sons did would not be cause enough for what the teacher
said or did.

*Self-Esteem, Pride, and Dignity*

Conflicts are sometimes the result of poor self-esteem and loss of pride and
dignity. In many instances, the indignities are perceived through the eyes of one’s culture.

According to administrators, some students misconstrue what is said, others are territorial
about their space, this can lead to conflicts. Daniel says:

At times it is about "he said" "she said" and I have to do
something about it, or he bumped into me and this cannot be
allowed. Sometimes it is about my or our space. This is where we hang out. You find space somewhere else.

William also concurs that some students are territorial and create conflicts with students who claim their space. He suggests that:

Quite often, students congregate in groups in certain sections of the school during breaks. Other groups are not allowed to use that space, it is owned territory. Whenever an attempt is made by another group to use that space conflicts occur, because this is seen as encroachment on territory, an indignity that must be punished.

*Old Conflicts*

Another administrator reports that in his experience, interpersonal conflicts are due mainly to old conflicts brought from the original countries. Many students from war torn areas, or areas where there is distrust or longstanding feuds between neighbouring countries or groups, bring these problems with them and accost each other in the halls and in class. When students from Arab countries are in the same class, with Jewish students, or students from Ethiopia and Eritrea, for instance, hostility is obvious. When these old conflicts are added to the alienation, loneliness, exclusion, even scapegoating that some students experience, their difficulties can be overwhelming. Samson says:

We have cases of students from countries fighting for independence, or from places with longstanding grudges. We see the effects on them in their hostility to each other.
Interpersonal conflicts resulting from social relationships and interaction are also reflected in the data. This type of conflict is not restricted to students/student relationships but also teacher/student, administrator/parent and so on. For the most part, social interactions are culturally determined. There are customs about greeting people, i.e., shaking hands, bowing, or kissing the cheeks on both sides. This type of interaction creates uncertainty for people, and is perceived as humorous or subservient by some. Home visits by teachers or administrator are usually times of uncertainty regarding the social graces and the kinds of behaviour expected. Samson, for example, speaks of his uncertainty when he says:

Sometimes when I meet parents of another culture I am unsure about how to greet them. Usually I have my hand out, but they bow instead, so I bow in return. I always feel a little foolish when I do that but don’t want to offend.

Marie is also uncertain of the appropriate behavior when she visits the homes of some students. She says:

To visit the home of a student from another culture I try to determine beforehand what is polite and acceptable in that culture. Do you refuse a cup of tea, if you do not desire one, or must you accept out of courtesy?

Ransford also reflects his uncertainty but tells how he prepares himself for home visits:
I often consult teachers, older students or community leaders to prepare me for home visits or for parents visiting the school. I do not want to create confusion or give the wrong impression.

Social relationships and interactions also result in conflicts that are more student-related. Quite often the teenagers are rebelling against parental authority, and authority in general. Parents expect to be informed of the children's social activities, even by their teachers. The girlfriend/boyfriend situation is very high on the list of activities. The students indulge in this, knowing that such activity is strictly forbidden by their parents. Some parents are so strict that teachers do not volunteer any such information to them.

Elimer maintains that:

Some parents do not know that their son or daughter has a girlfriend/boyfriend. This could result in the girl being returned to the original country for an arranged marriage. It could even result in conflict between the two sides of parents.

Kini also believes that some parents have unrealistic expectations of the school and their children, thus putting too much pressure on them. She says:

Within all cultures, parents want to be informed. However, I am a little more reluctant to involve parents, especially some of the Asian parents whose expectations are so high for their children that the children find them hard to live up to.

Even when the parents know about the existence of a relationship, if the relationship involves a girl and a boy from the same culture, a double standard is reflected. The
parents usually want the school to be involved and report to them, but when only their
culture is involved, they want the school to stay out of it so they can resolve it their way.

Daniel mentions one such incident:

We had a major girl and boy problem the other day involving students from the same culture. The girl’s parents found out and decided that the two should get married. The girl wanted to finish high school and go to university while the boy had dropped out and was hanging around bars and pool halls as well as stalking her. He was physically abusive to her in the park but the parents would not press charges, and wanted to prevent any action by the school.

Sometimes the conflicts are interfamilial, in which girls experience a second layer of pressure from home through their brothers who abuse them and their boyfriends, and report to the parents. Garno indicates that:

The brothers of the girls often act as their guardians. When a girl and boy relationship is discovered, the brothers sometimes get into physical confrontation with the sister as well as the boy involved, and inform the parents.

A few older girls have resented the actions of their brothers and the strictness of the parents. As a result, they have dropped out of school, to live with friends, and go to work, their whereabouts unknown to the parents. Deidre further explains the situation:

Usually, the sisters are under the control of their brothers who act as guardians. Sometimes sisters usually do not want to follow the old ways so there is conflict. Some girls have
dropped out to be on their own because of the pressure. The parents have no idea where they live and often blame the school for not keeping an eye on their daughters and reporting to them.

Adolescent Problems

Adolescent conflicts usually involve name calling, "dissing" (disrespect), dirty looks, gossip, boy/girl relationships among others. These often occur between or among friends, who spread gossip and bring others into it. Someone feels that he or she is losing face and is going to settle the score so there is a verbal or physical altercation. As Samson points out:

When friendships go sour, and this one says this about that one others are involved and before you know it people are coming from opposite ends of the school to get their reputation cleaned up.

Disrespecting is reported to be a major cause of interpersonal conflicts. It manifests itself in the 'cut eye,' bumping into someone with no words of excuse given. Instead there are words perceived as being damaging to one's reputation, and said in a certain tone of voice or accompanied by certain kinds of body language. Garno states that:

The whole issue of "dissing" in the mysterious adolescent world is about disrespecting. Coupled with that is immaturity and a lack of alternative ways to resolve conflicts. "Dissing" usually leads to fights especially where there is an audience.
New Canadians, for the most part, have poor self-esteem and experience some inadequacy in dealing with their environment. "Dissing," which they perceive as being disrespectful to them, especially to their religion, or their culture, drives another nail in the coffin. Retaliation, in kind, or physical fight, is seen as honourable. "Dissing" is a dangerous concept held by most, if not all, students and recently a student was stabbed to death off school property for bumping into another student from another cultural background. Benjamin contends that:

We do have enormous problems about students giving each other dirty looks. Being looked at the wrong way or giving the eye is seen as bad. When this carries with it body language, that is perceived as showing disrespect, the score is going to be settled soon after.

New Canadians also resort to name calling, and have verbal altercations with other students. This sometimes brings them into conflict with the police, especially when weapons are involved. Samson, for example, says:

Name-calling has led to serious problems. We have had to call the police in a few cases where there was physical confrontation. Knives were drawn but not used. In another case a student was stabbed with a pen. The assailant was charged, and the victim taken to the hospital. Adolescents were involved in both cases.
Fights occur often among students, and this is problematic for schools. On occasions friends get involved and the problem escalates. Ransford says that:

Many after school fights result from "dissing." Someone has shown disrespect in one form or the other and friends of each side get involved. Before you know it words are passed and blows follow. Sometimes friends from outside the school come to the defence and get involved.

Sometimes the prejudices of parents expand their children's conflicts in unnecessary ways, and send the wrong signals to their children. Kini provides an example of this:

There was a fight between two girls and some clothes got ripped. This was an incident between two immature students, and the incident was not serious enough to warrant arrest, so I would not call the police and the parent of the white girl agreed. However, as soon as he realized that the other was black (a new Canadian), he insisted that the police be called. I had to, but the police did not charge the girl, but she had to go through that embarrassment.

Adolescent problems, when coupled with the cultural and racial situations, are hardly distinguishable. The adolescent new Canadian, like other adolescents, gets caught up in the web of relationships that results in conflicts.

Language Difficulties

Interpersonal conflicts, due to poor English language ability, and inappropriate use of the first language are also mentioned by most administrators. Teachers speak to
students during class time if they are not doing what is required of them. Insubordination of the student to the teacher’s direction could lead to admonishment for inappropriate behaviour, and this can cause problems. The student often responds whispering in his or her own language. The teacher is unaware of what is said, but suspects it is disparaging and requests interpretation by someone from that language background sitting close enough to overhear. Students, who disapprove of the behaviour of their classmates, will volunteer the interpretation, so that disciplinary action can follow. This conflict between teacher and student, thus, widens to conflict between the perpetrator, the interpreter, and the teacher. Martin provides a case in point.

Two students were sitting side by side, and not the best behaved, when a teacher attempted to discipline them. One whispered loudly in her own language. The teacher heard the words but was not able to determine the meaning. Another girl told the teacher in English the swear words that were used, and the students were sent to me. After school there was a fight between the interpreter and the student who used the obscene words. A small knife was seen, and the police were called.

Poor English ability sometimes results in conflict between teacher and students. Students with very limited facility with the language often misinterpret something said by teachers or students. English language idioms are usually the main culprit because English speakers use them, while students learning the language usually do not, because they are not among the first lessons students are taught. English speakers get into conflict through
miscommunication, so it stands to reason that learners of the language will misunderstand one another and have conflicts. Administrators and teachers have to be extremely careful when speaking with language learners to avoid using idioms and words with multiple meanings. A case in point is provided by Daniel and, although it is somewhat lengthy, it is worth repeating here.

In front of my office there are a number of seats occupied by students who were waiting to see the Vice-Principal. These seats were all taken when the Principal arrived in the office. He asked why so many people were there and was told they were waiting to see the Vice-Principal. The Principal was annoyed and said, "Let's clean them out of here; there are too many people here." I called the girl that was next but she wouldn't speak to me. I asked her why she was in such a bad mood. She replied that the Principal had called her dirty because he said to clean them out and you only clean things that are dirty. It took me a while to explain to her what he meant, and I am not sure she understood or believed me.

Miscommunication occurs in and out of classrooms. Students, especially people learning the language, do not always seek clarification of what is said. Instead the student remains upset and confused. Jennie suggests:

Conflicts occur when somebody uses a term that doesn't mean what it seems to mean. This happens in the class with the teacher and students or students outside of class. Often the student who feels hurt remains confused and refuses to talk
about it, especially if the student feels put down and is
embarrassed. This leads to a fractious type of relationship
with the teacher, and fights if the problem is with a student.

One administrator, Marie, referred to her own experience, the difficulties she
encountered, and the conflict she experienced, because she could not speak the language.

I speak from personal experience because English was not my
first language. I was learning it at school but at home I
reverted to my first language to communicate with my
parents. Many times I didn’t understand what the teachers
were saying or the students, for that matter. The teachers
would say something, while looking in my direction, some
students would laugh but I didn’t know whether to laugh or
cry because I didn’t understand. I was too embarrassed to ask
anyone; sometimes it’s years after that I realized what was
said to me. Sometimes I couldn’t produce answers because I
was not sure of the question, so I would go home and cry.

Garmo also speaks of miscommunication in the language and is concerned about the
effects.

There are many mismatches and misconnections with the
language. I don’t have a clue as to how one proceeds except
with a high level of sensitivity and awareness.
Miscommunication problems are also difficult for teachers who see them as attempts to show disrespect, as Benjamin states:

Language, in the broadest sense, communicates every subtlety. A student may say, "I don't like the way he said 'excuse me.'" Especially in the teenage world it results in conflict because it brings into focus the whole concept of disrespect.

Research has shown that it requires years of studying the language to gain proficiency. It is difficult to ensure that communication really takes place when the level of proficiency is not very high. As William suggests:

Well, you know how many years it takes to achieve proficiency with the language so it is a constant issue for all of us. You never quite know if what you said and meant is what is heard or if you heard what they wanted to communicate. It's a constant issue.

Administrators are aware that it is not only what is said, but how it is said, and the atmosphere created by the body language that goes with it, can bring conflict. Some of our new Canadian students are adults with children of their own and all students desire to be treated with respect by their teachers as well as other students. Any perceived disrespect brings conflict. Lorna suggests that attitude is important.

If I wanted to get a difficult student, who had just been screaming at the teacher, out of the room and I stood at the door and ordered him or her to come with me, I probably
would get the same barrage that the teacher got. On the other hand, if I walked in and respectfully went up to the student and whispered that I would like him or her to come with me so I can hear the other side of story, the student would be very likely to do so.

Body language is very important in analyzing what is said especially among adolescents. The body language that accompanies the words can put a whole new twist on them so that conflicts can result. Students have often said that it is not just what was said, but the look and the body movement that made them mad. Language difficulties also lead to disconnections and conflicts between the school and the home, because some parents avoid the school because they cannot speak the language. Many are upset at the system for various reasons but do not know how to explain themselves in English, so they remain upset at home. Even on parents’ nights many parents stay away for fear of not understanding and being understood. Social workers can be used to bridge the gap.

Nindra says:

Many parents don’t feel comfortable about contacting or coming to the school because of their language difficulties and/or lack of understanding of the system. Even when we call home we cannot communicate with them. We have to send out social workers from their language backgrounds to make the connection.

Not only poor English language ability, but also use of the original language, causes some conflicts. Some students want to swear and ridicule other students in verbal
altercations, but avoid the repercussions by using their first language. When students repeat the words in English the conflict becomes louder and more heated. Ransford, for example, says that:

Sometimes students use their original language to say horrible things to others, and a verbal fight ensues. I usually use an interpreter to tell me, in English, the meaning of what was said. At times I am really shocked at how ugly and demeaning the words are. At the same time, the students feel that the only way to deflate the hurt being caused by the other side is to use the language they know.

Some students do speak English with a heavy accent. They are not easily understood and teachers have had to ask them probably too often, to repeat, causing shame. A few other students are always vocal about not understanding the student either, thus embarrassing the student who may then decide not to speak up again, and lose out on a vital aspect of language learning. Garno says:

I have often had students come to me to complain that the students in their classes laugh when they speak. Their accent is so heavy that I sometimes have to get an interpreter. I can see the difficulty with that in the class, but we have to try to get the other students to be more sensitive to the difficulties of others.
Interpersonal conflicts also stem from socio-economic factors. The different styles of modern dress tend to compete with the traditional dress of some groups, and this sometimes leads to tension. Many new Canadian students do not wear their traditional dress, especially the boys, who try to fit in with the general population. According to Daniel, there seems to be a major competition amongst students about wearing the latest fashion labels; this sometimes leads to conflicts with those who cannot afford the expense or must wear traditional clothes.

The students from the Caribbean seem to be at the forefront of that movement, displaying the new styles, including expensive running shoes. This provides them with a measure of popularity among the student body, especially among white students, who, themselves try to attain a measure of this as well. Students who cannot afford it, get overlooked and those who wear traditional dress must survive outside this fashion scene. Many of the fashion setters are not particularly good academic students, and some students outside the group are good achievers. In moments when the tension flares into real conflicts the latter group lets the former know where the priorities should be and conflicts escalate. As Annabell says:

Some of the fashion setters from the Caribbean do not excel in academics, probably because they work long hours to buy the stylish clothing, and thus do not spend enough time studying. Other students will tell them that they prefer to have good grades and wear non-descript clothes rather than the
other way around. This, on more then a few occasions, has led to fights.

Administrators report that some students, especially from the majority culture, and a few non-refugees, drive their own cars to school. Some students are dropped off at school by parents or older siblings, and there are those with cell phones or pagers. These groups often tend to see themselves as better off than the public transit riders or those who must walk. This distinction creates groupings of well-off and not so well-off. The latter group is often ignored by the former, so social interaction outside the class is minimal, if any, and this may lead to tension. Marie, for example, indicates that:

The well-off students show off their cars, their cell phones, and pagers. They find each other and form cliques. They hardly associate out of class with the other students so tension is created and conflicts develop.

How Some Groups Handle Conflicts

Interpersonal conflict often escalates because of the way some groups tend to handle conflicts. Administrators say that some individuals deal with their conflict as individuals, while others have a group approach, and the police are often called for these group conflicts. Administrators also suggest that there is a tendency for larger groups to take the group approach but some administrators are reluctant to name groups. Administrators also indicate that some groups prefer to have conflicts settled by the home, independent of the school, although this seldom works without school intervention. Administrators also contend that individuals often do not all belong to one group; it may
be just a number of friends ready to help one of their members. Often administrators make judgments according to what they see happening, and how often, and whether there is a pattern before they attempt to name a cultural group. As a consequence, they prefer to speak in generalities. Samson says:

You are lucky if you can get to a point as a Vice-Principal where you recognize these kinds of significant behaviours in more than two or three groups. You pick up helter-skelter, may see a pattern but you are never always certain.

Students from areas where there is conflict and violence, often see violence as a way to solve conflicts. As Garno says:

Vietnamese, Chinese, Tamils, Sri Lankans, and some of the other students are from areas where there is a lot of violence, or have gone through a war not too long ago. The students still see violence as the way to solve conflicts. The answer to an offence is, therefore, to go out and get a number of their countrymen and so the conflict expands to serious violence. This violence usually takes place off school property and this makes it harder for us to control.

Some administrators are reluctant to name groups or to speak for others, but do it anyway. Daniel, for example, states that:

I do not know if it is fair to categorize in this way but I will just speak from my experience. If there is a conflict with a student from Vietnam or South East Asia, you can be assured that after school and almost cold bloodedly, you could meet
a large group that has gathered to help their member take care of that particular problem.

Ransford also concurs with the ways some groups handle conflicts. He says:

You could bump into a Vietnamese fellow in the hallway, and he will make a mental note of who you are. Three or four hours later after school you are going to meet several of them who are there to straighten out the perceived indignity to one of their members. If we know before hand, we have the police on hand.

In schools many groups form according to their language, so when conflicts occur their group handles them. Samson says:

Recently, we suspended a couple of Turkish students, also Filipinos and Spanish for group conflicts. They feel more comfortable speaking their language so they form groups, and handle conflicts as a group. Luckily, the police officers come down regularly to help calm things down.

This group approach is also suggested by Martin, who says:

Group fighting is typical of the Chinese. If you touch one, you have a gang on your hands. Without fail the Sri Lankans do this as well.

Annabell also supports the view, and vouches:

Sri Lankans and the Tamils also have a tradition in the school for doing things in groups rather than individually; you don’t find one Tamil in a fight, you find a carload of them arriving
at school to have an encounter with an equal number of Vietnamese, blacks or white Canadians.

Nindra supports the view, as well, and suggests that:

The Latin-Americans are also known for their group approach to settle conflicts. Oftentimes, I wonder if it is the language but I have seen cases where the students have reasonable facility with English and they still respond to conflict in groups.

Not all students use the group approach to solve their problems. As Martin states:

The Caribbean students are not much into gangs. They will go it alone in a fight. Their friends or group will be in the background shouting and egging on the fight and laughing loudly.

William agrees with Martin. He holds:

We have a fairly large Eastern European culture here, Russians, Polish, Ukrainian. It is rare when you find a large contingent of them involved in any conflict. They certainly get involved in personal conflicts but they don’t seem to have the group approach.

Administrators report that some students, when called on to give the facts regarding a conflict, are willing to give a story. The Caribbean students are like that, but
not the Chinese, they tend to remain quiet and provide no information. Even with threats of suspension or expulsion, they are not forthcoming. Daniel, for example, states that:

The Chinese students, if they have a conflict they do not admit anything or blame others. If there are fifteen involved and you get two you will not get the names of the others from either of the two.

This frustrates administrators who know that later that day there will be a group to settle the score, and this group could involve people from outside the school as well as from inside. Kini says that often, it is friends of individuals who make up the group rather than all from one culture, defending their friend.

In many cases, students prefer to have conflicts handled by the home without the involvement of school or community. They see the conflict as their problem and want to resolve it in their own way. This often leads to other problems, even abuse, depending on how the parents correct their children. In some groups, parents still believe that the child is spoilt if the rod is not used. Jennie provides a case in point. She says:

A student became ill at a dance; she was obviously drinking or had taken drugs. The parents were called by the brother, the chaperone. We called 911 and they brought the fire, ambulance, and the police. They were preparing to get the girl’s stomach pumped. When the mother came in, and her daughter was throwing up, she went outside and returned with a stick to give her daughter a beating on the spot. She had to
be restrained and counselled by the police as to the illegality of her proposed action.

When there is conflict, some parents, concerned with the safety of their children, pull them out of school, especially when the parents are not familiar with the system and cannot speak the language. They often see the school as too liberal and cannot be trusted to discipline their child properly or fairly. A social worker from that culture may have to be called in to make them aware of the law about compulsory school attendance up to age 16. Marie reports the response of a parent whose son was involved in a conflict.

You have bullies in the school and the teachers cannot control them. I am not sending my son back to school, I keep him home where it is safer. We teach him not to fight.

Characteristics of the Most Conflict-involved Students

From the above data it is obvious that there are many conflicts and that they often become expanded and more dangerous by the way they are approached by students. While most groups tend to use the group approach, not all students from these groups are involved in conflicts. The characteristics of the most conflict-involved students revolve around their personalities, and habits. The students may display psychological difficulties, anti-social behaviour patterns, or have frustrated, too strict, or too indulgent parents.

Administrators believe that students from the Caribbean like to be visible. They hang around so they come in contact with other groups, and conflicts often result. Students from South East Asia have the most conflicts with their parents, mainly because
of differences in parental expectations. Daniel suggests that, "The Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, and Tamils are the ones who seem to be more resistant to accepting and maintaining all aspects of the home culture, and try to change to the more liberal North American culture." Deidre believes that, "Some Vietnamese more so than the Chinese students are more likely to seek their own way and reject parental control, which, of course, means conflict."

Some students have come to Canada with serious psychological problems. They have carried weapons, even used them, and now suffer the effects (Cole 1998). Administrators say that these students are easily agitated, and in some instances are quite irrational. They have conflicts with almost everyone with whom they interact in the school setting, and have to go through the Board channels to get the needed help. They are also anti-social and other students avoid them. Annabell, for example, says:

> We have students who have experienced psychological torment and would have conflict anywhere. We have not had dangerous incidents involving these students, but teachers and other students often feel intimidated.

Deidre contends that in her school:

> We have had students with mental problems. They are combative, use obscene language, and have no fear of or respect for authority. Although we get them to a doctor and medicated, they sometimes forget or refuse to take the medication and they throw their classes into turmoil.
Ransford also speaks of students who are mentally unstable. He says:

These are students who appear rational but they have fought in battles with weapons. They are suspicious of the actions of others and get loud if they feel bothered. Other students avoid them. They feel ignored and are usually quick to begin a confrontation.

Administrators suggest that students who are not learning well become frustrated because of their inability to speak the language. They tend to blame the teachers for going too fast, not answering their questions, giving them low marks, and not going over lessons that they have missed because of absence for the most frivolous reasons. They see the other students as too noisy, not helping them, and they deflect whatever blame they can away from themselves. These students usually complain to the administrators and are often rude and disobedient to teachers. One reason for their poor achievement is sometimes low ability because their prior education level is very low. Some students go to work after school for eight hours, are sleepy in the mornings, have no time for homework or study, and so they perform at very low levels. Lorna, for example, speaks of the problem and says:

There are some 16-year-olds who did not complete elementary school; actually their education assessment is grade 3. They cannot function at high school level but they do not want to go to the non-credit programs. They tell you they want to go to college and they get very frustrated and conflictive.
Some students seem to be "between a rock and a hard place," and this produces conflicts for them as well as their teachers. Jennie states that:

Some students need to work to survive, and they need full time pay, so they work all night washing dishes etc. In the mornings they need to go to sleep but they come to school instead. That shows commitment to school, but it does not help them because they have done no preparation and are not in a learning mode. Poor achievement, however, is never seen as their fault.

Administrators believe that students whose parents are too indulgent, especially with their sons, cause them to fail because they lack the skills to take charge of their learning. At school there is no pampering, so the boys find it difficult to be strong and independent in the school setting. On the other hand, the too strict parents cause their children to rebel and to throw off some of the restrictions placed upon them, so they are always in conflict. Garno, for example, says:

We are constantly talking to parents and getting social workers to speak to them to show them the consequences of being too restrictive. Sometimes they only understand when a child has left home, in open defiance of their authority.
The type of student who considers his/her culture to be superior, ignores others, or calls them names, is often in conflict with others. Their parents are usually called in as part of the solution. Not all students are sensitive and tolerant of others. As Kini says:

Some of our (white) Canadian students cause problems for others by calling them names, mimicking their speech and laughing. They feel that any race or custom other than theirs is less so they proceed to show their superiority. That is unacceptable to us and must be attended to as it happens.

Summary

The conflicts encountered in the study fit, quite well, into the classification provided by Gay (1981). Students, parents, teachers, and administrators experience procedural, substantive, and interpersonal conflicts.

Gay indicates that interpersonal conflicts are most detrimental and far-reaching for the students. The data support this. Interpersonal conflicts run the gamut of the students' experience, conflicts with parents, teachers and other students. Some of the difficulties associated with transition, intercultural problems, loss of pride, self-esteem, and dignity, gender preferences of parents, old country conflicts, social relationships, adolescent problems, poor language ability, negative use of first language, and the impact of socio-economics, result in conflicts. The people involved in the procedural conflicts are usually teachers and students or administrators and students. Substantive conflicts often, but not always, include the parents. Interpersonal conflicts sometimes involve teachers, students,
parents, administrators, but are mostly between students and students. Parents become involved usually at the request of administrators.

All conflicts can be problematic for students, but especially interpersonal ones which sometimes lead to students' rejection of the educational process, removal by parents of the student, especially girls, and their return, against their will, to their original country to an arranged marriage. Interpersonal conflicts often get expanded from little misunderstandings to major fights by the ways that some groups deal with conflicts. Some cultural groups, or individuals within those groups often are involved in gang type retaliation, getting their friends from inside and outside the school to fight their battles. Such actions often involve the police which can have far reaching consequences. Administrators look for ways to deal with all these conflicts, and the next chapter looks at conflict resolution in the schools.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Conflict Resolution

Whenever there are conflicts, there is the need for conflict resolution strategies. Conflict is not always a negative thing among students, because it gives them a chance to voice their concerns and the difficulties they are experiencing. Conflicts allow teachers to discover what is going on individually among their students, so that effective measures can be taken to address the situations. Reports of conflicts also inform administrators about the atmosphere in their schools so that proactive and reactive measures can be put into place to ameliorate negative situations. Administrators are aware of this, and endeavour to concentrate on the more positive aspects of conflict to develop strategies that are likely to bring about win/win results.

Conflicts occur in all the schools involved in this study, in some more than in others, so conflict resolution is done on a daily basis, whether by the teacher who seizes that opportune moment to put a stop to a negative attitude or behaviour, by mediation groups, or administrators. A careful analysis of the research data reveals five kinds of strategies for conflict resolution in the schools.

1. proactive initiatives
2. mediation groups
3. mediation strategies
4. mediation hindrances
5. punitive measures.
Not all of the above elements are found to the same extent in all the schools, but conflict resolution, in some form, is very much an important part of school life.

**Proactive Initiatives**

Most administrators will have worked in education for some time. They have come up in the ranks as teachers and many have had experience with the multicultural aspects of their schools. They have seen and dealt with many conflicts and know what kinds of conflicts to anticipate. This awareness has led them to employ various proactive measures to prevent conflicts. Many conflicts are caused by ignorance of differences between people, and groups of people, races, and cultures, jealousies, rumours, misunderstandings, bullying, disrespecting, fights, ending of friendships (Schrumpf, 1997). The effort to correct this in the schools is to have students learn about each other, interact, share, and teach others about themselves, so that they can became a more conflict-free community of learners.

Not only students, but teachers also need help in dealing with students. For the most part, teachers are from the majority culture, and need to learn about the various cultures represented in their class rooms. To this end some schools hold workshops for their staff, facilitated by Board personnel, appropriate community leaders, and social workers. Samson recalls, "We have three workshops yearly for teachers to get some ideas about the cultures of their students and thus be better able to meet the needs of the immigrant students."
Annabell also speaks of the efforts made by her school to provide the necessary training for teachers. She says:

The staff attends workshops, and the school has piloted projects on culture and inclusiveness. The aim is to help the teachers discover strategies to meet the needs of all their students, particularly the new Canadians.

In an effort to stem ignorance of other cultures, and as a proactive measure, the curriculum is also adjusted so that the content reflects all cultures represented in the school. School activities in the larger setting must also reflect this celebration of cultures.

William, for example, states:

Well, we try to do as much as we can in a variety of ways to be proactive. The curriculum content for E.S.L. students must attempt to celebrate the values of everybody’s culture and experience. The whole school must ensure that all plays and stories are from a variety of cultures. We start with valuing everyone.

Deidre also sees the need for training for the teachers, and says:

I am involved in professional development for teachers for those designated days when teachers meet for conferences. I have always requested that a presentation be available for teachers dealing with immigrant students. This has always been helpful.

Proactive initiatives by administrator and staff also involve timetable adjustments to provide separate physical education classes for males and females. Flexibility is also
important in allowing some female newcomers to wear something other than the designated gym clothes until they get more oriented to their school surroundings. Religious requests such as times and places for prayer are also accommodated while ensuring that important classroom activities are not jeopardized. Samson points out that, "We have created the timetable to provide separate classes in physical education for certain females who refuse to be in co-ed gym classes." Garno also speaks of adjustments that are made for South Asian girls regarding the wearing of gym clothes:

There are sometimes problems with South Asian girls who are not wearing the gym uniform. I allow them a little time and get older South Asian girls who wear the uniform to help counsel them. Sometimes it works.

Adjustments are also made for Islamic students to attend to religious requirements. Martin states that:

As an Administrator for many years in this system I am aware of the requests that Islamic students make for time out to pray and to visit the mosque. We discuss this in staff meetings, so all teachers are aware of them and advised to comply on a reasonable basis that will not jeopardize the students’ credit.

To foster inclusiveness, understanding and awareness, all schools have reported the existence of school clubs, multicultural clubs called by different names, such as the Rainbow club, and ethnic clubs, which provide a high level of interaction and help
students feel more grounded. They often put on cultural exhibitions, food fairs and hold International Nights. Daniel says:

> In this school there is a multicultural club. The students go there, represent their groups and they love to put on cultural exhibitions, where artifacts and special foods are displayed.

Annabell talks about the success of ethnic clubs in her school, and sports events that occur as students develop pride in their clubs. She declares:

> I am really happy about our ethnic clubs. I got a couple of them going. The students take pride in them and start organizing their own soccer tournaments and other things and take their place in the school.

As the students take pride in their clubs, they feel empowered to the extent that they involve people from the community. Annabell states that:

> The students (peers) had an election and voted in officers and then made decisions about what the club should be involved in; the students feel empowered and even involve people from the community at times.

The clubs are run by students, but they are sponsored by teachers. Garno features the Spanish club as he says:

> Our multicultural and language clubs are sponsored by teachers, but run by the students. Recently the Spanish club put on a few sessions in which teachers and students were being taught Spanish. The students take pride in these clubs and this helps them to have a sense of belonging.
The school gets a chance to involve the parents, community leaders, and other interested persons in the life of the school during cultural exhibitions. Administrators maintain that all cultures represented in the schools are encouraged to take part and put on displays in booths. This effort usually culminates in an International Night with speeches and performances and intercultural fashion shows involving different groups. Ransford observes:

When we have our cultural exhibitions followed by an International Night, students, teachers, parents etc., just swell with pride. These are students who are all English language learners. It's really gratifying to see.

Kini suggests the fine aspect of the exhibition when she says:

We all just get caught up in the exhibitions, sampling foods from around the world, seeing artifacts from various lands, their informal and formal dress styles. The night performances are always first rate; the different dances, the music, it's all so enlightening.

In some schools students who can speak some English are also encouraged to join the student council. Each class selects a representative to the council and that person attends meetings and reports the issues and decisions back to the class. Jennie sees the good in all this and suggests:

Students get a feeling of self-worth as their class representatives. They are committed to it; some miss no meetings and are proud to report to the class, even leading
discussions of issues to take back to the council. Its a great way to be involved.

Elimer concurs, as she explains the process of becoming involved in the student council and the improved stature of its members. Elimer states that:

The student council has a high profile in this school so it is viewed as important to be a part of it. The new Canadians either volunteer or are chosen by their classmates to represent them and they do a good job of it and add to their stature in the process.

To enhance the cultures, different weeks of the year are dedicated to different cultures. During this time information sessions are held on different aspects of that culture, they put on displays and their music is played on the schools public address system before the mornings devotion. This is aimed at sensitizing the whole school to different cultures. Maria says:

Different weeks of the school year are dedicated to different cultures. For example, February is for black students, May is for Asian etc., they divide it according to the number of cultures in those groups; they talk about their countries, show various aspects of their cultures and instead of the usual morning music on the public address system, their music is played.
Nindra also speaks of music time allotted to different groups for the benefit of all students. She maintains that:

    Wednesdays during lunch time is ethnic music time. Decision is made beforehand about which country’s music will be played. The Canadian students get to hear Canadian music and all other kinds of music and to develop an appreciation of it.

Another proactive initiative is bringing in speakers from the different language groups to speak to the students. Speakers include social workers, religious and other prominent community leaders, as well as successful immigrants from the different cultures. They address topics of interest to the students, answer their questions, and hear their concerns. Speakers are able to explain not only the demands of the school system, rules and regulations, but also the rights and responsibilities of the students, all in their own language. This knowledge helps the students to better understand their surrounding, get settled more quickly, and possibly have fewer conflicts. As Jennie suggests:

    Especially for the very new students we have had to get social workers from their culture to talk with them. These social workers determine what assistance they need, get them help, and assist them to become acquainted with the system.

Ransford mentions the help of Islamic religious leaders who often provide needed information. He says:

    Our Islamic students wanted too many afternoons off and were missing too many classes. Now we are all better
informed by their religious leaders who spoke to us and the students about what is expected of the adherents of the religion.

William sees the need for role models to encourage the students. To this end he selects such people to speak to his students. He states that:

We seek out people from the community who came to this country not knowing any English, and have learned, gone through university and are successful in this culture. They act as role models to help calm the students’ fears about the future.

Another proactive strategy is to have special home forms for new Canadians. They get to know one another, and a particular teacher that they can get to know quickly and to whom they can direct their concerns. They meet that teacher first thing in the morning, and, in many cases, that is the first class of the morning. This helps to ground the student rather quickly. Nindra maintains:

We have a home form for the new Canadian students, so they can become familiar with other students and at least one teacher, that they will see first thing every morning and have for their first class. Some students find others from their culture and language backgrounds and feel more comfortable sooner, so we believe that we prevent some conflicts that way.

Community policing departments have links to the schools, and administrators often use them proactively to prevent conflicts or to prevent them from escalating. The
schools inform them of possible problems after school on the school premises or nearby.
The police presence and counselling are usually enough to calm the situation. As Benjamin says:

We call the police sometimes before incidents occur. As soon as we hear that there is going to be a fight later that day, on the premises or nearby, we alert the police from our community policing office and they are there waiting before school ends.

Mediation Groups

Despite the various measures to prevent conflicts, they do occur, and conflict mediation groups are found in all the schools involved in the study. Mediation is a communication process in which the people with a conflict work together with the assistance of a neutral third party, co-operating to resolve their conflicts peaceably (Schrumpf, 1997). The groups are usually small, mostly involving two people, i.e., two teachers, two adolescent students, or a teacher and a student. In the case of student mediators, there is a sponsoring teacher to whom the students report or who takes over in case the students experience difficulties (rarely necessary). In some cases the student group involves older students from the immigrant cultures, who have volunteered to help with students from their own cultures. Jennie, for example, says:

We do have a conflict resolution group made up of older students supervised by a teacher or a Vice-Principal. These students are usually from different cultures, who help students
from their own cultures, because they can speak to them in their own languages as well as English.

Administrators maintain that students in the mediation groups are those who have enough facility with the language to communicate well, can articulate issues, have a good student posture, in terms of learning ability and behavior patterns, and are usually good role models. They are also, for the most part, involved in other forms of leadership, such as student council, mentoring, or the buddy system so that they are already known by many students. Most students are, therefore, willing to have them lead their conflict mediating sessions.

Training in conflict mediation is provided for sponsoring teachers, usually through the Board of Education sponsored workshops. Teachers either volunteer or are asked to attend by an administrator. In a few schools training is provided in in-school workshops, facilitated by personnel from the Board of Education, to allow the involvement of more teachers. But usually the two teachers who receive the initial training are allowed time off in their timetables to concentrate on conflict resolution, rather than simply do it extracurricularly, as others do. Ransford says:

We have a wonderful conflict resolution team. Two teachers received the training offered by the Board of Education. They in turn, have trained other teachers and students. Two of these teachers are allowed to be two-thirds released from class teaching to spend time on conflict management.
Martin mentions mediation groups in his school that deal with aggressive behaviour. He states:

We have all our staff trained in conflict mediation; how to deal with aggressive behavior. We also have a management team in the school where youngsters who are obviously disobedient, who are acting out in defiance, can work one-on-one with special education staff.

Teacher mediation is vital to the school. The teachers are usually the first to be aware of the conflicts, especially E.S.L. teachers, who know their students and have a better understanding of some of their problems. Some schools, therefore, have all their teachers trained to deal with conflict. As William says:

All teachers are trained in mediation techniques. However, our E.S.L. staff tend to have more immediate success with new Canadians because they are trained to deal with these students.

Some administrators rely a lot on teacher mediation rather than deal with the problems themselves. Usually, their conflict resolution method is more one of arbitration, where they determine the solution and the disputants are expected to comply. They often use teacher mediators because they believe that students from certain groups are suspicious of them, especially when a white student and a minority student are involved. The administrator is often seen to favor the white student. When the solution favors a student from a minority culture, the white student is usually upset that the white administrator
does not take his/her side. Elimer, for example, does not believe that students see her as unbiased. She says:

I see them getting out of hand, and disregarding the rule. I just tell them how it is going to be, without too much discussion. They take their punishment. I often feel that it is not helpful for me to do anything in conflict resolution because I am not perceived as being neutral by the students, so I usually refer cases to the trained people that we have on staff.

Samson also shares Elimer's belief, and suggests that students have complained to others regarding their perceived view of his bias towards white students. Samson explains that:

There have been situations in which I have had to come down heavily on a student who disregards the rules too many times. They complain to their teachers that I am easier on the white students who have done the same thing. This, of course, has no merit but it is difficult to defend. So now I send the cases to mediation by the teachers.

Peer Mediators

When students serve as mediators to assist other students, they are called peer mediators. Some teachers and administrators refer conflicts to peer mediators, who would be a group of students, usually two, trained in the process, and ready to work on conflicts
referred to them. Administrators suggest that peer mediators receive in-depth training in communication skills. Deidre, one of the sponsors, states that:

Peer mediators receive training on how to be active listeners, show that they are interested, making eye contact, responding with facial expressions, gestures and posture, sometimes with brief utterances, etc. They are trained to summarize the information from both sides of the conflict and to use open ended questions to get additional information, if required.

Daniel says as much and adds that:

Peer mediators learn how to be peacemakers before they go into action. They must show respect for others and for differences. They must also believe that what they are going to be doing will make a difference and a valuable contribution.

In some schools conflict mediation is also provided through the mentoring program. Mentoring is done as an extra curricular activity in some schools, while in others it is timetabled for all grade 9 students, so mediation is done on a class basis. In mentoring per se, a teacher works with a set number of students, four on average, checks on the students' work, meets with them informally or by arrangement, listens to their concerns, and helps them find solutions. These teachers may or may not be part of a mediation group. Annabell says, "Our peer mediation group got started as part of our mentoring program and it has been very successful."
When conflicts are referred to peer mediation, there is also a process that is usually followed. One administrator explains the process as follows:

1. Listen to get all relevant information from both sides;
2. Allow the students in the conflict to talk about the problems;
3. The mediation group leads the discussion;
4. The students brainstorm possible solutions;
5. One solution is chosen that is satisfactory to both sides;
6. A formal agreement is written up and signed; and
7. A report is provided to the sponsoring teacher.

One variation seen is in step one where the peer mediators require the conflicted students to write the problems before a discussion is begun. The success rate of the mediating peers is quite high, possibly due to the greater level of trust and the absence of any power play. Nindra speaks of the success peer mediators experience in her school:

For the types of conflict referred to the peer mediators, there is almost always success. Students choose to have them mediate their conflicts, trust them more than they do adults and see them on equal terms with themselves.

Samson also speaks of the success of peers, even suggesting some reasons for that success. He contends that:

The peer mediators succeed because their method is very business-like despite their age. Teachers and students trust and support them.

Maria provides a case in point to underscore the success that peers experience:

There is the case of the boy who escaped being charged by the police. There was a conflict, and he was seen with a
weapon, which contravenes the Board's zero tolerance regarding weapons. The boy was a very new Canadian, unable to speak English. A girl from the same culture trained in conflict resolution was allowed to work with him in the Vice-Principal's office, explaining the policies. He gave the weapon to her and asked for forgiveness for his attitude. The police do show sensitivity quite often and the peer mediators are quite successful.

Some variations to the basic strategy are also suggested. In one particular school the peer mediation process often includes dramatic performances. Once the students have explained the problems, members of the drama group put into action some of what they have heard. Martin states that:

There is an added component to the process in this school. Students from the drama group play out the situation. Those students put into action some of the things they are hearing so that the combative students can see, hear, and determine what they could have done differently. The process here also begins and ends with a contract.

In some schools the students are required to sign a contract to begin and end the process. They must also write the problem down; discussion and dramatic performance follow, and after a solution is determined, another contract is signed to abide by the decision. In other schools the contract to begin and end, and the stating of the problem are verbal.
Mediation Strategies

Conflict resolution is mostly aimed at managing student behaviour, and a considerable amount of responsibility of administrators to the school community concerns managing conflicts. Administrators indicate that there are times when they use negotiation, consensus decision making, or mediation, but their program places much weight on mediation. As Ransford says:

There are times when I use negotiation. I get the two parties or representatives of the groups to sit, meet face to face and work out the problem. They come to me when a solution is found.

Martin reports a style sometimes used by his guidance counsellor, who relies on consensus building:

They get all the parties involved in the dispute or their representatives to meet and work together to solve the dispute by creating a plan of action that all parties can support. The students do this by themselves or with someone who plays a neutral role.

The strategies for conflict mediation are somewhat similar in the schools, probably because the training for all the teachers is done by the same Board personnel. Nindra explains the conflict resolution program in her school. She says that:

The conflict resolution program is organized by a staff member or two, utilizing a student peer and older students
from different cultures. They all determine the strategies used and the appropriate one for each conflict.

Administrators suggest that the type of conflict and the people involved determine the strategy and the mediation groups that get involved. Conflicts of a serious nature, such as those involving illegal or immoral actions, acts against school policies, fights involving weapons, used or not, are usually referred to the administrator who may choose to mediate or to refer them to others. Conflicts involving teachers and teachers, teachers and parents, or teachers and some students are usually mediated by administrators, particularly the Vice-Principals. As Jennie observes:

Conflicts between teachers and parents, and teachers and really belligerent students, I handle myself. If I feel that there is going to be a quick resolution I do it alone, otherwise I get whatever kind of help I see as necessary, such as a social worker or teacher.

Jennie also speaks of her difficulties mediating with parents and suggests that she sometimes invites someone else to be with her. She says:

Sometimes I pull in another member of staff so I am not mediating alone. I have had some difficult mediation with parents so I am very careful.

When there is violence, the presence or use of a weapon, the police become involved. Such conflicts are handled by the Vice-Principal, usually, or the Principal. Where confidentiality is of utmost importance, especially when there is the return of a
student to school after a jail term, the Vice-Principal usually takes on that responsibility.

As Samson states:

If the conflicts involve the police, or if the students have to be reinstated after going to jail, the Vice-Principal handles them. Those would not go to teachers or peer mediators.

Some administrators not only want another staff member present, especially when dealing with parents, but they will also accommodate others at the request of the student or students in the conflict. Usually it is a Special Education teacher, a Guidance Counsellor, or a student with good facility in English, someone they perceive to be an advocate or friend.

**Basic Conflict Resolution Strategy**

The basic conflict resolution strategy in the schools, with some exceptions, tends to revolve around getting the necessary information, ensuring that everyone involved understands the issues, then searching to resolve the conflicts in a win/win fashion. As gleaned from the data, the strategy involves:

1. listen actively to both sides;
2. repeat what each one says;
3. ensure that both sides understand the issues;
4. determine solution or refer to another group;
5. punish where necessary; and
6. follow-up at a later date.
Daniel explains that this basic method may not be scientific, but is relied upon to produce the desired results. He says:

We don't have a scientific method as such. Our basic method simply involves active listening to get all the information and ensure they understand by repeating what is said to me. Then I make a determination as to the resolution or I return the matter to the teacher or peer mediation group.

Lorna suggests a course of action that she follows in mediation:

First I talk with the students separately, then together to get as much information as possible. While I am doing this, I am trying to determine whether I should mediate this, get someone in with me, or refer the conflict to the teacher mediation group, or bring in a social worker. If I decide to go it alone, then we have a discussion and I decide on the resolution. Sometimes I allow the conflicted parties to have a say in this.

One administrator operates from a philosophical belief about the willingness of some students to accept other people's ways and the education to be gleaned from the conflict at hand. He will forego punishment if the student learns from the misbehaviour. Ransford posits:

My two benchmarks are education and a willingness to take somebody's behaviour and accept it for one reason or another. If the students can acknowledge their willingness to move on from there and to celebrate the change for the better in
attitudes, then I do not put my time and energy into punishment for the action.

Ransford also provides a brief account of his mediation strategy. He says:

I get the information from both sides but I do not look for an immediate solution. I am going to give time for education. I will wear down the student and if we are not getting anywhere I will postpone it to the next day.

Ransford has also seen changes for the better in adolescent behaviour, using his strategy.

He says:

I am amazed at the adolescents’ ability to learn and to give and take in situations of conflict. They go into conflict resolution sessions feeling that they are absolutely right, but after being forced to listen to the victim’s side, nine out of ten times the student begins to realize that his/her position is not very defensible after all.

When referrals are made to the teacher mediation group, the process combines elements of the processes used by administrators and by student mediators. One administrator handed me a written process submitted to him by a teacher mediator who sometimes used it. It involves the acronym IDEAL

I = information getting
D = determine the problem
E = evaluate all possible solutions
A = act on one solution
L = list all the resources that may be needed to aid the solution process, especially in the case of teacher and student conflicts.
Other administrators have not focused on this particular acronym but suggest that their teacher mediators do follow a course of action that is closely related, as seen in the following strategy.

1. get the information;
2. discuss the problem;
3. look for win/win solutions;
4. choose the one solution satisfactory to all;
5. get the conflicting parties to agree to it;
6. close the case; and
7. follow up at a later date.

The follow-up step is seen by administrators as being important to ensure that agreements are being kept and that old problems are not still simmering to return in more expanded and dangerous forms. As Daniel suggests:

We need to be vigilant in our follow-up to ensure that students and or teachers live up to agreements, if we are to avoid the same old conflicts emerging in other and more serious forms. We have had a few cases of people who agree to behave one way but are still harbouring ill feeling.

Marie has seen the effects of not following up after a conflict has been resolved:

Sometimes we see to the resolution of a conflict, and everyone seems satisfied at the outcome. Some time after a small thing would happen and the old wound is opened up and a wider conflict erupts. Some people do carry grudges and it is often hard to tell. So I encourage teachers to follow-up and I do so myself in the cases that I deal with.
Mediation Hindrances

Despite all the efforts to anticipate conflicts, to be proactive and to set up groups to be involved in resolution of conflicts when they occur, efforts are sometimes hindered. Administrators suggest hindrances such as Bill 160, the very lenient Young Offenders Act, too few staff members to sponsor peer mediation programs, and unco-operative parents. Many of the activities for peer mediation take place as extra-curricular ones, after school, or during lunch breaks. The younger teachers with fewer years of experience are usually, but not only, the ones voluntarily involved. But they are the ones who lose their jobs because of Bill 160. This Bill was passed by the legislature in 1998. It took control of the education system from the Teachers Federation and the Boards of Education, and placed it in the hands of the provincial government. Among other things, it prohibited Principals and Vice-Principals from being members of the Federation, and brought changes to education financing which resulted in fewer teachers in the classroom. Because of this many younger teachers have lost their teaching positions in the school. As Daniel says:

Bill 160 is taking away our younger more energetic teachers who are most enthusiastic in terms of doing extra-curricular work. They work with student council, mentoring, conflict resolution, and various other aspects of school life. It is a real pity and a loss to the school.
Martin also contends:

I have a young teacher that I hired last year. He is in his early thirties and he has revived the student council, helped in teacher mediation, trained peer mediators, and is poised to do a lot of good things, but because of Bill 160, I cannot keep him next year.

Another hinderance is the Young Offenders Act which students learn about very quickly, especially if they are involved in gangs. Gangs involve girls as well as boys. Administrators believe that the Act is very weak and poses little threat to students even when the police are involved. The students are quite aware of this. As Nindra maintains:

Sometimes, I think there is a message you have to send out to the school population, in general, that there are certain limits, there are consequences. The Young Offenders Act means very little to them, because they know that nothing of consequence is going to happen to them if they do certain things.

There are times when all the support is put in but nothing works and the dysfunctional behaviour continues. Nindra provides the following case to demonstrate this:

One gang-related conflict involved a girl from this school and other girls from other schools. We tried to work with this student through a whole variety of strategies involving the parents, a social worker from the language and cultural background to advise the students of where such behaviour could lead if she did not mend her ways. But her poor and destructive behaviour continued and escalated into a situation
that happened off school property downtown. She ended up in court, was convicted, and had to be excluded from the school. Our efforts did not even come close to a win situation. Nobody won here.

Many conflicts, especially physical confrontations, occur off school property. The police, quite often, become involved. The administrators’ hands are tied, so to speak, because it’s a police matter. If the students are able to return to school right away, the school can only involve them in counselling, which has very limited help in resolving the conflicts. Sometimes some members of the gang or of the group are no longer students anywhere in the system, so they are not available for counselling. Not all schools have peer mediation, especially where only one or two teachers were trained and they have left the school. Students also graduate or transfer to other schools so each year new students need to be trained. Some schools are without peer mediation groups for whatever reasons and their absence is felt. Benjamin says:

We do not have a peer mediation group this year but we did have last year. It depends on the calibre and the quality of the students that we have. This year, we have a strong student senate which is helpful but not a true substitute for peer mediators. We have had some of the conflicts resolved by people in the student senate. They talk to students in assemblies, address behaviour problems, encourage respect for cultural differences etc. So many difficulties are addressed to the school rather than on a more individual basis.
Ransford also has no peer mediation group in his school because of a lack of trained sponsors. He states that:

We have all the other elements involved in mediation except peer mediators because of lack of teachers trained in mediation, to train and sponsor the peer mediators. These teachers are gone to other schools on promotion. I have asked for other teachers to volunteer for the training but no one has come forward. I may have to select a couple because peer mediation worked very well when we had it.

In Lorna’s school, as well, there is no peer mediation group, and she sees no real substitute for that. Lorna says:

We do not have peer mediation this year and believe me we have noticed the lack of it. Others have had to mediate conflicts for which peers would have had the edge, just because they are peers. We hope to rectify this soon.

Parents are often involved in conflicts, and in conflict resolution. While some are supportive and co-operative, others can be hindrances, especially if the conflicts involve their traditions and beliefs, where they can become adamant and inflexible. Daniel says:

When traditions and beliefs become part of the argument, the parents will tell you that it is their culture and they will not change. Such conflicts hardly end in a win/win situation.
Samson suggests that when violence occurs there is no problem getting the co-operation of parents:

There is no culture really that condones violence. In situations involving violence, I find that parents are very co-operative and become a part of the solution.

Sometimes, unco-operative parents insist that it is the lax school system that is affecting their children negatively and their children are blameless. When these parents are involved in the problem, mediation is not a useful process. As Benjamin says:

We have parents who refuse to accept that their child has done wrong. They insist that it is the system and the school that are at fault, or their child would not have done this or that. Resolving such problems takes too much time and the child does not learn from the behaviour because the parents haven’t faulted him or her for it.

Some parents from the majority culture sometimes come with prejudices against some cultural groups. They will often ask for a change of class, to one with more students from their particular culture, as the way to resolve the conflict, when students from minority cultures are involved. In cases where the administrator is also from the majority culture these parents expect that the conflict be solved in favour of their child. As one parent is reported to have said to the administrator: "The Vice-Principal should look out for people like himself/herself against "those people" who are coming into the
country." There are parents who also become verbally abusive, instead of helping to solve the problem.

**Punitive Measures**

Conflict resolution programs include a system of punishment to fit the behaviour. The Boards of Education create such a system, and provide this to schools in the form of a binder labelled "Standard Procedures." These procedures detail the prescribed actions to be taken by administrators when faced with certain negative behaviours, and these measures are geared to make the school a safer place. The provisions of the legal system of the province and the country that relate to schooling are also provided. The Boards have teams of lawyers who, from time to time, delineate the law to administrators for their own protection. Administrators, therefore, are expected to follow these guidelines very carefully or run the risk of breaking the law, losing the support of the Board, and possibly becoming involved in unwanted legal action taken by the parents, the police, or others. Marie points out that:

The Standard Procedures binder deals with human rights in the schools and in the workplace. It is the one that I refer to very often as well as the School Safety binder for directions on solution of some conflicts. It is wonderful because it gives the administrator a kind of safety blanket, you are not alone, everything else is in flux, but here is a set of procedures that I can hold onto, and that is very comforting.
Administrators, therefore, take their responsibility very seriously, not only for the safety of the school, but also to cover themselves. When one is dealing with so many students and their parents, small conflicts can escalate, and take on a life of their own. Administrators are sometimes put on the defensive even when they follow the procedures. Many report cases in which they have been reported to the Board and or taken to court when parents are dissatisfied with their decisions. However, when they act within the guidelines, they are supported by the Board which also provides legal assistance if needed. One administrator tells of a racial incident that started when a white student called an Indian student "Paki." One friend from each side got drawn in, so now four students, two inner city tough white students and two new Canadians were involved in a fight in the cafeteria. The administrator drew on the suspension provision of the Standard Procedures and all four students were suspended for five days. This automatically requires that the parents visit the school to see the administrator.

The parents of the new Canadian students felt that they were the victims and should not have been suspended. They made appeals to the Board which required that the superintendent make several visits to the school. He found that the Vice-Principal acted correctly and lent his support, but one parent withdrew her child on the basis that the administrator was racially prejudiced; and she even started court action. The administrator, however, had the support of the Board. Another administrator who also
tried to resolve a case using the guidelines was called names by a parent who reported him to the Equality Office at the Board of Education. Lorna points out that:

The Standard Procedures lists an A and a B list. The B list involves the more serious types of conflicts. We try to follow exactly what the Standard Procedures says. For suspension or calling the police we have our directions, but we still get into conflicts with disgruntled patients.

Kini also makes use of Board policies and the police when necessary. She says:

If there is a racial incident or a physical fight between students, or a theft, we call the police. So we try to follow the police directions and the Board Policies.

Martin suggests that, even when you follow Board policies, you sometimes have to deal with irate parents:

She called me a buffoon, stupid, incompetent, and wrote letters to the superintendent and the Director of Education. She requested that action be taken against me because of my decision to suspend her son, along with four others involved in a fight.

This matter was resolved in favour of the Principal but only after he had written a report and provided all documents relating to the case. It can be time consuming and frustrating but that is one of the hazards of the job because one cannot always please everyone.

The suspension provision of the Procedures is the one most often used for conflicts involving truancy, minor fights, insubordination etc. Suspension can be removal for one
day or several. Because this automatically involves the parents, administrators must be careful that this does not create other conflicts at home. Some parents can be violent in the home and resolve conflicts in abusive ways, making a bad situation worse, so administrators often have to make judgement calls. Samson suggests that:

We have to listen to the student and find out about the cultural background, to determine how the parents will respond when they are called. In one case a new teacher phoned a student’s home, not knowing the situation there. The father kicked out his daughter and she had to move in with friends.

Garno states that care must be taken by administrators and teachers when dealing with parents regarding any boy or girl relationship involving their children:

Especially in situations where a boy friend is involved, we try to find out something about the parents, whether they are abusive or are likely to send the girl back home to an arranged marriage. Usually one of our best students from the same cultural background will get involved and speak to the parents because they can better relate to them.

Suspensions involving several days are reserved for such incidents as fights, drinking of alcohol, smoking, and drug involvement. Counselling goes along with suspension in order to return the student to the school community. Incidents involving weapons are viewed very seriously and could lead to permanent removal from the school to alternate facilities provided by the Board of Education. The police must be called for
major fights, possession of a weapon, drugs or other such situations fraught with danger. Administrators also must make judgement calls regarding the procedure, with students new to the country. Help from the superintendent is usually sought. Nindra explains that for very new students to Canada, she sometimes must seek other measures than those in the Standard Procedures.

If there is a conflict involving violence we are required to go through the procedure of suspension. In some cases the policy does not work because of the cultural background of the students and newness to the country. Instead of suspension we get onto a social worker from the same cultural background to counsel the student. Then if the incident is repeated that student is treated like all others.

**Summary**

Conflict resolution involves proactive initiatives, mediation programs, mediation groups, and mediation strategies. Proactive initiatives include workshops that provide training for teachers and students who are selected or who volunteer to be participants in the conflict resolution program. These training workshops are facilitated by the Board of Education. Proactive measures often involve timetable adjustments to provide separate classes for males and females, in some subjects, and to allow time out for prayers and other religious activities for students from some religions. School clubs, called by various names, are also organized to foster inclusiveness, understanding, and awareness of similarities and differences, and the benefits to be gleaned from multiculturalism. These
clubs sponsor cultural exhibitions, food fairs, fashion shows, international nights, and involve parents and community leaders in the life of the school. Students from other cultures are also encouraged to become members of the student council as class representatives and enjoy the distinction of reporting to class, and bringing class issues back to the council. Another proactive measure undertaken is having speakers from outside the school, from different cultural groups, into the school to speak to students about the school system, the system's expectation of them, as well as to address the students' concerns. These speakers include social workers, religious leaders, other community leaders, and people who have come from different cultures, learned English, improved their education, and have become successful in their fields of choice.

Home forms for new Canadians only, is another strategy that allows the students to get acquainted quickly, develop friendships, and have a teacher with whom they can develop a relationship and to whom they can make some of their concerns known. Community policing has established various offices, and developed links with the schools. Administrators often use this as a proactive measure, to have a police presence on the school premises or nearby, when there is a report of impending fights or violence involving students. Despite these initiatives to prevent conflicts, they do occur, and in order to find solutions, mediation persons and groups are at work in the schools. These involve the administrators working alone or in collaboration with others, usually teacher mediators, guidance counsellors, or peer mediators. The types of conflicts determine the appropriate mediation group, and whether outside help is necessary. In some schools
there is a mentoring program, members of which sometimes assist in conflict resolution proactively as well as reactively. Peer mediators are described by the administrators as being very successful, as students tend to trust them more than they do grown ups, and there is the absence of the power inherent in the positions of teacher, and, more so, administrators.

In spite of all the efforts at conflict resolution there are obstacles that often thwart action. Provincial laws, such as Bill 160, result in the loss of teachers, mainly younger ones with fewer years of teaching who are willing to go the extra mile to keep their jobs. These teachers are often more energetic and enthusiastic, and willing to be involved more deeply in extra-curricular activities. The Young Offenders Act is said to lack teeth, and students feel little threat from it. It also weakens fear of the police. Many of the bigger conflicts among students occur off the school premises, which limits the actions that can be taken by the administrator. Another hindrance to conflict resolution is the lack of peer mediation groups in many schools. The absence is often due to the lack of a sponsoring teacher trained in mediation strategies. Unco-operative parents also stymie the efforts of administrators to solve conflicts. Some parents are prepared to defend their children at all cost and to denounce decisions made by the school in resolution of conflicts. While some conflicts are due to misunderstanding and are just petty occurrences, others can be quite dangerous. Punitive measures are put in place not only as a deterrent but as punishment for anti-social behaviour.
The Board of Education provides the Standard Procedures that outline the negative behaviours and the appropriate punishment. The "Safety in Schools" binder also complements these procedures. Punishment runs the gamut from one day suspension to several days or to expulsion. Incidents involving violence, weapons, and drugs, become police matters, and administrators are duty bound to call in the police. Failure to do so can be to the administrator's detriment, because some parents are willing to go to court to defend their children and to punish the administrators for their actions. It is, therefore, incumbent upon administrators to follow procedures as well as the dictates of the legal system. When mitigating circumstances develop, especially when students are very new to the country and speak little or no English, administrators protect themselves by seeking the advice of their superintendent, and sometimes other out-of-school support agencies such as the church or the different cultural communities. The following chapter looks at some of the out-of-school support systems, and some of the changes that administrators would like to see.
CHAPTER EIGHT
Out-of-school Support Systems, and Desired Changes

This chapter deals first with the support systems that administrators rely on to help them resolve conflicts. It also looks at the changes that administrators desire that will help them deal with conflicts. The chapter on conflict resolution mentions some in-school areas of support on which administrators have depended over the years in their efforts to be proactive and reactive in preventing and resolving conflicts. Changes in the funding formula of schools have resulted in teachers having little unstructured time leaving them little or no time for work on conflict mediation. The absence, or near absence, of psychologists, school nurses, and hall monitors, and the reduction, or absence, of guidance counsellors, has greatly reduced the in-school support on which administrators have relied. Familiar names and telephone numbers for quick answers for administrators are no longer available, due to changes in the structure of the School Board.

In 1998, five Boards of Education, i.e., Scarborough, City of York, Etobicoke, Toronto, and North York were merged by the provincial government, to form one very large Board. This new board is now the Toronto District Board, which has one Director instead of five. Many of the superintendents have retired or have been retired by the Board. Uncertainty and unfamiliarity regarding the new Board have reduced the comfort level at which administrators have operated over the years. The only better known
support left to those whose Boards have been all but disbanded is the school superintendent, who must now play a more extended role in support of the schools. Some areas of support for administrators are mentioned in the research data, but these are mainly in reference to the old Board which, by the time of this writing, will be non-existent. A measure of uncertainty about what support systems will be available through the new Board is also reflected.

The support systems mentioned are:

1. The Board of Education;
2. Parents School Councils;
3. The police;
4. Administrators’ Association;
5. Community leaders/groups;
6. The Ontario Teachers’ Federation; and
7. Parents.

**Board of Education**

Most administrators express satisfaction with the kinds of support that they have received, over the years from their Board, in the area of conflict resolution. This support does not refer only to the policies that provide direction, such as Equity, Affirmative Action, Safety in Schools, Sexual Harassment, Race Relations among others, but also to the supervisory personnel, such as superintendents, their assistants, and other Board staff. These people work closely with administrators to explain and implement the policies in the schools. They also help determine appropriate punishment, where necessary, in resolving conflicts, and to find alternative placement for students deemed unsuitable for the regular school setting. A group of people from the Board also work as interpreters
for the schools, especially in minority language areas. Marie speaks of her satisfaction with the old Board when she says:

As a Principal, I can tell you that the superintendents of the old Board have been wonderfully supportive. They know that we are dealing in an area in which many conflicts occur, and I have never had one say to me "Twit, why did you do that?" They appreciate the number of decisions we make and that some will be wrong.

The Board policies are a major source of direction for many administrators, and they want to keep them. These policies are quite detailed, often providing a step by step procedure, including the type of punishment to fit the behaviour. As Martin suggests:

I can use the old Board policies to address any issue of culture, race, language, violence, or anything that should arise. I hope that the new Board will keep them rather than create new ones.

Administrators feel supported especially when they must meet parents who do not speak English. The Board provides interpreters so that all parents can receive fair updates on their children's programs. These interpreters are mainly from minority cultures who are fluent in English as well. Interpreters are provided for the languages spoken by the larger groups of students. Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Tamil are some of these. Samson, for example, indicates:

The Board personnel have been quite supportive, especially in the area of languages. Not many of our teachers are from the
minority language areas, and on parents’ nights we do need
interpreters. They are provided to us by the Board.

One area in which administrators feel very supported is the one dealing with
punitive measures, police involvement, and student reinstatement after being in the penal
system. The Board provides the necessary papers and superintendents to take the pressure
off administrators. Nindra says:

I think our Board has been very supportive. They would like
us to resolve as many issues as possible within the walls of
our school, but when we face very serious situations involving
suspensions, the police, reinstatement of students, we
certainly have their help. They provide us with appropriate
paper work and often arrange alternative placements for
students deemed unsuited to the regular school setting.

Administrators and teachers must also depend on the Board to provide workshops
on conflict resolution to maintain that program in the schools. Jennie remarks that:

Our Board goes along with the conflict resolution courses and
workshops. It is also willing to send people into the schools
on request, and that is very helpful to us.

The Board also has a crisis response team, made up of school administrators,
teachers, psychologists, and social workers, that goes out to the school in times of great
tension. Such times include such things as incidents of serious injury to staff or students
resulting from the use of weapons, tragic or sudden death of staff or students, etc. These
are times of severe conflict and this team helps people to work through their problems.
Garno, for example, maintains:

The team from the Board is very helpful. These people come in and put in the time that is needed. Remember when the administrator at one of our schools was shot, that team made the difference, so there is support from the Board.

Social workers from the various cultures are also assigned to the schools by the Board to assist the students, particularly with personal conflicts. They understand the culture, and speak the language, so students are better able to articulate their problems and understand solutions, thus preventing some conflicts. As Marie says:

The social workers speak to cultural groups and then, by appointment, see individual students. They do a lot of good for all of us.

Psychologists, some working with an interpreter, have also been provided by the Board to help students with their problems, both personal and academic. These psychologists are usually among the first ones to determine deep personal conflicts in students, and they provide a very useful contribution in the effort to reduce and resolve conflicts. Ransford sees this as a useful element of support and says:

This year we had a psychologist from Spanish background. He helped us with the students from Central and South America and has been tremendous in getting to the heart of the students’ concerns and problems.

Not all administrators express this level of satisfaction in the support received from the Board. One, in particular, has been waiting a long time for a third Vice-Principal,
warranted by the larger enrollment of students. The present Vice- Principals carry a heavy workload, and do not feel that the Board is very sensitive to their plight, given the level of diversity in that school. Vice- Principals do have a major work load, often working into late evening hours. It is very difficult when the school is understaffed in this way. Elimer voices her frustration when she indicates:

> We have not really felt supported, because we keep waiting and waiting for the other Vice-Principal who never comes. The Board is not proactive in managing the system in terms of deploying personnel or to what is happening to our people on the front lines.

Administrators’ attitude is sometimes seen as a problem in solving conflicts. One administrator, who also suggests satisfaction with Board policies, feels that administrators themselves need to change and show a greater commitment to these policies. Martin maintains:

> The basic thing really is to embrace equity in the true spirit of what it means, along with inclusiveness. We must embrace all rules and regulations around all the barriers. Then we will be in a good position to act. We cannot just give lip service.

The new amalgamated Board is an untried entity that has created much scepticism among administrators. Each school Board, prior to amalgamation, had its own culture, policies, and ways of getting things done. Board personnel were well-known to administrators, who also knew direct telephone lines to the people that they needed most.
This is no longer so. The new Board is now a much bigger one, stretching for miles beyond the old borders, and many of the old familiar faces are gone, Board culture has changed, and administrators are uncertain, and much more confused about the future. Bigger, to them, is not better, and Martin, for example, reflects on this and suggests an uncertain future for the schools. He says:

I have no idea what the amalgamated Board will be like but I can see what's coming. Don't ask me if it looks good for us.

The loss of the old familiar Board is also felt by Marie, Samson, and Annabell among others. Marie says:

We are losing a lot with the demise of our Board. I can't see that our needs will be met and as quickly by the new Board as we don't even know who to call, with the exception of our own superintendent.

Samson worries about the loss of familiar faces, such as, the superintendents with whom he has worked.

We have lost most of our superintendents that have worked with us all these years. All we can do is wait and see.

Annabell is concerned about the loss of superintendents, but is also incensed at the insensitivity of the present system, and remarks:

The superintendents whom we trust are gone, and already I have seen the lack of sensitivity of the new Board. What they
are doing to teachers and to adult students is totally terrible.

I don't see things getting better really.

Parents/School Councils

In some schools, parent associations, parent councils, school councils or community council, whatever name they choose to be called by, provide support. While many are concerned, even consumed by other issues, some make conflict resolution a priority. They are made aware of many of the conflicts by their children, and sometimes by the school. As parents, they know the difficulties involved, and they work to find answers and provide advice to administrators. For example, Martin states that:

We have a parent/school council which is wonderful consisting of eight parents. They often know of conflicts before we do, mostly from their children. They discuss conflicts in their meetings and offer us their advice.

Ransford does not have a parent council in his present school but sees it as a good thing, and talks of his experience in a former school, where the parent council worked well. He responds that:

We don't have a parent council in this school, but in my previous school there was a small one, about half a dozen people. But they were influential. They talked to their own children about conflict resolution and often gave us suggestions on how to resolve some conflicts.

One of the shortcomings of the parent/school councils is the lack of immigrant parents, mainly because these parents are at work or because of their inability to speak
English well. Their absence and lack of input are felt. Other parents are not very committed to parents councils, especially in inner city schools that are in commercial rather than residential areas. Daniel, for example, states that:

We do not have immigrant parents on the school councils because many work at nights or they can’t speak English or don’t reside in the area. But the parents we have serve on various committees, serving all the students.

The presence of interpreters is not enough of an incentive for parents to give up working hours to attend to school matters. Nindra says:

Although we try to get the message home that we have interpreters for the major language groups at our meetings the immigrant parents do not attend, and this is sad; we really need them here.

The Police

The police are another support group. Each police division has a section that comprises a small number of police officers. These form the community’s response team that goes into the schools in response to calls from administrators in times of major conflicts. These officers not only act in response to calls but also proactively, speaking to the schools from time to time on gangs in the community, and different kinds of anti-social behaviours, and their consequences. Such consequences are usually more detrimental to immigrants and refugees who could be deported, so it is very important for them to know their personal responsibilities to the society. The officers are trained in
sensitivity to deal with the diverse cultures. The students also get a chance to see them as advocates, instead of the enemy acting against them when they commit offenses. Samson, for example, reports:

We have two officers assigned to this school, but other officers respond when these are unavailable. They are trained in sensitivity to the diverse student body, and have always been helpful.

Administrators see the police presence as being usually timely and having a calming effect on conflicts. The schools rely on them to keep the peace. As Benjamin, for example, says:

There are times when we must get the police here. The response is always good and sometimes their mere presence acts as a deterrent to calm the most belligerent students. We couldn’t do it without them at times.

Administrators’ Association

Principals and Vice-Principals had separate organizations until approximately five years ago, when they joined. Since then, both groups have had the benefit of sharing experiences together. Major conflicts and resolution strategies in any of the schools are made known to administrators in all schools. Smaller conflicts, and their resolutions, often have lessons for all schools as well. In the monthly meetings some of these occurrences are shared and administrators get a chance to learn from one another’s successes or mistakes in solving conflicts. There is also a level of networking that goes
on as administrators seek advice from their peers in their efforts to find solutions. All administrators are apt to call their peers sometimes before they call superintendents, who, as supervisory officers, are not ones to whom one would always want to display a level of ignorance in some situations. Marie speaks of the helpfulness of the Administrators Association to her personally, when she says:

I am an administrator for three years. There are many of my peers with more years of experience. I often network with them and they understand my inexperience. Sometimes I call them instead of or before I call the superintendents, and I get answers.

Administrators say that they learn from each other’s experience and are always willing to share, for the good of the group. Useful workshops are often part of these meetings, so valid information is often provided. As Ransford says:

I always try to attend the administrators’ meeting. Often you get direct details about conflicts and how they were handled. It’s always good to get it first hand, so you have that strategy ready if and when something like that happens in your school.

Especially in the absence of the old Board, some administrators find comfort in the ability of the Association to provide help, Nindra suggests that:

It is very comforting to know that if something goes wrong and you have no experience with it, you can call on a member of your association for help and it will be held in confidence.
Community Leaders/Groups

Help is also provided by community groups. Because of the high level of diversity of ethnic groups, cultures, and languages, their help to administrators is invaluable. Such leadership includes, church leaders, heads of community organizations and groups working for community improvement, social workers, philanthropists, successful past students of the school system, and some parents, among others. These are people who are proficient in English, but are from different cultural and language backgrounds. Individuals from these groups are invited to the school from time to time to speak to the students from their own cultural and language backgrounds. Sometimes they address the whole school on topics deemed appropriate by the administrators; and from them administrators learn about cultural differences, possible areas of conflict, and useful conflict resolution strategies. Daniel feels indebted to these leaders for the part they play, and states:

We are indebted to community leaders for the help they provide. When there is a conflict over the practice of a religion, we bring in the religious leaders, who advise both the students and us. Other leaders talk in their language to student groups about various topics of concern to the students.

Ontario School Teachers Federation

Help has always been provided by the Ontario School Teachers Federation through its various units. All administrators usually rely on it to a great extent. It delineates the law as it pertains to schooling, provides job descriptions, determines work loads and
responsibilities as well as provides help in times of conflicts. If an administrator is sued by parents, legal assistance is provided at no cost to the administrator. The Federation also tries to calm irate parents, to diffuse harsh situations, and to resolve conflicts outside of the legal system. Recently, however, the present Ontario government removed administrators from the Federation and designated them managers of schools as opposed to expert teachers. Administrators, in turn, formed their own association called Administrators’ Council, which now takes on some of those roles previously held by the Federation. This council, however, does not have the same financial capacity as the Federation, to pay for legal help. Administrators must now be more careful in their efforts to solve conflicts, to avoid possible legal bills, if legal action is taken against them. The negative side of this is that students may go unpunished for very poor behaviour, because suspensions and expulsions can be challenged by parents. Because no help will be forthcoming from the Federation, administrators will have to pay their own legal bills if there is a court challenge to their decisions; therefore, administrators need to practise self-preservation. Ransford, for example, explains that:

The Federation was a big help to us but that is being taken away from us. It remains to be seen what the Administrators’ Council will be able to do, given their financial constraints. We must learn to protect ourselves better, especially from parents who choose to use the courts to solve even little problems.
Administrators are concerned that they are no longer part of the Federation and the financial implications of that. Nindra, for example, states that:

The Federation is an entity in itself with people who can provide assistance when and where necessary. Administrators have schools to run, so there is not the time or the bodies to provide the kind of help. Any financial fallout from legal battles will be an out-of-pocket expense for administrators, so conflict resolution involves looking over your shoulder.

Martin explains a personal experience, with an upset parent, and remembers the assistance that the Federation provided for him. He indicates:

I experienced some problems in the past with an irate parent who thought I was negligent because of what happened to his son. An investigation followed and, during that investigation, the Federation provided me with an informed representative. I felt very supported.

Parents

Parents usually want the best for their children, and that includes a good education. But some immigrant parents struggle with survival on a day to day basis, and often rely on their children to work and help out financially, at the expense of an education. There are also those parents who understand little about education in Toronto, do not have the language, do not trust the system or the school, do not provide the necessary motivation for their children, or do not display an encouraging parent posture with the school to help
their children succeed. Kini explains the plight of some parents and its effect on school attendance. She says:

Due to the economic climate many parents have to work, and often their children also have to work and provide financial assistance to them. Even when they attend school their attendance is poor and they learn little. In the face of conflicts these parents are not very useful.

Garno also provides another aspect of the plight of parents that affects school attendance and creates conflicts. Because many immigrant parents cannot speak the language, they need their children, who have even little facility with the language to accompany them to the doctor or any place where English is required. School is seen as less important, and often as insensitive to parents’ needs for translation. Garno contends:

Many parents do not speak or try to learn English. They have to depend on their children to go about with them and translate. School becomes secondary to that need, so these parents are not responsive when we ask that their children be in attendance at school. In times of conflict they react against the school.

Administrators report that some parents are also too permissive with their children who, in their eyes, can do no wrong. The school or other children are always at fault, never their children. These parents cause more harm than good and are often no credit to the system. Benjamin, for example, says: "The parent who decides that his or her child never
makes a mistake is the one who hinders resolution of a conflict and cannot be relied on for help."

Co-operative parents are a support system for the school. They take time to visit, speak with teachers and administrators, some through interpreters, and attend the various celebrations in which their children are involved. They are usually at meetings requiring the presence of parents, and express their satisfaction or concern with their children’s progress. In times of conflict involving their children, they are willing to listen to the administrators, and be part of the solution. As Martin opines:

Some parents can be belligerent, and refuse to be part of a solution, but the majority of our parents will counsel their children as we recommend. They co-operate with the school, try to understand our point of view, and often the problems get solved.

Constructive input from parents is always appreciated by administrators. There are parents willing to speak up, even in poor English or with the help of translators. They want to be helpful and be there to support their children. At the same time, they wish to respect their culture, and will not compromise that in any way. Administrators must also respect that. As William says:

In almost all cases there is terrific input from parents. They are incredibly supportive. Many do not speak the language well, but they try their best, and some are willing to use interpreters. Unless the conflict touches a cultural nerve
(that's when they become upset) there is support for the school.

Samson agrees with the above, and goes further to suggest that some parents help proactively. Once they are made aware of the standards of conduct that the schools strive for, some parents speak with the children on how to avoid conflicts. He maintains that:

Parents even help proactively with conflicts. We tell them what is expected of their children and ask for their help in maintaining the standard, and avoid getting involved in conflicts.

**Desired Changes**

Some administrators said that they are satisfied with present Board policies, while others desire not only changes to policies but also to the credit system. Among those desired changes are ongoing in-service training for teachers in conflict mediation, an increase in the number of teachers from minority language backgrounds, and more people and time to deal with conflict mediation. Kini, for example, thinks that more and more families are experiencing violence, so more attention should be paid to the family to help them cope with life's problems. She says:

I am satisfied with the policies as such. Whenever conflicts occur there is a policy to be referred to. My concern and the change that I would like to see is to establish a course on the "dynamics of the family" and it should be compulsory for all students. Families seem to be getting more and more dysfunctional these days.
Some administrators suggest that while there are good policies on such issues as sexual harassment and violence, there are not enough programs available to the students to make them aware of the expectations of these policies. Many of these students are from cultures where there are no such values, and certain behaviours related to sexual matters are not frowned upon or viewed as undesirable. Enforcing the present policy among such students could become quite punitive instead of instructive. Family violence seems to be on the increase; so also is violence among students. Some students are from homes and countries where violence is used to solve conflicts. Violence in songs, movies, and television programs are a normal part of the students' environment in Canada, and some of this is repeated in the schools (Kenna, 1998; Murray, 1996). Administrators say that they want to see more programs and more workshops in the schools dealing particularly with issues of sexual harassment and violence. Deidre, for example, states:

Often, there is a conflict involving sexual harassment between students of minority cultures. I talk to them about the policy, what is allowed and what is not. They just give you that blank stare because that is not a problem in the original country. We have to teach them the policy before we punish for the behaviour.
Elimer supports the idea of more programs to teach such policies to students, to ensure their understanding, especially when students have never faced even the vocabulary involved. As Elimer suggests:

Some students have never heard the term sexual harassment. They think girls like to be pursued and touched. When these behaviours are spurned some males are confused and take it personally, thinking something is wrong with the way they look or whatever. We speak to them about the policy and this society, but we need programs to change their thinking and attitudes.

When schools provide bits and pieces of programs, administrators indicate that they get a chance to see the inadequacy of the programs. They suggest the need for well developed programs, and more social workers and school nurses to help students. Kini speaks of this need when she says:

In this school we provide what programs we can through the guidance office, and it is an eye-opener for us when we see the number of adult married students reporting family violence and sexual abuse. Teachers do not have the time; social workers are spread over more schools; there is hardly a school with the school nurse any more. More programs and people are needed but they are just not being made available.

Usually two teachers from each school are released to get the training provided by the Board on conflict resolution. Some administrators complain of the inadequacy of that and suggest that all teachers should be trained in conflict management and that more time
should be provided to teachers for this purpose. They believe that the Board should pay more attention and allow better funding for conflict resolution programs. Benjamin is one who holds this belief, and says:

We need to get more people trained in conflict management. We need more time to work on it. Teachers are very busy people. We, as administrators, have more than we can handle. The Board needs to see conflict resolution as a big part of the life of the school and focus more attention and money in that direction.

Annabell voices her frustration with all the rhetoric being spoken and the things written that are to be implemented but for which no training for implementation has been provided to the teachers. She says:

I guess you get a little tired of all the lip service. It becomes frustrating. It seems that a lot of Board officials work on process, but they are not on the front lines dealing with real conflicts. They write all these grand pamphlets but teachers need training and time to get things done.

Administrators not only see the need for more training and time to deal with conflicts, but also believe that training should be mandatory for all administrators and teachers. They also advocate that training in conflict and anger management be on the curriculum that is taught in all teachers’ colleges. Following that, yearly workshops by
the Board should apprise administrators and teacher of best practices that become available. Nindra is one who sees this need and says:

Conflict and anger management should be part of teachers' training in all colleges. As new things become available the Board should have workshops, even yearly, so that teachers and administrators can keep abreast of the information.

Administrators find that, although the material on conflict management put out by the Board is good, it is not always suitable for new Canadians. Lorna suggests that, in developing materials, attention should be paid to the diversity of cultures that must be served. Lorna observes that:

There is material put out by the Board on conflict resolution. It is good but not entirely suited to our new Canadians. Some attention needs to be directed to conflict in our diverse school population, and appropriate training provided for us.

Administrators, for the most part, also want teacher training colleges to mandate a course or courses on the different cultures. Complaints regarding the lack of this training and the impact on teacher and administrator decisions are mentioned in earlier chapters. It has surfaced, in the study, as something administrators would really like to see made available to them and their staff. Daniel is one who speaks about this and says:

The education of teaching staff and administrators about the different cultural backgrounds is really inadequate. I have had a bit of training over the years and it has always been an eye-
opener. I know that I don't know five percent of what I need to know. That will be a welcome change.

Marie also concurs with this need for training, because of the dearth in knowledge about cultures from which many of her students come. She says:

If I had my way, I would make education in other cultures mandatory for all teachers and administrators. Middle Eastern people, South East Asians etc. I know very little about. This should be done at the Faculty of Education and other teachers' colleges more than a lot of what they are doing. I should be given the opportunity to personally develop in that area.

One administrator who does not seem to go with the flow, gives her opinion without hesitation, and tells it as she sees it. When asked about desired changes, Annabell replies:

I do want changes, I guess the change I want most would be to see more attention paid to the front line people as opposed to the academics with their coined phrases that often lack practical application.

A change that all administrators say that they wish to see is an increased number on staff, in each school, of teachers from the minority cultures. With so much diversity of cultures and languages in the school this is seen as an asset. Students cannot be used for translation purposes all the time, because of the problem of confidentiality. A staff member who can translate, eliminates that problem. Students also see themselves represented when they see staff from their own backgrounds. They see role models, they
can speak to someone on staff in their own languages. In addition, administrators and staff have someone to call on for interpretation, or to get the other side of the story in English. Administrators view such a multicultural staff as a necessity and as helping to create a school culture that reflects the whole school. They report a small improvement in this area, but progress is slow. As Jennie says:

I don't like to have a student interpret for another student because of confidentiality. The ideal change that I would like to see is a more multicultural staff that is representative of the cultures in the schools, and can assist with translation when necessary.

Another change that all administrators would like to see is the restoration of some areas of school funding that have reduced the number of people coming into schools who assist with conflict resolution. People such as guidance counsellors, psychologists, nurses, and hall monitors have been working in the schools for some years now. The new funding formula and Bill 160 have taken these people out of the schools for the most part. Psychologists used to be attached to more than one school, but they could see students with problems by appointment without much delay. The school nurse worked once a week for half a day in one school, but now some schools have none. Together these two sorts of professionals could detect and help to diffuse a number of conflicts, particularly personal ones. Hall monitors were also very useful, as they walked the hallways, corridors, and washrooms during class time, and were able to spot a lot of conflicts in the making. They called the office or accompanied students there, where administrators
could deal with the situation. Now these three levels of support either exist barely or not at all, and the schools experience the loss. Daniel, for example, remarks:

It is inconceivable to me that the people in authority do not understand the value to the school of the psychologist, the nurse, and the hall monitor. The more conflicts in the school, the less they see the need for these people. Well, we can only do the best we can with what we have.

Guidance Counsellors

Administrators maintain that guidance counsellors deal with all the students in the school, on a one-on-one basis. They know those who are failing academically, those with problems at home and in the school. Generally, students are more willing to confide in them than in their teachers. Guidance counsellors know the students who are suicidal, have attempted or entertain thoughts of it, and can arrange for the necessary help for these students. They often alert the homes and the administrators to what is happening with the children. Guidance counsellors, psychologists, school nurses, and hall monitors may be seen as dispensable to some people outside the school, but they are invaluable to the school in discovering early warning signals of students in distress. Many of these positions have been eliminated from the schools, and administrators feel the void. They would like to see them return, but it is more likely to remain a wish than become a
reality, as they recognize what the political priorities are. Ransford provides an example of how the students are affected:

A student with personal conflicts would rather talk to the nurse or the psychologist on guidance counsellor rather than anyone else but that is not available in the school as formerly. We have to phone, make an appointment to get someone. Can the problems wait?

Benjamin reflects that the absence of psychologists, nurses, and hall monitors is further compounded by the loss of the old Board with the familiar support personnel.

There are fewer people to help now, and with the new Board we are not even sure whom to call for quick action. All the superintendents of our old board are gone, with the exception of the school superintendent.

A few administrators suggest that the changes he would like to see would be at the school level. His concern is that the different cultures are very far apart. Despite international clubs, many students still operate within their cultural groups only. The parents of these groups have little or no relationship with other cultural groups, and he would like this to change. Samson is one of these administrators, and he says:

We are now trying to call the parents in various cultural groups, to get them together. We want to have members of their communities to form a Board so that we can integrate various language groups and be better able to solve problems, and parents will feel more involved with the school.
Garno would also like to see this coming together of cultures and is taking steps to try to establish this better relationship. He states:

We have tried, and are trying, to have intercultural events, to bring people together, yet we see them congregate still in the different cultural groups. We need to find better ways to improve relationships among the cultures, in and out off schools.

Summary

Administrators, by and large, are satisfied with their support system from outside the school. They also reflect on changes they would like to see take place. Several areas of support are mentioned but they are cognisant of the fact that their old Board is being dismantled to give way to a new larger one, and the support system may change for the worse. Among the support systems mentioned are: the Board of Education, the police, Administrators’ Association, community and group leaders, and the Teachers’ Federation.

Almost all administrators express a sense of security and reliance on their old Board of Education. They view the personnel as people who understand the issues and are ready and willing to help. Superintendents assist in conflict resolution, particularly when punitive measures must be taken to stem dysfunctional behaviour. They also provide alternative placement when students must be taken out of the public school environment. The Board also provides interpreters from various language backgrounds to assist schools dealing with conflict resolution. Workshops are also provided for teachers by the Board. Crisis response teams are made available by the Board, in times of grave conflicts.
Psychologists, nurses, and hall monitors are also provided to assist the schools in dealing with conflicts and other aspects of the students' lives. Not all administrators express satisfaction with the support from the Board. Inadequate deployment of administrators is one area mentioned resulting in the long wait some schools experience in getting personnel.

The new amalgamated Board is viewed with suspicion and scepticism. Many of the old familiar faces have been removed, even forced out, leaving instead people who are seen as unknown and untried. Administrators report that they are uncertain, even confused but are taking a wait and see attitude. Parent/school councils are another support system for the schools. Members of this council often make conflict resolution a priority and help the school find answers. However, very few parents, especially of minority background, serve on these councils. The police are another helpful group especially in times of conflict. Their presence usually prevents conflicts from escalating and students who commit unlawful acts are dealt with by them. The police are also used proactively to speak with students to explain the penalties that go with illegal acts and how to avoid them. Another helpful group is the Administrators’ Association which provides its members with information particularly on conflicts in their schools, and on conflict resolution strategies they might employ. Members all act as a network to provide assistance. Leaders from community organizations, particularly immigrant communities, assist the school by providing needed information regarding their cultures and religion.
They also provide people to speak to some of the concerns of the students from similar backgrounds, as well as to administrators.

Another strong support system for administrators in the area of conflict resolution used to be the Ontario Teachers’ Federation, which provided help, in times of conflicts. Teachers, Principals, and Vice-Principals have all been members of the Federation. Due to the removal of Principals and Vice-Principals from that Federation, administrators decided to, and have now formed the Toronto Administrators’ Council, to replace the Federation. This new Council, however, has very limited resources, and cannot provide the financial assistance that the Federation could for them. Support also comes from co-operative parents, who are willing to do their part in preventing or resolving conflicts that involve their children.

Many administrators want changes. Some want to see other courses such as family life, for example, added to the credit system and be mandatory. They would require more in-service training for teachers, an increase in the number of teachers from minority backgrounds in the school, and more people and time to deal with conflict mediation. Some administrators suggest that while the Board polices may be good, there are not enough programs for students or teachers to improve awareness of the contents of these policies or to implement them with fairness, especially with minority students. It is also felt that the Board’s idea of releasing two teachers to receive training in conflict mediation is inadequate and efforts should be made to train all in-service teachers and administrators. Administrators also suggest that all teacher training colleges should teach
conflict resolution to all their students. They also want a refunding of schools to bring back guidance counsellors, psychologists, nurses, and hall monitors because administrators believe that these workers play a big part in stemming conflicts and resolving them re-actively or pro-actively.

Researchers have addressed the issues of conflict, with many examples of the enduring impact of culture, and how cultural differences can result in conflicts. Many of these studies have been related to elementary school age students so the findings may not be as relevant to those of high school age. However, those studies conducted with high school students have a direct bearing on new Canadian students, their experience with cultural differences and the conflicts they face. Various typologies of conflict resolution strategists are also provided in the literature but many are not suited to schools. Their relevance is more to business and industrial settings. Those that can be used in the schools are very similar in structure, differing mostly in vocabulary only. Administrators must be careful to review all the strategies provided to determine suitability for their schools. The next chapter discusses the findings of the research.
CHAPTER NINE

Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. The literature on which the study is based suggests that there are various types of conflicts, many issues around which conflicts revolve, and certain people who are usually involved in such conflicts. Many researchers have contributed to the literature on the topic, for example, Gay (1981), Ogbu (1994), Ryan and Wignall (1994), Schrumpf (1997); and Margolis and Tewell (1988). Whenever conflicts occur there need to be programs or strategies for resolution. The literature has also provided some, but not all are useful to schools, let alone diverse school settings. The data from the study show that the administrators in the study have observed these conflicts in their schools and have conflict management programs to resolve them. The study was guided by a four-dimensional framework that includes: (1) types of conflicts, (2) the people involved, (3) the issues around which conflicts revolve, and (4) conflict resolution.

I wanted to provide a context for the conflicts so I thought it useful to ask participants some demographic questions. These provided useful data on the number of cultural groups in the schools, the numbers of new Canadian students involved, changes in the countries of origin, in age range, socio-economic levels, gender composition, and academic orientation. The discussion will, therefore, focus first on diversity as a context
for conflicts and then on the four areas of the framework. The findings from the study suggest that, indeed, many conflicts in schools revolve around diversity: for example, conflicts based on differences in national origins, race and ethnicity, gender, social class, values, and communication styles (Schrumpf, 1997).

We live in an increasingly diverse society and people and institutions often react to diversity with prejudice, resulting in discriminatory behaviours and actions. Administrators in this study contended that such behaviours occur in their schools because of the number of minority cultures that must co-exist with the majority culture, except in some adult schools where students are all of minority cultures. They also suggested that conflict resolution programs and Board policies were not enough to address the prejudice and intolerance of differences. Administrators said that they have endeavoured to create a positive school climate that focuses on raising awareness of similarities and differences, and on activities that proactively celebrate differences by honouring talents and expressions that foster understanding and social justice. They also indicated that they usually rely on Board policies such as anti-racism, equity, multiculturalism, sexual harassment, and safety to help in providing social justice for their diverse groups. The proactive measures shown in the data: orientation sessions, international concerts, exhibitions, and fashion shows, do help to honour talents and expressions, foster awareness of differences and similarities, develop positive school climate, and contribute to achieving social justice.
Diversity

Today, diversity is a demographic reality that sometimes becomes associated with conflicts in schools. The presence of the diverse groups leads to conflicts in the area of assessment and placements of students. Administrators tended to perceive the whole process of assessment and placement as being one of conflicts. Also involved in this process are the conflicts of transition as students negotiate and navigate boundaries to find a comfort level. Conflicts occur when students feel that they have been placed too low in the system. Some students believe that they can learn English in a short time and request accelerated programs sometimes of English only. Conflicts occurred when their requests could not be accommodated. Administrators contended that conflicts revolve around misplacement, dissatisfaction with timetables, rejection of some subjects, and refusal by some male students to participate in working groups that involve females.

At the time that this research was being done, large numbers of adult students were placed in schools that were mainly for adolescents, and that brought some conflicts. These were mainly related to the differences in ages and maturity levels. As of September 1999, adults will no longer share that school space, thus avoiding some of those conflicts. The dissatisfied students often leave the system, especially adult students. Boards have provided assessment centres, where students should go initially, where some of these problems are dealt with, but the vast numbers of students cannot be assessed in time for the beginning of school. Therefore, schools cannot wait on these centres, if they are to have their staff in place, and not lose teachers when the all-important October numbers
go to the Board. These are the numbers that determine the staff a school will maintain for the school year. Therefore, some of these conflicts continue to occur, as the schools do their own assessments and placements.

The conflict resolution strategies that were revealed in this research were somewhat different from those in the literature, and there was enough difference to allow the formation of one new category with drama as an element, as an addition to existing research. Written contracts to begin and end sessions and the introduction of drama were some unique features. All the schools involved in the study represent a full spectrum of diversity. The various languages heard during the lunch breaks, and the different styles of clothing that reflected the national or religious dress of many groups attest to this. One administrator, on reflection, said his school reminded him of the global village concept of the world. Diversity in these schools seemed a bit overwhelming, but it reflects a reality that is not new. Population migrations have existed since the beginning of human history, and, as Ghuman (1993) suggests, migration has always been, and probably will remain a feature of human society. However, the size, speed, and visibility in this century are unprecedented (Allmen, 1992). The global village image of the world implies that, in our current age, humanity is coming into increasing contact with each other through transportation and communication. It takes only a short time to be transported to a foreign country, or to communicate with someone in very distant places. Humanity must, therefore, learn to understand its own behaviour and that of others (Allmen, 1992).
This global village image reflects the school population and administrators spoke of the almost daily admission of new students who have come into the country from various parts of the world representing many different countries, language backgrounds, and cultural traditions. Attention to diversity brings into focus cultural differences. These reflect differences in human behaviour. At this time in history when there is the movement of many cultural groups into majority cultures, the differences become very obvious. Each culture has its own distinct identity, its own value orientation which will persist, partially or wholly, in the new culture (Allmen, 1992). As far back as 1978, Conners (1978) revealed that multicultural countries were the norm and monocultural, the exception. "We are the world" is truly the slogan for the final part of the twentieth century, and people are painfully aware of the problems of the world. It was John Donne (1573-1631), who said:

No man is an island intire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the maine. Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind ....

Administrators also acknowledged this diversity and indicated that it was their responsibility to help. To provide this help administrators appeared to honour the principles set by the Ministry of Education to determine the prior education of all the students and their appropriate placements. One administrator cited the difficulty in knowing how to compare what the students have learned in their country, in any subject, with what is learned here by students of the majority culture. The conflicts and stresses
of this initial period are recognized by administrators who plan orientation sessions and bring in speakers to help students understand the system, and help them cope. That the schools must engage in continuous intake of students throughout the school year increases the difficulties faced by the school and the students. Orientation, for some students, is reduced to their being shown around the building by other students. They arrive late in the school year, miss out on the more tangible efforts at the beginning of the school year, and have more conflicts that take longer to be resolved. Despite the difficulties involved, the guidelines from the Ministry have helped administrators process and place the students, and, in this regard, have helped administrators manage diversity.

Among administrators, attitudes to diversity were both positive and negative. By and large, they spoke of the richness that the various cultural groups bring to the school, in their talents and expressions and the opportunity for students to learn about each other. Negative attitudes relate to the conflicts that occur and the time that must be expended dealing with them, the extra work involved in making changes to curriculum schedules and generally to attend to the diverse needs. Responses to diversity have been positive and varied. They include orientation sessions and events to raise awareness about the various groups. Each cultural group is involved in ways that highlight the culture for others to understand, and this helps to foster respect for their customs and traditions. The discussion will now centre on the four aspects of the framework.
Types of conflicts

Conflicts that involve new Canadians are not only those of assessment and placement in the schools. They also include, for example, conflicts of transition (Margolis & Tewell, 1998; Gay, 1981; Phelan et al. 1993; Au, 1994; Delgado, 1991), conflicts relating to cultural differences and cultural discontinuities (Corson, 1992, 1993; Ryan, 1992; Ryan & Wignall, 1994; Ogbu, 1994); religion (Ghuman, 1994), gender inequalities (Ryan et al., 1994; Ghuman, 1994; Gay, 1981; Phelan et al., 1993; Yates, 1985), the link between language and culture, and the difficulties involved in learning the new language (Corson, 1992; Phillips, 1983; Allemeh, 1998; Tim, 1994; Vogt, Jordan and Tharp, 1987).

All administrators claimed to have observed these types of conflicts in their schools and to have had to resolve many. They also bemoaned that they have had to expend a lot of time and energy dealing with these conflicts at the expense of other aspects of their work. Because the conflicts are so many and so diverse, I will again employ Gay's (1981) classification of procedural, substantive, and interpersonal categories to focus the discussion on types of conflicts and I will provide examples in each category.

Procedural Conflicts

These are conflicts that occur when students act against the norms of classroom protocol: the rules, expected behaviours, and directions provided from the teachers. Some of these conflicts are due to the students' newness to the system, some are due to personal and psychological problems caused by traumatic prior experiences such as torture or
imprisonment, and some by efforts to bridge the cultures of home and school. Sometimes these conflicts occur in the form of outright disobedience to the teacher in the classroom; and sometimes because the teacher is female and that gender carries little authority in the student's country of origin. Also involved, at times, is the refusal of some male students, especially adults, to sit with female participants in small group activities or to be involved in any co-educational activities.

Procedural conflicts also occur because of poor readiness for school. Some students do not place the same value on "time" as is expected in the schools. One administrator, for example, felt that this was partly cultural. He indicated that a student from Somalia mentioned that this year, 1998, was the year 1991 in his country and that his calendar had thirteen months so it was taking him a little time to adjust. This administrator also said that he often dealt with students from that and other areas for lateness and would be told that they were only 25-30 minutes late so there should have been no problem. There are also those students who, usually, for religious reasons, refuse to stand in respect for the national anthem, and when asked to stand outside the class for the duration, refuse, and tend to argue about their rights. Many students also have had prior traumatic experiences and are mentally incapable of handling the teaching and learning process, and who instead refuse to do any assignments in or out of class, and disrupt the class activities.

Discontinuities of customs and traditions, for example, in class organization, and the teaching and learning process also result in procedural conflicts. The home culture continues to follow the customs and traditions of the original country, in dress, food,
relationships, and language. The student must now lead a bicultural existence while wanting to conform to some aspects of the new culture. At times, these conflicts prevent their learning readiness and, as one administrator suggested, result in outbursts and direct disobedience to the teachers, because of lack of understanding or frustration with the new procedures.

Some students experience conflicts because they are forced to curtail the use of their own language in class and in school, in order to be understood by the others. They associate this with lack of respect for themselves and their culture because no one is interested in their language (Allemeh, 1998). Learning the new language is seen by them as being tantamount to giving up the language of their parents (Garcia, 1988). They often act against the teachers and students in the language classroom, in anger and frustration and refuse to do the work assigned. Several administrators said they have had to resolve conflicts in which students in the E.S.L. class insisted on speaking only to people from their original country so that they could use their language, rather than follow the teacher’s instructions so that they could relate to others and learn English more quickly.

Administrators indicated that often male students, who are adherents of the Muslim religion, have to be removed from the classroom and sent to an administrators’ office to be reprimanded or punished because they are disruptive, rude, and unco-operative. Community leaders’ help is sometimes sought so that students can hear about the rules and procedures of the school and the expected behaviours in their original language. These conflicts take valuable time away from the teacher, the administrators, and other
students. All administrators in the study have remarked on the disruptive nature of procedural conflicts in the school. They waste the teacher's time and the students' as well which somewhat thwarts the teaching and learning process.

**Substantive Conflicts**

This category of conflicts involves disagreements over the goals of education in the old and the new school system, and, as all administrators maintained, cause disruption in the program, in the class and in the school. Some students believe that the credit system is working against them in the practice of their religion. The credit system requires their presence in class for prescribed hours, but the students need time out for religious practices. A compromise is usually made to allow students time for religious practices, while operating within the credit system. Some students also view the curriculum as being padded with worthless subjects, for example, Physical Education, Swimming, and Art, and refuse to honour those subjects on their timetables. Administrators said that some students, particularly girls, refuse to be involved in swimming. The girls refuse to wear the designated clothes on the basis that they do not cover enough of their bodies. Usually, however, their objection to this subject is because they believe that the subject is not worthy of their participation. Often these students are supported in this by their parents on religious and moral grounds, and this attitude frustrates administrators, who must find solutions.

Some administrators have also said that perceptions of post-secondary education among some immigrant parents are different from what the school expects. Some parents
see no need for education beyond the high school level for both sexes, but more so for girls, regardless of their academic ability. For these parents the goal of education is to teach the student to speak English enough to go to work or help in the family business. Some administrators suggested that this is more so among parents in the lower socio-economic group, who need the financial help, or those with small businesses who need the extra hands to work. Many parents of new Canadians also refuse to allow their children, especially girls, to participate in field trips, especially if they involve overnight stay. Educators view these trips as an integral part of teaching and learning, but some parents see them as a context in which their daughters' reputation and chances for marriage could be damaged. If there is a brother to be a chaperone and if it is a single day trip, the girls' chances to participate improve.

Some administrators said that they often make efforts to intercede with such parents for their children, but more often than not, to no avail. At the other end of the spectrum there are those parents who try to get administrators to place their students in classes that are too advanced for them regardless of the number of times the students experience failure. In some cases, administrators report that the students become so frustrated that they leave the school system, because of the inflexibility of their parents. This effort to circumvent the process is troubling for many administrators, and conflicts occur between parents and administrators. Trandis (1991) presents another cultural aspect that results in substantive conflicts. He suggests that all societies contain certain elements of collective and individualistic tendencies, but the overriding orientation of traditional
societies is toward the collective domain. Kluckholn and Strodtbeck (1961) indicate that anthropologists and psychologists differentiate Eastern and Western societies on a bipolar dimension of collective versus individual orientation. Eastern societies are more group and family oriented, while Western societies have become more individualistic. The primacy of the family over individual interests is supported by Ghuman (1993, p.15) who provides a narrative by an Asian, working in England. He said:

I have a job as a clerk, it was a good job, with bright prospects. But I could not save much. I had three young sisters at school -- for them my parents had to raise dowries. Though we had a small farm, it was a hand to mouth existence. ... I got a job in a factory, and saved money to help my family. My three sisters got education, were married with dowries, and the family built a "pukka" (brick house). I had a chance to do a B.Sc. (Econ.), but my family responsibilities came before my self-advancement. I had to sacrifice my career for the family, but I don't regret it.

The major aim of education in Western societies, according to eminent scholars, is the development of autonomy in the children. Such a philosophy is often interpreted by Asian parents as leading to selfish children (Parekh, 1986; Buchignani, 1985; Ghuman, 1993). Administrators said that guidance counsellors often experienced roadblocks when trying to counsel students regarding post-secondary education, when parents need them to go to work and help support the family. In some instances, the
students know early that there will not be college or university for them, so they do not expend much energy to achieve high marks.

*Interpersonal Conflicts*

This category of conflicts stems from different aspects of the student’s life, and from the various issues that confront those students. Interpersonal conflicts occur over such issues as attitudes, beliefs, and values, intercultural problems, erosion of self-esteem, pride and dignity, gender issues, old conflicts from original countries, social relationships, adolescent behaviours, and language learning difficulties. These conflicts are very consequential for students and problematic for administrators who also spend a lot of time trying to find solutions and keeping student behaviours within the expectations of the school and the legal system.

Administrators believe that there is not much that they can do to stop this type of conflict because, as long as there is interaction among the diverse groups there will be interpersonal conflicts. Many of the students have little facility with the English language, have poor self-esteem, and feel a loss of dignity. They have poor communication skills, heavy accents, and often misconstrue what is said. They often perceive some behaviours of others through the eyes of their culture and as indignities against them. They respond with anger, resulting in conflicts and sometimes physical violence which, at times, involve the police. Old conflicts associated with grudges from the original countries are often observed in the classrooms and in the halls of the school, requiring quick intervention by teachers and administrators, to prevent escalation. Conflicts due to
religious beliefs also often occur, and social interaction among the various cultural groups is often dictated by religious beliefs and old traditions. Many Canadian customs, such as those relating to dating and marriage, are rejected by many immigrant parents on the basis of their religion and tradition. Administrators often find themselves trying to pacify irate parents who want the school to inform them of love relationships involving their children, because such relationships are forbidden by the parents who seem to view the administrators and teachers as chaperones for their children's social behaviours.

Interpersonal conflicts also involve problems between and across cultures. Some of these are between parents and children, others are among students. The conflicts are sometimes intergenerational, as different age groups bring different perceptions and attitudes to the majority culture. The younger students want to embrace aspects of the majority culture, while older siblings, but especially parents, want their children to uphold the cultural traditions that they brought with them. As Phelan et al. (1993) state, these students are navigating multiple worlds, and many parents do not understand the level of stress and anxiety that this bicultural existence entails. Students often rebel against their parents, often disguising their activities.

One administrator spoke of the habit of some girls from the Muslim religion who had permission from their parents to participate in swimming lessons if they wore national long dresses. The girls took shorts with them, and changed at school, without letting the parents know. Some girls have also established love relationships across cultures at school, knowing that they are against the wishes of their parents. Administrators indicated
that they have tried to avoid playing the role of student advocate or a mediating role in conflicts between parents and children because they sometimes become too involved. The administrators rely more so on the guidance counsellors to play that role. Despite administrators having delegated some of the responsibilities for dealing with conflicts to others, they still must spend a considerable amount of time themselves dealing with conflict, because of the various issues around which conflicts revolve, and the large number of people involved in them.

People Involved in Conflicts

By and large, everyone in the school, at one time or another, becomes engaged in conflicts -- teachers, administrators, and students; but the students and their peers are most often the ones involved, because of their high level of interaction. Some conflicts also involve parents and students, and parents and administrators. Some administrators, in suggesting the reasons for such conflicts between them and parents, indicated that quite often parents want to dictate to the schools, want administrators to be chaperones for their children, or to report to them the actions of their children that contravene the expectations of home. Such conflicts also occur because administrators have legitimate school matters that require the co-operation of parents, which they sometimes do not achieve. However, it is the conflicts among student peers that can be very consequential for them, their parents, and the schools.

Administrators have said that some students have been able to avoid conflicts, have settled into the school setting, and have been co-operating with their teachers and peers.
Many students, however, are involved in conflicts. The students most involved seem to possess certain characteristics that set them apart. The data identify such characteristics as violent personalities, poor learning habits, psychological difficulties, anti-social behaviour patterns, and parenting patterns that are too strict or too indulgent, racial and cultural intolerance. This is quite a list, but as administrators suggest, any one characteristic is enough to trigger conflicts. Such students can hardly be expected to learn, and mix well in the school. One administrator remarked that helping students to conform requires administrators to look beyond the conflict and determine what motivates the behaviour.

Punitive measures have their place, and are sometimes used, but when they do not lead to improvement of the behaviour, they are not very effective. Procedures for quick identification of such students are in place, according to some administrators, and quick actions follow. Sometimes the problem is mainly with the parents, and administrators said that they deal with this head-on, for the benefit of the student and the school, because it is a very serious issue. Nipping some of these characteristics in the bud could provide more productive and adaptive people for society.

**Issues Around Which Conflicts Revolve**

As mentioned earlier, the issues around which conflicts revolve are many and varied. They involve, for example, cultural transition, religion, gender inequalities, cultural discontinuities, old grudges, the link between language and culture and learning the new language, and adolescent behaviours. As students move from one culture to the
next, they experience conflicts. Administrators in the study said they were aware of these conflicts and can anticipate the transitional ones, despite any student demeanour of calm or well being. Students come steeped in the traditions of home and country, and should not be expected to bridge the cultures without some difficulties.

**Transition**

Transitional conflicts are mentioned in the literature, by such researchers as Margolis and Tewell (1998), Gay (1981), Phelan et al. (1993), Au (1994), and Delgado (1991). Because these conflicts are mainly personal and psychological, administrators find them difficult to identify and mediate. Some students are unable to come to terms with the new culture, to establish a bridge, and, therefore, end up on the list of dropouts, as evidenced by the dropout lists in the schools. When this happens, parents are apt to blame the school, unaware of their own part in the problem, because many parents insist on a high level of original cultural purity. To rectify this problem, more work should be done with parents, sensitizing them to the transitional problems of their children. But this is not very likely to happen due to the potential cost for personnel to carry this out, at a time when budgets are being trimmed.

**Religion**

Administrators in the study said that religion is always an issue around which conflicts revolve in their schools. This is understandable given its strong hold on adherents. This is one aspect of the students' culture that they do not have to give up; it is a connecting thread with their home, group, and original country. They identify very
strongly with it, and are not willing to compromise any aspect of its practice. As one administrator said, "They make their requests known and expect full acquiescence." There are differences in class and region to the level of their religiosity, but, by and large, religious influence is very strong, especially amongst Muslims. Ghuman (1983, p.16) reports the view of one adherent of the Muslim religion, including the teaching on gender:

We must follow the teaching of the holy Koran and Sharia books; pray five times a day, engage in almsgiving, do Haj and observe Ramadan. According to our religion, women should dress modestly and look after the home and children. We don't want them to mix with men and flaunt their sex.

For Hindus, it is important to carry on their tradition of vegetarianism and maintain a deep spiritual outlook. Sikhs strive to wear a turban to cover their long hair; and wear a Kirpan (dagger), as symbols of their religious beliefs. There are many other religions, but adherents among the students are fewer.

The various faiths are not without criticism in the society and in the school, creating tension, due to the range of values and differences among the faiths. It is, therefore, not difficult to see how conflicts arise, and the major responsibility that administrators have in trying to accommodate all the practices, celebration days, food restrictions and special requests in the cafeteria. In the schools, administrators try to preempt much of the criticism with accommodation. In doing so they are also following the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education and the Board of Education as well as the law
of the land which entrenches the right to religious freedom in Canada. Some administrators said that they also practise self-preservation, by accommodating students' requests, in order to avoid accusations and legal challenges if they refuse. As Hodgkinson (1982) maintains, administrators often make decisions based on consequences. Accusations of religious intolerance, supported or not, could have negative consequences for their reputation as educators.

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality, as a source of conflict in the homes as well as in the schools, is also reflected in the data. As mentioned earlier, in many homes, boys are favoured over girls and treated likewise. Brothers are often put in charge of their sisters, and almost allowed to play a parental role. The girls may seem to accept this as a tradition in their cultural groups, but, as some administrators said, they are saddened by it, and tend to develop an inferiority complex. The beliefs of some groups, dictate that men and women should not mix outside the home, and, as mentioned earlier, teachers are faced with male students not wanting to sit or work with female students in the classrooms. As Deem (1993) maintains, girls are subjected to patriarchal authority structures in the household and in the community and are crucial in the girl’s development of gender identity. However, as Ghuman (1993) says, there are exceptions, because there are social class, religious caste, and regional differences. Nevertheless, the custom is still quite
pervasive. Ghuman (1993, p.18) provides an account given by a Sikh woman, as a case in point of the female experience. It is quite revealing:

Firstly, I was "gulam" (slave) to my father’s wishes, followed by my brothers’, then my husband’s and then, after his death, my sons. When will I be free? We are human beings too! Men have tea, beer, gossip, laugh and joke in their spare times, but us ... too busy cooking, cleaning, washing, looking after children and entertaining guests.

This experience is quite grim and may not totally mirror the experience of women in that or other religions. However, many of these attitudes are reported in the research data, such as administrators being told of brothers maintaining a parental authority role over their sisters, and even over other girls from their cultural groups. This gender role orientation explains the basis for the brothers’ behaviours, and the complaints administrators usually received from many girls regarding this. The school cannot reinforce these patriarchal beliefs. Researchers, such as Wolpe (1988a), Deem (1986, 1992) and Seranton (1989) among others, suggest that schools should recognize that gender inequality is socially and economically constructed, not innate, and seek to eliminate its detrimental effects upon girls and boys, women and men.

One area in which the school has very little impact on the gender issue is with the arranged marriage tradition. Many administrators indicated that some girls were afraid to establish love relationships at school, especially outside of their group, because of the threat of parents discovering it. They fear that their parents would send them back home
to an arranged marriage with someone they didn’t know. The administrators pointed out that this is a major source of conflict between parents and children. Arranged marriage is more a problem for the girl than for the boy, because of the subservient relationship that marriage entails for females. This custom of arranged marriage and the dowry system are very much part and parcel of the Asian social structure (Ghuman, 1993). Marriage, in these cultures, is supposed to be primarily for the union of families to promote mutual financial and social interests. In the Muslim tradition marriage also reinforces the existing bonds of the extended family, and thus, is arranged between first and second cousins. Individual feelings, sentiments, and love are given secondary consideration to the interests of the family. Love is expected to come after marriage (Ghuman, 1993).

Administrators also spoke of girls being unhappy because they were being actually sent home for arranged marriages. However, they are getting fewer of these complaints. This type of marriage is being made easier for those involved because many students are requesting changes. More and more girls, and boys too, although not requesting Canadian marriage customs, want, and are getting, a greater say in their marriage arrangements. Even if they agree to such a marriage, they want certain conditions met, as they try to establish a middle-ground between Eastern and Western cultures. They do not want to go fully against their parents’ wishes, but do want changes to the old ways of arranging such marriages. Not many parents, however, are happy with the changes, but many of
their children are determined to get their way. Ghuman (1993, p.59) reports the words of a Hindu girl regarding this:

My brother and sister had arranged marriages, so there is no doubt I'll get it too! But I must know this person really well before I say "yes." If I don't like him, I have to say "no."

Ghuman also reports the words of a Sikh girl, who said:

Arranged marriage is good in some ways ... but I must get choice. I want somebody in Canada, someone not outside my community (p.59).

This change in attitude is being heard in the schools as well, as suggested by two administrators, but, in their opinion, only a minority of the students are bold enough to request changes. Many are too afraid to go against the wishes of the parents. It is also difficult for schools to mediate conflicts rooted in these longstanding traditions, and they have had little success, as administrators reported. Yates (1985) notes that, gender issues within education are extremely complex ones, affected not only by sex role socialization but also by interpersonal relations, wider social relations, the economy, and a host of other factors. Some administrators have indicated this complexity, but felt that they must continue their efforts to see that girls are fairly treated and given a voice in such major decisions, regardless of how difficult and slow progress continues to be, because people's traditions are deep-rooted.
Old Conflicts

Administrators also indicated that they have had to solve conflicts due to old grudges, quarrels, and problems of wars, brought over from the original countries. Students from both sides of a conflict often attend the same school, and are even classmates. This is not usually known to the teachers or the administrators, until a conflict erupts. This occurs between Jewish and Arab students, Ethiopian and Somalian, Iraqi and Iranian, Indian and Pakistani, as well as from other feuding countries. Administrators understand the difficulties in which the students find themselves, and the emotional surges of animosity for the enemy. One administrator reported that these quarrels can become quite dangerous, as in the case of an incident that took place in her school, and involved other students from both sides of the feuding groups. Such quarrels cannot be allowed to find expression in the schools, and, as administrators said, of all the conflicts, this type is usually the least tolerated in schools. It is made very clear that all such problems must be left behind in the original country.

Another administrator remarked that there are many students from war-torn areas so the schools could be thrown into chaos if such conflicts are allowed to occur. If they do occur they are handled swiftly, and the students are dealt with as severely as possible. Adult students, in particular, face the threat of expulsion from the school for such conflicts. Board policy on safety in the schools for all the people who learn or work there, is specific about students who seek to injure others or to make the environment difficult or unsafe for others. Discipline must be maintained at all costs, and safety of the
students, teachers, and others in the school are of paramount priority; so administrators are vigilant in this area.

The Links Between Language and Culture

Conflicts also revolve around the link between language and culture. Researchers, such as Corson (1992), Philips (1983), Gay (1981), Allemeh (1998), Tim (1994), and Vogt, Jordan, and Tharp (1987), have suggested that students experience conflicts due to the inextricable link between language and culture. This is an important issue because the students see their culture and language as being ignored, disrespected, even mimicked and ridiculed by some students of the majority culture. Many also see the rejection of their language and culture as a rejection of themselves and their values (Arvizu, 1994). Arvizu also suggests that culture gives meaning to people's lives and is symbolically represented through language and interaction. Of necessity, students must learn the new language, but some are unhappy because they perceive the learning of a new language as giving up the language of their parents. While not all students feel as deeply about this, many do, and face tremendous inner turmoil. Garcia (1988, p.10) provides an example of the deep inner feelings of shame and guilt experienced by a Finnish student when faced with learning a new language for survival. As this student says:

When the idea had eaten itself deeply enough into my soul that it was despicable to be a Finn, I began to feel ashamed of my origins. To survive I had to change my stripes. Thus to hell with Finland and the Fins. All of a sudden I was overwhelmed by a desire to smash my face. That which could
not be accepted had to be denied, hidden, crushed and thrown away.

The above example appears to be at the extreme, but the loss of self-esteem and self-concept is obvious. Children acquire self-esteem and a basic self-concept through the language taught to them at home. In this language the culture is embedded and individuals internalize the culture via the language. Therefore, the language they speak serves as a badge or label they wear to show the world who they are and how they feel about themselves (Garcia, 1988). Administrators in the study said that, sometimes, students in conflict with their peers often revert to the use of their original language, in order to assert themselves in the face of ridicule, even to vent their frustration with teachers. They know they are not being understood, but the use of their language appears to give them power and confidence. This underscores the link between their language and their concept of self.

Learning the new language also is an issue around which conflicts revolve. Speakers of languages other than English often experience conflicts due to miscommunication. Such students often misconstrue what they hear from their teachers, or in interaction with their peers. Some students are from tonal language backgrounds; Cantonese students, for example, where one word said in one tone means something different when said in another. In addition to that, idiomatic expressions, so often used by English speakers, also often result in conflict for language learners. The administrator who asked his Vice-Principal to clean out the office because there were too many students
waiting, was accused by one of the students of calling her dirty because, as she says, only dirty things need to be cleaned. Body language also poses problems for language learners. It is culturally constructed and learners do not yet understand that aspect of the culture. This is quite prevalent and confusing, and should be used as sparingly as possible by teachers. Some administrators said they keep this in mind when speaking with new Canadians, because they are aware that it confuses far more than it educates.

_Cultural Discontinuities_

One of the issues around which conflicts revolve is cultural discontinuities (Ryan & Wignall, 1994; Ogbu, 1994, 1995). Discontinuities of various aspects of the home cultures and of the school systems create difficulties for new Canadians. Discontinuities are experienced in school organization, the teaching and learning process, social groups, old friendships, majority status, and full use of original language. The necessity to fit into the new school culture, learn the language, interact with people from other cultural groups, assume the required student posture of the school, is felt right away. At home parents are insisting on maintaining all aspects of the original culture, while their children must spend much of their time in the new majority culture of the school. Students have little time to reflect and adjust, and this creates many conflicts for them. Even those students who succeed in finding a way to bridge the cultures are still experiencing conflicts because of the discontinuities they experience (Delgado, 1994). Discontinuities in teaching and learning styles are very difficult for many students. As Ryan (1992)
indicates there is substantial evidence in the literature that different individuals and groups acquire knowledge in different ways.

Some students learn more by rote, memorizing chunks of materials from textbooks or notes (Ghuman, 1994). Some students prefer to work individually, rather than in groups, dislike class discussions and debates, and are intimidated when asked to give class presentations. They do not perform well in the interactive classroom in this system. The Office of Civil Rights (1975) in the United States (Ryan, 1992) also acknowledges the fact of different learning styles among individuals and groups, and urges school systems to diagnose the different learning styles in order to provide appropriate teaching styles and learning environments that will maximize students’ educational achievements. This would be ideal, but it is very difficult to implement in the high school system today, with its diversity of groups. A high school class in this system is one and a quarter hours in length, and the class comprises several cultural groups (including the majority culture), and students with different learning styles. Administrators said that efforts to accommodate the different learning styles of students in such a class would have obvious limited effect. With classes that cater to one or two such groups it would be more effective.

*Adolescent Behaviours*

Another issue around which conflicts revolve is adolescent behaviours, and these can be quite significant. Sparling (1994) and Gay (1981) suggest that some adolescent behaviours involve interpersonal anger, retaliatory aggressive acts, such as passive
withdrawal of participation, teasing, name calling, disrespecting, gossiping, and problems in male/female love relationships. These are similarly identified by administrators in the study. Many of the new Canadians are adolescents and have the same emotional characteristics as any other, underscoring the fact that people are basically the same regardless of cultural and regional differences. New Canadians, too, are involved in these conflicts. However, when such conflicts are coupled with other conflicts of settlement in the new country, some administrators describe them as being highly problematic.

The administrators operate on the premise that adolescents are just that, regardless of other differences and deal with their conflicts similarly. Such conflicts also pose problems for school discipline and the learning environment of the classroom. Some, for example, "dissing," have sometimes been escalated to serious proportions involving the police. Administrator Benjamin, for example, argues that good manners and respect for others must be taught both at home and school, and he insists on it. The conflicts more related to adult students, such as sexual harassment, gang involvements, physical fights that involve weapons, and the carrying of weapons are viewed by administrators with much more seriousness and are handled as such. When adolescents engage in the adult type conflicts, they receive the treatment that fits the behaviour. As mentioned earlier, administrators said that they do not compromise on good discipline. In this context of conflicts, conflict resolution is vital.
Conflict Resolution

Efforts at conflict resolution must be seen in terms of the goals of the school regarding the need to maintain good discipline, safety, and to have students learn in a comfortable and stable environment. Conflict resolution is an important aspect of any school program, and administrators pay much attention to it. It is important to see that there is a middle ground between the occurrence of the conflict, and the punishment, i.e., mediation; and students can learn behaviour modification as a lifelong skill. School Boards urge this, and provide training for some teachers as mediation sponsors in their schools. It is also useful information for the public that students and their peers play an important part in this mediation process, and are successful, because this prepares them for their place as adults in society. As Schrumpf (1997, p.3) says, peer mediation enables students in many ways:

a. It helps them see conflict as a part of everyday life and as an opportunity to grow and learn;

b. It is more effective than suspension or detention in promoting responsible behaviour;

c. It can help to reduce violence, vandalism and absenteeism in schools;

d. It can help reduce the amount of time teachers and administrators spend dealing with conflicts among students;

e. It is a life skill that empowers students to solve their own problems through improved communication and understanding of differences.

f. It can be a force for promoting mutual understanding of various individuals and groups throughout the school community.
Mediation by peers, involves only certain types of conflicts, but, as the administrators suggest, the trust level between them and the students in conflict is high, mainly because there is no power play, and students can connect with their peers in ways that adults cannot. They can also display the perspectives and attitudes of youth (Schrumpf, 1997). Teacher and administrator mediation is also well entrenched in the schools, and plays a major role in maintaining discipline. This is also an area in which administrators and teachers can show new Canadians that they will be treated fairly, like all other students. It is also an opportunity to show students that they can go to them for assistance, rather than taking things into their own hands.

In the literature available on conflict resolution various strategies are provided, but, as mentioned earlier, many are inappropriate for school settings, and more useful in non-educational organizations (Green, 1998; Leithwood, Cousins, & Smith, 1990; Owens, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1987; Wynn & Gutus, 1984; Moore, 1996). Among the more appropriate for schools are those presented by Margolis and Tewell (1988), Thomas (1976), Follet (1993), Fris (1992), and Schrumpf (1997). Administrators indicate that their priority in conflict management is to maintain discipline by preventing as many conflicts as possible. They anticipate many of these conflicts, given the large number of students and the diversity of backgrounds, languages and language proficiency levels. Administrators have been taking proactive measures in this regard, especially at the beginning of school, in September.
Some proactive conflict management measures include orientation sessions, formation of multicultural clubs, multicultural events, such as concerts and exhibitions, getting speakers from the different language backgrounds into the schools to communicate with students in their own languages, and the police to speak to the students, to soften their perceptions of them. Special home forms are also created for new Canadian students, so that they can get to know one another and the particular teacher that they will see first in the mornings before going to other classes. The administrators suggested that the proactive measures taken in the schools to prevent conflicts have been quite useful because they not only help to prevent conflicts, but also serve as orientation strategies and cultural exchanges of information that have been useful to the whole school. These measures cannot be expected to solve all conflicts and so each school has a conflict management program. This program involves mediation by peers, but also by teachers and administrators.

The program also involves a number of punishment models used by administrators from detention after school or early mornings to suspension and expulsion, for the most extreme cases that involve criminal behaviours. There are also hindrances to conflict resolution as reported by administrators. Some hindrances involve some provisions of Bill 160 that reduce staff in the schools, the leniency of the Young Offenders Act that allows very little punishment for many serious anti-social behaviours, and the very prejudicial attitude of some parents. These should be brought to the attention of the School Board, especially where more people, programs, and training are needed. Administrators should
make their concerns known, because the work they are doing in resolving conflicts is invaluable not only to the school but also to society.

The main conflict resolution strategy gleaned from those provided in the research data, is useful and closely resembles that of Margolis and Tewell (1988). It is very practical, easy to remember, involving no special terminology such as avoidance, integration, and domination, characteristic of those provided in the research. Administrators said that they liked the method being used because the emphasis was on the process, the simple steps to follow, and all persons involved are required to make the decision, not just the mediators. The strategy is as follows:

1. agree to begin the process;
2. get the information from both sides;
3. determine the problem;
4. discuss the problem;
5. evaluate all possible solutions;
6. choose the most appropriate solution;
7. close the case; and
8. follow up later.

As reported earlier, there is no standard peer mediation strategy provided in the literature and some researchers, who have surveyed many schools, have found that every program is different (Schrumpf, 1997; Kmita, 1997; Kolan, 1999). The above strategy mirrors the information in the training manuals. The strategy by Margolis and Tewell (1988) suggests that active listening to get the required information is the first step. They recommend that peer mediators be taught creative and critical thinking skills to determine
and discuss the problem, and set criteria for evaluating and choosing appropriate solutions.

When the peer mediation strategy from the study is used by peer mediation groups in some schools, other elements are often added. In some cases a written contract begins and/or ends the process. In some schools a verbal contract, in which disputants agree to have peer mediators, begins the process. Schrumpf (1997) calls this first step, agree to mediate (verbally or written), very essential. In other schools a contract must be signed by the parties in conflict to begin. Schrumpf (1997) also suggests that, when schools are dealing with non-white cultures, the written contract may not be acceptable. Some cultural groups may rely on words as a binding agreement, and find a written contract demeaning or expressing a lack of trust. Getting the information, determining the problem, seeking solutions, and choosing the appropriate one are steps suggested by some mediation strategies in the literature (Margolis & Tewell, 1988; Fris, 1992). The strategies by Thomas (1976), and Follet (1993) are useful for adults but are more geared to matching the styles with situations, rather than providing a step by step process that peer mediators would find useful.

One approach not seen in the literature is reflected in the research data. This involves the inclusion of drama, in the peer mediation process. One school reports the use of drama in peer mediation, and indicates that students from the school's drama group join the mediators and, after listening to both sides of the conflict, dramatize the behaviours. The administrator for the school suggests that this has had a very positive
effect on the process in every instance. Students see their behaviour, the negative effect, and then discuss other and more positive ways in which they may have behaved instead. This is a strategy that more schools should be engaging in, because of the learning possibilities for behaviour modification and long-term gain. The strategy that includes drama is as follows:

1. sign a contract to begin the process;
2. get the information from both sides;
3. determine the problem;
4. dramatize the behaviour;
5. discuss the problem;
6. evaluate all possible solutions;
7. choose the most appropriate solution;
8. close the case;
9. sign a contract to honour the chosen solution; and
10. follow up later.

As mentioned earlier, the written contracts are optional. However, some administrators said that they often request that there be a contract signed at the end to show that the disputants accept and are willing to live by the solution selected in the mediation session. Some of the conflict resolution strategies in the literature, and mentioned earlier in this chapter, could provide some help if used in the schools, but this help would be somewhat limited. They would be more helpful to adults than to peer mediators. Follet's (1993) strategy of domination, compromise, and integration describes the style to be used in certain situations but does not directly inform the steps in each style. Thomas’s strategy also describes the styles and matches them with potential situations. Again, it may not be useful to peer mediators. It also begs the question
whether administrators will, in their busy work schedule, stop to determine appropriate style. When they deal with conflicts, they tend to use arbitration and punishment rather than mediation as such, except when dealing with parents (Schrumpf, 1997).

Fris’s (1992) strategy is a report on styles used in a study of 15 high school principals. It is a useful reminder of what is sometimes done. His first step deals with managing the information base which is what most strategies recommend as a first step after agreement to begin is reached. The other two steps: censure unacceptable behaviour and manage the climate are more related to the atmosphere desired. Some of this is necessary in most mediation sessions, but not as a main focus. It is, therefore, more useful for mediation training than for mediating conflicts. The strategy presented by Margolis and Tewell (1988) could be quite useful for peer mediators. Their first step, active listening, which draws on skills of communication, includes listening, speaking, as well as creative and critical thinking abilities. This is a useful method to get information. Training manuals for peer mediators recommend this method (Schrumpf, 1997), and each step coincides well with the methods found in the study. Its problem definition, analysis generating, and selecting solutions are all part of the strategies being used in the schools by peer mediators. Schrumpf’s six-step model, which advocates gathering points of view, creating win/win options, evaluating options, and creating agreements could also be useful. Gathering points of view is similar to the getting-the-information step, creating and evaluating options is equal to the discussing-and-evaluating-options step. The strategy bears close resemblance to the ones being used in the schools,
and which are working well, as many administrators have said. However, the literature does not show any particular strategy that potentially could achieve better results in the schools than those ones being used.

**Re-evaluating Conflict Theory**

A brief overview of the Marxist perspective reveals that proponents of that theory believe that there are two classes in society: those who own production, and those who do not. However, societies do have more than two classes, and production is no longer the prerogative of any particular class. The two classes are said to be antagonistic to each other, leading to conflicts, yet this is hardly supportable today. Marxists also believe that the ideology of the dominant class is being perpetuated in the schools, leading to conflict. Conflicts do occur in the schools, but with the diversity of the student bodies today, there are various issues over which conflicts occur, as the data from the study indicate. Conflicts are also believed by the Marxists to bring change. This appears somewhat possible on the micro levels of small groups, individuals, and schools but less so in the larger society.

Another theory, the Functionalist, suggests that conflicts are prevented by a consensus of values held by society. There are so many different value systems in society today, that it is impossible to get a consensus of values. Rather than relying on shared value systems to promote consensus, it should be noted that some societies do employ more drastic measures, such as the gun and the police to prevent, or to solve, conflicts. Some Functionalists, such as Durkheim (1964), admit that conflicts sometimes develop.
Towards the end of his work, *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim contends that society is evolving from a mechanical to an organic solidarity. In this society the dignity of the individual becomes emphasized, and the privileged class must respect the dignity, and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals. He suggests that resistance to this evolution of society, lack of respect, and inequality of opportunities for success, bring conflicts. Yet, conflicts in society today are not about individuals seeking respect or even equal opportunities. Conflicts among individuals are far more complex than the Functionalists perceive them to be. Some conflicts are said to restore equilibrium in the society, a claim that is somewhat removed from reality in any society. On a micro level, this movement towards equilibrium might be possible. Major conflicts, in some societies, drag on for years, and often cause instability and disequilibrium.

Functionalists also believe that the schools reproduce the structure of the distribution of "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1974) that is closest to the culture of the dominant group. This is said to result in a conflict of values, beliefs, and interests in the schools. Again, conflicts in the schools are not just about cultural capital. Conflicts of values, beliefs, and interests are based more on the cultural differences among the minority and majority cultures as they meet and search for compatibility. This theory has relevance to the new Canadian situation only in its suggestion that cultural factors are sources of conflicts.

The Weberians believe that conflicts occur over economic resources and rewards, competition of status and prestige, the struggle for political control, bargaining,
negotiation, and compromise. Rooted in this belief, Weberian theory is not different from
the others in its attention to economics. Where Weber’s approach is somewhat different,
is in its attention to cultural factors as sources of conflicts. It mentions such issues as
social class, cultural position, ethnic backgrounds, religion, levels of education, among
others, yet it focuses more on a macro level, rather than individual. Although these are
some of the sources for conflicts, suggested by administrators, they do not address the
conflicts experienced by individuals in the schools today. Scholars, such as Townsend,
and Robinson (1994) contend that Weber deserves new respect for his attention to cultural
and historical contexts. If cultural "contexts" and this study’s cultural factors approximate
each other, the theory as one of conflict would be somewhat strengthened.

In the end, then, the three perspectives on conflict theory display shortcomings in
their capacities to help us understand the conflicts that involve new Canadians. These
theories are macro, concentrating on social phenomena as group or structural phenomena,
as opposed to micro or individual. Conflicts occur on a daily basis and in specific
interactional forums. From my research study, it is obvious that most conflicts appear to
be interpersonal in nature, and are often specific to particular situations. It is also evident
from the study that there are issues such as gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, and so on
that interact with one another to produce significant conflicts.

For example, among some ethnic groups, gender is a source of conflict. Males are
preferred over females, and treated more favourably, causing conflicts and poor self-
esteeom. Girls are more often forced into arranged marriages, resulting in conflicts in the
family, and administrators said they have often felt obliged to intervene. Some ethnic minority groups feel undervalued in the majority culture. They speak with different accents, and dress differently, sometimes for religious purposes. Such differences sometimes create tension and cause confrontation with others from the majority culture, as some students from the minority cultures attempt to assert their equality of social status. Conflicts are more involved than any of these theories indicate. Perspectives that acknowledge the complexities of conflict and differences, and allow us to see conflict as interpersonal and situational, would perhaps allow us to understand and deal with conflicts more effectively.

**Leadership in Diverse Contexts**

As mentioned earlier, research on leadership in diverse contexts is at the beginning stage. My study investigated whether any community relationships had been established by the administrators. I asked direct questions regarding such relationships, and tried to establish the ways in which such relationships were helping administrators to deal with diversity and conflicts. All administrators said that they had established useful relationships with their communities, particularly with religious leaders of minority groups, social workers from the students' cultural and language backgrounds, police officers from the community, and people from similar backgrounds who had to learn English, and who had achieved success in their chosen fields. Administrators said that they have invited these individuals, from time to time, into their school to speak with the students.
The religious leaders inform administrators and staff about the religious practices, and what is required of the students in order for them to adhere to the prescribed practices. These leaders also help to explain to the students, in their original languages, the rules, procedures, the credit system, student rights and responsibilities, and the school system generally. Administrators maintained that students are able to voice their concerns and receive answers in their original language, thus avoiding miscommunication and confusion, that are so often caused when they try to express themselves in English. The social workers address the social, health, and economic needs of the students, by connecting them to agencies that provide the kinds of assistance they need. Social workers also sometimes act as interpreters for administrators when dealing with some students, but with parents in particular who have little or no facility with the English language. The "successful" people speak to the students about their own experiences as immigrants to Canada, their initial difficulties with the English language, and the new culture, as well as feelings of homesickness which stayed with them for a long time. Administrators indicate that the police are called at various times to deal with students who commit infractions of the law, and so the police are usually seen as the enemy. By coming into the schools and speaking to the students about how they can avoid problems with the law, and informing them of emergency situations in which they can be of help, the police can soften their image.

The administrators are of the opinion that these initiatives to involve the community help to make students feel that there is 'light at the end of the tunnel,' that
they can survive, and achieve their career goals in the new society, as some before them have. The administrators also say that these measures have been proactive in reducing conflicts among new Canadians in the schools, because students were less confused and frightened, and related better with peers and teachers. Administrators also indicate that they were convinced that they would have been less effective in dealing with the diverse population, and the conflicts that usually ensue, had it not been for these community relationships. These kinds of links with the community are aspects of inclusive leadership and initiatives that could be of interest to all administrators, particularly those working with diverse student bodies. Inclusive leadership is therefore, an area that requires much research and deserves the attention of more scholars.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the overall study, with particular reference to findings on diversity, as well as those relating to the four areas of the framework, i.e., types of conflicts, the people involved in conflicts, the issues around which conflicts revolve, and conflict resolution strategies. The chapter also includes a re-evaluation of conflict theories, and discusses school leadership in diverse contexts. The next chapter concludes the study.
CHAPTER TEN

Conclusion

The main intent of this study was to determine administrator views of, and strategies for acting on, conflicts involving new Canadians. Another purpose was to contribute new information to the present research in the area. The process of investigation was guided by questions developed from the literature on the topic, reviewed for the study. The process was guided by a four-dimensional framework which included (a) types of conflict, (b) the people involved, (c) the issues around which conflicts revolve, and (d) conflict resolution. These four themes also helped to guide the presentation of the data. The investigation employed one-hour interviews with each participant. It also included observation of secondary data collected from the School Board and the schools.

These secondary data included School Board policies, school documents such as calendar of events for the year, agendas of cultural events, and school clubs, notices posted on boards, school newspapers, drop out lists, and latecomers lists. Woods (1983) posits that documents can lend weight to something, but they can also be used to appear to give weight to something. A researcher should, therefore, be careful how much is read from documents. While the documents in this research, conveyed information relevant to the topic, this information was contextualized in the particular school to be meaningful.
For example, the drop out and latecomers lists from computer printouts revealed the extent to which new Canadians were leaving a school, or not coping with the procedure regarding time, and thus determined some of the conflicts involved. The agendas regarding exhibitions, cultural clubs, and social events reflected the schools’ efforts to validate all the cultural groups, develop awareness of the groups, establish more congenial social relationships, and reduce conflicts resulting from cultural transition and cultural differences.

The primary data which involved interviews with administrators have indicated that the conflicts they perceived were quite similar to those observed in the literature. The conflicts and the issues around which they revolved also fitted well into the three categories suggested by Gay (1981). Also revealed was that efforts at prevention and resolution of conflicts were geared towards such school goals as having students comfortably settled into the system, maintaining good discipline, developing inclusive school culture, and helping all students meet their educational potential.

The interviews also brought into focus issues and concerns that have not been addressed in existing research up to this time. One issue was the concern of administrators regarding their lack of preparedness to deal with the diverse cultures in the school. They suggested that there have been no distinct efforts made to educate teachers or administrators in this regard, and that the absence of that has quite a negative impact on their practice. This study also was being done at a time of major restructuring, school reforms, funding changes, and changes to the administrator’s role. I, therefore, had the
unique opportunity to hear from the administrators about the ways in which they were being affected, and what changes they would like to see made to assist them to perform their jobs more efficiently.

The conflicts that new Canadians experience when they enter the school system in Toronto should not be underestimated. It is, therefore, important that administrators in the school be able to identify and deal with these conflicts in a clear, easy to understand way. The effects of conflicts on school discipline, and culture can also be very negative, especially given the many groups of students. They come from diverse cultures, language backgrounds, and value systems. They bring with them various world views. All these need to be accommodated by this system and be respected. The reality of the world as a global village, and the fact that nearly all, if not all, Canadians have ancestral roots in another country, should allow for understanding, empathy, and a willingness to help. This does not, however, diminish the impact of the conflicts caused by the large numbers, the diversity, the differences, and the demands on the school system.

One aim of this research study was to provide a reliable source of information for administrators to help identify and resolve conflicts involving new Canadian students. The information obtained in the research includes types of conflicts, the people involved, the characteristics of the people most likely to be involved in conflicts, and the strategies for resolution recommended in the literature, as well as those being used in the schools involved in the study. The study has also provided information in new areas such as administrators' concerns about situations that are hindrances to more effective practice
in dealing with diversity, and the changes they would like to see that will counter the negative effects of Bill 160, a Bill that changes the formula for school funding, thus reducing teaching staff and other employees. An administrator’s job involves tremendous responsibilities, with conflict management as no small part of it. Administrators rely heavily on support from others, mainly because of their lack of knowledge regarding the various cultural groups for whom they must make decisions.

One of these support systems is the Board of Education, which sets the tone of the school through its various policies. However, administrators believe that the Board does not provide enough assistance regarding the people who need to help. The Board’s embracing of Bill 160 has also resulted in the trimming of teaching staff, the disappearance from some schools of the school nurse, the hall monitors, and the school psychologist. Where they still exist, they are spread so thinly among various schools that it makes very little difference. Amalgamation of five Boards into one large Board has created uncertainty among the administrators in terms of changes in policies and where to get help, because people on whom they depended are no longer there. However, the Board continues to be helpful in dealing with punitive measures that are sometimes necessary to teach students responsibility.

The Board has mandated a Parent School Council for each school, but only some schools have one as a working entity. Many have difficulties getting them off the ground, particularly inner city schools that are surrounded by factories and commercial buildings instead of housing for families. Poor parents must also work, sometimes at two jobs,
having no time for school visits or meetings. A review of this mandate is obviously in order for some schools.

The Toronto School Administrators’ Council serves as a support group, but, as mentioned earlier, lacks the economic clout of the Federation. It helps administrators solve conflicts by making information available on best practices in the schools. This is a group that is collaborative in approach. Community leaders from minority language backgrounds provide invaluable help to administrators in preventing as well as solving conflicts. They can reach the students in ways that the administrators and teachers cannot, due to their facility in English and their original language, as well as knowledge of the culture. Such community liaisons with the schools are thus useful and should be encouraged. The schools also depend on the police presence from time to time. Administrators say that they are grateful, and they look to the police not only in times of conflict, but also for conflict prevention. Students also get to see the police as friendly advocates for protection instead of as the enemy when they are called to enforce the law in conflict situations.

Despite all this support, administrators claim that they are not happy. Ostensibly, they and their teachers need training for diversity. One important area included cultural knowledge about their students. What Milk (1994, p.107) says of schools in the United States is applicable to schools in Toronto. He says that there is enough evidence to indicate that present and future teachers have not been, and will not be, adequately prepared to deal with the substantial cultural diversity in the classrooms. The
administrators involved in the study have said that much about their teachers and themselves, that neither they nor their teaching staff have been adequately prepared. Milk (1994) also notes that it is foolish to expect teachers to convey to their students the need for active involvement with materials drawn from many disciplines and sources to fit the diversity, unless they themselves have experienced working with these. Teacher training should allow sampling of a wide range of exciting, cross-disciplinary activities and materials (Geddes, Sturtridge, Oxford, & Ray, 1990, p. 85). Effective course work possibilities should be taught in teachers colleges, and such work would be based on current research and theory. Milk (1994) also suggests some course work possibilities which are as follows:

1. creating co-operative modes of learning in the classroom;
2. integrating the curriculum for cross-disciplinary learning activities; and
3. achieving high levels of interaction in context that are characterized by differing levels of language proficiency among students.

These are useful strategies, and administrators also advocate such changes. They want teacher training colleges to take responsibility for the training, but they also request that training in the different cultures be included as well. They also want ways to be devised by their Board of Education to avail administrators of the opportunity to learn about these cultures, because they believe that it is important for teachers and administrators to have a working knowledge of the cultures of their students. As shown in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, quite often a student’s behaviour is culturally based, as evidenced by eye contact, the movement of the head in opposite directions from
that used by the majority culture for "yes" and "no" (Gay, 1981; Porter, 1981; Hurt, Scott, & McLroskey, 1978).

Teachers are often confused by this because they interpret such behaviours according to the norms of their own culture, to the detriment of their students. Administrators also believe that students and parents are more aware today of their rights and are willing to confront administrators if they believe that their children are not being fairly and well served. In light of this, administrators are, and should be, considering self-preservation measures in dealing with conflicts, so that they do not face legal action from parents or have complaints against them made to the Board of Education or the College of Teachers. The administrators also want to see a restoration of funding to rehire people such as psychologists, more social workers, school nurses, and hall monitors.

In North American schools, students appear more troubled than ever. Some are willing to use weapons to hurt their schoolmates and teachers. Often psychologists are people to whom troubled students are willing to talk, but they are now mostly unavailable. There is the Board policy on safety in the schools, but if the people are not there to help enforce it, then the policy is generally worthless. The Ministry of Education and the Board of Education need to re-evaluate this policy for its effectiveness. A research study to look at the impact of restructuring and funding changes on the role of administrators could be quite useful. Some schools for adult new Canadians are being closed, or have been closed, as the funding formula changes. It is unclear, at this time,
what the full impact is for the education system. This is an area that is worth investigating by researchers.

The extent to which the various religions are accommodated in the schools is a lesson to all persons in the school, about understanding, in general, and religious understanding, in particular. Other lessons, such as standing up for values and living according to these values can be a lesson for students, teachers, and administrators as well. Differences in heritage is another issue around which conflicts revolve, because of differences in appearance, language, and values. Some of these differences such as skin colour, for example, will always be obvious. There will always be people who equate differences with inferiority and treat people accordingly. Administrators are taking steps to educate students mainly of the majority culture to respect all others and treat them as they would wish to be treated. All students need to have a comfortable learning environment, in which they are respected and valued.

The findings of this study clearly show the views of the 15 administrators and the strategies they use to deal with conflicts that involve new Canadian students. The schools involved in the study are recipients of a large number of different cultural groups, from various countries, and speaking various languages other than English. As these different groups mingle with each other, and especially with the majority cultural group, incompatibilities surface and conflicts result. Each school has a conflict management program in place. This includes proactive measures to prevent some conflicts, but when conflicts occur other measures are used. These range from arbitration, used mainly by
administrators, consensus decision-making, and mediation, to punishment which is used by teachers and administrators. Mediation is done by teachers, but especially by peer mediators who are specially trained to deal with particular types of conflicts. Peer mediation is said by administrators to be very effective and is encouraged in the schools. Administrators, by and large, reflect a positive attitude to diversity in the schools despite the conflicts, but they reflect a sense of uncertainty regarding the level of support available to them from the new Board of Education. However, they acknowledged their responsibility to all their students and believed that they were doing the best they could.

The findings of this study lead me to believe that a study that looks at how new Canadian students perceive the conflicts in the school, and efforts to resolve them could be useful to administrators. This would help to determine if the administrators and their students are seeing the same side of the coin, or are their views markedly different. This could result in adjustments and changes, if necessary, to present practice for the benefit of all involved.

The four areas presented in the framework, as suggested earlier, were gleaned from the literature on conflicts. I also chose them because I felt that they were suitable to my topic, which deals with conflict. I knew where I wanted to go with my topic and was confident that questions based on these four areas would achieve the relevant and appropriate information that I desired. After transcribing the tapes, and reading over all the transcripts, I revisited my framework and felt that it worked quite well. Another researcher might see this differently, and perhaps, at a later date, I could as well. If there
was an inadequacy, it would have been in my method. Upon re-examining the whole process, I realized that, if I had spent more time, even a few days instead of hours, observing in a few of the schools, the responses to my questions might have been different. My questions too might also have been different. Yet, the level of similarities in the responses has led me to believe that there is no need to doubt the credibility of the responses.

The area that, in hindsight, I would have probed more is demographics -- changing patterns in the schools. I would have included a question or two on the administrators’ view of their role in their diverse contexts. A few administrators hinted at their concerns regarding their role and the atmosphere of uncertainty within which they now practise. Research has shown that administrators today need to be more transformational and inclusive in their approach to school leadership (Leithwood, 1992; Ryan, 1999). Begley (1999) maintains that the nature of school administration is much less predictable, and more conflict-laden today, than in past years. He sees the need for administrators to become more sophisticated in their leadership, and management of education, and more sensitive to the value orientations of others.

Reflection in praxis is advocated by Hodgkinson (1991), who suggests that the administrator who engages in praxis: the linking of theory, and practice through reflection and value analysis, is the one most likely to be effective. The above leadership qualities are useful and should be part of any school leadership training. This study, while endorsing these qualities, also advocates inclusive leadership, which is not exclusive of
the qualities mentioned, but which appears to be more appropriate in diverse contexts. Administrators are now designated as managers, and this begs the question whether the policy makers, in their top-down approach to policy-making want to return to the management philosophy or "Taylorism." This management style is the historic and dominant model of educational leadership derived from business and economics, and practised during the early years of educational administration (Maxcy, 1998, p.218). I am sceptical of some policy-makers' knowledge of educational leadership theory and the meaning of the leadership style involved in "manager." It would, therefore, have been interesting to hear what the administrators themselves had to say, and how their changed role affects their ability to deal with diversity in the schools.
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APPENDICES
Appendices

A. Research Questions

1. What is the nature (i.e., procedural, substantive, and interpersonal) of the conflicts being seen?
2. Around what issues (e.g., gender, religion) do these conflicts revolve?
3. Who is involved in these conflicts?
4. What actions do administrators take to deal with these conflicts?

Interview Questions

1. Demographics

   a) How long have you been in this school and in your present position?
   b) What is the size of the school population?
   c) What is the percentage of new Canadians?
   d) What cultural and language backgrounds are represented and how large are these groups?
   e) What changes have you seen in the new Canadian population over recent years?
   f) In what ways does this diversity affect the school?

2. I'm interested in the problems you face in resolving conflicts involving new Canadians. Before I start with my specific questions, would you tell me any thoughts you have on this matter? I'm interested in exploring any issues which you may feel are relevant.

3. Types of Conflicts.

   a) What is the nature (e.g., procedural, substantive, and interpersonal) of the conflicts seen in this school?
   b) What differences are seen in the way some groups handle conflicts?
   c) Do conflicts often form along racial or cultural lines?

4) Issues around which Conflicts Revolve

   a) Around what issues (e.g., gender, religion) do these conflicts revolve?
   b) What kinds of things do some groups or individuals seem to have conflicts about while others do not?
To what extent does religion play a part in conflicts, and in what types of situations?

Language?

Cultural differences, such as patterns of dress, social interactions, and so on.

Gender

Other issues?

Try to think of some examples of conflicts. Are there any common patterns among them?

5. People Involved

a) Who are involved in these conflicts?

b) Are certain groups of students more often involved in conflicts while others are not?

c) What characteristics do your most conflict-involved students have in common?

6. Conflict Resolution Strategies

a) What actions do you take to deal with each kind of conflict?

b) Do you have a process, steps that you follow, or do you have different approaches depending on the conflict? If so, how are they different?

c) What Board policies or suggested procedures do you sometimes follow?

d) Thinking of the examples above, or others that spring to mind, how did you resolve the conflicts, and were you able to resolve them to your satisfaction and in a win/win situation?

e) What changes would you make, if you could, at the Board level, and/or in your school to reduce conflicts?

f) What, if any, relationship do you have with the community, and how has that assisted you to deal with diversity and conflict?

g) To what extent do you think Board Office personal appreciate the difficulties you face in managing conflicts or could they be more supportive?

h) In what ways does the school council assist you in dealing with conflicts in the school?

7. What further thoughts on the topic would you like to offer?
B. Consent Form

Research Title: Administrator Views of, and strategies to deal with, Conflicts involving new Canadians.

This form is a follow-up to our telephone conversation regarding the research project which I am about to conduct. It is to provide you with more information and formally invite your participation in this project which will be submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements of Doctor of Education Degree at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education. I will be under the supervision of Dr. James Ryan.

Purpose of the Study

In our telephone conversation, earlier, we discussed the purpose of the study as being to determine administrator views of, and strategies for dealing with conflicts involving new Canadians (students from minority cultures, who are in Canada for five years or less). In my thesis, I identify four areas that are central to the project. These are:

1) Types of conflicts.
2) The people involved.
3) Issues around which conflicts revolve.
4) How administrators deal with conflicts.
Participants

Fifteen administrators will be involved. Selection is based on the length of time in their position (more than one year), and the number of new Canadians in their schools. Because you fit the category so well you are respectfully invited to participate.

Participation

There will be a single semi-structured one-hour interview between June and September of this year. These will be tape-recorded and then transcribed. These transcripts will be made available to you, in full, as soon as they are done. It will be your privilege to change the transcript as you see fit, and my conclusions will be based on your revised version.

I hope to visit you at your school (a) to request some secondary material that will be helpful for this project, (b) to plan the logistics for the interview. I will telephone, to set a date convenient to you.

Ethics

The anonymity and confidentiality of the research will be protected as follows:

- no last names will be used, and other names will be changed,
- the new names will be known only to the researcher,
- all names will be deleted in all the records and replaced by pseudonyms, known only to the researcher
- all participants can, therefore, be assured of anonymity,
all transcripts and tapes will be kept confidential, and the data will be shared
only with the members of my thesis committee. Only with your explicit
permission can this data be shared with any one else.

Potential benefits of participation

Your student body includes people from diverse groups and cultural background.
You are already aware of the conflicts that result from this diversity.

I will be attempting to provide a resource for administrators, documenting findings
regarding the four areas of investigation mentioned earlier. Strategies for conflict
resolution will also be provided from the data, and can be helpful especially to new
administrators.

The finding will also be an addition to the literature on conflicts, and be of interest
to all educators.

Written Consent

Please complete this form, and be assured that it will remain only in the possession
of the researcher.

I am willing to participate in the research project: Administrator views
of, and strategies for dealing with, conflicts involving new
Canadians.

Signed: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________