The Challenge of Inclusive Education in Relation to Differentiated Instruction

By

Giulia Tedesco

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Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
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ABSTRACT
This Master of Teaching Research Project is a qualitative study on the subjects of inclusive education and differentiated instruction, guided by the following question: How does the implementation and practice of differentiation and inclusive education in secondary English and history classrooms mean teaching “differently” to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning abilities? I compiled a series of questions and conducted face-to-face interviews with consenting participants, regarding the practice and implementation of both inclusion and differentiation, and the effectiveness and necessity of these practices within the mainstream classroom. The interviews were used as a means through which to gain insight into peoples’ attitudes, beliefs, value systems, concerns, motivations, and aspirations as educators, so as to provide depth and analysis to the literature previously reviewed. One of the overarching themes, central to the research, is that of caring for students’ individuality and viewing their differences and abilities as additions to the classroom morale, the classroom community, the world entire. It is my belief, as an educator, that all students have the incredible ability to learn, and that it is my responsibility to nurture their individual learning needs; the research and collection of data supports this claim. It has therefore my intention to uncover methods of teaching based upon the idea and need for inclusive education, especially those which communally educate students within the general education classroom where all have their educational needs met, along with the support of their peers. To quote poet William Yeats, “Teaching is not about the filling of a pail, but rather, the lighting of a fire.”
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Research Study

As I take on the responsibilities that accompany the role of “teacher”, I am overcome with the understanding that I am to face various challenges and difficulties as I aim to model my classroom around the value of inclusive education and differentiated instruction and assessment. In aiming to narrow my focus on the key issue of inclusive education as it is directly related to teachers’ work, I direct my observations upon intriguing elements of the issue, namely inclusive education as it pertains to diversities within the classroom, and learning styles and abilities. I aim to instill within my students academic goals geared to their individual learning needs and abilities, and in turn, the social-emotional goals of peer acceptance and equality within the classroom whole. I am utilizing this paper as a basis for learning from the views and strategies of others in the classroom, to strengthen my own. Much of the influence behind my vision for teaching is based upon Mahatma Gandhi’s doctrine, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” As this quote suggests, I aim to change the way in which young people learn, and in turn, the way in which they view themselves, others, and the world that surrounds them. Inclusive community building ought to begin in the classroom environment, and as the teacher within that environment, it is my responsibility to ensure that all students are given the ability to achieve excellence through differentiated instruction and assessment.
Purpose of the Study

My experiences within the classroom have drawn my attention to the need for a greater presence of inclusive education, as the classroom is comprised of students with diversified learning styles and abilities. This observation has led me to suggest that these students should not be taught unanimously and ambiguously, but rather inclusively, crossing boundaries, and learning as a community. Educational theorists, Chriss Walther-Thomas, Lori Korinek, Virginia L. McLaughlin, and Brenda Toler Williams (2002), behind the *Collaboration for Inclusive Education: Developing Successful Programs* defend that inclusive learning environments are:

> Those in which everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met. Students are educated in general education classrooms with their peers to the greatest extent possible (p. 4).

Though the philosophy surrounding the practice of inclusive education and its environment is seemingly idealistic, it is a method that commits teachers and students alike to work together in order to achieve the common goal – unique contributions for greater effectiveness of learning and understanding (Chriss Walther-Thomas *et al.*, 2000, p. 4). Furthermore, inclusive education is based upon the efforts of the community – students, families, educators, administrators, and others, providing a sense of encouragement, support, and belonging (Chriss Walther-Thomas *et al.*, 2000, p. 7). As this communal support is essential to the overall learning process of all students in general education classrooms, it is integral to the learning experiences of students with diversified learning abilities and disabilities, in particular, students within special education programs. It is therefore my intention in this research to investigate methods of teaching based upon the idea and need for inclusive education, especially those which communally educate students within the general education classroom where all have their educational needs met, along with the support of their peers (Chriss Walther-Thomas *et al.*, 2000, p. 4).
**Background of the Researcher**

The teaching experience that directed my attention to the issues of inclusive education was working alongside an Associate Teacher in both the Special Education program, and the Junior Literacy Intervention program at St. Bernard Catholic Elementary school. Working with students in these special education programs, I learned styles and methods with which to successfully interact with and educate the students, often one-on-one with those struggling to comprehend the lesson and/or material. Speaking in a moderate pace and utilizing much needed repetition, I found did eventually lead to successful material comprehension; however, I was not satisfied with the lack of enthusiasm and desire to learn that the students presented me with. As this group of students, few in number, had been separated from their classmates for a portion of their day, I found that they seemingly felt withdrawn from the challenges and learning experiences presented within their general education classroom. In order to avoid the resulting issue of students’ feelings of separation and isolated learning, I feel that it is necessary to more strongly implement the practice of inclusive education, utilizing inclusive developmental approaches, which promote higher learning standards for the classroom whole. How would one, as a teacher, go about teaching a lesson to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning abilities, so that the learning process was communal and inclusive of every student? Of teaching, I am learning that the challenges and obstacles that come with teaching, especially those that come with teaching students of special needs and learning disabilities, are the means by which to develop and improve as a teacher, as it is through the students that the teacher learns and develops communication and understanding of the learning process.

The teacher, in relation to curricular development and individualized education and learning, is the medium through which effective instruction proceeds. Inclusive education, as it
has been determined, is a supportive and communal atmosphere where all “students are educated in general education classrooms with their peers to the greatest extent possible” (Chriss Walther-Thomas et al., 2000, p. 4). In Chapter 11: Teaching Academics in Inclusive Classrooms, of *Collaboration for Inclusive Education: Developing Successful Programs*, Chriss Walther-Thomas *et al.* (2000) present various learning objectives for the inclusive classroom:

- Analyzing curricular content and demands; identifying strengths and needs of students in relation to these demands; brainstorming and selecting environmental, curricular, and instructional accommodations; implementing appropriate accommodations; and evaluating student progress. For students with special needs, this process is enhanced through professional collaboration […] specialists have been prepared to identify individual strengths, weaknesses, and learning preferences as well as alternative instructional strategies to address individual differences (p. 234).

With implementations for practice, it is suggested that teachers new to inclusive education should present to their students appropriately challenging practice activities so as to encourage opportunities for all students to succeed. For example, “using the same task and materials as are used with typical peers, using the same task but an easier step, using the same task with different materials, using a different task related to the theme of the lesson, and/or using a different objective and a different task” (Chriss Walther-Thomas *et al.*, 2000, p. 235). Inarguably, it is the purpose of inclusive education to integrate all students into the atmosphere of the general education classroom, providing in turn, differentiated instruction for those who struggle, while still maintaining the expectations and standards of the academic classroom – inclusive education is thus teaching to diversity and teaching effectively.

The goals that I have for my students may be understood as ideological; Tim Loreman, Joanne Deppeler, and David Harvey (2005), in *Inclusive Education: a Practical Guide to Supporting Diversity in the Classroom*, write, “[Teachers] must be prepared to provide for the needs of all students in their grades irrespective of any diagnosis of “difference” […] the
underlying belief that all children can learn and be taught […] the principle does not say that all children can learn at the same rate, nor in the same volumes” (p. 44). Academically, I aim to have my students achieve a level of success that surpasses the expectations that they previously held for themselves. I will challenge my students to practice critical thinking, which the Foundation for Critical Thinking defines as the mode of thinking in which the quality of thinking is improved by skillful analysis, assessment, and reconstruction (Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2009). Critical thinking allows students to direct their learning, and challenges their intellectual skills and abilities, which reflects upon an understanding of themselves as learners and their achievements, as well as themselves as individuals’ part of a classroom whole.

Inclusive education should be utilized as a means by which to connect with the students, as a whole group, and as individuals. It is the student that presents to the teacher the most effective ways in which he/she learns, and thus it should be the intention of those implementing the practice of inclusive education to get to know the students and their individual learning needs. It is my belief that all students, diverse in every aspect, especially those with learning disabilities, can be integrated into the general education classroom, and it is my aim to determine and develop the methods and practices to implement in order to educate accordingly.
Research Topic/Question

How does the implementation and practice of differentiation and inclusive education in Secondary English and history classrooms mean teaching “differently” to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning abilities?

Rooted in the belief that all students can learn within the mainstream classroom, this question asks educators to uncover the ways in which to do so, so as to be able to teach effectively. Effective teaching would then imply that all students are able to learn the same subject material, through different instructional strategies; working towards the betterment of the quality of students’ learning.

Overview

Chapter 1 includes the introduction and purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as how I came to be involved in this topic and study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature, looking particularly at the idealism of inclusive education, criticisms of inclusive education, the methods of implementation of differentiated instruction, integration of special education students in mainstream classrooms, multicultural education, and holistic education. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and procedure used in this study including information about the sample participants and data collection instruments. Chapter 4 identifies the participants in the study and describes the data as it addresses the research question. Chapter 5 includes limitations of the study, conclusions, recommendations for practice, and further reading and study. References and a list of appendixes follow at the end.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Idealism of Inclusive Education:

Presented within the work entitled *Fostering Multiliteracies Pedagogy through Preservice Teacher Education* (Jennifer Roswell, Clare Kosnik, and Clive Beck, 2008), is the need to recognize the diversity of language forms, in order to teach effectively and appeal to the diverse learning abilities of the students within the classroom. It is suggested that there are many types of literacy variations, including “school literacy versus local literacy, formal language versus informal/conversational language, written communication versus graphic, projected, spoken, or enacted communication, [etc]” (Jennifer Roswell, Clare Kosnik, and Clive Beck, 2008, p. 152). As each of these modes of communication exist, so too should they be acknowledged and equally presented within the classroom and the learning process. Inclusive education integrates diverse learning styles into modified lessons, communicable unto all, as “the essence of what education does needs to change” (Jennifer Roswell *et al.*, 2008, p. 152). Inclusive education should be utilized as a means by which to connect with the students, as a whole group, and as individual selves. It is the student that presents to the teacher the most effective ways in which he/she learns, and thus it should be the intention of those implementing the practice of inclusive education to get to know the students and their individual learning needs – the Constructivist pedagogy (Jennifer Roswell *et al.*, 2008, p. 159). It is here that I pose the following question: What challenges do you foresee in implementing multiliteracies pedagogy, and how would you ensure the creation of a balanced literacy program and in turn, effective teacher instruction?

In continuing with the vision of the integration of diverse learning styles into modified lessons, author Jenny Corbett (2001) of *Supporting Inclusive Education: a Connective*
Pedagogy, argues that the inclusive pedagogy is directly linked to effective learning in that it is about connecting to the individual’s learning style and recognizing how they can learn most effectively, as well as linking the individual’s learning to the curriculum and learning tasks in such a way that they can gain maximum benefit (Corbett, 2001, p.35). Corbett (2001) suggests that education exists beyond the learning classroom and is a key aspect of inclusion (p.36). She states, “Education means responding to the curiosity and interest of the learner, letting them take initiative […] making education distinctive and meaningful” (Corbett, 2001, p.36). The inclusive school is about supporting learners who require additional resources – the movement beyond formal boundaries into “holistic flexibility in an open approach which focuses upon education within many contexts rather than mere schooling” (Corbett, 2001, p.38).

Of the traditional model of differentiated instruction, Corbett (2001) states that it is the adaptation of teaching and learning materials to account for individual differences in learning style (p. 47). It is suggested that if attention is drawn towards variation in learning styles, value is in turn placed upon the individual learner; education becomes individualized, and rather than becoming segregated from one’s peers, one becomes part of a unified whole, where the differentiation of instruction and assessment benefits all students. If supported and nurtured, inclusive learning has the potential to manifest as empowerment and lifelong growth (Corbett, 2001, p. 48); effective learning is determined entirely by the high quality of teaching provided, instilling within the students personal engagement. It is through inclusive education that students with various learning abilities and multiple intelligences are allowed to exercise their right to be a part of the mainstream classroom whole. Corbett (2001) also alludes to the significant effect that inclusive education has upon students’ social development; “The expectations in school are that all children can learn about social behaviour and respect for others […] children with various
learning abilities] are encouraged to become aware of their social context and the influence they have on others” (p. 53).

Authors Margo A. Mastropieri and Thomas E. Scruggs (2000) of the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Effective Inclusion present several arguments for the implementation of full inclusion, focusing on students with disabilities, varying in severity, as well as students with diverse learning styles and abilities. The primary argument is that full inclusion within the mainstream classroom is a civil right (p. 22),

As students with disabilities have the right to be educated in the same classes alongside their non-disabled peers. [It is] maintained that separate classes or schools are not equal to mainstream environments […] Furthermore, full inclusion promotes the belief that students with disabilities learn more in integrated settings than in segregated settings. [It is] maintained that students, including those with and without disabilities develop better working relationships, communication skills, interaction skills, and friendships when they are in fully inclusive environments […] Students becomes embracing of individual differences in full-inclusion environments (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p. 23).

In accordance with the argument presented by Mastropieri and Scruggs, authors Chriss Walther-Thomas, Lori Korinek, Virginia L. McLaughlin, and Brenda Toler Williams (2000) of Collaboration for Inclusive Education: Developing Successful Programs argue that the “clustering” of students with various disabilities may be beneficial for some, depending on severity and necessity; however, it is through separation from the mainstream classroom that students’ social lives are affected, as “they [are] segregated and isolated from families, peers, and classmates” (p.7). Furthermore, they note:

   Inclusive communities are designed to surround all participants – students, families, educators, administrators, staff, and others – with support and encouragement to nurture a strong sense of belonging […] ‘When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to become “normal” to contribute to the world. Instead, we search for and nourish the gifts that are inherent in all people’” (Chriss Walther-Thomas et al., 2000, p.7).
The second argument made for inclusion is that inclusion reduces stigma, as “students with disabilities are stigmatized when they are forced to be educated in a separate special school, with special education class, when they have to leave the general education classroom” (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p.23). Mastropieri et al. (2000) suggest that stigmatization resulting from the separation of students with disabilities from the mainstream classroom negatively affects students’ self-esteem, as their individual differences are unappreciated by what has been labeled as the “norm” in education and learning ability (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p.23). Inclusion allows all students to foster within themselves an appreciation for their own abilities, while maintaining unity with the classroom whole. It is integral that we as teachers educate students, not only for the academic classroom, but for the world and lifelong journey that awaits them, and it may be argued that it is through inclusive education that all students become better prepared for the diversities and challenges that will inevitably present themselves.

Furthermore, inclusive education promotes equality. Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000) state:

The most important reason to include all students in the mainstream classroom is that it is the fair, ethical, and equitable thing to do [...] it is discriminatory that some students, such as those “labeled” as disabled, must earn the right to be in the regular education mainstream or have to wait for educational researchers to prove that they can profit from the mainstream, while other students are allowed unrestricted access simply because they have no label. No one should have to pass anyone’s test or prove anything in a research study to live and learn in the mainstream of school and community life. This is a basic right, not something one has to earn (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p.23).

It is an inherent belief of mine that it is the responsibility of the teacher to teach and teach effectively, to all students, both regardless and acknowledging of difference, ability, and variation. The practice and implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction nourishes the minds of those students who have often been made to feel external of academic “normalcy”, and encourages equality in the realms of academia, social interactions, emotional
growth, and esteem in one’s own abilities; to quote poet William Buttler Yeats, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” A specific personal goal within the classroom is to help students realize their important role in their communities, and to encourage students’ participation in and outside of the classroom. I believe that all students can learn and ought to be given equal opportunity to succeed, though, as individuals, they may not necessarily learn in the same ways.

**Criticisms of Inclusive Education:**

There are several arguments made against the implementation of inclusive education within the mainstream curriculum. Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000), through research and extensive survey, outline five. The first is that a continuum of services option is necessary. “Opponents of full inclusion maintain that a more cautious approach should be undertaken with respect to the full-time placement of students with disabilities in general education classes […] the “appropriate education” component than the “least-restrictive environment”” (Mastropieri *et al.*, 2000, p.23). Secondly, the general education classroom may also be stigmatizing in that the issue of self-consciousness arises when learning becomes individual and specialized in front of all other peers. The example given by Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000) is that of a student with a reading disability; “Many students with reading disabilities have expressed a preference for receiving reading instruction in resource classrooms, finding it a safer environment” (Mastropieri *et al.*, 2000, p.24). Student preference ought to be taken into consideration as the feeling of discomfort and unease in the mainstream classroom may hinder learning, promote further stigmatization, and destruct one’s self-esteem.
A third concern against the implementation and practice of inclusive education is that general education teachers are not prepared for full inclusion; “Many general education teachers frequently report having inadequate training, time, and personnel resources for including students with disabilities in general education classes […] this is likely to affect the quality of education teachers can provide to students [as] planning and collaboration time appear critical to the successful implementation of the full-inclusion model” (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p.24). In accordance with this is the concern for the lack of sufficient resources in order to educate students with special needs and disabilities within the learning classroom. It is here that accommodation becomes challenging and difficult to implement successfully. Moreover,

Although some have argued that the same or similar instruction occurs in special or general education classrooms, others have identified clearly distinctive educational practices between general and special education classes. Special education classes are smaller and feature more cognitive-behavioural approaches toward instruction, different curriculum materials, strategy instruction, and more review and practice activities (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p.24).

The final concern and argument against the implementation of inclusive education is that there is no research to suggest and support the superiority of full inclusion; “It is argued that no data exist to support the elimination of the continuum of services […] No data exist to demonstrate that students with disabilities who are fully included outperform students who receive special services in other settings. In fact some evidence suggests that many students with disabilities perform better in resource room models or other special education settings” (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p.25).
Methods and Implementation of Differentiated Instruction

Glenda Beamon Crawford (2008), author of *Differentiation for the Adolescent Learner: Accommodating Brain Development, Language, Literacy, and Special Needs* writes of differentiation that it is a commonsense approach to learning when dealing with the complexities of the adolescent mind (p.5). She writes:

Adolescent learners differ in cognitive ability, social and economic status, literacy and language proficiency, race, ethnicity and culture, background, prior knowledge, quality of family support and degree of opportunity; motivation, learning preferences, and interests. Who adolescents are, the complex composite of biology and experience, determines the learning strengths and academic challenges they bring to the classroom […] distinct variations in the way adolescents’ brains receive, strategically process, and emotionally relate to content, instructional delivery, and assessment (Crawford, 2008, p. 5-6).

In seeking to improve my ability to differentiate instruction, and in turn, become a stronger and more effective teacher, I look to Barrie Bennett’s work entitled *Beyond Monet: the Artful Science of Instructional Integration*. Bennett draws attention to the sentiment that I hold of the practice of teaching – that it is both an art and a science. To quote Northrop Frye, Bennett (2008) writes:

That although art and science meet somewhere in the middle, they start from different ends of a continuum. Art starts with the world we want to have; science starts with the world as we see it. Science learns more about the world as it goes on; it evolves and improves […] Art is about identifying the human and natural world or identifying connections between them (p. 10).

With this, it is understood that teaching is about identifying the individual needs of the student, according to their strengths, weaknesses, and learning abilities, and making modifications and improvements in order to further their understanding and overall learning. Bennett (2008) recommends both discovering and creating patterns of instruction, specifically looking at the ways in which students learn, and working with their multiple intelligences. It is through modification that teaching becomes a science, evolving in order to increase the potential for success. Bennett (2008) further suggests that the ability to differentiate instruction results in the
designing of student learning and environments, providing enthusiasm and motivation. He offers several instructional ideas with which to modify student learning and create a powerful learning environment, i.e. Bloom’s Taxonomy, Think-Pair-Share, Concept Mapping, Role Playing, Humor, etc. The phrase that Bennett (2008) includes in his book to summarize chapter 2, states: “The language or symbols employed in the teaching/learning process are extensive. The ‘well worn image of classrooms where teachers talk and students listen, memorize, practice, and display knowledge has begun to fade as educators recognize that there is more to teaching and learning than words’” (Bennett, 2008, p.45). Seemingly indisputable, it is difficult to turn away from the lecturing method of teaching that many teachers have become so accustomed to.

Tim Loreman’s (2005) work entitled Inclusive Education: a Practical Guide to Supporting Diversity in the Classroom, and Sheryn Spencer Northey’s (2005) work entitled Handbook on Differentiated Instruction for Middle and High Schools, communicate a similar message for teachers entering a classroom of diverse student learning and need. Both works recommend that differentiation and inclusion of students with learning disabilities into the mainstream classroom can only successfully occur when teachers take the time to modify the lessons, assessment strategies, and styles in which the students are expected to learn. Though this is seemingly obvious, it is a series of challenging tasks and implementations. Northey’s (2005) Handbook on Differentiated Instruction for Middle and High Schools recommends getting to know your students in order to understand the ways in which they learn (i.e. what kind of fruit are you?/ what type of learner are you? – Gardener’s theory of Multiple Intelligences, distribute interest inventory, etc) and provides methods with which to differentiate the content being taught (i.e. concept development, anticipation/prediction guides, engaging the emotions, mind maps, making the book come alive, etc.). It is important to remember that students’
learning abilities vary as greatly as their cultures and ethnicities, and as teachers, we ought to encourage student learning, regardless of how greatly the style differs from mainstream instruction. It is through modification and acknowledgement of multiple intelligences that we as teachers remain lifelong learners, and become relatable and approachable to our students.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Teaching to the Emotions**

Of the program entitled Universal Design for Learning, Crawford (2008) writes that it is a “differentiation approach to curriculum design and instruction that responds to the learning brain. UDL interjects variety and flexibility into the way information is represented, the skills and strategies students employ to learn and demonstrate competence, and the emotional engagement and enjoyment in the process” (p.8). Crawford (2008) addresses the language of differentiation within the classroom environment, and draws attention to various learning needs of students through explanation of Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences; Linguistic, Logical/Mathematical, Musical, Spatial, Bodily/Kinesthetic, Naturalistic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Existential (Crawford, 2008, p.13). Teaching to emotional/intrapersonal intelligence is integral when aiming to implement the practice of inclusive education upon secondary students as all students can become emotionally engaged within subject material and in turn, become more greatly aware of themselves and the world that surrounds them.

Daniel Goleman (2005), as cited in *Teaching With Emotional Intelligence*, defined emotional intelligence as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (Mortiboys, 2005, p.1). In teaching with emotional intelligence, one will encourage their
students to be more engaged in subject material, resulting in greater motivation, and a greater readiness to take risks, as well as a readiness to collaborate and stronger creativity and tenacity (Mortiboys, 2005, p.1). In order to teach with emotional intelligence, one must be able to recognize and respond to one’s own feelings as well as those of the students and learners, as well as be able to encourage an emotional state in students which is conducive to effective learning (Mortiboys, 2005, p.1).

In acknowledging that all students learn differently from one another, as per Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Crawford (2008) states that “the key to effective differentiation is to adjust the curricular components of content, instructional strategy (process), and assessment (product) continuously in response to adolescents’ interests, readiness levels, and learning profiles” (p.14), so as to encourage the development of a classroom of full inclusion. Crawford (2008) suggests that effective teachers do the following for successful differentiation in the adolescent classroom:

- Inquire about students’ personal strengths, preferences, and interests and incorporate these into planning.
- Learn about students’ families and cultural backgrounds and honour these within the curriculum.
- Find out what students know or remember and help them relate to new learning by building connections.
- Look for broad themes in the content to include a wider range of students’ ideas.
- Help students make a bridge between content and real life.
- Vary tasks to accommodate individual learning strengths and preferences.
- Structure groups that are flexible to validate interests and a range of learning abilities.
- Give assignments that differentiate for students’ varying learning abilities.
- Allow students to discuss, explore, wonder, and question.
- Listen, guide, encourage, expect, push, facilitate, and challenge.
- Celebrate students’ individuality by letting their thoughts be heard and their creativity flourish.
- Allow students to work, talk, and question collaboratively.
- Permit all students to delve into and better understand content through direct, meaningful, and relevant involvement.
- Challenge students to use knowledge in ways that make sense and a difference in their lives and others.
- Trust and guide students as they take ownership of their own learning.
- Respect and value students’ differences and build on them so that they become more competent and confident in personal learning management.
- Enable students to expand their horizons of learning by interacting with resources in the local and global community (Crawford, 2008, p.21-22).

Each of these suggestions allows for a greater quality of learning for both the student and the teacher, as both are able to discover several methods of understanding external to various traditional methods of instruction. As educators, it is integral that we take the time and initiative to get to know our students and understand who they are as individuals. It is crucial that we invite them to be active participants in their learning process, where they challenge not only themselves, but their peers, and their teachers as well, to be more open minded to the embracing of difference, of change, and of the ways in which we are all able to learn from one another. I believe that the task of an exceptional teacher extends beyond the classroom through the development of curiosity and intellect of all students, as well as by promotion of a students’ self worth. Therefore, my classroom will be an inclusive and constructivist setting where my students will feel safe to be their authentic and genuine selves, as well as not being afraid to make mistakes and learn from them. Learning in the classroom structures the ways in which students learn outside of the classroom, and the ways in which they enable themselves to become active and influential members of society. Through questioning, discussion, exploration, and development of trust within themselves, students become engaged with materials that had once been separate from them, and are able to connect their academic learning to their lifelong learning needs. As teachers, it is our responsibility to prepare them for the world that awaits them, for the challenges that face them, and for the successes that they will inevitably achieve, and it is through inclusive education and differentiated instruction that my students will be able to take ownership of their learning, and undoubtedly, their lives.
Integration of Special Education students within the Mainstream Classroom:

In an effort to discuss the process through which the integration of students with learning disabilities and special needs into the mainstream academic English and history classroom, focus is shifted upon the findings of researchers Stephanie D. van Hover, and Elizabeth A. Yeager (2003), authors of the work entitled *Secondary History Teachers and the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities: An Exploratory Study*. When discussing the topic of Special Education and the students who are placed within these classrooms, it is necessary to identify what van Hover and Yeager (2003), name the “identifiers” of these students integrated within the general education classroom. The authors note that students could be identified “as having learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, emotional or behavior disorders, communication disorders, hearing impairments, visual impairments, and/or physical disabilities” (van Hover and Yeager, 2003, p.37). Van Hover and Yeager (2003) argue that students that have been identified as having a disability within the general education setting, have a written individualized education program (IEP), developed by administration, parents, educators, and contributions made by the student. The IEP includes “levels of functioning, long- and short- term goals, extent to which the student will not participate in the general education classroom and curriculum, services to be provided, plans for initiating and evaluating the services, and needed transition services” (van Hover and Yeager, 2003, p.38). Further, van Hover and Yeager (2003) note, that “Although impossible to generalize across disabilities, students included in the general education classroom typically require meaningful curricular and instructional accommodations and adaptations in order to succeed academically” (van Hover and Yeager, 2003, p.37). In quoting author E.J. Nowacek (2001), of *Suggestions for Teaching Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms*, it is explained that an accommodation is “a modification to the delivery
of instruction or method of student performance that does not significantly change the content or conceptual difficulty of the curriculum; adaptations extend beyond accommodations and involve changing the content or conceptual difficulty of the curriculum” (p 37). Van Hover and Yeager (2003) continue to state:

The success of students with disabilities requires teachers to differentiate curriculum, provide a framework for learning, intensively model learning processes and strategies, present information in multiple ways, allow students to demonstrate learning in multiple ways, teach students to use memory strategies, teach self-regulation and self-monitoring, provide opportunities for extended practice and application, and adjust work load and time requirements […] Special educators argue that "differentiating curriculum" involves planning for the success of all students in the class and explicitly establishing goals for the range of student ability by considering what some students will learn, what most but not all students will learn, and what all students will learn (p. 37).

Though the integration of special education students within the mainstream academic classroom requires educators to challengingly implement and practice exceptional inclusive education, it is imperative to understand that not only do the identified students benefit from the differentiation instruction and learning, but so too do most other students within the class. All students can learn; it is merely a matter of changing the method, changing the routine.

Introduced by van Hover and Yeager (2003) is the statement that “Teachers viewed history instruction, curriculum, and assessment as standard for all children, regardless of ability level. Teachers made very superficial changes to assignments rather than truly “adapting” assignments or instructional approaches” (Abstract, p.36). Through the perspective of an educational researcher, the opportunity to confront and discuss necessary aspects lacking from the academic classroom is made possible. Van Hover and Yeager (2003) state:

Certain factors contribute to successful inclusion, including: meaningful adaptations to instruction and curriculum that differentiate and individualize instruction for students with disabilities, positive teacher beliefs and attitudes towards inclusion and students with disabilities, and contextual support for general education teachers (p.36).
Though undoubtedly possible, van Hover and Yeager (2003) have found that research continues to suggest that several special education teachers and educators of the mainstream academic classrooms consider themselves to be ill-prepared and constrained by the prevalent standardized view of instruction and curriculum (p.36), therefore offering diverse student ability and level of comprehension minimally significant changes to the curriculum and instructional approaches. Necessary and therefore needing to be effectively implemented within the mainstream academic classroom, van Hover and Yeager (2003) implicitly state that there exists little or no research on the issue of inclusion and differentiation, and methods of implementation thereof, in a classroom comprised of students with varying learning abilities and disabilities. As is such, it may be argued that the lack of information pertaining to issues and instructional strategies surrounding inclusive education and differentiated instruction is undoubtedly detrimental to the quality of student learning, and the individual educational experience had – “It becomes imperative that [history] educators possess the ability to create interesting, engaging, and educationally responsive environments for all students” (van Hover & Yeager, 2003, p.37).

As has been previously mentioned, the practice and implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction in the secondary English and history classrooms can be considered idealistic as there remains a critical reality that time places great restraint on the ability of the teacher to differentiate and be consciously inclusive of all student diversities and variations. It is a necessary challenge to be able to reach every student through learning and education, and though idealistic, inclusivity and differentiation present the opportunity through which to do so.
Multicultural Education through Differentiated Instruction in the Secondary Classroom:

Entering into secondary English and history classrooms, teachers are confronted with the reality of multiculturalism, and the representation of cultural practices, expectations, and understandings through their students. Delinda van Garderen and Catherine Whittaker (2006), authors of the article entitled *Planning Differentiated, Multicultural Instruction for Secondary Inclusive Classrooms* claim that “The No Child Left Behind Act requirements for standards-based curricula and standardized assessment for all students have changed the focus of educational reform […] a promising practice for meeting the demands of standards-based education [and improving achievement] is differentiated instruction” (p.12). As an extension of the practice of differentiation is the method of multicultural education, as a result of the growing diversity amongst student populations, and the need to teach to the individual; it is argued that it is the purpose of multicultural education to be culturally responsive, so as to promote student achievement in a culturally relevant manner (van Garderen and Whittaker, 2006, p.12).

As differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, and multicultural education are often discussed in an integrated manner, van Garderen and Whittaker (2006) suggest that they provide various converging concepts, theories and ideas applicable within the inclusive secondary classroom, comprised of students with various academic abilities, racial and ethnic identification, sexual, religious, economic, and gender identifications. Drawn upon are the hallmarks of special education that have been identified as methods proven successful in increasing student achievement. Van Garderen and Whittaker (2006) state:

For decades, one of the hallmarks of special education and gifted education has been individualized instruction and flexible grouping. With the more recent emphasis on educating an increasing number of secondary students with exceptional needs in inclusive environments and including all students in state assessments, both general and special educators are asking important questions about the feasibility of and responsibility for
providing individualized instruction in the general education classroom. Differentiated instruction provides a platform for accomplishing this (p.12).

Arguing for the practice and implementation of differentiated instruction and the acknowledgment of the diversities found within the general education/mainstream classroom, van Garderen and Whittaker (2006) present current educators with the means by which to implement the practice and achieve the sought after standards-based results. Differentiated instruction is introduced as “curriculum and instruction that meets the needs of academically diverse learners by honoring each student’s learning needs and maximizing each student’s learning capacity […] [through] content, process, product, affect, and learning environment” (van Garderen and Whittaker, 2006, p.12-13). Directly linked to this sought after approach to teaching and instruction is the concern over the academic underachievement of students with disabilities and African American, Latino, Native American, and some Asian American students (van Garderen and Whittaker, 2006, p.13). The concern arises as there has long been the assumption that the fault lays with the culture and family, rather than with the curriculum and curricular expectations. Van Garderen and Whittaker (2006) offer explanation and approach to diverge from this prior assumption in a movement towards the practice of multicultural education. It is stated that:

Multicultural education is an approach that encompasses curriculum and instruction but extends beyond them to consider the restructuring of all aspects of schooling. Its major goal is to allow students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to succeed in an ethnically and racially diverse nation and world [through] […] content integration, knowledge construction process, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and an empowering school culture and social structure (p.13).

It may be argued that from the perspective of a secondary English and/or history classroom, the multicultural education approach is one that would result in increased standards-based achievement as its use and implementation encouraged student engagement, participation, and
interaction with course materials and texts. It is in the understanding that our students have of themselves and others, diversity and variation alike, that the classroom community and environment becomes all the more accepting and “safe”. This is not to say that the implementation of multicultural education would generate the need for multiple methods of instruction, but rather one integrated method, applicable and engaging for all students, regardless of academic, intellectual ability and diversity. In furthering this argument, van Garderen and Whittaker (2006) defend that “regardless of the degree of heterogeneity of a district or classroom, all students should learn about the history and experiences of diverse groups so they can function in a global society” (p.13), so as to minimize seclusion and isolation.

The concept, culturally responsive teaching, taken from Gloria Ladson Billings and incorporated into the work of van Garderen and Whittaker (2006), claims that “culturally responsive teaching celebrates individual and collective accomplishments, provides academic and personal mentoring in survival skills and self-advocacy, promotes critical thinking, and uses cooperative learning groups or peer tutoring situations” (p.14). In accordance with the inclusive practice of multicultural education and differentiated instruction, culturally responsive teaching is purposefully designed to eliminate prejudice and increase students’ opportunities to work and interact with one another, so as to develop positive attitudes toward human diversity; it is not teaching differently, but rather, teaching inclusively, and consciously so. Van Garderen and Whittaker (2006) offer examples for differentiated instruction through the five classroom elements of content, process, product, affect, and learning environment (p.14):
### Elements

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| • Content: what is taught and how access to the information and ideas that matter is given. | - texts at varied reading levels  
- provision of organizers to guide note-taking  
- use of examples and illustrations based on student interest  
- present in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modes  
- providing materials in the primary language of second language learners. |
| • Process: How students come to understand and “own” the knowledge, skills, and understanding. | - vary the pacing of student work  
- use cooperative grouping strategies  
- develop activities that seek multiple perspectives on topics and issues. |
| • Product: Student demonstration of what he or she has come to know, understand, and be able to do. | - provide bookmarked internet sites at different levels of complexity for research sources  
- develop rubrics for success based on grade-level expectations and individual learning needs |
| • Affect: Student linking of thought and feeling in the classroom. | - modeling respect  
- help students examine multiple perspectives on important issues  
- ensure consistently equitable participation of every student. |
| • Learning Environment: Classroom function and feeling. | - rearranging furniture to allow for individual, small-group and whole-group work  
- Availability of supplies and materials. |

Offering various methods with which to accommodate and modify classroom instruction so as to increase the possibility for student success is increasingly necessary in a learning environment where student diversity is ever prevalent. However, there are various methods and examples through which to modify and accommodate instruction as the learning experience is entirely subjective, and can be more creatively based. Garderen and Whittaker (2006) offer dimensions and examples of multicultural education:
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| Content Integration                   | -use of examples and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations and theories.                                                                 | - biographies of women or persons of color who are scientists or mathematicians  
- demography of diverse groups  
- use of primary documents  
- reading and creating multicultural literatures  
- including images of various types of families in the curriculum |
| The Knowledge Construction Process    | -extent to which teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine cultural assumptions, references, perspectives, and biases.                                                                 | - female and people of culture authors included within the curriculum  
- include the perspective of both the dominant and non-dominant cultures in historical conflict  
- examine labels applied to persons with disabilities; learn from the perspective of the actual person  
- validating the importance of all languages  
- discuss differences and experiences |
| An Equity Pedagogy                    | -teachers modify their teaching to facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, and social-class groupings.                                                                 | - Knowing the cultural background of students and incorporating them into class instruction and procedures  
- Using cooperative learning  
- Placing students in pairs to encourage question and answer exchanges |
| Prejudice Reaction                    | -characteristics of students’ racial attitudes and how they can be modified.                                                                                                                                  | - using heterogeneous groups by gender, race, and language in cooperative learning  
- developing racial identity; teaching race as a social construct |
| An Empowering School Culture and Social Structure | -grouping and labeling practices across the ethnic and racial lines so as to allow for examination of school culture that empowers students from diverse groups and populations.                                      | - inclusion of students in determining rules  
- including students with disabilities  
- hiring teachers of various minority groups |
It may be argued that the implementation of multicultural education, though seemingly directed towards increasing students’ awareness of the racially, ethnically, and culturally social reality that surrounds them, presents an advocacy for the equal representation and inclusion of all individuals within the secondary school curriculum, namely within English and history classrooms. The issue of the representation of gender within the secondary classroom is one of many pertaining to the implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction.

**Holistic Education and Teaching to the Whole Child**

In defining the term holistic education, I turn to John Miller (2006), author of the work entitled *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion: Creating Conditions for Timeless Learning*. He states that:

> Holistic education is an approach aimed at teaching the whole person. Holistic educators reject educational approaches that limit learning solely to the intellect or that train students so that they can compete in a global economy. They believe that we must see the student as a complete human being, which includes a mysterious, timeless quality (e.g., the soul). Holistic educators argue that schooling limited to preparing students to compete in a global economy is lacking in this respect (p. 101).

Holistic education is the development of the whole person, mind, body, and soul, and therefore nurtures the individual student to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, and spiritually. Holistic education as an extension of inclusive education and differentiated instruction is a means by which to teach students “differently” – to take them out of the classroom and into society, into the lives, cultures, and individuality of others, into nature and the global classroom, and into the confines of their minds, their souls, their inner selves. Having taken courses focused on the study and practice of holistic education, I find myself intrigued by the practice of teaching “differently” – teaching in a way that is more relatable, more approachable, more understandable, and considerably more enjoyable than learning out of
textbook, reading words upon a page. Inclusive education and differentiation through holistic curriculum allows educators to teach to all students, and to be able to more effectively reach the individual and his/her learning needs.

Ron Miller (1992), author of the work entitled, *What schools are for: Holistic education in American culture*, states that:

To be ‘well educated’ in the modern industrial world, means to be well disciplined; it is to be alienated from one’s own spontaneous, creative, self-actualizing impulses. Holistic education calls for a new recognition of the organic, subconscious, subjective, intuitive, artistic, mythological, and spiritual dimensions of our lives (p. 153).

The underlying necessary creativity found within holistic education is particularly intriguing for educators in secondary English and history classrooms, as the interpretation of text, factual revelation, and the understandings of language are learning experiences rooted in the subjective. Teaching “differently” to a classroom comprised of students with varying learning abilities and needs becomes less idealistic and more realistic when utilizing holistic learning, as it is student-centered, diverse, variational, and explicitly beneficial to all participating.

In accordance with inclusive education and the goal of the educator to turn the classroom communal and supportive of one another, Ron Miller (1992) states that “an individual person is a whole system, but is contained in community, which is a more inclusive (more whole) system. But then community is surrounded by, and infused with, and given meaning by, the affairs of the larger society; and any given society is but one member of the global family of humanity” (p.28). As an inclusive educator, holistic education speaks to the necessity of the communal classroom so as to positively and effectively encourage and nurture the growth and development of the individual student, fostering knowledge, skill, and understanding.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Procedure:

The Master of Teaching Research Project was conducted for the purpose of obtaining qualitative research on the subjects of Inclusive Education and Differentiated Instruction, guided by the following question: How does the implementation and practice of differentiation and inclusive education in Secondary English and History classrooms mean teaching “differently” to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning abilities? Qualitative research asks the question “why” through the analysis of unstructured information gathered during the process of informal interviews. The purpose of this research was to answer the question of why or why not teaching to students with diversified learning abilities means teaching “differently”, and why or why not teaching differently is considered beneficial, as well to discuss and analyze various practices and methods of implementation.

The study includes a review of various literary works and authors who themselves have researched and studied both inclusive education and differentiated instruction. I looked to author John Miller (2006) for insight into the practice of holistic education, to Barrie Bennett (2008) for guidelines on classroom management and the art behind planning the most effective differentiated lesson; to Chriss Walther-Thomas, Lori Korinek, Virginia L. McLaughlin, and Brenda Toler Williams (2000) for discussion and insight into Inclusive Education, Margo A. Mastropieri and Thomas E. Scruggs (2000) for insight into methods for the integration of special education students within the mainstream academic classroom, Delinda van Garderen and Catherine Whittaker (2006) for explanation of multicultural education, as well as countless others whose works inspired my decision to pursue the topics of inclusion and differentiation, so as to be able to share my passion for teaching and the betterment of students’ quality of learning.
Upon completing the literature review, I compiled a series of questions to be used for the purpose of face-to-face interviews with consenting participants, regarding the practice and implementation of both inclusion and differentiation, as well as the questioning of the effectiveness and necessity thereof within the mainstream classroom. The interviews were used as a means through which to gain insight into peoples’ attitudes, beliefs, value systems, concerns, motivations, and aspirations as educators, so as to provide depth and analysis to the literature previously reviewed. As a qualitative researcher, the interviews aided in my seeking to understand the topics of inclusive education and differentiated instruction from the perspectives of the population directly pertaining to them. The interviews allowed me insight into the experiences that my participants have had with inclusion and differentiation, and in turn, allowed for discussion on matters sensitive to the issue. Once the interviews had been completed, I analyzed the data gathered in an effort to answer the guiding research question of whether or not teaching to a classroom comprised of students with diverse and varied learning abilities implies teaching “differently”, or is it merely a matter of teaching more effectively for the benefit of all students, teachers included.

**Instruments of Data Collection**

The instruments utilized for the purpose of the data collection were the informal interviews had with two consenting participants, identified through the pseudonyms Max and Emma. Max, an educator at the senior History level, and Emma, an educator at the intermediate Language Arts and Social Studies level. The interview questions were centered directly upon the encounters had with both inclusive education and differentiated instruction at both the
intermediate and senior school levels, within the setting of the English and/or History classroom.

For example:

- In what ways have you structured your lessons and teaching in the academic classroom?
- In what ways would you, as a teacher, go about teaching a lesson to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning abilities? Do you perceive this to be entirely possible?
- In what ways do you consider the practice of inclusive education and differentiated instruction to be integral to overall student learning? Explain.
- In what ways is the practice of multicultural education integral to the learning and understanding of various literary texts and/or historical events?
- In what ways do you consider Holistic education to be an integral part of secondary learning, namely in the English and History classrooms?

These questions allowed for thorough discussion and reflection upon the practice and implementation, or lack thereof, of inclusive education and differentiated instruction within the “traditional” academic classroom. Some of the questions were subject to modification as the participants’ answers became more directly focused. Each of the participants was exceptionally verbose and allowed for depth and insight into both inclusion and differentiation.

**Participants:**

As was previously mentioned, the two consenting participants throughout the interview process are to be identified within the research through the pseudonyms Max and Emma; Max, an educator at the senior History level, and Emma, an educator at the intermediate Language Arts and Social Studies level. Max, an educator for over ten years at the secondary English and History level, with experience having taught at the primary/junior and college level, presented
me with a vast spectrum of teaching experiences, as well as an opportunity to attain great insight into the views, beliefs, and practices of this educator within the classroom. Max presented the opportunity to delve further into questions pertaining to inclusive education and differentiated instruction, specifically at the senior grade level, within the context of the Academic English and History classroom.

Emma, an educator for over 12 years at the intermediate grade level, having taught Language Arts (English) and Social Studies (History) for the past eight years, so too presented me with a vast spectrum of teaching experiences, and insight into the classroom of an educator teaching to several students with identified learning disabilities, in a classroom where several subjects are taught, and are given a limited amount of time to be taught. Emma presented me with an opportunity to look to the practices and implementations, or lack thereof, of inclusion and differentiation within the intermediate English and History classrooms.

I chose Max and Emma as my interview participants for several reasons, the core reason being the teaching experiences that each held, specifically pertaining to the subjects of English and History at either the intermediate and/or senior levels of study. I also selected these participants as I knew that both of these educators had experience teaching to students with learning disabilities, who had been integrated into the mainstream academic classrooms, which was a particular area of intrigue for me; I wanted to know more about the possibilities of inclusion and differentiation, and whether or not the teachers presented with these issues on a daily basis were in fact utilizing these methods – effectiveness and possibility, what do they look like to these participants, within their classrooms?
Data Collection and Analysis:

Upon having collected the data through the informal interview process, I transcribed the interview, questions and responses, reading them several times over as I went along. The aspects investigated throughout the duration of the interview were those of the methods of practice and implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction, or lack thereof, as well as questioning the use and effectiveness of multicultural education and holistic education – within the mainstream academic classroom, as well as when teaching to a classroom comprised of students with varying learning disabilities and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Each of these aspects is directly linked to the overarching research question: How does the implementation and practice of differentiation and inclusive education in Secondary English and History classrooms mean teaching “differently” to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning abilities? I began the process of analysis by reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews, particularly focusing on the aforementioned aspects. I highlighted, using several colours to identify differing aspects, the mention of the uses of inclusive education and differentiation, as well as the positive and negatives outcomes that resulted. I took notice of particular classroom exercises and activities, lessons, and methods of instruction that pertained to the discussion of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the uses of inclusion and differentiation, through multicultural and holistic education. I took note of the views and opinions of each of my research participants when asked of the mere possibility of completely integrating students with special needs and abilities into the mainstream academic classroom. I analyzed the data for genuine reactions, responses, and opinions on the prevalent issue and matter of teaching to a classroom of students comprised of varying learning needs and
abilities, including those students who have been identified as having particular learning disabilities.

**Ethical Review Procedures:**

In order to ensure that ethical research practices were in place throughout the duration of the interviews, as well as throughout the duration of the process for this research piece, agreed-upon standards for research were developed so that as researchers, we explicitly consider the needs and concerns of the people we study, that appropriate oversight for the conduct of research takes place, and that a basis for trust is established between researchers and study participants. Ethical review approval procedures were followed, beginning with the explanation and signing of the consent to participate reference sheet (See Appendix A for a copy of the informed Consent Letter). This directly stated that the participants understood that the topic of the interview had been explained unto them, and that any questions they may have had about the research had been answered satisfactorily. Prior to signing, participants were made aware that if they so chose, they were able to withdraw themselves from the research piece without penalty. Ethical standards were also in place so that participants understood that if they wanted to revisit the transcribed interview responses they could, and that if they wanted a copy of the transcription, it would be provided to them. My participants were also informed that their contribution to my research would be acknowledged, and that they would be informed of the extent to which their contributions would be used.

Respect for the persons participating in the research was of the utmost importance throughout the process of transcription and declaration and analysis of findings. Each of the research participants was ensured that their contributions, names, and identifiers would remain anonymous, and that for the purpose of this research, they would be given pseudonyms for which
to be able to reference them. The dignity of all research subjects was respected, as their contributions were not made for the purpose of identifying and exploitation; as a researcher I ensured anonymity.

**Limitations:**

This Master of Teaching Research Project conducted for the purpose of gaining insight and breadth on the various practices and implementations of inclusive education and differentiated instruction, while integrating special needs students into the mainstream classroom, presents merely a few pages into the vast amounts of information and research previously done on the topic. One of the limitations of the research is the constrained amount of time given for completion of the work, as much more could have been addressed and acknowledged when discussing the prevalent issue of the necessity for the practice of inclusive education, in relation to differentiated instruction.

A second limitation of this research is the limited number of research participants that were interviewed. Though this was a conscious choice, it is understood that the interviewing of several others, educators, administration, and students alike, could have further enriched the data collected, and further discoveries and observations could have been made. However, the purpose of this research project was not to offer a general overview on how inclusive education and differentiation could be used to engage and effectively teach all students, regardless of intellect and/or academic ability, but rather to interview teachers who would present their personal perspective on the topic analyzed for the purpose of this study, and allow for insight into their experiences with the subject of study, revealing their opinions attitudes, beliefs, value systems, concerns, motivations, and aspirations as educators, so as to provide depth and analysis to the literature previously reviewed. As a result of these limitations, the study has been made more
focused and the findings more relevant to those specific sub-themes chosen by myself, the researcher.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present findings based on an interpretation of data collected from two face-to-face interviews with practicing intermediate and secondary school teachers within the Greater Toronto Area. Prior to having had conducted the interviews, questions examining the strategies, methods, and obstacles pertaining to and surrounding the issues of inclusive education and differentiated instruction were developed, with the intent of being able to gain insight into peoples’ attitudes, beliefs, value systems, concerns, motivations, and aspirations as educators, so as to provide depth and analysis to the literature previously reviewed. The purpose of this research was to answer the question of why or why not teaching to students with diversified learning abilities means teaching “differently”, and why or why not teaching differently is considered beneficial, as well to discuss and analyze various practices and methods of implementation.

The findings resulting from the interviews discuss intermediate and secondary school teachers’ views, practices, and understandings of inclusive education and differentiated instruction, through discussion of multicultural education, holistic education, and accommodations and modifications made in relation to literacy and critical historical thinking, so as to support the integration of students with special needs into the mainstream classroom. The findings also discuss the role of the educator in relation to the practice and implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction, as well as implications for the role of the students within and throughout the learning process.
Key Themes and Findings

The analysis of the interview data presented five general themes and key findings shared by the research participants as a result of experiences, insights, values, and aspirations for education for the future. The general themes and/or key findings of this research are the following:

- Inclusive education and differentiated instruction are the result of a passionate and caring teacher:
  - Differentiated instruction as a means by which to integrate all students into the learning classroom;

- Intermediate and secondary school English and History teachers use a variety of instructional methods to teach various literary representations and historical interpretations;

- Inclusive education as a means by which to develop social relationships and interactions;
  - Teaching “differently” as a means to initiate and encourage students’ success, academically, socially, emotionally, wholly.

- Multicultural education as a means to uncover discrimination:
  - interpret different meanings and methods of understanding; and

- Challenges of implementing inclusive approaches to education and differentiating instruction.
Finding #1: Inclusive education and differentiated instruction are the result of a passionate and caring teacher: Differentiated instruction as a means by which to integrate all students into the learning classroom.

“The best teachers teach from the heart, and not from the book,” written by an anonymous author, exemplifies the outlook that I have of the teaching profession, and of the privilege that we, as educators, are given in shaping the learning, and in turn, the lives of adolescents as they present themselves within the confines of our classroom walls. A common sentiment expressed by countless educators, including my research participants, is that the success of a student and the successful implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction are determined by the teacher, and the care and passion put into one’s work as an educator. As both research participants discussed the subject, it was evident that their attitudes and value systems were rooted in the belief that the role of the teacher extends far beyond the pages of the textbook, and that teaching requires a nurturing and humanistic approach. Their discussions around the subject relate to Ghandi and the influence that he has had on my vision and mantra for teaching, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” In order to change the world, and the environment in which we reside, we as educator ought to embody that change, and encourage that development of perspective.

Much of the discussion pertaining to the caring and passionate teacher reflects the perspective of author Jenny Corbett (2001) of Supporting Inclusive Education: a Connective Pedagogy, where it is argued that the inclusive pedagogy is directly linked to effective learning and the caring teacher, in that it is about connecting to the individual’s learning style and recognizing how they can learn most effectively, as well as linking the individual’s learning to the curriculum and learning tasks in such a way that they can gain maximum benefit (Corbett,
Corbett (2001) suggests that education exists beyond the learning classroom and it is the role of the caring educator to inspire that learning through the inclusive classroom (p.36). She states, “Education means responding to the curiosity and interest of the learner, letting them take initiative […] making education distinctive and meaningful” (Corbett, 2001, p.36). In this research study, teachers uncovered characteristics of meaningful education, and in turn, discussed the implications that each had on students’ learning. Primarily noted was the importance of care, not only as part of instruction, but of planning and lesson delivery as well. Max, an educator at the senior History level, states:

Inclusive education and differentiated instruction really just refers to good teaching, where you are aware of and trying to look out for different areas of interest and different areas of need for the students […] and every single one, so you might “differentiate” for a special needs students, or you might “differentiate” because someone is just not motivated or they’re not interested, or there’s a group of students who seem really interested in what you’re teaching.

Max’s statements suggest that the teachers who leave the longest lasting impact on students’ learning, are those who display genuine passion and caring, not only for the profession, but for the individual students as well. Max directly refers to the differentiating of learning material as best practice for all educators, as it is a marker of what he refers to as a “good teacher.” Similarly, Emma, an intermediate Language Arts and Social Studies teacher reflected upon the meaning of inclusive education in relation to the caring teacher; taking a similar stance upon the subject, Emma offers an idealist vision for the teaching profession:

Inclusive Education means teaching so that everyone is included, regardless of the students’ abilities, especially referring to the integration of special needs students within the mainstream classroom [...] making different our instructional strategies so that there is not only one way of teaching or understanding; a teacher’s job is to change and modify so that everyone can learn, and their needs are met.
Like Max, Emma suggests that dedication and constant efforts made towards the betterment of student learning are the responsibility of the teacher, and it is the caring teacher that works to create a communal environment where all students are able to learn. Emma suggests that it is the teacher who needs to change the methods of instruction, with the purposeful intention of being able to teach to every student – this is the identifier of what she refers to as a “good teacher.”

The idea of allowing students to take initiative in their own learning and development is one that coincides with the practice and implementation of differentiation and inclusion as these methods encourage student inquiry, and the celebration of one’s intellectual abilities. Both Max and Emma expressed a belief in the value of the caring educator, in accordance with the necessary conscious efforts to differentiate learning and understanding so as to appeal to all students within the learning classroom.

*Finding #2: Intermediate and secondary school English and History teachers use a variety of instructional methods to teach various literary representations and historical interpretations.*

In an effort to draw upon the variational methods of teaching and instruction currently being implemented within the intermediate and secondary English and history classrooms, I framed my interview questions around what the participants were currently doing to teach “differently” to a classroom comprised of students with varying learning abilities and needs. Interestingly, both research participants identified their teaching practices as a combination of both the traditional and the modern, where the implementation of the “modern” was necessary, in order to result in effective teaching, learning, and understanding. When asked to describe instructional methods used to promote inclusivity and differentiation, Max stated:

I might start with an open-ended question, move into discussion, and assign a task, and what makes it inclusive is that it might peak the interest of those students who may not
necessarily be interested in History. It might also appeal to those students who may be having English Language difficulties, and find discussion to be more approachable. Also, students who might have a different background, or come from a different culture, the question might allow them to speak about their experience, instead of the Canadian experience found within the textbook [...] the best kind of history is the history that exposes you to other types of culture.

Max discusses instructional methods that support inclusivity and differentiation through implications for multicultural education; he suggests that beginning a lesson on the Second World War, for example, from an inquiry based approach, encourages students’ curiosity and engagement, and appeals to all students as it utilizes informal discussion as a means through which to learn. Max defends the notion that allowing students to share their individual perspectives in relation to the “traditional” course material promotes awareness among peers, as well as encourages active participation in the learning process.

In discussing the subject of differentiated instruction and various instructional methods utilized within the classroom, both Max and Emma indirectly alluded to the theories presented by Glenda Beamon Crawford (2008), author of *Differentiation for the Adolescent Learner: Accommodating Brain Development, Language, Literacy, and Special Needs* where she writes of differentiation, that it is a commonsense approach to learning when dealing with the complexities of the adolescent mind (p.5). She writes,

> Adolescent learners differ in cognitive ability, social and economic status, literacy and language proficiency, race, ethnicity and culture, background, prior knowledge, quality of family support and degree of opportunity; motivation, learning preferences, and interests. Who adolescents are, the complex composite of biology and experience, determines the learning strengths and academic challenges they bring to the classroom (Crawford, 2008, p. 5).

When asked to describe instructional methods implemented within the classroom, promoting inclusivity and differentiation for all students, Emma offered the following suggestion:

> What I have found to be most effective is dividing the class into smaller groups, particularly for activities pertaining to reading and collaboration, allowing one to get to
better know the students on a more individualistic level; what it is that this particular student needs to succeed? What modifications need to be made so that this student does not feel excluded from his or her classroom environment and peers?

Emma’s statements suggest it is understood that teaching is about identifying the individual needs of the student, according to their strengths, weaknesses, and learning abilities, and making modifications and improvements in order to further their understanding and overall learning. From this discussion, and the responses that my research participants have provided, I have gathered that the implementation of effective differentiation and inclusive education depends upon accommodations and modifications made for all students, both regardless and acknowledging of all “differences”, as all are valuable in the defining make up of a classroom community. Emma suggests that allowing students to work alongside one another encourages community building and peer acceptance. Collaborative activities also promote the understanding and development of social skills needed outside of the context of the classroom. The teaching strategies and instructional methods presented express the attitude that offering options, choice, and different means through which to present knowledge and understanding, most often result in students’ appreciation for learning, and success in academic endeavors.

Finding #3: Inclusive education is a means by which to develop social relationships and interactions; teaching “differently” as a means to initiate and encourage students’ success, academically, socially, emotionally, wholly.

Inclusive education should be utilized as a means by which to connect with the students, as a whole group, and as individual selves. Authors Margo A. Mastropieri and Thomas E. Scruggs (2000) of the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Effective Inclusion present several arguments for the implementation of full inclusion, focusing on students with disabilities,
varying in severity, as well as students with diverse learning styles and abilities. The primary argument is that full inclusion within the mainstream classroom is a civil right (p. 22),

As students with disabilities have the right to be educated in the same classes alongside their non-disabled peers. [It is] maintained that separate classes or schools are not equal to mainstream environments […] Furthermore, full inclusion promotes the belief that students with disabilities learn more in integrated settings than in segregated settings. [It is] maintained that students, including those with and without disabilities develop better working relationships, communication skills, interaction skills, and friendships when they are in fully inclusive environments […] Students becomes embracing of individual differences in full-inclusion environments (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p. 23).

When discussing the ways in which inclusive education develops social relationships and interactions within the classroom, Emma states:

When working together in a communal environment, students are more likely to become accepting and nurturing of one another’s differences, rather than being discriminatory and judgmental of them. Inclusive education and differentiation encourages students to support one another, help each other learn, and promote the benefits of working together, in both the classroom and the world external to it.

Emma suggests that the communal environment is that which is inclusive of all students, including those who struggle with learning disabilities, mental illness, exceptionalities, etc., and, as a result, proves beneficial for all students within the learning environment. Interestingly, Emma’s statement reflects the benefits of implementing multicultural education within the mainstream classroom, as both practices promote acceptance among peers, reducing discrimination, and encouraging students to view others as valuable contributors to the classroom environment.

The second argument made for inclusion is that inclusion reduces stigma. It is here suggested that stigmatization resulting from the separation of students with disabilities from the mainstream classroom negatively affects students’ self-esteem, as their individual differences are unappreciated by what has been labeled as the “norm” in education and learning ability (Mastropieri et al., 2000, p.23). Inclusion allows all students to foster within themselves an
appreciation for their own abilities, while maintaining unity with the classroom whole. It is integral that we as teachers educate students, not only for the academic classroom, but for the world and lifelong journey that awaits them, and it may be argued that it is through inclusive education that all students become better prepared for the diversities and challenges that will inevitably present themselves.

In accordance with the development of social relationships and interactions among peers, it is the role of the educator to promote and encourage students’ ability to empathize and connect with those whose lives are separate from their own. Fittingly, Max discusses a particular lesson where students were studying the subject of the Second World War and the Holocaust, and were asked to participate in several activities to aid the furthering of their learning and understanding of the subject material. Max expresses,

In that lesson, we could have pictures about what happened, historically from the perspectives of other people, maybe watch a short video of people who went through it [...] I could see in the students’ faces that they were thinking about what happened, and in turn, how it had an impact on them, emotionally as well as intellectually. It is to stress the importance and value of understanding the history, lived experiences, and suffering of all people who participated in and were affected by countless hardships and sufferings.

As an educator, inquirer, and researcher, it is an engrained intrinsic belief within me that it is the responsibility of the educator to instill within the students, the realization that as members of society and the human race, we ought to be open to challenge and question the actions and choices of others in order to learn, in order to grow. One of the things taken from this discussion was the emphasis on the students’ need to feel comfortable within the classroom environment, so as to be able to participate and be an active member of the classroom community; both of my research participants alluded to the face that student success is greatly dependent upon one’s interaction and relationship with one’s peers, for without it, the student is unable to present themselves genuinely, and is therefore experiencing a limited education.
Finding #4: Multicultural education as a means to uncover discrimination: interpretation of different meanings and methods of understanding.

In discussing inclusive education and differentiated instruction through the conscious implementation of multicultural education, it was undoubted that my research participants would look to multicultural education as a means by which to inspire celebration and disintegrate hate and discrimination. Both Max and Emma alluded to the benefits of implementing literatures, perspectives, characters, opinions, artifacts, etc. within the core curriculum material, as it would increase students’ level of engagement, as well as develop a sense of inquiry and a longing to understand. Of multicultural education and its implications for classroom material to become more social and relatable, Max states:

You’re studying the history of the world, and the world is a multicultural place. So, when we imply that white – Canadian students of European background are only going to be interested in white – European background and history, it’s strange, and so one of the things that strikes me whenever we start talking about multicultural education is about changing the kinds of things that we’re going to study is the implication that people can only be interested in or only relate to something that has been passed down and influenced them throughout their culture. And I think that is not true, and I think that the best kind of History might even be the history that exposes you to other types of culture, or culture that you are not really familiar with.

Fittingly, Emma expresses sentiments for the practice and implementation of multicultural education by stating that “we live in an incredibly multicultural city, and so it’s important to make learning more meaningful and directly realistic [...] making our students more aware [...] to be aware of the whole story and being aware of different perspectives.” Max noted that all students are able to become interested in subject matter previously perceived as external and irrelevant, as it is that which is different which inspires the human mind to wander, to questions, and to yearn to become informed with that which we do not already know. Emma takes note of the reality that surrounds each and every student, educator, administrator, parent, and the like, as
that which offers unto the mind of our students, a canvas upon which to explore, a people with which to become one, a classroom within which to learn. Multicultural education is a means by which to teach “differently”; it is a means by which to reach all students within the mainstream classroom, and allow them to take initiative, to take interest, and to inspire their learning. It is through analysis of the informal interviews that I have found a common belief and value amongst my colleagues and research participants – multicultural education is intrinsically part of what it means to teach “differently” to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning disabilities. The purpose of education is to make it real, to make it applicable and it is through the practice and implementation of multicultural education that teachers are able to do so.

**Finding #5: There are a number of challenges that intermediate and secondary school teachers face when striving to implement the practice of inclusive education and differentiated instruction.**

Authors Margo A. Mastropieri and Thomas E. Scruggs (2000) of *the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies for Effective Inclusion* present the concern against the implementation and practice of inclusive education which states that general education teachers are not prepared for full inclusion; “Many general education teachers frequently report having inadequate training, time, and personnel resources for including students with disabilities in general education classes […] this is likely to affect the quality of education teachers can provide to students [as] planning and collaboration time appear critical to the successful implementation of the full-inclusion model” (Mastropieri *et al.*, 2000, p.24). In accordance with this is the concern for the lack of sufficient resources in order to educate students with special needs and disabilities within the learning classroom. Though the challenges of full inclusion and integration of students within
the mainstream classroom are prevalent, there too exist struggles pertaining to the instruction practices supporting inclusive education and differentiated instruction. Max states that “in both English and history, there exists a struggle with the English language for English Language Learners (ELL’s), in which case accommodating and modifying course material can prove to be somewhat challenging. Suggesting that inclusion and differentiation present the possibility for sensitivity issues and censorship, Max states:

The classroom should be a place where there would be a discussion, and I think that if something’s offensive to a particular culture and/or group of students then it presents an opportunity to open minds and really become the place where any challenging, pressing, and controversial issues have the possibility to be discussed. There’s a place for that if the teacher and students can handle it […] It’s a good place to address “what” and “why” people get offended, or why particular cultures avoid certain areas of focus and discussion.

In taking a similar stance on the subject of multicultural education and issues of sensitivity and censorship, Emma stated:

All students need to be challenged, and should be challenged to use the same text as all the other students, despite religious, cultural, or personal reasons, as the text that has been assigned has a particular message and meaning needing to be shared amongst the classroom community. Maybe it would be a good way to talk about the importance of having an open mind.

Both Max and Emma discuss the challenges of inclusive education and differentiation as a means by which to take advantage of inquiry based learning, allowing for meaningful learning and discussion to develop as a result of student engagement with the subject. Both teachers suggest that although multicultural education confronts students with topics and issues external to them, it is a means by which to achieve meaningful communication, distinctive and applicable education, and student interaction with course material.

When asked of the possible challenges surrounding the issue of inclusive education, Emma stated that “inclusive education is often times challenging, especially looking from a
special education point of view, where there are several students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), having been identified as Learning Disabled (LD), etc. Inclusion is wonderful and important, but it is very difficult to meet the needs of every single student within the classroom.” Furthermore, there arose the question of whether or not certain literary materials and texts would be applicable at both the intermediate and senior school levels, particularly drawing upon the question of relevance and challenge. There exist countless challenges and struggles awaiting educators passionate about the conscious choice to implement the practice of inclusive education and differentiated instruction. However, it is through my research, analysis of my data collection, and intrinsic belief that I continue to support the instructional methods and practices of teaching “differently” to a comprised of diversified learning styles and abilities, which implies teaching to a vast number of students who need to be taught on a more personal level, where their education is geared towards their success and achievement, with priority placed upon the students.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Reflections

The concepts and understanding of inclusive education and differentiated instruction, as discussed within the literature review, are similar to the ways in which intermediate and secondary English and history teachers in this research study have come to understand them. These teachers viewed inclusivity and differentiation as a means by which to strengthen and develop communication among students, peers, and educators, as well as a means by which to ensure student success, academically, socially, and emotionally. Both teachers viewed multicultural education as an extension of inclusive education, promoting students’ awareness of
the diversities within the learning environment and the global community, as well as encouraging acceptance and celebration of one another’s valuable differences. English and history teachers understood inclusivity to mean a classroom where no one is excluded, a classroom where all are appreciated, and fittingly, both teachers acknowledged the various challenges and struggles tied to the practice and implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction.

I began this Master of Teaching Research Project asking the question of what it meant to teach “differently” to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning abilities, and after having gathered the research data and analyzing it in relation to the literature, I have discovered that teaching “differently” implies teaching in the most effective way possible, being conscious of students’ ethnic, cultural, intellectual and individual diversities, and incorporating those valuable characteristics into the learning material, as well as the instructional strategies presented. Teaching “differently” means teaching to the individual student, and not the textbook, as the most effective way to teach to a classroom comprised of students with diversified learning abilities, is to teach to them all, so as to benefit all learners within that classroom. I have also understood that teaching through inclusive education and differentiated instruction is a seemingly idealistic practice and that the challenges that educators face are those surrounding issues of relevant material, censorship, sensitivity issues, and the reality that the time spent in the classroom is not enough to cover all of the material and subject matter desired.

**Methods and Practices of Implementation in secondary school English and history**

Intermediate and secondary school English and history teachers in this research study described a number of practical ways to integrate inclusive education and differentiated instruction into the mainstream classroom. Other strategies for teaching through inclusivity and
differentiation were also explored in the literature review, through the works of Van Garderen and Whittaker (2006). As was previously discussed in Chapter 4 of the research study, one of the challenges that teachers face when implementing inclusion and differentiating material is the fact that most teachers are not adequately trained to teach to a classroom comprised of diverse learning abilities, and are therefore unable to effectively integrate students in special education classrooms into mainstream classrooms. Though the literature and the research participants present countless instructional suggestions to be implemented within the classroom, it may be suggested that there ought to be further resources developed to better train teachers on how to effectively integrate all students into the mainstream classroom, while remaining inclusive of diversity and varying learning ability. As such, it is important to consider which teaching strategies are currently being implemented within the secondary school classroom, the level of effectiveness of each strategy proven through student success, and the areas of instruction that require greater reflection and development of resources. Collaboration amongst colleagues and administration, to develop strategies for best practice, may prove to be beneficial.

**Implications/Recommendations**

As has been described previously, one of the most pressing reasons behind my decision to further study the issues of inclusive education and differentiated instruction as they arose within intermediate and secondary school classrooms is that which is based in my desire to reach every student through the power of education, including those who have otherwise been left unheard. I feel that it is both my privilege and responsibility to provide for my students, an educational experience that will reside within them indefinitely, and that will not only provide an opportunity to become more knowledgeable, but an opportunity to ignite a flame within them, a
passion for that which is greater than any one of us, a yearning to know. I chose to study inclusivity and methods of differentiation out of concern for those students whose marvelous exceptionalities had been labeled as disabilities, and for those reasons, had been segregated from their peers, their learning classroom, and the mainstream educational experience. Though students with special education needs were of particular interest to me and my research, I chose to broaden my spectrum to include all students, including those who could potentially be reached by inclusive education, multicultural education, holistic education, and differentiation of course material and textual context. I chose to study instructional strategies that would promote student success, student engagement, and provide the betterment for the quality of education that students ought to receive.

The implications for practitioners in the intermediate and secondary school classrooms, about the subject of inclusivity and differentiation is that although the methods of implementation and practice are possible, they present themselves as a challenge unto all educators; each and every student learns differently, presenting unto the educator diversified and varying learning abilities, therefore making the effective practice and implementation of inclusive education and differentiated instruction idealist. With this I have learned that all effective and meaningful teaching is a result of patience, perseverance, and passion for the teaching profession. Regardless of the challenge that awaits, inclusive education and differentiated instruction, are educational means to reach every student, and to ensure that all students feel safe, welcome, and as though they are undoubtedly members and participants of the classroom community. The task of an exceptional teacher extends beyond the classroom through the development of curiosity and intellect of all students, as well as by promotion of a students’ self worth.
I acknowledge the fact that as a teacher, I hold the power to influence the thoughts and perspectives of my students, leading them to views, opinions, and theories potentially contradictory to their own. Through this, the possibility for controversy and student defiance may arise; however, it is through questioning and challenging that we become more inclined to learn from all that surrounds us, and allow ourselves to open our minds to all that is new and intriguing. The same theory is applicable to differentiated instruction and the integration of all students within the mainstream classroom. Though certain students may be initially frustrated, confused, or judgmental of others, it is the responsibility of the teacher, and in turn, of education, to provide for that student, a means by which to become accepting and encouraging of one another, despite and acknowledging of one another’s differences. Inclusive education is based upon the efforts of the community – students, families, educators, administrators, and others, providing a sense of encouragement, support, and belonging (Chriss Walther-Thomas et al., 2000, p. 7).

Further Study

Upon completing the Master of Teaching Research Project, I feel that though much work has already been done on the study of inclusive education and differentiated instruction, there remains a vast amount of information on instructional practice, implications for practice, and most importantly, student responses to the classroom implementation of inclusivity and differentiation left undiscovered. I am confident that through my research, I have been able to delve further into issues and subjects pertaining to the topic, though I have but merely scratched the surface, as I am certain that there are countless others, who could have furthered the study with their expertise. As a new and eager teacher, I look forward to putting the findings of my research into practice within my own classroom, and discovering instructional methods,
assessment strategies, and presentational practices that appeal to all students, engage their intellect, and inspire within them the desire to want to learn more.

For further study, I feel that more ought to be done on the issue pertaining to the social relationships that develop as a result of inclusive education, and comparatively, the perceptions that these students hold of all others that surround them. I believe that inclusivity and differentiation offers a vast possibility for in depth and meaningful discussions, especially within intermediate and secondary English and History classrooms. Teaching “differently” means taking chances, and it means utilizing our role as educators to benefit the quality of learning and comprehension of our students. To quote William Butler Yeats, “Teaching is not about the filling of a pail, but rather, the lighting of a fire.”
Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: ___________________

Dear ___________________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. I am studying ________________ for the purposes of investigating an educational topic as a major assignment for our program. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. My course instructor who is providing support for the process this year is Dr.__________________. My research supervisor is ____________________. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of a 40 minute interview that will be tape-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you. I can conduct the interview at your office or workplace, in a public place, or anywhere else that you might prefer.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor and my course instructor. You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the tape recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,
Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by __________________(name of researcher) and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ____________________________________________

Name (printed): _______________________________________

Date: __________________
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS TO ASK A TEACHER ABOUT MY RESEARCH TOPIC:

Interview Questions

- How long have you been teaching at the Secondary School level?
  - How long have you been a teacher of either English or History?

- In what ways have you structured your lessons and teaching thus far in the academic classroom?
  - In what ways would you consider your teaching strategies to be “traditional?”
    - And in what ways can you describe the ways in which your method of instruction is “different?”

- To the best of your knowledge, explain inclusive education.

- To the best of your knowledge, explain differentiated instruction.

- In what ways would you, as a teacher, go about teaching a lesson to a classroom comprised of students with diversified and varying learning abilities? Do you perceive this to be entirely possible?

- In what ways do you consider the practice of inclusive education and differentiated instruction to be integral to overall student learning? Explain.
  - If no, would you ever consider utilizing the practice in your own classroom?

- Describe a lesson that you have implemented within your classroom that promotes inclusive education, and has ideally resulted in overall comprehension?
  - If no, what has been the determining factor that has turned you away from inclusivity and differentiation?
In what ways would placing more focus upon conceptual and thematic learning, rather than strict attention to detail, be beneficial or detrimental to student learning and comprehension?

- In turn, beneficial or detrimental to the implementation of inclusivity and differentiation?

- To the best of your knowledge, explain multicultural education.

- In what ways is the practice of multicultural education integral to the learning and understanding of various literary texts and/or historical events?

- In what ways does multicultural education allow for course material to become more social and relatable?

- What challenges do you foresee in implementing multicultural education and inclusive education?

- In what ways would you ensure the creation of a balanced literacy program and in turn, effective teacher instruction?

- To the best of your knowledge, explain holistic education

- In what ways do you consider Holistic education to be an integral part of secondary learning, namely in the English and History classrooms?
REFERENCES


