COLLABORATIVE TEACHING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

By

Jean-Luc M. Xavier

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Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand how collaborative teaching methods are currently being used as a means to enact Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP). This study, through two semi-structured interviews explores the experiences of an administrator and educator of an elementary school as they pertain to collaborative teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy.

This study found that although maintained with difficulty, the participants value and actively partake in collaborative approaches. It was further found that an individual’s role as an administrator or educator and their cultural backgrounds may have an impact in the level of importance and understanding of CRRP. These findings call for improved levels of communication, increased professional development and further research into combined pedagogies.

I believe that working collaboratively will accelerate the process of acknowledging the importance of CRRP in addition to maximizing the benefits of collaborative approaches within its methods so that students are able to succeed academically and socially.

Key Words:

Collaborative teaching, culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, multicultural education, immigration and education
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As I have learned from experience:

“The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet”

- Aristotle
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Research Study

Canada, known for its multicultural policies and its cultural mosaic has welcomed millions of immigrants from all corners of the globe. In fact, the visible minority population increased from 4.7% in 1981, to 19.1% in 2011 (National Household Survey, 2011). This increase in visible minorities resulted in a change in Canadian linguistic diversity of which one fifth of the Canadian population spoke a language other than English, French or Aboriginal languages (Dewing, 2013). Individuals of differing languages, religions, cultures, traditions, ideologies continue to contribute to Canada’s rich diversity. In this context, challenges related to social and cultural integration became apparent (Banks, 2010). As the world continues to become more globalized, the enigmas of learning about, working with and benefiting from individuals with identities and ideologies different from our own can be daunting. The mosaic that exists on a national scale mirrors itself on a smaller scale within Canadian cities and their clusters of culturally dominant based communities. As families make the choice to immigrate to Canada and raise their children in a North American society populated with other cultures, they are faced with the difficulties of immigration, including finding employment, learning a new language, adapting to new cultures and values, racism, and access to education and professional help, which are still evident four years after having immigrated (Statistics Canada, 2005).

The children of immigrant families more often than not face intense challenges due to the differences between their cultural background and the community, into which they are trying to integrate, just as their parents do – add to this, the growing pains of youth, making for awkward and complicated situations (D’Souza, 2011). Children are influenced by many factors including
the family, educators, unique perspectives, and life experiences (Ontario, 2014). Moreover, educators can know more about the complexity of each child and can deepen children’s learning and experiences when they look at and listen to children from multiple perspectives, social and cultural contexts in which they live and play (Ontario, 2014). The family and the community act as anchors in the development of children, and play a role in the way children learn about others (Ontario, 2007). The school, more specifically education, is one of the most critical areas for national planning as they represent the primary societal institution in which a country’s dominant language and national identity is legitimized (Romaine, 2010). Teachers and educators also play a significant role in how students participate, how they learn social, cognitive and academic skills, and assist students in acquiring knowledge and skills needed later the school can be utilized to improve student achievement (Hannikainen & Rasku-Puttonen, 2010). Therefore, “[t]o implement effective multicultural education schools must help all students – including ethnic and language minority students as well as majority group students - to acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed for productive employment in highly technological and global society (Banks, 2010; p.3).

The institutionalization of multiculturalism in response to demographic change has been growing since the 1980s and have been evidenced by affirmative action initiatives aimed at reducing racial profiling, for example, and schools and educators are beginning to demonstrate a similar commitment (Dewing, 2013). Today, schools are encouraged employ a teaching staff who are reflective of their student population (TDSB, 2006). However, as this may not always be possible, educators have been incorporating a variety discourses to build bridges across the gaps existing between students and educators (Sharma, 2013). When a teacher introduces a variety of discourses, pedagogies and frameworks which have been based on anti-racism, multicultural and
inclusive education and culturally and relevant responsive methods, it can assist student immigrants improve upon academic and social achievement and reduce the negative experiences that marginalized students may encounter at school (Sharma, 2013).

**Research Problem**

Teaching programs need to focus on the role of schools in multicultural society (Kress, 2004). National education has usually resulted in the imposition of dominant cultures on the ignorance of diversity, devaluing and even destroying minority cultures (Castles, 2009). Despite growing evidence in many education systems, the trend has been not been towards recognition of the need for policy and planning, but towards the imposition of a more centralized provision and greater intolerance of diversity (Banks, 2010).

The response to the cultural mismatch between home and school environments of racially marginalized students was first identified as “cultural synchronization” coined by Jacqueline Irving (1998) which has since then developed into Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) (Ladson-Billings, 1994). CRRP is a teaching method that is both inclusive and reflective of students’ cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds that has been shown to be effective in educating culturally diverse student populations (Gay, 2010). While the effectiveness of CRRP has been recognized, teacher education has been identified as one of the obstacles to its effectiveness as teachers must learn how to recognize cultural differences and incorporate the abilities of students into their pedagogy (Gay, 2010). The difficulties of “cultural competence,” (the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than one’s own) include the fact that teachers often unknowingly discriminate against culturally different students (Moule,
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2011). As suggested by literature, collaborative teaching can be a means to contribute to increase teacher empowerment and student achievement.

Teaching within the last 20 years has adapted to a more collaborative approach with an understanding that the solo practitioner approach is no longer in sync with the changing demographics and learning needs of students (Troen & Boles, 2012). As a result, further investigative research has been conducted and suggests that teacher collaboration contributes to improved levels of efficacy amongst teachers (Goddard & Goddard, 2007). Historically, collaborative teaching has rarely been seen, but has been said to improve efficacy in teachers Shachar & Shmuelevitz, 1997 as cited in Goddard & Goddard, 2007. As other professionals such as doctors, politicians and lawyers were well immersed into a collaborative approach, it became time for teaching to follow suit (Troen & Boles, 2012). With newer and more specialized individuals becoming involved in the education of students, such as ELL support, special needs based educators, and social workers, the collaborative technique can be utilized to improve student achievement (Goddard & Goddard, 2007).

Purpose

The purpose of my proposed research is to learn how samples of teachers enact culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy through a collaborative teaching approach. Through this research, I hope to learn how these teachers enact collaborative teaching and what outcomes they observe in terms of their capacity to be responsive to the cultural diversity represented in their classrooms.
Research Questions:

The primary question guiding this research is: How is a sample of teachers currently enacting culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy through a collaborative teaching approach, and what outcomes do they observe from students?

Subsidiary Questions

- How do these teachers define and conceptualize collaborative teaching?
- What are these teachers’ beliefs about culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy?
- How did these teachers come to be involved in collaborative teaching? What experiences and factors informed this decision?
- What challenges do these teachers confront working in collaboration?
- What factors and resources support these teachers’ commitment to teaching CRRP through a collaborative approach?
- What outcomes have these teachers observed from students?
- What benefits do these teachers experience from enacting CRRP through a collaborative teaching approach?

Background of the Researcher

As an immigrant to Canada at an early age, being an ELL student, and from a recognizable minority group, I feel that my learning experience was hindered due to my differing cultural norms, stereotyping and difficulties in grasping the English language. In elementary school, there were a number of black students in my class, but many of them first generation Canadians, English speaking and from countries that did not have such strong ties to the French and education system. On a number of occasions, I encountered mockery, on part of the teachers, and
subsequently, my peers as a result of my strong Caribbean accent and the learned behaviour of rising to my feet when being addressed by a teacher and or when a teacher enters a classroom. For me, this was not odd, only the norm, one that if not followed back home would have resulted in a swift beating for disrespecting authority. Having experienced such incidents, I became quiet, reserved and unwilling to socialize and converse with my peers, which ultimately hindered my social skills and resulted in lower grades in terms of group work, and being somewhat of an outcast in team sports. These experiences, alongside racial stereotyping continued into my mid-teens, and I had always pondered how things could be different, and how it could be different today. Evidently, racism, racial profiling and racial stereotypes exist in society, and in the workplace. One is led to think that if continually acknowledged and effectively addressed, the end result after a seemingly endless number of generations, these racial issues, and in a broader sense prejudices, can be minimized so as to result in a more equitable society.

Being that it is difficult to teach without knowing your audience; a clear understanding of underlying issues will be helpful to determine the best ways in which teachers can effectively deliver curriculum in addition to teaching students how to behave in a variety of settings. I shall attempt to uncover the current extent to which collaborative teaching is employed and its effect on student behavioural and/or academic performance, and how it can be adapted and applied in demographically diverse settings in order to determine the best way in which I can incorporate my findings into a manageable practice as I begin to teach. Ultimately, this may assist in a more inclusive sense of instruction to which my future students may be more receptive.
Overview

In order to address the issues outlined in this paper, I shall endeavour to conduct qualitative research by carrying out interviews of educators with experience and knowledge in collaborative teaching in order to strengthen my understanding on how it can be best utilized and incorporated into my teaching method, so as to benefit my future students, peers, and school. In order to provide a brief understanding as to how Canada’s cultural and linguistic diversity has impacted its education system, chapter 2 will refer to Canada’s political and historical origin, in addition to its recent demographic status. Moreover, chapter 2 will involve a thorough literature review of multicultural education, culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, and collaborative teaching methods. In chapter three, an elaboration of my research design and technique will revealed and refined, the findings to which will be discussed in chapter four. Finally, in chapter five, I will delve into my findings as they relate to my literature review and generate implications and the applicability of these implications to the teaching community and my own practice as a beginner teacher.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide a brief historical context of migration and political ideologies in order to establish a basic understanding as to how immigration has affected society and education in Ontario and address how these factors have shaped our current education system. I will then review Ontario statistics, with a focus on the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA)\(^1\) to further establish the need for a diverse educator population. I then proceed with a review of literature in the areas that impact education, collaborative teaching, multicultural education and culturally responsive relevant pedagogy. More specifically, I review the themes related to the issues facing diverse student populations, how these issues are being addressed, and how collaborative teaching can assist in tackling these issues. I start by reviewing the literature in the area of historical and political context and I consider how it has set the stage for educational policy. Next I review research on the extent to which the demographics of Ontario imply a need for change in the representation of educators. From there I delve into the implications that a diversified teaching staff may have on a multicultural student body, applying a number of findings of research studies and how they could benefit when a collaborative approach is utilized. Finally, I review literature in multicultural education and CRRP and incorporate these approaches with a collaborative method in order to establish a greater benefit for all stakeholders.

Historical Context

Historically, the world has never seen migration so drastic and so extreme in numbers that it raised complex questions about citizenship, democracy and education (Banks, 2010). With the first governmental sanctions in policies of multiculturalism taking place in Canada in 1971, Canada’s response was a liberal approach to address the growing concerns of the multicultural mosaic that was forming (Banks, 2010), in an effort to replace the Western imperialist policies that promoted historic prejudices, attitudes and cultural conflict (Porter, 1975 as cited in Banks, 2010). Liberals argued that the traditional (Western imperialist) approach promoted inequality and awareness of race and ethnicity, which in turn instilled attachments to Western imperialist ideologies, ultimately resulting in employment and educational discrimination and exclusion (Glazer, 1975). In the 1960s and 1970s it became clear that the liberal-assimilationist ideology had prevailed, (which argued that the solution to this problem was to create a common national culture where individuals would be culturally and structurally assimilated (Banks, 2010). This was proving to have its limitations suggesting that “by ignoring children’s cultural backgrounds it may isolate them and undermine the values and culture of their parents and communities. The result can be low self-esteem and failure” (Castles, 2009 p.59). However, Canada’s Council of Ministers of Education for Canada (CMEC) has brought together by the governing bodies in an attempt to communicate and coordinate education, has been a hindrance to education moving away from a neoliberal discourse and thereby reaffirming neoliberal goals rather than goals of social justice (Joshee, 2010).
Demographics

Alongside the somewhat morphing of ideologies, from liberalist to liberal-assimilationist, liberalist to neo-liberalist, the institutionalization of multiculturalism has been a process, which has been ultimately hindered by the remnants of colonialism and its destruction of indigenous cultures, languages and religions leaving a poignant and challenging legacy in Canada (Banks, 2010). Moreover, a demographic divide became apparent as immigration increased, and international human rights came to the forefront problematizing citizenship and citizenship education (Banks, 2010). As Canadian policies continued to change, the face of Canadian demographics changed alongside it (Banks, 2009). Despite some encouraging developments, weak links between policy and planning render many existing policies ineffective, and without the necessary resources, policies can neither be implement nor effective (Romaine, 2007).

The population of Canada has become more and more diverse, and it is projected that by 2025, immigration in Canada will account for all population growth in the country (National Household Survey, 2011). By 2011, four in every ten Ontarians were of a visible minority (National Household Survey, 2011). Of these individuals, 26.6 percent were Allophones (individuals whose mother tongue is a language other than English or French) and the TCMA had the highest number of Allophones. Areas including Brampton, Mississauga, and Markham contained a population in which more than 50 percent of its residents comprised of members of the visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2011a). Such can be seen throughout the Greater Toronto Area, and its neighbouring municipalities, where cultural/ethnic pockets have become part of the city’s identity. With such a diverse population, how has Ontario attempted to accommodate the rise in the number of visible minority immigrants?
With the establishment of a national multicultural policy in 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to set the scene for economic, social, cultural, and political spheres in Canadian life and citizenship (Chan, 2010). With this in mind, the Ontario government has made efforts to encourage its institutions to hire individuals of visible minority in an effort to encourage applications for positions from individuals of minority (Dewing, 2013). The education system, is no different:

Changes in federal immigration policies beginning in the 1960s resulted in a massive influx of new Canadians from non-traditional non-European sources with a resulting increase in linguistic, racial, and cultural diversity in urban areas. In the mid-1970s the former Toronto and the York Boards of Education adopted the first multiculturalism and race relations policies in education in the province.

(Anderson, 2003; p.6)

Multicultural Education

Historically, Canada has looked to the United State with respect to policies in multicultural education, with Canadian organizations including the Canadian Citizenship Council (CCC) working and consulting with American scholars to create a series of books to promote the acceptance of newcomers to Canada (Joshee & Winton, 2011). However, Canadian educators and policy makers did not simply adopt all American policies, rather discussions were had regarding a number of American education policies during the 1940s and 1950s to which Canada’s response was to focus on citizenship education (Joshee & Winton, 2011). However, this being said, Canada has and does continue to borrow from the American education policies which lean toward a greater sense of social cohesion rather than a focus of multicultural policies (Joshee & Winton, 2011). As the idea that cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity could be actively and positively accommodated, they became increasingly accepted within modern-nation states (May, 2010).
James A. Banks, leading scholar and accredited founder, defines “multicultural education” as:

an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school

(Banks & Banks, 2007; p. 1 as cited in Nieto, 2010; p. 80)

However, the as noted earlier the issues facing minority students have existed for decades.

As acknowledged in literature, the incorporation of the cultural backgrounds of student into the education system is not a simple task (Ramsey, Williams and Vold, 2003). Banks’ (2010) four levels of approaches to multiculturalism as outlined below, can act as an aid to incorporate the identities of the culturally (and linguistically) diverse into an education system.

**Level 1 - The Contributions Approach** by incorporating important individuals and or traditions of different nationalities by acknowledging their contributions to society. This can be seen in such activities/events such as Black History Month and Multicultural Day.

**Level 2 - The Additive Approach** by adding content, concepts, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing the curriculum’s structure. This approach may be accomplished by the inclusion of important literature of other cultures in the analysis of literature.

**Level 3 - The Transformational Approach** requires adjusting the structure of the curriculum so that students can view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups. This would require a re-evaluation of the course content to the extent that
differing viewpoints may be interjected, so students are able to understand the views of the oppressors and the oppressed (for instance).

**Level 4 - The Social Action Approach** by allowing students to make decisions on important social issues so that they themselves can partake in solving them. This may include activities that require the students to make rules that are inclusive and qualified.

(Banks, 1999; Ramsey, Williams and Vold, 2003)

Moreover, these approaches are evident in the Canadian education system (Pashby, 2013)”. More recently, alternative methods have been implemented in Toronto to address the concerns of the visible minority. For example, in the fall of 2009, Ontario opened its first Africentric school (junior kindergarten to grade 8) in response to a community’s request in 2007 in an effort to address the achievement gap affecting students of African descent (Toronto District School Board, 2013). Since then, Toronto opened an Africentric high school in September, 2014 (Ferenc, 2013). Despite that the opening of such a school was met with much criticism and controversy (Anderson, 2009), the government and its school board began to address and respond to the requests of the community (Toronto District School Board, 2013). Much concern was raised pertaining to accusations of segregation and preferential treatment of minorities as evidenced in response to Scott Anderson’s interview with Professor George Dei, chair of the department of sociology and equity studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (2008) (Anderson, 2009). Some find it difficult to understand that there would be such a need for an Africentric school, and how that it is “fair” to tax payers and individuals of other minorities. From the comments made following the article it became discernible as to whether or not the individuals
posting these comments were of a visible minority. On one hand, views clearly reflected the fragmented mosaic of society where some individuals could not comprehend the perspectives of visible minorities; on the other hand, individuals played the proverbial “race card” making accusations that is has been “too long, this racist, white supremacist education system has failed to reflect the diversity of the people who live in Canada” (Anderson, 2009).

As above, some feel that it has taken “too long” for the education system to be more reflective. However Banks’ (2010) four phases in the Development of Ethnic Revitalization assists in understanding the various stages minorities experience in order to reach a dialogue between dominant and marginalized groups that make it possible for an Africentric school to exist. More specifically, in the first phase (characterized by ethnic polarization) and intense identity quest by victimized ethnic groups (in this case, African-Canadians/Caribbean Canadians). This victimization according to Banks, results in ethnic groups attempting to legitimize race as a foundation of their problems. Second (the precondition phase), is the creation of rising expectations among victimized ethnic groups. In the current example, this would be the response of the community’s request for a school that addressed the poor academic achievement of youths of African descent. The third phase (Institutionalization Phase), the establishment and function of the school as an institution itself, which is to be followed by the final phase (Later Phase); wherein the search for multiple-causal explanations for the problems of victimized ethnic groups and the development of dialogue between marginalized and dominant ethnic groups is explored.

For instance, the struggles of African–American students as they pertain to academic achievement have been well documented, leading the search for an answer to the question of what can be done and what should be done to promote academic success of African-American...
According to Irvine (1990), cultural synchronization, is the necessary interpersonal context that must exist between teacher and African-American students to maximize learning. This suggests that a student body of predominantly black individuals, being instructed by a white female is less likely to be receptive, if there is no established synchronization. In this sense, Banks’ contributions approach may prove to be less effective being that students are more responsive to those who reflect themselves (Smith, 2000).

On the other hand, if these approaches are implemented with a diverse set of educators or by including important members of the community i.e. local political or authoritative figures such as doctors, police men/women etc., of visible minority, who have personal experience in the topics being discussed it may bring a sense of validation to those who are of the same ethnicity. Moreover, interjecting local visible minority figures will reinforce the effect of inclusion and diverse nature of successful individuals, promoting a sense of belonging to students of a visible minority while providing exposure and understanding of students of a differing ethnicity which they may not otherwise experience. This is possibly alluded to in Banks’ contribution approach of incorporating important individuals, and in the transformational approach, wherein students can establish a sense of cultural synchronization while learning about cultural groups, from the cultural groups directly.

Factors Affecting Education

It is not difficult to comprehend that one’s place of origin, culture, ethnicity, and language can either benefit or hinder their educational achievement (Smith, 2000). Add to this, the stereotypes and racism, one’s academic achievement may be reduced if resources and solutions are not readily available (Smith, 2000; Santamaria, 2013). Moreover, it has been argued that if
too much emphasis is placed on learning about cultural differences and that the education system may produce students who are less prepared for job success as time in class is focussed on cultural differences (Castles, 2009). These fears and concerns about multicultural education and other reforms related to diversity are articulated by scholars in the United States who epitomize this stance. Further, it is recognized that the nature of educational paradigmatic responses as they often do not occur in a linear or set order make it difficult to plan a course of action prior to a multicultural education paradigm being recognized in society (Banks, 2010), creating a responsive education system.

**Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy**

Research has demonstrated the negative impact that students have experienced as a result of discrimination in terms the compromise on a student’s mental health, sense of self, and perceptions about their peers, making it necessary for teachers to be taught how to maintain a culturally sensitive classroom (Sirin et al., 2010). Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) has been greatly attributed to the works of Ladson-Billings (Santamaria, 2009; Sharma, 2013), who developed the term “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy” based on the works of a number of scholars including Mohatt and Erikson (1982) on “culturally responsiveness” which “refer[s] to a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture” (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; p. 467). CRRP is “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 1994 as cited in Coffey). It argues that culturally responsive “explicit knowledge about cultural diversity is imperative to meeting the educational needs of ethnically diverse students (Gay, 2002). Literature has supported the idea
that “culturally responsive teaching is more appropriate for responding to cultural and linguistic diversity” indicating that the integration of a student’s cultural background into education have resulted in higher academic achievement. (Santamaria. 2009; p. 214).

The focus on students with different needs, whether academic, cultural, linguistic, or otherwise, has resulted in reform that has generated various individualized educational programs, such as English Language Learner (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Differentiated Instruction (DI) programs (Santamaria, 2013). DI derives from special needs programs in which special needs children are instructed in a mainstream classroom setting and is more generally described “as a group of common theories and practices acknowledging student differences in background knowledge, readiness, language, learning style, and interests resulting in individually responsive teaching appropriate to particular student needs” (Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998, Vaughn et al., 2000, as cited in Santamaria, 2013). As culturally diverse students are often misdiagnosed with learning disabilities, Santamaria (2013) acknowledges the implied benefits that may be observed in the application of DI on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) learners, on the premise that CLD learners also include academically diverse learners.

The response to CLD learners has been Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT) which empowers students on an intellectual, emotional, social and political level by referring to a student’s culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994). As CLD learners are differentiated in a classroom, teachers have been encouraged since the 1970s to use cultural references of CLDs in their pedagogy as a resource, rather than to view them as barriers (Santamaria, 2013). This idea supports Banks’ work in multicultural education calling for change in education as it would better meet the needs of CLD students restoring dignity and pride in students’ respective cultures (Santamaria, 2013)
As previously discussed, a culturally reflective education system would be beneficial to a diverse student population as students are more able to see themselves in power structures (Smith, 2000). However, research acknowledges that a reflective and/or a diversified staff may not be sufficient, or feasible (Sirin et al., 2010).

**Collaborative Teaching**

“Collaborative teaching” in research has been found to be difficulty defined as collaboration is a concept, an action, a process, and a form of leadership (Planche, 2004). Moreover, the use of collaboration in teaching in specific areas of education has necessarily redefined itself for the scope of the literature being discussed. For instance, “co-teaching” has been defined as the collaboration as being “between general and special education teachers for all of the teaching responsibilities of all students assigned to a classroom” (Gately & Gately, 2001; p.41). More generally, Bauwens and Hourcade (1995) describe co-teaching as “a process that involves the restructuring of teaching procedures in which two or more educators possessing distinct sets of skills work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach academically and behaviourally heterogeneous groups of students in integrated educational settings” (as cited in Walther-Thomas, 1997; p.396). However, Walter-Thomas (1997) and McDaniel and Colarulli (1997) discuss co-teaching and collaborative teaching in structural terms, rather than providing specific definitions, as such, collaboration in literature has “no clearly defined boundaries” (Planche, 2004), for the purpose of this paper “collaborative teaching” is defined as Thousand et al.,2006 defines co-teaching: “two or more people shar[ing] the responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom (Thousand et al., 2006; p. 242). The purpose for such a broad, and necessary definition, is that current literature on collaborative teaching focuses
primarily on special needs individuals. Therefore, in a search of relevant literature, one falls into the trap of focusing on the benefits of collaborative teaching on specific groups rather than looking at the broader implications on diverse student populations.

Differentiated Instruction, (discussed earlier), originated from special needs programs was later found to be applicable across differing types of diverse students (Santamaria, 2013). More specifically, with the Disabilities Education Act of 1990, it had recently come to light that individuals with special needs are better addressed in a “regular classroom” via the integration of special needs educators, a notion strongly pressed by the concept of equal right to education for all students (Dohan & Schulz, 1998). Similarly, there is a dearth of research that has been conducted pertaining to the implementation of collaborative teaching approaches and their outcomes (Rivera, 2014). With this in mind, the success of special needs students would be limited if a more inclusionary approach is not available. Moreover, the applicability of students with varying needs may also be addressed in the same way as presented in the case of differentiated instruction and the expansion of its scope into other cultures, traditions and ideas and culturally relevant teaching (Santamaria, 2013).

Collaborative teaching has shown that when speech language pathologists are integrated in a regular classroom, both educators are able to observe and analyze a greater range of language skills which can assist in the understanding of the communication behaviours that are pivotal to classroom success (Dohan & Schulz, 1998; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 1991; Silliman, Wilkinson, & Hoffman, 1993). This concept could also be applied to English Language Learners. When teaching in a multicultural environment, educators will undoubtedly encounter students who have little or no understanding of the national languages. With 20-60 percent of the Canadian population learning English as a Second Language (Statistics Canada,
2011b), language is a barrier that many individuals face. In 2011, Toronto, Ontario, 240,000 individuals had no knowledge of either French or English (Statistics Canada, 2011c). More often than not, educators are faced with students who have basic knowledge of the national language, some individuals who have difficulties in grasping language and others who excel (Santamaria, 2013). In a class with varying abilities, it becomes difficult to accommodate weaker students while challenging those who are more advanced. Whilst schools in Ontario offer ESL classes and/or programs, the crux of the difficulties, does not solely stem from English being a second language. More specifically, as students speak an array of native a language, their natural language structure plays a fundamental role in the difficulties they face when learning English (Romaine, 2010). Therefore, if Dohan & Schluz’s suggestion for a more collaborative approach to integrating speech language pathologists were applied to a class of multicultural students, the language and behavioural observations would also become apparent. As collaborative teaching in team models enriches and improves both teaching and learning (McDaniel & Colarulli, 1997), this would suggest integrated classes for English rather than ESL/ELL classes.

However, benefits to the students may only exist if educators utilize this information and modify their pedagogy so as to improve the quality of teaching. If expanded, Dohan & Schluz’s findings can be of benefit to students of differing backgrounds, as in the case of differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching (Santamaria, 2013). It too can be applied to culturally linguistically diverse individuals with respect to their specific language and behavioural needs, but the greatest benefit to these students, would stem from such educators who can clearly understand students’ environment as it pertains to them (Banks, 2010). This begs the question of how much can an individual who speaks and teaches their mother tongue relate to those struggling to learn a second language? Moreover, how much empathy can be extended by a
teaching staff be to a student body when the proportion of white students at the TDSB 2011 consisted of 28 percent and teaching force was more than 70 percent Caucasian and nearly 80 percent female at the elementary level (Alphonso, C., & Hammer, K., 2013). This is not to say that a white female cannot understand or acknowledge the difficulties surrounding minority students, only that educators need to be educated in order to possess the necessary skills to avoid potential cultural misunderstandings (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). Such is the case in which parents were charged with assault for the common use of spanking to discipline children of African and Jamaican descent and in the case where a teacher called the Peel Children Aid Society “because a child was sent to school with a roti and the teacher didn’t believe it was healthy” (Toronto Star, 2014). Instances like these arise despite that the concept of needing a diversified educator population was just revisited in early 2013 when a memo was circulated within the Toronto District School Board suggesting that teaching candidates “should be male, from visible minorities or aboriginal to get an interview for a full-time teaching position” (Alphonso, C., & Hammer, K., 2013). Many individuals were shocked, more so, as this idea was formally put into writing, as policies such as this were already in place in urban areas. Further shock to the public came in the fall of 2014 when the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario posted a workshop titled “Re-thinking White Privilege”, to which Education Minister Liz Sandals responded that she was not aware of the course’s contents, but acknowledged the “real need” to address the diversity issues in schools (CBC, 2014). Clearly the crux of the issue is ensuring that educators are aware that white privilege exists, the message being conveyed “is not for white people to feel shame or guilt, but instead feel a sense of responsibility” (Köksal, 2014). While this approach may be controversial, it can create opportunities for educators who do attend to be more aware of diverse cultural issues facing their students, colleagues and community alike. Given what we know about the potential of collaborative teaching to support students with special needs, it is important, in
this context, to investigate how collaborative teaching might better support the learning needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Benefits

A benefit of collaborative teaching is a sense of cohesiveness, as a course of strength and restraint building the capacity to call for school improvement and reform (Planche, 2004). When common beliefs are shared however, the way in which its benefits are measured is somewhat obscure. For example, there is much “how to” implement collaborative systems in schools, which discuss the benefits in terms of the personal growth amongst educators (Conzemius & O’Neil, 2002), and of the benefits outlined in these materials appear to be intuitive in nature as there is little supporting research referenced.

Walther-Thomas’s study (1997) demonstrated a significant number of beneficial outcomes in support of collaborative teaching. More specifically, her research shows that collaborative teaching is beneficial to diverse learners in settings such as peer-tutoring, cooperative learning, and integrated curriculum approaches, in addition to general education students in terms of cognitive skills, social skills and overall improved peer relationships. Positive outcomes were also noted in the success of co-taught classes as opposed to isolated teacher. Educators in the study were also found to benefit from the increase of self-esteem and self-confidence that collaborative teaching brings into the forum by way of support, and feelings of family like ties within a classroom community.

While it is imperative that educators benefit from collaborative teaching, different measures of its outcomes is necessary so that it value can be appreciated at all levels. For instance, the involvement of parents has been identified as an option to consider in team teaching,
identifying benefits such as, broader perspectives, new ideas, diverse expertise, strengthened commitment to the team’s recommendations, enhanced communication, and stronger school-community relationships in (Conzemius & O’Neil, 2002). As students experience the involvement of their parents, the students will also benefit academically (Wilson and Allen 1987, as cited in Smith, 2000). Here, the concept of “children see, children do,” can also be applied, and the more interactions and collaborative projects between students, parents and teachers will add to the understanding of other cultures; a component which should be considered in collaborative systems (Troen & Boyles, 2012). Whether positively or negatively teachers and students alike will have pre-existing perceptions and attitudes towards individuals of other races; diversifying the educator population may assist in dissipating some of the negative perceptions as fellow educators and students would need to respect one another in the classroom (Banks, 2010). However, it cannot be ignored that some individuals cannot overlook racial stereotypes, merely by having to interact with them on a daily basis, hence the disbelief by many that white privilege does not exist, the true value of the outcome of breaking down such barriers, will take generations, which is why it is of such importance to implement multicultural hiring policies and collaborative approaches sooner rather than later. This is as applicable to education as it is to the community as a whole, the more interactions between diverse groups, the more opportunity there is for understanding, being that: “people are afraid of what they don’t understand”.

**Obstacles to Collaborative Teaching**

*Teacher Education*

It is easy to look only at the impact of pedagogy and the implementation of the diversification of teachers on its students. However, it is not only the Ontario government that
demonstrated concern, but some educators also grew concerned with the mis-matched population of teaching staff (Faez, 2003; Hulsebosch & Koener, 1993; Theissen, Bascia & Goodson, 1996, Kauchak & Burbank, 2003). Despite the Ontario College of Teachers’ efforts to make the teaching profession more reflective of the student body (Ontario Ministry of education, 2004), other issues have begun to surface. Hiring a more diverse staff in itself seems simple enough however, when educators of a variety of backgrounds enter the Ontario education system, preparation for these educators is necessary as many are new to the education system (Faez, 2003). Studies carried out in this area reaches as far as the needs of the diverse students, and do not focus on the need to prepare educators (Faez, 2003). Ultimately, these concerns must be addressed so that the benefits to the students can maximized. There is little point in inserting a diverse population of educators expecting them to simply teach. Similarly, educators who come from the same backgrounds as the students, will inevitably encounter similar difficulties as the students; only they will be the ones teaching. This supports Jones et al. 2013 in which colleague relationships were found to be critical in the development of beginner teachers, special education teachers in particular, when analyzing the commitment of teachers to assignment and to the school, which is paramount in any collaborative environment. Without a sense of commitment, teachers will not be able to sustain the collaborative approach that can improve student achievement resulting in a forced and predictable environment and, what Hargreaves defines as “contrived collegiality” (Datnow, 2011). However, creating a collaborative environment is not as simple as putting educators in a room and expecting them to get along and share information and ideas. Many attempts at implementing and/or sustaining collaborative approaches fail, as there is simply not enough collaboration in all areas, and the natural feeling of individuals in group settings to have a leader (Troen & Boles, 2012). In the alternative, teachers may find themselves
in a culture of group think\(^2\), which will ultimately prove to be counterproductive, as the benefits of collaborative teaching, i.e. different opinions, ideas, styles, problem solving strategies etc., would come to a complete stand still. The implication here is that as the education system continues to employ more individuals from diverse backgrounds and encouraged to work together, it can assist in dissipating the group think conundrum, as teachers will have different ways of thinking, problem solving, techniques and experiences to draw upon.

**Collaborative Approach Outcomes**

The outstanding question remaining to be addressed is the outcome of collaborative environments as it pertains to students. As with the other areas of literature of collaborative education, this topic requires much attention and research (Kress, 2004; Goddard & Goddard, 2007). Of the little information that is available, it has been found that a more inclusive community environment plays a factor in students’ academic achievement. Smith’s (2000) dissertation on *The Influences of Parent, Peer, Demographic, and Cultural Factors on Black Canadian Students’ Academic Performance and Attitudes Toward School* studies these outcomes, so that its data can be utilized to improve pedagogy when teaching students of African descent with the implication that the data can be applied across cultures. Smith’s study analyzes to what degree these factors affect students’ academic outcome concluding that parent variables have a strongest impact. Moreover, Smith goes to great lengths in her overview of the subcultures within the community and the education system, a factor receiving very little attention in research. It is suggested that the role of parents play a significant role in the attitudes that a student has towards achievement through education. An example of this exists at John A. Leslie Public School in

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\(^2\) Coined by Psychologist, Irving Janis. When members of a group are similar in qualifications, status and training, and individuals share a desire to “get along” and be agreeable, the sense of a constant unanimity is reached.
Scarborough, where approximately 70 percent of parents were born outside Canada, students are thriving in an environment where parents attend literacy and math nights, and a literacy program is in place where parents and students are encouraged to read and learn together (Alphonso, C., & Grant, T., 2013). The greater the support from parents, the more likely it is that the student will achieve a positive academic status - “Everything we know about effective school works at building on student engagement and parent engagement. We know that if parents feel welcome in their child’s learning, then that carries over into the home.” (Principal Greg McLeod, as quoted in Alphonso, C., & Grant, T., 2013). However, these results, according to Smith, vary by gender and community. Smith’s comparison of statistics between students in Toronto and Halifax demonstrate how a number of factors affect a student’s attitude towards school, and therefore, their academic success. Smith explains that “regional differences in educational outcomes, parental and peer support, and cultural beliefs/attitudes found in the current study may be a result of differences in their present day socio-demographic climate”, further noting that Toronto Blacks have favourable circumstances when examined as a homogenous group.

It is with such findings that an Africentric school such as in the Toronto case discussed earlier would even have been considered, never mind being put into practice – herein lies another issue. As controversial as it may be to some, persons of African descent are placed into one single category (Smith, 2000). However as seen in Smith, differences between African born, Caribbean born and Canadian born Blacks is prevalent, as is the number of generations their respective families have been in Canada. This according to Smith is the result of differing religion, culture, traditions, ideologies and expectations within the subgroups, so it is also of great import to identify that different subculture of races will face different issues. This does not necessarily imply the need for race/culturally centred schools, rather that students require an environment in
which they feel safe, secure and understood; a feeling that many students have yet to experience (Stead, 2012; Abbott, 2008). Stead (2012) argues that despite the entrenchment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the U.S. Constitutions, powerful social hierarchies ostracize individuals outside of social “norms” which prevents individuals from being comfortable with being themselves thereby regulating minority students to margins and re/enforcing social stratification (Brosio, 1998; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Connell, 1996; Diamond, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Ginsburg & Clift, 1990; Habermas, 1987; Liston & Zeichner, 1991; Poole & Issacs, 1993 as cited in Stead, 2012).

The sense of identity and belonging to students is paramount to students’ academic achievement which correlates to peer relationships, education perception and aspiration which in turn has an effect on students’ overall academic performance (Smith, 2000). When this concept is applied into a multicultural and culturally responsive dynamic, the question of how to provide students with a sense of belonging, when the population is so diverse is raised once again, and without collaboration, it simply will not evolve by itself.

Conclusion

As outlined above, limited literature that is available as it pertains to collaborative multicultural education and culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy. However, what is available, strongly by way of implication, is that policies and approaches currently in place may benefit further if a more collaborative model is utilized. Current literature and policies have attempted to address the issues of the diversification of educators over the last four decades through multicultural education and culturally responsive and relative pedagogy, yet to date, reflective teaching staffs has yet to manifest. Moreover, due to the lack of documented examples
of success in these areas, students are becoming segregated as a means to provide a sense of belonging within fragmented mosaic societies, rather than attempting to tackle them within the “confines” of a multicultural setting, an environment in which they will be expected to adapt into.

Despite that the collaborative approach can be seen between special educators and general teachers, educating organizations, parents and schools, and within schools themselves, the connection between these relationships to the culturally responsive and relative approach has yet to be made. These are means to encourage the integration of beginner teachers and teachers from other countries, improve support for communities, educators and students. And while the literature of the benefits of collaborative approaches has been focused on educators, it cannot be forgotten that the students can also benefit socially, academically and emotionally.

As for the next section of this paper, I am hopeful to uncover currently existing examples of a type of “culturally collaborative teaching”, as with the case of collaborative teaching – just because it is not clearly defined, does not necessarily mean that it does not exist. Suggestions made in both the works of Banks and Ladson-Billings, set a stage for collaborative approaches, but identifying examples in literature would be a matter of assumption and a result of “reading into” the implications of existing literature. However, at its core, the problem remains -

If “we can put a man on the moon and a robot on Mars – surely we can figure out how to design lessons in a way that can be understood by children of all backgrounds” (Brown, 2008)
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the key aspects of the research methodology used in this study. A qualitative study using a semi-structured interview approach was conducted. As a result of ethical clearances, my interviews were limited to educators and administrators. The interviews will endeavour to ascertain how samples of teachers enact culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy through a collaborative teaching approach. Through this research, I hope to learn how these teachers enact collaborative teaching and what outcomes they observe in terms of their capacity to be responsive to the cultural diversity represented in their classrooms. One of this research paper’s greatest limitations is not only the type of sample, but also the sample size which is not representative of a statistically relevant sample. However, being that the purpose of this study is to provide a basis for my teaching skills, the sample will be able to provide some insight as to how to incorporate collaborative teaching in culturally diverse student populations to build my own technique.

Research Approach & Procedures

While this paper is inquisitive in nature, a qualitative study approach was taken so as to allow for an exploratory outcome (Campbell, 2014). In utilizing an ethnographic approach, this would assist in my study of the collaborative process in action, in addition to grounding a theory in the views of participants which I can then apply in my own teaching.

This is a qualitative research study uses semi-structured, open ended, interviews. This study is an effort to advocate for the emancipation of marginalized groups, and therefore draws
on the critical ethnographic characteristic of qualitative research (Thomas, 1993, as cited in Creswell, 2013). This study has been undertaken in an attempt to generate new knowledge for practice that can hopefully be implemented in the future of teaching across diverse student cultures, which can be best brought to light through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviewing, according to Bernard (1988), is best used when researchers have a single opportunity to interview their participants (Rapley, 2001). Moreover, semi-structured interviews can also assist when discussing situations that address cultural and political issues, as its versatility will allow the researcher to adjust to varied responses (Bernard, 2011).

The data will be transcribed and analyzed in order to seek out and understand teachers’ perspectives on the needs of a culturally diverse student body and how these educators are currently incorporating collaborative approaches to maximize learning. The data will also be utilized to identify obstacles to these approaches. Moreover, an analysis of the findings hopes to uncover effective approaches and strategies currently being utilized by teachers.

Data Collection

For this study, I conducted two semi-structured interviews that ranged from 45-60 minutes. I interviewed one teacher and one administrator (reasons for which are provided in the “participants” section below). The semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix B) consisted of 33 questions aimed at learning about participants’ experiences in relation to multiculturalism, collaborative teaching practices and strategies for a culturally diverse classroom. These questions were selected to explore current pedagogical and collaborative approaches being utilized in diverse student populations to establish how these methods could be built upon. The interviewees determined the location of the interview and I made the necessary accommodations in order to
make the interviews more convenient for the participants. All interviews were electronically recorded on a digital Dictaphone which was placed on the table in front of the interviewee to ensure excellent sound quality.

In order to maintain confidentiality and security of the data, the recording of each interview remained in my possession and was later secured in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. The recordings were then transcribed and transcriptions were returned to the locked cabinet along with reflection pieces. The reflection pieces were written following each interview to address any lingering questions, concerns or surprises I had at the time, noting down any patterns that became apparent. The reflective components also assisted in detecting my own bias, expectations and sensitivities toward race, cultural, status, and/or stereotypes.

**Sampling Criteria**

In my search for participants, I endeavoured to locate individuals who had experience in participating in schools that had worked collaboratively with other teachers to enact CRRP as these individuals would be best able to answer my questions. However, after having made a number of inquiries, no institutions could formally agree that their collaborative methods were to enact CRRP. Rather, the response was that their school aimed at working collaboratively in order to provide the best education for their students. This being the case, I opted to interview teachers and administrators that teach or have taught, within the last two to three years in a culturally diverse classroom (at least 70% visible minority).

As the purpose of this study is also to learn about the strategies and approaches being utilized in culturally diverse student populations, it was necessary to select participants who possessed at least three years of teaching experience in said classrooms. This was to be able to
allow for questions that pertained to the benefits and/or barriers in collaborative teaching. In addition to the aforementioned requirements, participants were also required to be fully contracted teachers in either the junior to intermediate levels, so that I may employ these strategies with my future students as they would be more applicable.

*Sampling procedures*

As schools that actively practised collaborative teaching in order to pursue CRRP, could not be found, participants selected by the principals of Public School A and Public School B. These two schools were chosen both schools contained student populations that were culturally diverse, which is essential to my study. Teachers and administrators of these two schools who met the above noted sampling criteria were included in the “random” draw by the principal, and I was present when the principals each drew two names from a list of the schools’ teaching and administrative staff who had volunteered.

Unfortunately, due to lack of agreeable availability and unforeseen circumstances, participants from Public School B were unable partake in the study. As such only two interviews were conducted.

As semi-structured interviews will be conducted, participants will be able to reflect and discuss their personal experiences as they pertain to collaborative and culturally responsive and relevant approaches.

**Participants**

The selected interviewees comprised of a principal and a teacher, and although prior to the random draw, it had been established that the school had no particular focus placed on
collaborative teaching and CRRP, as a researcher, I decided to continue with the two participants. My reasoning for doing so, was as a result of difficulties locating any school that explicitly utilized collaborative methods to enact CRRP, reinforcing their respective mantras: “educate our students to ensure that they develop strong skills so that they become responsible members of society”. Upon my inquiries into methods utilized to achieve this goal, I was met with responses that confirmed my suspicions of an array of pedagogies were in place at the discretion, primarily, of the individual educator.

Being that this was the case, I thought it best to continue with these participants as I believe that the context in which I will be practicing will be in a similar environment. The selected individuals will assist me in understanding the dynamic involved between educator and administrator as they pertain to collaborative teaching. Moreover, this selection will also provide me with an insight as to how administrators assist, aid or hinder the enactment of CRRP.

As the facilitation of collaborative environments are key to productive collaborative frameworks in addition to breaking down structural and cultural barriers (Conzemius & O’Neill 2002), it was important in this study to include participants at the administration level. Principals play a major role in how the teachers were able to collaborate with one another and in understanding how organizational common goals can work in cultures and subcultures (Barbour, 2007). By extending the sample to the administration, the level of communication and support can also be reported on.
Participant Bios

*John (pseudonym)*

John is a 55 year old principal of an elementary school located in the city of Toronto with a student population of over 700 students. He has been a principal for 14 years and a teacher for 13. In his 13 years of teaching he has taught grades 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 at six different schools at the elementary level in Toronto, Ontario. The schools in which he has taught have always been culturally diverse. His current school student population comprises of individuals from Southeast Asia, India, Pakistan and Somalia. John identified that the students’ parents tend to be well educated but in low paying attempting to establish themselves in Canada. John identifies himself as an average educated white middle class Canadian male who having been born in England, is proud of his English Heritage.

*Adam (pseudonym)*

Adam is a 36 year old elementary school teacher in the city of Toronto. He has been a teacher for four years having taught grades 2/3, 3, 4/5, and currently 3/4. Adam describes the school in which he teaches as “culturally diverse” and reflective of Toronto’s population. Adam notes the student population being predominantly from the Philippines, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and China encompassing low income families. Adam identifies himself as an African Canadian.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the interviews, the audio files were transcribed into written documents. The data was then analyzed for common themes, including pride and responsibility, the participants’ respective understanding of collaborative teaching and CRRP, their benefits and challenges. I analyzed the qualitative data inductively by searching for common themes and
particulars across interviewees; one of the most popular analysis procedure (Wolcott 1994b as cited in Creswell, 2013). Being that qualitative research is generally a simultaneous collection and analysis of data whereby both mutually shape on another, the analysis of the data will also be reflexive and interactive (Sandelowski, 2000). This being said, an ethnographic approach endeavours to ground interpretations of the participants’ perspective, rather than that of the researcher (Silverman, 2010). It is for this reason that I have chosen to apply Wolcott’s data analysis strategy as identified by Creswell (2013). In doing so, I will be highlighting and reinforcing the reason for this study, identifying patterns and providing contextualization through the support of existing literature where possible and presenting my findings within tables and charts.

**Ethical Review Procedures**

It is important to disclose the purpose of the study to the participants (Creswell, 2013). I have indicated in the letter of consent (Appendix A) to the interviewees that by taking part in this study, they would not be placed at undue risk. They were assured that there are no known risks to participation. Moreover, I have also indicated that the interviewees are at liberty to decline answering any questions they are uncomfortable in answering. Being that this study delves into the realm of culture and religion, it is important that respect is afforded to these populations (LaFrance & Crazy Bull, 2009, as cited in Creswell, 2013).

As a visible researcher I was afforded an opportunity to build a rapport with the participants. After several days of developing and building a rapport with my interviewees to establish an appropriate comfort level, I verbally informed them of the purpose of this study, and advised that they all had the right to withdraw before the interview and anytime thereafter. I
further informed the participants that this withdrawal would also mean and include the deletion/destruction of any recordings and/or transcriptions.

Prior to conducting the interviews, I also informed participants of what exactly to expect and the process. I further advised them that a transcribed and audio copy of the interview would be available to the respective interviewee upon request. Due to time restrictions and for the purpose of the scope for this paper convenient sampling was utilized. Participants were also given a pseudonym. As identified by Hatch (2002, as cited in Creswell 2013), it is important to be sensitive towards vulnerable populations and imbalanced power. As such I will be bringing my identity and position to the forefront during this study as a member of the visible minority, by explaining my interest in exploring collaborative teaching amongst culturally diverse groups, and sharing a personal experiences as a student. This is to ensure transparency of my values, biases, power dynamics, and also minimizing the “bracketing” that is necessary in order to construct meaning from the responses of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

The participants were advised that upon completion of the interviews, I would share with them a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy. I further advised them that only myself as the researcher and my course instructor will have access to the raw data and that the audio recording would be destroyed after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected.

Methodological Limitations and strengths

A limitation of this study is the small sample size and the type of participants that were ethically approved. Unfortunately, parents and students could not participate. This presents a particular challenge as this paper seeks to understand the teacher dynamic of education on a cultural and collaborative level, which as identified by scholars such as Smith (2000), is also
impacted by the community. Therefore, limiting the type of participants in this study creates an additional difficulty to understanding a multifaceted idea from a single viewpoint. As such, the data collected reflects only one component of a complex and multi-faceted issue. Participants might also be more inclined to try and provide me with the “right” answer in fear that they might appear discriminatory. Additionally, there is a big difference between what they might want for their classroom and what they actually do in practice. This is a further limitation of this study. As ethical approval was only extended to a single research method (interview), this restriction would not allow for surveys or observations. Surveys and observations of the interviewee could potentially uncover strategies and/or approaches being utilized that the teachers are unaware.

**Strengths**

On the other hand, although the sample size is small, this has provided me with the ability to familiarize myself with the participants. Having the benefit of having met and worked with the participants of the study during one of my practicums, I have been afforded the opportunity to build a rapport and create a more relaxed interviewing experience.

Moreover, my personal experience as an immigrant to Canada, with English as my second language, and being of African descent, provides with me with a lens from which I am able to approach this subject matter in reflective way. Though by no means, an expert, my past experiences will provide me with a greater understanding as to the context in which I was educated. This will enable me to apply the knowledge gained from the literature reviewed and my findings from this study to improve my teaching practice going forward. Moreover,
Conclusion

In this chapter, I started by providing a brief overview of the research methodology that was used for this study. I began by giving an introduction to my research and stating my research question which addresses what collaborative approaches are being utilized to encourage a culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy in the classroom. I then discussed the procedure of the qualitative study. Afterwards, the sampling criteria and participant bios for my interviewees were touched upon. I then discussed the data analysis procedure and ethical review procedures. Finally, methodological limitations were addressed.

In chapter 4 I will report my findings and overarching common themes as uncovered in the process of the interviews. I will also be integrating my reflective pieces to detail my trail of thought so as to provide a basis for the recommendations I will make in chapter 5, which will also include the implications and of my findings further outlining the things that I have learnt and how they can be applied in my own pedagogy.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter outlines an analysis of the data obtained during the two in person interviews conducted, in an effort to learn the ways in which collaborative teaching is utilized to enact Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy. These interviews were recorded and then later transcribed in order to document the experiences of an administrator (John) and educator (Adam) of an elementary school in the Toronto District School Board. As indicated in chapter 3 of this paper the names of the participants have been replaced with pseudonyms as have the names of the students being discussed and the name of the school.

As a result of the interviews conducted a plethora of information emerged. This information was then coded, and will now be presented by way of themes interpreted through the data obtained. In order to provide context, this chapter will first provide a brief introduction to the participants, which will be then be followed by a discussion of their responses as they relate to the following themes and sub-themes uncovered in the interviews:

- Pride and Responsibility
- Collaborative Teaching
  - Understanding
  - Importance and benefits
  - Challenges
- Culturally Responsive and Relevant pedagogy
  - Understanding
  - Importance and benefits
  - Challenges
- Cultural Identity affects pedagogy
The Participants

John

John is a principal of an elementary school located in the city of Toronto with a student population of over 700 students. He has been a principal for 14 years and a teacher for 13. In his 13 years of teaching he has taught grades 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 at six different schools at the elementary level. The schools in which he has taught have always been culturally diverse. His current school student population comprises of individuals from Southeast Asia, India, Pakistan and Somalia. John identified that the students’ parents tend to be well educated but in low paying attempting to establish themselves in Canada. John identifies himself as being an average educated white middle class Canadian male who having been born in England, is proud of his English Heritage. John further noted that within equity circles he was defined as a "large pack, pack of privilege."

Adam

Adam is an elementary school teacher in the city of Toronto. He has been a teacher for four years having taught grades 2/3, 3, 4/5, and currently 3/4. Adam describes the school in which he teaches as “culturally diverse.” Adam explained that the student population comprised of individuals from the Philippines, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and China encompassing low income families. Adam identifies himself as an African Canadian.

Sense of Pride and Responsibility

Both John and Adam demonstrate a sense of pride and responsibility with respect to their positions. John’s responses to the questions presented distinct differences in terms of pride and responsibility as an authoritative figure, an official person of the school in addition to a
disciplinarian, a "boss", further describing himself as "the ultimate authority figure" in his role as a leader. Conversely, Adam’s responses and interests seem to be more aligned with the students and the community. When asked about his role, Adam recognized that his role was beyond that of a disciplinarian. He noted that he saw himself as another “parent, a role model, mentor and a counsellor” further adding that “as teachers we have to make the students feel like they are important people in society”.

It is important to note the pride that the participants place on their roles as it could suggest that the participants experience a sense of self-fulfillment. Initially, administrators were included in the sample as a means to identify the differences between administrators and teachers as they pertain to collaborative teaching. As recognized in literature, a sense of cohesiveness is necessary in order to improve and reform schools (Planche, 2004), whilst it would be simpler to ignore the hierarchical dynamics in collaborative teaching and CRRP, its significance with respect to both could not be ignored. As evidenced in the participants’ pride and responsibility, it becomes clearer that they each view their positions in a different light; Adam sees his role beyond that of the classroom and the school, whereas John, views his role as confined within the realm of the school. Though, not delved into deeper, the difference in accountability, can be seen to pose a conflict in attempts to working collaboratively.

**Collaborative Teaching Defined**

The term “collaborative teaching” in literature thus far includes a “mishmash” of multiple educators working together to teach students, in pairs, groups and even communities (Planche, 2004). When requested to define “collaborative teaching,” Adam defined collaborative teaching as “teachers working together in different ways to benefit the community, school and
students”. John on the other hand, responded with “that’s a loaded question” further pointing out that there are several types, and a single definition would not suffice to distinguish the term. Clearly, John had reinforced the findings of current literature surrounding the difficulties with respect to defining collaborative teaching as noted by Walter-Thomas (1997) and noted that collaborative teaching has no clear boundaries (Planche, 2004).

Of note, in their definitions of collaborative teaching, John focussed on the role of the educators. John, placed emphasis on the concept of multiple teachers working together to instruct a group of students further identifying that the teachers, coaches and leaders as the primary players. However, Adam’s understanding of collaborative teaching is one that focused on the concept of teachers planning and working together, in addition to recognizing its focus as its benefit to the students.

The difference in the participants’ definition, identify a potential disconnect in the functioning of collaborative teaching, particularly, in that John and Adam work at the same school. Without a synonymous understanding of the roles being played by members of the group collaborating, the sense of responsibility may shift, and the sense of commitment reduced. This in turn would essentially disrupt the collegial relationships that are essential to the collaborative environment (Jones et al., 2013). The role of John in collaborative teaching is further removed, and therefore limited which may explain his lack of focus on the benefits to the students and his focus keeping the teachers on the “continuum” (discussed below).

**The Importance and Benefits of Collaborative Teaching**

The participants were interviewed with respect to their beliefs surrounding collaborative teaching. As stipulated by literature, collaborative teaching in team models enrich and improve
teaching and learning (McDaniel & Colarulli, 1997). Both John and Adam recognized that collaborative teaching is imperative as educators. John felt that as educators, "we have a responsibility to work collaboratively because it results in better teaching - this in turn supports students". Adam also felt that it was important to maximize collaborative teaching. He noted that "it's important that teachers share their ideas since we all have a wealth of information that can benefit students". Adam continued that he found it beneficial to his own personal career as he liked learning as much as he could and he found that being a new teacher there were teachers within his school who had a significant more experience than himself and he would be able to ask and work with others and "feed" off their knowledge. Adam further noted that working with other teachers would also assist them in being aware of their own biases as they teach. This indicated that working with others could also contribute to the ideas being incorporated in their classrooms to reflect the identities of the students in the class whilst teaching curriculum.

Collaboration for Adam occurs in a variety of ways. For instance, the Internet and social media provide a resource that was not previously available to other educators. Of interest, Adam noted that some educators agree to work together once every two weeks to share different materials. This is a forum in which they would meet and discuss the outcomes (student responses) that have taken place in the classroom as a result of utilizing materials or methods discussed in previous meetings. Here, teachers share their observations and identify as a group what has been working well, and what has not so that they can collectively strategize and address things that need to be changed.

John’s involvement in collaborative teaching dealt with the arranging of preparation periods to take place at the same time amongst teachers. He explained that teachers had access to
resources, coaches and one another in order for teachers to aid their collaborative efforts. However, as discussed below, getting teachers to work together posed to be a problem.

Challenges to Collaborative Teaching

As previously identified in chapter 2 of this paper, obstacles with respect to collaboration exist in teaching. Adam indicated that it is necessary to establish a common goal when dealing with collaboration. This includes administrators and teachers alike. “Without a common goal, the sense of direction in terms of methods of instruction, fluidity in a student’s education, and I mean just trying to work together, conflict is a sure thing, and without collaboration nothing works”. The tone in which Adam delivered this was somewhat shocking, when queried further, he explained, that there are times when

“We can't agree all the time, but there are also some times when you simply can't agree to disagree...If you consider that students have different teachers and that curriculum must build on top of itself you can't just go off and do and teach however and whatever you feel like...students come first and as teachers, as adults we have to ensure that the teaching process throughout the child's education...flows as much as possible.”

Adam shared that beyond common goals, time and resources (material) are major obstacles to collaborative teaching. Adam spoke that beyond teachers who share the same prep period gathering biweekly, it was difficult to meet more frequently.

“Even if you have the same ideas, there are still things you need to get done by yourself to prepare for your class. It’s a shame though, I mean one huge time saver is sharing lesson plans, and if you can, and are willing to do that you can have a little extra time to keep building on what works.”
Limited access to printing credits also posed a concern when working in groups. “Some teachers are very conscious about how many printing credits they have, and are unwilling to put some of the projects that need to be printed onto their accounts. This means that those who are willing to use their credits end up with a short fall, and some teachers get really annoyed when they are only using their credits every time they meet.” Whilst it is understandable that schools have their limits with respect to funding, it is disappointing to find that something as necessary as printing was found by Adam to prevent some teachers from returning to work together during shared prep periods.

John’s responses to collaborative teaching questions were very passionate. He spoke of having to “insist”, “support” and “put pressure” on teachers to get them to work collaboratively. “I have provided time in the timetable for teachers to work together…teachers are accountable for the time and the outcomes of their time together…collaboration is a continuum so teachers come to it at varying places…you need to understand this and then move teachers along this continuum.” His tone and body language spoke to his frustrations, as he had indicated that collaboration has been important to him from when he decided to go into teaching. It was odd to note that he felt that teaching is a “profession [that] continues to be one in which many teachers work in isolation” as this was not my experience in my practicums, or the literature reviewed (Troen & Boles, 2012).

John’s experience with the nature of the teachers’ willingness to participate in collaborative efforts posed some concern. He noted the difficulties in enforcing teachers to work together, challenging their commitment. John further expressed that despite having allotted time for teachers to collaborate, some teachers are unwilling to participate. John expressed that
administration must be present to ensure that these collaborative efforts to take place, moreover, he found that he had “insisted...through support and pressure”.

John’s experience with these challenges is well documented in literature. A collaborative environment is not simple to implement or maintain (Troen & Boles, 2012), essentially, teachers being forced, or “pressed” into working together may in fact result in contrived congeniality (Datnow, 2011), and an atmosphere of the presence of people, but not like minds.

**Understanding of Culturally Responsive and Relevant pedagogy**

Both participants defined "Culturally Responsive and Relevant pedagogy" as a student’s culture being reflected in the curriculum. Throughout their responses to CRRP questions, John and Adam’s understanding of CRRP demonstrated that this form of pedagogy is beyond merely learning about a few cultural events and sharing it with their students. Both participants demonstrated that CRRP is an ongoing “living thing” that changes with time and student populations. This was interesting being that in the literature reviewed it was found that teacher education on CRRP was a barrier to enacting it (Gay, 2010).

However, beyond these two points, the similarities in the participants’ responses to questions pertaining to CRRP differ drastically. Adam and John’s views of CRRP identify the differences as seen in the literature reviewed. For instance, Adam’s approaches appear to mirror Banks’ levels three; which involves students making decisions in social issues so as to become “active players” to solutions, and four, which encompass the idea of making alterations to the curriculum so that students can view concepts, events and themes from multiple perspectives. (Banks, 1999; Ramsey, Williams and Vold, 2013). On the other hand, John’s understanding of
CRRP seems to be more similar to the concept of instruction, as suggested by the work of Ladson-Billings (1995a and 1995b).

Adam’s responses echoed the student centred approach, and experienced that students would be more attentive in class “because the information they are receiving and giving is about them”. Adam was also able to provide a number of examples in which CRRP had been utilized in his classroom and was able to provide his personal experiences in enacting CRRP whilst consciously being aware of the school’s diverse population. Adam demonstrated a personal sense of responsibility when enacting culturally relevant pedagogy as he felt that it was important that students to feel important in society. He felt that it was one of the ways to motivate students.

On the other hand, John's tone and language when discussing CRRP, was very fragmented and resistant. John did not present that he felt that CRRP is imperative to a student's education. He explained that there were resources provided by the school to enable teachers who were interested in enacting CRRP. “As a Model School we have access to a Model School’s curriculum and a coach to provide support for curriculum implementation…so they have the access to the resources and support available to them”. John admitted, though not expressly, that model coaches provide support for the teachers. Beyond this, John was able to add that his school engages Multiculturalism Days, and events that pay tribute to other cultures, such as Asian Concerts and African nights, but that these examples are based on performance and not on instruction. John’s understanding of CRRP, is well noted. He has acknowledged that his school as in Banks’ Level two approach to Multiculturalism, in which content, concepts, themes and perspectives are added, but without the need to change the structure of the curriculum (Banks, 2010). Adam’s method takes place at a more “grassroots” level and he has begun to dabble in Bank’s Level 3, the Transformational Approach. Adam notes that in his sharing of ideas with teachers, they would discuss classroom responses when students were learning about specific
cultures within the class. “Some of the teachers will take the methods others have tried, or share a story about another culture, and see if they get the same response from students…it’s really interesting…sometimes the kids who are from the same culture, but follow different traditions, you end up with this almost adult debate coming from the students”.

Although Adam and John both noted the significance of cultural perspectives and culturally reflective curriculum, it was not evident as to how deep their understanding of CRRP was, until examples of enacting CRRP were provided. John through is identifying of the difference of culturally reflectiveness not a means of instruction, failed to recognize the potential of CRRP and how it affects and benefits the experience of student. Moreover, his resistance to acknowledging its importance reaffirms Ladson-Billings’ need for educators to change the way they think about the curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 2008).

Benefits of CRRP

Adam found that reflecting students’ cultural identities within the curriculum was very beneficial to the students in their understanding of other cultures and their response in class. He saw that when discussing cultural events and inviting students to discuss their own personal experiences and family celebrations, the students speaking would get excited and feel more confident as they knew what they were talking about. Moreover Adam noted the information being presented by the student was not only beneficial to student education, but also beneficial to his own. “There’s so much that I have learnt from colleagues, parents and students about cultures that I wouldn’t have learnt by myself”.

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Adam’s experience, affirms that a CRRP approach engages more than a single population, moreover, it presents a more meaningful relationships between the students, the students and teachers, and teachers themselves (Hong & Anderson, 2006; Milner, 2011).

John also identified that a benefit of CRRP to students and spoke of culturally responsive and pedagogy as a means to providing multiple perspectives to the students in effort to help students to become "critical learners and global citizens" and did indicated that CRRP had a larger role to play with respect to looking at issues critically with a social justice lens and one that is more intertwined with society as a whole.

Obstacles and Challenges to CRRP

Literature presents that the incorporation of cultural backgrounds in curriculum is not simple (Ramsey, Williams & Vold, 2003), yet despite this, Adam was able to work with other teachers and seek out online information in order to overcome these obstacles, even though he admitted that additional resources, feedback and a hands on presence would be beneficial to his efforts in effectively enacting CRRP. Moreover, Adam stated that “there are no conflicts among teachers because most of us agree that making the curriculum more relevant to the identity of our students is important.”

However, Adam did note that time was a challenge in CRRP. “Meeting with administration a couple times a year is not enough. Especially when you aim get a prep time with some teachers who you know share the same ideas as you do about CRRP…this is very hard to do without complications”. Adam also felt that his views on CRRP were not always supported to the same degree by the administrators, which he believes has an impact on the already limited resources for his implementation.
“Having administrators who are on the same page as you, and want to improve the culture of the school is important. Sometimes they just kind of brush it off and you can’t help but think that you don’t have resources because they don’t agree. That might not be the case, but it sure feels like it.”

Conversely, John presented CRRP almost as though it was an obstacle he noted that “most teachers don’t have the motivation, time or dedication to implement CRRP…implementing CRRP is hard work…it involves time, commitment, and desire to be reflective and challenge your own assumptions and beliefs.” John went further to explain that there is a knowledge gap, and that “some teachers aren’t even aware of CRRP…the PD [professional development] required to understand and implement CRRP in a meaningful way isn’t provided.”

Clearly, the lack of knowledge, motivation and time are not problems that can be solved by additional funding and resources as Adam may feel, but the teachers require additional education, direction and support from their peers (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011).

**Collaborative Teaching in CRRP**

When interviewed about collaborative teaching as a means to enact CRRP Adam was very responsive. He was able to distinguish its importance when sharing with other teachers of other backgrounds, particularly in his anecdotes pertaining to students who share a cultural identity with another member of staff.

“I’m an African Canadian, and there aren’t too many students who can identify with me, or me with them, but I can talk to my colleagues in our prep meetings and learn about their cultural norms, differences, events, just as much as students can learn from me. Other than that, collaboration for me mostly happens online when reading posts on teaching. I know obviously it’s not collaborative in its traditional form, but when messages get sent back and forth in the kind of chat room, you clearly aren’t doing it all by your lonesome”
John on the other hand, felt that collaborative teaching and CRRP are not connected in any way. “The focus of collaborative teaching is not CRRP. It might be part of it, if teachers choose to focus on CRRP during that time…CRRP is more typically done by individual teachers where they have an interest as part of our Model Schools initiative.” The differences and the lack of connection between John and Adam’s idea of CRRP is imperative to understanding the conflict that can potentially arise from CRRP. These differences may be cultural and hierarchical but, essentially they speak to their own personal experiences in their own learning. When being interviewed about their personal background and whether they felt that there in cultures were reflected in their learning experience John clearly saw that his was reflective.

The concept, educators being reflective of the community, has been noted to have an impact on the response of students, was reinforced by the conducting of the interviews for the purpose of this paper. More specifically, Adam had received comments on various occasions from other members of staff that some students, particularly male, had been more responsive to his instruction than any other member of staff. In his anecdote, Adam elaborated:

“Steve” was known to be a difficult student throughout his studies at School B, and when he was in my class, he just somehow seemed to take to me....he was known to be the class clown and very disruptive, but I didn’t change my teaching, I simply ignore his rebellious ways of deliberately shuffling papers when I was talking and constantly tap his pen on his desk, when he became my student. When he didn’t respond to that, I simply asked him why he did it, looked him in the eye and told him that it was unacceptable, and that it was disruptive. After that, I would call on him in class, and commend him for being well behaved, and he continued to behave...I didn’t see him as a “problem child” at all. After that, I mean, he wasn’t a model student, but he would come to me to ask questions, and do a “look what I did” thing and it was rewarding to see as a teacher. It was my colleagues after a number of discussions that made me believe that it might have been related to my being African Canadian and male. I mean essentially, most of my colleagues take the same approach when it comes to “discipline”.
Adam’s experience may or may not have been a result of “Steve” being of Jamaican origin, but there is room for interpretation that Steve’s response to his previous teachers, being female and white, could have played a role. As stipulated by Smith (2000), Steve may have been able to identify himself with Adam, which in turn was reflected in his responses when being taught by someone with whom he could identify himself.

Conversely, John, felt that the diversity of staff had no bearing on the implementation of CRRP. It must be noted that John is a white male which is a factor to consider when discussing cultural issues so as to be conscious of potential cultural biases and varied cultural experiences.

As provided by this example, John may have been experiencing difficulty of "cultural competence" this would be the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than one's own as. As stipulated by Moule (2011), John may in fact have been unknowingly discriminating against differently cultured students, simply by not being aware, that cultural diversity in educator population does indeed play a part in a student’s achievement.

**Cultural Identity Affects Teaching Goals**

Both participants recognized that their cultural identities and experience as students play a part in their teaching methods.

When questioned about their learning experiences, John explained his education was Eurocentric. He felt that the reason for the lack of cultural material taught within his classes growing up was because his class was not culturally diverse. When asked as to whether his cultural identity was reflected in his learning material he responded "when I was in school the cultural make-up of Toronto was very different. At my high school in Scarborough, for example,
there was one black family who attended school. As a result, the novels I read where the classics which were Eurocentric. But that was reflective of the community at that time. Obviously society has dramatically changed in Toronto and Canada since then due to immigration."

John’s response, as supported by literature, demonstrates that there is a greater need for teacher education with respect to understanding the importance of culturally reflective educators (Faez, 2003). It is possible that John’s response is based on the fact that because his identity was reflected in his education, that he does not feel the importance of its inclusion in education today. However, his response did not support literature in the sense that educators were becoming more concerned with culturally reflective teaching staff (Faez, 2003; Hulsebosch & Koener, 1993; Theissen, Bascia & Goodson, 1996; Kauchak and Burbank, 2003). It is evident that despite the Ontario College of Teachers’ effort to put pressure on the importance of reflective teaching staff, it was not being accepted by at least one principal, which poses to be problematic for CRRP if more principals are of the same opinion.

John’s response also possibly speaks to the issue of white privilege. However, it is not necessarily the case that John was aware of his actions or the reasons for his actions, and guilt or shame need not be part of the message being conveyed as a result, rather responsibility (Köskal, 2014). Though the question of “how” is not the question that remains; as literature suggests that education for educators can provide the necessary skills to avoid these issues (Ladson-Billings, 1995a), but more of how can one be taught to change something that they are not aware, or not believing that there is a problem.

Adam, on the other hand, confirmed that his cultural identity was not reflected in the curriculum he was being taught. He noted that “it’s not one of those things you really notice
when you are being taught material. It’s something that became more apparent to me as I got older. But by the time I got to university and then teacher’s college, that’s when it really kinda hit me.” Adam further indicated that his knowledge and understanding of CRRP and his realization that it was not part of his education has been a “kick start” to ensuring that his teaching methods include culturally responsive and relevant methods.

The participants’ responses suggest a number of possibilities. However, as noted above, Adam found that his endeavor to include culturally relevant material is a personal one. Adam explained that any information that he was to find, was a result of his personal searches and experience working with other teachers of different cultures, rather than from resources within the school. This difference is important to note being that Adam is an African Canadian teacher, and John a white Canadian principal. This speaks volumes as to whether or not the difference is simply because of their differing views of importance of CRRP or because they come from differing cultural backgrounds and have different educational experiences, or because of the different roles they play.

Adam’s educational experience and response with respect to culturally reflective staff and CRRP may have contributed to his pedagogy on a conscious level that is not known to John. As supported by literature, Adam would likely be able to understand students’ environment as it pertains to them (Banks, 201) as he had lived through it, thereby assisting in the understanding of the behaviours that are paramount to success in the classroom (Dohan & Schulz, 1998).

Conclusion

Interestingly, as noted in the reflection portion of this paper, the reason for which I had steered my MTRP in the direction of collaborative teaching as a part of CRRP was because of my
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culture and my educational experience. Having conducted the literature review and the collection of data, it is not until now that I am forced to acknowledge that my lens has been forgotten. I must constantly remind myself as an educator that the lens from which I am seeing is different from that of my colleagues, and administrators. Biases are bound to exist and will impact the learning of students (Solomon & Daniels, 2009) and cultural competence will always be a part of education in a culturally diverse school. As such, John’s responses and the analysis of same, encompasses a number of variables which need to be delved into at a deeper level rather than simply attributing his responses to white privilege and his role as a principal and are unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper.

Overall, the information obtained from the two interviews have been very helpful to me personally. Unfortunately, I had anticipated a total of four interviews which would have provided me with a greater insight as to collaborative teaching in CRRP. Due to lack of agreeable meeting times I was unable to carry out the additional two interviews which may or may not have been able to provide me with a greater understanding or to specifically identify the additional variables affecting the responses I have obtained.

Adam and John have provided me with an “eye-opener” as to whether or not collaborative teaching and CRRP are actually manageable within the school setting. With respect to literature, the definitions of collaborative teaching and CRRP are reinforced despite the value of which they carry in each participant’s pedagogy thus far.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter outlines the origin of this MTRP, its objective and its purpose. It will provide a brief overview of the research in multicultural education and collaborative pedagogy and investigate as to how these two approaches combined can impact the education of a culturally diverse population. I will then proceed to introduce the qualitative study and the interview process, outline its findings, implications, attempt to address the initial questions posed and finally conclude with recommendations, all in an effort to answer the question: how a sample of teachers utilize collaborative teaching as part of culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy?

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to understand the ways that educators utilize collaborative teaching methods as a means to support Culturally Responsive Relative Pedagogy, and to incorporate the successful approaches to my teaching practice.

Overview

As discussed in chapter 2 of this paper, Canada's wave of immigration and its liberal approach to handling the growing concerns of the multicultural mosaic generated western imperialist policies that often promoted prejudice and conflict (Banks, 2010). These policies resulted in inequality in the round of employment and education which included exclusion (Glazer, 1975). The liberal-assimilationist ideology that prevailed proved to have its limits when it became recognised that ignoring a child's culture background may cause the child to feel
isolated and undermine the values of their parents and their cultures which can generate low self-esteem and failure (Castles, 2009).

Although a number of educational governing bodies have attempted to move away from a neoliberal discourse there have been a number of obstacles that prevented in selling the ideas of social justice (Joshee, 2010). The morphing of ideologies from liberalists to liberal-assimilationist, to neoliberalist created challenges to the institutionalisation of multiculturalism, with the remnants of colonialism and effort to destroy indigenous cultures, language and religion hindering change (Banks, 2010).

Although Canada has attempted to adjust its cultural educational policies in the 1960s (Anderson, 2003) by working alongside American scholars in order to create a series of educational tools to promote the acceptance of immigrants to Canada (Joshee & Winton, 2011), Canadian institutions could not simply borrow from and adopt from its American neighbours; Canada’s own response to citizenship immigration education became necessary, giving rise to multicultural education.

Research has shown that the integration of a student’s culture within education has resulted in a higher academic achievement (Sharma, 2009), it is questionable as to why these findings have not dominated pedagogy in a society as diverse as Ontario.

The focus of education should encompass various student needs whether they be academic, cultural or linguistic. Differentiated Instruction programs have been implemented within schools as a response to special needs education and have demonstrated that individuals are more responsive to the teaching approaches (Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998; Vaughn et al.,
2000, as cited in Santamaria, 2013). Similarly, English Language Learner programs have also been implemented to address the needs of those learning English.

The response to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners (CDL) is Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT) which aims to empower students by referring to a student’s culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). However, despite encouragement since the 1970s CRT has not yet taken root in education systems, and has resulted in the mislabelling of culturally diverse learners as those requiring Differentiated Instruction.

As such, CRT, now more formally recognized as Culturally Responsive and Collaborative Education, needs to be implemented within culturally diverse populations to address the concerns of visible minorities. In 2009, Ontario provided response to the growing achievement gap affecting students of African descent, by opening the doors to an Africentric school. Although the opening of this school opened a Pandora's Box of criticism and controversy (Anderson, 2009), the needs of the students had finally come first and were being addressed. The success of the Africentric school reinforces the finding a student’s sense of identity is paramount to their academic achievement, which also correlate with to their relationships and attitude towards education (Smith, 2000).

The Study

This study attempts to uncover teachers’ understanding of collaborative teaching and CRRP, in addition to identifying the benefits and obstacles, and strategies executed in classrooms. Barriers and benefits to collaborative teaching and CRRP were also identified. The information obtained has assisted me in determining my own teaching practice going forward and also to provide an insight for other educators, administrators, and those individuals in the
education sector. This chapter aims to continue to analyse the findings contained in chapter 4 and to extrapolate the implications and limitations of the study.

**Methodology**

This qualitative study involved using a semi-structured interview approach so as to allow for an exploratory outcome. Two participants who have taught for at least two to three years within a mostly diverse cross room (at least 70% was a minority) were selected by way of a random draw with in a school located in the Toronto District School Board. This qualitative research study comprised of two open ended question interviews, ranging from 45 to 60 minutes in duration, utilized an ethnographic approach as a means to advocate for the Emancipation of marginalised groups. 33 questions were selected to uncover the current pedagogical and collaborative approaches being used in present-day classrooms. Confidentiality was maintained by securing all notes and recordings, and the names of the individuals replaced with pseudonyms.

**Findings**

Various themes were uncovered in the process of the interviews. These included pride and responsibility, the underpinnings of collaborative teaching and culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy as they relate to and are understood by the participants and how cultural identity affects pedagogy.

Both participants demonstrated a sense of pride and responsibility with respect to their positions. John's responses to the questions posed presented a sense of pride and responsibility as an authoritative figure and official person of the school. Moreover his responses demonstrated that they were clearly associated with his role as an administrator. On the other hand, Adam
exemplified pride in his active role of a student's learning process in addition to playing the part as a parental figure.

Both John and Adam identified that there is a profound importance in collaborative teaching and both defined collaborative teaching in similar terms thereby establishing a formal place for collaborative pedagogy within the school. Moreover, the participants’ commitment to collaborative teaching was found to be of great value.

Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy on the other hand, was not seen to carry the same importance to John and Adam. When questioned about CRRP John's responses were very fragmented and resistant and did not present that he felt that CRRP was imperative to student education. John indicated that there were various resources in place to support the pedagogy of various educators within the school, but did not specify that CRRP was a strong focus. Cultural background and personal educational experiences as a matter of perspective became a question raised in determining the level of importance placed on CRRP.

Conversely, Adam's responses were more in line with the student centre approach and he was able to elaborate on his own personal experiences contributing to his sense of importance to enacting CRRP. Adam expressed that he was consciously aware of the school’s diverse population and as such, connected with a sense of personal responsibility in an effort to make his students feel more important in society as a means to motivate his students.

Contrived collegiality and resources were identified as obstacles to collaborative teaching, whereas lack of resources, knowledge, motivation and interest hindered the implementation of CRRP. Moreover, collaborative teaching as a means to implement CRRP has been found to be a personal endeavour to collaboratively work with educators external to one’s immediate peers.
Implications

Communication

The data collected via the two interviews imply that the lines of communication between administration and educators need to be broadened. Although both Adam and John teach within the same school, their ideas, particularly as they pertain to CRRP, are drastically different. Whereas Adam focuses on the classroom level, John’s primary concerns are with respect to the functioning of the school as a whole. Adam’s concerns appear to be more aligned with the benefits of the students and parents. Whilst this may be considered appropriate in terms of roles and responsibilities, as a community the focus needs to be on the education of students. Principals and teachers need to work together so that resources can be combined and streamlined; if principals place a formal importance or openly recognize various pedagogies; teachers may be more able to implement them from within the classroom, with the assistance from within the school.

It is interesting to see that the lines of communication within a school are so fragmented. If both Adam and John recognize the importance of collaborative teaching, how effective are their collaborative efforts?

This being said, collaborative teaching is relatively new; and has only, within the last two decades, diverged from a solo practitioner approach, as it had been found that “going it alone” approach was less beneficial to the needs of students (Troen & Boles, 2012). Research indicates that collaborative teaching improves efficacy in teachers (Goddard & Goddard, 2007), in addition to being attributed with providing a sense of cohesiveness and strength as a means to paving the way for school improvement and reform (Planche, 2004).
Importance of CRRP

John does not equate CRRP to be as important to student education as Adam which may potentially create a barrier to meeting the needs of Adam and other educators who may wish to implement pedagogical practices. These lines of disconnect may limit the resources available to educators, hinder their pedagogy and create a more sole-practitioner environment, and therefore create an obstacle to collaborative approaches.

As such, educators and administrators require further professional development, perhaps by actively participate in research studies, becoming involved with teacher candidates, or having government regulated requirements to ensure that the educator’s knowledge is up to date. Whilst other occupations are legally bound in order to maintain licensing and/or designations, teachers too should be held to the same standard. It is of utmost importance that educators be educated, not only in curriculum, but also in practice.

Enacting CRRP

Adam’s responses created a sense of “solo practitioner” approach in his efforts to enact CRRP. As a Canadian of African descent may play a part in his focus and understanding of CRRP, whereas John, a white male, may also be a factor. However, the sensitivity of this implication is one that requires further research, as it possible that the differences of opinion of CRRP may be due to the fact that the two participants play different roles in a students’ education and within the school.

Although Walter-Thomas’ study (1997) found that collaborative teaching proved to be beneficial to culturally diverse learners in peer-tutoring, co-operative learning, and integrated
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curriculum approaches, adding that cognitive and social skills also improved peer relationships, this was clearly not the case with Adam or John.

As educators in a culturally diverse population, it must be recognized that alternative pedagogies addressing the needs of our students have been researched and has indicated that it is important to maintain a culturally sensitive classroom (Sirin et al., 2010). Failing to do so can compromise students’ mental health, sense of self and perception about their peers.

Recommendations

As per outlined in chapter three of this paper, the limitations of this study included its sample size. As the goal of this study was, in part, to understand the teacher dynamic of education on a cultural and collaborative level, it would have been beneficial to include interviews of student and parents. The limit of a single viewpoint of the collaborative process is unlikely to reveal the overall impact of collaborative and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Communication

Opening the lines of communications speaks to the broader concept of a “common goal and purpose”. Although not all educators and administrators will necessarily appreciate the value of collaborative teaching or CRRP, if at the core of the school, the idea of the benefit to student education is placed first and foremost, the direction is clear regardless of pedagogy. Moreover, lines of communications need to be extended in its broadest sense. Principals and educators need to communicate with School Boards, in addition to involving the local community and parents; doing so, can improve students’ overall learning experience (Sharma, 2009).
Playing different roles, John and Adam must prioritize things differently, and although not all teachers focus on CRRP, resources should be made available for teachers to enact this type of pedagogy (and others). If John is unable or unwilling to see the benefits that CRRP can have on students, Adam’s efforts may be curtailed. As such, educators like Adam require the support, direction, and access to material resources to assist them in enacting their pedagogies.

Though beyond the scope of this paper, administrators, and school boards need to find a way to create an environment conducive to collaborative teaching. Unfortunately, it appears inevitable that contrived collegiality will exist at some level which begs the question as to whether or not incentives to participants may impact the willingness of educators to actively participate.

Adam and John seem to lack the cohesiveness that would encourage improvement and reform, calling for assistance from greater powers, including the school boards, and even the Ministry of Education. This is not to say that a school board or the Ministry should reprimand individuals failing to effectively communicate or force collaboration – this would result in contrived collegiality, but simply that further time be allotted to team building and professional development. Additional PA days prior to the summer break may be considered so as to not further reduce the number of days that students are in class.

Further research

Further research both qualitative and quantitative in nature should be carried out in order to assess the outcomes of students being taught in a collaborative and culturally responsive environment. Whether concurrently or consecutively, research has indicated that there is a lack of
data supporting the outcomes of collaborative and or culturally relevant responsive teaching practices.

Specifically, the role of collaborative teaching from the perspective of the administrator requires additional investigation in order to differentiate the findings of this study. Similarly, the same can be said of research of collaborative teaching at the teacher level, with participants of differing cultural backgrounds. Research findings will provide a clearer definition as to how much the responses provided by John can be attributed to their differing roles as a principal and educator, versus cultural identity.

Contrived collegiality could be investigated in an educational setting to uncover as to whether or not educators can be encouraged to participate in collaborative approaches. Despite research indicating that collaborative methods benefit educators and students, it appears that this is not a sufficient means of motivation.

Conclusion

This qualitative study has uncovered some of the obstacles to collaborative teaching and culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy, and provides a brief insight from the perspective of an educator and an administrator from within a single school in an effort to find out how collaborative teaching can be utilized to maximize the benefits of CRRP.

The literature review as contained in chapter 2 of this paper clearly identifies the historical context and need for educational reform in culturally diverse communities. As collaborative teaching and CRRP have both been found to be beneficial to both students and
educators, the potential for the two pedagogies to be utilized simultaneously has yet to be discovered.

This study found a sense of pride within the teaching profession at both administrator and educator level and common element to the definitions of collaborative teaching and CRRP. It further confirms that the participants in this study value collaborative teaching, but indicate that CRRP has not been met with the same degree of importance, calling into question the reasons as to why. The two interviews conducted raise further questions, including: why is CRRP valued at different levels, whether this difference stems from cultural or personal experience, educators’ education/knowledge, whether the role of educator or administrator plays a part.

Interestingly, my research began with collaborative teaching methods having learned that collaboration can assist a student teacher in developing their own pedagogy. As I experienced the cohesiveness of the teachers during my practicum and witnessed its benefits, I could not ignore that there was a marked difference of cultural difference.

As an immigrant to Canada at an early age, with English as a second language, coming from a homogenous society, I have felt in my past that my learning experience has been hindered due to the new social dynamics that I had found myself, and my practicum experience drugged up the “lost” feelings that I experienced as a student. Students today experience the same feelings and difficulties that I did as a student. I was then compelled to bring in the component of the collaborative approach to CRRP and aimed my MTRP at the needs of culturally diverse students, who find themselves in this predicament, and investigate as to how the benefits of CRRP can be maximized by utilizing a collaborative approach.
In hindsight, the initial goal of my MTRP was a Pandora’s Box, a venture too broad for the limitations of this study. However, as a Teacher Candidate, the wealth of information learned by merely completing the literature review has opened various doors that require further investigation by myself, scholars, educators and the community.

The bastion of information obtained in the interview process has enlightened my understanding of the differing perspectives within a single school and has peaked my interest in how I can best apply the knowledge learned. It is important to note, although implied by the findings of this study, that the cultural identity of an educator may correlate with the importance that is placed on CRRP.

Ideally, a wider range of participants would have allowed for a clearer set of variables as they pertain to collaborative teaching and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy. Doing so, would a provided a deeper understanding as to why CRRP has not yet taken root in the education system.

Although as this study suggests, both pedagogies have their obstacles and challenges, a greater effort with respect to the education of educators can assist in emphasizing the importance of both collaborative teaching and CRRP. By way of further education and common goals, educators, administrators, communities and parents can work together to ensure the best education for the students.

On a more personal level, I shall endeavour to look to other educators from both within and outside of the school(s) that I teach, in order to create my own network that I can build on. Networking with individuals at the administrative level, at different levels of education, and at school board level will assist in contributing to educational reform. By playing the role of an
advocate for educators, students, parents and the community when voicing concerns to the school board I will be able to actively open lines of communication.

The completion of this study has awoken me to my great role in becoming a teacher. The responsibilities associated with educating and the impact that teachers can have on a child is almost unmatched by any other profession. I aim to adjust my pedagogy as I grow as a teacher, by keeping lines of communication open with administrators, parents, students, and involve the culturally diverse community around the school, that has been found to be beneficial to students both academically and socially (Smith, 2000).

As the visible minority population continues to grow and various current political issues circle and cross the lines of racism and racial profiling and/or stereotype, I continue to be more culturally aware of the culturally diverse student population. As a student I felt that my culture was lost and ignored, and will endeavour to ensure that CRRP plays a part in my pedagogy. I am convinced that working collaboratively will accelerate the process of acknowledging the importance of CRRP in addition to maximizing the benefits of collaborative approaches within its methods so that students are able to succeed academically and socially.
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 collaborative teaching approaches in culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy 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. Angela MacDonald-Vemic. 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 45-60 minute interview that will be audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you.

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. You will be assigned a pseudonym and any identifying information will be excluded. 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, decline to answer specific questions, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the audio 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,

Researcher name: Jean-Luc Xavier

Email: jeanluc.xavier@mail.utoronto.ca

Instructor’s Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ____________________________ Email: ____________________________
Research Supervisor’s Name: ___________________________________
Phone #: ______________________ Email: _______________________

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 Jean-Luc Xavier and agree to participate in an interview
for the purposes described. I agree to having the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ______________________________

Name (printed): ______________________________

Date: _____________________
Appendix B: Interview Questions

I would first like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study.

This study aims to explore the collaborative teaching methods being employed in culturally diverse student populations in an effort to improve Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy. This interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes, during which time you will be asked a series of questions pertaining to your experience in collaborative teaching in your culturally diverse classroom.

I would like to remind you that you have the opportunity to decline in answering any questions you feel uncomfortable in answering, in addition to withdrawing from this research study at any time.

Section A: Background

1. How many years have you worked as a teacher/administrator?
2. What grades/subject areas have you taught during these years?
3. Can you describe the school you currently teach in and the community demographics? Are these demographics reflected in your current classroom?
4. How has having a culturally diverse student population impacted your pedagogy?
5. Have you previously taught in an environment in which the student body was more homogenous? How, if at all did that affect your teaching?
6. As you know, this study is investigating teacher practices related to culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy. Can you tell me what experiences contributed to developing your interest in CRRP?

7. How do you describe your own cultural identity?

8. In your own educational experience, do you feel that your cultural identity was reflected in your learning material?

9. In what ways, if any, has your cultural identity impacted your teaching?

Section B: Beliefs and Values

1. What does culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy mean to you? How did you develop this understanding of CRRP?

2. Why is it important to you to enact CRRP?

3. As you are aware, a further component of this study is interested in collaborative teaching. Can you tell me what collaborative teaching means to you?

4. How did you develop an interest in and/or your practice of collaborative teaching?

5. Is collaborative teaching something that you enact broadly speaking, or is it something you specifically enact to further your commitment to CRRP?

6. In your experience, what are the benefits to employing collaborative and culturally responsive and relevant approaches simultaneously?

Section C: Approaches

1. What is your understanding of your role as a teacher/administrator in terms of collaborative teaching? In your experience does this vary across your interactions with staff/students/parents?

2. Can you tell me more about how you enact your understanding of CRRP in practice?
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE & COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION

1. What are your learning goals?
2. What range of instructional approaches and strategies do you use to enact CRRP?
   What role does collaborative teaching play in helping you meet these goals?
3. What are some additional key resources that enable you to enact CRRP?
4. Can you please describe for me a specific example of how you have enacted CRRP through collaborative teaching practice?
5. How do you work collaboratively with other teachers to enact CRRP?
   a. What are some of the key practices and strategies you use to communicate and work together?
6. What challenges, if any, do you experience enacting CRRP?
   a. How do you respond to these challenges?
7. Has any conflict arisen as a result of your commitment to CRRP?
   a. If yes, can you tell me more about what happened? If no, why do you think that is?
8. What challenges have you experienced enacting collaborative teaching as a component of CRRP?
   a. How did you respond to these challenges?
   b. What factors and resources support your capacity to enact a collaborative teaching approach to CRRP?

Next steps/Recommendations
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE & COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION

1. What advice do you have for beginning teachers who are committed to enacting CRRP?

2. What recommendations, if any, do you have concerning how the school system can be more responsive to students’ cultural identity?

Thank you again for your time and thoughtful responses.
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE & COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION

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