HIRING FOR DIVERSITY – CHANGING THE FACE OF ONTARIO’S TEACHER WORKFORCE

by

David Jack

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Graduate Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

2016

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Abstract

Changing the face of Ontario’s teachers is a topic that draws both ardent support and profound criticism by those closest to school governance. It surfaces questions about teacher quality, student achievement, inequity, diversity, politics, public trust, the past, the present, and the future. In the centre are teachers applying for jobs, and principals making decisions about whom to hire, and why. Influencing these decisions are a number of elements that range from the rational procedures that underlie human resources management to the intuitive, difficult to define factors borne of principals’ experiences and perspectives on teacher excellence.
This study attempts to examine the processes at play as principals go about hiring teachers for the specific purpose of diversifying the teacher complement in their schools. Despite pressure from public policy since the 1980s, movement towards greater diversity in the teacher workforce has been slow, showing only modest change while the ethnoracial diversity of Ontario’s large urban centres approaches or surpasses fifty percent. Surveys from nearly a quarter of the principals in District A (a large, suburban school district in the Greater Toronto Area) and follow-up interviews with ten of their colleagues provide data that reflect how principals position diversity relative to other teacher qualities when hiring, their understanding of policy intimating the need for more teachers from diverse backgrounds, and the internal and external hurdles they face when hiring teachers. The data also show that these factors do not often include dimensions of teachers’ diverse identities. This finding remains surprisingly consistent among principals across variables such as experience, the number of interviews they conduct, and the student diversity of their respective schools. Data collected from personal interviews, however, show more nuanced differences between principals’ hiring stories and reflect a strong, unresolved tension between a belief in the benefits of teachers from diverse backgrounds and the hiring decisions that manifest this belief. Of note: the vast majority of participants in both the survey and interviews self-identify as White European. As such, the data are interpreted as a representative sample of principals in District A, but also as the prevailing identity of those charged with hiring teachers.
Acknowledgements

*What I cannot create I cannot understand.*

Physicist Richard Feynman shared these thoughts with his students shortly before his death in 1988. Writing a dissertation has been a work of creating, beginning with an unsettling idea, then determining to make it a learning focus, then creating this work (and the several papers that precede it) with a view to better understanding the original idea. Along the way, many people helped in the creation.

To the unwitting planters of the idea – the senior administration team in District A who thought it was a good idea to appoint me Principal of a new school in 2008, I thank you. Without them, the idea about hiring teachers specifically from diverse backgrounds might never have unsettled me the way it did. And I must acknowledge and thank the unforgettable teaching staff at that new school – you were the ones who endured long conversations about this creation of mine and who were all too happy to challenge my thinking at each opportunity. Working with you will always be the highlight of my career and I’m fortunate to call you friends.

Further along the creation path came colleagues willing to share their hiring stories, either anonymously through the survey, or by personal interview. Clearly, without your input, this work could not have happened. I salute your courage in speaking candidly about a topic that remains controversial in many workplaces. I must also acknowledge colleagues, Elana and Paul, for sharing your expertise in the art and science of research methodology. Your generous support of time, guidance and assistance is
much appreciated. And to Jim Ryan, for taking an interest in my ideas and my efforts to express them, your part in this work is much appreciated.

Lastly, I must acknowledge the support of friends, who in the past few years have come to accept my chronic social unavailability, and to my family for expressing their genuine support and interest in this learning.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

For many years, Canadians have recognized their society as increasingly diverse. This diversity is most often marked by the racial, religious, linguistic, ethno-cultural and other differences used by individuals and groups to describe their identity. While society generally has become more diverse, the teaching profession has remained relatively homogenous, a feature made more noticeable over time and increasingly subject to criticism (Ryan, Pollack, & Antonelli, 2009). Much of the criticism stems from a belief that students of difference are disadvantaged in school when the teacher workforce is unrepresentative of their differences. Those upholding this belief look to longstanding patterns of student underachievement that show discrepancies between groups on several school attainment measures as evidence of the need for a more diverse teacher workforce (Ladson-Billings, 1992; King, 1993; Gay, Dingus, & Jackson, 2003). For example, Blacks have higher suspension rates than non-Blacks; Portuguese students have higher high school drop-out rates than non-Portuguese, non-native speakers of English have lower academic achievement scores than native speakers, and so on (Toronto District School Board, 2007). As prosperity and educational attainment become increasingly inter-connected (Gu & Wong, 2010), so too is the call for improvements in education systems such that no one group of students fares less well than any other. Increasingly, researchers feel that one such improvement would be the hiring of more teachers who represent the diverse student population (Sleeter & Thao, 2007). This study will examine how school principals navigate the changing process of hiring teachers into schools with diverse student populations, and the factors that influence their decision-making.
This study is of professional interest on several fronts. First, the notion of increasing teacher diversity is now embedded in the Ontario provincial education policy (Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools, 2009). As a school principal hiring teachers regularly, my decisions, and those of my colleagues, ought to now be influenced by this policy direction. The policy statement, however, makes no reference to research supportive of this direction, but uses it as a cornerstone to the building of more inclusive and equitable educational experiences for students. Second, my experience in opening a new school in 2008 provided me with the rare and ideal opportunity to hire teachers who would represent the racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity of a new school community – but that proved to be a challenging undertaking given the low number of non-White applicants. As such, I have had to re-think my own approach to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, the dividends that their differences make to students, and the assumption that teachers from majority groups fall short in their capacity to maximize the school experience for students from minoritized groups.

1.1 Research questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate how principals’ understanding of diversity is reflected in the decisions they make when hiring teachers. To do this, the following sub-questions will be explored:

1. What are principals’ attitudes toward diversifying the teacher workforce?
2. What strategies do they use to recruit and hire teachers?
3. How do their views on diversity shape their hiring practices?
4. What supports or constraints do they encounter when attempting to realize their hiring goals?
1.2 Significance and organization

In most school jurisdictions in North America, including District A where I work, principals are largely responsible for hiring teachers for their schools (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle & Thompson, 2010; Liu, 2002; Strauss, Bowes, Marks, & Plesko, 2000). In only rare cases would a teacher join a school staff but through the decision of the principal. As such, any movement toward increasing teacher diversity in schools (or maintaining the status quo) rests with this group. Principals’ understanding of diversity as a strategy to increase student achievement, to improve school climate, to enhance parent involvement, or to reinforce the spirit of an inclusive society is expressed, to some degree, through the decisions they make when hiring teachers – either to choose the White, middle class female who constitutes 4/5 of Ontario teachers (Ryan, et al, 2009), or the South Asian, multi-lingual, non-Christian who increasingly represents the student body, especially in large urban centres. Studying how principals go about hiring teachers, and the factors they weigh most heavily when making those decisions, is important in two ways. First, since principals are central to the entire teacher hiring process, it is critical to engage them personally in discussions about their hiring experiences and to gather their views on elements of the hiring process that facilitate or inhibit hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. Second, public institutions such as schools need to reflect the principles of equity entrenched in social policy that claims workplace discrimination to be unacceptable. As such it is important to better understand the conceptual schema used by principals in their efforts to arrive at discrimination-free hiring decisions.
In this study, the conceptual framework developed to better understand the key research question is informed by the literature on understanding diversity and its effects in the workforce generally, current and emerging hiring practices in business and education, the debate around the need for diversity within teaching, and how these converge at the moment when the principal makes a decision to hire the best teacher for the job. As such, this study is organized into four key sections. First, the introduction and literature review outline the nature of the questions under investigation, and the research evidence informing the questions themselves. Second, the research methodology section describes the approach used in answering the research questions and the methods used to gather and analyze data. The third section presents the quantitative and qualitative research findings, followed by the fourth section that discusses interpretations of the findings, implications, and conclusions.

Appendices include the online survey and interview questions used to gather information from the study participants, and a copy of the Information and Consent letter sent to all principals in District A.
Chapter 2

Diversity in the Teacher Workforce

The research to date on the subject of teacher diversity as an important factor in improving the school experience for diverse student populations does not lead to conclusive findings. It is complicated by varying degrees of commitment among education decision-makers as to whether teacher diversity really matters in improving learning outcomes for disadvantaged groups, usually groups that can be identified by the dimensions of diversity as described in the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Equity and Inclusive Education policy and protected under in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Additionally, the process for placing teachers into classrooms that reflect the full spectrum of diversity in contemporary Canadian society includes many institutional stakeholders contributing to the complement of teachers: the Ontario College of Teachers in marketing the teacher profession; university education faculties in recruiting teacher candidates, and district school boards in recruiting and hiring a diverse teacher workforce. However, the pragmatics of changing the teacher workforce to the degree necessary in order to approximate a balance between the student and teacher diversity would be a challenging undertaking. Using 2006 data from the Toronto District School Board, minoritized groups are underrepresented in teaching by as much as 30% when compared to the overall population of the city, meaning an equivalent increase in such groups would be needed to match the racial representation of teachers to the level represented in the student population. But while the process of altering the face of teaching to better represent the student community at large can only occur at the pace
governed by fluctuating teacher attrition-replacement or population change, it must be asked why has it taken so long?

Diversity in Canadian schools is not a recent phenomenon. In the past 50 years, visible minorities in Canada have increased from roughly 2% to nearly 20% of the population, and in some large urban centers such as Toronto, the number exceeds 50% (Statistics Canada, 2011). What remains are two seemingly conflicting ideals – that diversifying the teacher workforce to represent the student population makes intuitive sense and should be pursued, but that the decision to hire such teachers may require significant political intervention such as affirmative action in their favour. Central to the purposes of this study, the dimension of diversity most discussed is race. As such, the conflict centres around systemic racism, the negative effects of schooling for some racialized\textsuperscript{1} groups, and the need for corrective measures without strong evidence that they will work.

Research questioning the lack of diversity in teaching identifies two critical advantages for minoritized students to have minoritized teachers. First, minority teachers serve as role models for minoritized students who consistently disengage from school, under-perform scholastically, and have higher than average dropout rates (Dei, 1995a). Over time, researchers contend, the racialized teacher’s success in life (completion of high school and university, good paying professional job) will demonstrate that being a

\textsuperscript{1}“Racialized” is the term used to reflect the process that has created disadvantage based on physical attributes. This process creates categories that become socially significant for the purposes of exercising power (Galabuzi, 2012).
member of a visible minority group does not become a barrier to success (Solomon, 1997). The second key area of inquiry examines a cultural pedagogy specific to minority teachers (King, 1993; Irvine, 1993) that is different from the dominant White culture of most teachers (Escayg, 2010). Ladson-Billings (in Grant, 2005), describes culturally relevant teaching as “us[ing] students’ culture to help them create meaning and understand the world” (p. 106). The argument contends that minoritized teachers who share their students’ cultural contexts are better positioned than mainstream White teachers to help minoritized students in particular develop the critical stance needed to examine their educational experience and benefit optimally from it. Mismatches between the culturally-embedded pedagogy of White teachers and the peripheral culture of minoritized students can leave students feeling culturally undervalued possibly resulting in disengagement and other forms of underachievement (Irvine, 1993; Escayg, 2010).

What follows is a more detailed look at these two lines of inquiry.

2.1 Minority teachers as role models

King (1993) outlines the progression of the role-model hypothesis during the early civil rights movement in the US through the period of desegregation to the present. Prior to this period most Black students in the US were taught primarily by Black teachers (Sleeter and Thao, 2007; Foster, 1993), and over the next 30 years, Black teachers were gradually replaced by White teachers through racial integration efforts leaving fewer and fewer Black students with Black teachers (Holmes, 1990). At the time, increasing attention was drawn to the role schools played in reflecting changing social realities, including the increasingly racial diversity of the population as a whole (Carrington & Skelton, 2003). During this same period, discrepancies in school
performance between Black and White students became more glaring as schools became increasingly mixed-race. More and more, students who did well in school looked like their teachers; those who did not, did poorly.

Researchers investigated teacher-student racial matching in an effort to partially explain poor achievement by Black students and called for an increase the number of Black teachers in the profession (Adair, 1984; Graham, 1987; Stewart, Meier, LaFollette and England, 1989). Loehr (1988) concluded, “positive role modeling and characterization are crucial for ensuring commitment of minoritized youngsters to schooling. Without sufficient exposure to minoritized teachers throughout their education, both minoritized and majority students come to characterize the teaching profession – and the academic enterprise in general – as better suited to Whites” (p. 32).

While the reasons for longstanding underachievement by minoritized students are complex (King, 1993; Ryan, et al, 2009), it may be no coincidence that the relatively sudden reduction in the number of minoritized teachers relative to the number of minoritized students since the 1960s has prompted educators to consider role-modeling as a key strategy in promoting positive learning experiences and educational outcomes for underachieving students. Teachers as role-models, especially minoritized teachers role-modelling for minoritized students however, has undergone criticism as a concept. Pierson (1995) argues that the underlying assumption of the role-model hypothesis is flawed on two levels. First, the roles played by individual teachers, or groups of teachers defined by a common trait, such as race, cannot be assumed to have positive, or any, effects on students sharing those traits compared with students without such traits. Second, relying on like-race matching as a key strategy in improving school outcomes for
minoritized students serves to mask the complex systemic influences on their underachievement thereby perpetuating a “special attention for special groups” approach while leaving the systemic problems untouched. Not only is role modeling suspect from a conceptual perspective, qualitative evidence from both students and teachers (Rezsai-Rashti & Martino, 2010; Martino & Rezsai-Rashti, 2011; Maylor, 2009; Hopson, 2013) lead to only mixed conclusions regarding any positive effects of matching like-race students and teachers.

2.2 Role-modeling in and out of school

Role-modeling in social contexts other than schools has also been studied to determine its socialization effects. The premise for such studies is to explore the effects of individuals’ status within a social context such as a neighborhood in order to find out if minoritized students respond differently to role or character models than do non-minoritized students. To test the impact of social role models for minoritized youth outside of school, Ainsworth (2010) examined the effects of high status minorities within neighborhoods (Black, White and mixed). In this case, high status was determined by a combination of educational attainment (the proportion of residents with a university degree) and residential stability (those who had lived at the same address for at least 5 years). Approximately 9000 Black and White high school students from working class to disadvantaged neighborhoods (areas with increasing proportions of residents without a college education, a stable residence and with high/chronic unemployment levels) were followed over a period of four years – neighborhoods where the number of high status individuals varied by number and race. The study controlled for variables such as family size, employment, parent education, income and even parental involvement in their
children’s school. The number of high status individuals, arguably potential role models, was then compared to reading and math achievement data over time. Ainsworth (2010) found that neither Black nor White students were scholastically advantaged by the presence of high status same-race individuals living in their neighborhoods regardless of neighborhood type.

These findings contrast with Turley (2003) where a study of neighborhood income alone showed positive correlations between number of high status residents (either race) and student achievement for White students, but not for Black students. Only when high status residents were themselves Black did student achievement for Black students correlate positively with residents’ income. These studies represent attempts to quantify the effect of social role models on students’ school performance generally – findings that have been absent from earlier studies supporting or criticizing the role model hypothesis and any potential political fallout from its role in policy development.

Proponents of role modeling in schools emphasize the importance of race more than other dimensions of difference, such as religion, or gender. Writers on both sides of the role-model hypothesis debate, chiefly King (1993) and Cizek (1995), have based their arguments almost exclusively on the need for like-race role models for students. Critics caution against a narrow view that assumes teachers of a particular minoritized group can serve de facto as role models for all students of the same minoritized group (Hopson, 2013; Hess & Leal, 1997). Instead, given the complexities that underpin a role-modeling relationship between student and teacher, it is suggested that no single dimension of difference can account for perceived advantages or disadvantages stemming from racial
mismatches between students and teachers. Instead, Allard (2006) suggests that teachers who are able to locate themselves in the “discourse of difference” (p. 327) set themselves apart from teachers whose life experiences are limited to the mainstream majority. Similarly, Santaro (2007) documented greater teacher credibility among minoritized students for teachers whose life experience mirrored ‘minoritized’ or underprivileged status in some way, e.g. linguistic, socio-economic or religious. These studies support the claim that minoritized, but not necessarily racially minoritized, role models help offset historic power imbalances between have and have not groups (Adair, 1984; King & Wilson 1990; Foster, 1990).

As with race, studies on teacher-student gender matching have been used to strengthen arguments for the role-model hypothesis under the assumption that “like is good for like” (Carrington, Tymms & Merrell, 2006, p. 315). Similar to the relative absence of teachers of colour, concern has been expressed over the dearth of male teachers particularly in elementary schools - an imbalance influenced historically by labour markets, role stereotyping, and job status. In a quantitative study by Carrington et al. (2006) of nearly 9000, 11-year old students, no significant differences were found between scholastic achievement and attitudes of boys or girls linked to the gender of their teachers. In a qualitative study using longitudinal data, Ehrenberg, Goldhaber and Brewer (1995) found similar academic results with 8th and 10th grade students – none that could be correlated significantly with teacher gender alone. However, male and female teachers gave different subjective evaluations of students, regardless of the race of either teachers or students. Typically, male teachers gave less favourable anecdotal evaluations
of students’ work, but such evaluations seemed to have no measurable impact on achievement outcomes.

### 2.3 The school context and race

The debate surrounding the role model hypothesis as it pertains to minoritized students centers not so much on whether or not it is a worthy notion, but rather that there are conflicting viewpoints that increasing teacher diversity will bring about the educational benefits for students it is intended to serve. Without convincing evidence one way or the other, we are left with the continuing question – does the current mismatch between the relative numbers of minoritized students and teachers really matter?

To answer this question, we must look at evidence gathered to date that shows how well minoritized students are doing in school. Presumably, if minoritized students are performing on par with other students, then it may not matter whether or not they have like-race role models as teachers. But even after years of study and work in improving scholastic achievement for minoritized students, the Toronto District School Board’s 2010 Achievement Gap Task Force report showed that racialized groups, (in particular Aboriginals, Blacks, Hispanics and Portuguese students) scored lowest on measures of academic achievement in elementary school, achieved the lowest rates of credit accumulation in high school, and had the highest drop-out rates of its collective student population. While reports of this type have been published for many years in the US (Lee, 2002) the Toronto report is an uncommon attempt in Canada for a school district with a highly diverse student population to compare student performance across its various student groups. The repeated confirmation over time that some groups of minoritized students fare less well in school (TDSB, 2010) has fueled much of the
controversy surrounding the role model hypothesis and its potential merits. The groundwork for both arguments warrants further discussion here.

The case for the role model hypothesis is captured in King (1993). In her review, the author draws on numerous studies that describe positive effects of Black teachers in the US on school success for Black children and youth. For example, King refers to specific teaching strategies used by Black teachers with Black students (Ladson-Billings & Henry, 1990), Black teachers’ superior abilities to communicate with like-race students (Foster, 1990), and Black teachers’ efforts to create family ethos that combats traditional negative school experiences for Black students (Henry, 1992) as reasons why minoritized teachers, in this case Black teachers, should be available to teach minoritized students. In addition, King cites the work of J.E. King (1991) in describing a pedagogy of emancipation for Black students by Black teachers akin to Friere’s critical _Pedagogy of the Oppressed_ (1970). King and others (Solomon, 1997; Dei, 1995a) strengthen the call for role models for minoritized students by claiming that the role of a minoritized teacher is different from a teacher who is part of the power elite (Solomon, 1997, p. 396). White teachers often communicate to students the knowledge, values and attitudes of the prevailing power majority because of their membership in it, whereas minoritized teachers must communicate a dual message: to White students, a lived experience unknown to them and to Black students, a message of courage to become better than history would have them be. Finally, King references other scholars (Adair, 1984; Graham, 1987; Stewart, Meier, LaFollette & England, 1989) who champion the need for like-race role models for minoritized students.
King also describes the advantages of minoritized role models for White students. In an increasingly pluralistic society, Smith (1989) suggests that minoritized teachers offer cross-cultural models that demonstrate the broad range of social values, attitudes and beliefs needed for students to appreciate diversity. Finally, King (1993) cites the 1986 *Carnegie Forum on Education* as further support for increasing minoritized representation in teaching: “The race and background of their teachers tells them [students] something about authority and power in contemporary America. These messages influence children’s attitudes towards school, their academic accomplishments and their views of their own and others’ intrinsic worth” (p. 79).

While King describes a number of reasons to advance the need for minoritized role models in schools, few of her claims are supported through empirical evidence that shows advantages for students with like-race teachers. For example, while Foster (1990) may state that Black teachers communicate more genuinely with Black students than White, this statement and others, critics argue, stem from accounts of Black teachers and their experiences (Hopson, 2013; Escayg, 2010; Henry, 1992), rather than from studies designed to show such differences based on genuine reports from students.

Advocates of the role-model hypothesis draw on additional research that points to inadequacies on the part of non-minoritized teachers and the mainstream culture they represent. These shortcomings include lowered academic expectations for Black students (Rubovitz & Maehr, 1973; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007), streaming disproportionate numbers of Black students into non-academic secondary school programs (Yau, Cheng, & Ziegler, 1993), and giving preferential treatment to students of their own kind (Cornbleth & Korth, 1980). Taylor (1979) documented cases of White teachers
providing undifferentiated levels of assistance, encouragement and positive feedback to both Black and White students where their racial identity was concealed, but gave lower levels of assistance, and less encouraging feedback to Black students when students’ race was known beforehand. The effects of such teacher practices have led to the ‘stereotype threat’ – a term coined by Steele (1997) and documented in experiments where Black and White students performed equally well on a range of problem-solving tests with no introduction. When students were given the same tests described as a test of their ability, Black students performed markedly less well.

The arguments of proponents of the role-model hypothesis have caught the attention of policy makers especially in the wake of efforts that have resulted in only modest success in closing achievement gaps between White and minoritized students. At the same time, researchers have criticized elements of the role-model hypothesis, the research sustaining it, and the cautions needed when applying the hypothesis in a political context. What follows is a summary of those criticisms.

Cizek’s critique (1995) of King’s review (1993) of the need for more minoritized teachers draws into question not only the substance of some of King’s claims but also theoretical concerns of many of the arguments she makes (p. 79). In fact, Cizek’s chief criticism is the lack of a clear theoretical framework guiding arguments in support of the role model hypothesis. He argues that King merely compiles a list of statements from other researchers who agree there should be greater representation of minoritized teachers in the profession, rather than building evidence-based arguments to show how such increased representation would in fact change the learning prospects of minoritized students.
Cizek argues that expressed concern over the lack of minoritized representation in teaching is not the primary concern in public education, but is, rather, the personal and academic success of all students. The imbalance between the number of minoritized teachers and minoritized students may draw undue attention as a possible cause of underachievement for minoritized students because evidence of this imbalance is obvious. Cizek cautions against causal relationships being drawn between phenomena that are easily documented but not necessarily related, (e.g. few Black teachers and many Black underachieving students). He goes on, “the real issue is not whether more or fewer teachers of a particular group is desirable for its own sake, but how the characteristics of teachers generally are related to their effectiveness in promoting success for all students” (1995, p. 90). Instead, Cizek suggests that there may be less visible, but more socially concerning factors such as community socio-economic status, access to costly post-secondary education, and lower academic expectations of minoritized student groups, that may explain their underachievement and that would require more complex remedies than simply hiring more minoritized teachers (p. 81).

King’s collection of references is also questioned. Rather than summarizing well-grounded studies - possibly because there are so few – Cizek criticizes King for drawing on claims made in writers’ reflective essays. In one such essay, King claims that “children of color need role models”, followed by several references, all making the same claim, but not referring to studies suggesting that children of color need role models more than other children, or that all children of color need role models similarly, or that the absence of role models for children of color leads to greater future disadvantage than for other children. In a similar vein, Cizek points to King’s repeated use of the term
“teachers of color” (p. 83) to describe all teachers of colour equally, despite citing authors whose work focused chiefly on Latino, or Black, or Asian, or Native American teachers.

Researchers view the shortage of minoritized teachers from two angles. First, King argues that since teacher education programs are college-based, potential minoritized teachers are kept out of teaching because of historically lower rates of high school graduation, or graduation from non-academic programs that limit access to college degree programs. Gordon (1994) investigated minoritized college students and found different reasons for minorities not entering the field of teaching. Successful middle-class minoritized college students reported being counseling into higher-paying, higher-status careers. In particular, students reported that their parents harbour feelings of ill-will towards the teaching profession because of negative school experiences generally and lowered expectations in particular (p. 351). Cizek weighs in on this argument by suggesting that the evidence used by both authors fails to account for fluctuating trends in teacher education admission, and that reasons why an individual may or may not choose to attend teacher training are neither static nor necessarily race-dependent (p. 84).

Despite his criticism, Cizek acknowledges the value of King’s work in drawing attention to a number of factors surrounding the limited number of minoritized teachers as a means to encourage empirical study of the claims King and others make. He states: “it would be unwise to suggest that African American teachers are de facto better teachers of minoritized students than are teachers of other ethnic backgrounds without empirical evidence” (p. 90).

Cizek’s critique of King’s 1993 article reflects a research paradigm that itself is problematic in considering the varied arguments about the need for more teachers from
diverse backgrounds. Cizek questions King’s assertions based on theoretical, methodological and analytical grounds, all traditional hallmarks of robust research used to inform policy and incite change. Of particular concern for Cizek is King’s use of the term *crisis* (p. 80) without first providing a theoretical framework for what causes a crisis in education. Second, Cizek questions the lack of empirical studies able to defend her key assertion that the lack of minoritized teachers is at least part of the cause of underachievement by some minoritized groups. Without these, Cizek then challenges King’s attempt to propose policy changes which may or may not bring an end to the purported crisis, or effect the positive changes she envisions.

Cizek’s criticisms represent a research framework that favours the establishment of cause-effect relationships prior to corrective actions being taken. Because the arguments around increasing teacher diversity are complex and occasionally contradictory, researchers continue to look for more precise data before suggesting specific courses of action. Cizek’s critique, unfortunately, fails to recognize the human cost of longstanding inaction to underachieving student groups as sufficient motivation for action, a perspective that underpins King’s arguments and those she cites.

Notwithstanding Cizek’s advocacy for well-grounded research, efforts to document the relationships between teacher and student race, particularly relationships that show effects on student achievement, have been scarce and difficult to conduct. Allen (1994) described three key roles for teachers, including that of being an “ethical template who inspire others to believe that they too may be capable of high accomplishments” (p. 191). With disproportionately few racial minorities in teaching (Ryan et al, 2009; Lundy & Lawrence, 1995), one can speculate that the role model effect
on a racial minority may be minimized if the role model him/herself is White. The ‘you can be like me’ message in role modeling has obvious limitations when it comes to racial difference. Carr and Klassen (1997) describe teachers’ perceptions of their role model function after surveying and interviewing White and non-White teachers in Toronto. They found that while both groups agreed that minority teachers play an important role in connecting with minority students, White teachers ascribed greater importance to minority teachers’ race in establishing these connections than did minority teachers themselves. Dei (1995a) gathered input from Black students, their parents, and Black community workers all of whom expressed a need for more Black teachers. They claimed that Black teachers better understood the social context of Black students than White teachers owing to common experiences shared by Black students and teachers. This claim, however, has been countered in a British study (Maylor, 2009) that showed wide variation in the responses of Black teachers to questions of the importance of role modeling for Black students. While the notion of minority teachers serving as role models for minority students holds intuitive merit at least, the argument weakens as it assumes a degree of homogeneity among minority teachers and students alike that implies most teachers of a racial group serve de facto as role models to most students of the same racial group.

Dee’s (2004) attempt to establish a quantitative relationship between academic achievement of students with like-race teachers and different-race teachers stands as one of very few empirical analyses of its kind. His analysis of longitudinal student
achievement data from the Tennessee STAR project\(^2\) (Word, 1990), many of which had several, mostly-Black or mostly-White classrooms taught by like-race teachers, indicated that in math and reading, students achieved significantly better in classes of like-race teachers than with unlike-race teachers. Dee noted that the like-race teacher effects for White students were consistent across socio-economic categories, whereas like-race effects were much stronger for Black students in high-poverty schools. It was also noted that the longer students were matched with like-race teachers, the stronger the positive effect on student achievement. However, Dee also found that the positive effects were greater in mostly-White classrooms than in mostly-Black classrooms. While his research attempted to control for teacher quality and other factors, Dee cautioned that the study did not identify a specific practice or strategy that can account for the stronger learning outcomes of students when taught by like-race teachers. He speculates that teacher quality among Black teachers affected high-poverty classrooms due to the difficulty in attracting White teachers to such schools. His speculation is corroborated by studies of teacher transfer that show higher numbers of effective teachers transferring away from, and few effective teachers transferring to, under-served and under-achieving schools (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Ronfeldt, Wyckoff, 2011). Dee’s study stands out as the singular quantitative analysis of student achievement correlated with teachers’ race. Despite his findings, Dee warns his results “could be construed as supporting increased racial segregation of teachers and students as a means of improving overall achievement. This

\(^2\) The Tennessee STAR (Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio) project was designed to study effects of class sizes and tracked reading and math achievement for K-3 students from 1985 – 1989.
interpretation is blind to the potentially adverse social consequences of such a policy” (p. 59).

2.4 Minority teachers as cultural pedagogues

The second key argument supporting a more diverse teacher workforce, in particular, racial diversity, centers on the specific cultural pedagogy of individual teachers or groups of teachers. Cultural pedagogy is defined as “an understanding and application of students’ backgrounds to enhance the quality of one’s teaching practice” (Escayg, 2010, p. 3). Gay, Dingus and Jackson (2003) review research of Native and African-American teachers that suggests these minority teachers approach teaching differently than White teachers, and define achievement in broader terms. They cite studies (King, 1993; Foster, 1993) that claim that not only do minority teachers set higher academic expectations for minority students than White teachers do, minority teachers typically expand these expectations to include character development, social responsibility, ethnic affiliation and political activism. Nelson-Barber and Mitchell (1992) go further by suggesting that effective teaching practices promoted by scholars and practitioners are largely Eurocentric, or at best, culture-neutral. They suggest that minority teachers are better equipped to fine-tune teaching approaches and curriculum content that match the cultural context of minority students. Dei (1995a) describes an example of a culturally meaningful teaching strategy for Black students unsupported in mainstream pedagogy. Providing students with choice, either in reference to assigned academic tasks or in social decision-making, is a teaching technique commonplace in contemporary classrooms. Dei (1995a) found that Black teachers (and parents)
disapproved of allowing students so much choice, and preferred a more didactic approach when teaching Black students (p. 103).

Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that majority culture teachers struggle to recognize and appreciate the vulnerabilities of minority culture students because of their lack of personal experience as a cultural minority (Santaro, 2007; Nieto, 1992). Though often inadvertent, teacher behaviours that express the perspective of the majority culture and do not consider the cultural experience of minority students overrate the value of the majority reality at the expense of the minority one (Dowdy & Campbell, 2008; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). As such, the slow change in the diversification of the teacher workforce, when coupled with the persistence of academic underachievement by minoritized students when compared to non-minority students (Howard, 1996; Carr & Klassen, 1997; TDSB, 2010) support hypotheses advocating the need for greater teacher diversity. These phenomena draw into question the hiring processes used by principals to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds (notwithstanding the procedural constraints inherent in them) and that the processes alone may not account entirely for the decisions made to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds.

Critics of cultural pedagogy caution against stereotyping minority teachers’ philosophies and practices and that not all teachers or students of any particular minority group necessarily share cultural or social experiences. Furthermore, some minority teachers have questioned their perceived advantage in connecting with like-race students through greater sensitivity to minority students’ lives or culturally relevant curriculum. In a study by Mabokela & Madsen (2007) minority teachers expressed feelings of tokenism in being assigned to work with minority students, and felt that their perceived
superior competence in teaching minority students served as a disincentive for White teachers to alter their teaching practices.

2.5 Workforce diversity as social inclusion

Beyond the arguments supporting or questioning the direct influence of teacher diversity on schools are those that describe workforce diversity as a necessary agent in building social inclusion, and therefore worth advancing on equity grounds alone. This sense of belonging is often captured in minoritized groups’ feelings of attachment to their adopted country, and being accepted by fellow citizens (Banting & Soroka, 2012). While these sentiments are affected by a number of factors attributed to the minoritized group itself, including age, education status, and length of time living in the new country, one’s feelings of belonging are also tempered by the circumstances faced during the integration process (ibid, p. 164). Access to employment, or more importantly, levels of employment, is one such circumstance whereby newcomers, in particular, minoritized newcomers, face barriers to their social integration. This, in turn, limits the social inclusion of newcomers into the wider community (Galabuzi & Teelucksingh, 2010; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).

In Canada, where the value of multiculturalism has been manifested in public policy since 1971, the advent of specific groups of citizens being noticeably underrepresented in a particular segment of the workforce signals discord between how civic values are expressed in theory and in practice. Equitable participation in the broader community, including employment, is a key form of social inclusion and serves to refine and reinforce shared political norms such as democracy, national unity, and multiculturalism (Jenson, 1998, 2002). Galubuzi and Teelucksingh (2010) note that civic
values require ongoing revision, especially in light of longstanding and significant changes to population identities, a phenomenon that accurately describes post-World War II Canadian society. Periodically, governments are called on to intervene to facilitate such revisions in order to correct trends that show social exclusion, and to minimize potential political tensions between the established dominant cultures(s) and those represented by newcomers (Shukra, Back, Keith, Khan & Solomos, 2004). Among other markers, researchers look to employment opportunity as a proxy of a society’s efforts to build social inclusion, or to become exclusionary (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Henry & Tator, 2000; Galabuzi, 2006). According to data from Canada’s 2006 census, racialized men and women are “highly underrepresented in educational service and public administration” (Block & Galabuzi, 2011, p. 9). More specifically, data from the Ontario College of Teachers’ three most recent annual reports show the unemployment rate among foreign-trained teachers consistently more than double the rate of Ontario-trained teachers (in 2014, 76% vs. 33%), with most of the foreign-trained complement coming from predominantly non-White countries, namely, India, Jamaica, Philippines, Lebanon and Pakistan (OCT, 2014, p. 63). If, therefore, the teacher workforce tends to be less inclusive of minoritized teachers than those representing the dominant White culture, then a move to reverse this phenomenon can be viewed as a civic imperative in a country that upholds the social value of difference.

2.6 Impact of policy

Among researchers and policy-makers alike, there is growing concern for the lack of minoritized groups represented in teaching today, particularly in light of significant increases in the minoritized student population in recent times (Ryan et al., 2009). While
the considerable research into this issue has generated a range of positions regarding the effects of a diverse teacher workforce (Gay, Dingus, Jackson, 2003), governments in various jurisdictions (Canada, USA) have issued policies favouring increasing teacher diversity. In Ontario, such direction is captured in the *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009) and its attendant policy memoranda that require school districts to institute policies and practices such that teachers represent the student populations they serve:

“The board’s work force should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board’s work force should also be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board’s jurisdiction”. (Policy and Program Memorandum 119/13, p. 5).

In my case, hiring for a new school, and given that the student population was to be approximately 70% African Canadian, 20% South Asian, and 10% White\(^3\), the racial-ethnic diversity of the new staff became a factor, among others, in teacher selection.

While the role-model hypothesis seems to have influenced policy to some extent, Garcia & Guerra (2004) suggest that the role-model hypothesis can be viewed as a combination of two separate hypotheses relating minority students with poor school performance. The first of these suggests that teachers of a given racial or cultural background serve as role models for students of similar background and are able to better understand and appreciate the school struggles such students may experience because they, the teachers, may have shared similar experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1992; King,

\(^3\) due to the lack of self-identification data, proportions are based on face to face orientation meetings with students in the schools they previously attended.
The second hypothesis offers that racial-majority teachers (in the case of most research on the topic, White) have lower expectations of non-White students (Cornbleth & Korth, 1980; Ferguson, 2003) than of White students. Setting aside the King-Cizek debate about the relative merits of role-modeling and its potential effects on improving school outcomes for minoritized students, the lack of research to corroborate Dee’s 2004 work leaves the debate open to the effects of like-race teacher-student matching on academic achievement (Gay, 2000). Nonetheless, if fewer minority teachers enter the teaching profession because of the lack of role models, it would stand to reason that the overall number of competent teachers within this group is also diminished, leaving school principals with fewer choices in selecting teachers based even partially on race. Hess and Leal (1997), and Dee himself (2004), advise against hiring policies that focus heavily on same-race balance between student population and teaching staff. Instead, it would seem reasonable to support hiring practices that take into account the full range of teacher qualities, including providing positive role models and demonstrating an appreciation of student differences, both of which may be enhanced through a same-race balance between students and staff.

In contrast to the role-model hypothesis is the notion of merit-based equity policies (Simpson & Wendling, 2005). Such policies are based on capitalist ideals that in the competitive market, including teacher hiring, merit is the chief determinant in hiring decisions. Supporting this notion is an extensive literature that points to teacher quality as the “most significant institutional determinant of academic success” (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vidgor, 2006, p. 779). The particular features of teacher quality that lead to academic success, however, have been far less easy to identify and equally difficult to evaluate.
Nonetheless, studies (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vidgor, 2006; Rockoff, 2004; Aaronson, Barrow & Sanders, 2003) have shown relationships between specific teacher characteristics (e.g. experience, graduate degrees and professional test scores) and student performance. Elementary students showed higher levels of academic achievement when taught by teachers with generally more experience, more formal education and higher scores on state-required professional exams. The dilemma for those selecting teachers is as follows: for students to achieve their best academically, teacher characteristics such as experience and advanced training should weigh heavily in teacher selection (Staiger & Rockoff, 2010). For students from minoritized groups, academic achievement may also be enhanced by choosing teachers of similar racial-ethnic backgrounds (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Ronfeldt, & Wyckoff, 2010). With a still largely White teacher workforce (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009), the challenge for principals becomes one of hiring high quality teachers where ‘quality’ includes various dimensions of their own diversity.

2.7 Teaching qualities as selection factors

Research on what constitutes effective teaching has attempted to identify relationships between differences in teacher qualities and student learning outcomes (Aaronson, Barrow & Sander, 2007; Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2006). Such research is difficult to do given the number of factors that affect learning, and has consistently revealed substantial variation in teacher effectiveness (Engel, 2009). The research has been equally consistent in identifying few observable teacher characteristics that can account for variation in teaching effectiveness (Hanushek et al, 2005). Even measurable qualities, such as teachers’ qualifications and preparation, explain little of the differences in student outcomes regardless of school context (Buddin & Zamarro, 2009).
Teacher characteristics found to relate to teaching quality include experience and teachers’ cognitive ability or proxy thereof (Engel, 2009). Teacher inexperience has been found to show a negative effect on student achievement (Hanushek, et al, 2005; Rockoff, 2004) for beginning teachers, then a stronger effect in the first few years of a teacher’s career, then more modest effects thereafter. Similarly, teachers’ overall intellectual ability, as measured either by IQ tests, or college admissions tests such as the SAT, have been found to influence teacher quality and effectiveness (Ehrenberg & Brewer, 1995; Hanushek, et, al. 2005; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane & Staiger, 2008). Engel (2009) reports that studies investigating the preferred teaching qualities sought by principals often include neither overall intelligence nor experience, and may not systematically include selection criteria able to reliably predict teaching effectiveness (Ballou, 1996). Such findings draw into question the hiring criteria principals use when selecting effective teachers.

Harris, Rutledge, Ingle and Thompson (2010) document a number of studies where principals have identified the teaching qualities most sought when hiring. Some qualities, such as strong communication skills (Dunton, 2001; Ralph, Edwin, Kesten, Lang & Smith, 1998) and enthusiasm (Dunton, 2001) were ranked consistently high by principals as desirable teacher traits. Still high, but less consistently ranked, were pedagogical skills, personal philosophies, professional knowledge, and caring (Stronge & Hindman, 2003). A later analysis by Ingle, Rutledge and Bishop (2011) showed similar teacher qualities preferred by principals, with pedagogical skills, communication skills and content knowledge identified most consistently and frequently. Principals also reported teachers’ personality traits, such as enthusiasm, caring and strong interpersonal skills as influential in making hiring decisions.
Critics of the selection criteria used by principals to hire teachers point out the absence of experience and intelligence as discrete selection criteria (Baker and Cooper, 2005; Ballou & Podgursky, 1997). Harris et al, (2010) counter that in the case of intelligence, principals believe that university training itself is a sufficient proxy measure of intelligence. Moreover, principals were known to report that highly intelligent teachers had difficulty connecting with students and colleagues (p. 228). In the case of experience, these researchers reported that principals indeed considered a teacher’s experience, but rather than seeing more experience as an asset, preferred to hire teachers with little experience, believing younger teachers were de facto more enthusiastic and open to learning (Rutledge et al, 2008, p. 254). What complicates the list of selection criteria are the unclear relationships between factors that, in turn, may account for individual factors being perceived by different principals as both desirable and undesirable. Nonetheless, it is from this collective research that the list of teacher traits is drawn in developing the survey for the current study.

2.8 Current hiring practices in schools

In all cases, school administrators have consistently described their hiring objective as selecting the best person for the job, arguably the most crucial administrative task for a principal (Mason & Schroeder, 2010). “Best” emerges from a combination of factors that include the ability to perform the technical and professional requirements of the job, to demonstrate past capabilities in teaching, and increasingly, to articulate a set of values and beliefs shared by the organization (Braun, Willems, Brown, & Green, 1987). To realize their objectives, principals follow a hiring process similar to that documented in the occupational literature: recruitment, screening, selection and offering the job
What follows is a review of the limited literature on the teacher hiring process, with illustrations from District A to provide context.

Teacher recruitment efforts are subject to many of the same factors affecting other labour market trends related to changes in population. Depending on the size and context of school districts (e.g. sparsely populated, geographically large, rural vs. densely populated, geographically small, urban), teacher demand can fluctuate significantly within political jurisdictions. Ontario reflects this phenomenon over the past 10 years as seen with incremental overall population growth but large numbers of school districts with declining student populations, and small numbers of large suburban districts with population increases (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2013). In various contexts, teacher recruitment processes range from highly centralized for hiring teachers in urban contexts (Levin & Quinn, 2003) to highly decentralized, especially when hiring new teachers (Liu & Johnson, 2006). Job specificity also impacts teacher recruitment – high demand teaching positions limit the applicant pool resulting in jobs being advertised for a longer period of time, with compromises occasionally made by school administrators in order to fill a position in a timely manner (Liu, 2002). Affluent suburban districts have fewer challenges in recruiting teachers than do rural or inner-city districts (Liu, Rosenstein, Swan, & Khalin, 2007) which, for suburban schools, means the screening and selection process may need to be more competitive; for other districts less so. Timing has also been identified as a factor in recruiting teachers (Engel, 2009). School districts may be disadvantaged if their recruitment timelines are later than in neighbouring districts, especially in times of high teacher demand and low supply. This disadvantage would be
magnified when recruiting high demand teachers in less desirable (rural and/or disadvantaged) districts.

In District A, teacher recruitment processes operate on two levels: one for recruiting new hires usually for high demand positions (e.g. secondary math and science, French as a second language, and special education); the second for recruiting teachers from one school to another during the annual teacher transfer process. New hires are actively recruited by teams of school principals who attend annual job fairs at Canadian university faculties of education, and through online advertisements for high demand positions. Recruitment during the annual teacher transfer process is comparatively low-key and governed by teachers’ collective agreements, but annually involves hundreds of teachers. Vacant teacher positions within schools are posted online, and are available only to current employees with the required qualifications.

Screening is often the next step in teacher hiring (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008) and serves to narrow the potential pool of applicants further (Cable & Gilovich, 1998). A number of screening tools are available to school administrators, each designed to reflect the need to learn about the teacher applicant as well as accounting for the various components of the teacher’s work. Screening begins with the required credentials for a position, with additional criteria added at the discretion of the employer and in accordance with relevant labour law. For instance, an employer may screen by years of experience in an effort to estimate an employee’s skill level, but may not use age as a screening criterion as it could be used as a means to discriminate against older or younger workers, and therefore contrary to the Ontario Human Rights Code. Screening tools are also known to include work samples, cognitive ability tests (e.g. SAT scores),
job knowledge tests, and integrity tests (such as absenteeism records) all believed to help predict future job performance (Ryan & Tippins, 2004). In my experience as principal, work portfolios, performance appraisal reports, resumes, and oral and written language proficiency assessments are used to varying degrees to include or exclude teacher candidates from obtaining an interview. More latitude is allowed in screening external candidates than for current employees. Prior to the implementation of Ontario Regulation 274/12, current employees in District A were guaranteed a job interview provided they held requisite credentials for the job which minimized the role and effect of using screening tools.

As in occupations other than teaching, the information gathered in the screening process is weighed largely through a personal interview, certainly the most consistently used, and arguably the most important hiring tool (Kogan, Wolff, & Russell, 1995). Questions persist, however, about whether the screening and interview processes used to select teachers result in hiring the best candidate (Rutledge et al., 2008). Teacher attributes revealed during an interview vary in the degree to which they can predict a teacher’s ultimate effectiveness (Cohen-Vogel, 2011) but are also subject to how highly these attributes are valued by the principal conducting the interview. Mason and Schroeder (2010) reviewed a number of key studies on principals’ hiring practices and found that while principals claimed that their interview processes sought to chiefly determine a teacher’s professional traits (e.g. pedagogy, professional knowledge), analysis revealed that in fact personal attributes, (such as willingness to learn, attitude, and confidence) factored more heavily in the decision to ultimately hire a particular teacher or not. This finding was consistent across variables such as the principal’s
gender, type of school, size of school, years in education, and experience as a principal. Such findings support the notion that teacher hiring, while critical, is a highly subjective exercise, and as such, suggests that the “best person for the job” is an equally subjective construct.

While collective agreements outline some of the conditions under which interviews will occur (e.g. at a mutually convenient time, with accommodations as requested), the content and format of the interview remain largely at the principal’s discretion. Principals determine which topics to explore during an interview, identify the response indicators they are seeking, weight questions according to their own belief systems, and evaluate the candidate not only on his or her own merit, but on how this teacher would complement the staff overall. Similarly, when conducting post-interview reference checks, apart from a small number of standard required reference questions (e.g. How long have you known this teacher?), the principal determines which references to contact, how many, and any additional questions to ask the referees.

The final step in teacher hiring involves the deliberation by interview team members of the candidates interviewed. This team usually consists of the hiring principal and at least one other principal or vice principal colleague. Depending on districts’ policies, teacher colleagues may also participate in these deliberations but their influence varies widely (Liu & Johnston, 2006). The school principal remains the chief gatekeeper for hiring decisions (Rutledge et al, 2008). Deliberations may also be affected by the sense of urgency in hiring, and are often based on intuitive rather than rational decision-making (Mertz, 2010). Once the decision is made, the job is offered to the preferred candidate.
In all cases, the steps taken by principals when hiring teachers must be in accordance with hiring processes negotiated between the school district, or province, and the organization representing teachers. In District A, these processes are described in collective agreements and must be followed in order to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all teachers applying for positions as they become available. Grievance procedures are also outlined in collective agreements in the event that the hiring process has been breached. Typically the process outlines timelines (when jobs can be advertised, where, for how long, and when hiring decisions must be made); data collection (what data a principal can ask an applicant to submit and requisite credentials); screening criteria for obtaining an interview (ranges from no screening, i.e.: all applicants are interviewed, to specific number of applicants to be interviewed), and grievance procedures. In addition to conditions outlined in collective agreements, school districts adhere to internal hiring policies in compliance with provincial and federal human rights and labour legislation. Such conditions are in place to ensure an equitable hiring process that identifies provisions for disability accommodation, constitution of hiring panel, language proficiency standards, and opportunities for feedback. Notwithstanding the hiring processes outlined in collective agreements, human resources policies and legislative regulations, principals in many jurisdictions (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle & Thompson, 2010), are able to exercise considerable discretion in hiring teachers to the school. Even in systems with highly centralized teacher hiring processes, principal discretion accounts for 75% of hiring decision-making (Liu, 2002; Strauss, Bowes, Marks, & Plesko, 2000; Cohen-Vogel & Osborne-Lampkin, 2007). Certainly in the
context of this study of District A, the responsibility for hiring teachers to individual
schools rests largely with the principal.

2.9 Perspectives on diversity

“Writing about diversity is writing about power.” (Lumby and Coleman, 2010, p. 1). The function or purpose of diversity in the workplace itself has undergone debate in
the literature (Hays-Thomas, 2004; Prasad & Mills, 1997). Research has documented
various perspectives ranging from diversity as a precursor to social emancipation
(Asante, 2007; Gay, 2000; Goodwin, 2004), a perspective rooted in historical patterns of
workplace discrimination, to diversity as a function of workforce management (Morrison,
Lumby & Sood, 2006; Hays-Thomas, 2004; Konrad, 2003), a perspective emerging from
increased attention to the mismatch between the diversity of the available pool of
employees and those who are ultimately hired. As a social construct, workplace diversity
legitimizes efforts to deconstruct longstanding power structures of we and other (Swartz,
2009) resulting in the eventual emergence of new institutions more reflective of the
present than the past. On the other hand, the perspective of diversity management
reflects efforts to integrate other into we to varying degrees without significant change to
overall social power structures (Konrad, Prasad, & Pringle, 2006). Blackmore (2006)
describes the 20th century discourse as “capitalizing on diversity” versus “diversity as
social justice”. In the former, differences in people are viewed as positive provided they
support neo-liberal ideals of individual progress and attainment. In the latter, however,
differences between people are simply acknowledged for their own sake without efforts
to value one dimension of diversity, e.g. race or gender, over another. In the workplace,
an example of these perspectives may rest in the processes used to hire diverse employees
(Antwi-Boasiako, 2008). Is it the case that diverse employees are recruited to increase the organization’s attractiveness to the diverse potential clientele with a view to improving corporate outcomes; or are diverse employees hired because excluding them, in light of their growing numbers and availability, would be socially and morally unjust?

To better understand the paradigm for diversity within teaching, it will be useful to first review frameworks widely used in other public and private sectors for pursuing greater diversity in the workplace. Because of shifting demographics in Canada in past decades, businesses and public institutions, like schools, must cater to an increasingly diverse client population (Gérin-Lajoie, 2012). The case for promoting workforce diversity has largely stemmed from three underlying theories on organizational demographics (Mannix & Neale, 2005; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). First, social categorization describes research that focuses on diversity based on differences such as age, gender, ethnicity, religion or language. Such differences become more salient by their under or over-representation in a group, and therefore become the “differences” sought in order to reverse under or over-representation within a group or organization (Shore, Chung-Herrera, Dean, Ehrhart, Jung, Randel, & Singh, 2009; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998). Not surprisingly, these categories are often the same ones protected under human rights legislation and promoted in diversity policies. Similarity-attraction research is a second underlying theory in diversity discourse. It catalogues investigations of socially and culturally constructed differences in beliefs, attitudes and personal values that emerge between and within groups (Rivera, 2012; Jackson, Stone, & Alvarez, 1993). These differences are less tangible at various stages of the hiring process, but highly valued in organizations where employee-organization “fit” is believed to enhance
productivity and performance. Thirdly, diversity research has also examined differences in employees’ cognitive diversity and its influence on their innovation and decision-making capacities. Such differences reflect variation in thinking style (Shin, Kim, Lee, & Bian, 2012), attitudes born of experience and background (Tegarden, Tegarden, & Sheetz, 2009) or personality traits (Harrison, Price, Gavin, & Florey, 2002), none of which are at first obvious to employers but are believed to add innovation and creativity that result in competitive advantage (Williams & O’Reilly, 1998; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Mello & Rentsch (2015) caution that “the varied conceptual and operation definitions [of cognitive diversity] restrict theory development and comparisons of empirical results” (p. 1). Given these perspectives, any positive or negative findings from workplace diversity research must be interpreted in light of their underlying theoretical bases in particular rather than be generalized to multiple workplace contexts. As such, the current study is framed on conceptual rather than theoretical grounds in an effort to document principals’ experiences with hiring-related phenomena and the relationships between them.

In broad terms, the notion of diversity is grounded in the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes, visible and invisible within a group, that often form the basis of anti-discrimination policies and legislation (Jonsen, Maznevski, & Schneider, 2011). These characteristics usually include gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, race, language and ethnicity, and represent key barriers that have historically disadvantaged certain groups of people from attaining equitable levels of socio-economic status through education and employment. It is, therefore, not so much the naming of different human characteristics that is important but rather the empowering or
disempowering consequences of diversity that have fuelled the diversity debate over time. How one understands the concept of diversity, then, reflects how one understands its impact and role in the social balances of power between groups of people (Konrad, Prasad, & Pringle, 2006). In a business or education context, the understandings of diversity held by those charged with diversifying the workforce are reflected in the decisions made when selecting employees and considering those from diverse backgrounds.

2.10 Workplace diversity – a business context

In business, the case for workforce diversity has always stemmed from anticipated improvement in meeting business goals, chiefly productivity and profitability (Litvin, 2006; Simkins, 2000). Historically, businesses indeed had diverse workforces but not all roles within a business were accessible to all types of workers. The new paradigm of workplace diversity, then, envisions a workforce where job types are open equally to all groups of individuals. This paradigm has arisen from a combination of democratic ideals and anti-discrimination laws. It has also emerged within the confines of western neo-liberalism where social and economic attainments are thought to be the product of an individual’s own abilities presumably free from systemic discriminatory barriers (Blackmore, 2006). This paradigm limits the concept of diversity to its most basic form – that of the workforce representing the faces of the general population, but continuing to reflect neo-liberal values of the dominant group that claim the lack of socio-economic attainment is largely due to individual deficits. Shore et al. (2009) propose that “in a time of boundaryless and virtual [business] organizations, it is time to . . . create a new set of paradigms” (117) in order for organizations to realize the potential of diverse workforces.
So intractable is the longstanding “every man for himself” paradigm in Western business organizations that it has drawn into question the very value of workplace diversity at all. While the question, ‘is a more diverse workforce better than a less diverse one?’ has prompted considerable research over the past 25 years (Jonsen, Maznevski, & Schneider, 2011), not all findings have shown that organizations believe it to be (Filler, Liebig, Fenger-Veith & Varan, 2006; Ely, & Thomas, 2000). Most workplace diversity research has focused on management efforts (Jonsen et al., 2011) rather than the outcomes of such efforts in supporting business goals. This lack of research clarity may explain to some degree the slow-moving developments in diversifying workplaces. It may also reflect differences in understanding diversity between business types (e.g. service vs. industry) and within business organizations (e.g. upper vs. front line management) (Konrad, et al, 2006).

Diversity in the workplace has been studied on many levels (Jonsen et al, 2011) ranging from superficial (visible differences between individuals and groups) to deeper, but often less obvious dimensions of diversity, such as educational background, ethnicity, religion, or personal politics. Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt (2003) estimate that nearly 90% of diversity studies have focused on visible differences between people, a pattern that maintains a narrow conceptualization of diversity. Similarly, strategies used to manage diversity in the workforce are limited to those for which outcomes can be measured empirically and where diversity can be reached by adding or subtracting certain types of workers from various levels within an organization at various times (Cox, 1993; Larkey, 1996). Such an approach presumes a ‘right mix’ of workers that, if obtained, would help an organization reach strategic business goals.
To test the ‘right mix’ hypothesis, Ely and Thomas (2000) conducted a study of three mid-sized service firms in an effort to determine if the firms’ efforts in worker diversification had indeed led to more effective outcomes for the respective companies. Through interviews and surveys across employee groups within each firm, trends emerged that linked the outcomes of each firm’s diversity efforts with the perspectives held by various levels of management. In other words, even though there were many similarities between the firms’ strategies to diversify their workforces, each firm conceptualized diversity differently, and these differences were borne out in various criteria chosen to measure effectiveness.

Ely and Thomas’ work revealed that the concept of diversity was indeed perceived differently in all three firms, sometimes within and across employee groups. Their study provides evidence that simply diversifying a workforce alone does not necessarily lead to improved business outcomes for an organization. Rather, they suggest that the conceptualization of the term, diversity, and its strategic implementation, may be connected to more democratic distribution of power between and among individuals and employee groups – from a diversity standpoint, a more effective organization. Their work also sheds light on research that has documented discrepant levels of satisfaction with organizations’ efforts to improve business outcomes by diversifying their workforces. On a smaller scale, such as in a school, when faced with the task of diversifying the workforce, it could be argued that the ways in which diversity is conceptualized by the individual making hiring decisions may differ markedly from one decision-maker to the next resulting in varying degrees of power redistribution, or diversity effectiveness, within the school organization.
2.11 Workplace diversity – an education context

In some regards, educational organizations are similar to businesses. Indeed in the past number of years, education improvement efforts have attempted to mirror business improvement models, including recruitment and hiring (Leithwood & Day 2007; Mertz, 2010). Similarly, the discourse around employee diversity has resounded in educational research with broad claims that the diversity of the community should be reflected in the diversity within educational organizations. Such claims have also been captured in policy documents such as Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools, 2009, that states “Board and school staff should reflect the diversity within the community and be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse groups within the board’s jurisdiction” (p. 16). This policy goes on to state that both the effectiveness of the organization (school board/school) and learning outcomes of students will be fortified by efforts to diversify the workforce. As seen in Ely and Thomas’ work (2000), a diversified workforce can render varying degrees of outcome improvement thought to be more a function of how diversity is conceptualized within the organization, and in particular by those responsible for hiring decisions, than merely the act of employing diverse workers.

In an educational context, then, it may be useful to compare educational leaders’ understanding of diversity with that of their counterparts in business, and between themselves. Lumby (2006, 2009) and Lumby & Coleman (2010) undertook studies of school workers’ conceptualizations of diversity. Rather than focus on school leaders exclusively, the study relied on Begley’s (2003) broad definition of leadership - a deliberate transmission of values to inform action – in order to gather sample perceptions
of diversity from senior, middle and front-line leaders at two community colleges in the UK. Lumby and colleagues chose two distinctively different colleges for their study – one largely reflective of the diversity in the general population; the other, ninety-nine percent White. In this case, diversity refers to students’ race, country of origin, first language and academic level. The diversity of teachers and school leaders in both schools was similar to that of their respective student populations.

Lumby found that leaders’ discourses about diversity fell into three categories: values, conceptions of diversity, and action. Conceptions of diversity ranged from narrow (focusing on race, ethnicity and gender) to broad (expanding to less visible forms of difference, such as religion, educational background or personal politics). In all three categories, the comments from leaders in school 1 were notably different than those from leaders at school 2. Briefly, in school 1, diversity was highly valued and conceptualized from both narrow and broad perspectives. Diversity issues were viewed as central to the overall mission of the school, and included difficult leadership debates about areas of the school where power and influence were not equitably distributed. For example, leaders acknowledged that janitorial workers were primarily Black, and viewed this as a shortcoming of their diversity strategy. Lastly, school 1 had a comprehensive set of actions, often in the form of policies, procedures, committees and employee networks that provided both a forum for input and a vehicle to make change. As a result, leaders at school 1 conceptualized diversity as more than a set of values, but acknowledged the sometimes difficult management responsibilities in advancing an effective diversity strategy. One leader summarized this school’s action-oriented conceptualization of diversity this way: “Roll up your sleeves, get stuck in and stop hiding behind
bureaucracy or your office door or your title. Be involved with the people” (Lumby, 2009, p. 434).

By contrast, leaders in school 2 conceptualized diversity in ways that appeared to minimize its importance altogether. No connections were drawn between the obvious discrepancy in the diversity of society at large and the relative homogeneity of the school faculty and students. Visible differences between students were dismissed as “irrelevant” (Lumby, 2009, p. 437), differences superseded by the acknowledged common purpose of the school – to prepare students for university. Lack of diversity within leadership ranks was similarly rationalized by a vague system of meritocracy that promoted ‘the best person for the job’ wherein human differences are presumably taken out of the formula for assessing quality and used to justify any hiring patterns that emerge or continue, e.g. more males than females, more Whites than non-Whites, etc. The “similarity-attraction” hypothesis (Baker & Cooper, 2005; Walker & Walker, 1998; Young, Place, Rinehart, Jury & Baits, 1997) documents longstanding patterns of school leaders attracting teachers who share not only common professional values and perspectives, but also individual and group characteristics such as race and gender. Both the concepts of meritocracy and similarity-attraction seemed to prevail in school 2 with regard to its teacher and student recruitment philosophy. Not surprisingly, school 2 had no plan of action to alter its current processes.

Lumby (2009) sorted school leaders’ responses into four conceptualizations of diversity: Indifferent (diversity is not associated with school outcomes), Entryist (diversity is a factor in analyzing trends in school outcomes; efforts are made to compensate), Multicultural (diversity is a factor in most elements of school operation and
governance; efforts are made to improve), and Systemic (diversity is central to achieving equity of access and opportunity; efforts are made to transform). The following table compares her findings in an educational context with those described by Ely and Thomas (2000) in a business context.

Table 1 – Conceptualizations of Diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Indifference</th>
<th>Entryist</th>
<th>Multicultural</th>
<th>Systemic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lumby</td>
<td>Discrimination &amp; Fairness</td>
<td>Access &amp; Legitimacy</td>
<td>Integration &amp; Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Ely &amp; Thomas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, Lumby made no attempt to measure effectiveness outcomes of the schools’ diversity efforts as Ely and Thomas had done in the analysis of three professional firms. The strong assumption in education is that efforts to embed diversity principles and practices are better than not doing so, and rationalized by increasing trends of social diversity generally and strongly held beliefs that learning and social outcomes are enhanced when Multicultural- or Integration and Learning-type conceptualizations of diversity are pursued (Hoffman, 1997; Jonsen, et al, 2011).

2.12 Conceptual framework - how does diversity factor into the process principals use to hire teachers?

The research discussed above describes a number of concepts about diversity and their relationship to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. These multiple concepts invite a varied interpretation of phenomena and perspectives and, therefore, have influenced the scope of the present study, its structure and coherence, the selection of
study participants, the design of data collection tools, and the data-analysis process. The conceptual framework here allows for interpretations to unfold as the study progresses, but also provides sufficient boundaries that ground interpretation in the phenomena observed and recorded. For example, given the breadth of diversity discourse in the literature, it was important to engage study participants in a discussion of diversity as they understood it. It was equally important, however, to guide the discussion towards the effects of their understanding of diversity on a key task in their work – that of teacher hiring. Similarly, it was useful to position findings from an anonymous survey alongside those from personal interviews – not to weigh the findings of one over the other, but to capture any consistencies or contradictions that may emerge from the purposeful juxtaposition of diversity and teacher hiring concepts stemming from survey and interview questions. Additionally, the framework used in this study recognizes that concepts relating to diversity in the workplace are expanding over time, as are notions of employee equity, and anticipates the complexities of participant responses to the research questions.

The literature review itself affects the conceptual framework used. First, it reveals that principals work by a set of professional values that, like all values, are rooted in a set of beliefs (Gold, 2003), including beliefs about diversity (Harris et al., 2010). Second, while research acknowledges that teachers from diverse backgrounds can improve some elements of the school experience for students, in particular, minoritized students, it is unclear that academic achievement is similarly affected (Gay, 2000). Third, the process of making a hiring decision by a principal is influenced by similarities between the principal and the prospective teacher, by the teacher’s personal skills more
than his/her professional skills, and by hiring processes established externally by the
school district that sometimes complicate a principal’s ability to minimize uncertainty in
the decision-making process (Mason and Schroeder, 2010). These factors will converge
in the principal’s perceived importance of diversity weighed against other important
teacher traits when making hiring decisions, and the principal’s understanding of how a
teacher’s difference(s) will positively impact student learning.

Figure 1 below represents the convergence of two fields of influence in
principals’ decision-making when considering teachers from diverse backgrounds.

For the purposes of this present study, only the more visible dimensions of diversity will
be considered in reference to teachers from diverse backgrounds. At this point, teacher
applicants in District A are not asked to self-identify based on any dimensions of
diversity, so only assumptions based on visible traits are available to principals when
conducting interviews. As such, race and/or ethnicity (identifiable by skin colour and
other physical traits), gender (identifiable by physical traits and dress), and language
spoken (sometimes identifiable by accent, or associated with race) will limit the
definition of diversity. These identity data on teachers are not available to principals
prior to an interview, which poses a dilemma. If a principal is specifically interested in
hiring teachers to diversify the teacher complement based on race, gender or language
difference, then identity information (akin to information about education, experience and
qualifications) could position diversity alongside more traditional selection criteria such
as experience and qualifications typically included in resumes and cover letters and
available prior to an interview.

The drive to diversify the teacher workforce in Ontario and other North American
jurisdictions is fuelled by global immigration patterns that have resulted in the steady
increase in the proportion of minority students in schools. Research in the field,
however, includes arguments that range from strong support for teacher diversity to
questioning whether it matters at all. In surveying and interviewing school principals, I
aim to uncover how they respond to the call to increase teacher diversity in their
individual schools, how their responses relate to current research, and how they evaluate
dimensions of diversity vis-à-vis personal and professional qualities that influence
teachers’ work.
Chapter 3

Research Design and Methods of Analysis

To examine the interplay between principals’ conceptualizations of diversity and the process of hiring teachers, this study will draw on two sources of data. Many research questions and combinations of questions are best and most fully answered through mixed research solutions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) in ways that “offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research” (Cresswell & Clark, 2007, p. 9). This study attempts to embed qualitative data from semi-structured interviews into the broader quantitative survey data in an effort to provide context and depth to the survey responses. Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer some flexibility in the wording and sequence of questions based on participant responses, but seek to elicit specific information from each respondent (Merriam 2009). Moreover, the present study is bounded by its single-district context and as such, takes on the characteristics of a case study (ibid, p. 40). The timing of this investigation represents a period of general declining student enrolment in Ontario (Declining Enrolment Working Group, 2009) and stable teacher attrition rates (Ontario College of Teachers, 2012). These trends combine to create conditions where many school districts are faced with laying off teachers rather than hiring new ones. In the case of District A, however, student enrolment continues to grow, albeit more modestly than in the recent past, creating increasingly unique study conditions – ones where teacher hiring continues – and where principals continue to make hiring decisions on a frequent basis.
The Survey

To begin, all elementary and secondary school principals in the district where I work were invited to complete an online survey (see Appendix A). The district studied is a large, suburban, highly diverse community in the Greater Toronto Area, with approximately 150,000 students in 220 schools, therefore a corresponding number of principals. Given the demographics of this district, very few schools are without diverse student populations, e.g. multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-faith, or combinations of these variables. As such, it is reasonable to expect that most principals have encountered, either at their current school or a previous one, the phenomenon of hiring teachers for a diverse student community.

Draft survey questions were refined based on feedback from 3 principal colleagues and members of District A’s research department. Adjustments were made to simplify the language of the questions, the number of questions, and to alter the rating scales so that respondents were more likely to give true and honest responses rather than providing a null response. Particularly with the question asking principals to rank in order the importance of teacher traits when hiring, colleagues recommended that the traits be randomized to prevent respondents from assuming the order of the items in the survey represented an undisclosed preferred order. Four-point rating scales were used for questions asking for ratings (e.g. of importance) so that similar/dissimilar ratings could be clustered in describing principals’ views.

Survey items were largely close-ended, with items asking participants to rank order pre-listed teacher qualities that may have influenced them while hiring teachers in general, and to express their stance on topics related to hiring teachers from diverse
backgrounds in particular. Additionally, most items allowed for supplementary, open-ended comments if respondents chose. Participants were also asked to provide demographic data about themselves and their school populations. Quantitative data of this sort allowed for descriptive statistics to inform later analyses regarding the strength of relationships between groups of participants and how diversity factored into their hiring practices. While the survey participant sample is not randomized nor its results generalizable to other district contexts, Spearman’s Rho analyses were conducted to determine if correlations exist between sub-groups of principals and how they perceived the importance of diversity.

The first part of the survey gathered demographic data about the respondents (gender, total number of years as a school administrator, number of schools as a school administrator). Response frequencies permitted an exploration of principals’ gender and experience and their potential relationship to how they perceive the importance of teacher diversity when hiring. Another survey question asked principals to identify the racial-ethnic background of prominent student groups representing approximately 20% of the school population to see if student diversity influences principals’ perceptions of teacher diversity. Responses reveal possible connections between one specific dimension of student diversity, e.g., ethno-racial, with principals’ rankings and perceptions of specific factors in teacher hiring explored in the second part of the survey.

The next question asked principals to rank by importance a list of traits used when hiring teachers.

*Please rank order the factors below according to their importance to you when considering teachers to be hired at your current school. 1 = most important; 10 = least important.*
This list was extracted from the related literature (Kersten, 2008; Rutledge et al., 2008; Harris, Rutledge, Ingle & Thompson, 2010; Mackenzie, 2011), and ultimately consisted of the following, loosely defined competencies: professional conduct, pedagogical knowledge and skill, effective classroom management, educational background, additional qualifications, experience, and ability to collaborate with others. The literature on diversity and teacher hiring often deals with diversity separately from other factors considered in teacher hiring, such as personal and professional traits (Harris et al., 2010). As such, three additional items were added to this list: ethno-racial identity, gender, and languages spoken and/or accents used, in order to include dimensions of diversity with more widely accepted desirable teacher traits. The goal was to determine how principals would rank dimensions of diversity in teacher selection compared to other traits. To increase the integrity of their responses, the list of traits was randomized for each individual survey such that principals might give due consideration to these unfamiliar additions. Consistent with the existing literature, it was hypothesized that diversity dimensions such as race, gender and multilingualism would be ranked low against more commonly used factors. Ranking teacher traits, therefore, may reflect the importance principals ascribe to diversity as a factor compared to more traditional ones such as experience, pedagogical knowledge, personal disposition, and additional qualifications or credentials.

The next question asks principals for their level of agreement with a statement in PPM 119/13 advocating for greater teacher diversity “so that students, parents and community members are able to see themselves represented” (p. 5). Respondents were
also asked to elaborate on their level of agreement. The purpose of this question was to capture principals’ overall stance towards teacher diversity and then compare this stance to other factors considered when hiring.

The next question asked principals to rank the importance of reasons stated in the literature and provincial policy arguing for a more diverse teaching staff.

*How important to you are the reasons listed below when considering hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds?*

Villegas & Irvine (2010), Gay (2003), and Ehrenberg, Goldhaber & Brewer (1995) document a range of positions supporting greater teacher diversity. This question explores principals’ beliefs about the potential dividends provided to students when instructed by a diverse teaching staff.

In the next question, principals were asked to indicate which dimensions of diversity most influence their hiring decisions.

*A teaching staff can be diversified on a number of dimensions. To what extent have your hiring decisions been influenced by these dimensions in the past?*

These dimensions (culture, gender, language, physical disability, race, religion and sexual orientation) were drawn from the list of protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code (2012). This question allowed for comparisons to be drawn between the dimensions of diversity determined to be most influential in hiring, and how these ranked compared to other teacher traits such as professional knowledge.
Principals were then asked to indicate potential barriers in hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds.

*There are a number of circumstances that are sometimes perceived as barriers to hiring diverse teachers. Please indicate the extent to which these barriers have factored into your hiring decisions.*

The purpose of this question was to discover not only perceived barriers, but to provide comparison points to other claims principals made, for example, principals’ stance on the need to increase teacher diversity vs. their views on perceived barriers that may hinder them from doing so.

Finally, respondents were also asked to identify their ethno-racial background using descriptors currently under consideration for voluntary staff census for all employee groups in the district. Such self-identification in the survey permits further exploration of possible relationships between self-identification descriptors and factors influencing hiring decisions, including decisions to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds. Such analyses have informed the contention that the hiring decisions principals make may be influenced by their conceptualization of diversity, which is itself affected by their own identity (Young, Place, Rinehart, Jury, & Baits, 1997).

In summary, the purpose of the survey was to collect demographic data from a sample of principals in the district and their views on a range of topics related to teacher hiring. Fifty-six of 220 principals completed the online survey. Four incomplete surveys were withdrawn from the data set leaving a usable response rate of 24%. The survey responses were analyzed using SPSS v21 to calculate basic frequencies and means for each survey item. Of particular interest were the frequencies for the overall rankings of
the importance of teacher traits. Included in the list of teacher traits were dimensions of diversity, namely, race, gender and languages spoken. These frequencies were then cross-tabulated against 3 independent variables (principals’ experience, the number of interviews conducted yearly, and the number of prominent ethno-racial groups within the school population) in order to examine their effects, if any, on principals’ rankings of desired teacher traits, particularly the ranking of dimensions of diversity. Principals were also asked to self-identify by gender and ethno-racial group in order to identify possible variation in item responses.

Interviews

In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a small number of principals who volunteered to discuss their experiences in hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds in a one-on-one interview setting. I speculated that principals with a particular interest in the topic of hiring for diversity would be those most inclined to volunteer for an interview, and whose experiences would most clearly illustrate their decision-making. Preference was given to respondents with experience as a principal in more than one school, and with more than 3 years in the position. With the implementation of Ontario Regulation 274/12, and recent changes to district policy that now allows pre-screening of teacher applicants before interviewing thereby eliminating the previous requirement to interview all applicants, principals with fewer than 3 years in the role would likely have less hiring experience than colleagues in the role longer. Furthermore, student enrolment growth in the district has plateaued in the past 3 years after a decade of significant increases. Slower enrolment growth has reduced teacher hiring, leaving principals in the role during the high growth period (2000-2010) with
more hiring experience and opportunity to reflect on the factors influencing their hiring decisions.

All fifty-six of the survey respondents were eligible to be considered for a follow-up interview as indicated in the survey information letter (see Appendix C). Twelve principals contacted me through email to express an interest in being interviewed and ten met the selection criteria described above. Interviews were arranged at principals’ work sites during the first three weeks of July, 2014. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, and each interviewee provided written consent for the interview to be audio-recorded and transcribed under conditions of anonymity and confidentiality. Most of the principals interviewed were known to me to varying degrees. This relationship served to improve the frankness of the interview and provided a level of trust between interviewer and interviewee. Because I, too, am a principal, and have conducted many teacher interviews, participants were able to provide detailed information knowing that I understood the hiring context in District A and its stance on increasing teacher diversity.

Interview questions (see Appendix B) were drawn from the open-ended response prompts of the survey in an effort to triangulate responses from corresponding survey items. In the end, data from principals were derived from closed survey questions, open-ended survey questions, and interviews. Interviews, however, provided a more detailed account of the factors influencing hiring decisions, as well as an opportunity to hear principals’ experiences with the outcomes of these decisions. While the survey provided an opportunity for respondents to expand on their answers if they choose, semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to describe the contexts around their hiring experiences.
thereby allowing the interviewer “to enter into the other person’s perspective” (Patton, 2002).

Interview transcripts were first manually coded for recurring themes and unique perspectives. Responses for each question were entered into MS Excel™, and code words/themes tabulated using the text and text string count functions in an effort to capture principals’ thinking that is commonplace, and/or conversely, uncommon. Because the interview questions stem from the themes explored in the survey, it was anticipated that similar themes would emerge from the interviews, such as the perceived dividends of a diverse teaching staff, teacher diversity as a factor in teacher quality, and barriers in hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. Other unanticipated themes, however, emerged from the interview transcripts. Care was taken not to discount themes that did not support the study’s conceptual framework in favour of those that do in order to maintain a balance between anticipated themes and those from the grassroots (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

3.1 Study parameters

The rich contextual description that permit case studies to illustrate a phenomenon so well also mark its potential limits. That said, “readers can learn vicariously from an encounter with the case through the researcher’s narrative description” (Stake, 2005, p. 450). It becomes the reader who then judges the degree of generalizability rather than the researcher. Findings from the current study, however, are limited in ways similar to other qualitative research, such as in their limited ability to make reliable predictions of future behaviour based on anticipated survey results, and the challenge in minimizing researcher bias. Merriam (2009) questions these limitations of qualitative research, however, and
the overall value of predictability as the hallmark of reliable research. Nonetheless, participants in this study have participated voluntarily, and no controls were in place to limit participation of one participant over another in order to achieve randomization. As for the survey in particular, the request for respondents to self-identify using various dimensions of diversity may have prompted principals to be more cautious in their responses, or to choose not to self-identify. Self-identification is not part of the current human resources culture in District A, although is currently a consideration for changes to human resources policy (The Journey Ahead, 2013). It was anticipated that a lack of self-identification by participants would limit efforts to establish relationships between various constructs within the survey. One further potential concern was the degree to which participants would respond truthfully to the questions in the survey. Given the growing politicization of hiring for diversity, there was a risk that participants would respond cautiously to questions that may challenge the assumptions underlying their professional judgments about teacher hiring.

Data obtained through follow-up interviews captured voices of only a few willing participants. While it was anticipated that their contributions would be informative and complementary to the survey results, it was equally expected that only principals with a particular interest in the issues related to teacher diversity would volunteer to be interviewed. As such, caution was needed to avoid suggesting that their views mirror those of their colleagues.
Chapter 4

Survey findings: How important is teacher diversity when hiring?

This chapter explores this question through the findings from a sample survey of principals in District A. Principals’ overall ranking of desirable teacher qualities that included 3 specific dimensions of diversity (gender, race/ethnicity, and the languages spoken) are analyzed against variations among the principals themselves, and in the school populations they serve. Similarly, the survey asks principals to rank the barriers they perceive in hiring diverse teachers. Again, this ranking is analyzed against differences in the principals themselves and their school contexts.

The importance of diversity in any context is subjective by nature; in this study, determining how principals view its importance will be explored from a number of angles: their experience, the perceived advantages of having a diverse teaching staff, and their personal beliefs about teacher diversity generally. While complex, the question of “importance”, however, is central to arguments advocating for a more diverse teacher workforce. If teacher quality is “the most significant institutional determinant of [students’] academic success” (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vidgor, 2006, p. 779), then the determinants of teacher quality are presumably those used by principals to make hiring decisions in search of the best person for the job.

All data from the survey stem from fifty-two out of a possible 220 elementary and secondary principals in the district, or approximately twenty-four percent. While the response rate was an initial concern, and lower than anticipated, Holbrook, Krosnick & Pfent (2008) found only weak associations with surveys with response rates between 20
and 50%, and the representativeness of the surveyed population (p. 527). Similarly, Johnson and Wislar (2012), in investigating the marked decline in response rates to surveys in general, and online surveys in particular, claim that “the response rate of a survey may not be as strongly associated with the quality or representativeness of the survey as had been generally believed” (p. 1805). Nonetheless, given that the survey data were gathered by invitation, and not by randomized selection as noted earlier, they are to be interpreted as only a sample of principals in the district, and not necessarily generalizable across it.

Demographic data were captured on a 4-point scale allowing the lowest two and highest two responses to be clustered together for ease and strength of analysis. The following table shows the demographic categories used in analysis and the percentage (rounded) of respondents per category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1 – Principal Experience and School Diversity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Range of Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Diversity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents are distributed approximately equally across each experience category and diversity level in the school. Self-reports of experience are believed to be highly accurate, and as such, allow for analyses of experience against other variables to be reasonably robust. Conversely, principals were left to approximate the number of prominent ethno-racial groups in their schools as no precise student demographic data of
this type are available in District A. However, these approximations are representative of Statistics Canada data in District A (2011), and therefore can support subsequent analyses using the student demographic variable.

Table 4.2 represents the overall rankings of desired teacher traits expressed in mean rankings.

*Table 4.2 – Overall Importance of Teacher Traits*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Traits</th>
<th>Mean ranking/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Conduct</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Management Skill</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy knowledge</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived fit with staff</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional qualifications</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational background</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-racial identity</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages spoken/accents used</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall rankings show that all three dimensions of diversity were considered least important of the hiring factors listed. To evaluate the strength of this finding, however, it is important to compare it against participant demographics in order to determine if rankings are affected by other variables. Do the rankings differ among principals with more experience in the role, with more school assignments, and with more opportunity to hire teachers? Furthermore, did principals rank these teacher traits differently when their school population contained large numbers of students from diverse backgrounds? For the present study, survey responses were captured on a four-point scale. Degrees of importance (very important, important, unimportant, or very unimportant) or agreement
(strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree) were clustered to express general importance or agreement. For example, a positive ranking of “importance” reflects both “very important” and “important” responses to the survey item.

4.1 Rankings and principals’ experience

Table 4.3 below represents how principals ranked diversity traits given their relative experience in the role. Percentages (rounded here) represent the proportion of principals who ranked these dimensions of diversity in the bottom 3 rankings; the higher the proportion, the lower the ranking.

Table 4.3 – Diversity Rankings and Principal Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less (&lt;6 years)</th>
<th>More (6+ years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-racial identification</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Spoken/Accents Used</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportionately, nearly twice as many principals with more experience ranked ethno-racial identification (17% vs. 32%) and gender as relatively unimportant (13% vs. 32%) than did their less experienced colleagues, whereas the difference was less marked for languages spoken/accents used (25% vs. 32%). However, Spearman’s Rho analysis of these data, however, indicate that in this sample, principal experience was not significantly correlated with ranked importance of ethno-racial identity, gender or languages spoken. In the context of the present study, experience, then, has little influence on how principals rank the importance of teacher diversity when making hiring decisions.
When principals’ range of experience, as indicated by the number of different schools where they have been the principal, was considered, the rankings were similar to the previous ones.

Table 4.4 – Diversity Rankings and Number of School Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity Dimension</th>
<th>1 school</th>
<th>More than 1 school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-racial identification</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Spoken/Accents Used</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 shows the proportion of principals with more than 1 school assignment continued to rank all three diversity dimensions (ethno-racial identity, gender, and languages spoken), lower than principals with only 1 school assignment. Again, Spearman’s Rho analysis of these data, however, indicate that the number of school assignments was not significantly correlated with ranked importance of diversity. When range of experience is combined with overall experience, neither factor appears to influence how principals rank the importance of teacher diversity. However, with experience, principals’ perceptions of other teacher selection traits gain in importance relative to the importance principals assign to diversity. As practice and experience may inform belief (Guskey, 2002), principals may be better equipped over time to observe evidence of the outcomes of hiring decisions based on a teacher’s pedagogical knowledge (e.g. student achievement), whereas evidence of the effects of teacher diversity may be less clear.
4.2 Rankings and principals’ opportunity to hire

It would seem reasonable that the opportunity to hire teachers provides the authentic context for principals to reflect on the factors they consider most salient when making hiring decisions. As such, the opportunity to hire may better reflect what principals consider important and how these perceptions may change given greater hiring opportunity. Principals conducting many interviews per year come in direct contact with a wider range of teacher applicants than principals conducting only a few interviews, and as such, would be able to consider a wider range of variables when making hiring decisions. For instance, if a principal interviews on average only 5 teachers per year, it is unlikely that the applicants would represent the full range of diverse groups, e.g. members of various ethno-racial, linguistic, and faith groups, and/or members from the LGBTQ community, etc. Table 4.5 represents the relative number of teacher interviews principals conduct each year.

Table 4.5 – Estimated Number of Interviews Conducted Yearly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
<th>Percentage of Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 30</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 30</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding

From the survey, approximately half the respondents indicated they conduct up to 30 interviews per year while half the respondents stated they interview more than 30 teachers per year.Remarkably, approximately 80% of principals indicated they conduct
an average of at least 15 teacher interviews per year. These numbers underlie the significance of teacher hiring within the principal role, and reinforce the “high-stakes nature of hiring responsibilities” (Cranston, 2012, p. 26).

The number of interviews principals conduct yearly seemed to have little impact on how principals ranked the importance of dimensions of diversity in their hiring decisions. Spearman’s Rho analysis of these data indicates that the number of teacher interviews was not significantly correlated with ranked importance of diversity. The percentages listed in Table 4.6 represent the proportion of principals who ranked the three dimensions of diversity in the bottom 3 rankings.

Table 4.6 – Diversity Rankings and Number of Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fewer (&lt;30/year)</th>
<th>More (30+/year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-racial identification</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Spoken/Accents Used</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this case, even principals interviewing “fewer” teachers per year are presented with substantial opportunity to weigh the qualities they consider most important. This finding was confirmed by further analysis of all 6 categories of number of teacher interviews (Table 4.5) showing no significant correlation between how principals rank the importance of diversity and their opportunity to hire. In the context of this study, the overall differences in principals’ experience, number of school assignments, or the number of hiring opportunities available to principals seems to have little, if any, notable impact on how they perceive the importance of teacher diversity when making hiring decisions.
4.3 Rankings and diversity of school population

According to King (1993) and others, and echoed in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Strategy, 2009, and again in PPM 119/13, one of the key reasons given for diversifying the teacher workforce is so that minoritized students can see themselves represented in the teachers they encounter, a phenomenon that is currently not the case for many students, particularly in large urban, multicultural school districts (Ryan et al, 2009; TDSB, 2006; Pike & Jaffay, 2007). Therefore, the ethno-racial and/or linguistic composition of a school population may be a stronger external influence on principals’ hiring decisions than factors related to the principal him/herself, such as experience, or less predictable factors such as opportunity. It seems less likely, however, that the student gender mix in a school would significantly influence principals’ hiring decisions to hire male or female teachers since all schools have relatively equal numbers of male and female students.

Of the principals surveyed, 37% estimated that their student population contained only 1 ethno-racial group consisting of more than 20% of the school population. The remaining 63% of principals estimated that their school population contained more than 1 ethno-racial group consisting of more than 20% of the total population. Prominence of groups identified for both school contexts as follows: South Asian – 85%; Black African – 42%; European – 36%; Non-White West Asian/Middle Eastern/North African – 26%; East Asian – 23%, and Southeast Asian – 11%. Table 4.7 outlines how principals in both contexts ranked the importance of dimensions of diversity in their schools. The percentages represent the proportion of principals who ranked the dimension of diversity in the bottom 3 rankings of desired teacher traits.
It was hypothesized that the diversity of the school population would have a significant impact on how principals perceived the importance of dimensions of teacher diversity. The data in Table 4.7 show that in school contexts with one prominent ethno-racial group, approximately one fifth of principals still rank teacher diversity as unimportant, or at least in the bottom 3 rankings among teacher traits. What is notable is that this figure rises to nearly one third of principals in schools with even greater student diversity. Spearman’s Rho analysis of these data, however, indicates that diversity of the student population was not significantly correlated with ranked importance of diversity. Whether a school population was described as having one group of diverse students, or several groups, in both cases, however, the two most prominent groups were members of a visible, non-White racialized group (South Asian (85% of the time) and Black African (42% of the time). This phenomenon seemed to have little influence on principals’ ranking of the importance of teacher diversity as did variables such as principals’ experience or opportunity to hire. The proportion of principals ranking teacher diversity as unimportant seems to remain constant (approximately 20% – 35%) regardless of their years in the job, the number of schools as principal, the number of interviews they conduct or the ethno-racial composition of their school population. These data could also represent the consistent strength of other teacher traits considered by principals when hiring teachers.
Following the ranking of teacher traits and competencies, principals were asked to comment on their agreement with a statement in Policy and Program Memorandum 119/13. This PPM was distributed by the Ontario Ministry of Education as an appendix document to the *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009*. The PPM states, “The (school) board’s work force should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents and community members are able to see themselves represented.” (5). There was general agreement with this policy statement (81%), with 15% of principals expressing strong agreement and 66% expressing agreement. In light of the analysis of rankings of teacher traits and competencies, while principals may agree with the spirit of the policy, their agreement does not seem to translate into tangible differences in what is seen as important hiring considerations in schools with significantly diverse student populations. Moreover, nineteen percent of principals disagreed with the statement while 9% expressing strong disagreement with a policy statement urging them to factor the diversity of their schools’ populations into their hiring decisions.

Further inconsistencies emerge with the results from the survey question asking principals to rank the importance of reasons often used to support the hiring of teachers from diverse backgrounds, whether in highly diverse or more mono-cultural schools. These claims (Villegas, 2010) include rationales such as the breakdown of historic power inequities and stereotypes, overcoming cultural differences, increasing parental involvement, providing role models for students, and improving students’ sense of inclusion. On a 4-point scale, mean ratings ranged from 2.3 to 3.4 indicating general agreement with the rationales supporting hiring diverse teachers. The strength of these responses, however, seemed inconsistent with how principals rated the overall
importance of diversity dimensions when ranked against other teacher traits and competencies. Responses to the next survey question corroborated this inconsistency. When asked to indicate the extent to which a wide range of diversity dimensions influence hiring decisions, e.g. culture, race, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation and physical disability, the mean response was 2.2 out of 4, with 10% of all responses marked as Not Applicable, indicating that hiring decisions are weakly influenced by diversity dimensions generally.

### 4.4 Influence of diversity on teacher hiring

The final two survey questions asked principals to first reflect on the extent to which teacher diversity may have influenced hiring decisions in the past; then to identify circumstances they perceive as barriers to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds and the degree to which these barriers affect their hiring decisions. Table 4.8 shows means scores on a 5 point scale indicating the extent to which principals claim that their hiring decisions have been swayed by various dimensions of diversity.

#### Table 4.8 – Influences of Diversity Dimensions on Hiring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity Dimension</th>
<th>Extent of Influence/5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Disability</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion/Faith</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dimensions of diversity are drawn from the protected grounds identified in the Ontario Human Rights Code. While hiring decisions may have been influenced more by
culture, gender, race and language than any other dimension, a mean score of 2.2 out of 5 indicates that diversity is not a strong influence in teacher hiring. Interestingly, principals indicated that Culture and Religion influence their hiring decisions only “to little extent” 11% and 47% of the time respectively.

Table 4.9 indicates the barriers identified by principals and the extent to which these barriers influence their hiring decisions.

*Table 4.9 – Principals’ Perceptions of Barriers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Barriers</th>
<th>Extent of influence (moderate and large extent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of pedagogical knowledge</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak communication skills in English</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of experience in Canadian school context</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of diverse teacher applicants</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of demographic information about a teacher</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims of discrimination by other teachers</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that pedagogical knowledge was consistently ranked by principals in the top 3 desired teacher traits, it is not surprising that a perceived weakness in this trait would constitute a reason not to hire any teacher, not only teachers from diverse backgrounds.

A similar argument could be made for professional conduct (also consistently ranked in the top 3 positions), and weak communication skills, arguably a subset of professionalism and implicit in the Standards of Practice of the Ontario College of Teachers. What is noteworthy, however, is the extent to which availability of diverse teachers was perceived to be a barrier. The data are unclear as to whether or not principals are describing an outright shortage of teachers from diverse backgrounds, or if the shortfall reflects diverse teachers who also possess other desired traits. Previously, the barriers noted by
principals could be described as shortcomings of the teachers themselves. Lack of teacher availability, along with the lack of demographic information, however, reflects a change in the notion of hiring barriers from ones that are individualistic to those that are systemic in nature. This observation corroborates principals’ earlier perceptions of the importance of teacher traits – those that are within teachers’ locus of control are ranked consistently high whereas those that beyond teachers’ control such as their identity or systemic barriers, are perceived as less influential when hiring.

Principals were also asked an open response question where they could expand on their experiences and offer suggestions that would improve their ability to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds. Responses to open questions echoed the barriers listed in Table 4.8 with one notable exception. While the lack of teaching experience in Canada, and weak communication skills in English were often mentioned as barriers, the implementation of a new Ministry of Education policy, Regulation 274/12, was listed as the most problematic barrier in hiring diverse teachers and many suggested it be repealed. A more complete description of this Regulation and its recent impact study will follow.

In the survey, principals provided the following suggestions they believed would minimize other perceived barriers in hiring diverse teachers:

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4 Regulation 274/12 requires school districts to use seniority with the district as a key determinant in hiring occasional teachers to permanent teaching positions.
### Table 4.10 – Principals’ suggestions to minimize barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak communication skills in English</td>
<td>1. Systematic evaluation of English language skills particular to the teaching profession prior to accreditation by the Ontario College of teachers and/or individual school districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Set minimum language standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of experience and/or understanding of Canadian school context</td>
<td>3. Internship programs for foreign-trained teachers to gain Canadian school experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Conditional certification status until internship requirements are met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of diverse teacher applicants</td>
<td>5. Recruitment by education colleges of diverse student teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The perceived barriers to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds correspond to the original ranking of overall desirable teacher traits and competencies (see Table 4.2). Principals highly value pedagogical knowledge, professional conduct, and strong classroom management skills and use these as benchmarks in making hiring decisions. When these traits and competencies are thought to be compromised, for instance due to weak communication skills and/or a lack of teaching experience in a Canadian context, then principals perceive them as barriers to the teacher’s competence which in turn influences the ultimate decision to hire. It is unknown whether or not the suggestions noted above would reduce hiring barriers. What is common among the suggestions, however, is the notion that the key to increasing teacher diversity rests outside of the principals’ locus of control. External language assessment, internship programs and recruitment by colleges suggest that hiring diverse teachers would be improved if these actions were put in place. This perspective is inconsistent, however, with research showing principals to be the key decision-makers in teacher hiring (Rutledge, et al, 2008) and in survey evidence in the present study suggesting that the importance of teacher
diversity remains relatively unimportant to principals despite their experience, and in the face of highly diverse school populations. Further discussion of this perspective emerges from follow-up interviews with principals.

4.5 Regulation 274/12

In 2012, the Ontario Ministry of Education amended the Education Act by way of Regulation 274/12. The Regulation obliged district school boards to institute hiring procedures for occasional teachers whereby their seniority with the board became an automatic screening criterion once they applied for a job. When a position became available, the five applicants with the greatest seniority were eligible to be interviewed, and provided they each had the required qualifications for the position, principals were obliged to hire one of the five. The Regulation was implemented in response to longstanding concerns on the part of occasional teachers that younger, less experienced teachers were given preferential consideration during the hiring process, and that experience as an occasional teacher was undervalued, and in some cases, viewed as a liability in their search for full-time employment. It was argued that principals perceived occasional teachers who had been unable to secure a full-time position over time as obviously under-skilled, and each passing year lessened an occasional teacher’s chances of getting a full time job (Ungerleider & Baumann, 2014). The Ontario College of Teachers noted that foreign-trained teachers in particular were subject to this phenomenon, with many foreign-trained teachers representing various non-White ethnoracial groups (OCT, 2012). Regulation 274/12, in part therefore, was an effort to potentially diversify the teacher workforce, at least for occasional teachers. While it is still unclear whether the Regulation has indeed improved the hiring prospects of
minoritized teachers, the use of seniority as a mandatory consideration in teacher selection was perceived negatively by principals in survey and individual interview responses. Further discussion of principals’ perceptions of Regulation 274/12 will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.6 Self-identification of principals

At the end of the survey, principals were asked to self-identify by gender, ethno-racial group, and other identifiers such as sexual orientation, time lived in Canada, speaking a variety of English, or members of a religious or cultural group whose clothing or appearance makes such identity visible. It was anticipated that the response rate for this question would be lower than for other parts of the survey, and indeed, approximately 93% of respondents chose to identify their ethno-racial group whereas all respondents self-identified by gender. Employee self-identification is not a common phenomenon in this district, and its novelty may account for the lower response rate.

Seventy-one percent of principals were female; 29% male. While this gender distribution may reflect the gender breakdown of principals in District A, it is too uneven to allow for meaningful analyses based on gender alone. Eighty-five percent of respondents self-identified as being of European heritage; 2% Aboriginal; 7% Black/African, with 7% choosing not to answer. Without ethno-racial census data of principals, it is not possible to know if this distribution is representative of the district, and given the high proportion of those identifying as European, factor analysis by ethno-racial group was not undertaken. It was hoped that the survey sample would represent a broader spectrum of ethno-cultural groups represented by principals as a whole, which may have been achieved with a higher response rate. What is obvious, however, is a
significant mismatch between the ethno-racial identities of principals and the student populations in the schools they serve. These data also signal that the perceptions captured by the survey are largely those of principals from European backgrounds, thereby consistent with Galabuzi’s analysis of the underrepresentation of minoritized groups in Canadian managerial positions (2010).

While the lack of ethno-racial variation among the principals surveyed did not allow for cross-analysis of principals’ racial identity with other hiring preferences, the ethno-racial homogeneity of the principal group itself warrants some discussion here with respect to the perceived importance of diversity revealed in the survey.

The consistency with which principals ranked dimensions of diversity as unimportant may be interpreted two ways: that principals genuinely believe that factors other than diversity are more important when hiring, or that the lack of ethno-racial diversity of the respondents prevented a broader spectrum of perspectives on hiring diverse teachers. It is possible that responses from greater numbers of non-White principals may have altered the survey response patterns resulting in less consistent hiring factor rankings. This possibility stems from research into variations in the discourse on diversity by different ethno-racial groups (Hoffman, 1997). One such variation is the notion that “each culture is construed as incommensurably different from every other” (p. 380) highlighting the difficulty one culture (e.g. dominant) may have in understanding the experiences and perspectives of another (e.g. non-dominant). Hernandez and Kose (2012), however, suggest that cross-cultural appreciation is not necessarily fixed, and suggest that individuals’ perspectives on diversity are in development, and subject to change with time and life experience. Hernandez and Kose draw on research by Bennett
that investigated principals’ cultural competence, in this case viewed as a proxy for valuing diversity, and placed these competencies on a continuum ranging from denial (where cultural differences are denied or ignored) to integration (where individuals become bi- or multi-cultural based on experience with others’ differences).

There is growing evidence that members of a dominant group differ in their perceptions of non-dominant groups and overlook the influence of their dominant status (Blackmore, 2010). Carr & Klassen (1997) found non-White teachers more critical of White principals’ commitment to anti-racist education (and noted the dearth of non-White principals generally) while non-White teachers believed anti-racist education was over-emphasized and viewed other school issues such as student behaviour as more important. Similarly, data from the 2004 Ethnic Diversity Survey showed significant differences (36% vs. 10%) between the acknowledgement of racism between racialized groups and the public at large, with higher rates noted by Blacks. Recognizing that racism is not the same as ranking factors used to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds, perceptual differences between racialized and dominant groups, in this study, minoritized teachers and White principals, may account in part for the consistency with which principals ranked the importance of diversity as they did. As Shields (2002) argues, “the [leadership] focus in culturally-diverse contexts is usually on the transformation of participants rather than on the transformation of organizational structures and cultures” (p. 217). This focus on changing the participants emerges in the suggestions principals offered for diverse teachers to overcome the barriers to employability the principals themselves identified (Table 4.10).
4.7 – Summary

Twenty-four percent of principals in District A responded to an online survey about a range of topics related to the factors they consider when hiring teachers generally, and the circumstances that may influence their hiring decisions when hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds in particular. Demographic data on principals were gathered in order to determine if the teacher traits they consider most important vary according to a number of variables. The survey data suggest that the importance principals ascribe to teacher diversity, in this case teachers’ ethno-racial background, gender, and the languages/accents they use, varies little despite notable differences in principals’ experience, the number of interviews they conduct, or the student diversity at their schools. The data further suggest that principals also perceive specific barriers that inhibit their ability to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds, and have identified ways to minimize these barriers. Of significance in the interpretation of the survey, however, is the identity of the principal group as a whole, the vast majority of whom self-identify from a background of White-Europeans. While their identity is not surprising, it provides a largely singular perspective of the issues examined in this survey, and must be considered in its interpretation.
Chapter 5

Insights from Principal Interviews

Ten principals who completed the survey volunteered to be interviewed in order to share their subjective accounts of teacher hiring. The principals interviewed represented a range of experiences in a wide variety of elementary and secondary schools, and central board positions, but each with a minimum of three years in the role. While their accounts are not representative of principals in this district or beyond, themes emerged in their narratives that give weight to some of their shared experiences, values and perspectives. The following profiles provide brief background information about each principal interviewed. All names used are pseudonyms.

5.1 Principal profiles

Ken

Ken has worked in his current school for 3 years, his first assignment as a principal. Ten years ago, the school would have been described as rural, but with housing expansion nearby, the school is now serving growing numbers of students from diverse ethno-racial backgrounds. The growing diversity of the student body has become a point of controversy within the school and among some community members. Growth of certain populations, however, is matched by decreases in the White, rural community, and Ken states that many teachers have chosen to remain at the school for many years.

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5 All principal names used are fictional.
While Ken’s hiring experience is substantial in his two previous urban schools as vice-principal, hiring opportunities have been few during his time at the present school.

**Charles**

Charles is a secondary principal currently working in a central administrative role in the district. His principalship prior to this assignment was in a highly diverse community known in the district for its high enrolment of newcomers to Canada, representing many ethno-racial and faith groups, most of whom are learning English as a second language. Charles’s current responsibilities include hiring teachers to consultative positions who work with teacher colleagues and administrators in a variety of contexts, supporting school improvement initiatives throughout the district. Charles has been a principal in the district for more than 15 years during a time of significant population growth, and over his 30-year career has seen the district change from largely White, suburban community to a highly diverse, urbanized landscape.

**Leo**

Leo has been a principal at three schools, most recently at a newly opened school where he was responsible for hiring all staff except for custodial staff. During the year his school opened, the collective teacher agreements required him to interview all applicants, which numbered in the hundreds given the number of positions to be filled. Having to select staff from so many applicants presented challenges in meeting hiring timelines, and Leo admits resorting to “shortcuts” in the process. For instance, Leo reported previewing names of references, and if the applicant listed a trusted colleague as a reference, then he was more inclined to consider the applicant. Leo’s school is located
in a new housing development in the district, a community that attracts many families from diverse backgrounds, in particular, large numbers of first generation Canadians whose parents come from South Asian countries.

Deb

Deb is a principal in a mid-sized, suburban elementary school. The school serves a community of mainly middle class families, but also draws on an area where families are transient, and residence turnover is quick. In Deb’s five years at this school, the transient portion of the school population has changed dramatically from African Canadian, to eastern European. Deb admits that her views on hiring for diversity are influenced by her own, sometimes negative, school experiences as a child of immigrant parents, and never having teachers who shared her cultural background. Deb also admits to struggling with the possible implications of PPM 119 and its resemblance to affirmative action policies implemented in the past.

Jules

Jules is now in his second school as principal, his first being in an established middle-class area of the district and his second in a highly transient neighborhood with many newcomer families from South Asia and the Caribbean. As such, his current school hosts a school-readiness program for pre-schoolers as well as community integration programs for their parents. Jules’ first school offered French immersion, and he talked openly about the challenges of hiring for diversity in a highly competitive market for French-speaking teachers. At the time, Jules shared his frustrations in efforts to aim for high teaching standards, and attempting to hire teachers from diverse
backgrounds, only to be thwarted by very few applicants, all in demand by other schools. The experience of having few teacher applicants has emerged again in his second principalship, due in part he believes, to an unwarranted, negative reputation of the community perceived to be a challenging place to work. Jules also spoke of experiences where selected candidates did not meet the standard, experiences that have led him to be cautious in expanding his hiring criteria beyond effective teaching competencies.

**Jacob**

Like Leo, Jacob had the opportunity to open a new school at a time when interviews were required for all applicants, and as such, has interviewed hundreds of teacher applicants. Jacob made particular efforts to hire teachers reflective of the student population but experienced challenges similar to Jules in that the school offered a French immersion program, and competition for qualified, high caliber teachers was significant. Jacob’s first principalship was in a large, urban middle school serving a low-income community. Jacob shared many accounts where African-Canadian teachers demonstrated particular skill in working with challenging students from the same background but believes that strong, meaningful connections forged between students and teachers goes well beyond like-ethnicity. Currently, Jacob works as a principal at the district level, and hires teachers to consultative positions to work in schools throughout the region.

**Karl**

Karl is now in his second school as principal. His first school served a largely mono-cultural community of families from South Asian countries. Karl shared his experiences of hiring teachers from the same community as a significant asset, not only
to assist with home-school communication, but as an information source for teachers to reduce misunderstandings and stereotyping projected at families for cultural practices, including months-long periods of time when children were withdrawn from school yearly to visit family overseas. Karl’s current school serves a low-income community and hosts a school-readiness centre for pre-schoolers and parents. Like Jules, Karl often has few applicants for job vacancies due in part, he believes, to the school’s reputation in a high-poverty, high-need community. Because of hiring timelines, Karl’s school has been particularly affected by Regulation 274/12 leaving jobs unfilled in September, and reducing Karl’s latitude in hiring teachers he believes to be the necessary “right fit” for working successfully in a school such as his.

Anna

Anna was a secondary school principal in a neighbouring district before becoming a principal in District A. Anna sees some similarities and differences between district hiring practices and because of experiences in her previous district, has become a strong believer in a highly objective approach to making hiring decisions. Anna recounts the story of a colleague who heavily factored teachers’ ethno-racial identity into decision-making, with questionable results in the end. As such, Anna admits to taking a very cautious approach to hiring for diversity, and makes hiring decisions based solely on verifiable teacher competencies and skills. As a school principal, Anna’s hiring experience was extensive; her current role is that of a central principal who hires teachers into consultative positions to work with a variety of secondary schools to support improved student achievement efforts.
Barb

Previously, Barb had been principal in a school serving a predominantly White, upper middle class neighbourhood. Two years ago, Barb became the principal of a large elementary school serving a community from various ethno-racial backgrounds and many first generation students. In the past year, school boundaries were changed, pushing the school population to over 1000, and creating approximately 20 teacher positions. This year, hiring rules changed such that principals could screen applicants, and were required to interview as few as five applicants per position. Nonetheless, given the number of positions, Barb has interviewed a minimum of 100 teachers in a 3-month period. Barb commented on the “intensity of the hiring process” this year, remarking on the hours (all after school, evenings, and weekends) needed to provide fair and equitable opportunities for all applicants. Nonetheless, Barb recognizes the critical importance of selecting teachers for her school, and that poor decision-making is very difficult to reverse.

Doreen

Doreen has been a principal at two schools, and like Leo and Jacob, opened a new school as her second principalship. The school is located in a middle to upper-middle class neighbourhood, and is easily accessible from other regions of the Greater Toronto Area. Doreen wondered if its location affected the volume of applicants – numbering in the hundreds during her six years at the school. Doreen is a strong advocate of acquiring a diverse teaching staff, but is critical of political discourse that defines diversity in terms of ethno-racial and other visible identities. Doreen recounts an experience where she was encouraged by her superintendent to hire as many African Canadian teachers as possible. Doreen adds that her superintendent was also African Canadian. Instead, Doreen
subscribes to a broader definition of diversity, one that in her experience, effects stronger
teacher-student relationships. Doreen is a long-time advocate of the multiple
intelligences research by Howard Gardner (*Frames of Mind, 1983*) and aims to select
teachers who represent a wide range of learning aptitudes and differences represented by
Gardner’s framework.

Each principal was interviewed using the same semi-structured questions
(Appendix B), their comments audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim for analysis.
The following themes emerged that add clarity to how these principals understand
diversity and how it intersects with their decision-making around teacher hiring:
Opportunity and Availability, Diversity as a stand-alone construct, Dissonance, and
Problems with Process.

5.2 Opportunity and availability

Most of the principals interviewed made reference at some point to the
availability of teachers from diverse backgrounds as mutually interdependent with the
opportunities to hire them. In other words, both conditions have to co-exist in order for
the principal to hire such teachers, but in the experience of many principals, do not. As
student enrolment declines in many Ontario districts (Ministry of Finance, 2013), the lack
of opportunity to hire becomes an increasing challenge in changing the proportion of
teachers from diverse backgrounds from its longstanding White-dominant status (Gay,
2003, McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). The district studied here, however, has
experienced increases in student enrolment for many years. Opportunities to increase the
teacher workforce have been numerous, and according to the survey data collected, the
majority of principals conduct many teacher interviews each year, indicating that the
opportunity to diversify their staff is feasible. In the case of Doreen opening a new elementary school, she conducted approximately 600 interviews for 11 new positions. At the time, the collective agreement in the district obliged elementary principals to interview all qualified applicants. While this ratio of applicants per position is unusual, the greater number of applicants increased the chances of teachers of various diverse backgrounds applying to Doreen’s school.

Despite its population growth in recent years, multiple opportunities to hire teachers are not universal in District A. Ken’s experience is the opposite of Doreen’s. Ken is principal of a small school once serving a largely rural population. Local residential development is causing an influx of South Asian students into a community with predominantly European roots. The overall student population, however, is declining, and as such, Ken has had very little opportunity to recruit new teachers. In his words,

In the past year, we’ve lost 5 staff due to smaller numbers in classrooms but our current make up out of the 15 or so teachers we have – all but 1 are White women in their late 40s/early 50s, and 1 man. We did have some younger staff. Everybody’s White but the ones we lost were the younger ones who had the lowest seniority. So in terms of the make-up of staff, I haven’t had a lot of opportunity to increase or do anything in terms of diversity other than hire a teaching assistant.

When asked about his reaction to the claim in PPM 119/13 that a district’s workforce should reflect the diversity of the community, Ken recounted a story of the only Black student (person, in fact) in his school who stated she had no examples in the school, felt out of place, and didn’t fit in. Ken reflected, “I think to be able to have her [culture]
represented would be really important for her here.” Ken worried that if the White/non-White balance of students continues to change, the lack of ethno-racial diversity of teachers will become more obvious and concerning. While Ken’s circumstances are somewhat unique in this district, they may be representative of many other districts where suburban growth, especially of ethno-racial groups dissimilar to the existing population, and where such growth has only marginal net gain to the overall student enrolment thereby not necessarily resulting in greater hiring opportunity. At the school level, Ken’s example demonstrates two demographic shifts required for significant change in teacher diversity – opportunity to hire resulting from teacher attrition, and/or opportunity to hire resulting from increased student enrolment. Provincially, teacher attrition is stable while student enrolment is declining.

Some principals perceived that Regulation 274/12 adversely affected the opportunity to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds. As the regulation applies only to occasional teachers, and not those with probationary or permanent positions, it is nonetheless a substantial component of the teacher workforce with approximately 1000 occasional teachers being employed over the course of the year in long-term positions, or roughly 10% of teachers overall (Human Resources department, District A). Regulation 274/12 restricts principals to hire from only the 5 most senior applicants per position, so the complement of those 5 applicants may not include teachers from diverse backgrounds. As Leo put it, “I can’t hire [long-term occasional teachers] for the diversity of my school other than through luck” – luck that he has the opportunity to advertise teaching positions, and luck that teachers from diverse backgrounds apply for them.
Principals repeatedly expressed teacher availability as a concern in their experiences hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. Two principals in particular expressed frustration in the lack of teacher applicants. While this may seem puzzling during a period of teacher surplus, the following explanation of the hiring process shows how this phenomenon can occur. From March to June, principals are allocated the number of teachers they will need to staff their schools based on predicted student enrolment for the coming year. In District A, which has seen consistent enrolment growth over time, this process has automatically led to teacher positions available at schools experiencing growth, especially newly-opened schools. Each hiring interval, open only to permanent teachers, causes a domino effect – if a teacher is hired at another school, a vacant position is created at the school he/she left. The process continues until mid-June, when remaining vacant positions are either advertised externally to teachers outside of the district, or are temporarily filled with long-term occasional positions until mid-September when more accurate enrolment numbers are known, and staff numbers adjusted accordingly. Jules and Karl indicated that by mid-June, they had vacant positions with no applicants. In Jules’ and Karl’s schools, they had had no applicants for the past two successive postings. Both work in schools communities with large numbers of newcomers to Canada where students arrive with low social capital, and live on subsistence incomes. Jules and Karl speculate that these factors influence the school’s desirability for teachers, which may account for the low number of teacher applicants. Jules’ previous school offered a French immersion program, and there, too, Jules describes instances where teaching positions had few applicants due in part to the required qualifications, and the growth of the program due to increasing demand. In
cases where teacher applicants are still largely from the dominant White culture, teacher availability mitigates against hiring teachers specifically from diverse backgrounds. Principals raised the point of compromising their hiring decisions under pressure to fill vacant positions. As Leo states:

I think the compromise would come more from fewer candidates and having to just pick someone because you know there’s not anyone else out there who’s going to apply, than just for the sake of diversity.

Leo is describing circumstances where he feels the pressure to hire a teacher knowing that it is unlikely one from a diverse background will apply later on. Teacher diversity loses out against other hiring criteria in situations of high demand and low supply where required qualifications and ready availability influence the selection decision most.

Both opportunity to hire, and availability of teachers from diverse backgrounds are seen as necessary conditions in principals’ discourse on hiring for diversity. These conditions are not unique to teacher hiring, and seem self-evident. For them to emerge during these interviews, however, may indicate that principals are either genuinely frustrated in their desires to diversify the teaching staff at their schools, or accept that efforts to do so are often at the mercy of pre-determined hiring procedures and other circumstances beyond their control.

5.3 Diversity as a stand-alone construct

During the interviews, principals were asked to comment on PPM 119/13, particularly the statement: “The board’s workforce should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board’s workforce should also be capable of understanding and
responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board’s jurisdiction” (p. 5). Their responses generated wide-ranging opinion, and surfaced the notion of identity as a teacher trait, not only a personal trait. In other words, is there a point at which professional qualities (knowledge and skill) intersect with personal traits (e.g. gender) to the extent where the personal trait augments the professional ones, thereby improving a teacher’s employability? The increasing use of identity as a variable in describing social behaviours reflects the complex and nuanced understanding of identity (Abdelal, Herrar, Johnston & Martin, 2001) and is one of the foundational arguments of the role-model hypothesis – that features of a teacher’s personal identity are integrated into their palette of professional attributes, and serve to improve their capacity to accomplish their work, especially in some school contexts (with students like them) and arguably in all contexts. The PPM 119 statement also drew questions about the definition of diversity itself, and criticism about the narrow, visibility-based definition implied in the policy.

It is necessary, then, to provide context for the use of the term ‘diversity’ as used in principal interviews. Hoffman (1997) provides a summary of the diversity discourse widely adopted in the educational arena. First, diversity refers to groups of people transplanted into an environment where their ways of being different, once noticed, result in reduced status vis à vis the existing dominant group. The group’s degree of power loss may be a function of longstanding historical patterns as in the case of African-Americans and First Nation Canadians, or a more recent phenomenon such as the case for Muslims in the post 9-11 era. This notion of diversity tends to reflect only visible differences between groups, and assumes that beneath the superficial differences lay universal
elements of sameness that provide the motivation to tolerate and/or accept the cultural, racial, linguistic, religious and other differences that define us. This notion of diversity was expressed clearly during principal interviews as “value-added” – that teacher diversity is perceived as supplemental to desired teacher qualities and only considered once genuine teacher quality is secured.

Hoffman (1997) identifies an opposing notion of diversity that also emerges in education discourse on diversity. Rather than describing diversity as an external layer of difference overlaying a core of similarity, this second perspective positions differences between people as mutually exclusive and limits the ability of one group to understand and appreciate the other (p. 380). It is this conceptualization of diversity that underscores the call for students from one ethno-racial group to be taught by teachers of the same group – a perspective echoed in the writings of Villegas & Davis, 2007; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; King, 1993; Sleeter & Thao, 2007; and others. Both perspectives on diversity are reflected in education hiring policies such as PPM 119/13 – that visibly different student populations have been underserved in public education as evidenced in persistent achievement gaps between groups, and that the lack of teachers reflective of such groups may have been a contributing factor that needs redress.

A number of principals expressed concern over the policy’s implication that the school board’s efforts to diversify the workforce should focus on dimensions of diversity that are readily visible, such as race, gender, and possibly religion if expressed through dress, so that “students, parents and community members are able to see themselves represented” (PPM 119/13, p. 5). Doreen was clear in her critique:
I want to make sure that when we think of diversity. . .that we represent all facets of life, regardless of colour. Diversity to me is not just colour. In fact, it’s not colour at all. I think there are some really wrong statements about diversity meaning colour. I think it’s a miniscule and dangerous way to look at getting an eclectic group of people [teachers]. You need to look at diversity in terms of what people bring to the table, [their] experiences.

DJ – Have you felt that colour is the definition and understanding of diversity?

Doreen – Yes, absolutely.

Doreen’s commentary was empassioned, and she shared an experience where she felt her hiring decisions were being monitored by her supervisor. Her supervisor encouraged her to hire members of the Black community specifically. Doreen envisioned for her school a learning community that included teachers of all identities. Doreen identified a tension between her perception of her supervisor’s limited race-defined description of diversity against her own more multi-dimensional view of diversity. Doreen clarifies her point about the use of the expression in PPM 119, “see themselves represented,” this way:

The teacher can look like [a student] but not represent them at all. The power is not only about the colour, the gender or the culture. Those things have power, true. But the ultimate power is about the identity and the connection it allows between kids and teachers.

Charles, too, challenged the manner in which the policy suggests that visible elements of diversity seem to outrank those less visible markers. His example stems from his experience as principal of a rural school, then of one in an urban setting. “[for] students in an urban setting, it’s very different than for students in a rural setting. It’s [students seeing themselves represented] more about awareness of what’s required to help students feel like they’re part of the school – it may be cultural, or environmental”.

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By ‘environmental’, Charles is referring to elements of a student’s life circumstances being reflected in the school that may not be borne of a student’s cultural heritage. Charles shares an example of students seeing themselves, or their lifestyles, reflected in the school. In an urban setting, the scheduling of extra-curricular activities after school is typical, and does not present insurmountable obstacles to student participation. In a rural school, however, the fact that students live considerable distances from school, and rely on school buses for transit, requires that teachers factor this into school operations just as teachers would appreciate the need to accommodate and support cultural events for students. Charles provided another example related to socio-economic differences. In his experience in rural schools, teachers had to appreciate and understand the impact of poverty, often a salient difference that teenagers work hard to keep invisible. Teachers do not need to ‘represent’ poverty, but may be hired because of their experiences in low-income communities and their efforts to minimize the largely negative effects poverty brings to students (Flessa, 2007).

In reflecting on PPM 119/13, several principals expressed agreement with the need to hire teachers who represent and understand the community they serve. As seen in the survey, 81% agreed with the PPM’s claim. However, principals’ agreement was tempered with one condition. While teacher diversity is considered an asset, particularly if the teacher’s difference reflects the students’ difference (e.g. ethno-racial identity, or languages spoken), it is only considered an asset if the teacher’s traits and competencies are of high caliber and already worthy of hire. In this sense, diversity was described as an additional feature, and would only influence a hiring decision if other professional competencies were intact, but would not be considered if the teacher’s skills were
substandard in any way. For instance, when asked how diversity factors into hiring decisions, Barb states, “When you’re weighing diversity versus competency and skill set, and trying to put the [teacher] team together, that becomes a pretty big question”. In this case, Barb clearly separates diversity from her conception of teacher quality. She also introduces the idea of fit, one argued by Cranston (2012) and Liu & Johnson (2006) as a consideration in teacher selection. Barb is concerned about person-group fit (Kristof-Brown, 2005) – that apart from a teacher’s assets professionally or personally, the principal must consider how the new hire will complement an existing team.

Anna’s description further distanced diversity traits from teacher competencies. Anna advocated for hiring processes that strip away any identifying information about candidates until the interview. In Anna’s view, screening tools should be

“transparent, and criteria-based. . . diversity does not, however, factor into these posted criteria. . . . If you have two people who are absolutely equal, and then the next step is that one of them can reflect the community as well, that’s value added. But if you’re hiring to reflect the community and they’re not the best teacher, then I think you’ve made a mistake, and I’ve seen that happen.”

Here, Anna conceptualizes teacher quality as identity-free, that one’s ethnicity, race, religion, gender, culture or sexual identities are not central to what a highly competent teacher is, or may have shaped how teachers gained the competencies they possess.

Blackmore (2010) attributes this perspective to White dominance in Western educational leadership, and the neo-liberal values that influence their thinking. White school leaders (all those who volunteered to be interviewed in the present study) are unlikely to appreciate the privileged role their Whiteness has played (Bicower, 2009), and are therefore unlikely to attribute others’ racial identity as a potential influence in their life
attainments (Jensen, 2005). Variations on the mutual exclusivity of diversity and teacher competence were also expressed by Deb and Jules:

Deb – I prefer to hire the person I think demonstrates the skill set that I want for a teacher in my school. I don’t want someone who has a skill set in, perhaps program planning, but is weak in other areas but represents the diversity of the population I need. I really want to hire the best person for the job.

Jules – If we had 2 exemplary candidates in all aspects and were considering both people and very, very similar in what they brought, then it [diversity] might be an additional thing. For example, this one speaks Punjabi; this one doesn’t. With all things else being equal, it might be a good idea to hire the Punjabi teacher….I think diversity comes after because sometimes we’ve had 10 applicants, and 2 were male, and a few spoke different languages and we thought this looks promising – we have quite a range of people here. If one of the male or language speakers blows the interview, there’s no way (interviewee’s emphasis) we’re going to consider either of those candidates. So it’s [diversity] more a secondary consideration than a primary one.”

Two notions surface from these commentaries. First, the definition of the best person for the job can clearly exist outside the traits that often describe diversity. Second, dimensions of diversity can constitute reasons to exclude a teacher being hired. In Jules’ example, dimensions such as gender or languages spoken would never override shortfalls in teacher quality and competence as determined through an interview and follow-up references. By comparison, majority teachers, mainly White females, are judged only by the competencies they demonstrate during an interview thereby setting up a type of double standard for evaluating teacher quality (Bicower, 2009). When competing for jobs, teachers from diverse backgrounds must first reach the minimum threshold of excellence based on presumably identity-neutral traits such as
professionalism and pedagogical knowledge, and then surpass that threshold by means of value-added traits such as ethno-racial or linguistic similarity to the student population, before being considered viable candidates.

5.4 Dissonance

As the conversations with principals continued, dissonance emerged as a theme. On an intellectual level, most principals acknowledged the advantages of having a diverse teacher workforce. At the same time, principals were conflicted by the potential implications of increasing teacher diversity for its own sake within their individual school contexts. While some were clear in their ‘quality first, diversity second’ stance on hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, all principals interviewed agreed with the claims made about the advantages for students in seeing themselves represented by the adults in the school. Principals saw strong advantages particularly in recruiting teachers who speak the native languages of students, and who provide gender and racial role models. Advantages were also noted in establishing stronger working relationships with parents if teachers can assist in overcoming linguistic or cultural barriers parents may find, and for understanding ethno-racial perspectives that may be misunderstood by teachers from the dominant racial group. Charles and Anna, both secondary principals, noted that having teachers whose ethno-cultural background represents that of students helped students navigate social situations where one group’s ethno-cultural beliefs interface with Canadian school traditions, such as school dances.

Charles – When you hired new teachers, you could immediately see that if someone [the new teacher] wore a hijab, they [students] would migrate naturally to someone else [a teacher] wearing a hijab.
Anna – I have had kids ask “can we ask another teacher to volunteer to be a rep on this committee because she’s South Asian, and because she’s going to understand when we want things around dances and proms – she’s going to get it.” Supporting that request added a whole new level by honouring their South Asian traditions in our celebrations. We frankly mightn’t have understood if we had only Anglo teachers on the committee.

What Charles and Anna describe here is a pattern of accommodating minoritized students as they learn about Canadian schools and what happens there. Having teachers on hand who are able to assist students in this transition, possibly teachers who have themselves lived through this phase as newcomers is an advantage. These examples also illustrate these two principals’ recognition that teachers like them were not identified by students as helpful mediators in negotiating mainstream Canadian high schools. The dance example also suggests that hiring diverse teachers had positive, unintended side effects for students, but that these side effects were not serious considerations when hiring the South Asian teachers originally, especially given Anna’s unwavering stance earlier about teacher identity having little to no role in hiring decisions.

The sense of dissonance emerges as principals recount numerous experiences that acknowledge the importance of having a diverse teaching staff, as intended by PPM 119/13, but make equally clear their position on choosing such teachers only after identity-neutral teacher qualities are intact. Blackmore (2010) describes such tensions as “the other within” (p. 45), a phenomenon peculiar to those in White-dominated positions of power and authority. While gains have been made in recognizing the influence of identity dimensions for non-members of the privileged group, (e.g. women, members of minoritized groups, members of the LGBTQ community), less attention has been paid to
the influence of Whiteness by those identified as White. What Blackmore calls “normative Whiteness” (p. 45) has left educational leaders struggling to see how recognizing and valuing alternative understandings and practices in culturally diverse contexts is a necessary condition to effect greater equity in schools. This may leave principals unable to reconcile their desire to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds with the acknowledged limits they place on its value.

When initially asked in the survey about the validity of claims that support hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, principals rated one or more of such claims as important. These included: 1) breaking down historic power inequities (lowest rating 2.3/4); 2) overcoming language barriers; 3) mirroring Canadian multiculturalism; 4) challenging stereotypes; 5) increasing parent/guardian involvement; 6) overcoming cultural differences; 7) closing achievement gap; 8) improving students’ feelings of security; 9) building a more accepting environment; 10) providing role models for minoritized students; 11) having all students feel included (highest rating 3.4/4, see also Appendix A). In conversation, however, several principals added reservations to their agreement:

Ken - I think diversity on staff is important, but I’ve encountered staff who dispute it.

Deb – I agree with the second language claim, but we also have interpreters so there are ways around that. I find it difficult that these claims are so strongly held when the mechanisms/processes to make it happen aren’t in place, and may never be. They’ll just remain claims.
Jules – the role-modeling claim, yes. And the second language claim, yes. I’m not convinced about gender though. Diversifying the staff is more to support all kids, not just some.

Jacob – I agree with all the claims, especially in cases where students are at risk. I’m not sure that the racial match claim is what makes the entire difference. It may help repair relationship damage as a starting point, though.

Karl – yes, especially the claim about second languages. But I’m cautious about one language speaker representing all speakers. Commonalities of lived experience are a stronger connection.

Anna – I agree with the claims as they support extra-curricular involvement at the school, but don’t think kids do any better academically with ‘value-added’ diversity.

Barb – Agreement with claims? That’s a loaded question. I’ve seen the role-modeling claim strong regarding gender, especially for boys with male teachers, or like-race matched teachers and students. I’d say this claim seems strongest, though, when it’s not the norm.

Doreen – I agree with all the claims, provided diversity means the full range of human qualities that people share, as well as those learned through culture. I think that visible representation, while possibly a starting point, soon melts away if other connections between kids and teachers aren’t forged.

Themes emerge within the responses to this particular question. Eight of the ten principals identified some area of caution in agreeing with claims supporting diversity in the teacher workforce. While role-modeling and second language facilitation were generally supported, even these had detractors (Deb, Jacob and Karl). But no principal gave unqualified support to these claims outright as mirrored in the broader response to this question in the survey. A mean score of 2.9 out of 4 indicated a ranking of “slightly
important”. In conversation, principals’ reticence to agree unreservedly with these claims was evidenced in the pause time many took before responding at all. Doreen’s response is interesting – she agrees the claims are important, then adds a proviso “provided diversity means the full range of human qualities humans share”. Her statement reiterates diversity as a stand-alone construct discussed earlier – that teacher diversity is valued but has its limits. Jacob, however, expressed some frustration with the ongoing debate around the need for teacher diversity. Jacob’s disappointment in the need for PPM119/13 follows:

There’s something inherently wrong when a person who wants to be in education cannot understand or appreciate why having that kind of environment and a diverse teaching staff is important. And how do you get at that? Everything that matters isn’t measurable, and everything that’s measurable doesn’t always count. It comes to having enough information about that person, about what they represent, and what their broad philosophy is, how they are as a human being, their acts of service, and their professional learning, to understand why they want to be in a classroom.

This is not to say that Jacob, or any principals in this study, support teacher diversity for the sake of political expedience. On the contrary, principals puzzled over the claims that support teacher diversity, so much so that their responses to this particular question represented impassioned analysis of their experience with students and teachers, and more importantly, the meaning of diversity itself.

A critical perspective on the term diversity, and how a diverse teacher workforce is particularly beneficial to students like them, indicates a degree of cognitive dissonance for principals between the intuitive good in teachers representing either the microcosm of a school community or the macrocosm of society, and the central role principals
themselves play in affecting the hiring decisions that would bring about a more diverse teacher workforce.

**5.5 Problems with process**

The final stages of the interviews with principals focused discussion on their perspectives on increasing teacher diversity at their schools or in the district generally, their experiences at hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, and their thoughts on ways to improve the hiring process.

In District A, the process for hiring teachers has many elements and varies slightly by teacher group. The section above, describing the effects of Regulation 274/12, outlines the process involved in recruiting and hiring occasional teachers where a candidate’s seniority with the district is a required point of consideration. The following account will describe the steps in hiring teachers unaffected by Regulation 274, i.e.: the internal hiring of teachers already employed by the district who are applying for positions in other schools in the district. With approximately 9,000 elementary and 6,000 secondary teachers in District A, and growing, the number of hiring opportunities stemming from this internal process is in the hundreds, with an additional 400 new hires annually since 2010 (personal correspondence, Human Resources Manager, District A, 2014). The hiring process is outlined in the District’s collective agreements with teacher federations, and as such, each step requires consistent compliance.

Positions are advertised within the district with minimal information. Teacher applicants know only the name of the school, the name of the principal, contact information, the job assignment, and the job proportion (e.g. full time, part time). The
teacher may choose to investigate additional information about the school as desired. If
the teacher is interested in a particular position, then he/she submits a standard resume
and proof of qualifications to the school. The resume contains no self-identification
information other than the candidate’s name. The principal may then screen applications
and shortlist a minimum of 5 candidates to be interviewed.

During the interview, the interview team asks questions of its own choosing, rates
responses according to a scoring scale, views a candidate’s most recent performance
appraisal report, and collects written consent for the candidate’s references to be
contacted. Principals are obliged to contact a minimum of two references, and are
required to ask 4 standard reference questions. The principal may ask additional
questions, and is encouraged to ask questions that require the referee to rate the
candidate’s performance on a scale designed by the principal. Information shared during
reference calls, combined with the impressions left by the applicant during the interview,
constitute the major information sources upon which the principal makes a decision to
either hire one of the teachers interviewed, or to repost the job.

With this process well understood by principals interviewed for this study, they
were asked how they go about increasing teacher diversity at their schools. One
principal’s single-word answer underscored the multi-faceted nature of diversifying
teachers at his school: “Strategically”. In this case, the principal had experience facing
covered resistance to previous efforts to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds. The
resistance was largely community-based but quietly supported by teachers in a school
with only very recent changes to student demographics after a long history of a White,
Anglo-Canadian dominant culture. Ken is sensitive to the risk of hiring a teacher into an
unwelcoming staff and community, and has had to weigh the potential disadvantages for the teacher against his beliefs that students would benefit from such a change:

Ken - If I wanted to make a positive impact and have that person accepted on staff, I would probably target the intermediate [grades 7 and 8] area. I think there’s a hierarchy in the school: the higher the grade level you teach, the more authority you have. I think that would lend authority to the person [new teacher] and given them opportunities to organize things like graduation that are community-wide, where parents have a lot of contact and can see them as a positive representative of the school.

Ken goes on to describe other high-status positions in the school, especially those where many students have contact with the teacher, as the strategic position to advertise, then aim to hire a teacher from a diverse background.

Three of ten principals responded with versions of “I don’t know” when asked how they would go about increasing diversity in their schools. This candid reflection on the question as they see it may represent the perceived shortcomings in the current process to facilitate reaching diversification goals. Dan followed up with “the only way is to blatantly discriminate in favour of diverse groups”. This comment is in reference to the notion of reverse discrimination or affirmative action, a strategy used in the past to facilitate hiring members from minoritized groups, e.g. women, into positions where they had been historically underrepresented, e.g., school administration. Reference to a political strategy such as affirmative action may also underlie a genuine limit to principals’ ability to proceed with a process whose conceptual underpinnings they still find unconvincing. As noted above, principals in this study are reserved both in their beliefs about the payoffs of a diverse teacher workforce, and in using teacher diversity as
a hiring criterion. It stands to reason, therefore, that without these convictions, principals would look to external processes such as hiring policy directives to bring about changes to their hiring practices.

Anna offered, “if you go about hiring the way I do, you hope to end up with a strong pool of candidates, any of which would do well, and then offer the job based on value-added, which could include diversity. But if the pool [screening process] generates White females, then I go with a White female”. Both Anna and Dan offered strong opposition to the implications of PPM 119/13, and were confident that dimensions of diversity, and any benefits they may offer to students, lay outside their understanding of teacher competence. However, Leo, unsure how to go about diversifying teaching staff at his school, genuinely believed in the spirit of PPM 119/13, but recognized two drawbacks in the process. First, in order that teachers are hired to reflect students and the community, it is important to know more information about community identities. Similarly, knowing teacher identity/ies is critical, but difficult to ascertain under current hiring conditions. To compensate, Leo states: “I’ve become more curious about finding out about the cultural groups that I’m not part of. I ask lots of questions. I don’t always get answers I understand, but at least I ask. Otherwise, I’m guessing most of the time.”

Here Leo recalled his efforts to learning more about cultural groups in his schools following experiences where such knowledge would have been useful. In several cases, names of teachers on resumes were unfamiliar, so he assumed a gender and racial identity that turned out not to be the case. Because the hiring procedures in the district do not include demographic information about teacher applicants, Leo realized he would need to learn ways to glean this information from application forms/resumes some other way.
One strategy included inquiring about applicants’ names not of European origin to better understand the possible ethno-racial and/or gender identities their names sometimes reveal. Leo was committed to include teacher diversity as a hiring consideration, so had to complement the district’s hiring process to accomplish this goal. His alternative, as he says, was to merely guess. Leo’s example reflects Mason & Schroeder’s assertion that principals are disadvantaged by the lack of “factual, objective, or predictive teaching information about a candidate on which to make a decision” (2010, p. 188).

Several other principals relied on some type of unofficial applicant screening in an attempt to interview diverse applicants. In the absence of teacher self-identification, using applicants’ names is one, albeit unreliable, strategy to screen for ethno-racial or even gender identity, in order to diversify the list of applicants to be interviewed. Jacob stated:

> It’s hard. You can’t really tell by a name, and that may be all you have to go on from paperwork. A name won’t tell you who’s going to cross the threshold. In the end, it’s about trying to find the person on paper that you think you’d like to engage in conversation and see where it leads.

Jacob is responding directly to the question, “How do you go about hiring diverse teachers?” His first reaction is that the process is difficult, then qualifies the statement by describing a process whereby the principal must rationalize the information documented for a job application into a reason to invite the applicant for an interview. Jacob holds little faith in the documentation itself in providing a window into the teacher’s potential, so uses it as a mid-step in getting to the more telling phase of the process – the interview itself. Jacob relies more heavily on his ability to ascertain the teacher’s overall
competencies through conversation which he trusts will lead to the next step – following up with reference calls.

Other principals relied on scanning resumes for information teachers have highlighted in their applications in order to shortlist diverse candidates for an interview. Experience working with diverse student populations, participation in groups and events that are identity-positive (e.g. gay-straight alliances, Asian Heritage, Black History, Franco-ontarien celebrations) led principals to believe such applicants possess an accepting mindset and the capacity to appreciate difference. As Jacob said, “if you have those [qualities], it may not matter what a teacher’s identity is anyway.” That said, Jules concluded that simply reviewing resumes for clues is

“a start, but a poor start. It’s a very tough thing to do without talking to the candidate. So you screen to interview 5 [applicants], but the screening tool is poor, then you may be interviewing folks that are not what you wanted, and missing folks that were victims of a poor tool. And to hire for diversity, you really have to be clear what you want, what the school needs, and why.”

Jules’ last sentence reiterates the need for clarity about the purpose in selecting the right candidates to be interviewed, and ultimately hired. But the statement also reflects a certain risk he sees in the screening process; one made more critical when hiring for diversity in particular. Jules illustrates this point with an account where he believed a male teacher would be an asset on an all-female staff. He believed a male teacher would be beneficial to certain students and may complement the staff in providing a missing perspective on school decisions and operations. As such, Jules deliberately sought male applicants but was disappointed in the outcomes of the interviews for these teachers so hired none of them. In his words, Jules “missed out” on
other candidates by using a specific screening criterion. Experiences like this have confirmed Jules’ stance that hiring for diversity is a consideration “when all things are equal... but not when they aren’t”.

Screening applicants for interviews is a new element in this district’s hiring process. Until 2013, elementary principals were required to interview all candidates applying for positions provided the teacher held the necessary qualifications. As such, principals are unaccustomed to screening teachers, and have complete discretion in generating their own screening criteria. District A currently uses an English language screening tool for all applicants applying from outside the district, but given the shrinking number of such opportunities, most interviews do not include the use of language screening. Nonetheless, principals in this study identified English language evaluation outcomes as inconsistent. Leo and Barb, both principals in schools with a high proportion of English language learners and interested in recruiting teachers who speak the languages of the community, expressed “significant mismatches between oral and written language skills” (Barb). Leo described frustration with the language evaluation process in particular, which is conducted by the interviewers during the interview itself:

Leo - I think that it [the language screening process] needs to be fair to the candidate. We’re checking language while people are speaking; we’re trying to listen for content; we’re trying to engage. I think it would be fairer to tape someone’s interview and then actually look at their language, and then look at their answers. When I try to give feedback to a candidate and they have language errors, then I’m reluctant to do that unless I can be very specific in the error. It’s not fair.
Leo’s concern with fairness reflects a sense of accountability he feels in making hiring decisions as he does. He suggests that evaluating a teacher’s English language skills during the interview is a procedural weakness that could lead to unfair advantage for native English speakers. Should Leo’s evaluation of a teacher’s language skills be unfavourable, he knows the teacher will not be hired. As such, he must document sufficient details about this evaluation in order to provide the applicant with meaningful feedback. He is uneasy about the process that requires him to render such an evaluation while simultaneously engaging in an interview. This process detracts from the interviewer’s attention to the content of the interview putting native English speakers at an obvious advantage, and requiring an additional level of complexity in considering non-native English speakers (often members of a minoritized group). In this case, Leo struggles with the conflict between recruiting teachers with core competencies such as professional conduct, which would include effective communication skills (Harris et al., 2010) and his desire to aptly justify his tolerance threshold for such skills under evaluation conditions that may unfairly reflect either his ability to account for a teacher’s communication skills, or the teacher’s competence in English per se6.

The notion of using a screening tool that includes teacher self-identification prompted wide-ranging opinion. Anna was clear that “I don’t see why you’d ever need that information and I wouldn’t have a problem if people took names off [the application/resume] as well because I want to go only by criteria in order to get to the interview.” Jacob believed that “voluntary self-identification would help, but it would be

6 The district’s English language assessment protocol for external teacher applicants is currently under review.
equally helpful if we were able to describe our student population in the job posting”. This may draw candidates who feel they affiliate strongly with certain groups, so more diverse candidates would apply”. More principals, however, were cautious in their support of self-identification. Their apprehensions were multi-faceted. For some, such as Jacob, self-identification by teachers could be helpful for principals during the hiring process because “the more information people have, the better decision they can make”. Jacob’s statement concurs with Mason and Schroeder’s (2010) observation that low cost data collection methods, such as previewing resumes, generally yields low validity information about applicants, but seem to be a popular means to screen large numbers of job applicants. Charles, like Karl, also thought it could be helpful for principals if applicants provided self-identification information but worried about possible tensions for the teacher:

Charles: I think we’re at a point where if I were going to self-identify, I might be a little bit reluctant to put it in there [a resume] because you don’t know how people will respond once they see it. I think as we become better informed and educated as adults then I think we may get past that so people would feel more comfortable and actually include it.

Karl: Self-identification is a very sensitive question for folks who may feel that [it] could be a stumbling block to being hired if people are not being accepting and truly looking for diversity.

Charles and Karl were genuine in stating that self-identification may be a point of discomfort, but both claimed the discomfort would be borne by teacher applicants. Making such a claim as principals, however, may signal a degree of discomfort on their
own part especially since both implied self-identification could contribute to a teacher not being hired “if people [principals] are not accepting and truly looking for diversity”. As hiring decisions remain largely up to principals, the discomfort may rest with the potential requirement to defend hiring decisions when self-identification data eventually become readily available for analysis, information that is currently difficult to obtain and anecdotal in nature.

While District A is currently contemplating an employee census where members of all employee groups would be invited to disclose elements of their identity such as race, principals interviewed had mixed and strong views on how such an exercise would help to promote greater teacher diversity (see Chapter 7). Phillips, Rothbard & Dumas (2009) propose that in cases where job security is strong, individuals are more inclined to disclose confirming information about one’s status; where security is weak, such as with teachers seeking a new job, identity status information may be less forthcoming. These researchers add that identity information, in particular less visible forms of identity, can be problematic in contexts where various identities are not seen as equal, and create “status distance” (p. 13) between members of identity groups. As such, teachers seeking positions at a different school may be willing to provide identity information, whereas teachers applying for their first position in the district may be disinclined to do so. If true, such a pattern of identity disclosure may help with teacher diversification at an individual school, but may not significantly increase workforce diversity within the entire district.

Although Jules recognized potential advantages for principals if applicants were to provide self-identifying information, especially in cases where the existing school staff
comprised little diversity, he also expressed concern that teachers not “go through the process feeling that they got the job because . . .[of their identity]. Jules admits that his cautious perspective stems from experiences where dimensions of diversity, in his case, the ability to speak multiple languages, weighed too heavily into hiring decisions and student learning was later compromised. Jules recounts an experience where, in an effort to improve parent involvement and access in a school with a high proportion of newcomers to Canada, he specifically sought teachers who spoke the languages of the parent community and weighed this factor heavily in his decision-making. Jules believed that he could provide the necessary support to teachers should they demonstrate minor shortcomings with their pedagogical knowledge and practice – a reasonable compromise for improving the “dismal” (Jules’ description) parent-school connection. In the end, Jules regretted this approach stating that while these teachers facilitated better communication with a few parents as they came to know the school, their shortcomings in classroom practice and pedagogy negatively affected students daily, a compromise not worth repeating. To his credit, Jules admitted that it is very difficult to see immediate positive outcomes in a domain as ill-defined as parent involvement but easy, and more troubling, to consistently witness the negative outcomes of poor teaching.

The final recommendation by principals to improve their ability to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds was the notion of timing. Timing was particularly troublesome for principals with many positions to fill since the interval between advertising a position and making a hiring decision is the same regardless of the number of positions to be filled. Several of the principals interviewed have been in schools with similar hiring challenges; Barb and Doreen had over 25 positions to fill in the 2013-2014
academic year within 3 months, the same timeframe allowed Ken, who had one position. In such circumstances, principals conduct shorter interviews, as little as 20 minutes allotted per candidate in order to allow time to gather references and make final decisions. Doreen said, “I often wish I could call applicants back to talk further if I think of more questions, maybe just an informal chat. But protocol doesn’t allow it, and the time crunch makes it not feasible anyway.”

5.6 Summary

Principals who volunteered to be interviewed shared openly their perspectives on hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. All had considerable experience hiring teachers: from hiring teachers to across-district consultative positions to hiring an entire staff for a new school. Transcripts of their interviews revealed four key themes. First, the opportunity to hire teachers, and teacher availability are important necessary conditions in any strategy aimed at augmenting minortized teachers in the workforce. One principal noted that in a period of declining enrolment in Ontario, many districts have little opportunity to hire teachers leaving the effects of diversity policies at a standstill. Second, principal discourse described diversity as a construct outside the realm of teacher quality. As seen in the survey findings, teacher qualities that strongly influence hiring decisions do not include dimensions of diversity. This finding was reinforced during principal interviews as they described diversity as a hiring factor considered only after teacher competence has been confirmed. Third, principals expressed degrees of dissonance between their beliefs in teacher diversity in general and their reserve in hiring a teacher from a diverse background under certain conditions. These conditions included the lack of diversity in the school community, lack of
confidence in the teacher’s demonstrated competence, discomfort with perceived political pressure to favour diverse teachers, and lack of evidence suggesting that hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds improves schooling outcomes for students. Lastly, principals identified a number of challenges with hiring processes and procedures that mitigate against increasing teacher diversity. Of particular note was principals’ frustration with Regulation 274/12 that requires principals to first consider teacher experience when making hiring decisions. It was argued that younger teachers are more representative of District A’s diverse population and as such, the Regulation is further slowing efforts to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds.
Chapter 6

How Principals Understand Diversity and Who Gets Hired

This chapter discusses the findings of this study in light of the two intersecting components of the conceptual framework guiding it: principals’ understandings of diversity and the process they use to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds. It concludes with a discussion of a very recent hiring policy in District A that was introduced coincident with the data collection for this work.

6.1 Understanding diversity

Diversity has become an increasingly prominent sub-topic in the vast literature on school leadership (Ryan, 2007; Blackmore, 2006). Indeed, research in both diversity and leadership arenas show notable conceptual overlap. In writing about recent educational reforms, Leithwood (2006) notes, “most initiatives that fly the restructuring banner advocate strategies for altering power relationships” (p. 1), a comment akin to Zanoni and Janssens’ summary of diversity as a concept reflective of power relations and social construction (2004). And like leadership generally, the efforts required to bring about the changes leading to more democratic distribution of power and a climate of genuine inclusion require persistence and time. A number of challenges slow the progress towards greater diversity in schools. As discussed in Chapter 2, one is the variation among school leaders in their conceptualization of diversity. Another is the management of diversity, which implies that diversity is a problem that requires a solution, and that the solution should operate within known system parameters (Morrison, Lumby & Sood,
Diversity management is a call to action (Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000) and in schools, usually responds to policy directive prompts and follows the same process as other job components managed by school leaders. The problem is analyzed, solutions generated, resources acquired, and results tracked. Despite persistence (policy reviews, professional development, research, structural reform, greater public accountability) and time (an entire generation), two key components in diversity management, student achievement and teacher diversity, have shown little change (Dei, 2003). First, specific groups of students, identifiable by race, gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity, continue to underachieve in school clearly not benefiting from diversity management efforts (Howard, 2010; TDSB 2006). The second is the diversification of school leaders and teachers as a key strategy in developing more inclusive learning environments for all students, but in particular for those historically marginalized (Ryan, 2007). If improving outcomes for disadvantaged students is believed to be function of a diversified workforce in education, it is important to investigate the strength of this belief and its impact on the rate of teacher diversification.

Ely and Thomas (2000) argue that differences in conceptual beliefs between those who manage diversity may account for the mixed reviews in the literature on the advantages of diverse workforces (Fiedler, 1966; Ruhe and Eatman, 1977; Watson, Kumar, and Michaelson, 1993; Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991; Fiedler, Meuwese, and Oonk, 1961; Shaw, 1983; Tsui, Egan, & O’Reilly, 1992). Their study of three mid-sized professional services firms, each with solid track records for recruiting and retaining a
diverse workforce, revealed that beliefs about diversity influenced the many governance functions within the firms.

Three general conceptualizations were noted. First, issues principally relating to *discrimination and fairness*\(^7\) constituted one such conceptualization. It was marked chiefly by efforts to increase representation of different cultural groups within the firm. Little attention beyond increasing representation was given to integrating these employees’ cultural differences into the day-to-day operation of the firm, however. Employees did not perceive decision-making power to be evenly distributed across the firm, nor did they report high degrees of feeling respected and included. In the end, employees felt that despite efforts to increase cultural diversity, the insights and skills of non-White employees were not maximized and the firm’s effectiveness was compromised.

The second conceptualization of diversity centered primarily on issues of *access and legitimacy*\(^8\). Here diversity was perceived to have a direct link with the firm’s ability to access a broader client base and to provide better client service. In this case, cultural difference was valued, but only to the extent that it improved client contact. As such, front line employee groups were more diverse than upper management causing an obvious power imbalance within the firm and subsequent questioning on the part of front line employees as to their relative value within the firm. Despite these shortcomings, the employee diversification strategy was effective, that is, the firm was rapidly expanding its

\(^7\) Ely and Thomas’ term

\(^8\) Ely and Thomas’ term
client base. Employees remarked, however, that the firm’s strategy was not open for discussion that in practice led to muted tension between upper management and front line workers.

A third conceptualization of diversity was observed and focused on issues relating to *integration and learning* ⁹ within the firm. This understanding of diversity focused not on increasing representation from diverse groups in the overall workforce, or on increasing it among specific employee groups to optimize productivity, but rather on enhancing the overall core work of the firm and the processes it used to accomplish that work. What separated this understanding of diversity from the other two was a significant commitment across employee groups to learn about the cultural diversity of their client base; the open discussion about conflicts arising from culturally different perspectives among staff members; and a strategic increase in cultural diversity within employee groups that traditionally hold more power, such as upper management. Not surprisingly, those seeing this conceptualization played out in their organization believed diversity to be a positive influence in their organization or department. It must be noted here that Ely and Thomas found evidence of each conceptualization of diversity in all three firms to varying degrees and that no single firm conceptualized diversity uniformly among its employees. They did, however, draw links between the degree of the firm’s effectiveness and the extent to which the firm subscribed to one fundamental understanding of diversity over another.

How employers understand diversity, then, is reflected in the processes used to

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⁹ Ely and Thomas’ term
arrive at hiring decisions. In the current study, survey and interview data from principals in one Ontario school district have combined to add context to the relationship between principals’ views about diversity, and how these views shape their hiring practices. To accomplish this, principals identified the points at which the dimensions of a teacher’s diversity, in this case, their race/ethnicity, gender, and linguistic diversity, became strong factors when considering whom to hire.

Using Lumby’s categories of understanding diversity (2009), principals in this study would appear to view diversity as somewhere between Entryist and Multicultural. Lumby (p. 442) describes this category range as follows:

1. The goals of the school district or of individuals are to increase representation of traditionally unrepresented groups, or to work towards building an inclusive culture.
2. The differences between individuals are viewed as irrelevant, or as being viewed positively as an attribute of some.
3. Leaders’ values and practices tend to be homogenized and minimize individual difference, or are recognized as a potential organizational advantage only.
4. Attention to the effects of culture and discourse ranges from minimal to considerable.

The following section provides evidence from the present study to demonstrate principals’ views on diversity and their degree of similarity to Lumby’s categories of understanding.
6.2 Diversity and representation

It is a goal of Policy and Program Memorandum 119/13 to increase the number of teachers who represent the students and communities they serve such that “The board’s work force [should] reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board’s work force should also be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board’s jurisdiction” (p. 5). While the policy provides direction to further institute an inclusive culture in schools and districts, it includes workforce diversification as a necessary step in the process. In the present study, most principals indicated a desire to increase representation of teachers from diverse backgrounds. Eighty-one percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the spirit of promoting greater teacher diversity as stated in PPM 119/13, and principals rated “having all students feel included” as the most important reason to pursue hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. When asked if they encountered barriers in increasing teacher diversity at their schools, principals were readily able to identify such barriers, and were equally ready to provide suggestions that would reduce the barriers they perceived (Tables 4.9 and 4.10). Moreover, principals shared their frustration with low numbers of teachers from diverse backgrounds applying to their schools, and with the lack of opportunity to hire such teachers because of tight hiring timelines, lack of information, and lack of staff turnover. These findings reflect principals’ intentions and efforts that increasing the representation of teachers from diverse backgrounds is important, a perspective characterized by an Entryist conceptualization of diversity.
However, representing teachers from diverse backgrounds in the district’s workforce is not the same as transforming the culture of the district to value the diversity of those same teachers. Researchers caution that improving representation of minoritized groups has dominated the diversity discourse (Jonsen, Maznevski & Schneider, 2011), but is insufficient in achieving diversity goals (Hoffman, 1997). At best, it reinforces fixed views about the relationship between individual differences and the broader culture. These fixed views are reflected in the consistently low ranking of teacher diversity as an influential factor in hiring (Chapter 4), and the dissonance principals expressed as they attempt to resolve the perceived dilemma of hiring a teacher from a diverse background who, because of their diversity, becomes the best teacher for the job.

6.3 Diversity and difference

Lumby also suggests that the way principals view specific differences between individuals signals how they understand diversity generally. When differences are minimized, or considered noteworthy in few circumstances by some individuals, one’s understanding of diversity is evolving, but limited. Diversity understood this way retains categories of difference as a deficit, with value increasing as the difference diminishes. For example, a teacher who speaks many languages, but is not a native speaker of English, gains access to teaching positions as his/her English skills improve to the level consistent with an arbitrary standard, or where they are no longer a deficit. At this point, the language difference is not considered relevant when comparing language skills between teachers.

In several instances in this study, principals looked first for teacher qualities that they viewed as diversity-neutral, i.e. those traits that are unrelated to a teacher’s racial,
gender or linguistic identity, and the first priority when determining a teacher’s overall competence. Principals rationalized this strategy repeatedly as the best way to achieve their hiring goal - securing the best person for the job. Multiple analyses of principals’ low ranking of the importance of diversity against other hiring criteria (Tables 4.3; 4.4; 4.6; 4.7) clearly demonstrated their commitment to the strategy of, as Jules stated, “diversity matters after quality”. Among candidates of equally high caliber, principals then considered value-added differences such as race, gender, or the languages teachers spoke.

The belief that differences between teachers are relatively unimportant is reflected in other ways. First, when asked how useful self-identifying information would be when teachers apply for jobs, principals’ responses fluctuated widely. Deb responded:

No, actually I don’t [think self-identification would help]. I think if you wanted, you could look at someone’s name and make a guess as to what you think their diverse background might be.

Anna was more critical, claiming that not only is self-identifying information of little value, but it is undesirable because of the inaccurate assumptions and stereotyping it may provoke. “I just want to stick to the [job] criteria” was Anna’s way of dismissing information that marks ethno-racial, gender or other differences associated with diversity. In other words, some principals not only find categories of difference irrelevant, they would prefer that such differences could be somehow removed from the context of hiring altogether. Indeed, when asked to self-identify for the survey, nearly 25% of principals skipped the question, or responded “I choose not to answer”, further possible evidence of their belief in the irrelevance of their own individual differences, while at the same time,
revealing a puzzling contradiction - that differences in one’s identity have little or no place in the discourse of diversity itself.

Yet in other circumstances, some principals conceptualized diversity that includes partial recognition of the value of individual differences – a hallmark of Lumby’s Entryist category. Jacob commented that especially for students at risk, or if the parent-school relationship is damaged, it is important for students to see a teacher “like them”. Jacob recounted the story of a Black male student in grade 8 who struggled with many elements of the school experience, and for whom teachers had been generally unsuccessful in forging a meaningful relationship. Jacob placed the student with a Black female teacher, and while there was no instant improvement, Jacob noticed the interaction between the student and this teacher less antagonistic than with others. In this instance, Jacob was certain that the racial difference between the teacher and others he could have selected accounted, at least in part, for the student’s eventual improvement. This experience provided Jacob with evidence of context-specific relevancy of teacher diversity, evidence that over time may have shaped his perspective of diversity overall.

In a similar vein, Leo, Barb and Jules remarked on the value of kindergarten teachers who speak the language(s) of many of their incoming students. Both Barb and Jules were strong advocates of a “quality first; diversity second” approach to teacher hiring, but recognized, like Jacob, the teacher diversity advantage in specific contexts.

6.4 Diversity and homogenous values and practices

In the survey, the consistency of principals’ rankings of the importance of dimensions of diversity when hiring teachers reflects some degree of homogeneity in principals’ values and practices. Regardless of their experience as a principal (Table 4.3,
the number of interviews they normally conduct (Table 4.6), or even the diversity of their school community (Table 4.7), principals consistently ranked diversity as less important than other teacher traits when making hiring decisions. Similarly, Table 4.8 shows that principals rated various dimensions of diversity as having only “some” to “moderate” influence in hiring teachers. While admitting their hiring decisions were largely unaffected by teacher diversity, this consistency was disrupted by principals’ strong agreement with claims justifying why a diverse teacher workforce is important—the potential advantage resting with teachers from diverse backgrounds who first meet the quality threshold principals use to judge the best person for the job.

While the reasons underlying the consistency of principals’ attitudes towards the value of teacher diversity are open to conjecture, the practices they routinely use to hire teachers are a function of the district’s human resources policies, provincial regulations and collective agreements with teacher unions that leave little room for independent interpretation. In some sense, these hiring procedures reflect how diversity is conceptualized by senior leaders (all former principals) at the organizational level. The district’s renewed emphasis on policies and procedures that builds confidence “in fair and bias-free hiring processes” (*The Journey Ahead*, p. 103) suggests that increased teacher diversity can be realized through a combination of improved accountability measures and employee education. Under these conditions, it is reasonable that any shift in how principals conceptualize diversity is at least partially due to the homogeneity of policy and practices increasingly exercised by the district. Given that *The Journey Ahead* is in its early phase of implementation, it may be some time before such a policy can effect the changes to the understanding of diversity it envisions.
On one hand, principals’ values are expressed uniformly against teacher diversity as a key determinant in hiring decisions. As Deb asked rhetorically: “Are we hiring the best teachers for the job, or are we purposely hiring people that fit a population demographic?” Her use of the term “we” signals her belief that her position is held by many, and not her alone. On the other hand, principals’ favourable recognition of a provincial policy (PPM 119/13) that promotes teacher diversity for the organization indicates a shift in conceptual understanding of diversity itself. While principals struggle with their personal involvement in this process, they support the idea of greater diversity in the teacher workforce within the district as a whole. Unwittingly, principals may not overtly recognize that only through their direct involvement will the collective political desire of greater teacher diversity come to pass.

6.5 Diversity and the effects of culture and discourse

Principals’ reactions to the implicit and explicit meanings of PPM 119 capture the “minimal to considerable” range of attention and discourse Lumby uses to define an “entryist towards multicultural” understanding of diversity (Lumby, 2009, p. 443). While one in five survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the intent of PPM 119/13 to increase workforce representation of diverse groups (presumably, believing little attention should be paid to the policy), the remaining eighty percent expressed agreement with the direction implicit in the Memorandum. This range of opinion was also captured by the principals interviewed as they expressed intellectual dissonance between their desire to hire more teachers of difference, moral conflict in their obligation to do so, and frustration negotiating policies and procedures that mitigate against these aims. These views, recorded in interviews during this study, and experienced with
principal colleagues during training sessions supporting implementation of *The Journey Ahead* policy, reflect some of the current discourse on diversity among principals in District A.

Principals’ positions on the need for increased teacher diversity were multi-faceted. The most critical were those of Anna who was earnestly concerned about the possibility of quota hiring (aiming to hire diverse teachers approaching a number representative of the diverse proportion of the student population overall). Similarly, Deb understood the PPM to include the possibility of deliberately favouring teacher diversity as a factor in hiring, which she described as “complete discrimination”. Jules, too, worried about how the PPM could be interpreted and possibly lead to a diminishment in teacher quality as diversity carried increasing weight in the selection process. Anna also challenged the lack of evidence in the literature or her own practice that showed improved learning outcomes for students in classes with like-race teachers, thereby questioning the validity of the Memorandum’s claims.

Many more principals expressed more moderate, but no less sincere critique of the spirit of PPM 119. Leo is supportive of increasing teacher diversity, but was unclear about the PPM’s use of the term “diverse communities”. His key criticism centered on the difficulty he faces in determining the diversity of her school community. Without demographic information about students (or teachers), he expressed frustration thus: “You want me to do something [hire teachers that reflect the school community] that I don’t even know what it is. All I can go on is what kids look like – not good enough”. Ken wondered, “does community mean the school, or the entire district. It makes a difference”. Charles also challenged the policy’s use of terms like “reflect the
community”, and “see themselves” (p. 5) that favours visible differences over any other. Doreen agreed, stating, "implying visible differences puts those differences higher than others, which cannot be”.

However, perspectives shared by Jacob and Karl on the intent and purpose of PPM 119, and arguably of diversity itself, were notably different from the others. Jacob:

“The PPM states what should be in practice already. These conditions need to be met in order to provide a healthy, welcoming learning environment for all kids. Schools are made richer when kids feel that teachers want to learn about them, the kids, or already know a lot about who they are. It’s sad that a PPM would need to be generated to promote this kind of thinking.”

Jacob is uncritical of the PPM itself, but rather of the need for continued political intervention to prompt the changes it proposes. Karl states, “Hiring for diversity means it’s on your mind. You know where the gaps [in teacher perspective] and you need to fill them with teachers who appreciate difference. That’s the diversity I want, and kids need.” Such statements indicate that these principals possess a diversity mindset where the time for debate has passed and where diversity itself is a philosophical principle guiding their leadership work.

For these principals, each has reflected considerably on his/her understandings of diversity. The range of opinions captured in their comments regarding teacher diversity provides detail to the survey result showing a 20%-80% split in support of the policy direction of PPM 119. While describing principals’ views of a complex construct is challenging, their responses to this policy serve as a reasonably proxy of how they conceptualize diversity, as Lumby would describe, between Entryist and Multicultural. This generalized understanding puts principals in this study on or near the crux between
leading for diversity and leading with diversity where the key difference lies with the notion of expanding diversity that triggers a set of actions rather than inspiring a habit of mind (Lumby, 2006). Much of the survey data in this study centred on the decision-making actions related to teacher hiring. It became clear that the decisions principals made when considering hiring a diverse teacher followed a consistent, two-step process, largely unaffected by principals’ hiring experience, or even student demographics. First, establish that the teacher can demonstrate well-grounded pedagogy, classroom management, and professionalism; then consider any dimensions of diversity the teacher may have in making the final decision. Any perceived threats to these actions, such as a provincial or district policy that questions this practice, was received with wide-ranging criticism from principals interviewed. In other words, the path to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, arguably a sub-set of leading with diversity, would follow the same path as hiring any teachers – through time-honoured structures that admittedly generated barriers for minoritized teachers (Table 4.9) but that could be reduced through another series of actions (Table 4.10). Some principals, however, shared reflections and opinions better characterized as leading for diversity. Principals like Ken who worried about the lack of teacher diversity at his school as the student population changes quickly from White to largely South Asian; like Karl, who looked for teachers with diverse perspectives and experiences; like Doreen, who used Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences framework to seek a wide range of teachers regardless of their ethno-racial, religious, linguistic or any other identity markers. Jacob’s observation that “principals need to first examine their own biases rather than checking boxes” signals that diversity, for him, is highly valued in various contexts within his work: a frame of mind.
In some sense, this understanding of diversity should be expected. Hoffman (1997); Blackmore (2006); Lumby (2006); and Jonsen, Maznevski & Schneider (2011) have criticized the diversity research in education for straying from “the possibilities of delivering its [diversity’s] promise of more inclusive and equitable schooling” (Blackmore, 2006, p. 182) and diverting towards “a managerialist agenda which impels a focus on outputs similar to a commercial approach” (Simkins, 2000, in Lumby, 2006, p. 151). It may not be surprising that when principals understand teacher diversity as a response to a political climate rather than a call for more equitable school outcomes for students, that teacher diversity factored only modestly into their overall hiring schema. Moreover, when the political discourse, embodied in the *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009*, and PPM119/13, positions differences as deficits, (what Lumby would describe as “narrower definitions [of diversity that] focus on those characteristics which are most likely to disadvantage an individual: ethnicity/race, gender, disability and age” (2006, p. 152), one can more readily see how principals’ conceptualization of diversity is one that is additive in nature, and consistently expressed using terms such as “value added”, “under-represented”, “diverse communities”, and “reverse discrimination”, “other languages”. Equally unsurprising is how principals have consistently ranked dimensions of teacher difference lower in importance than teacher qualities such as professional conduct, pedagogical knowledge, and even classroom management skill. It follows, then, that several principals interviewed were uneasy with their personal, or the district’s, vision for increasing teacher diversity. With 20% of principals surveyed disagreeing with the need for increased teacher diversity as outlined in provincial policy (see p. 97), the political vision as it currently stands may not be sufficiently compelling to
change principals’ perceptions of diversity. Similarly, with 4 of 10 principals interviewed responding “I don’t know” when asked how they go about increasing teacher diversity at their schools, this reflects either their uncertainty with the either the procedural steps (e.g. use of screening tool) or their personal knowledge biases (e.g. teacher quality does not include diversity) towards hiring diverse teachers, or both. Not knowing how to increase teacher diversity could be a proxy for resistance to try.

Uncertainty in hiring for diversity, however, has provoked other principals to reflect more deeply on their hiring practices. Both Jacob and Doreen struggle with the narrow definition of diversity used in the district – one that focuses on more noticeable differences such as race, gender, languages spoken, and to some extent, religion – and political efforts such as voluntary self-identification to reduce the construct of diversity to one that can be quantified. Doreen’s hopeful perspective on the need for diverse teachers is largely unencumbered by policy direction or other mechanisms designed to produce a more diverse teacher complement. She recognizes her own need to “satisfy my own diversification needs” as the central motivation in hiring teachers of difference. Her definition of diversity, however, is broad, and, like Blackmore (2006), is about “addressing highly specific cultural, linguistic, economic and social needs; building individual and collective cultural and social capital” (p. 182). Leo shares his own optimism: “This conversation about hiring for diversity needs to come out of the closet. It’s only discussed in passing, and we need to see evidence that it matters”. Leo is referring not to correlational evidence that Asian students learn better with Asian teachers, or that boys do better with male teachers, but rather to evidence from school
leaders, including teachers, that diversity matters to them as individuals – that a learning and working environment that is diverse is de facto better than one that is not.

6.6 Who gets hired?

Since 2010, District A hired 1,265 teachers to permanent positions (Human Resources, District A), and several hundred teachers to the pool of occasional teachers. In District A, 55% of students are now described as visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2011). The findings of this present study are drawn from the perceptions of 66 practicing principals who share one particular similarity. Eighty-five percent of the survey respondents self-identified as White, and all principals interviewed were White. In the absence of employee identity data collected in the district, it bears noting that any conclusions are based on the voices expressed largely by one ethno-cultural group, and that this group far outnumbers any other in the district. What is known as the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Young, Place, Rinehart, Jury & Baits, 1997; Baker & Cooper, 2005) may account for some of the challenges shared by principals in this study in their efforts to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds.

6.7 Hypothetical influences

The similarity-attraction hypothesis suggests that a “positive relationship exists between perceptions of similarity and degree of attraction” (Young, Place, Rinehart, Jury & Baits, 1997, p. 87) between job applicants and those responsible for hiring. It rests on the notion that in many hiring circumstances, both employer and applicant lack information about the other that leads employers to default to demographic similarities as factors in hiring. Furthermore, this practice has influenced teacher hiring in some
districts “as a means for diversifying the demographic composition of a teacher faculty”
(ibid, p. 87) to the extent that principals with specific demographic traits, e.g. race and
gender, are purposely selected for hiring teams based on the desired demographic traits of
teachers being recruited. In a large-scale study aimed at testing the similarity-attraction hypothesis in teaching, Young et al. (1997) concluded that while little attraction was
noted between like-gender pairings of applicants and administrators, the attraction was
indeed stronger among like-race applicants and administrators than unlike-pairings.
Rynes & Barber (1990) and Lin, Dobbins & Farh (1992) suggest that the similarity-
attraction factor is stronger when minority applicants are recruited by like-race personnel
as it signals the organization’s values towards employee diversity and improves the
comfort level of both applicants and recruiters in the hiring process.

The similarity-attraction hypothesis helps shed light on the range of data collected in
this study, particularly the survey findings that place diversity as consistently less
important that other teacher competencies, and interview findings where principals have
expressed dissonance between their desires to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds
and their steadfast beliefs that dimensions of diversity are largely outside the realm of
core teacher competencies. However, principals consistently indicated, both in the
survey and in interviews, that hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds carried many
benefits for students, and similarly expressed that in a few cases, their hiring decisions
had indeed favoured an applicant representative of the student body, and not like
themselves. So while the similarity-attraction hypothesis may have some role in the
initial phases of the hiring process, such as recruitment and screening, other factors may
emerge that more strongly influence the decision-making phase of hiring.
Mertz (2010) examined teacher hiring from the perspective of decision-making theory. Her study suggests that educational organizations favour a rational-economic model for teacher hiring. This model promotes the use of clearly defined selection criteria tailored to personnel needs of the organization culminating in hiring decisions that are rational, quantifiable and defensible. Research suggests that using such a model holds great potential for attracting teachers with skills known to enhance student learning outcomes such as pedagogical expertise, content knowledge and professional practice (Leithwood & Day, 2007) and that recruitment processes are often developed from a rational-economic perspective, i.e. recruitment, screening, data-collection and selection (Kogan, Wolff, & Russell, 1995). However, Mertz (2010) found that principals routinely used an administrative decision-making model – one where principals juggle multiple, coincident factors that mitigate against following a more rational-economic model. Mertz describes this model as “bounded rationality” (p. 188) where some, but often insufficient, information about the candidate is available to the decision-maker, where confidence in the decision may be fragile, and where time and political constraints affect decision-making in ways inconsistent with a rational-economic model. As a result, principals relied on their intuition about teachers, and asked questions that allowed them to “get a sense of the total person, their values and ethics” (p. 194). Moreover, given that both in Mertz’ study and the present one, there was a lack of conformity to a common set of interview questions, Mertz found that the questions principals asked during interviews reflected what they themselves valued, and so responses viewed as favourable were those that often reinforced the principal’s own values. While the hiring process may have been
rational in design, human intuition often disrupted the process resulting in decisions based on principals’ values rather than reliable evidence of performance.

The intersection of the similarity-attraction hypothesis and the administrative decision-making model provides a platform to better understand the findings in the current study, and ultimately who gets hired. In general, principals were unwavering in their commitment to hire the best person for the job. Principals were consistent in the descriptions of teacher competencies that define the best candidate: those who conducted themselves as professionals, possessed considerable knowledge of effective pedagogy, and who understood the underpinnings of positive classroom management techniques. It is reasonable that principals were attempting to recruit teachers whose competencies were believed to strongly support student learning, and similar to their own (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman & Johnson, 2005; Cranston, 2012). When asked about perceived barriers in hiring diverse teachers, principals overwhelmingly identified lack of pedagogical knowledge and weak communication skills in English as the key barriers (Table 4.9), characteristics known to be strengths of principals and requirements for promotion to their positions. But the intuitive decision-making processes principals used led them to consider other, more culturally sensitive, and arguably values-dependent, variables such as dimensions of teacher diversity (race, gender or linguistic background) that generated internal tension when they were asked to describe how important such variables were to them. These tensions may account for the repeated response “I don’t know” when principals were asked to explain how they hire for diversity. Since none of the principals interviewed was non-White, there were reduced points of attraction based on similarity, at least racial or cultural similarity, when interacting with applicants from a different
ethno-racial or linguistic group. In such cases where a rational selection process was used, principals would have reverted to a distinct step-wise approach that included seeking strong evidence of teacher competence. However, over-reliance on an intuitive decision-making process left principals in an uncomfortable zone between desiring an outcome (hiring diverse teachers) and knowing how to realize it. In the extreme, this approach to hiring would be as Leo described: “sometimes it [getting the diverse teacher for the job] is just luck”. By “luck”, Leo is describing the ideal circumstances when a teaching position is available, when a range of excellent teachers apply (including those from diverse backgrounds and identities), when follow up references are favourable, when the desired South Asian, and/or male, and/or multi-lingual teacher is offered the position, and accepts. Such circumstances combine the best of rational and intuitive hiring approaches, but are often infrequent, and challenging to predict.

6.8 Influence of barriers

Notwithstanding the impact of the role-model or similarity-attraction hypotheses, or hiring models that favour rational or intuitive decision-making, the procedures that guide teacher hiring are also known to influence which ones are ultimately hired (Staiger & Rockoff, 2010; Ingle & Rutledge, 2010; Mason and Schroeder, 2010). A number of factors have been discussed in the literature that identify procedural complications in teacher hiring generally, and were similarly noted by principals in this study. Timing of the hiring process, teacher availability, language proficiency of applicants, policy restrictions and the lack of information have made it difficult to recruit and select teachers in general, and the lack of self-identification data available to principals in
District A has been especially troublesome if principals seek teachers with unique identities such as race, gender, religion or multilingualism.

The timing of teacher recruitment processes remains a persistent and significant hurdle for principals. Due to the cyclical nature of the academic year, principals aim to have all teachers in classrooms by the beginning of the cycle - usually September - but can only begin this process once other administrative decisions, often beyond their control, are made. This creates a bottleneck effect where principals vie for the same highly competent applicants within a relatively short period of time. Doreen, Barb, Jacob and Leo all reported timing as a key barrier when hiring teachers. Indeed, all principals interviewed shared their concerns regarding the spring hiring period as a time when schedules are tight, reference callbacks are awaited anxiously, and job offers can only be made during specific time windows. All four of these principals, however, had the experience of opening new elementary schools prior to 2012 during a time when they were required to interview all teacher applying to vacant jobs. New schools typically attract many applicants, which dramatically increased the number of necessary interviews within already short timelines. All four principals reported significant challenges in making reliable hiring decisions under these circumstances.

Engel (2009) reports that in a 1999-2000 sample of over 8500 principals in various US districts, only 25% of teachers were hired for the upcoming school year before school let out for the summer. The balance was hired over the summer, with more than 10% being hired after the school year had begun. Levin & Quinn (2003) suggest that the reasons for delayed hiring timelines relate to several other time-sensitive operational processes such as notification of leaves of absence and retirement, teacher
transfer processes as negotiated through collective bargaining, the innately inaccurate nature of forecasting student enrolment, and budget timetables. Any change to one process directly affects the implementation of the others. In the case of District A, preliminary budget and staffing decisions are begun in February but not finalized until mid-September, increasing pressure on principals to fill remaining vacant positions quickly once the school year has begun. Both Jules and Karl expressed frustration with the hiring cycle. With few teacher applicants for their available jobs, both principals had unfilled positions as of September, which triggered further procedural delays due in part to Regulation 274. Under such pressures to find a teacher once the school year has begun, it is possible that principals are inclined to rely on the outcomes of an intuitive decision-making process rather than those resulting from the more time-intensive analytical approach to hiring that includes the use of standard interview questions, scoring rubrics, multiple reference calls, etc. After two hiring rounds with diminishing numbers of applicants, Jules stated, “sometimes you just have to compromise and just pick someone because you know there’s not anyone else out there who’s likely to apply”. As suggested earlier by Mertz (2010), intuitive decision-making can lead principals to favour applicants who share similarities, including perspectives and values borne of cultural, racial, linguistic, religious, and other identity markers. While no principals interviewed in this study stated outright that they based hiring decisions on identity similarities with candidates, the three most prevalent reasons principals gave for not hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds (lack of pedagogical knowledge, weak English skills, lack of Canadian teaching experience, Table 4.9) represent traits principals possess
but that they perceive such teachers lack. Furthermore, this finding expresses the views of survey respondents, 85% of whom identified as White-European.

The availability of teachers from diverse backgrounds has also been identified (Ryan et al, 2009; Escayg, 2010) as a factor in the slow movement towards a more diversified teacher workforce. In simplistic terms, if the presence of diverse teachers invites students to see teaching as a possible future profession, then it stands to reason that the lack of diversity in the teacher workforce may have a counter effect. This is the argument central to the role-model hypothesis (King, 1993; Sleeter & Thao, 2007; Gay, Dingus & Jackson, 2003) that calls for more diversity in teaching in order to provide visibly attainable models for students as they contemplate future careers. Critics of the role-model hypothesis (Cizek, 1993; Maylor, 2009) however, argue that true role-modeling goes well beyond identity similarities that may exist between teachers and students, and that such similarities should not be presumed to strengthen the role-model potential teachers hold. Overall, principals held that a highly-effective teacher is a better role model for all students than one whose connection is based on a singular trait like race or gender. Jacob states, “kids don’t need a teacher to be a role model separate from any other kind. They need to see role models that do different things and who are accepting”. Karl and Doreen were also cautious of assuming role-modeling can exist between teachers and students simply because of overlap in identity markers. “Commonalities of lived experience” are better predictors of role-modelling occurring (Karl). “If you’ve got 25 kids in a class with 1 teacher, nobody can represent all. So I want someone who is well-versed [in diversity] and accepting of all people. That’s when real role-modeling happens” (Doreen).
The role-modeling arguments aside, it is known that disproportionately low numbers of students from diverse backgrounds seek teaching as a profession (Villegas & Irvine, 2010), and that little is known about the reasons why. Gordon (1994) suggested three main themes believed to contribute to low enrolments of minority students in teacher training programs, such as unsuccessful school experiences through high school, the lack of social capital needed to break into a traditionally White-dominant profession, and the low status and remuneration vis à vis other professions requiring similar educational investment. While similar current research is hard to find in the Ontario context, lower achievement and graduation rates among some minority student groups, e.g. First Nations, Blacks, speakers of English as a second language (Education Quality and Accountability Office, 2014; TDSB, 2006) indicate that teacher training programs that include high school graduation as an admission requirement are already unrepresentative of the diversity of the overall population at large. Therefore, the chances of teachers from diverse backgrounds getting hired are predictably lower than their White counterparts. Escayg (2010) calls on teacher training university faculties to “redefine their goals as teacher training institutions” (p. 6) to first facilitate the enrolment of minoritized teacher candidates, but also to provide the necessary supports for such teachers in training needed to counter isolation they experience in navigating White-dominant contexts. As Deb stated in her interview, “you can only hire from among the teachers who apply” reinforcing the notion that selecting teachers from diverse backgrounds remains, in part, a function of availability.

Availability of teachers from diverse backgrounds, however, is a matter of perspective where the term refers to both the number of teachers applying for jobs, and
their perceived state of readiness to teach. According to the Ontario College of Teachers 2012 Annual Report, sixteen percent of all teachers certified that year were internationally trained. Among teachers trained abroad (excluding those trained in the US), approximately 55% were required to provide the College with proof of English language proficiency before receiving certification to teach in Ontario. When coupled with results from the 2011 National Household Survey results, it is likely that many foreign-trained teachers, largely from Asia and Africa, have immigrated to Toronto suburbs, including those represented by District A. Coincidentally, English language proficiency has been noted in this study as a barrier in hiring teachers from diverse ethno-racial backgrounds. Clearly the first-year unemployment rate of foreign trained teachers (78% vs. 38% for Ontario-trained teachers), as reported by the College, suggests that at least some non-native English speakers may face additional challenges when seeking teaching positions.

While the issue of English language proficiency does not appear in the extant research as a teacher trait typically influencing hiring decisions, its inclusion in this discussion is relevant as it relates specifically to the immigrant teacher context in District A. Indeed, in both surveys and interviews in this study, principals reported that in some cases, applicants’ English language proficiency was a concern, and mitigated against their selection of teachers from diverse backgrounds as preferred candidates. Charles recounted an experience hiring a teacher whose first language was not English but a language of many students in the school. The teacher’s oral language skills were strong, but when it came time to communicate in writing (with parents, colleagues, students), the teacher’s language skills became a liability. In the present survey, principals ranked
weak communication skills in English as the second most influential reason in not hiring a teacher from a diverse background and called for more rigorous language screening by the College before issuing certification. Leo and Jacob were also critical of the current language evaluation process used in District A whereby language skills are evaluated during, rather than before, the job interview itself. In their view, this practice detracts from their efforts to attend to teacher responses about pedagogy, experiences with students, and other hiring factors considered more crucial to their hiring decision. Barb was also concerned by what appears to be “scripted” responses to interview questions with teachers with non-native English fluency. In her view, often such teachers struggled to provide examples to illustrate what they said or to respond to follow-up questions or other diversions in the conversation.

6.9 Policy influences

Lastly, policies at various levels influence who gets hired. In some cases, the policy directive is intended to provide a framework for changes in workforce composition over time, such as the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009. With fewer than half of Ontario school districts then in compliance with previous Ministry memoranda requiring districts to develop equity policy (p. 11), the current strategy was developed to re-focus attention to ongoing increases in Ontario’s student diversity in the face of persistent achievement gaps experienced by some student demographics. The strategy suggests that “systemic barriers may also impede fair practice with respect to hiring, mentoring, promotion, and succession planning” (p. 13), the first in a series of later policy statements that makes explicit reference to the teacher workforce composition as
both a barrier to equitable student outcomes, and a solution to relieving such outcome
disparity through its diversification.

Other policies, such PPM 119/13, provide more specific direction to school
districts and include some accountability measures. This policy gives direction to school
districts to remove barriers that impede equitable access to employment by any individual
based on identity, and pushes boards to monitor hiring outcomes such that employees
reflect the local communities. As discussed earlier, this notion prompted genuine
discomfort on the part of some principals interviewed including fears that such a policy
directive could invoke discriminatory hiring practices in favour of visibly minoritized
groups thereby compromising their decision-making process, believed to be grounded in
selecting the best teacher for the job. Deb, Jules and Anna were particularly concerned
with even the remote prospect of using teacher diversity as a strong influence on hiring,
claiming it would threaten their ability to hire the most effective teachers and amounted
to reverse discrimination. Jules summed up with “I don’t believe it’s morally right to
have to compromise teaching excellence for the sake of diversity.”

Still other policies, such as Regulation 274/12, specifically require that some
groups be considered first for certain jobs. While the discriminating criterion in Reg.
274/12 is seniority (Sec. 6.3), and not race, gender or religion, its intent was to correct
hiring practices claimed to be relationship-based (Regulation 274/12: Final Report, 2014,
p. 12) that over time left many occasional teachers, often foreign-trained and from
diverse backgrounds, unable to access full-time employment despite their years of
experience, even during a years-long period of employment growth from 2000 – 2010
(Ontario College of Teachers, 2010, p. 35). This policy, too, drew considerable criticism
from principals in the present study and has been the subject of concern by a variety of stakeholders (Ontario Principals’ Council, People for Merit-based Teacher Hiring, student teacher unions, members of the provincial legislature, and others) such that the current Minister of Education undertook a review of the impact of the regulation (letter from the Minister to Council of Directors of Education, October 2013).

The outcomes of the review, made public in November, 2014, included a number of findings that pertain directly and indirectly to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. For example, many school districts voiced strong concern about their loss of autonomy in determining hiring practices; there was reluctance to hire teachers who had worked as occasional teachers for many years; some districts discovered means to bypass stipulations of the Regulation; and many boards had not previously used a step-wise approach to teacher hiring that included occasional teaching as the default first step (p. 11). In short, many districts questioned the relevance of the changes brought about through the Regulation which suggests a belief that the status quo processes used were preferred, and by extension, an uncritical perspective on the cumulative effects of those processes: the slow progress towards teacher diversity. Ultimately, the impact of various policy directives influencing hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds will be borne out over time, but complicated by the current lack of demographic data about the teacher diversity that would facilitate monitoring such changes. However, a policy developed in District A, *The Journey Ahead*, merits some discussion here as it positions provincial policy within the context of the district being studied.
6.10 The Journey Ahead

*The Journey Ahead* (2013) represents the summative findings of an independent study carried out in District A in 2011 – 2012 to respond to public concerns about perceived nepotism in the workplace (Toronto Star, November 4, 2014). The researchers’ objective was to examine hiring practices at all levels, and to make recommendations about future direction. Of particular concern was the public perception that hiring practices disadvantaged members from minoritized groups especially in light of the significant proportion of visible minorities residing in the district whose children attend schools there. The study examined all areas of hiring of both academic and business staff by collecting perceptual data from job seekers and those responsible for hiring decisions, by reviewing competition files, and by examining the district’s policies and procedures.

The researchers found a number of procedural and policy factors that, over time, have led to a culture where “many believe that personal connections and personal characteristics influence one’s advancement within the organization” (p. 102). While the authors admit that there are no quantitative data available to determine the degree of impact of this culture on teacher hiring, the data collected from interviews and reviewing competition files tend to support the claim that teacher hiring is relationship-based rather than based on candidate merit (p. 40). The authors claim that “individuals from diverse backgrounds will likely be under-represented among academic staff. It [current hiring practices] does not support the [district’s] need and desire to hire the most qualified person for the job” (p. 40). The authors recommended a more criterion-referenced recruitment and selection process, and suggested that such a process would minimize
hiring bias. They cautioned that the absence of a more rational selection process “can often result in successful candidates being those who most resemble the people who conduct the interview, thereby placing candidates from diverse backgrounds at a disadvantage” (p. 44).

Findings from *The Journey Ahead* contribute to those in the present study in several ways. First, while finding the best teacher for the job is the ultimate goal of principals hiring teachers, the subjectivity in selecting teachers for interviews narrows the pool of potential applicants, possibly inadvertently, to those teachers who share identities with the principal. This finding corresponds with the personal reflections of some of the principals interviewed who, when asked how they hire to diversify teaching staff, responded with few clear options, such as Deb’s “I don’t know how to answer this question unless we reverse discriminate”, suggesting the difficulty in rationalizing a predisposition that is subjective in nature. Furthermore, in identifying two perceived barriers in hiring diverse teachers (pedagogical knowledge and communication skills in English – deficit skill sets of the teachers themselves) principals are suggesting that if the subjectivity of their decision-making falls short, then a reasonable solution is to improve the subjects (diverse teacher applicants) rather than challenge the decision-making.

Second, in the current study where principals consistently define “best” as expressed by the teacher’s pedagogical knowledge, professionalism and classroom management skill, findings in *The Journey Ahead* suggest teacher selection is largely a non-competitive, subjective process and draws into question whether the best candidate is ultimately chosen much of the time. Instead, the individual principal’s perspective on any desirable teacher trait becomes the benchmark by which these competencies are measured,
resulting in a close match between the teacher’s expression of these competencies and the principal’s perspective of them. When the number of principals charged with hiring is often unrepresentative of the range of teacher identities competing for jobs, the outcome leaves unsuccessful applicants questioning the hiring process, and slow movement towards greater diversity in the teacher workforce.

One of the key recommendations in *The Journey Ahead* includes the implementation of an employee census in order to assess the diversity of various employee groups. Census information, if reliable, would provide the district with evidence to support training programs for hiring decision-makers that are presently perceived to be more relationship-based than merit-based. The reliability of census data will be a critical factor in providing the baseline data suggested in order to mark progress in intended hiring outcomes. Duma, Rothbard and Phillips (2008) caution that encouraging employees to disclose identity information may be less effective in organizations with existing diverse workforces, and they should invest first in building and sustaining work cultures that acknowledge and accept differences as employees choose to share them.

Workplace censuses have taken place in other Ontario school districts in the recent past, e.g. Hamilton-Wentworth DSB in 2006, and Toronto DSB in 2007. Response rates in both districts were 70% and 61% respectively. In both districts, the purpose of the census was to provide quantitative data of the composition of its employee base and compare these data to the diversity of the community at large as described by Statistics Canada. In response to concerns raised about the covert purpose of their diversity census, Hamilton-Wentworth DSB was careful to point out in their
communication to employees that it would “not establish hiring quotas or targets as a result of this information, but will use information gathered to help with recruitment, retention and development initiatives” (Report on the Diversity Audit of the HWDSB, Pike & Jaffray, 2007, p. 7). This concern was echoed by principals in the current study who challenged the recommendation in The Journey Ahead calling for a diversity census on the heels of PPM 119/13.

Interestingly enough, in the current study, of the 56 principals who responded to the survey, 7% chose not to self-identify by the more visible dimension of ethno-racial background, and 46% chose not to further self-identify by less visible dimensions such as sexual orientation, being born outside of Canada, or speaking a variety of English outside the workplace. It remains to be seen how employees in the district will respond to the call to participate in a voluntary census, and how the reliability of census outcomes will inform future direction.
Chapter 7

Conclusions

The education landscape in Ontario has changed substantially since I began this inquiry into the question of teacher hiring in diverse school contexts. Two critical provincial policies, *Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009*, and *Policy and Program Memorandum 119/13* have been enacted during this period, and together reinforce one of four key mandates of the Ministry of Education – that equitable education outcomes for all Ontario students is a right in a publically-funded education system. These policies further suggest that one factor contributing to longstanding inequitable outcomes for some student groups may include the equally persistent lack of ethno-racial diversity among Ontario teachers. Additionally, Regulation 274/12 has prompted school districts to revisit hiring processes for at least one teacher sub-group (occasional teachers) and has mandated principals to include teaching experience as a critical factor in making hiring decisions. If current employment rates of foreign-born teachers reflect a historical pattern of under-employment, then Regulation 274/12 may help to improve teacher diversity as many foreign-born teachers are members of racialized minorities. Coincident with these policy directives, however, is the fact that student enrolment in the province continues to decline overall, interrupting the impact such policies may have on increasing teacher diversity.

The starting point for this research was my own experience opening a new school, and having the opportunity to hire all teachers. Aware of district direction to take into account the diversity of the community when selecting teachers, and increasingly aware
of the significant underrepresentation of ethno-racial diversity when meeting applicants during interviews, I resolved to explore this dilemma: if the school experience is enhanced when students’ lived experiences are known, understood and appreciated by teachers who share these experiences, and research corroborates this claim, why, then, does teaching continue to be populated by an ethno-racial demographic so different from that of the community?

My personal experience mirrored the challenges with hiring processes similar to those detailed in Ingle and Rutledge (2010) and expressed by colleagues interviewed for this study. Timelines can be problematic if screening is not allowed, as was my experience in opening a new school in 2008. All contract teachers who applied were eligible for an interview provided they held the required qualifications with the Ontario College of Teachers. All positions had to be advertised simultaneously, or approximately 35 positions in the case of a new school. With an average of 6 applicants per position, over 200 interviews had to be scheduled within a 15 day timeframe, after which unfilled positions would be re-posted. Albeit with diminishing numbers of vacant positions, this cycle would continue until mid-June or when all positions were filled. Time had to be allotted to contact references before any hiring decisions were made. If timing did not allow for references to be contacted, two options remained: hire the teacher without a reference check, or do not offer the position, and repeat the process in the subsequent round of job postings risking that the candidate might accept a position elsewhere, or if not, be disinclined to re-apply.

Given the rapid population growth in District A, approximately 40 new schools have been opened in the past 10 years. Typically, new schools attract many teacher
applicants, and under hiring rules prior to Regulation 274/12, all contract teachers who applied had to be interviewed. In the case of our school, 385 contract teachers applied for the approximately 35 full-time teaching positions available for September 2008. While new schools per se do not attract one cultural group of teachers more than any other, to approach the teacher distribution as expressed in the role-model hypothesis I would need to hire approximately 22 African-Canadian teachers, 5 South Asian teachers, and 2 or 3 Caucasian teachers. Of the 385 applicants, 4 were African-Canadian, 3 were of Asian descent, and 1 was South Asian. Even if all were hired, the ability for staff to proportionately represent the ethno-racial identities of the student population was not possible. Clearly there was a need to explore alternative means to hire competent teachers able to maximize the school experience of our diverse student population that went beyond the implications of the role-model hypothesis.

Attempts to apply the merit hypothesis were similarly challenging. In this case, years of experience and advanced training (e.g. additional qualifications and/or degrees as recognized by the Ontario College of Teachers) were taken into account. Of the 385 teacher applicants, less than 1/3 had more than 10 years’ experience, considered the soft marker between “experienced” and “novice” (Rockoff, 2004). Remarkably, but due in part to the recent hiring of large numbers of new teachers district-wide, approximately half the teacher applicants had fewer than 5 years’ experience. All but one of the visible minority applicants were in this inexperienced group. As such, it appeared that using teacher experience as a key determinant in choosing teachers significantly narrowed the overall pool of potential candidates without knowing anything else about their performance in the classroom. This scenario was duplicated in regard to teachers’
advanced training. In general, experienced teachers hold more additional qualifications than novice teachers. In the case of our school, applying the role-model hypothesis faced serious limitations in hiring same-race teachers, and consideration of the merit hypothesis seriously narrowed the range of teacher applicants and all but eliminated visible minorities from the running.

Central to the drive to increase teacher diversity is the question ‘does it really matter’ that students see themselves in their teachers at school? Determining what matters is difficult terrain. While it is true there is little empirical evidence that shows positive correlations between the school outcomes of minority students and their affiliation with minority teachers along the way, it is hard to ignore the considerable body of literature that claims that it must. Compelling studies have been authored by researchers arguing that schools should reflect the society at large and failure to do so reflects systemic prejudice. Similarly, it is difficult to accept such claims when they are unsubstantiated by empirical evidence linking teacher diversity to improved school outcomes. However, it seems equally difficult, if not unethical, to continue to dispute such claims while other efforts to improve school outcomes for minoritized groups show disappointing results. Dee’s 2004 study, showing positive correlations in students’ reading and math when taught by like-race teachers, seems to stand alone in the literature since its publication, but may serve as a model for further studies in establishing such links. That said, such research is fraught with political landmines that could implicate teacher recruitment and hiring in ways strikingly different to the status quo. The parallel argument, and one slowly gaining momentum in District A, rests in the process to adopt an understanding of diversity that Lumby describes as Systemic – one where proof of the
positive effects of a diverse workforce is not required in order to recognize and promote its inherent value. Counter-evidence such as the ongoing underachievement and under-acceptance of some student groups alongside ongoing under-hiring of teachers from diverse backgrounds becomes the evidence to consider and monitor.

The perspective of the school principal was critical in exploring this question. In most studies exploring teacher hiring, it is clear that the principal holds the balance of power in making hiring decisions, and in District A, all teacher hiring decisions rest with the principal. While some argue (Liu 2002, 2006, 2007, and others) that decentralized hiring structures have advantages, especially when implementing a corporate agenda aimed at changing the composition of the workforce, school districts have sidestepped this practice, possibly due to tradition, but possibly because unlike other managerial/leadership positions, all principals were at one time teachers, doing the very job they are now charged with awarding to another, and basing their decision-making on their own identity as teachers first. The principal’s perspective on qualities of a teacher, then, became central in the inquiry, and indeed, revealed that principals are consistent in their perspectives on what constitutes teaching quality, itself, a largely subjective construct. These perspectives varied little despite principals’ experience in the role, the hiring opportunities they have had, or the diversity of their school communities. Teacher diversity did not factor prominently in principals’ views about teacher quality. Instead, any advantages teachers’ identities may bring to their teaching role was described as value-added and only considered after conventional quality markers of teachers were satisfied.
However, the study also revealed inconsistencies in how principals perceive diversity itself and any subsequent advantages hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds may afford. Perspectives of diversity ranged from definitive, visible differences between people to wider conceptualizations of diversity that included the impact diversity has on power relationships in the education arena. Equally varied were principals’ responses to how they go about increasing the diversity of teachers in their schools, with several claiming internal conflict between their stated desire to do so and their reticence in actualizing this desire.

Notwithstanding differences in how principals conceptualized diversity and its merits, principals identified specific barriers in the processes used to recruit and hire teachers from diverse backgrounds. Principals felt that current screening tools failed to surface the information needed to know about teachers’ diverse identities, that the opportunity to hire teachers was often out of their control, and that the interview timelines made for a highly competitive hiring environment that sometimes led to rushed decision-making. Above all, principals felt their autonomy to hire the best teacher for the job was now compromised by the introduction of Regulation 274/12. While consistent in their desire to hire the best teachers, this study corroborates research suggesting that determining “best” is a highly subjective process strongly influenced by individual principals’ sense of personal identities, values and beliefs.

Variation in how principals’ understand diversity, its role in determining teaching quality, and its perceived impact on students’ learning, may be a byproduct of the decision-making autonomy enjoyed by principals in District A, or in any organizational structure composed of units which themselves are widely variable, such as schools.
While not all school districts may share District A’s tradition of leaving hiring decisions almost exclusively to individual principals, the tradition is sufficiently widespread to account for a perceived threat to boards’ hiring autonomy described in the final report on Regulation 274/12 (Ungerleider & Baumann, 2014, p. 58), and similarly voiced by the Ontario Principals’ Council (2013). If in hiring, principals are best able to express their values on education by selecting teachers who share them, then any effort to curtail such autonomy would similarly reflect a threat to principals’ leadership value, in strong opposition to current research naming principals as the most influential agent in school improvement, second only to teachers (Leithwood, 2008). If school improvement efforts affected all students equally, or better still, hastened the closing of achievement gaps for disadvantaged groups, including minoritized students, then principal autonomy would be an effective corporate strategy for District A and others. Unfortunately, these gaps persist which draws into question the role of principal autonomy in teacher selection from both the school perspective, and also that of the district as a whole.

My reflections on the genesis of this project took me to The New Meaning of Educational Change 4th Edition, by Michael Fullan (2007). In it he discusses the interplay between beliefs and behavior in individuals’ experience with educational change. In some respects, this study explores changes in both principals’ beliefs and behaviours in hiring teachers. One implication of the research on educational change, says Fullan, is “the possibility that beliefs can be most effectively discussed after people have had at least some behavior experience in attempting new practices” (p. 37). So the challenge before District A may be in moving ahead with efforts to diversify its teacher workforce while opposing beliefs, or at least reluctant attitudes, question those efforts.
Some measure of decentralized hiring may be a required interim measure to effect the degree of teacher hiring “correction” that will allow the value of teacher diversity to be seen as a key hiring factor rather than a secondary one. My original challenge in hiring teachers to a new suburban school where at least three quarters of students came from African-Canadian or South Asian backgrounds was the small number of applicants from diverse backgrounds. From that time to this, however, I have come to recognize the potential systemic bias that has defined our understanding of teaching quality and competence, and that underpins teacher selection processes in the minds of principals in District A. In contemplating my own potential responses to the survey and interview questions I asked of colleagues, I found my perspectives mirrored by those who recognized the inherent value of teacher diversity, including differences in personal identities and professional practice, but who continued to struggle with the relative importance of teacher diversity as a contributing factor in students’ learning trajectories. Conversely, it was challenging to appreciate colleagues’ perspectives that called for bias-free hiring and minimized the effects of teacher diversity to a second-flight consideration. Such perspectives stemmed from a belief that bias can be indeed eliminated during a process as subjective as hiring and that teacher merit can be parsed out from teacher identity, a puzzling prospect in the relationship-based work of teaching.

Moreover, if school leaders are drawn from the ranks of teaching’s best, then one has only to look at the diversity of school leadership, as sampled in this study, to connect the lack of teacher diversity with the lack of leader diversity. What stands in the way of speedier diversification of the teacher workforce is our challenge in viewing teacher hiring through a contemporary diversity lens rather than one focusing on visible
differences in general, and ethno-racial differences in particular. Instead, the selection criteria determining “the best person for the job” reflect the collective biases of White educational leaders of the past who maintain a stronghold in policy implementation still.

Praxis in education is a topic of longstanding discussion, and the prospect of amending teacher hiring practices to achieve ends suggested by research is similarly debatable. If searching for the best teachers, research would suggest recruiting teachers with strong intellectual abilities and by relying on objective evidence of their effective teaching performance. The use of such practices would position all teachers, including those from diverse backgrounds, on equal footing when competing for jobs. The current face of teachers in Ontario suggests that hiring decisions include factors that have disadvantaged diverse teachers, continuing a mostly-White teacher tradition.

Findings from this present study inform the research on diversifying the teacher workforce, at least within the context of one school district where the debate is current and active. As Leo remarked during his interview, “This conversation about hiring for diversity needs to come out of the closet”, a reflection of the range of opinions prompted by the notion of teacher diversity, and of the anticipated discomfort those conversations, like others in the past about various dimensions of diversity, may engender. While this study elicited a similar range of opinions and perspectives among participant principals, their voices largely represent those of the White, Anglo-Canadian majority, and not those of their minoritized colleagues. Further efforts to surface those voices will add to the ongoing debate of the need to diversify the teacher workforce. However, if principals’ tendency is to hire teachers who share their values and beliefs about teaching, and the principal workforce itself lacks diversity, then a strategy to consider is the diversification
of those in leadership roles in education. This, too, may require further political persuasion, but more importantly, ongoing, authentic dialogue about the inherent relationship between diversity and power.
Part 1 - Demographic Information and Experience

1. By clicking "I agree" below, I consent to participating voluntarily in this survey and understand the conditions of anonymity and confidentiality as described in the Information and Consent Letter to Survey Participants. I further understand that I can withdraw from further participation in this survey up to the point where I click the Submit button at the end of the survey. Once my responses are submitted, there is no way to exclude my responses from the survey data.
   ○ I agree

2. How many years have you been a Principal in the Peel DSB or elsewhere? (Please include current year).
   ○ 1 - 3 years
   ○ 4 - 6 years
   ○ 6 - 10 years
   ○ > 10 years

3. Throughout your career, at how many different schools have you been a Principal (in Peel or elsewhere)?
   ○ 1 school
   ○ 2 schools
   ○ 3 schools
   ○ 4 schools
   ○ > 4 schools

4. Please provide an estimate of approximately how many teacher interviews you conduct each year for the purposes of hiring teachers to your school (either contract or LTO)?
   ○ none
   ○ 1 - 5 per year
   ○ 6 - 10
   ○ 11 - 15
   ○ 16 - 20
   ○ 21 - 30
   ○ >30

5. Which of the following ethno-racial group(s) best describes the background of the most prominent groups (>20%) in your student population. Please indicate all that apply.
   ○ Aboriginal: Including North American Indian, Metis or Inuit, or a member of a North American First Nation. An Aboriginal person may have treaty status, or be a non-status, registered or non-registered Indian.
   ○ Black/African: Including those of African heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, Jamaica, Nigeria, Brazil, etc.).
   ○ East Asian: Including those of East Asian heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, China, Japan, Korea, etc.).
   ○ European: Including those of European heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, Italy, Portugal, England, Argentina, South Africa, etc.).
   ○ Mixed racial origin/Other: Including individuals with one parent in one of the visible minority groups listed here, and those who identify with another ethno-racial group.
   ○ Non-White Latin American: Including indigenous persons from Central and South America.
   ○ Non-White West Asian, North African or Arab: Including those of North African or Middle Eastern heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, etc.).
   ○ South Asian: Including those of South Asian heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Guyana, Trinidad, East Africa, etc.).
   ○ Southeast Asian: Including those of Southeast Asian heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, etc.).
### Part 2 - Teacher Hiring

6. Please rank order the factors below according to their importance to you when considering teachers to be hired at your current school. 1 = most important; 10 = least important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethno-racial identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived &quot;fit&quot; with current staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy knowledge and skill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language(s) spoken/Accents used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional conduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. PPM 119 (2013) states: "The board's work force should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented" (p.5). To what extent do you agree with this statement? Please elaborate below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please elaborate on your selection.
8. How important to you are the reasons listed below when considering hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Break down historic power inequities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a more accepting environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge stereotypes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close achievement gaps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have all students feel included</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve students' feelings of security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase parent/guardian involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror Canadian multiculturalism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcome cultural differences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcome language barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide role models for minority students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. A teaching staff can be diversified on a number of dimensions. To what extent have your hiring decisions been influenced by these dimensions in the past?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>To little extent</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>To a moderate extent</th>
<th>To a large extent</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Part 3 - Barriers to Hiring Diverse Teachers

10. There are a number of circumstances that are sometimes perceived as barriers to hiring diverse teachers. Please indicate the the extent to which these barriers have factored into your hiring decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To little extent</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>To a moderate extent</th>
<th>To a large extent</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claim of discrimination by other teachers</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of demographic information about a teacher</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of diverse teacher applicants</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of experience in Canadian school context</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of pedagogical knowledge</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak communication skills in English</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify)

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Self-Identification

11. I self-identify as:
   - [ ] female
   - [ ] male

12. Please identify the ethno-racial group to which you most strongly identify:
   - [ ] Aboriginal: Including North American Indian, Metis or Inuit, or a member of a North American First Nation. An Aboriginal person may have treaty status, or be a non-status, registered or non-registered Indian.
   - [ ] Black/African: Including those of African heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, Jamaica, Nigeria, Brazil, etc.).
   - [ ] East Asian: Including those of East Asian heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, China, Japan, Korea, etc.).
   - [ ] European: Including those of European heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, Italy, Portugal, England, Argentina, South Africa, etc.).
   - [ ] Mixed racial origin/Other: Including individuals with one parent in one of the visible minority groups listed here, and those who identify with another ethno-racial group.
   - [ ] Non-White Latin American: Including indigenous persons from Central and South America.
   - [ ] Non-White West Asian, North African or Arab: Including those of North African or Middle Eastern heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, etc.).
   - [ ] South Asian: Including those of South Asian heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Guyana, Trinidad, East Africa, etc.).
   - [ ] Southeast Asian: Including those of Southeast Asian heritage, regardless of place of birth (e.g., Canada, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, etc.).
   - [ ] I choose not to answer.

13. Part of my identity also includes (please check all that apply):
   - [ ] Being a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning, or 2-spirited individual
   - [ ] Being a new Canadian (e.g., been in Canada for less than 5 years)
   - [ ] Speaking English that is different than the language or sounds common in the workplace (e.g., with an accent, as a non-native speaker)
   - [ ] Regularly wearing dress that reflects my identity or ethnic background
   - [ ] Holding a religious identity that may be reflected by my appearance
   - [ ] I choose not to answer

   Other (please explain)

14. Do you have any suggestions that would improve your ability to hire teachers from diverse backgrounds to your school?
Hiring for Diversity - Semi Structured Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your most recent experiences hiring teachers.

Possible follow-up prompt questions:

- How did diversity factor into your decision-making?
- How do you go about “understanding and responding to the experiences of diverse groups” at your school?
- Have there been any particular cases where understanding a segment of the student population was made easier by having a member of that population as a teacher on staff?

2. PPM 119 (2013) states the board’s workforce should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board’s work force should also be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board’s jurisdiction. What does this statement mean to you in making hiring decisions?

Possible follow-up prompt questions:

- If faced with a minority teacher of mediocre calibre (from interview, references, etc) and a majority teacher of high calibre, how do you decide which one to hire?
- Are there specific diversity traits that you seek out? Which ones? Why?
3. There are several claims made to support hiring teachers to reflect student diversity. From your experience, how valid are these claims?

Possible follow-up prompt questions:

- Re-list the claims
- Do you have personal evidence to support or reject such claims?

4. If you want to increase teacher diversity on staff, how do you go about it?

Possible follow-up prompt questions:

- When you know you’ll have a position to advertise, do you make the posting a classroom position (affecting relatively few students) or a non-classroom position, eg. Music, where many students would come in contact with this teacher?
5. In your experience, are there times when the decision to hire a teacher from a diverse background been problematic?

Possible follow-up prompt questions:

- If yes, what was the nature of the problem?
- How did it get resolved?

6. What elements of the hiring process would improve your ability to diversify the teaching staff at your school?
Appendix C

OISE
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Information and Consent Letter for Survey Participants

Dear Colleague,

I am doctoral candidate in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at OISE/UT under the supervision of Dr. Jim Ryan. Thank you for your interest in participating in this research. The purpose of this study is to better understand how principals understand diversity as it pertains to teacher hiring in particular, and data will be gathered in two parts. First, your completion of a 15-minute survey (linked below) will help me gather insights about how principals view teacher diversity, its impact on student learning, and how they go about hiring teachers in diverse school contexts. The survey questions will centre around:

- The amount of interviewing and hiring experience you have in general
- The degree of student/community diversity in your school
- Your thoughts on the impact of a diverse teaching staff on student success
- The factors you consider when hiring teachers
- How the hiring process you use helps or hinders

There is also a section at the end of the survey for you to self-identify. Like all sections of the survey, that section is completely voluntary. No personal identifying information will be collected through the survey. Raw data and analyses will be available only to me, and my thesis advisor, Dr. James Ryan (OISE/UT). The survey can be found at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HiringforDiversity2014. Once you link to the survey, you will be asked to agree to the conditions of anonymity and confidentiality outlined in this letter. You will only be able to continue with the survey if you click the “I agree” button. You can terminate your participation in the survey at any time up to the point where you click Submit at the end. At this point, your responses will form part of the raw data, and cannot be excluded. Survey results are stored on a secure server, are password protected, and only accessible by me. It will never be possible for me to match survey responses to an individual participant.

The second set of data I plan to collect will be through personal interviews with those wishing to participate further in this research. For those interested, I invite you to contact me at david.jack@peelsb.com, 905-890-1010, Ext. 2376, or at 416-200-3858 to arrange a convenient time to talk. The interview may take up to 1 hour, and will be recorded with your permission, then transcribed verbatim for analysis. The recordings, transcriptions and analyses will only be available
to me, and Dr. Ryan. Anonymity and confidentiality will be assured by the use of pseudonyms if/when comments are included in the dissertation. Interview participants will be asked to provide written consent before the interview begins. All interview recordings and transcripts will be stored in my locked office, and digital versions password protected on my home computer. As with the survey, you can terminate your participation in the interview at any time during the interview, or by contacting me afterwards if you wish to withdraw your participation. At that point, the tape-recording and transcripts of our interview will be destroyed. Approximately 15 interview participants are needed; in the case where more than 15 participants volunteer, preference will be given to principals with more experience in the role, and more experience interviewing teachers.

Because this research will be looking at hiring processes specifically, your collective views on the strengths and shortcomings of these processes may help to inform our understanding of effective hiring practices in diverse school contexts. Such findings will also add to the dearth of information on teacher hiring practices in Canada.

At no time will you be judged, evaluated or at risk of harm through your survey or interview responses, nor will any value judgments be made of them. It keeping with the conditions of the Peel DSB External Research Review Committee, a copy of the final report will be submitted to the committee. Similarly, once the dissertation is defended, it becomes accessible as part of the public record and will be available http://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/9944. If opportunity arises to share these findings through publication or presentations, be assured that participants’ identity will remain strictly confidential. Pseudonyms only will be used to refer to any direct interview comments that may be used in the final dissertation.

Should you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, or if you have any complaints or concerns about how you have been treated as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto, at ethics.review@utoronto.ca, or 416.946.3273.

Thank you.

David Jack
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905.890.1010. Ext. 2376, or 416.200.3858
david.jack@peelsb.com

Dr. Jim Ryan, Thesis Supervisor
Professor, OISE/UT
252 Bloor St. W. Toronto, M5S 1V6
416.978.1152, jim.ryan@utoronto.ca
References


