INTEGRATION OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS INTO A CANADIAN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT: A CASE STUDY

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2016

Abstract

My research study focuses on Chinese immigrants who feel marginalized in the Canadian school system due to their lack of proficiency in English. My research question is how do Chinese immigrants who are recent arrivals experience marginalization in an Ontario school in relation to ministry and classroom expectations and teaching strategies. The participants are eight secondary school students who have been in Canada for up to two years and who are at least 18 years of age and are enrolled in courses ranging from grade 9 to 12 at an Ontario private school. The theoretical framework involves social constructivist theory and practices that facilitate second-language acquisition. The study uses a phenomenological approach to data analysis. Interview data and researcher’s observations are the main sources of data. The results generally indicate students’ dissatisfaction with teaching instruction and suggestions were made about strategies that can be implemented to better suit their needs.
Acknowledgements

This thesis owes its existence to a number of individuals. I wish to thank the Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning for allowing me to conduct my research study with the University of Toronto and particularly my supervisor, professor Daphne Heywood, for the ongoing help and advice in the preparation of my thesis, including editorial help. Further, a special thanks to Daryl Herring for the constructive feedback and editing with my thesis. I would also like to thank the members of staff and the eight fellow students who have chosen to participate in my research study.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description of the Problem and Rationale</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Constructivism—A Pedagogical Imperative for English Language Learners</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-Questions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview Questions for Student Participants</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insights from the Literature</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Related Research: Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Constructivism in a Second Language Classroom</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Gaps and Recommendations</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topic of Focus</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design of Study</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection Activities</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five Criteria</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collecting Data</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recording Information</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resolving Field Issues</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Storing Data</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>DESCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detailed Descriptions</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation of Essential Themes: Students’ Experiences of Marginalization</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary of the Essential Themes and Observations</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations Based on Participants’ Responses</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implications for Future Research</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix A—Ethics Approval Form</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix B—Informed Administrative Consent Form (from the Principal)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix C—Informed Teacher Consent Form (from the Teacher)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix D—Interview Guide and Focus Questions</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix E—Participant Observation Guide</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F—Consent-to-Participate Form (from the Participant) .......................... 98
Appendix G—Consent-to-Translate Form (from the Guidance Counsellor) .............. 105
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Description of the Problem and Rationale

According to Jim Cummins (2011) two of the most controversial problems during the past 50 years in both European and North American contexts “have concerned (a) the education of immigrant and minority group students, and (b) the most effective ways of teaching them” (p. 1974). This study seeks to describe: how recent emergent adult Chinese immigrants from China experience marginalization in an Ontario private high school in relation to ministry and classroom expectations and teaching strategies. This study shares the strategies that the marginalized participants suggested would meet their needs and create a more inclusive learning environment.

My interest in building inclusion and positive classroom dynamics stems from my teaching experience at the high school senior level, particularly with recent Chinese immigrants to the Toronto area. I am interested in the marginalizing experiences that new immigrant students from China have in their secondary school years. I came to Canada as an immigrant from a European country and struggled in the Ontario school system because English is my second language. My personal experience informs my belief that an emphasis should be placed on inclusion strategies for ELLs. Moreover, during my four years as a classroom teacher, I have learned that the Ontario curriculum and teacher classroom expectations are not always implemented effectively for all students. The curriculum and expectations fit best for the students who are Canadian-born and those who grew up mostly within the Canadian school system. Many Chinese immigrant students at this school feel they are unfairly being assessed on established criteria that are not inclusive of the varying needs of their own cultural and social backgrounds. These established criteria include the overall
and specific expectations that are outlined in the Ontario ministry documents and are supposed to be taught in secondary school courses. Further, Ontario ministry guidelines inform teachers what to teach and how they can implement a variety of differentiated instruction strategies to create inclusivity for individuals with varying academic needs and low literacy rates. Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy is one such document that outlines the guiding principles of an inclusive education system, indicating that this involves creating “positive learning environments so that all students can feel engaged and empowered by what they are learning, supported by the teachers and staff from whom they are learning” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 12). Inclusion is thus key in supporting the achievement and well-being of all students. It is imperative for all educators and staff members in schools to work together to develop an inclusive environment as per ministry guidelines.

While many immigrants who come to Canada face significant challenges, a focus on Chinese youth is particularly valuable because the “Chinese currently constitute the largest group of new immigrants to Canada; it is established that approximately two thirds of immigrants to Canada each year come from Asia, with the Chinese representing the largest group” (Costigan, Su, & Hua, 2009, p. 262). Numerous Chinese immigrants find it difficult to learn due to linguistic and cultural barriers, as well as to the inability to relate to Canadian classroom practices and/or a difficulty in adapting to Canadian school routines and meeting educational requirements. Language acquisition is a significant adjustment issue for immigrants (Minichiello, 2001) as is the unfamiliar school environment that they have to deal with, which sometimes fails to fulfill their academic and social needs (Ogbaru & Ogbaru, 2013).
This study seeks to understand the marginalizing experiences of recent immigrants from China and how classroom and teaching practices can contribute to feelings of marginalization. The research helped me to develop further insights on different teaching methods that can be incorporated in the classroom to better reflect these students’ linguistic needs and to help reduce the feelings of marginalization and exclusion that students often feel upon entering the Ontario secondary education system.

I conducted a case study involving students from middle-class backgrounds with strong literacy skills in Mandarin but limited English literacy skills who have been in Canada for up to two years. The eight participants were recruited from one private school. They were at least 18 years of age, enrolled in courses ranging from grade 9 to 12, thus making them emerging adult learners. I chose a two-year time span because I wanted to compare the responses pertaining to the overall quality of learning of participants who have just arrived in Canada to those who have been here for a longer period of time. I chose Chinese-speaking, foreign-born students in a private school setting in the Toronto area because the particular school that I chose is one of the many secondary schools in the Scarborough area where the Chinese student population outnumbers the Canadian-born student population. I teach English and History at this school. It is thus important to note that because I did my case study with students at one particular private school, my findings may not be applicable across public or other private schools in Ontario. It is also important to note that while all students were at least 18 years of age, some were placed in grade 9 classes and not all were in grade 12 classes due to either their low literacy skills in English or their lack of sufficient schooling back home in China. Some only finished grade 7 or 8 in China and so upon their arrival they were placed in grade 9 or 10 programs, as opposed to in grade 12. None of the students had
IEPs. The importance of IEPs has been identified long ago by the ministry in which “student achievement of [modified] curriculum expectations will be assessed in accordance with the provincial achievement levels and with course-specific assessment information, as described in provincial curriculum policy documents” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 22). Further, an IEP provides students identified as exceptional with opportunities to achieve curriculum expectations through modified achievement expectations or accommodations in which the student receives extra school support and/or services (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001b). Moreover, as stated in the Growing Success ministry document, which outlines assessment and evaluation policies, an individual learning plan “allows the principal and staff members to establish where learners are going in their learning and empower them to learn through targeted instruction and guidance” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010a, p. 32).

As stated in the previous paragraph, the participants at this school were all at least eighteen years of age at the time the study was conducted and some were not enrolled as regular day school students for a period of at least one school year preceding their registration at this school. They are thus considered mature students (adults). In this study they are referred to as emerging adult learners. In the ministry document titled Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, the ministry acknowledged that for mature students, “principals will determine the number of credits that a mature student needs in order to meet the credit requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)” and it is the principal’s discretion that “up to 16 Grade 9 and 10 equivalency credits may be granted to a mature student following an individual assessment” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 69).
The adult learners at this particular school were required to resume their education at the grade 9 or 10 level and were not granted credit equivalency for any courses. Moreover, while these students were at least 18 years of age, and are thus described as emerging adult learners, they were treated like other grade 9-12 students and their age was not a factor in determining both content and pedagogy. A case study involving observations and interviews was conducted to collect necessary data for analysis. I observed how students performed in the classroom and spoke to the teachers to get input on their learning. Triangulation of data was made possible by the availability of participants’ tests, Ontario Student Records (OSRs), documents, and/or records from various classes. Moreover, interviews were needed to obtain primary data in the form of first-hand accounts of students’ struggles in the classroom.

**Social Constructivism—A Pedagogical Imperative for English Language Learners**

The study examines the application of socio-constructivist teaching practices that facilitate second-language acquisition for Chinese-speaking students in the Ontario school system. Social constructivism—which will be further described in Chapter 2— is particularly relevant to the second language classroom because language learners:

- need a great deal of comprehensible input, or access to the data of the target language,
- [and] this access is most effectively provided by exposure to authentic texts,
- examples of genuinely communicate language use, rather than materials created solely for pedagogical purposes. (Belcher, 1999, p. 254)

The ethnic identity of Chinese residents is one that appears strong in Canada, and it is thus important to look at acculturation and the role that educators play in the formation of adolescent development in Canada on both an academic and a social level. Thus, social constructivism as a pedagogical tool is important not only to help build upon language
facility but also in order to build feelings of inclusion. Implications of the findings for future research and teaching practices are also discussed in the study.

**Sub-Questions**

I developed four sub-questions to help foster a comprehensive understanding of my research question, and to provide categories for data collection and analysis. My four sub-questions were directly linked to nine interview questions developed for the students. The interviews took the form of a structured conversation between the participants and me, and they each answered up to two questions per session. The purpose of asking my main research question and guiding questions was to inquire about, and to report on the experiences of students in my sample population, with the aim of creating a list of strategies on how educators in general can facilitate the integration of recent Chinese immigrants using a constructivist approach to differentiate instruction. The four sub-questions aim to identify participants’ experiences on:

- comparisons between Canadian and Chinese education systems
- barriers to full inclusion in the Canadian school system
- curricula changes that are required to facilitate English language acquisition for recent immigrants from China
- how schools and classroom practices can better reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of recent Chinese immigrants.

Once the participants responded to the nine interview questions the answers were categorized using the four sub-questions. These categories for analysis formed the basis of my headings in Chapter 4.
Interview Questions for Student Participants

The nine interview questions asked participants about their experiences of learning English, different teaching styles from those back in their home country, cultural background, and asked how students felt about their new school environment in Canada in relation to learning the subject matter. The participants were asked for their suggestions on how they believe the challenges they face in Canadian classrooms can be resolved. The following are the nine interview questions that were asked of the participants:

▪ Have you experienced any discouragement in the Canadian education system (i.e. language barriers, different teaching styles than those back home, etc.)?

▪ What are the similarities and differences between the Canadian education system and the Chinese education system (in terms of teaching styles and methods, curriculum documents, and subject areas and implementation)? Which one do you prefer and why?

▪ How do you feel about your new school environment here in Canada? Do you find it easy to learn in your classroom? Why or why not?

▪ Which subject do you find the most difficult? Why do you find it difficult to learn this subject?

▪ Do you find that the content you are learning in your classes relate to your own background and culture and/or personal experiences?

▪ What would help solve your challenges in the Canadian classroom and help you better adapt to the Canadian way of learning?

▪ What are some strategies that can be used to help you learn English more effectively in the class?
• What are some ways that teachers can help enhance your school experiences and make them more conducive to your learning?

• Do you believe that your cultural background can be woven into current classroom practices? If so, how?

This research adds to the literature and to our understandings about the Chinese and Canadian education systems, the experiences that new immigrant adult students have, and should help to build a greater awareness of how social constructivist pedagogy can facilitate second language acquisition for Chinese youth in the Ontario education system.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Insights from the Literature

Many contributors to the literature on immigration in Canada acknowledged that Chinese immigrant students have the potential to contribute to a prosperous future in Canadian society (Krashen, 1998; Goldstein, 2000; Cummins, Mirza, & Stille, 2012).

However, they suggested that a lack of effective second language instruction in formal educational settings can present barriers to full participation and can limit the possibilities for achievement and inclusion. This chapter provides an overview of related research regarding second language acquisition and how social constructivism in an ELL classroom can be used effectively as a tool for facilitating literacy development. It also discusses four themes that describe some of the reasons why immigrants may feel marginalized in the classroom environment. These challenges include: issues with acculturation, parental involvement, learning a second language in a school setting, and the need for student-centred learning. Lastly, this chapter discusses research gaps in the current literature.

Related Research: Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition is a significant challenge for new immigrants as they adjust to their new home and new ways of learning (Goldstein, 2000; Roessingh & Kover, 2002; Cummins, Mirza, & Stille, 2012). Goldstein (2000) showed that acquiring “a second-or other language for the purpose of succeeding in school is a complex process and schools and teachers serving immigrant communities are presently working hard to find ways to teach their ESL students” (p. 357). In some of his earliest research Jim Cummins (1979) offered a framework for developing two types of language skills in bilingual students. He made the distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and
cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to proficiency in language including vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, while CALP refers to higher order thinking skills, including evaluation, analysis, and synthesis. Cummins (1979) addressed that BICS can take roughly one to two years to develop for a bilingual speaker while CALP can take anywhere from five to seven years to develop.

Language proficiency targets four areas, including listening, speaking, writing, and reading, all which include vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. According to Roessingh and Kover (2002), mastery of a language varies for each individual and it can take up to eight years for bilingual learners to master a language. Their findings support those made earlier by Cummins. Despite positive outcomes relating to academic achievement that is experienced by many groups of linguistically diverse students, researchers claimed that “there are [still] significant gaps in provision within Canadian education in relation to linguistically and culturally diverse students and communities” and that it is imperative to look at lack of academic achievement “in relation to the education of [many] bilingual/ELL students” (Cummins, Mirza, & Stille, 2012, p. 27).

Immigrants who often come with limited literacy skills thus require “concrete literacy and academic support to achieve a level of academic success equivalent to that of their Canadian-born English-speaking counterparts of the same age” (Schleifer & Ngo, 2005, p. 31). Findings that recorded the experiences of ESL students showed parallels between second language acquisition and academic achievement.

The learning of a second language in a school setting is particularly complex for adults. In the case of immigrant youth and adults, “second language learners usually require at least five years to catch up to native English speakers in academic English” (Cummins,
Mirza, & Stille, 2012, p. 30). Additionally, Grayson (2009) suggested that the communication skills and GPAs of many older university students “who are sons and daughters of immigrants, independent of length of time in Canada, are not as high as those of native-born English-speaking Canadians” (p. 33), partly because older immigrants may take longer time to acquire a second language than younger students. To support this claim, researchers Jiang, Green, Henley, and Masten (2009) conducted a study in which they found that during the 2007-2008 academic year, 110,128 Chinese students “were enrolled in US colleges and universities, constituting 17.6% of the international students studying in the USA” (p. 481). These authors noted that given importance of language for learning and communication “second language (L2) acquisition is a significant issue for students arriving in the USA after puberty” (Jiang et al., 2009, p. 481). Since these students arrived in the USA long past “the critical period of language acquisition”, these researchers doubted they would acquire English skills at a near native-speaker proficiency level. Nevertheless, if acquiring native-speaker proficiency is possible for this demographic, it is important to consider “what variables relate to such an attainment” (Jiang et al., 2009, p. 481).

The ministry’s *English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development: A Resource Guide* outlines variables that may be attributed to adult learners taking longer to acquire second language acquisition. These include the acculturation process in which newcomers may experience culture shock and may experience one or more of the following: confusion and anxiety, depression and isolation, withdrawal, alienation, aggressive behaviour, avoiding contact with mainstream culture, discrimination, and/or the amount of support received by others (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001a). Moreover, it is worth noting that:
In the early stages of acculturation and language acquisition, there are periods of rapid growth as well as times when the student may experience a “silent period” or plateau. During such “silent periods”, the student is absorbing large amounts of linguistic and cultural information but is not yet ready to produce oral language, especially in front of the class. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001a, p. 11)

In Jiang et al.’s study (2009), “participants were still closely aligned with their ethnic heritage, eating Chinese food [and] socialising with Chinese friends and speaking Chinese whenever English was not required” (p. 488). The participants in this study consisted of forty-nine Chinese international students who were enrolled in graduate programmes at a large university at the time of study and none of the adult learners received English training for more than six months in China (Jiang et al., 2009). Immersion into current society and positive acceptance of cultural customs may be necessary for successful L2 learning to take place and in order to enhance L2 proficiency, the researchers suggested that “immersion activities perhaps should be coordinated into formal L2 education programmes to facilitate L2-speaking proficiency for educational purposes” (Jiang et al., 2009, p. 489).

The language and isolation can be a barrier to academic learning and ESL learners “acquire language most readily when they are fully involved in all learning activities in the classroom” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001a, p. 12). To facilitate students’ language learning and feelings of inclusion, research suggests that program planners should ensure the following are in place: incorporating students’ first languages in the curriculum content, providing opportunities for acquiring new vocabulary and integrating the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, giving extra time to process the new language, ensuring that the purpose of all tasks is clear to the learners, and allowing language to be used in a natural way in real and practical contexts (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001a, p. 12). Researchers
suggested that a social constructivist approach could help with language acquisition and with the elimination of marginalization.

**Social Constructivism in a Second Language Classroom**

Analyses of social constructivist pedagogy with relation to immigrants by Richardson (2003), Gordon (2008), and Schwartz and Fischer (2003) suggested the importance of implementing social constructivist teaching strategies in a Canadian classroom full of immigrants for second language acquisition and inclusion. According to Richardson (2003), Phillips edited an NSSE Yearbook which contained “foundational elements in considerable agreement with what is meant by constructivist learning theory [in the 21st century]” (p. 1624). Social constructivism is recommended for teaching recent immigrants who are English Language Learners (ELLs) because it allows “teachers to take into account what students know. Teachers [can] then build on this knowledge and allow students to put their knowledge into practice” and create an inclusive classroom (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012, p. 108).

Gordon (2008) claimed that social constructivism has emerged as a very powerful tool for explaining how knowledge is produced and, in turn, how immigrant students learn by their interaction with the world. Social constructivism suggests cognition “is shaped by the interactions among social actors and the contexts in which they act” and that this interaction may help with the acquisition of language skills (Gordon, 2008, p. 324).

Particularly important to the ELL teacher is the distinction between social and academic language. Social language is language that has been developed from social activities such as “talking about experiences, retelling events, describing activities, giving personal opinions, body language, visual clues, etc.,” while academic language tends to focus
more on “predicting, explaining, analyzing, justifying, inferring, arguing, persuading, etc.” (Combs et al., n.d.). The interesting connection, as suggested by the same researchers, between social and academic language and social constructivism is one in which “a learner’s actual developmental level [is] determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Combs et al., n.d.). They also suggested that social constructivism aims to bridge the link between social and academic language and a learner’s developmental level gained in collaboration with “capable peers,” or peers who are fluent in the English language.

It is stated in The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9-12: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development curriculum document that “English language learners will have the best chance to succeed in classrooms where there is opportunity for extensive oral interaction with English-speaking peers” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 27). Richardson (2003) claimed that a focus on social aspects of classrooms is important because this approach “centers on the ways in which power, the economy, political and social factors affect the ways in which groups of people form understandings and formal knowledge about their world” (p. 1624). Richardson (2003) and Gordon (2008) also emphasized social constructivism in relation to the facilitation of group dialogue that contributes to the “shared understanding of a topic” and thereby provides “opportunities for students to determine, challenge, change, or add to existing beliefs and understandings through engagement in tasks that are structured for this purpose” (Richardson, 2003, p. 1626). Social constructivism according to these researchers can help bilingual students acquire second language
acquisition through shared understandings and group dialogue through the ongoing exposure to the English language.

Moreover, Gordon (2008) made note that some teachers do not encourage their immigrant students to stay literate in their first language, thereby setting their students up for failure. Such teachers encourage students to practice English as much as possible in a Canadian classroom so that they can easily adapt to the Canadian life. Gordon called this an education system that “alienates and dulls us, graduates people who have had no mentoring in the questions that both vex and enliven the human spirit, [and creates] people who are spiritually empty at best and spiritually toxic at worst” (Gordon, 2008, p. 322). Social constructivism can provide an ideal learning environment for immigrant learners and can possibly build positive relationships between immigrants and the Canadian-born population. Schwartz and Fischer (2003) further emphasized that an attempt at integration can also help develop students’ social and academic language and English proficiency by sharing, communicating, and working with others of a Canadian-born background, and by emphasizing that knowledge “is a personal creation,” and should be “socially mediated” for enhanced learning to take place (p. 23).

Theme 1: Issues with Acculturation

Costigan, Su, and Hua (2009) have commented that acculturation issues in Canadian classrooms can limit the full participation of immigrants and, therefore, limit their academic achievements. They found that many immigrants who are living in Canada face significant challenges due to acculturation, which is a process that involves one cultural group adopting the beliefs and/or values of another cultural group. They claimed that Chinese adult immigrants, are engaged in “developing a sense of themselves as members of an ethnic
minority group while simultaneously becoming a member of the broader Canadian society” (Costigan et al., 2009, p. 261).

Four stages of acculturation are identified in the Ontario Ministry of Education’s *English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development: A Resource Guide*. During the first stage, newcomers may feel excitement, eagerness, and feel optimistic about the new country. The second stage is characterized by culture shock in which newcomers may see themselves as observers and feel isolated, demonstrate withdrawal, and/or avoid contact entirely with the mainstream community. During the third stage, newcomers may try new behaviours and feel less anxious and be willing to understand more English. The last stage is characterized by newcomers being able to value both new and old cultures, show trust, and may feel that their emotional equilibrium is restored. The rate at which immigrants experience acculturation may vary and is not the same for everyone. Some students may experience characteristics of different stages at the same time, while others may remain at the same stage for an extended period of time (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001a).

Many immigrants often struggle with both language and identity exploration while trying to become integrated into a Canadian identity. Costigan et al. (2009) claimed that while Canada has an official policy that welcomes multiculturalism, not all classrooms do. The researchers conducted a study in which many immigrant participants felt that their acculturation was moving quite slowly, and they felt they were not as appreciated by their Canadian-born classmates as they were by their Mandarin-speaking friends.

Costigan et al.’s (2009) in-depth study involved 68 immigrant Chinese adolescents living in Canada. Several mentioned that they “felt they would become more Canadian with greater time spent in Canada and increased exposure to their Canadian peers,” while others
felt “confused adjusting to a new society, which was reflected in their inability to construct a coherent ethnic identity” and an inability to participate enough in “Chinese activities and [be in] frequent contact with their home culture” (Costigan et al., 2009, p. 263). The participants felt they could not easily integrate into the Canadian social fabric due to their struggles in adjusting to a new society and a lack of exposure to their Canadian peers.

Minichiello (2001) went further to describe some of the struggles of the acculturation process in relation to Ontario secondary education. She performed an investigation in a secondary school in the Vancouver School Distinct where the Chinese-speaking population outnumbered the Canadian-born English-speaking students. She mentioned that many students claimed they “did not form Canadian friendships, learn English easily, make cross-cultural adaptations, or excel in school” and that their responses raise “questions about the direction of Canadian education [and] the evolution of Canada’s pluralistic society” (Minichiello, 2001, p. 2). She also claimed that feelings of isolation and loneliness were all caused by discrimination that contributed to students’ feelings of homesickness and isolation and a need to “gravitate to co-nationals because of the security provided through social interactions with people from their home country” (Minichiello, 2001, p. 3).

Minichiello (2001) discussed language acquisition as a main adjustment issue for many students and that it is one of the many challenges that immigrants face. In instances such as this, studies show that a possible solution to eliminating issues with acculturation and language acquisition can be through social constructivist practices, which can give students a balance of non-English and English language backgrounds because by having students communicate with one another and work together in group activities, they can both
participate in and understand instructional activities and one another’s cultures and thus successfully coexist (Schwartz & Fischer, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Gordon, 2008).

Studies show that positive interactions can occur by incorporating strategies such as cooperative learning to help students develop their native language proficiency and, at the same time, learn a second language through the ongoing interaction and collaboration with their peer members. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2007a) greatly encourages cooperative learning activities, which they asserted allow students to “have numerous opportunities to practice the language necessary for the smooth functioning of the group: for example, how to make suggestions, express opinions, encourage others, and disagree politely” (p. 40).

Ogbuagu and Ogbuagu (2013) further stated that immigrant students often feel like outsiders due to negative emotions towards them and most immigrant students often feel “unwelcomed, teased, unacknowledged, unmotivated, and afraid”; they do not receive “appropriate and sufficient help to learn the new language quickly enough, and the school environment [is] not meeting their social and emotional needs” (p. 76). Several investigations have shown that “the adaptation experience of many immigrants can indeed affect their educational performance as they attempt to integrate themselves into a new culture that is unfamiliar to them” and that “the issue of difficulties with language appears to be one of the most stressful areas in an immigrant’s attempt to adapt to a new culture” (Ogbuagu & Ogbuagu, 2013, p. 83). The Ontario Ministry of Education (2001a) claimed that “students generally find it easier to learn English [and feel included] if they receive support while going through the acculturation process” (p. 8).
Theme 2: Parental Involvement

The literature also suggests that parental involvement is important for cultural consideration and adjustment within a Canadian pluralistic landscape for immigrants. Guo (2012) mentioned the importance of parental interaction in relation to ethnic identity and suggested that consulting immigrants’ parents in order to understand ethnic considerations can contribute to better adjustment for Chinese students who reside in Canada. He supported this idea and said that when it comes to social interaction, many children are often unaware of the rules in the Canadian classroom and revert to their original cultural behaviours, such as “lowering their heads and walking behind teachers to show respect. Regrettably, without appropriate transcultural knowledge, the teachers [often] misinterpret students’ actions” (Guo, 2012, p. 125).

Guo (2012) claimed it is important to understand first language knowledge because “for some, teaching and preserving the first language at home is an important means of staying connected to relationships, cultural values, and identities forged in their home countries” (p. 126). Research indicates that parents play a key role in the socialization of their child’s identity. According to the Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, parents should “feel that their active participation in discussions regarding assessment and placement decisions is welcomed, and the student should have equitable access to available program options” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 25). Costigan et al. (2009) supported this argument by acknowledging that without ongoing communication between educators and parents, it is difficult for teachers to develop a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of immigrant culture and program options because “parents are likely to be their children’s primary source of
knowledge about the Chinese culture” (p. 267). Lee and Hebert (2006) compared youth of immigrant and non-immigrant origins in order to demonstrate why it is particularly important to spend time researching immigrants and their ongoing struggles in a Canadian context.

In an attempt to answer how Canadian youth feel about being Canadian, Lee and Hebert (2006) concluded that “non-immigrant youth are strongly attached to Canada and appreciate the diversity of Canadian society; whereas immigrant youth [who can] securely exercise their cultural rights within the process of becoming Canadian” and share a sense of common belonging and harmony within all cultures can really help form “a citizenry respectful of multiple identities” within Canadian society (p. 517). Cultural consideration and proper adjustment can occur if migrants have dual ethnic individualities instead of forgetting one or the other in an attempt to become more integrated into Canadian society.

**Theme 3: Second-Language Classrooms**

It is crucial to examine the features of language instruction and inclusivity of second-language classrooms in order to understand the immigrant adult-student’s experiences. According to Schleifer and Ngo (2005), “ESL learners require both structured language instruction from qualified ESL teachers in an ESL instructional setting and explicit language support for content classes,” yet “many [students] continue to need ESL support well into their post-secondary years” (p. 30). Cummins, Mirza, and Stille (2012) asserted that lack of coherent policies in relation to the education of ELL students shows there are significant gaps in the education system to address linguistic diversity for instruction and that perhaps this is because “there is little expectation or requirement that educators who assume positions of responsibility (e.g., school principals or vice-principals) are familiar with the knowledge base relating to effective instruction for bilingual/ELL students” (p. 27).
The combination of linguistic and sociocultural challenges, as well as a lack of responsive support sometimes in classrooms, can limit the academic success of immigrant students in Canada (Schleifer & Ngo, 2005). Further, the dropout rates among ESL learners in secondary school are between 61% and 74%, which is a significantly high number, and researchers feel that much support needs to be given to these students with special needs (Schleifer & Ngo, 2005). Cummins (1997) discussed the limitations in satisfying the needs of ESL learners. As far back as in 1997 he acknowledged that a curriculum which “reflects only the experiences and values of middle-class English-speaking pupils and effectively suppresses the experiences and values of culturally diverse pupils” is one that can be disempowering for linguistic minority students (Cummins, 1997, p. 110). Stewart Rose and Evans (2014) emphasized in the 21st century the importance of using “varied teaching and learning practices that actively engage students in their learning” and claimed that such teaching practices should be “characterized by an emphasis on clear student learning outcomes, a commitment to all students, high expectations for all, fair assessment and evaluation, technology-rich and arts-based learning contexts, and peer support” (p. 8). Therefore, “schools aiming to deepen student engagement and learning and strengthen school-community relations must carefully consider the multiple and interconnected dimensions of inclusive education if continuous improvement is to be sustained over time” (Stewart Rose & Evans, 2014, p. 8).

Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012) proposed a solution to this issue which is that educators should “probe for children’s level of understanding and the ways in which that understanding can be taken to higher level thinking” (p. 108). One of the ways this can be achieved is by taking into account students’ background knowledge and prior experiences
and, according to the authors, have teachers maintain a dual language system where students can become bilingual and biliterate and be able to practice not only English but their heritage languages in the classroom environment, as well (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012). The Ministry curriculum document for ESL supports the use of dual language instructional material: “An insistence on English only may limit students’ cognitive activity to their level of proficiency in their second language” since ELLs need access to their “first language as a tool for learning and thinking” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 27).

Gilbert (2010) claimed that processing information involves “social interaction” and “requires learners to learn with and from others” (p. 4). Nie and Lau (2010) supported social interaction and suggested that it provides a richer and more diverse experience for the student, including “enhanced students’ interest” (p. 413) and that social constructivism as a practice can help provide meaningful context to learning through ongoing dialogue with peers and with the teacher. School experiences in an ESL classroom must be conducive to immigrant students’ learning needs, as Ma (2003) recommended, otherwise failure to do so may lead to “class and ethnic separation in opportunities to learn and to limited educational futures” (p. 545).

**Theme 4: Student-Centered Learning**

Researchers agreed that an inability to provide a student-centered learning environment can also pose a great barrier to full participation and inclusion for ESL learners (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002; McMillan & Hearn, 2009; Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012). Student-centered learning, including self-assessment, is one such way that these researchers recommended that social constructivism can work in a classroom and can contribute to immigrant students’ increased level of participation and academic success. According to
Alesandrini and Larson (2002), “in constructivist classrooms, learners articulate what they have learned as it relates to their prior knowledge” and “self-assessment activities of reflection and verbalization [can enable] learners to realize the meaning of what they have experienced” in terms of knowledge (p. 199). McMillan and Hearn (2009) supported this notion by asserting that student self-assessment can be a key feature to providing a student-centered learning environment because it can allow students to guide their own learning and create criteria for making judgments for their work. Self-assessment can occur when students judge their own work to improve performance “as they identify discrepancies between current and desired performance” (McMillan & Hearn, 2009, p. 39).

In the case of ELLs, McMillan and Hearn (2009) suggested ways that students can self-assess prior to and during learning through self-checklists, self-monitoring where they pay attention to what they are doing, providing feedback to themselves based on standards and criteria, and determine, perhaps through a journal entry, next steps or plans to enhance their performance. They also asserted that self-assessment enables students to “understand the goals and criteria, [and then] they must have opportunities to evaluate their own performance and make adjustments,” and that reflection can help them “think about what they know or have learned while they identify areas of confusion, so they can create new goals” (McMillan & Hearn, 2009, p. 43). Alesandrini and Larson (2002) supported using evaluation as a tool and acknowledged that in the case of immigrants, if teachers can see students evaluating their own work and progressing in their learning, then teachers, too, can reflect on where they went wrong in their instructional activities and on what needs to be modified accordingly to help generate strategies for even greater learning to take place. They agreed that by having students reflect on their own learning, teachers can gain a better and
more comprehensive understanding of how to integrate students’ personal experiences, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and prior learning in order to make academic success more achievable, which lies at the heart of social constructivism (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002).

Having “students authentically reflect on their own practice adds meaning to the process [of learning] that the students undergo” (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002, p. 44). Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012) agreed that “a focus on student-centered learning may well be the most important contribution of social constructivism” (p. 116) and emphasized that unless students receive the appropriate intervention at specific stages of their academic life, they will have struggles succeeding even well after secondary school.

**Research Gaps and Recommendations**

Based on the literature presented there is still room for further inquiry in the field of second language acquisition and emerging adult immigrants. Cummins et al. (2012) said it is with little doubt there are still “significant gaps in the extent to which coherent policies have been formulated at all levels of the educational system to address the implications of linguistic diversity for instruction” (p. 27). The results of the studies above aimed to shed light on some of the ways that researchers claimed social constructivism in particular can help immigrant students integrate academically and socially in a Canadian secondary landscape, and the common themes that were explored showed how they thought positive classroom dynamics and inclusion can potentially be achieved. While many of the resources invited readers to consider a constructivist approach, a comprehensive overview of the various strategies that teachers can implement in a classroom setting should be addressed
more clearly, including support documents and resources that could help foster social and academic growth aimed at Chinese immigrants.

Moreover, the literature should address how social constructivist approaches can be more effective than other theoretical approaches that claim to support academic learning. In addition, the literature should address any cross-curricular approaches in other core subject areas (such as math or science, as opposed to mostly in secondary English classes) and implementation strategies in these areas that can benefit immigrant students and promote active learning. Finally, there is still much to be addressed as to how school administrators, teachers, and curriculum policy makers can enhance the academic and social learning experiences of Chinese immigrants to better address the needs of a multilingual and multicultural population and how, in turn, successful parental interaction can occur between educators and parents if those parents are not fluent in English and/or are not willing to participate in their child’s learning.

How exactly educators can tailor courses to every individual’s cultural and linguistic needs, including individuals from various cultural backgrounds, still seems to be an area warranting further research, and resources should be provided for educators and policy makers to help understand positive classroom dynamics for Chinese immigrants in particular.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Topic of Focus

In keeping with a phenomenological approach, my research involved conducting a case study of a particular student population in the following stages: locating the site, acquiring participants, gaining access and building rapport, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, resolving field issues, and storing data. My research study involved a newly immigrated Chinese student population in one secondary school. My findings, though relevant to ESL teachers in similar classroom settings, also addressed the problems faced by the students that were taught in different subject areas at that secondary school. The goal for the research was to gather information about students’ ideas on how they felt they were learning in a Canadian classroom and how their low literacy in English greatly influenced their academic progress in the classroom. While interviewing the students, I wrote additional notes to both supplement and help to explain the interview data. I also did audio recordings of their responses.

Design of Study

I used transcendental phenomenology as my proposed research method, which consisted of bracketing out each participant’s experiences and collecting data from several people who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). After collecting and analysing the data that I had collected from my participants, I reduced the information to important statements they said and provide a textural description of the participants’ experiences, including what they experienced and how they experienced it in different classrooms. Next, I described strategies that educators and school administrators can use to implement a system of effective literacy development for Chinese immigrants to help obtain comprehension in various subject areas and minimize the sense of inequality and/or
alienation they often feel upon entering the Canadian secondary school system. For my data collection process, the most emphasis was placed on gaining access and creating rapport, data collection, and resolving field issues.

**Data Collection Activities**

**Locating Site and Individuals**

I specifically chose to focus on a secondary school located in Scarborough, Ontario, because the number of Chinese immigrants is greater than the number of Canadian-born local students at that particular school. I chose a classroom setting because it was where the participants’ academic achievement and social engagement took place. Because my study sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a recent immigrant from China in the Ontario school system and of how classroom practices can contribute to feelings of isolation, the secondary school I chose provided an opportunity to observe and communicate with various individuals in order to gain an overview of their lives in an academic and social context.

Before recruitment, I explained my proposal to the principal and she selected eight students that she felt would fit the study. Then, I held a face to face seminar with the students and asked if they would like to be participants for my study. I teach English and History at this particular school. But in order to avoid bias, the students selected were not in any of my classes, so I did not have the authority to assign grades to them for any assignments.

Data were collected between April and May of 2015. Interviews took place once a week, and observations (using inscribed notes) took place two times a week (each on a different day). The participants’ responses, during the interviews, were recorded. This recording system helped me track students’ behaviours and responses over a longer time and
helped me explore the world of these individuals in different subject areas. Along with the interviews, I observed how students behaved and met curriculum expectations in the classroom setting, which allowed me to determine their literacy capabilities. Translation of the consent forms was needed by the guidance counsellor (who spoke Mandarin) for recruitment purposes of the participants.

Based on student perceptions I was able to suggest strategies that educators and administrators can implement to help these participants obtain a high quality level of education, which will be further outlined in Chapter 5 of my study.

**Gaining Access and Creating Rapport**

In a phenomenological research study, permission from a human subjects’ review board must be sought before conducting the study (Creswell, 2007). Formal consent was sought from the principal of the school prior to the involvement of the individual participants. The principal was informed of the procedures of my project, which clearly outlined my purpose of study and how I planned to conduct activities that pertained to the experiences of the participants. She was also informed of how the information would be recorded and stored, and she validated that participants’ names would remain anonymous. Administration and participant consent, both of which were needed through the consent-to-participate forms, further discussed below, were needed in order for my research to take place, all of which was explained in an information session with the assistance of a guidance counsellor who translated my information to the participants. As the students were all 18 years of age or older, they were required to sign a document that outlined the rationale and community benefits of the project. All participants were provided a full explanation of project procedures and modes of data collection. The recruitment and consent procedures
were consistent with the TCPS-2, Articles 6.11 and 10.11 (University of Toronto), and all participants, due to their age, were competent to consent.

**Consent-to-Participate Form**

The consent-to-participate form was required for all participants, as well as for the administrator (principal), the teachers who were involved, and the guidance counsellor (who consented to translate the documents). Unsigned consent forms can be found in Appendices B-G. The forms verified that all participants’ names, teachers’ names, and staff names of those involved would not be associated with the research findings. Instead, I assigned letters to the interviewees to protect their confidentiality (e.g., Student A, Student B, etc.). The forms also included my rationale for this project, interview questions that were asked of the focus group, community benefits associated with their participation, timeframe of the research, confidentiality, a courtesy announcement, guidance counsellor and student data (including the OSR) access, withdrawal and screening process, and, last, the participants’ signatures.

I approached the participants two days after my information session and asked them if they would like to sign the consent form. I clearly outlined and explained the expected benefits that would be acquired from the interviews and observations. There were three expected benefits:

- the development of teaching strategies to help Chinese immigrants develop their literacy skills by tailoring teaching practices to meet their linguistic and cultural needs;
the sharing of data to the participants and to the teaching community near the end of my data collection procedure. Direct benefits from participants’ involvement in the project include a better-informed teaching community; and

- the sharing of data in the form of a summary on a newsletter that I would create for the participants.

I also noted the timeframe for the research process as occurring from April to May of 2015.

Recruitment criteria included students 18 years of age and above in grades 9 to 12, those who had been in Canada for up to two years and not more, and those with low-level English literacy skills. Exclusion criteria included those who were under 18 years of age, those who were very fluent and obtained high marks in their classes, and those who had been in Canada for over two years. The principal, therefore, did a brief screening process that enabled her to identify inclusion-exclusion criteria. I also stated that I would destroy any such information for non-participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria (including any information that may have been obtained or written down by the principal herself).

The form also indicated the right of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time (no form had to be signed) and that they could request that any data related to them to be destroyed. Participants were clearly informed that because the research topics included potentially sensitive issues such as challenges in adjustment, there was a psychological risk of a participant becoming upset and possible socio-legal risks associated with privacy. Therefore, the guidance counsellor would be available if needed, and be present in the class at all times during the interviews and observation sessions. The form also indicated that student data might, if needed, also be collected from the student and/or guidance counsellor.
This data included tests, OSR records, documents, and/or records from various classes throughout the duration of their study at the secondary school. I could possibly look at this as secondary data in order to determine how much the participants improved over the course of two years in different classes. After gaining access and building positive rapport, criteria sampling was the next vital step in my data collection process.

**Five Criteria**

According to Groenewald (2004), the “operative word in phenomenological research is ‘describe,’” which involves the researcher describing “as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts” (p. 5). I incorporated distinct modes of data collection into this study in order to develop effective criteria for judging accuracy and “remaining true to the facts.” According to Creswell (2007), there are five crucial criteria used to judge the quality of a phenomenological research study. The following criteria were applied to my research and my study met each standard in specific ways, as outlined below.

The first criterion is to ask whether or not the interviewer swayed the contents of the participants’ descriptions in such a way that the accounts do not truly reflect the participants’ definite experiences (Creswell, 2007). In order to provide an account that truly reflected participants’ lived experiences with none of the contents being swayed, the interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions. Even though the questions did focus on students’ negative experiences, by asking students how they felt they were learning in their subjects and if they had experienced any discouragement in the Canadian school system, I gathered various and distinct answers because not everyone responded in the same way. The participants typically said they felt uncomfortable since they had little to no exposure to
differentiated instruction, and many of them were struggling with language proficiency. Asking generalized questions as opposed to ones that would require them to answer yes or no led me to develop a broader understanding due to their varied responses. I also did not argue with or question their responses, so, in some cases when some of them responded positively, I did not judge or sway them to respond in another way but instead remained silent during my note-taking.

The second criterion is to consider whether or not the record is accurate and whether or not it conveys the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview (Creswell, 2007). The accuracy of my records and the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview process were determined based on the open-ended questions asked, including what the participants had been exposed to in terms of marginalization in the Canadian education system and how they had experienced this in the classroom. By highlighting significant statements and recording quotes said by each participant during the interview process, I developed an accurate portrayal of the participants’ definite experiences.

The third criterion is to consider the analysis of the transcriptions themselves and to determine whether or not there were conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been incorporated, and whether or not the researcher has identified these alternatives (Creswell, 2007). After the research data were collected and analysed over a certain period of time, I asked myself whether I omitted any other information or conclusions that should have been addressed during my observations and discussions with the participants and teachers. I was able to answer this by going back to my original interview questions, my notes, the student statements that I wrote down and the audio recordings to determine whether there were any omissions. Further, because the guidance counsellor was there at all
times, she helped ensure whether or not students may have tried to say something but couldn’t due to language barriers, and she was able to clarify any information that the students may not have been able to communicate.

The fourth criterion is to determine whether or not the author conveys an overall essence of the experience of the participants and whether or not this essence includes a description of the experience and the context in which it occurred (Creswell, 2007). In order to successfully convey an overall essence of the experiences of the participants, the research must focus on the common experiences of the participants. Through the interviews conducted on multiple occasions with each participant individually, I gained an overall sense of what each student experienced in the classroom setting and concluded that many of them had similar experiences in relation to classroom experience and learning (the context). I determined their similar and differing academic and social circumstances by bracketing out important quotes and statements from the interviews and written statements for their verification.

The fifth and last criterion is that a phenomenology that is well-grounded and well-supported should have a structural description that is situation specific and articulated in a concise way (Creswell, 2007). By witnessing student performances directly in the classroom, I examined if these students experienced alienation and if they understood course-related content. I observed how students approached and responded to required assignments and/or tests and tasks, as well as their interactions with peers and teachers. The combination of my discussions with them (interview questions) and my discussions with their teachers enabled me to develop a holistic understanding of their learning inside a school setting. The participants’ answers were analysed by me and the participants themselves to arrive at shared meanings and
interpretations. Through criteria sampling, I was able to gather valuable statements in regards to what the students experienced (feelings of marginalization) and how they experienced it in terms of the context (educational setting). In order to be able to process this information, various data collection activities came into play.

**Collecting Data**

**Interviews**

The interview process consisted of semi-structured interviews because the questions were subject to change as the interview process took place, depending on how the students responded to the initial questions and whether or not any of the questions needed to be modified or re-worded to fit the participants’ comfort level. The interview process took place once a week and helped to answer my guiding research question. I took notes on the students’ verbal answers beside each of the questions. The students were interviewed once a week on a one-on-one basis and the interviews were all approximately 10-15 minutes in length (per session).

One-on-one interviewing was essential to use in my research method because it allowed each individual to reveal their experiences that they may otherwise not have shared in a larger group setting. The interview procedure was useful to share adequate and insightful data, and the classroom setting comfortably provided the perfect place for interviews to happen. It was imperative during the initial interview to let participants know:

- the purpose of the study (to identify the inherent problems for linguistic minorities in one private school classroom in relation to teaching practices);
- the plans for using the results from the interview (to suggest solutions for schools and teaching practices); and
• the time needed to complete the data gathering (approximately one month).

Along with the interviews, observations were also vital in providing an accurate description of the research study.

Observations

It was necessary to conduct observations in the classes so that I could see how the participants behaved and performed in the classroom in terms of meeting curriculum expectations and to observe how well they understood the material taught. Observations enabled me to determine which teaching strategies were implemented that helped (or didn’t help) with the acquisition of English literacy and with inclusion.

The participant observations took place two times a week (on different days) during a specific period throughout the day in different classrooms (approximately 10-15 minutes in each class) in order to obtain as much information as possible in different classes. I also spoke to the teachers beforehand to ensure that I could sit in during the lessons, observe the students and take inscribed notes. During these observations I did not disturb or speak to the participants; no interruption during their class time occurred from my presence. I asked the participants afterward, during the interview process, how they studied in their classes, what they found difficult about certain subjects, and the like. I also asked their teachers, especially when time constraints made it difficult for me to gather certain information on my own, questions regarding the participants’ study habits and adaptability to the Canadian curriculum in relation to that particular subject area. I also discussed some of their low marks with their teachers. Teachers informed me of their teaching strategies with the ELLs and gave me background information about themselves as educators.
By incorporating one-on-one interviews and observations in my study, I was able to provide suggestions on how educators and administrators can revolutionize classrooms and Canadian schools in order to create meaningful experiences that can help foster academic and/or social growth for Chinese immigrants.

**Recording Information**

As I conducted interviews and observations, I took notes on the responses of the interviewees, including the audio recordings of all interview sessions, which effectively enabled me to organize information on ideas and important statements. I recorded information through initial jottings and included descriptive notes for recording and reflecting upon the students’ performance in the classroom atmosphere. Upon completion of the interviews and observations, I created my own comments based on the inscribed notes and listened to the audio recordings afterward to authenticate the interview data. Before recording all of the information, it was important to consider the various field issues that could arise from this kind of a research study and the different ways of resolving them.

**Resolving Field Issues**

**Interviews and Observations**

It was important to know how to deal with individuals saying too little or having emotional outbursts and how to provide ice breakers if they hesitated to disclose information. When individuals said too little, I rephrased my questions accordingly until they became comfortable with disclosing additional information. The risk of psychological upset was always present but thankfully did not occur with any participant. All participants were aware that they would be given the interview questions prior to agreeing to participate in the research, so they had time to deliberate before agreeing to participate in the process. Students
were fully aware that in case psychological/emotional/social problems occurred at any time throughout the study, a guidance counsellor would be readily available at all times, including during all observation and interview sessions.

I asked the guidance counsellor beforehand prior to my study to identify potential problems with the individual participants associated with psychological risks or possible upset. For instance, if a student was deemed to be emotionally unstable or to have family problems or something of a similar kind, I could have obtained this information from the guidance counsellor or, if needed, from their Ontario Student Record (OSR). However, she did not make any suggestions about any psychological or emotional issues associated with these particular participants. Nevertheless, in case they did occur, I had on-hand relevant referral help from the counsellor. I also knew how to frame my questions/responses in a way that was suitable to participants prior to the interview process. On a couple of occasions, when two of my students felt uncomfortable responding to questions two and three of the interview questionnaire, I reminded them they did not have to answer all of the questions if they were uncomfortable answering and explained the withdrawal option.

Another issue that I had to grapple with was whether the participants were actually able to articulate their experiences to me in English since their English skills were low. Patience played a key role in this; if students could not articulate what they wished to express, (which occurred sometimes), then the guidance counsellor was present at all interviews and translated some of their statements to me on their behalf. This seldom happened, but when it did, I rephrased some of the questions to a level in which they understood so there was no need for the guidance counsellor to translate, with the exception of a couple of instances. This worked well in an interview session when the participants were
trying to articulate information but could not do so effectively due to their level of English proficiency. In some cases, students’ responses included critical remarks about the school, teachers, or the principal, and confidentiality was maintained in those instances by not including any specific names implicated in the critical remarks and filtering to include only the information that was indeed crucial to include in my thesis.

As an observer, I assumed a nonparticipant role and avoided disturbing the class by being passive in my observations. One issue with the observations was how to record comments verbatim. It was thus important to know how to filter, beforehand, what information was essential to use and what was not in relation to my research. In addition, because the audio recordings and written notes were shown to the participants, they were able to let me know of any important information that they felt was omitted. Beyond all of these field issues, there were also ethical issues to consider when conducting this kind of a research study in a classroom setting.

**Ethical Issues**

I established consent and confidentiality procedures that enabled all participants to feel safe. I assigned letters in place of names to the interviewees to protect their confidentiality. Moreover, I avoided sharing my personal experiences on the topic because, although this may have provided participants comfort knowing that somebody else had experienced a similar phenomenon, it may have swayed them to respond in a particular way and thus reduce accurate information shared by them. Transcriptions and audio recordings were reviewed with the participants, which prevented information being reported that could harm the individuals. Likewise, the teachers who were observed were also aware of my presence in their classroom and were aware of exactly what I reported about their comments
in relation to student experiences. While individual protection through privacy measures was important when recording the data, it was just as important to ensure that interviewees and teachers were cognizant of the information that became interpreted.

The participants were informed that limitations to protecting their confidentiality, as outlined in the consent form, occurred only if the participants were deemed to be in a psychological or emotional crisis.

**Storing Data**

Storing and backing up information was important when I conducted my research study. The descriptive summaries (observation notes, theoretical notes and audio recordings) from both the interviews and the observations are stored on a USB drive that was password protected and only accessible by me. Because there were handwritten notes, each inscribed note was scanned for backup purposes while protecting the anonymity of the participants involved by masking their names on the computer during scanning. This allowed me to create handwritten copies, plus additional ones that were organized and stored within a computer database (all on a USB) along with the audio recordings. Only I have a copy of these records, which were stored securely in the principal’s office in a locked drawer. All identifiable electronic information outside of a secure environment has been encrypted with a passcode consistent with the University of Toronto’s data security and encryption standards. Data will be retained for five years after publication, and final disposal will be in front of the principal and/or guidance counsellor. At that time, participants’ information and records will be deleted from the USB. There will then be no further records on the computer of the data collection activities.
Incorporating the several components of the data collection process for a phenomenological research design enabled me to apply my research accordingly in order to develop various strategies for addressing the marginalization and hardships that Chinese immigrants face on entering the Canadian education system, particularly in the development of their literacy skills. Through my research, I was able to effectively grasp how to formulate and revise teaching models, according to the students’ suggestions, which is vital in helping students become active, lifelong learners (Bredeweg & Forbus, 2003).
CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Detailed Descriptions

This chapter summarizes key findings in the study connecting candidates’ experiences to the research question presented at the outset of the study: how recent emergent adult Chinese immigrants from China experience marginalization in an Ontario private high school in relation to ministry and classroom expectations and teaching strategies, and further, how the strategies that the marginalized participates described would meet their needs and create a more inclusive learning environment. Participants’ responses enabled me to determine the similarities and differences between the education systems of Canada and China and allowed me to see how this Canadian private school tried to incorporate inclusion practices in the classroom setting. After investigating the transcriptions and ensuring they met the five criteria described in the methodology chapter, I developed clusters of meaning and formed them into detailed descriptions of students’ shared feelings towards the phenomenon, which will be described below.

The Interviews

Responses were organized into four sub-questions based on the students’ responses. The main issues addressed in the interviews that relate to my research question are the following:

- discouragement in the Canadian school system;
- the Canadian versus the Chinese school system (including curricula and teaching practices);
- vocabulary and language barriers;
- the connection between cultural background and learning; and
• teacher and curricula implementation according to students’ firsthand account of educational experiences.

It was hoped that students’ responses to those five issues would help to answer the four sub-questions:

1. How do Canadian education systems compare with those in China?
2. What barriers are there to full inclusion in the Canadian school system for recent immigrants from China?
3. What curriculum changes are required to facilitate English language acquisition for recent immigrants from China?
4. How can schools and classroom practices better reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of recent Chinese immigrants?

Participants’ Profiles and Stories

The themes that are categorized below are for the purposes of answering the four sub-questions and research question. The themes that emerged from the research show that the eight participants experienced similar situations, although their responses were not always articulated the same way. The five themes below relate to what the participants said about marginalization and suggest ways that teachers can enhance their learning experiences.

Participants reported on being dissatisfied with the teaching they received and suggested strategies that would help them feel included. It is beyond the scope of this study to comment on the quality of teaching practices and equity policies, but from the data collected students created a list of strategies they felt would help them learn better. The themes presented in the following section illustrate their concerns.
Student A is 19 years old and has been in Canada for six months. She arrived at the school with limited literacy skills and was determined by the school principal to be functioning at a grade 8 English level. Student B is 18 years old and has been in Canada for two years and came to study at this private school just a year ago with very limited English language proficiency. Student C is 19 years old and has been studying at the school for a year and one month. He came with little to no English proficiency from his school in China and missed two years of secondary school because he had to help his father out with his business. Student D is 18 years old and has been in the school for nine months; this student studied English in China and his oral communication skills are satisfactory but he is weak in the areas of writing, reading, and listening. Student E, who is 19 years old, has only been in Canada for four months. She was in an international school in China for two years and acquired some English skills during that timeframe. Student F is 21 years old and has been studying at the school for one year. He has strong mathematical skills but has been out of the secondary school system for three years back home due to a spine injury. Student G is 18 years old and came to study in Canada three months ago. She received limited English instruction back home and her overall average upon arrival to the school was 57%. Lastly, Student H is 20 years old and he has been at the school for just over a year. He had English training for a limited amount of time in China and was pulled out of school because he was failing a few courses. He decided to work within the family business before his arrival to Canada.
Presentation of Essential Themes: Students’ Experiences of Marginalization

Theme 1: Discouragement in the Canadian School System

One common point of discouragement was level of spoken fluency in the language, which they felt was a barrier to their full inclusion in the Canadian school system, thereby addressing my second sub-question. The Ontario curriculum document, *English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development*, emphasizes how important it is for educators to provide supportive language feedback through “opportunities to produce spoken language and receive feedback in a respectful and helpful way” and provide a “caring environment where teacher and peers support English language learners and value their efforts to communicate” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 10). The students reported on the difficulty of acquiring spoken English skills. Some added more detail than others and explained their reasoning for their discouragement very clearly. Student A reflected on a moment when she realized that there were “many people who are fluent in English, and I am not.” Student A did not specifically mention that there was an issue with her not being so fluent in English, but it was obvious because although she did not explicitly state it, she alluded to being isolated when she was asked whether she felt any discouragement in the Canadian education system. She said: “I feel isolated from the local kids because I am always below their level of English so they don’t always wish to communicate with me or play sports with me.” Student B also explained the difficulty in acquiring English skills:

[It is] difficult to acquire English skills. [The] time is limited. Some people speak English very well and the teachers will talk to those people mostly, others they do not pay so much attention to. Translators don’t help much and teachers don’t often explain every single thing. They just don’t have the time.
Many students echoed this comment. They felt teachers did not pay enough attention in helping them acquire the English skills necessary to succeed. Some students went so far as to mention life outside of the classroom, including Student C, who commented on the difficulty of ordering from a local coffee shop. He said, “Even [when] buying Starbucks, if you don’t know the English words you can’t order, so I feel like an outsider because often I don’t know what people are talking about.” Clearly, discouragement was an issue both inside and outside the classroom. Student D mentioned, “If we say something indirectly they [the teachers] won’t understand immediately.” Student E elaborated on her own discouragement:

[It is] difficult for me to adjust, everyone speaks English [here] so well. In my new school environment, the most difficult thing is communicating with teachers and students. In the classroom it is not easy to learn courses, [there are] many complicated words and sentences. We spend 110 hours to study one course, [which is] not enough time for us. The speed of learning is a bit quick.

Student E mentioned the fast-paced learning environment in Canada and that 110 hours to study one course is perhaps not enough time. Discouragement from the participants came from the difficulty of adjusting to their new environment due to communication problems with teachers and students, the difficulty in studying courses, the speed at which courses were being taught, a lack of prior knowledge about the content, and Canadian culture.

Student F said, “The teacher doesn’t realize we don’t understand the principles. She doesn’t always talk in simple English,” while Student G further revealed, “[you] have to communicate with teachers and be brave to ask questions. I am not because I don’t have [the] vocabulary like local students.” Both students F and G reflected on the difficulties in
understanding the content being taught due to lack of vocabulary and language proficiency. Student H admitted, “[It is] stressful to adapt to a new culture when language is the most stressful in our attempts to adapt to the Canadian culture.”

While the participants all made different statements about the same issue, it is clear that there is dissatisfaction with the Canadian education system due to various reasons, most of them focusing on English language proficiency in communicating as the main barrier to inclusion in a Canadian secondary landscape.

**Theme 2: The Canadian versus the Chinese School Systems**

The second identifiable theme was types of curriculum and teaching practices in Canada versus those found in Chinese school systems, which directly relates to my first sub-question about the differences between the Canadian and Chinese education systems. Many students stated that the teachers in China pay closer attention to students’ marks and care more and are strict, whereas in Canada there is more freedom. Student A said:

> In China, the teacher forces you to study, but in Canada, there is much freedom in the class, which is not a good thing….In China, teachers lecture, but in Canada a lot of group work is present and I am shy….Teaching styles [are] much different [here] than back home. [In] China, [there is] standardized testing and exams, marks [are] very important, but here [it is based on a] credit system.

Sometimes freedom is not a good teaching strategy, as Student A mentioned, and it is important for teachers in Canada to understand the differences in teaching styles and curriculum delivery in order to be able to adjust to students’ ways of learning since “freedom in the class” is not always a “good thing” and group work is not always a solution.
Student B went so far as to say that in Canada, teachers feel that “when their jobs are finished for the day, they don’t have to help us anymore until the bell rings the next day…Teachers only teach curriculum, no life skills or anything non-curriculum related.” Others, including Student C, commented that the teaching style in Canada “gives students lots of freedom, whereas in China it is very strict, they help you at all times. They don’t give you independent activities.”

Participants made it clear that because of the differences in teaching and curricula implementation between Canada and China, they felt more comfortable with the learning environment in China. Student D felt that “Western teachers think logically and don’t take the time to get to know our difficulties,” while Student E observed, “Canadian science involves a lot of vocabulary, concepts, and critical thinking…but in China we don’t need to care about the vocabulary or concepts, we mostly memorize.” Others, including students F, G, and H, commented on the difficulties in studying both content and language at the same time and that often, according to Student F, “Here in math class they [teachers and curriculum] have many steps, so it’s different in terms of my personal experiences.” Student G talked about teachers being lazy because they often respond to questions too quickly and do not explain answers in detail, and said that Chinese teachers “are stricter.” Student G also made note of the fact that “in China, the courses are easier in comparison to those in Canada.” Student H mentioned one similarity: “All students have to work hard” in both school systems.

Other similarities among the two school systems included tests and quizzes, some similar courses, and only one instructor per class. While each student verbalized it differently, their experiences all pointed to same phenomenon—the differences in teaching
practices and implementation of ministry mandated curricula. Most students commented on the teaching practices, indicating that they were dissatisfied with the instruction they received.

**Theme 3: Vocabulary and Language Barriers**

A third theme that emerged from my data was that of vocabulary and language barriers, which were also barriers to full inclusion in the Canadian school system for Chinese immigrants and which relates to my second sub-question. Participants commented on language barriers, specifically in relation to the vocabulary and terminology that made it so hard for them to understand instruction in the Canadian classroom. Student A said she liked it here in Canada but “it is not easy to learn due to the language barriers, and I feel intimidated by other kids who can speak well.” Student B stated that English was the hardest subject due to “vocabulary” and there were no “strict rules about speaking English in the class.” “Strict rules” implied that some teachers did not effectively monitor whether or not the students were speaking in English or in Mandarin and this resulted in many students not practicing the target language but instead speaking in Mandarin only. Language barriers and a lack of rules about speaking in students’ L1 or L2 made it difficult for the Chinese participants to learn English effectively. Student C noted that it was difficult to learn subject content and language at the same time:

> [It is] difficult to study in the classroom because of the language barrier. [When] reading math questions I don’t understand some of them….Math [is very difficult] because even in China, my math wasn’t very good, so, in here, it is more difficult because I need to learn math and language at the same time, so it is hard to put all of my focus on math [only], [so] it is very distracting.
There was a clear relation between the linguistic and emotional needs of immigrant children and the lack of support provided to them because they felt the lack of language acquisition that they received made it difficult for them to learn subject-related content and be confident learners. Student D admitted, “In Canada we do not receive appropriate and sufficient help to learn English quickly, and that’s the problem….We don’t have enough English vocabulary and grammar so we get stuck when talking. Also, we are only allowed to speak in English and never in Mandarin, which makes it even harder to translate class material to our peers.” Students commented on the lack of support in language proficiency which made language a barrier for these immigrants, and they felt that there is a definitive need for educators to understand the importance of how they can foster a learning environment that is inclusive of the needs of these kinds of students. One such way this can be achieved, according to research studies, is by promoting reading comprehension and literacy engagement through “the development of bilingual students’ L1 proficiency” which can “play a positive role in L2 academic development” (Cummins, 2011, p. 1973). The Ontario Ministry of Education (2007a) supports opportunities to maintain and develop the first language because “the first language provides a foundation for developing proficiency in additional languages” (p. 10). Student E realized, “It is not easy to learn the courses [and there are] many complicated words and sentences,” while Student F declared that he had “some language barriers, such as in my science class, when my teacher explains some principles to me, I don’t understand the nouns and it impacts my understanding.”

There is a clear relationship between subject content and vocabulary, and many participants commented on the difficulty of understanding subjects due to language, or
“terminology,” as Student G admitted. In regard to the claim that “Western” teachers seem not to have enough time to spend with each individual student. Student H clarified this point:

[There is] not enough time to study English, so teachers cannot help us individually, [there is] just not enough time….English is most difficult for me because I have to write a lot of essays and Western teachers don’t have enough time to spend on only me to help me, so that’s why it’s hard for me and the Chinese [students].

While all students differed in their comments on various subjects, all pointed to the similar issue of English being a barrier that interrupted their learning. Vocabulary and terminology contributed to other comprehension problems of content material, and, clearly, the students said they did not always receive appropriate and sufficient help to learn the English language. Thus, while some students, like Student A, enjoy the classroom environment here, language is inevitably a barrier that one has to overcome in order to learn properly. Students made it clear that they felt it is important for teachers to enhance their school experiences by making them more conducive to learning.

**Theme 4: Connection between Cultural Background and Learning**

The ministry acknowledges that all teachers should strive to “validate students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds, encouraging them to become bilingual and bicultural” and all classroom resources “should reflect the students’ backgrounds, ages, interests, and level of proficiency in English” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 10). The lack of connection between cultural background and learning directly relates to my fourth sub-question which addresses how the students feel schools and classroom practices can better reflect linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of Chinese immigrants. For example, many
participants commented on the difficulties in understanding “Western” ways of thought.

Student A said:

We only study Canadian history here for the most part, not much [is said] about Chinese culture, and often times it is hard to understand Western references that these local kids understand and refer to, which makes learning the English language an even greater difficulty for me…

Western references made it difficult for Chinese immigrants to relate to Canadian history and allusions. Student B noted, “Only some lessons apply to my own culture. Everything else is Westernized, [and] examples teachers use are Western examples and news are all Canadian.” Student C validated that the “content here is very westernized, no content relates to Chinese culture.”

The participants felt that they did not have a strong connection to learning. Students believed that the content learned here is very Westernized and unrelated to their own culture. Student D said of teachers, “Western teachers don’t spend as much time trying to integrate ethnic minorities together but instead just focus on teaching the content from the curriculum books.” Absence of cultural background and learning made it difficult for students to integrate into a Canadian society that simply did not relate to their learning. The participants did not find their presence relatable to Canadian history. Student E even mentioned:

I always try and stick to my own ethnic group because that is where I feel I belong. They understand me better because we are all in similar cultural situations….We don’t learn much about Chinese culture, but teachers sometimes make reference to my culture in relation to the past, but no deep or meaningful analysis is ever given in
relation to my culture….Even in Career Studies, they [teachers] ask you to put down Canadian experiences mostly, [which] barely relates to me.

Student F claimed, “English jokes and Shakespeare are the worst because they don’t relate to my culture, so it is hard to understand,” while Student G gave a specific example about math class and Canadian references. She said:

[With] most examples used in classes, they [teachers] use European or Canadian references. For example, in Math, the textbook refers to Canadian names such as Dixie, Dundas, TD Building, etc., so how would I know what this is? Very little reference is made to Chinese culture, so I feel like an outsider sometimes.

Because many Canadian references did not relate to Chinese culture, often students did not understand or feel included in class discussions. Even though Student H admitted that in some subjects, such as history, “the teacher makes a lot of reference to other cultures so I feel included in many of the discussions,” not very much was being mentioned in all classes in relation to Chinese culture. Thus, Student H believed that Canadian references were “difficult to understand” without any prior background knowledge or content given.

Because the participants claimed there was a lack of Western background cultural knowledge being taught in classrooms, they ended up feeling bored and sidetracked and were unable to understand the content, North American jokes, and the lessons. Out of the eight participants, only one, Student H, said that he felt included in many of the discussions. However, while this particular student felt “included,” he also admitted that “teachers assume all students can understand all of these references” to North American jokes and noted that when such references were made, they were indeed sometimes “difficult to understand.” While some teachers incorporated jokes and references that pertained to other cultures, the
majority of the participants claimed they were not able to understand Western references and it made them feel like outsiders due to their inability to connect with the English-speaking locals.

**Theme 5: Teacher and Curricula Implications: Strategies that Students Identified as Inclusive**

To better meet the linguistic and socio-cultural needs of Chinese immigrants, participants made suggestions about teacher practices and curriculum content. These suggestions were made in their responses to sub-questions three and four on how school practices can better reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of recent Chinese immigrants. The interview data provided a firsthand account of some of the ways in which these students personally felt that they could be helped on an academic and a social level.

Responses included one or more of the following suggestions for teachers and curriculum:

- “giving more homework, feedback, suggestions” (Student A);
- “comparing situations and events with Chinese culture” (Student B);
- “making an individual plan for each student and making learning more fun and creating more diverse courses about other people’s cultures” (Student C);
- “providing more opportunities for communication for students and introducing new programs to help students integrate more in western society” (Student D);
- “organizing discussion groups and reflecting on Chinese culture by mixing national holidays and celebrations in with knowledge of western culture” (Student E); and
- “grouping people with similar interests together” (Student F).
Students G and Student H both mentioned the importance of communicating with parents to understand the student and Chinese culture better. Student G said, “My parents have very high expectations of me in achievement and study habits, [so] if my teachers talked to my parents ever, they would know how hardworking us Chinese students really are.” Student H also felt the need for teachers to communicate with parents: “I don’t see any of that happening at our school…”

In *Ontario’s Deepening Inclusive and Community-Engaged Education in Three Schools: A Teachers’ Resource*, it is clearly noted that parents should be viewed as “partners in education” and “finding ways to reach out and support parents essentially builds community and fosters a real connection between the parent, the student, and the school” (Stewart Rose & Evans, 2014, p. 39). Communication with parents is critical when trying to establish a connection with students’ learning backgrounds and culture, and it is crucial to understanding where these students come from and how they learn. These are the main concerns that students commented on during the interview sessions.

**Observations**

Observations were also conducted to see how all of these themes manifested themselves in the classroom. I spent a total of 15 minutes in each class each time a class was being observed. There were a total of ten classes observed. It is important to note that a variety of classes were observed, but each student took between one to three classes only due to scheduling (Students had between two to three credit courses per semester. Each semester lasted for approximately eight weeks). Therefore, the participants were observed in two or more of the following subjects, depending on their grade level: English, Grade 9, Academic (ENG1D), Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 10, Open (PPL2O), Calculus and
Vectors, Grade 12, University Preparation (MCV4U), Advanced Functions, Grade 12, University Preparation (MHF4U), Chemistry, Grade 12, University Preparation (SCH4U), Biology, Grade 12, University Preparation (SBI4U), and World History: The West and the World, Grade 12, University Preparation (CHY4U).

Ongoing discussions with the teachers about the students enabled me to get a more comprehensive overview of how students participated and behaved every day in the classes. Otherwise, I could not have drawn accurate conclusions based on only my own observations, since I was only there for a limited period each time. There were ten observations done for each participant, but some classes were observed more than other classes due to the consent of the teachers and the timing as to when they wanted me there.

For Student A, in ENG1D and PPL2O, I observed minimal teacher-student interaction, a low level of English proficiency skills, the student primarily communicating in Mandarin as opposed to English, low effort, a lack of work ethic, discouragement when answering questions in front of the class, and serious trouble in communicating in English to the teacher and students.

Student B spoke a lot of Mandarin in ENG1D and PPL2O and had to be reminded by the teacher to stay focused. He often isolated himself in the corner and stayed quiet for most of the lessons. He could not pronounce words such as “soccer” and “popular” when reading an information passage aloud. Further, he seemed to experience negative emotions when presenting in front of the class and had trouble with past, present, and future tenses. Last, he often struggled with understanding what the teacher was saying in her instruction.

Student C, in MCV4U and PPL2O, spoke Mandarin often in the class but was not shy to ask questions. From my observations, there was not much English interaction with local
students, and there was much confusion when Western cultural references were mentioned. Word problems seemed difficult for the student in mathematics.

Student D, in MHF4U and PPL2O, often played with his cell phone and never seemed focused. Language seemed to be a barrier in understanding the work, but he participated well in small-group activities, though he used mostly Mandarin for communication purposes in the class.

Student E, in MHF4U and PPL2O, was very quiet and shy, and she isolated herself at times and communicated mostly with other females in the class only. She seldom spoke with local, Canadian-born students; when she did, her discussions were very brief.

Student F, in SCH4U, SBI4U, and CHY4U, often used his cellphone to translate vocabulary in his classes. He listened to his iPod on a daily basis and seemed to be uninterested in most classes. Moreover, he did not seem to have a strong understanding of scientific thinking and vocabulary, especially when it came to tests, and often asked the teacher to translate simple words, to which the teacher replied, “Look them up.”

Student G, in SCH4U, SBI4U, and CHY4U, laughed about unrelated topics, and communication seemed to be a problem when explaining ideas orally. Moreover, the student did not understand scientific vocabulary like “photosynthesis” but worked well independently with a translator. She also needed extra time on some of her quizzes/tests to finish and often missed important information when copying down information from the PowerPoint slides.

Student H used minimal English throughout all observation periods in SCH4U, SBI4U, and CHY4U and spoke in Mandarin with the other Chinese students instead. He seemed to have language difficulties in communication because he often asked the teacher
what she meant by the rich vocabulary she used in her fast-paced lessons. Nevertheless, Student H worked well independently and was not afraid to ask questions and spoke in both English and Mandarin in the classes being observed.

**Summary of the Essential Themes and Observations**

This chapter discussed the data analysis and interpretation of the research study. Using participants’ stories, through quotes and audio recordings, and my own observations in each of the classes and discussions with the teachers, I was able to categorize my findings into five themes, or relatable topics, all of which directly related to the four sub-questions mentioned earlier. The essential themes and observations individually offered a small glimpse into the similar experiences of Chinese immigrants. While some students expressed more concern than others on the topics presented above, all opinions concurred on a need for change in curricula implementation and teaching practices. The fundamental principles of the ministry document entitled, *Growing Success*, consist of “keeping with the principle of supporting all students, and implementation of policy” that responds to the “needs of a variety of students” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010a, p. 7). Stewart Rose and Evans (2014) recognized the value of “ongoing school-based and job-embedded professional learning characterized by clear links among district goals, professional development goals, and student learning” as well as opportunities for “self-directed and collaborative modes of professional learning that connect theory and practice” (p. 8). Classroom educators and school leaders thus have a responsibility to implement best practices that are tailored to every individual’s needs.

The fact that none of the participants had an IEP raises a potential concern for responding “to the needs of a variety of students” on a school-wide level. Because these
students all came to the school with low-level English literacy skills, an individualized learning plan would perhaps be helpful in order to meet their diverse learning needs. The ministry encourages teachers to examine the current achievement level of such pupils as well as the strengths and areas needed for improvement in order to determine whether or not accommodations or modifications are appropriate for the student, which is why an IEP would be helpful to meet their needs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007c). In the case of immigrants, while “many have had some instruction in English, nevertheless, they often need considerable support to develop the level of English proficiency required for success in Ontario schools” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 5).

Furthermore, many students commented that communication and vocabulary were barriers to inclusion. Research suggests that an “understanding of linguistics can help teachers see that the discourse patterns they value are aspects of their own cultures and backgrounds” and that “teachers sometime assume that there is something wrong with students whose ways of using language are not what they expect” (Fillmore, 2000, p. 5). The teachers at this particular private school were all registered with the Ontario College of Teachers and had Ontario Teaching Certificates; however, as Cummins et al. (2012) noted many educators who work with bilingual students and ELLs “have had little preparation either in teacher education or through professional development to equip them to teach effectively in contexts where linguistic and cultural diversity is the norm” (p. 27). Some teachers at this school had taken additional qualification (AQ) courses in mathematics and science, but only I am qualified to teach English as a Second Language. Moreover, the school offers workshops and in-house learning when it comes to teaching ELLs, but these are offered a few times throughout the year only.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

A phenomenological research design was specifically chosen to help analyze the social and psychological ramifications of immigrant students’ struggles in the Canadian classroom from the participants’ perspectives on education and their everyday lives in that classroom. The structure for describing the experiences of the participants was derived from a thematic analysis of interviews with the participants, observations in the classroom, notes and audio recordings, and discussions with the teachers. Results illustrated that it is crucial for ongoing professional learning and development to take place in order to help all students become active, lifelong learners.

These fundamental questions framed this research:

1. How do Canadian education systems compare with those in China?
2. What barriers are there to full inclusion in the Canadian school system for recent immigrants from China?
3. What curriculum changes are required to facilitate English language acquisition for recent immigrants from China?
4. How can schools and classroom practices better reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of recent Chinese immigrants?

The research questions were answered by the five themes that emerged from the interview data and that were reported on in Chapter 4.
Limitations

Participant Responses

The first limitation to this study is that participants may not have been able to articulate themselves clearly and concisely due to their language barrier. However, in order to eliminate this issue, the guidance counsellor, who spoke Mandarin was there at all times and helped translate correctly any information that students were not able to clarify or fully articulate. Her presence, therefore, allowed me to determine if any omission occurred. However, although the students answered all of the questions, they may have responded in a certain way because the presence of both a teacher and guidance counsellor there may have compelled participants to try to articulate what they felt the teacher and guidance counsellor wanted to hear.

Teacher-Student Interaction

Before arriving at any conclusions concerning a participant, I often spoke to other teachers of the participant in order to corroborate the initial instructor’s opinion. But fifteen-minute sessions did not allow enough time for me to draw definitive conclusions about a teacher’s strategies or teaching methods. My observations could very well have coincided with a period of little or no interaction with students (i.e., during a “complete this assignment” time), but 10 minutes later (after my exit), the teacher could have been highly engaged with students in a very interactive study. Due to teacher preference I was only allotted that amount of time in each class. However, because there were a total of 10 observations and many interview sessions that followed, based on participants’ responses through the interview sessions it was plausible to conclude that there was minimal teacher-student interaction and that my observations were indeed valid.
Time

In addition to teacher-student interaction, time is another limitation to this study. One month may arguably not be enough time to reach certain conclusions about a group of individuals. Perhaps if the study had been longer, say a year, a more comprehensive overview could have been reached based on students’ responding over a longer period. But due to time constraints and the fast-paced semester system at that school, the principal arranged the study to be conducted within one month only. However, in order to diminish this limitation, I held a total of 10 observations with each single participant and nine interview sessions (in total) in order to gain an overall essence of their experiences. Therefore, the combination of observations and interview sessions allowed me to develop a comprehensive overview of the participants’ experiences.

Social Class Variation, Age, and Gender

Social class variation, age, and gender are also limitations to this study. The students were each observed in up to three different courses/classrooms. This could have been a problem because the participants may have had academic and social problems, but only in those particular courses. Had six or seven classes been observed, perhaps conclusions that are more accurate could have been drawn about their learning progress. However, because the students each had up to three classes a day only, due to their eight-week semester system, only specific classes were observed and only for a limited timeframe. Moreover, I chose to focus on Chinese immigrants who were all at least 18 years of age or older and who were from middle-class backgrounds who have been in Canada for up to two years. In order to accurately portray differing experiences and responses, perhaps it would have been more suitable to have different age groups of students and students from different socioeconomic
backgrounds participate in the study. But unfortunately, because the private school I conducted my case study at had a large population of Chinese students who were 18 and above, and who were all from middle-class backgrounds, it left me with little to no room for the analysis of other backgrounds to take place at this particular school. Another limitation is that I had two females and seven males participate in the study. There could have been more gender variation for a more suitable analysis to take place, but the particular school I conducted the study at had a population of mostly male students. Further, because the principal chose which students could participate in the study, it left no room for me to personally select participants.

While there are always research limitations in every study that should be addressed, a comprehensive overview of students’ lived experiences was arrived at through a variety of distinct methods, as mentioned above, in order to make the limitations and inconsistencies as limited as possible. Even if not enough time was spent in the classrooms observing participants, the participants’ direct statements and responses to their experiences in Canada alone provides much in the way of clear data. Based on participants’ opinions and descriptions of their experiences, there are many strategies that they feel would be effective to providing an inclusive classroom where immigrants of varying backgrounds could learn. The following are strategies that, based on the participants’ responses, can help eliminate marginalization in the classroom and foster academic and social growth for immigrant youth.

**Recommendations Based on Participants’ Responses**

**Recommendation 1: Individualized Learning and Parental Communication**

The participants themselves commented on the importance of providing individualized learning plans for each student (IEPs) and communicating with parents on an
ongoing basis. The eight participants suggested that teachers should create individualized learning plans for each student in order to get to know students’ learning styles. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2007c) made it clear that principals must ensure that every student who has an “Individual Education Plan (IEP) is receiving the modifications and/or recommendations described in his or her plan” and must ensure that it is properly “developed, implemented, and monitored” (p. 8). The participants in this particular case study did not have IEPs, so it is difficult to comment on whether or not they were receiving appropriate modifications and/or recommendations in relation to adaptations and strategies that would facilitate their success in mainstream classrooms. According to the ministry, “if the student requires either accommodations or modified expectations, or both, the relevant information must be recorded in his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP)” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007c, p. 29). Proper implementation, therefore, of curricula documents and ministry guidelines regarding individualized learning plans tailored to each student is imperative for successful English language acquisition to take place.

Other students also mentioned the importance of allowing students to receive sufficient and appropriate help that fits their needs and that teachers should communicate more with parents in order to understand Chinese culture and customs. The ministry document entitled, Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, envisions an education system that welcomes the positive impact of parent engagement on student achievement where “students are supported and inspired to learn in a culture of high expectations” in which parents “are engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue with other educational partners to support a positive learning environment at home and at school” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b, p. 7). To achieve this goal, the
document states that all schools must work together to create a welcoming environment and increase opportunities for parents to be involved in their child’s learning and development and help eliminate barriers to their learning. Along with the students’ suggestions on individualized learning plans and parental involvement as tools to help them excel academically and become integrated into mainstream education, another suggestion made was the need to provide a learning environment for Chinese immigrants that is learner focused and not just content focused.

**Recommendation 2: Creating a Learner-Focused Environment**

The students suggested that teaching should focus on the learner as opposed to the content. Many participants drew upon the concern that native English students were unable to understand their cultural backgrounds and customs and only referred to Western culture, without knowing much about the Chinese culture, thus making these students feel isolated and left out. The students suggested that teachers at this school should compare situations and events with Chinese culture and those of the West so that immigrants can feel included in class discussions and that this would make learning more relevant and engaging by exploring other people’s cultures, reflecting a constructivist paradigm by “maximising opportunities for Chinese youth in Canada to develop a positive sense of ethnic identification” and by making them feel comfortable learning about other cultures and engaging in dialogue with other students (Costigan et al., 2009, p. 270). Madeline Richards at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) commented on culturally relevant pedagogy in her classroom and asserted the importance of connecting reading materials with the interests and culture of the students; she claimed that her students read “culturally responsive and relevant books” which “engaged the students in developing critical literacy skills and provided them with concrete examples of
how they could make a difference [in the students’ learning]” (Stewart Rose & Evans, 2014, p. 120). Allowing students to reflect upon and understand Chinese culture and other cultures around the world could be established and, according to the participants, by adopting culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy at this particular school teachers can facilitate learning through use of “their students’ background knowledge as a vehicle for learning as well as for integrating social justice issues across the curriculum.” It is important and students’ cultural knowledge should be included in a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of all students (Stewart Rose & Evans, 2014). Social relations between teachers and parents can also promote a better understanding of students’ cultural practices, and parents can convey their perspectives on what teachers should know about their children.

Moreover, some students suggested that teachers should organize their lessons around discussion groups and group people together with similar interests for shared knowledge and mutual understandings to occur. This suggestion is supported by the literature on social constructivism that argues for that pedagogical approach. Social constructivism can allow students to explore knowledge and information that is relevant to them, and by drawing on students’ prior knowledge, teachers can have a better understanding “for redirecting or refining this prior knowledge and further developing it so that deeper and more complex concepts can be understood by the student within their own context” (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012, p. 115). In this manner, teachers can help learning take place in accordance with students’ cultural backgrounds and previous experiences, which can be integrated into the classroom content and celebrated, not suppressed.

Making material relevant to the Chinese learners, by incorporating and celebrating their linguistic and cultural differences, can contribute to inclusion and a student-centered
environment that not only focuses on teaching content but also allows the learner to construct and re-construct his or her own learning through prior knowledge and ongoing communication and understanding in the classroom setting. Because “knowledge is socially constructed, culturally mediated, and historically situated,” social relations in the classroom can help promote “insightful connections between curricular goals and immigrant students’ experiences in countries of origin, in transition, and in residence in the local community, in turn making sense of transcultural flows and attachments to locality” (Guo, 2012, p. 123). Social interaction is crucial in helping teachers understand their students linguistically and culturally; they can then promote an inclusive classroom filled with multiculturalism and diverse learners.

**Recommendation 3: Building an Inclusive Classroom**

A classroom filled with diverse learners with different language backgrounds poses a particular challenge for educators because they have to take into consideration a wide range of academic backgrounds and language abilities. Social constructivism can initiate collaboration among students where “ELLs are provided [with] the opportunity to collaborate with students of all different English proficiency levels,” which in turn may “help ELL students to develop more complex vocabulary and concepts” (Mvududu & Thiel-Burgess, 2012, p. 112). Because a main concern of the participants was vocabulary issues and language barriers, an important strategy that could be incorporated in all classrooms, according to the students in this study, is the opportunity for students to communicate with everyone in the class; this can help them with language acquisition and comprehension. A useful strategy that participants suggested was that teachers should incorporate various
problem-solving activities in order to have students work collaboratively and to allow Chinese immigrants to work with native English speakers, not only Chinese speakers.

**Recommendation 4: Providing Feedback and Ongoing Reflection**

Ongoing feedback and student and teacher reflection can also help improve social and academic learning. An important concern of many Chinese students was the teachers’ inability to give feedback and suggestions comprehensively, thus leaving students ignorant of their academic progress. Ontario’s *Growing Success* document suggests that the use of assessment tools can help students become independent learners and in order to help improve their learning teachers should play an active role in “giving and receiving feedback, monitoring progress, and adjusting learning strategies” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010a, p. 30). By understanding how each student learns, teachers can make learning more fun and diversify their courses and decide where the learners are in their learning and plan instruction and assessment accordingly to achieve learning goals.

Along with feedback, student and teacher reflection are also important for helping improve students’ quality of learning. Learning results from actively exploring new information and constructing new ideas; therefore, “learners play an ongoing, active, and critical role in assessment” when it comes to constructivism (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002, p. 118). Learners should get the chance to not only construct their own ideas based on their prior knowledge and experiences but should also be able to self-assess their own work in order to realize the meaning of what they have been experiencing in the classroom. *Growing Success* recognizes that self-assessment skills can help “students learn to identify specific actions they need to take to improve, and to plan next steps – that is, to define their long- and short-term individual goals with increasing clarity and realism” (Ontario Ministry of
Education, 2010a, p. 35). At the same time, teachers should reflect on their own teaching practices to determine if they reflect a commitment to embracing cultural diversity. Without knowing students’ strengths and weaknesses effective learning cannot exist. As the participants mentioned, giving ongoing feedback and suggestions, as well as being able to create individual plans for each student and assess one’s own work, are critical in constructivist thought and learner success. Then, “investigation, invention, implementation, evaluation, and celebration” (Alesandrini & Larson, 2002, p. 118) of academic and cultural backgrounds can occur in a classroom setting where teachers can evaluate their practices and not just impose content and lessons upon the students.

**Recommendation 5: Implementation of Curriculum Guidelines**

The participants suggested that educators should implement curriculum guidelines and policy documents effectively in order to allow students to construct knowledge through interaction that would meet their needs in order to create meaning for them in the classroom. According to their concerns, the following strategies would be helpful to eliminate marginalization in the classroom in relation to curriculum implementation:

- do not only focus on teaching subject content, but focus on *how* to teach different students from various backgrounds;
- each subject should have a specific number of lessons that refer to other cultures in depth; and
- incorporate different linguistic backgrounds and cultures into daily lessons in all subjects.

Sometimes a student’s background and experiences are not reflected in the curriculum due to the “mismatch between what is in the curriculum and students’ lived
experiences. When that happens, the excluded student feels less important and unmotivated [to learn]” (Ogbugu & Ogbugu, 2013, p. 85). Ontario curriculum documents clearly state the need for incorporating a wide range of teaching materials conducive to different needs and academic backgrounds. Examples of these descriptions are discussed below that specifically reference certain curricula of the subjects in which the participants were observed.

**The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10: English (Revised 2007)**

An example in the English curriculum that states the importance of incorporating various materials in each classroom is stated in the following: “The English curriculum takes into account that students in Ontario come from a wide variety of backgrounds and that every student has a unique set of perspectives, strengths and needs” and that instructional strategies and resources must “recognize and reflect the diversity in the classroom and suit individual strengths and needs” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b, p. 6). On the topic of program implementation instructions, the curriculum states, “Teachers will find ways to incorporate this diversity into their instructional programs and into the classroom environment” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b, p. 32). The curriculum states the importance of implementing various programs to suit diverse learners and their needs, particularly ELLs. While this may be very difficult to do, considering the numerous cultures from around the world represented in Canada, all educators should strive to incorporate an abundance of resources when it comes to inclusivity and social justice. For instance, instead of focusing solely on English texts, such as Shakespearean texts, non-English texts should be explored as well in order to provide a greater opportunity to understand different cultures.
The Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12: Mathematics (Revised 2007)

The mathematics curriculum states that learning activities and resources should be “inclusive in nature, reflecting the range of experiences of students with varying backgrounds, abilities, interests, and learning styles” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007d, p. 35). According to participants’ responses, they suggested that it is important for teachers to weave linguistic backgrounds and cultures into their daily lesson plans, even in math class.

Because social constructivism involves learners making sense of their own material in their own ways, allowing students to communicate more in the class about their own diverse methods and “ways” of solving problems can help incorporate students’ lived experiences in the class. As for the curriculum itself, students suggested that teachers can incorporate textbooks and reference examples where other countries are involved, such as referring to street names, districts, cities, buildings, and other locations from around the world, not just from Canada. Students can then explore the information, process it, and understand it in their own way. Furthermore, students should experientially explore language in the same way, including exploring mathematical concepts by collaborating with others in order to understand and be able to make sense of other cultural references along with their own. A constructivist approach would allow students to socialize and understand the vocabulary used in an English-Canadian setting so that students can make sense of these words and not merely guess or have to use translators all the time to decipher meanings and Canadian references.

The Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12: Science (Revised 2008)

The science curriculum addresses considerations for program planning for ELLs. It acknowledges that there are many newcomers who arrive to Canada and that, because they
are entering a new linguistic environment, “all teachers [therefore must] share the responsibility for these students’ English language development” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 38).

Perhaps providing a word list at the beginning of each science unit could help students decipher meanings without struggling to rely on translators all the time. At the same time, collaborating with others using social constructivist approaches (such as group work, paired work, collaborative discussion groups, etc.) and developing their own meanings of scientific content can help students, according to the participants, create differentiated viewpoints, meanings, and a mutual understanding of science that they feel is relevant to them.

The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 to 12: Health and Physical Education (Revised 2015)

The revised curriculum states the need for teachers to “develop and deepen their understanding of individual students, [where] they can respond more effectively to the students’ needs by differentiating instructional approaches” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 52-53). It also mentions that teachers can do this by incorporating “different types of resources, allowing a wider choice of topics, even adjusting the learning environment, if appropriate, to suit the way their students learn and how they are best able to demonstrate their learning” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 57).

The participants admitted they often got confused when it came to sports and physical education activities, especially when receiving instructions about sports they have never learned about before. A strategy they suggested would help them learn is for teachers to inquire about the various sports and activities that are played in China in physical education classes and be able to incorporate them into Canadian classes as well in order to make the
curriculum more relatable to everyone. Further, through a social constructivist approach, students can work collaboratively together in group activities to develop comfort and confidence by explaining instructions to one another and helping one another decipher something as simple as playing a sport. The curriculum, which addresses and acknowledges a need to incorporate modifications and accommodations based on linguistic and cultural factors, should be incorporated in all lessons so that educators can use their professional judgment to determine which resources they can use that relate to different types of learners, which in turn can help eliminate students’ feelings of isolation and exclusion.

The Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12: Canadian and World Studies (Revised 2005)

Students in The West and the World (CHY4U) history course investigated trends in Western civilization and world history from the sixteenth century to the present. Some of the expectations included students being required to analyse different religious groups and “a variety of types of communities that have evolved since the sixteenth century” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 194). The communities and groups that the curriculum mentions are examples that could be used in the classroom to explain the evolution of different communities and groups.

The curriculum provides examples that teachers can use, but these examples are not requirements that the teachers must use when explaining and analysing world concepts. The curriculum, therefore, leaves it up to the teachers to decide which cultural viewpoints to incorporate in their classroom curriculum, and many teachers, according to the participants, incorporated very little cultural viewpoints that were not Canadian.
Implications for Future Research

There are many implications for future research that arose from this study. It is important to note that the recommendations and strategies provided in this chapter pertain to this case study only and are based on participants’ viewpoints and strategies they felt would prevent marginalization. The participants at this particular private school reported on their struggles with integration as a result of ineffective teaching and failure to incorporate relatable content. The purpose of this study was not to evaluate equity policies, teaching methods, or ministry documents, but instead to report on students’ experiences and strategies they felt would help make them feel more included in classroom activities. All participants felt that educators should incorporate distinct kinds of educational resources in the classroom, by not only relying solely on textbooks but rather including other resources, such as field trips, guest speakers, audio visual aids, newspapers, literature, etc. that will help provide a comprehensive overview of material since the curriculum should be “based on the realities of the students’ lives, be meaningful to their aspirations, bridge disciplinary divides, [and] incorporate assessments that accurately reflect student learning…” (Peterson, 2009, para. 26).

Along with curricula implementation best teaching practices would be another area of research that could take place. Further studies should be done to see if other minorities, ethnicities, and immigrants face similar issues as the ones mentioned in this study and to determine whether or not they face their own unique issues. Lastly, perhaps conducting a study with a larger group of immigrants from various ethnicities and cultures would result in different conclusions on teaching practices and curricula implementation.
As previously stated, the purpose of this research was not to judge teaching practices or ministry documents but instead to report on strategies that the participants felt could help enhance their experiences in an Ontario classroom. According to participants’ responses, teachers and policy makers need to work together to ensure that there is a common understanding of not only what needs to be taught in the classroom, but how.

Conclusions

It is imperative to consider how Chinese immigrants can successfully go about learning in a suitable environment. One of the ways can be through a social constructivist approach since it allows students to develop shared understandings through engagement and ongoing exposure to the English language. Encouraging students to communicate with one another in both English and in their mother tongue can contribute to their literacy development in the target language while facilitating the process of full integration into Canadian society. Constructivism can help revolutionize the way immigrant students learn by changing the way teachers teach while incorporating culturally relevant curriculum content may help to foster literacy development for newly arrived ELL learners from China.

Teachers can incorporate direct instruction into their lessons sometimes in a way that complements social constructivism because social constructivism “comes about when there is something to talk about and engage with. Therefore, some direct instruction is needed to give one “the basic tools [they] will need to set up that discussion” (Paterson, 2013, para. 11). After all, a constructivist approach to education can allow learners to actively “create, interpret, and reorganize knowledge in individual ways” and in ways that best suit their learning process and needs by allowing them to be active learners (Brown, 2012, p. 38). It is
not possible to separate one’s history, interests, values, or cultural backgrounds and experiences from learning.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A—Ethics Approval Form

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

PROTOCOL REFERENCE # 31235

April 20, 2015

Dr. Daphne Heywood
DEPT OF CURRICULUM, TEACHING & LEARNING
OISE/UT

Mrs. Emina Tihak
DEPT OF CURRICULUM, TEACHING & LEARNING
OISE/UT

Dear Dr. Heywood and Mrs. Tihak,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "Integration of Chinese immigrants into a Canadian school environment: A case study"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHICS APPROVAL</th>
<th>Original Approval Date: April 20, 2015</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Continuing Review Level: 2</td>
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We are writing to advise you that the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol, for a period of one year. Ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Wakefield, Ph.D.
REB Chair

Dean Sharpe
REB Manager

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS
McMurrich Building, 12 Queen’s Park Crescent West, 2nd. Floor, Toronto, ON M5S 1S8 Canada
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Appendix B—Informed Administrative Consent Form (from the Principal)

**Title of Research project:** Integration of Chinese Immigrants into a Canadian School Environment: A Case Study

**Investigator:** Emina Tihak

**Summary of Proposed Research and Methods**

My research study will focus specifically on recent Chinese immigrants who are marginalized in the Canadian school system in relation to ministry and classroom expectations due to their lack of proficiency in English (the language of instruction). The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of what it means to be a recent immigrant from China in the Ontario school system, and how classroom practices can contribute to feelings of marginalization. Through my research I hope to address the inequities in the Ontario education system for new Chinese immigrants, particularly with regard to the development of English literacy skills, which in turn, will help me develop further insights on different teaching methods that can be incorporated in the classroom and Ontario curriculum to better reflect these students’ linguistic needs, and reduce the feelings of marginalization and exclusion the students feel on entering the Ontario education system.

I will conduct a case study involving high school students from middle-class backgrounds with limited English literacy skills who have been in Canada for up to two years. I plan to conduct interviews with eight students and to carry out non-participant observation while the individuals are in the classroom. In addition, I may gather secondary data such as tests, documents, and student records from the students themselves to help aid me in understanding student improvement in different classes over the course of two years. I will ensure privacy and confidentiality by allowing the participants’ names to remain anonymous. Data will be collected during the period of April – May 2015. After I have gathered my data I will then begin writing from June – July, 2015, and I plan to finish my paper by the end of July. The theoretical framework involves applying social constructivist theory to practices that facilitate second-language acquisition.

I will apply a phenomenological approach in my analysis and my data collection will be in the seven stages required for gathering data for phenomenological research. These stages include locating the site/individual, gaining access and making rapport, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, resolving field issues, and storing data. Triangulation will be achieved by examining secondary data such as ministry documents and students’ tests or assignments, OSR records, and/or documents, together with the journals from my participant observations and the interview data. I will also examine the audio recordings and speak to the teachers about the students’ progress in the class. I hope to apply the results of this study to my own practice, to create professional development workshops for colleagues on facilitating the integration of recent Chinese immigrants into the Ontario school system, and to write a thesis on my findings.
Interview Questions and Focus Group Questions

Research Question:

How recent emergent adult Chinese immigrants from China experience marginalization in an Ontario private high school in relation to ministry and classroom expectations and teaching strategies. Participants are eight secondary school students who have been in Canada for up to two years and who are at least 18 years of age and are enrolled in courses ranging from grade 9 to 12. Further, this study shares the strategies that the marginalized participants described that would meet their needs and create a more inclusive learning environment.

Sub-questions (for students) – what I would like to find out:

1) How do Canadian education systems compare with those in China?
2) What barriers are there to full inclusion in the Canadian school system for recent immigrants from China?
3) What curriculum changes are required to facilitate English language acquisition for recent immigrants from China?
4) How can schools and classroom practices better reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of recent Chinese immigrants?

Interview Questionnaire/Interview Questions:

1) Have you experienced any discouragement in the Canadian education system (i.e. language barriers, different teaching styles than those back home, etc.)
2) What are the similarities and differences between the Canadian education system and the Chinese education system (in terms of teaching styles and methods, curriculum documents, and subject areas and implementation)? Which one do you prefer and why?
3) How do you feel about your new school environment here in Canada? Do you find it easy to learn in your classroom? Why or why not?
4) Which subject do you find the most difficult? Why do you find it difficult to learn this subject?
5) Do you find that the content you are learning in your classes relate to your own background and culture and/or personal experiences?
6) What would help solve your challenges in the Canadian classroom and help you better adapt to the Canadian way of learning?
7) What are some strategies that can be used to help you learn English more effectively in the class?
8) What are some ways that teachers can help enhance your school experiences and make them more conducive to your learning?
9) Do you believe that your cultural background can be woven into current classroom practices? If so, how?
Community Benefits

Direct benefits from students’ involvement in the project include a better-informed teaching community because my data collection process will have implications for future teachers and I will be more knowledgeable on the different strategies and ways in which Chinese students can be taught in a way that they understand.

Information/Feedback

After the participation in the project is complete, participants will be able to access the information I have gathered at the University of Toronto library. The research material will also be summarized in the form of a newsletter (which will be in both English and Mandarin); both documents can be accessed through Emina Tihak. All participants will get a copy of both the thesis and newsletter once the research has been gathered and the final report has been written.

Timeframe

The research process itself will be from April to May, 2015. The interviews will take place once a week (for approximately 10-13 minutes with each individual student) and the observations will take place twice a week (both on different days for approximately 10-15 minutes), all in different classes throughout the day. Both will help me track student participation in the class and observe how they are learning and behaving in the classroom setting.

Confidentiality

During the research study all of the inscribed notes and information given will remain anonymous. No names will be released during this study in order to protect your privacy and confidentiality. The study and finalized results will remain completely anonymous. Any critical remarks about the school, teachers, or the principal, will remain anonymous and critical remarks will be filtered by the researcher to figure out which information is crucial to include in the research study. All information regarding names will remain anonymous. Data will be stored on a USB drive for 5 years—after publication and then will be deleted afterward. All identifiable electronic information outside of a secure server environment will be encrypted with a passcode. Students do not have to answer any questions they do not want to or do not feel comfortable answering.

A Courtesy Announcement

A courtesy announcement will be stated that my observations would include only non-identifiable field notes and that I would be observing the class as a whole and their participation in the class. This would keep focal students’ confidentiality safe and it would seem as though I am just there to observe their participation as a whole.
Guidance Counsellor, OSR (Ontario Student Record), and Student Data

The researcher will have on-hand relevant referral information, such as the local guidance counsellor. If the participants are going through a crisis, the researcher would ask the guidance counsellor beforehand to clarify any information that may be associated with psychological risks or possible upset. For instance, if a student is deemed to be emotionally unstable or to have family problems or something of a similar kind, the researcher would obtain this information from the guidance counsellor and, if needed, from their OSR (Ontario Student Record). The researcher will not make any judgments based on the students’ OSR (Ontario Student Record), but it is necessary to have this information on hand if necessary so that in case there is an issue, she would know how to frame my questions/responses in a way that would perhaps be suitable to that student prior to the interview process. The researcher plans to check in advance with the guidance counsellor and possibly, if needed, access the OSR (Ontario Student Record) for participants who the guidance counsellor suggests may have psychological or emotional issues associated with them. The researcher knows that access to potentially sensitive information may be difficult to evaluate and so the researcher would only look at the OSR (Ontario Student Record) if the guidance counsellor suggests there are psychological or emotional issues associated with the student. The researcher would not make any judgments based on the OSR (Ontario Student Record) as it is difficult to do so but it could potentially help clarify any information that may be associated with psychological risks or possible upset.

The guidance counsellor will be available and possibly, if needed, present during the interviews and observation sessions. Student data may, if needed, also be collected, from the student, such as tests, documents, and/or records from various classes throughout the duration of their study so that the researcher can look at this as secondary information that would help aid the researcher in determining how much the participants have improved over the course of two years in different classes. By collecting student records from the participants, it may be possible that the researcher discusses such records and marks with their teachers from various classes that pertain to their study. The researcher may also wish to speak to the teachers regarding students’ study habits in that class and how well they are adapting to the curriculum in relation to that particular subject area.

Withdrawal

All of the information gathered will be stored on a USB drive for 5 years—after publication. After that timeframe all of the data will be deleted. If participants choose to withdraw at any time they may do so and none of their information gathered will be stored and all previous information will be deleted immediately. If students wish to withdraw they must verbally tell the researcher at any point in time. They do not need to sign a withdrawal form for this.

**Participants could be at a risk of being emotionally or physically upset during this study. In case possible upset occurs, the researcher will have a duty to report intent to harm oneself or another.**
Principal’s Duty

While I am an instructor at the school and have taught all of the participants at some point in time, the participants in my study will not be students in my own class (for the duration of the two months) but instead students who are in other classes. I therefore will not be assigning any grades to them for the two months that I will be observing them and conducting interviews with them. No observations will therefore take place in any of my particular classes. Further, because I have chosen now to include students who are 18 and over, I will not directly recruit students but instead will remain blind to who decide to participate in the research. I will ask my Principal to choose eight participants who she thinks would be suitable for my study (she would choose who she thinks would be suitable in terms of low-level English literacy skills who are at least 18 years of age and who have been in Canada for up to two years. I will limit the number to a total of eight participants. I will avoid any bias when conducting my study because instead of me choosing the participants, they will be chosen by the Principal and then they can agree/disagree if they would like to be part of my study. Only those who agree will be participants.

Screening Process

There will be a brief screening process conducted by the Principal in which she will be able to effectively and determine who would be eligible and suitable for the researcher’s study. **Inclusion criteria would include:** students 18 and above, those who have been here for up to two years and not more, and those with low-level English literacy skills (which she would be able to determine because she has had them for quite some time and she can access their records and, if needed, their grades and marks to determine who has not improved much over the course of up to two years during their stay here at this school). **Exclusion criteria would include:** those who are under 18 years of age, those who are very fluent and obtain high marks in their classes, and those who have been here over two years. The Principal will therefore do a brief screening process that would enable her to identify inclusion-exclusion criteria. The researcher would destroy any such information for non-participants who do not meet the inclusion criteria (if any information is to be obtained at all/written down by the Principal herself).

The researcher (Emina Tihak) will have a duty to report to the guidance counsellor if the participants intend to harm oneself or another.

________________________  _________________________
Signature of Principal      Date

________________________
Printed name
*I understand all of the above information and hereby give informed consent that Emina Tihak can conduct her research study here at this school with the students as the participants from April to May, 2015, with informed consent from the participants as outlined in the Consent-to-Participate Form. I also understand that she will remain blind as to who participates in the study and that I will choose who is suitable for the study through a brief screening process with the students.

**Please note that all interview questions and the participation guide will be given to all students prior to recruitment.
Appendix C—Informed Teacher Consent Form (from the Teacher)

Title of Research project: Integration of Chinese Immigrants into a Canadian School Environment: A Case Study

Researcher: Emina Tihak

Summary of Proposed Research and Methods

My research study will focus specifically on recent Chinese immigrants who are marginalized in the Canadian school system in relation to ministry and classroom expectations due to their lack of proficiency in English (the language of instruction). The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of what it means to be a recent immigrant from China in the Ontario school system, and how classroom practices can contribute to feelings of marginalization. Through my research I hope to address the inequities in the Ontario education system for new Chinese immigrants, particularly with regard to the development of English literacy skills, which in turn, will help me develop further insights on different teaching methods that can be incorporated in the classroom and Ontario curriculum to better reflect these students’ linguistic needs, and reduce the feelings of marginalization and exclusion the students feel on entering the Ontario education system.

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Sub-questions (for students) – what I would like to find out:

1) How do Canadian education systems compare with those in China?
2) What barriers are there to full inclusion in the Canadian school system for recent immigrants from China?
3) What curriculum changes are required to facilitate English language acquisition for recent immigrants from China?
4) How can schools and classroom practices better reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of recent Chinese immigrants?

Interview Questionnaire/Interview Questions:

1) Have you experienced any discouragement in the Canadian education system (i.e. language barriers, different teaching styles than those back home, etc.)
2) What are the similarities and differences between the Canadian education system and the Chinese education system (in terms of teaching styles and methods, curriculum documents, and subject areas and implementation)? Which one do you prefer and why?
3) How do you feel about your new school environment here in Canada? Do you find it easy to learn in your classroom? Why or why not?
4) Which subject do you find the most difficult? Why do you find it difficult to learn this subject?
5) Do you find that the content you are learning in your classes relate to your own background and culture and/or personal experiences?
6) What would help solve your challenges in the Canadian classroom and help you better adapt to the Canadian way of learning?
7) What are some strategies that can be used to help you learn English more effectively in the class?
8) What are some ways that teachers can help enhance your school experiences and make them more conducive to your learning?
9) Do you believe that your cultural background can be woven into current classroom practices? If so, how?
Timeframe

The research process itself will be from April to May, 2015. The interviews will take place once a week and the observations will take place twice a week (both on different days). Students do not have to answer any questions they do not want to or do not feel comfortable answering.

Community Benefits

Direct benefits from participants’ involvement in the project include a better-informed teaching community because my data collection process will have implications for future teachers and I will be more knowledgeable on the different strategies and ways in which Chinese students can be taught in a way that they understand.

A Courtesy Announcement

A courtesy announcement will be stated that my observations would include only non-identifiable field notes and that I would be observing the class as a whole and their participation in the class. This would keep focal students’ confidentiality safe and it would seem as though I am just there to observe their participation as a whole.

I have decided to conduct the observations a couple of times throughout the week so that I can obtain as much information as possible when analysing the data and thus when writing my final report. I will observe how students behave and perform in the classroom setting in terms of meeting curriculum expectations and will see how well they communicate with others in the class and how well they understand the class material. Then, I will ask them afterward during the interview process how they study in their classes, what they find difficult about certain subjects, etc., and may ask their teacher, if needed and if it is difficult for me to figure it out on my own, for information regarding their study habits and adaptability to the Canadian curriculum in relation to that particular subject area. I may also discuss their marks with the teachers, if needed. The observations will be approximately 10-15 minutes in length.

________________________  ______________________
Signature of Teacher                  Date

________________________
Printed name

*I hereby give informed consent that Emina Tihak can conduct her research study here in any of my classes with the students as the participants from April to May, 2015, with informed consent from the participants as outlined in the Consent-to-Participate Form. I understand
that this will allow her to explore the world of the students in different classroom settings and track their behaviour and participation over this period of time.
Appendix D—Interview Guide and Focus Questions

The interview process will be formatted as a semi-structured interview because the questions may be subject to change as the interview process takes place, depending on how the students respond to the initial questions and whether or not any of the questions need to be tweaked around or re-worded to fit the participants’ comfort level. The interview process will take place once a week. My research question is stated below and the sub-questions are the four main factors I would like to extract out of the students. These four sub-questions will be my main focus questions and will satisfactorily answer my research question. In order to figure out the answers to the sub-questions I have created a list of interview questions I will ask each of the eight participants (all who will be at least 18 years of age). I will be taking notes on the students’ verbal answers beside each of the questions. The students will be interviewed once a week on a one-on-one basis, individual as opposed to in a focus group, and the interviews will be approximately 10-13 minutes in length. Please refer to the information below:

Research Question:
How recent emergent adult Chinese immigrants from China experience marginalization in an Ontario private high school in relation to ministry and classroom expectations and teaching strategies. Participates are eight secondary school students who have been in Canada for up to two years and who are at least 18 years of age and are enrolled in courses ranging from grade 9 to 12. Further, this study shares the strategies that the marginalized participates described that would meet their needs and create a more inclusive learning environment.

Sub-questions (for students) – what I would like to find out:
1) How do Canadian education systems compare with those in China?
2) What barriers are there to full inclusion in the Canadian school system for recent immigrants from China?
3) What curriculum changes are required to facilitate English language acquisition for recent immigrants from China?
4) How can schools and classroom practices better reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of recent Chinese immigrants?

Interview Questionnaire/Interview Questions:
1) Have you experienced any discouragement in the Canadian education system (i.e. language barriers, different teaching styles than those back home, etc.)
2) What are the similarities and differences between the Canadian education system and the Chinese education system (in terms of teaching styles and methods, curriculum documents, and subject areas and implementation)? Which one do you prefer and why?
3) How do you feel about your new school environment here in Canada? Do you find it easy to learn in your classroom? Why or why not?
4) Which subject do you find the most difficult? Why do you find it difficult to learn this subject?
5) Do you find that the content you are learning in your classes relate to your own background and culture and/or personal experiences?

6) What would help solve your challenges in the Canadian classroom and help you better adapt to the Canadian way of learning?

7) What are some strategies that can be used to help you learn English more effectively in the class?

8) What are some ways that teachers can help enhance your school experiences and make them more conducive to your learning?

9) Do you believe that your cultural background can be woven into current classroom practices? If so, how?

**Please note that students do not have to answer any questions they do not want to or do not feel comfortable answering.

附录 D — 半结构化采访指南和重点问题

采访过程将被设置为一个半结构化面试，因为这些问题可能在采访过程中会有所变动，取决于学生们对最初问题的回应以及是否有任何问题需要被调整或重新措辞来适应参与者的舒适度。面试过程为每周一次。我的研究问题已列在以下，子问题为四个我希望从学生们中提取出来的主要因素。这三个自问题将是我的重点问题并将圆满回答我的研究问题。我已列出了一系列问题并将面试 8 位参与者（每位参与者都至少 18 岁）来找到自问题的答案。我将对每位学生的口头答复做笔记。学生们将被每周采访一次，相对于小组，我会针对个人进行采访。采访将在长约 10-13 分钟。请参考以下信息:

研究问题:

近期从中国来的中国移民（那些在加拿大最多长达两年）如何在有关教育厅及课堂的期望的安大略省高中教育体系被忽略，以及这些学生的语言和社会文化背景被编入目前的课堂教学以创建满足自己需要的学习环境?

子问题（给学生） — 我想找出:

1）加拿大的教育体系如何与中国的比较?

2）中国的新移民对完全融入加拿大的学校体系有什么障碍?

3）促进中国新移民的英语需要什么样的课程改革?

4）学校及课堂实践如何更好的反映中国新移民的语言及社会文化背景?
采访问卷 / 采访问题：

1) 你有没有在加拿大的教育系统中经历过任何不适或悲伤（即语言障碍、不同于家乡的教学风格等）？

2) 加拿大教育系统与中国教育系统有哪些异同（在教学风格和方法、课程文件条款及学科领域和实现）？你喜欢哪一个及为什么？

3) 你怎么看你在加拿大的新学校环境？你觉得它在教室简单易学吗？为什么或为什么不？

4) 你觉得哪门学科最难？为什么你觉得这科困难？

5) 你是否觉得你在课堂学习的内容涉及到自己的背景和文化及 / 或个人的经验？

6) 什么将有助于解决你在加拿大的挑战并帮助你更好适应加拿大的学习方式？

7) 哪些策略可以用来帮助你更有效在课堂上学习英语？

8) 教室可以用哪些方法帮助提高你的学习经验使他们更有利于你的学习？

9) 你认为你的文化背景可被编入目前的课堂实践吗？如果是，怎么做？

**请注意，学生可以不用回答任何他们不愿意或感觉不舒服的问题。**
Appendix E—Participant Observation Guide

The participant observations will take place two times a week (on different days) during a specific period throughout the day in different classrooms (approximately 10-15 minutes in each class). The participation will take place during different periods so that I can obtain as much information as possible in different classes. I will talk to the teachers beforehand to make sure that I can sit in during the lessons to observe the students and take inscribed notes. A consent from the teachers will be necessary. I will not be disturbing or speaking to the participants during this timeframe so that no interruption during their class time can occur.

I have decided to conduct the observations a couple of times throughout the week so that I can obtain as much information as possible when analysing the data and thus when writing my final report. I will observe how students behave and perform in the classroom setting in terms of meeting curriculum expectations and will see how well they communicate with others in the class and how well they understand the class material. Then, I will ask them afterward during the interview process how they study in their classes, what they find difficult about certain subjects, etc., and may ask their teacher, if needed and if it is difficult for me to figure it out on my own, for information regarding their study habits and adaptability to the Canadian curriculum in relation to that particular subject area. I may also discuss their marks with their teachers, if needed.

A Courtesy Announcement

A courtesy announcement will be stated that my observations would include only non-identifiable field notes and that I would be observing the class as a whole and their participation in the class. This would keep focal students’ confidentiality safe and it would seem as though I am just there to observe their participation as a whole.

附录 E — 参与者观察指南

参与者的观察期将会一周两次（在不同天）在特定时间在VIP学院不同的教室（每节课约10-15分钟）进行。我将在不同班级进行来得到尽可能多的信息。我会事先跟老师商量来确保我能在上课时坐在教室里来观察学生并记录。教室的同意书是必须的。在此期间，我不会干扰或与任何一个参与者说话所以课堂时间将不会被打断。

我已经决定进行每周几次的观察，这样我可以在分析数据时得到尽可能多的信息来写我的最后报告。我会观察学生如何在满足课程期望的课堂上的行为及表现以及将看到他们如何与其他同学交流及他们对课堂内容的理解程度。然后，我会在采访过程中问他们如何在课上学习，他们如何对某些科目有困难等，并对他们的学习习惯，对特定科目的加拿大课程条例的适应性如果有需要问他们的老师或我自己弄清楚是否有困难。如有需要，我也会与他们的老师讨论他们的分数。
礼节性公告

一个礼节性的公告将会说明我的观察将包括非识别的现场记录以及我会将班级及参与者作为一个整体观察。这将保持联络学生的保密安全，并看起来是我只是观察作为一个整体的他们。
Appendix F—Consent-to-Participate Form (from the Participant)

Title of Research project: Integration of Chinese Immigrants into a Canadian School Environment: A Case Study

Researcher: Emina Tihak

Summary of Proposed Research

I am conducting a research study that will focus on Chinese immigrants who have been in Canada for up to two years and who are at least 18 years of age. My main research question is: how recent emergent adult Chinese immigrants from China experience marginalization in an Ontario private high school in relation to ministry and classroom expectations and teaching strategies. Participates are eight secondary school students who have been in Canada for up to two years and who are at least 18 years of age and are enrolled in courses ranging from grade 9 to 12. Further, this study shares the strategies that the marginalized participates described that would meet their needs and create a more inclusive learning environment. The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of what it means to be a recent immigrant from China in the Ontario school system, and how classroom practices can contribute to negative emotions. Through my research I hope to address this problem for new Chinese immigrants, particularly with regard to the development of English literacy skills, which in turn, will help me develop further insights on different teaching methods that can be incorporated in the classroom and Ontario curriculum to better reflect students’ linguistic needs and reduce the feeling of marginalization students sometimes feel when entering the Ontario education system.

I plan to conduct interviews with eight students once a week and to carry out non-participant observation twice a week while the individuals are in the classroom. In addition, I may gather secondary data such as tests, documents, and student records. Data will be collected during the period of April – May 2015. Compensation for participation to the end of the study includes a $10.00 gift card for Staples. I have asked the Principal to choose the eight of you specifically because she feels you would best fit my research study. All of you are at least 18 years of age and have been in Canada for up to two years.

Community Benefits

Direct benefits from your involvement in the project include a better-informed teaching community because my data collection process will have implications for future teachers and I will be more knowledgeable on the different strategies and ways in which Chinese students can be taught in a way that they understand.

Information/Feedback

After the participation in the project is complete, you will be able to access the information I have gathered at the University of Toronto library. The research material will also be summarized in the form of a newsletter; both documents can be accessed through Emina Tihak. All participants will get a copy of both the thesis and newsletter once the research has been gathered and the final report has been written.
Timeframe
The research process itself will be from April to May, 2015. The interviews will take place once a week (for approximately 10-13 minutes with each individual student) and the observations will take place twice a week (both on different days for approximately 10-15 minutes), all in different classes throughout the day. Both will help me track student participation in the class and observe how they are learning and behaving in the classroom setting.

Confidentiality
During the research study all of the inscribed notes and information given will remain anonymous. No names will be released during this study in order to protect your privacy and confidentiality. The study and finalized results will remain completely anonymous. Any critical remarks about the school, teachers, or the principal, will remain anonymous and critical remarks will be filtered by the researcher to figure out which information is crucial to include in the research study. All information regarding names will remain anonymous. Data will be stored on a USB drive for 5 years—after publication and then will be deleted afterward. All identifiable electronic information outside of a secure server environment will be encrypted with a passcode. Students do not have to answer any questions they do not want to or do not feel comfortable answering.

A Courtesy Announcement
A courtesy announcement will be stated that my observations would include only non-identifiable field notes and that I would be observing the class as a whole and their participation in the class. This would keep focal students’ confidentiality safe and it would seem as though I am just there to observe their participation as a whole.

Guidance Counsellor, OSR (Ontario Student Record), and Student Data
The researcher will have on-hand relevant referral information, such as the local guidance counsellor. If the participants are going through a crisis, the researcher would ask the guidance counsellor beforehand to clarify any information that may be associated with psychological risks or possible upset. For instance, if a student is deemed to be emotionally unstable or to have family problems or something of a similar kind, the researcher would obtain this information from the guidance counsellor and, if needed, from their OSR (Ontario Student Record). The researcher will not make any judgments based on the students’ OSR (Ontario Student Record), but it is necessary to have this information on hand if necessary so that in case there is an issue, she would know how to frame my questions/responses in a way that would perhaps be suitable to that student prior to the interview process. The researcher plans to check in advance with the guidance counsellor and possibly, if needed, access the OSR (Ontario Student Record) for participants who the guidance counsellor suggests may have psychological or emotional issues associated with them. The researcher knows that access to potentially sensitive information may be difficult to evaluate and so the researcher would only look at the OSR (Ontario Student Record) if the guidance counsellor suggests there are
psychological or emotional issues associated with the student. The researcher would not make any judgments based on the OSR (Ontario Student Record) as it is difficult to do so but it could potentially help clarify any information that may be associated with psychological risks or possible upset.

The guidance counsellor will be available and possibly, if needed, present during the interviews and observation sessions. Student data may, if needed, also be collected, from the student, such as tests, documents, and/or records from various classes throughout the duration of their study so that the researcher can look at this as secondary information that would help aid the researcher in determining how much the participants have improved over the course of two years in different classes. Please be advised that by collecting student records from you, it may be possible that the researcher discusses such records and marks with your teachers from various classes that pertain to your study. The researcher may also wish to speak to the teachers regarding your study habits in that class and how well you are adapting to the curriculum in relation to that particular subject area.

**Screening Process**

There will be a brief screening process conducted by the Principal in which she will be able to effectively and determine who would be eligible and suitable for the researcher’s study. **Inclusion criteria would include:** students 18 and above, those who have been here for up to two years and not more, and those with low-level English literacy skills (which she would be able to determine because she has had them for quite some time and she can access their records and, if needed, their grades and marks to determine who has not improved much over the course of up to two years during their stay here at this secondary school). **Exclusion criteria would include:** those who are under 18 years of age, those who are very fluent and obtain high marks in their classes, and those who have been here over two years. The Principal will therefore do a brief screening process that would enable her to identify inclusion-exclusion criteria. The researcher would destroy any such information for non-participants who do not meet the inclusion criteria (if any information is to be obtained at all/written down by the Principal herself).

*Please note that the Principal will have access to all of your student records, marks, and anything else that she feels will help her in the screening process in relation to your student record and studies here at this secondary school. She may have access to these through either the researcher, the guidance counsellor, or yourself if needed.*

**Withdrawal**

All of the information gathered will be stored on a USB drive for 5 years—after publication. After that timeframe all of the data will be deleted. If you choose to withdraw at any time you may do so and none of your information gathered will be stored and all previous information will be deleted immediately. If you wish to withdraw you must verbally tell the researcher at any point in time. You do not need to sign a withdrawal form for this.
**Please understand that participants could be at a risk of being emotionally or physically upset during this study. In case possible upset occurs, the researcher will have a duty to report intent to harm oneself or another. No penalties will result by not agreeing to participate in this research study. The researcher (Emina Tihak) will have a duty to report to the guidance counsellor if the participants intend to harm oneself or another.

附录 F – 参加同意书 (从参与者)

研究项目名称：中国移民进入加拿大学校的环境为例：课题研究

研究者：Emina Tihak

研究综述

我正在进行一项将重点放在在加拿大最多长达两年时间的至少18岁以上的中国移民的研究。我的主要研究问题是：近期从中国来的中国移民（那些在加拿大最多长达两年）如何在有关教育厅及课堂的期望的安大略省高中教育体系被忽略，以及这些学生的语言和社会文化背景被编入目前的课堂教学以创建满足自己需要的学习环境？我的研究目的是获取作为一个在安大略省学校体统的近期中国移民的理解以及教育厅的必修课程和课堂实践如何可造成不适。通过我的研究，我希望能对中国新移民提出这个问题，特别是针对英语读写能力，这将帮助我制定可在课堂上及安大略省课程纳入不同的方法来更好反映出学生的语言需求及减少学生在进入安大略省教育系统时感到的被忽略的感受。

我打算对8为学生进行每周一次的采访，每周当每位在课堂上时进行两次非参与者的观察。此外，我可能会收集辅助数据，例如测试，文档和学生记录。数据将在2015年4月至5月被收集。在研究结束时，我会补偿每位参与者10元的Staples礼品卡。我已问校长选择了8名因为她觉得你最适合我的调查研究。在座的每位都至少18岁并在加拿大时候最多长达两年。

社区利益

参加项目的直接好处包括一个更明智的教学社区因为我的数据收集的过程将对未来的老师们有影响，同时我会更有知识用不同策略用他们理解的方式教中国学生。这也将造福于社区，因为当关系到课程文档时，英语作为第二语言将会有更多的信息，课程文档及课堂教学实践也可被更修改来 有效地非加拿大出生的进入加拿大中学系统的中国学生调整。
信息/反馈
该项目的参与完成后，你将能访问我在多伦多大学图书馆里收集的学术期刊信息。研究材料也将被归纳为新闻格式，这两种文件均可通过 Emina Tihak 找到。一旦研究被聚合，最后报告也已完成，所有参与者都将得到学术期刊和新闻的副本。

大体时间
研究过程本身将由 2015 年 4 月至 5 月。采访将于每周一次（每位学生大约 10 至 13 分钟），观察将会每周两次（将在不同日进行，每次大约 10 至 15 分钟），都将在不同课堂进行。上述两项都将帮助我追寻及观察学生在课堂上的参与性及他们在课堂上如何学习及表现。

保密
所有在研究期间的笔记和信息都将保持匿名。为了保护你的隐私和机密，此研究将不会透露任何名字。这项研究及最终结果将保持完全匿名。任何对学校、老师及校长的批评将保持匿名，并且任何这些批评将由研究者过滤找出对研究至关重要的部分。所有有关姓名的信息都将保持匿名。信息将被保存在一个 USB 里 5 年时间 – 在出版后，然后将被删除。所有在安全服务环境外的识别性电子数据都将被加密保存。学生们不需要回答任何他们不愿意或者令他们不舒服的问题。

礼节性公告
一个礼节性的公告将会说明我的观察将包括非识别的现场记录以及我会将班级及参与者作为一个整体观察。这将保持联络学生的保密安全，并看起来是我只是观察作为一个整体的他们。

指导顾问，OSR(安大略省学生档案)，以及学生数据
研究人员将有手边的相关参考信息，例如指导顾问。如果参与者正在经历一场危机，研究人员将先询问指导顾问来清楚知道任何的可能心理风险及可能的情绪低落的信息。例如，如果一个学生被认为情绪不稳定或有类似家庭问题的一些问题，研究者将从指导顾问获得此类信息，需要时会通过他们的 OSR (安大略省学生档案)。研究者将不会对学生的 OSR (安大略省学生档案) 作出任何评论，但是若获取这些信息是必要的，因为如果有任何问题，她会知道合适地在采访过程中对学生表达我的问题。如果有可能的话，研究人员将先询问指导顾问，以及查阅那些指导顾问建议可能有心理或情绪问题的学生的 OSR (安大略省学生档案)。研究者知道获得潜在敏感信息可能很难评估，所以指导顾问建议有心理或情绪相关问题的学生，研究者将只会看 OSR (安大略省学生档案)。研究者将不会对 OSR (安大略省学生档案) 作出任何评论因为这很难做到，但这可能有助于澄清任何有关心理风险或情绪低落的信息。
指导顾问将会在有需要时在采访和观察期间在场。学生数据将在又需要时被收集，例如测试、文档，以及/或他们在 VIP 学院期间的记录作为研究者的次要信息帮助研究者确定参与者们在两年内在不同的课堂进步了多少。请注意，从你处收集的学生记录，研究者有可能讨论这些记录并标记你不同课的老师们有关你在教室的学习习惯。研究者也可能希望与你们讨论你的学习习惯及你如何适应有关特定科目的课程。

筛选过程

校长将进行一次简短的筛选过程，她将能有效确定哪些学生适合这项研究。**入选标准包括**：18 岁以上的学生，那些在加拿大最长时间为两年，并且英语能力较低（她将能够决定因为她已与他们相处了一段时间，她同时有需要能查阅他们的档案、年级和分数来确定哪些没有在两年内在 VIP 学院有明显进步）。**排除标准包括**：那些在 18 岁以下的学生，那些英语已非常流利并得到高分的学生，以及那些已来加拿大超过两年时间的学生。校长将进行一个简短的筛选过程来确保她找出入选及排除标准。研究者将会销毁掉任何与未达标准的非参与者有关的信息（如果校长记录了任何信息）。

**请注意，校长将会能查阅你们所有的学生记录、分数以及其它她认为能帮助她进行有关学生记录和在 VIP 学院学习的筛选过程。如有需要，她能查阅通过研究者、指导顾问或你们自己查阅。**

撤回

所有收集到的信息都将被保存 5 年在一个 USB 里 – 在发布后。在那之后，所有的数据将被删除。如果你选择撤回，你可以在任何时间这么做，任何你的信息都不会被记录并保存，并且所有之前的信息都将被立即删除。如果你希望撤回，你在任何时间必须口头告诉研究者。你不需要签署撤回书。

**请注意，在此期间参与者可能会有情绪或生理的不安。如果出现任何不安，研究者将有责任汇报有伤害自己或别人的意图。**

**不同意进行这项研究将不会带来任何惩罚。**

**如果参与者有意愿伤害自己或别人，研究者（Emina Tihak）将有义务报告给指导顾问。**

________________________
Signature of participant 参与者签名

________________________
Date 日期

________________________
Printed name 打印姓名
本人授权，我至少 18 岁，而且我已理解上述所有信息在此同意书里正确说明，并且我同意在此研究过程中成为一个参与者。我也理解我可以在研究中随时口头要求撤回参与，如果发生撤回，我的任何信息将不会被保存。

**请注意，所有的采访问题以及参与指南将在招募前给予学生。**
Title of Research project: Integration of Chinese Immigrants into a Canadian School Environment: A Case Study

Researcher: Emina Tihak

Summary of Proposed Research and Methods

My research study will focus specifically on recent Chinese immigrants who are marginalized in the Canadian school system in relation to ministry and classroom expectations due to their lack of proficiency in English (the language of instruction). The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of what it means to be a recent immigrant from China in the Ontario school system, and how classroom practices can contribute to feelings of marginalization. Through my research I hope to address the inequities in the Ontario education system for new Chinese immigrants, particularly with regard to the development of English literacy skills, which in turn, will help me develop further insights on different teaching methods that can be incorporated in the classroom and Ontario curriculum to better reflect these students’ linguistic needs, and reduce the feelings of marginalization and exclusion the students feel on entering the Ontario education system.

I will conduct a case study involving high school students from middle-class backgrounds with limited English literacy skills who have been in Canada for up to two years. I plan to conduct interviews with eight students who are at least 18 years of age and to carry out non-participant observation while the individuals are in the classroom. In addition, I may possibly gather secondary data such as tests, documents, and student records from the students themselves, which will be further outlined in their consent form. I will ensure privacy and confidentiality by allowing the participants’ names to remain anonymous. Data will be collected during the period of April – May 2015. After I have gathered my data I will then begin writing from June – July, 2015, and I plan to finish my paper by the end of July. The theoretical framework involves applying social constructivist theory to practices that facilitate second-language acquisition.

I will apply a phenomenological approach in my analysis and my data collection will be in the seven stages required for gathering data for phenomenological research. These stages include locating the site/individual, gaining access and making rapport, purposefully sampling, collecting data, recording information, resolving field issues, and storing data. Triangulation will be achieved by examining secondary data such as ministry documents and students’ tests or assignments, OSR records, and/or documents, together with the journals from my participant observations and the interview data. I will also examine the audio recordings and speak to the teachers about the students’ progress in the class. I hope to apply the results of this study to my own practice, to create professional development workshops for colleagues on facilitating the integration of recent Chinese immigrants into the Ontario school system, and to write a thesis on my findings.
Interview Questions and Focus Group Questions

Research Question:

How recent emergent adult Chinese immigrants from China experience marginalization in an Ontario private high school in relation to ministry and classroom expectations and teaching strategies. Participates are eight secondary school students who have been in Canada for up to two years and who are at least 18 years of age and are enrolled in courses ranging from grade 9 to 12. Further, this study shares the strategies that the marginalized participates described that would meet their needs and create a more inclusive learning environment.

Sub-questions (for students) – what I would like to find out:

1) How do Canadian education systems compare with those in China?
2) What barriers are there to full inclusion in the Canadian school system for recent immigrants from China?
3) What curriculum changes are required to facilitate English language acquisition for recent immigrants from China?
4) How can schools and classroom practices better reflect the linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds of recent Chinese immigrants?

Interview Questionnaire/Interview Questions:

1) Have you experienced any discouragement in the Canadian education system (i.e. language barriers, different teaching styles than those back home, etc.)
2) What are the similarities and differences between the Canadian education system and the Chinese education system (in terms of teaching styles and methods, curriculum documents, and subject areas and implementation)? Which one do you prefer and why?
3) How do you feel about your new school environment here in Canada? Do you find it easy to learn in your classroom? Why or why not?
4) Which subject do you find the most difficult? Why do you find it difficult to learn this subject?
5) Do you find that the content you are learning in your classes relate to your own background and culture and/or personal experiences?
6) What would help solve your challenges in the Canadian classroom and help you better adapt to the Canadian way of learning?
7) What are some strategies that can be used to help you learn English more effectively in the class?
8) What are some ways that teachers can help enhance your school experiences and make them more conducive to your learning?
9) Do you believe that your cultural background can be woven into current classroom practices? If so, how?
Timeframe
The research process itself will be from April to May, 2015. The interviews will take place once a week and the observations will take place twice a week (both on different days).

Community Benefits
Direct benefits from participants’ involvement in the project include a better-informed teaching community because my data collection process will have implications for future teachers and I will be more knowledgeable on the different strategies and ways in which Chinese students can be taught in a way that they understand.

Translation Materials
Because I will hold a mini verbal seminar with the students in regards to my research, translation of my speech is required since all students have low English literacy skills. It is important that all students understand the research process and procedures prior to choosing to volunteer in the research process. Further, translating recruitment materials will be necessary (including Appendix B-E, and G, since the questions and information will be given to them beforehand to think about), as well as the newsletter that will be given to them at the end of my research paper.

Psychological/Emotional Upset
There could be psychological risks, such as possible upset, or a crisis that arises. It is thus important that the researcher (myself) has relevant referral information at all times, such as OSR (Ontario Student Record) and student files. Further, a guidance counsellor should clarify any information that may be associated with psychological risks or possible upset and should be available to help me deal with any issues that arise, in accordance to school and ministry guidelines.

Guidance Counsellor, OSR (Ontario Student Record), and Student Data
I will have on-hand relevant referral information, such as the local guidance counsellor. If the participants are going through a crisis, the researcher would ask the guidance counsellor beforehand to clarify any information that may be associated with psychological risks or possible upset. For instance, if a student is deemed to be emotionally unstable or to have family problems or something of a similar kind, the researcher would obtain this information from the guidance counsellor and, if needed, from their OSR (Ontario Student Record). The researcher will not make any judgments based on the students OSR (Ontario Student Record), but it is necessary to have this information on hand if necessary so that in case there is an issue, she would know how to frame my questions/responses in a way that would perhaps be suitable to that student prior to the interview process. The researcher plans to check in advance with the guidance counsellor and possibly, if needed, access the OSR (Ontario Student Record) for participants who the guidance counsellor suggests may have psychological or emotional issues associated with them. The researcher knows that access to potentially sensitive
information may be difficult to evaluate and so the researcher would only look at the OSR (Ontario Student Record) if the guidance counsellor suggests there are psychological or emotional issues associated with the student. The researcher would not make any judgments based on the OSR (Ontario Student Record) as it is difficult to do so but it could potentially help clarify any information that may be associated with psychological risks or possible upset. The guidance counsellor will be available and possibly, if needed, present during the interviews and observation sessions. Student data may, if needed, also be collected, from the student, such as tests, documents, and/or records from various classes throughout the duration of their study to look at this as secondary information that would help aid the researcher in determining how much the participants have improved over the course of two years in various classes.

**The researcher (Emina Tihak) will have a duty to report to the guidance counsellor if the participants intend to harm oneself or another.**

**Students do not have to answer any questions they do not want to or do not feel comfortable answering.**

_________________________ __________________________
Signature of Guidance Counsellor Date

________________________
Printed name

*I hereby give consent that I will translate Emina Tihak’s verbal seminar, along with any necessary recruitment materials required for her research process during May – June, 2015. I also agree that I will be willing to provide any information from the participants’ OSR (Ontario Student Record) and student files to help with the study. Lastly, I will be available at all times during school hours, 9:30am – 5:30pm, if psychological upset or a crisis occur during the actual study itself and help the researcher handle issues according to school and ministry guidelines and policies. I will also be available during all student interviews and observations when/if needed.*