Multicultural Education in Catholic Elementary Schools

By

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Abstract

The aim of this research study was to examine and understand the outcomes, strategies, challenges, and successes of teaching multicultural education effectively in Catholic elementary schools. The main research question that guided this study was: how were a sample of Catholic teachers enacting multicultural education through culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP)? Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with two elementary school educators who currently work in Catholic elementary schools. Findings suggest that drawing from personal experiences and available networks significantly assist educators in their work by enabling them to empathize with their students and gain valuable resources to support their work. Also, students are actively engaged and interested in their learning as they can make personal connections to what they are being taught, thus positively affecting their academic performance and personal well-being. Findings also propose that through dedication, proper knowledge, and support, educators are in fact able to teach multicultural education effectively while still connecting it back to the Catholic faith by recognizing and acknowledging diversity and encouraging a responsibility to others. The implications of these findings suggest that it is important for this work to be widespread among the educational community and school environments so that an effective integration can occur. Also, more work needs to be done in research to incorporate student, parent, and community voices, and include student outcomes of effective implementation, so that educators and researchers are able to have a deeper understanding of these missing perspectives and realize the significance of this practice to better serve the people of the community.

Key Words: multicultural education, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, Catholic elementary schools, Catholic education
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Research Context

With the increase of immigration over time in Canada, the nation has become more multicultural. Over the years, Canada’s ethnic and cultural composition has been shaped by several waves of immigration. These immigrants have helped shape the identity of Canada, making it a land that takes pride in its diversity and ethno-cultural make-up. The term “cultural mosaic” is commonly used to describe the identity of Canada as the country encompasses many different ethnicities (Statistics Canada, 2015). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that Canada’s cultural diversity “shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians” (Kislowicz, 2012, p. 2). Therefore, the significance of the cultural diversity of Canada is one that is celebrated and promoted, evidenced by its status as the first country in the world to create a Multicultural Policy in 1971 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).

According to the 2006 National Household Survey Census, 19.8% of the total population of Canadians are individuals who emigrated from foreign countries. The continent of Asia, including the Middle East, presented the largest source of immigrants to Canada between 2006 and 2011. Society used the term “visible minorities” to categorize these groups of people (Statistics Canada, 2015). Canada’s Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as:

Persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, South East Asian, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese. (as cited in Statistics Canada, 2015, Visible Minority Population section, para. 2)
With the rise of immigration in Canada, new demands were created on the educational system to better meet the needs of its transforming multicultural society.

Studies have shown that a student’s culture significantly impacts how they learn and understand a concept (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Banks & Banks, 2007; Petty & Narayan, 2012). A student’s social environment has been known to greatly influence their comprehension and exploration of the world around them, thus affecting their overall academic performance (Anderson, 1984, as cited in Petty & Narayan, 2012). Such findings have encouraged Canada to adapt its educational system to one that respects Canada’s diverse cultures and promotes multicultural education. Banks (1993) defines multicultural education as:

An idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school. (p. 1, as cited in Russo, Adams & Seery, 1998, p. 180-181)

The method of educating students from culturally diverse backgrounds is enhanced when educators ensure to reflect their various students’ home cultures within their teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Brown, 2007). Modification of classroom structure and policy and practice transformation positively impacts students’ learning (Gay 2002; Brown, 2007). Therefore, in order to promote an in depth understanding of other cultures and promote amenable attitudes towards the nation’s diversity, multicultural education can be instrumental in creating opportunities to develop the curriculum in a supportive and nurturing learning environment (Russo, Adams & Seery, 1998). Furthermore, multicultural education assists in cultivating a ‘positive cultural identity and well-being’ within all students in the classroom and aims to

One of the approaches in facilitating multicultural education within the classroom is through culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP). Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992) describes CRRP as:

An approach that serves to empower students to the point where they will be able to examine critically educational context and process and ask what its role is in creating a truly democratic and multicultural society. It uses the students’ culture to help them create meaning and understand the world. Thus, not only academic success, but also social and cultural success is emphasized. (p. 110, as cited in Milner, 2011, p. 68)

Therefore, through educators teaching CRRP, students are able to see themselves in their learning and understand how their culture contributes to the curriculum and plays a role in society (Milner, 2011). Overall, this method of teaching enables students to have a sense of belonging to their learning environment and the external world.

As Canadian history in Ontario has shown to support the creation of Catholic schools, the ability of single-faith schools supporting and promoting a multicultural environment free of social division has been in question (Jackson, 2003; Pring, 2005, as cited in Breen, 2009). Catholic schools have two main goals whereby they aim to educate students into their cultural heritage and imbed the Catholic faith into all aspects of the curriculum (Altena & Hermans, 2003). However, researchers have emphasized the importance of Catholic school leaders understanding the impact that students’ cultures have in their lives and consequently underscore the need for Catholic education to adapt its methods to a more multicultural approach (Banks, 1992; Heft, 1997; Russo et al., 1998; Cattaro, 2002; Altena & Hermans, 2003; Breen, 2009;
Montejano, 2010). This is to better support the increase in the number of minority students enrolled within the Catholic school system (Russo et al., 1998).

1.1 Research Problem

In the context of increasing prevalence of culturally diverse classrooms, research suggests that some teachers avoid engaging students in controversial diversity-related discussions as a result of anxiety over creating tension in the classroom (Freeman, 2006; Prieto et al., 2009). In relation, several teachers avoid teaching multicultural education due to lack of knowledge and misconceptions around the relevance to their discipline (Banks & Banks, 2007; Lucas, 2010; Petty & Narayan, 2012). Also, as Catholic schools follow a single faith-based education, critics have argued that promoting a multicultural educational approach to teaching is debatable within these schools, as there is an emphasis on unity and oneness in the Catholic faith among the students; therefore, at times an exploration and learning of the cultural differences that encompass the student body is overlooked (Russo et al., 1998). Furthermore, the curricula in many North American education systems typically reflect dominant Eurocentric perspectives, with limited opportunity for learning about diverse cultural identities, perspectives, or histories (Petty & Narayan, 2012). Therefore, further research is required to address an in depth analysis of these issues so that the diverse population of students in Catholic schools are reflected and represented in their educational environments.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Given this problem, the purpose of my research was to learn how Catholic school teachers incorporate multicultural education through CRRP into their classrooms in regards to lesson planning, classroom design, and the learning atmosphere so that the cultural identities of their students are displayed in their teaching and in the students’ learning. I shared these findings
with the educational community, and integrated the significance of the findings into my own teaching practice.

1.3 Research Questions

The main research question that the study focused on was: how were a sample of Catholic teachers enacting multicultural education through culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP)?

The subsidiary research questions that helped further a critical analysis of the study were:

a) What were the challenges experienced by these teachers in regards to implementing multiculturalism in their classroom, and how did they handle these challenges?

b) What experiences informed these teachers’ commitment to enacting culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy in Catholic school classrooms?

c) What factors and resources supported these teachers in implementing a multicultural curriculum for all students to see themselves in their learning?

d) How were these teachers enacting CRRP in ways that forefront the Catholic faith?

1.4 Background of the Researcher

As someone who has experienced feeling excluded from the classroom environment in a Catholic elementary school due to being an ethnic minority, I developed a strong interest in learning how I could incorporate more multicultural practices through CRRP into the curriculum in Catholic schools so that the cultural identities of all my future students could be reflected in their learning. This is because I believe that my ethnicity was a major part of my identity during my childhood as I recall always being reminded that I was part of a visible minority group.

When I was in my Catholic elementary school, I remember being a minority in my class as I was the only brown South Asian girl. The majority of my classmates were African Canadian
and Filipino. Despite being part of the visible minority group in Canada themselves, I was made to feel different from the rest, as they were the two dominant races in my grade. As I was from a South Asian country, my peers ascribed me a stereotypical identity and categorized me as being “paki,” even though I was from Bangladesh and not Pakistan. They held stereotypical views of South Asian people, in which they assumed that I only ate traditional food (rice and curry), listened to Indian music, and wore traditional clothing at home. They found these stereotypical misconceptions of South Asian culture to be humorous. However, none of these stereotypes were actually true to my lifestyle as my family and I were greatly influenced by the Western culture due to having Portuguese ancestry and being Catholic. As a fear of being humiliated at school, I remember ensuring that I never brought certain food to school for lunch. I was cautious of how I pronounced English words as I had a slight accent when I first came to Canada. I also avoided eating with my hand at home and used cutlery instead, so that I could be more like my peers.

Although my peers did not segregate me for being South Asian, they did tease me occasionally and made my ethnicity the subject of amusement. I recall correcting my peers in their stereotypical views yet ensured to remain friendly so that I would be accepted and fit in with the rest of them.

Being of an ethnic minority with other demographic ethnic minorities, I felt like I did not belong to any group, as I was the only South Asian girl amongst my peers. This affected my self-esteem and confidence in being able to put my best efforts forward in my learning, as I felt intimidated by my peers. I felt like I had to stay in the shadow to avoid being noticed or standing out as I feared being segregated because of it. The constant fear that I held of being bullied because I was different affected my overall performance at school because I remained introverted, shy, and timid all through my elementary school experience. I did not try to be the
best that I could be because I believed that it was not right for me to overstep my peers as I was a minority amongst them and they ensured to covertly make that known and remind me of my identity.

Aside from having one teacher who looked similar to me, in terms of ethnicity, and who tried to incorporate some culturally relevant activities into the curriculum, I did not quite feel like anyone else understood or knew about my culture. I realize now that having that educator as a teacher greatly benefited me as his teaching practices slowly put me on my path of self-acceptance. Overall, my childhood experience contributed to my interest in this area of research, in hopes to help foster an inclusive and multicultural learning environment, free of biases, for my future students.

1.5 Overview

To find answers to the research questions I conducted a qualitative research study using purposeful sampling to interview two Catholic teachers about their strategies for implementing multicultural education through CRRP and being responsive to the ethno-cultural identities in their classrooms. In Chapter 2, I reviewed the literature in the areas of incorporating multicultural education in the classroom and planning an inclusive curriculum through CRRP in the Catholic school system. In Chapter 3, I discussed the research design that I conducted. In Chapter 4, I reported my research findings and discussed their significance in relation to the existing research literature. Finally, in Chapter 5, I identified the implications of the research findings for my own professional conduct and practice, and for the broader educational research community. I also provided a series of questions raised by the research findings, and reported areas for future research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I reviewed the literature in the areas of multicultural education, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP), and Catholic school education. More specifically I examined themes related to the implementation of multicultural education through the method of CRRP. I started by reviewing the literature in the area of identifying what this research informed about multicultural education and CRRP and I considered scholarly suggestions for best practices. Next, I examined research on the challenges to implementing these practices and considered student outcomes of effective practice. From there, I looked at the establishment of Catholic schools in Ontario and at the aims and challenges of Catholic school education in adopting a multicultural perspective. Finally, I reviewed the policies and procedures that are in place to support multicultural education in Catholic schools and considered scholarly recommendations for effective practice.

2.1 Multicultural Education

As a result of several waves of immigration into Canada within the last decade, the need to enhance the delivery of educational services through a more multicultural approach has been essential (Statistics Canada, 2015). This change in Canadian population has required educational institutions to reorganize and modify their curricula and practices to implement multicultural education within their schools. Currently, Canada’s 1971 Multicultural Policy asserts that there is equality among all its citizens in terms of identity preservation, acknowledgement of one’s ancestry, and inclusion in society (Minister of Justice, 2014). The notion held through the implementation of multiculturalism is that if one feels accepted, they are more likely to include and accept others, giving others of diverse cultures a sense of belonging as well. The way of
Canadian life through multiculturalism propagates the understanding of the many different cultures within Canada and promotes racial and ethnic harmony among its citizens (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).

Several researchers have described multicultural education as teaching students to respect others’ diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Lucas, 2010; Castro et al., 2012). Multicultural education considers other cultural perspectives with an understanding that there should be an appreciation for various differences. This type of education underscores cultural diversity and advocates paying attention to biases and minimizing stereotypes in order to promote an equitable and inclusive learning community. Multicultural education exists with the purpose of rejecting racism and discrimination. It calls upon educators to transform their conventional ways of teaching to one that embraces social justice and pluralism (Banks, 1993; Russo et al., 1998; Lucas, 2010; Castro et al., 2012). Furthermore, multicultural education promotes the opportunity for all students to succeed academically regardless of their ethnic diversity (Banks, 1993; Russo et al., 1998; Petty & Narayan, 2012). Therefore, the significance of enacting this within the curriculum in educational systems is clear.

2.1.1 Findings

Research has found that despite many educators’ understanding the significance of multicultural education, some teachers have failed to discuss and implement its practices within their teaching due to either limited knowledge, a lack of concern for racial inequality, viewing the material as controversial, or having a non-diverse student body (Aukrust & Rydland, 2009; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Lucas, 2010; Petty & Narayan, 2012). Despite these known barriers, many of these educators still acknowledge the importance of teaching multicultural education and believe in promoting high equitable quality education for students (Lucas, 2010;
Petty & Narayan, 2012). Moreover, research has found that teachers who are implementing multicultural education hold varying perspectives about the concept. Some educators view multicultural education as the blending of students and their backgrounds with other cultural and ethnic groups; whereas other teachers believe that multiculturalism applies only to student learning styles and getting along with others (Lucas, 2010; Petty & Narayan, 2012). Regardless, research has shown that talking about ethnic diversity is relevant to children’s discussions as they are inclined to gravitate to the subject with or without teacher influence (Aukrust & Rydland, 2009).

Findings from a study conducted by Castro et al. (2012) about the way that pre-service teachers implement multicultural education into social studies highlights two types of approaches. One approach is to add-in cultural materials, resources, and lessons wherever relevant in their teaching of the curriculum to foster acceptance and tolerance for ethnic diversities. This method involves teachers using multicultural literature whenever possible and discussing similarities and differences across cultures with their students making the cultural content as something extracurricular or a form of enrichment material (Galczynski, Tsagkaraki & Ghosh, 2011, 2012; Castro et al., 2012). The other approach in the study is to use culture as the basis for teaching the curriculum content. The researchers explain that using culture as the basis for curriculum teaching “requires the teacher to reorganize instruction so as to center on cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness, sometimes challenging historical events or narratives found in traditional history textbooks with counter-narratives or alternative perspectives” (Castro et al., 2012, p. 102). This method allows students to learn about the various cultural backgrounds and experiences of their peers, from each other. This approach supports the notion of people
having the opportunity to share their own perspectives and stories free of the biases and misconceptions that may be conveyed through the text (Castro et al., 2012).

The in-depth approach to implementing multicultural education used by the pre-service teachers in the second method was a result of appropriate professional development. The various strategies used to prepare that particular group of pre-service teachers included informing them about how to meet the needs of diverse learners, partnering them with experienced educators who modeled how to integrate cultural learning practices and create a community that respected cultural differences, and enabling them to interact and teach children of diverse backgrounds. The researchers believe that through experiencing this process, these pre-service teachers were able to offer a more meaningful and authentic integration of multicultural education to their students (Castro et al., 2012).

2.1.2 Scholarly suggestions for best practices

Studies have proposed that there are various ways to effectively implement multicultural education to enhance students’ optimal learning, promote cultural identity, and well-being. Researchers have contended that in order for students to improve academically, they need to be reflected in their learning through their native cultures and immediate environment (Banks & Banks, 2007; Brown, 2007; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Lucas, 2010; Castro et al., 2012; Petty & Narayan, 2012). Educators and administrators should also modify classroom structures and update policies and practices to reflect the cultural mosaic of their students (Brown, 2007; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009).

Proponents also argue that multicultural education should also be taught and included in all levels of teacher education and student curriculum so that educators may have the practice imbedded into their teaching philosophy, and so that students are provided with the opportunity
to learn about others from an early age (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Banks & Banks, 2007; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Lucas, 2010; Galczynski et al., 2011, 2012; Petty & Narayan, 2012). They further argue that it is important that educators also further students’ critical thinking of multiculturalism by encouraging them to analyze and problem-solve issues through the lens of different ethnic groups in their community (Galczynski et al., 2011, 2012; Castro et al., 2012). The book *Rethinking Multicultural Education* encourages educators to see past the Eurocentric perspectives portrayed in the curriculum and delve deeper into guiding their students to explore and research a meaningful understanding of multiculturalism through topics of social justice such as oppression, racism, slavery, and imperialism, etc. This book affirms that proper implementation of multicultural education should be rigorous, student-centered, interdisciplinary, and should promote critical thinking about topics of social justice within the classroom (Au, 2009; Delaney, 2011). Research supports that teacher attitudes about multicultural education should also promote respect and equity for all students and refrain from cultural biases and stereotypes so that their students may learn through their example (Banks & Banks, 2007; Galczynski et al., 2011, 2012; Castro et al., 2012; Petty & Narayan, 2012). Brown (2007) states that educators’ “positive or negative response could affect the self-esteem and academic success of students from these varied racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds” (p. 57). Furthermore, in order for the effective practice of multicultural education to occur within schools, there should be collaboration between educators and administrators in fostering an inclusive learning environment (Banks & Banks, 2007; Petty & Narayan, 2012).

### 2.1.3 Challenges

Research has identified several challenges that teachers face when implementing effective multicultural education. The main challenge for educators is their limited knowledge in
the area and lack of proper professional development to prepare them with successful strategies to integrate within their teaching (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Lucas, 2010; Galczynski et al., 2011, 2012; Petty & Narayan, 2012). This causes teachers to feel uncomfortable with teaching multicultural education and dismiss the significance of it, especially when there is a lack of understanding its relevance to their profession (Banks & Banks, 2007; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Lucas, 2010; Petty & Narayan, 2012). Also, with the lack of proper training in multicultural education, educators who are implementing it are commonly teaching it through the lens of a “cultural divide” whereby students are taught to examine cultural differences in other parts of the world, rather than relating their knowledge of other cultures to themselves (Lucas, 2010). Furthermore, a dominant Eurocentric perspective throughout the educational curriculum silences the meaning of multiculturalism, as students are mainly being taught through the dominant culture’s point-of-view; therefore, this prevents them from seeing their own cultures represented in their learning. This challenges teachers to find effective methods for implementation (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Lucas, 2010).

2.1.4 Student outcomes

Studies have shown that the academic achievement of students would advance if educators taught and conducted their classroom in a manner that was culturally responsive to their students’ home cultures (Brown, 2007). This could enable students to adopt a greater understanding of diverse cultures aside from their own (Russo et al., 1998). Research claims that learning multicultural education in primary schools can lead to more positive inter-ethnic relations as children have the opportunity to learn about cultural group differences and concepts such as anti-racism (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). Moreover, providing children with the chance to learn about cultural differences and other related aspects of multicultural education encourage
more positive attitudes as children’s knowledge and understanding of the diversity in the world is enhanced (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). A study conducted by Verkuyten and Thijs (2013) about early adolescents’ (9-12 years) peer group influence on multicultural beliefs report that the “beliefs of classmates are an important source of reference for children’s own beliefs and thereby for their ethnic attitudes” (p. 186); nevertheless, the experiences and attitudes of the majority [dominant] group of children had similar positive effects to that of different groups of ethnic minority children when multicultural education was introduced (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). Thus, indicating that multicultural education can be beneficial for all children involved. Additionally, implementing multicultural education appropriately would positively affect students’ self-esteem, well-being, cultural identity, and sociocultural awareness as they would be able to see themselves reflected in their learning and have a better sense of belonging (Castro et al., 2012). Therefore, ensuring to effectively implement multicultural education within the curriculum could help students feel a part of their classroom and school community, could lead to an overall meaningful and successful educational experience, and could positively shape their understanding and acceptance of ethnic diversity.

2.2 Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy

Implementing culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP) has been an approach that many educators have used to incorporate multicultural education into the curriculum. Teaching CRRP assumes that when students are taught content that is relatable to their lives, their learning becomes more personally meaningful, keeps their interest, and is more easily and thoroughly learned (Brown, 2007). Gloria Ladson-Billings, an early and leading voice in the area CRRP, envisioned that teaching CRRP would enable students to maintain a sense of cultural identity, while succeeding academically. Ladson-Billings (2006) proposed three principles of
CRRP, which include that (1) academic success is about student learning, whereby what students know and are able to do is based on what they are taught by skilled teachers; (2) students’ culture is an asset, whereby students are expected and empowered to develop intellectually and socially to build skills that are meaningful and beneficial to society; and (3) educators help students identify and respect their own cultural beliefs and practices while learning about broader cultures which enables them to have an opportunity to be someone in this world, fully informed, and free to take the path they wish to take (Gay, 2002; Milner, 2011; Petty & Narayan, 2012).

In order to teach culturally relevantly, educators need to understand that there is no predetermined set of strategies that they must follow with each group of students they teach, and that students’ needs will change with each newly assigned class (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2011; Schmeichel, 2012). Instead, how an educator conducts themselves in terms of their beliefs and perspectives is significant. Researchers (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Brown, 2007; Milner, 2011) have defined characteristics of a culturally responsive teacher as:

Such a teacher (a) is socio-culturally conscious, that is, recognizes that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality and that these ways are influenced by one’s location in the social order; (b) has affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing resources for learning in all students rather than viewing differences as problems to be overcome; (c) sees himself or herself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students; (d) understands how learners construct knowledge and is capable of promoting learners’ knowledge construction; (e) knows about the lives of his or her students; and (f) uses his or her knowledge about students’ lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar. (p. 21)
Overall, culturally responsive teachers believe that students’ ethnic backgrounds greatly impact how they learn; therefore, they ensure to teach in ways that are respectful of student cultures and conducive to their learning (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Gay, 2002; Brown, 2007; Alban & Reeves, 2014).

### 2.2.1 Findings

Studies have shown that teacher education programs can provide pre-service teachers with principles of multicultural education for which they can easily adopt; however, the problem lies in some of these teachers being unaware of how to effectively implement these principles into their teaching (Artiles, Barreto, & Pena, 1998, as cited in Groulx & Silva, 2010). Therefore, there is a need to help pre-service teachers broaden their understanding of conventional and unauthentic multicultural curriculum practices to more social action approaches that can help make a difference in children’s lives and in society (Groulx & Silva, 2010). One way of achieving this is to encourage educators to build positive relationships with their students and their parents by learning about students’ home environments and cultural backgrounds so that students feel appreciated for who they are and where they come from (Milner, 2011; Alban & Reeves, 2014). This practice of relationship building also aligns with the goals of CRRP, enabling educators to turn principles into practice (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Alban & Reeves, 2014). Research that provides strategies for teachers to use, to change principles into practice, both in teacher preparation and culturally diverse classrooms are exemplifying positive models for educators to follow (Cummins, Chow, & Schecter, 2006; De Gaetano, 2007; Kidd, Sanchez, & Thorp, 2008, as cited in Groulx & Silva, 2010).
2.2.2 Scholarly suggestions for best practices

In order for multicultural education to be taught effectively through the use of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP), research has recommended several requirements that should be fulfilled. These suggestions include that teacher-education programs should ensure to teach pre-service teachers to understand culturally responsive teaching (CRT), and have them recognize their own cultural biases and beliefs (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Brown, 2007; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Alban & Reeves, 2014). Programs should build on CRT practices during in-class instruction and field experiences, and encourage pre-service teachers’ professional development to help model responsive teaching qualities (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Brown, 2007; Groulx & Silva, 2010). Examining and revising the curriculum is also fundamental to teaching multiculturalism through CRRP (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Brown, 2007).

Overall, teacher-education programs should ensure to prepare pre-service and in-service teachers to work effectively with students of cultural backgrounds, and help build effective cross-cultural communication among educators, students, and the communities they serve (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Brown, 2007; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Milner, 2011; Alban & Reeves, 2014). It is important that teacher attitudes reflect an appreciation for the culturally diverse students that they teach, and that educators build and sustain meaningful and authentic relationships with their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002; Brown, 2007; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Milner, 2011; Petty & Narayan, 2012; Alban & Reeves, 2014). School administration should also support teachers in transforming their teaching, classrooms, and schools to be more culturally responsive, and ensure to implement and encourage policies that view diversity as beneficial to schools (Gay, 2002; Brown, 2007; Milner, 2011).
2.2.3 Challenges

Research outlined several challenges to enacting effective culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. As most new teachers prioritize learning specific teaching skills over altering their perceptions of schools and culture, the importance of meeting diverse students’ needs may be overlooked as new teachers may avoid challenging standard curricula and district expectations (Obidah, 2000; Joram, 2007, as cited in Groulx & Silva, 2010). Teachers’ cultural biases and lack of race consciousness also prevent culturally relevant practices from being implemented (Schmeichel, 2012). This can lead to misconceptions about what CRRP means and what it encompasses, enabling the possibility of stereotypical perspectives to occur (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Irvine, 2010, as cited in Schmeichel, 2012; Milner, 2011). Other factors inhibiting effective CRRP within the classroom includes some teachers’ inability to work with large class sizes and having inadequate support when it is required (Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008, as cited in Schmeichel, 2012).

Moreover, some educators experience difficulty exemplifying an appreciative attitude towards the cultural, linguistic, and social characteristics of their students, especially when their students’ cultural characteristics greatly differ from their own (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Brown, 2007; Schmeichel, 2012). This leads to a concern in the ability of teachers helping students learn about themselves, others, and the world, which is necessary for students to be a contributing member of society (Milner, 2011). Overall, this emphasizes the need for school administration, mentors, and teacher-education programs “to prepare teachers who are highly qualified to implement practices and deliver sound programs in the classroom” (Sullivan & Glanz, 2000, as cited in Brown, 2007, p. 60).
2.2.4 Student outcomes

Culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP) has numerous benefits to student success when it is implemented properly in the classroom. Researcher Milner (2011) highlights several significant outcomes of CRRP by stating that it:

Empowers students to examine educational content and processes, create and construct and deconstruct meaning, succeed academically and socially, and see contradictions and inequities in local and larger communities. (CRRP) incorporates student culture in curriculum and teaching, maintaining it, and transcending negative effects of the dominant culture. (CRRP) also creates classroom contexts that are challenging and innovative, focus on student learning (and consequently academic achievement), build cultural competence, and link curriculum and instruction to sociopolitical realities. (p. 70)

Others agree that when educators teach through their students’ cultural and experiential filters, the academic achievement of culturally diverse students will increase (Kleinfeld, 1975; Au & Kawa-kami, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2000, as cited in Brown, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Schmeichel, 2012). Therefore, CRRP is beneficial in assisting educators to implement effective multicultural education within their classrooms.

2.3 Catholic Schools in Ontario

The establishment of Catholic schools in Ontario began in 1841 when Bishop Alexander Macdonell’s dream of having Catholic schools funded by the state was enabled. This occurred through the new school Act that permitted Catholics and others to establish religious schools in the United Province of Canada (today known as Ontario and Quebec). Over the next 25 years that followed, more Catholic schools developed. Despite having faced several constitutional challenges, due to a population of a holistic Protestant majority in Ontario, Catholic schools in
Ontario were granted extended funding from junior-kindergarten to Grade 13 (McGowan, n.d., as cited in the Institute of Catholic Education Resource Material 2006-2007). However, over time this changed for Grades 10 to 13, as they would no longer be privately funded and would be under the jurisdiction of separate school boards. Furthermore, according to Bill 30, Catholic high schools had to have open-access admission for any child of a public or separate school supporter, with the option for public school supporters to exempt their children from religious education if they preferred (Dixon, 2003, as cited in the Institute of Catholic Education Resource Material 2006-2007). These are the same regulations that are in place for Catholic schools in Ontario today, whereby despite open-access admission being exempted for Catholic elementary schools, this is the regulation for Catholic high schools. Many people in the Catholic community see this as an issue; however, perhaps this regulation has provoked a greater demand for multicultural curriculum integration in Catholic high schools as most of these institutions have been known to effectively incorporate whole-school approaches such as International Night, which only recently seems to be a priority in Catholic elementary schools.

2.3.1 Aims and challenges of Catholic school education

The perspective mentioned above was assumed when examining the overarching goal of Catholic school education that is undoubtedly mandated throughout Catholic elementary schools, as they are not restricted to the open-access admission policy of Bill 30; therefore, they can focus on implementing a religious education curriculum. Schuttloffel (1998) explained the main aim of Catholic school education by stating, “Catholic schools have a...unique purpose congruent with their role as an extension of the Church's educational function: to help students synthesize faith and culture and faith and life” (p. 295, as cited in Russo et al., 1998, p. 183). This mission emphasizes the creation of a unified faith community, but the appreciation of children’s diverse
cultural backgrounds is still in question (Russo et al., 1998; Altena & Hermans, 2003; Breen, 2009).

Similarly, Sister Fitzgerald (1999) addressed in her letter to the Catholic education community that, “the world is the goal and the focus of our (Catholic) education systems. That child is being educated morally and ethically with the concept of social justice and peace to go out into that world and make a difference” (p. 11, as cited in the Institute of Catholic Education Resource Material 2006-2007). Again, the ability for children to learn about their cultural differences and gain an appreciation for who they are, where they come from, and what makes them unique is debatable, as the focus in “bettering” the world through religious amalgamation is promoted in Catholic school education. With the emphasis on creating a “community,” valuing and understanding differences is almost misconstrued as students are left to make their own assumptions and biases on cultural differences because some educators do not take the time to introduce students to various ethnic cultural practices and norms. This leaves students to make their own assumptions about some ethnic cultures, which in most instances strive from stereotypical portrayals in the media. Therefore, this exemplifies the challenge that arises in adopting a multicultural perspective throughout the curriculum in Catholic school education when there is a strong concentration on religious education.

2.3.2 Policies and procedures in support of multiculturalism

It is important to keep in mind that along with the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy of Canada, there are other various polices legislated by the government in support of Canada’s ethno-cultural mosaic in school systems. The Toronto Catholic District School Board’s (TCDSB) Policy Register (2011) recognizes that:
We (the Board) must uphold the protections entrenched in the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”), the Constitution Act, 1867 and confirmed in the Constitution Act of 1982 – the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms…the Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009) in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of the Board’s denominational rights under section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867 and as recognized in section 19 of the Ontario Human Rights Code…The Board is committed to…removing all barriers and forms of discrimination in striving to achieve Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. (H.M. 24 section, para. 3)

Therefore, given these numerous regulations in place to ensure that the TCDSB remains thoughtful of its ethnically diverse student population and provides an educational service delivery that is culturally sensitive, then why is a multicultural learning perspective in Catholic schools still controversial whereby studies (e.g. Russo et al., 1998) emphasize that there is a critical need to provide support and opportunities for social development in children, especially for children who are ethnically diverse in Catholic schools? Furthermore, if these multicultural practices are being effectively implemented in Catholic schools, then what are the positive outcomes for these culturally diverse Catholic students? There seems to be a need for further research in this area.

In his book, Cultural Diversity in Catholic Schools: Challenges and Opportunities for Catholic Educators, Martin (1996) points out that research suggests that “a key success for ethnic minority ‘at-risk’ students is support and motivation, which is central to the Catholic school approach to building community” (p. 12). He reports that several of his minority students
have stated that they appreciate Catholic school as it provides them with “a safe place where they felt valued, affirmed, connected, and at-home” (p.12); however, Martin (1996) stressed that in spite of these good efforts in this area, Catholic schools still need to do more for their ethnic minority students. Martin (1996) continues by reporting that although some Catholic schools are successfully making an effort to diversify their staff, there is still a concern for adequate ethnic minority staff and administration role models in Catholic schools for students.

The present solution to incorporating multicultural practices within the TCDSB involves establishing a Race and Ethnic Relations, Multiculturalism and Visiting Education Delegations Department within the Board. This department specializes in offering “a central location for staff, parents, and students to access program information, documents, resources, and web site links” (TCDSB, 2016, About Us section, para. 1) for anything related to race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism. It is here that educators are encouraged to contact and participate in a six-part leadership program on Race and Ethnic Relations Multiculturalism to keep updated on the revised Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity Policy and Guidelines document. The Department states that, “the goal of the program is to provide participants with relevant information in order to enhance professional growth and development, taking into consideration gospel values, leadership, diversity among staff, students and parents, and available resources” (Curriculum and Accountability Department, 2011-2012, para. 2). Despite this program being offered with the intention to assist Catholic educators in becoming more culturally knowledgeable and aware of the updated Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity Policy and Guidelines document, the concern still remains in this professional development course being optional for educators rather than mandatory for their profession.

Furthermore, other multicultural approaches taken by the TCDSB that seem questionable
involve allotting celebratory heritage months to specific ethnic Canadians. These ethnic Canadian groups include African Canadian Heritage for the month of February; Celtic Canadian Heritage for the month of March; Asian Canadian Heritage for the month of May; Aboriginal, Italian, and Portuguese Canadian Heritage for the month of June; and Hispanic Canadian Heritage for the month of October (TCDSB, 2016). Even though the Board has designated specific months to celebrating and acknowledging these various cultural groups, apprehension still exists, as researchers would argue if this multicultural practice truly provides students with an in-depth learning and understanding of these selected ethnic groups, or merely brings recognition to these cultures for the duration of their selected month (Heft, 1997; Russo et al., 1998; Montejano, 2010). The extent of an on-going rich multicultural learning experience for Catholic students still remains in question.

2.3.3 Scholarly suggestions for best practices

As critics question how effectively multicultural education is implemented in Catholic schools, several researchers have proposed strategies that can be enacted to support this matter (Banks, 1992; Heft, 1997; Russo et al., 1998; Cattaro, 2002; Montejano, 2010). To adapt effective multicultural practices, Catholic schools need to go beyond identifying and including different types of people in a single group. They need to make the effort to compassionately understand diverse peoples and cultures, be aware that these cultures are unique, and that these people should not be stereotyped from a distance (Heft, 1997; Russo et al., 1998; Montejano, 2010).

Russo et al. (1998) have added that educational leaders should be proactive by recruiting qualified minority candidates for job positions, provide ongoing professional development on issues of diversity for administrators, faculty and staff, and set goals and strategies to ensure that
change is sustained within the school environment (Montejano, 2010). Students and teachers should also be provided with numerous opportunities to participate in ongoing culturally enriching activities, and faculty should be assisted in creating and maintaining culturally inclusive school environments by developing, selecting, and using culturally inclusive teaching materials and methods that include a variety of old and new perspectives. By doing so, students are given an enriched sense of appreciation and understanding of diverse ethnicities in their curriculum (Banks, 1992; Russo et al., 1998; Cattaro, 2002; Montejano, 2010). It is through enacting these efficient approaches within the Catholic school curriculum and environment that Catholic schools can enhance their educational service delivery to a well-rounded religious and multicultural perspective that would meet the needs of all of their diverse students.

2.4 Conclusion

In this literature review I looked at research on multicultural education, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP), and Catholic school education. This review elucidated the extent that attention has been paid to implementing multicultural education effectively through CRRP. It also raised questions about the degree to which this is being done in Catholic elementary schools and points to the need for further research in the area of student outcomes as a result of effective implementation of multicultural education. In light of this, the purpose of my research is to learn how elementary Catholic school educators incorporate multiculturalism through CRRP into their classrooms in regards to lesson planning, classroom design, and the learning atmosphere, so that these findings can be shared with the educational community and integrated into my own teaching practice.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I described the research methodology. I began by reviewing the general approach, procedures, and data collection instruments, before elaborating more specifically on participant sampling and recruitment. I explained data analysis procedures and reviewed the ethical considerations pertinent to my study. Relatedly, I identified a range of methodological limitations, but I also spoke to the strengths of the methodology. Finally, I concluded the chapter with a brief summary of key methodological decisions and my rationale for these decisions given the research purpose and questions.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

This research study was conducted using a qualitative research approach involving a literature review and semi-structured interviews with two educators. Qualitative research involves studying things in their natural settings, in an attempt to understand, interpret, and wonder about the meanings people hold about problems or issues in their lives (Trumbull 2000; Creswell, 2009; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). This type of method looks at how people think and act in their daily lives and analyzes the research to obtain that information (Creswell, 2009; Taylor et al., 2015). Results in qualitative research are usually reported in words, rather than numbers, and can take the form of narratives in which participants convey their lived experiences with the researcher (Stiles, 1999; Trumbull 2000). This in turn provides an in-depth understanding into the personal perspectives of the participants. Data is collected through examining documents, observing behaviour, and/or interviewing participants, by the researchers themselves (Creswell, 2009).
Given my research purpose and questions, a qualitative research study was an appropriate approach for me as it enabled me to gain a deeper understanding into the lived experiences of the Catholic elementary teachers I intended to interview. This type of research allowed me to gain insights about how these Catholic teachers enacted effective multicultural practices into their teaching. Also, as qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting, this provided me with the opportunity to have face-to-face interactions with my participants and see them in their natural demeanour (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, this research method was ideal as it reports its findings in words, enabling an in-depth exploration of the participants’ opinions, thoughts, and beliefs on the significance of multicultural education.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection used in this study was the semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B). Semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity to hear about participants’ past and present lived experiences and behaviours (Creswell, 2007; Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The semi-structured format allows for the interviewer to design and plan an interview that attends to their research focus and questions, while leaving room for participants to elaborate and even re-direct attention to areas previously unforeseen by the interviewer. It promotes a balanced control over the interaction, as the interviewer uses open-ended questions and topics as a guide while interviewing, rather than having something fixed to follow (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Harrell & Bradley, 2009). This most widely used interviewing format for qualitative research permits the interviewer to probe with questions aside from the pre-determined questions created, to ensure that the correct material is covered in the interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Harrell & Bradley, 2009).
Conducting a semi-structured interview was a suitable interviewing format that aligned with my research purpose and questions. This protocol enabled me to delve deeply into the topic of multicultural education and understand the background information and expert knowledge provided to me by the Catholic elementary teachers whom I interviewed (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Harrell & Bradley, 2009). As I was able to collect detailed information in a conversational style, it assisted with creating a naturalistic atmosphere where my participants were capable of portraying their natural demeanour. Also, using this style of interviewing format enabled me to provide my participants with clarification on any questions that they did not understand during the interview, as I was not limited to following a script (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

3.3 Participants

Here I have reviewed the sampling criteria I established for participant recruitment, and I reviewed a range of possible avenues for teacher recruitment. I have also included a section wherein I introduced each of the participants for my research study.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

The following criteria was applied to teacher participants:

1. Teachers currently teach in Catholic elementary schools or have experience teaching in Catholic elementary schools.

2. Teachers have a minimum of five to ten years teaching experience in Catholic elementary schools.

3. Teachers believe in the pedagogical value of multicultural education and CRRP and consistently implement it in their everyday teaching practice.
To keep in line with a qualitative research approach, I decided to use a small, selective sample in my study (Creswell, 2009). In order to address the main research question, the participants that I interviewed have taught in Catholic elementary schools. Additionally, these teachers have a minimum teaching experience of five to ten years, as I wanted to gain experienced knowledge on the topic and perspectives on changing classroom demographics over time. Furthermore, to gain an authentic account of lived experiences, participant teachers believe in the importance of incorporating multicultural education and CRRP. Lastly, I interviewed teachers who were consistent in implementing these practices, because I was interested in their effective expertise knowledge and commitment to its practice being enacted in their schools.

3.3.2 Participant recruitment

When conducting qualitative research, being able to gain access to individuals who match the criteria to participate in the study is crucial. Two methods used when selecting a sample for qualitative studies are purposeful and convenience sampling. Purposeful, also known as judgement sampling, is when the researchers use their personal judgement and attempt to select participants who can intentionally provide in-depth insights into the research problem and purpose of the study (Creswell, 2007; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Convenience sampling involves researchers selecting participants who are most accessible to the researchers’ given location and data can be collected easily (Creswell, 2007; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

Given the small-scale nature of the study and the methodological parameters that I was able to work within, my sampling procedure relied on both purposeful and convenience sampling. This is because I used my judgement to recruit participants who met my criteria from my existing contacts and networks, as I am immersed in a community of teacher colleagues and
mentor teachers. The strategies that I employed to recruit participants for my study included contacting teacher associations and principals and providing them with an overview of my research study and participant criteria. I also asked that these individuals distributed my information to teachers who they believed that fulfilled the criteria. To avoid potential ethical issues, I provided my information rather than asking for these individuals to provide me with the names and contact information of people they thought would be suitable. This helped ensure that teachers volunteered to participate rather than feeling pressure or obligation to participate.

### 3.3.3 Participant biographies

Naomi was of Chinese and Japanese heritage and was born in Hawaii. She immigrated to Canada later on in life and first worked in the business world of finance, before she became an intermediate elementary school teacher with the Toronto Catholic District School Board. Naomi taught in Catholic elementary schools for 10 years and was going onto her 11th year of teaching with the Catholic Board. She taught Grades 7 and 8 in five Catholic elementary schools, and was beginning to teach Grade 8. Of these Catholic elementary schools, it was very uncommon for Naomi to see multicultural education being prioritized within them. Her commitment and interest in multicultural education derived from being a visible minority in Canada herself, a globalizing world, the Catholic faith and Ontario curriculum, and her dedication to being a knowledgeable teacher. Staying updated with the newspaper and news about the world helped prepare and continued to support Naomi in her work around multicultural education and CRRP.

Mason was born in Sri Lanka and immigrated to Canada with his family when he was five years old. He worked with the Toronto Catholic District School Board for 25 years. He was an elementary school teacher for 16 years, a vice principal for a little over two years, and a principal for seven years. While working as a teacher, Mason taught children aged from
kindergarten to Grade 8; however, specifically taught Grades 6, 7, and 8. He taught in four Catholic elementary schools as a teacher, administered as a vice principal and principal in two schools, and was going onto his third Catholic elementary school as a principal. Of these Catholic elementary schools, Mason had begun to see a greater awareness of multicultural education being prioritized within them more recently than before. Although he did not believe that he developed a commitment to enact multicultural education, Mason’s personal experience of being an ethnic minority while growing up in Canada and teaching other children of diverse backgrounds, broaden his perspective to understand the significance of multicultural education and helped him gain an interest in the concept. Mason’s students, their families, his educational experience, the Catholic School Board, attending workshops, and the Ministry of Education’s 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy Document all assisted him in preparing and supporting his work around multicultural education and CRRP.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the way in which data is described, classified, and understood in terms of how concepts interconnect (Dey, 1993; Lacey & Luff, 2001). Based on the research question, Lacey and Luff (2001) stated that the researchers might need to find “relationships between various themes that have been identified,” or “relate behaviour or ideas to biographical characteristics” of participants (p. 6). Ideally, qualitative data analysis occurs alongside with data collection to allow the researchers to create a developing understanding about the questions of the study. This information also then refines the participant sampling and the interview questions being asked (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) used the term “saturation” to mean that eventually, this
repeated process of data collection and analysis “leads to a point in the data collection where no new categories or themes emerge…signalling that data collection is complete” (p. 317-318).

A common approach used to analyze qualitative data involves using specific codes from a codebook to sort and organize text into similar content sections, which is then categorized into major themes (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). During my analysis, I used a similar procedure to code my data, looking for common themes and divergences in the data as relevant to my research questions. I also looked at “null data” – that is, what participating teachers did not speak to, and discussed the significance of it.

### 3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

Researchers need to be aware of the ethical issues that may arise when conducting qualitative research, as its approach usually uses methods that may seem intrusive into the personal lives of its participants (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Creswell, 2009). These ethical issues include the need to protect and develop trust with the participants; promote the reliability of research; ensure the authenticity, validity, and credibility of what is written; gain consent; maintain confidentiality; and enclose information about the right to withdraw, risks of participation, and how data will be stored (Creswell, 2009).

Given the purpose of my study, I was cognisant of the ethical issues involved. As the informed consent form “acknowledges that participants’ rights will be protected during data collection” (Creswell, 2009, p. 89), my participants were asked to sign a consent letter (Appendix A) giving their consent to be interviewed as well as audio-recorded. This consent letter provided an overview of the study, addressed ethical implications, and specified expectations of participation (one 45-60 minute semi-structured interview). Also, participants were aware of the minimal risks associated with partaking in the study. Given the research topic,
it is possible that a particular question may trigger an emotional response from a participant, thus making them feel vulnerable. Listening and reflecting information back to the participant causes this danger to occur (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Therefore, I minimized this risk by sending a sample of the interview questions to participants ahead of time, and by re-assuring them throughout the interview and in the consent letter that they had the right to refrain from answering any question that they did not feel comfortable with, as well as re-stating their right to withdraw from participation. Furthermore, as emphasized by DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006), I was prepared to provide my participants with emotional support if my interview questions created unnecessary stress or produced psychological complications.

In regards to confidentiality, my participants’ identities remained confidential and any identifying markers related to their schools or students were excluded. Creswell (2009) stated that, “in qualitative research, inquirers use aliases or pseudonyms for individuals and places, to protect identities” (p. 91). Therefore, to protect the anonymity of my participants, they were all assigned a pseudonym. My participants were also notified of their right to withdraw from taking part in the study at any stage of the research. I ensured to promote this freedom by asking the participants to verbally consent partaking in any interviews numerous times during the research process, so that the selected individuals had the opportunity to reconsider their participation if needed (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Also, participants had the opportunity to review the transcripts and to clarify or retract any statements before I conducted data analysis, as this provided them with a say in how their statements were interpreted and added to the authenticity, validity, and credibility of what was recorded (Creswell, 2009). Finally, as analyzed data should be kept safe, for a reasonable period of time, and then discarded (Creswell, 2009), all data (audio
recordings) accumulated in this study was stored on my password-protected laptop and phone, and will be destroyed after five years.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

Given the ethical parameters that were approved for the MTRP, some of the key areas that limited this study included having a limited sample unit and size, specified instrument for data collection, and timeframe to conduct the research. Effective qualitative research involves a holistic account of multiple participant perspectives; numerous sources of data collection such as interviews, observations, and documents; and considerable time to gather information (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Creswell, 2009); however, this study could only involve one interview each with a maximum of two to three teachers, and consequently it was not possible to interview students or parents, or to conduct surveys or classroom observations. Therefore, while the findings can inform the topic at hand, they cannot generalize the experience of teachers more broadly speaking, as a result of the limited number of teachers that I could only interview as a means of data collection. Additionally, the permitted timeframe to conduct the study did not allow for an in-depth analysis of what practices teachers are implementing overtime. All these factors limited the study from having a diverse sample representation of various perspectives, multiple sources of data, and substantial time to encompass a holistic account of the research problem (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Creswell, 2009).

Nevertheless, the strength of this study lay in having the opportunity to conduct semi-structured interviews with teachers. This enabled me to hear from them in more depth than a survey could allow for. It also created a space for teachers to speak to what matters most to them when it came to the topic at hand. In this way, interviews validate teacher voice and experience, and are an opportunity for them to make meaning from their lived experiences (Creswell, 2007;
Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Furthermore, the interviews provided an opportunity for the teachers to reflect on their practices and to articulate how they conceptualized particular topics in theory and in practice (Creswell, 2009).

3.7 Conclusion

In this research methodology chapter, I began by discussing the significance of using a qualitative research approach for this study, as it was most suitable given my research purpose and questions, and allowed me to gain insight into the lived experiences of my teacher participants. I then identified that a semi-structured interview protocol was the most beneficial instrument to use for data collection, because it enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of my participants’ perspectives on my topic. Additionally, I listed the participant criteria that was applicable for this study and provided brief introductions for those selected. As I am surrounded by a community of teachers, I explained that I used purposeful and convenience sampling to recruit my participants. I also described the procedure that I used to analyze the data collected from my interviewees. Moreover, I addressed the ethical implications of this study, which included consent; risks of participation; confidentiality; right to withdraw; member-checks; and data storage, and explained ways to handle these potential issues. Finally, given the ethical boundaries approved for the MTRP, I reviewed the methodological limitations and strengths of the study. Next, in Chapter 4, I reported the research findings.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I report and discuss the findings that resulted from my interviews with two Catholic elementary school educators who are committed to practicing multicultural education through culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP). To discuss the findings, I draw on connections between the participants’ experiences and the research presented in the Chapter 2 literature review. I explore the following four themes: Interviewees' backgrounds and personal experiences within their school and community informed their commitment to enacting CRRP in Catholic schools; Various factors, including the curriculum, children’s influences, and lack of knowledge and time affecting comfort level challenged educators’ effective implementation of multicultural education; Educators were supported by a range of personal and administrative resources when implementing culturally relevant curriculum; and Participants indicated a shared interest between multicultural education and the Catholic faith in becoming a better person. I then conclude the chapter by highlighting some of the significant research findings to support my study.

4.1 Interviewees' Backgrounds and Personal Experiences within their School and Community Informed their Commitment to Enacting CRRP in Catholic Schools

Personal backgrounds and life experiences played a significant part in influencing both participants’ commitment to implementing CRRP in their Catholic schools. Factors such as their personal identity, having the opportunity for formal and informal learning, and gaining positive feedback from others all encouraged them to continue their practice in enacting CRRP. It is through this continued commitment to conduct CRRP in their teaching that educators are able to provide an optimal multicultural education to meet the needs of their diverse group of students.
4.1.1 Interviewees indicated that their personal identity helped them empathize with their students

Given that both participants came from an ethnic minority background greatly influenced their perspective in understanding the significance of implementing a curriculum that included CRRP in their lessons. In spite of being Catholic and sharing that commonality with the dominant culture in Canada, having the life experiences of growing up in a Western culture that was in various ways different than their home culture helped these educators empathize with their students whose cultural perspectives may have been overlooked in their educational experiences. In her interview, Naomi expressed, “I have a personal commitment. I myself am a visible minority in Canada. My cultural history, background is multicultural”. She later continued by claiming that she wished that all children had the opportunity to learn about their cultural perspectives despite having to be raised in a Western environment. Similarly, Mason echoed this perspective when he reported:

I’m of an ethnic background myself so coming from that perspective and going to school, I had very few teachers that were of any ethnic background, other than being British, Italian, or European descent. I’m trying to recall teachers who actually brought a different perspective into the classroom, not that they willing didn’t do it; they just I don’t think had the experiences to bring it in.

Mason added that the students and parents in his schools were always excited that he was a principal, as he came from an ethnic minority and could understand their perspectives. Therefore, experiencing being ethnic minorities themselves, these participants were able to reflect on their personal life experiences and put themselves in the perspective of their students to comprehend the importance of incorporating a teaching method that included CRRP. Their reflective practice
aligns with effectively teaching CRRP and multicultural education as these educators’ positive beliefs and perspectives about multiculturalism significantly impacted their actions and behaviours in their classroom (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2011; Schmeichel, 2012). These participants’ positive outlook promotes best practices for implementing multicultural education as their supportive attitude assisted in promoting respect and equity for all students, so that their students may learn through their example (Banks & Banks, 2007; Galczynski et al., 2011, 2012; Castro et al., 2012; Petty & Narayan, 2012).

Additionally, these personal experiences of being an ethnic minority have instilled the value for wanting to change the cultural intolerance in this world within these interviewees. Naomi claimed that having heard several students use racial remarks and discriminatory terms against their peers, without being completely aware of the impact of their words and actions, made her realize that she needed to address such multicultural issues and help foster an appreciation for others. Naomi stated, “Canada has been a country that has opened its door to immigrants. This open-door policy is for some very good and for others, they don’t seem so positive about that. So I think we need to address that”. Likewise, Mason expressed this same concern for the growing intolerance. He explained that current violent events in the media portray or stereotype certain ethnic groups in a negative light; hence, he believed it was important to teach students and help them understand that these descriptions do not define an entire ethnic group, as everyone is unique and different. Therefore, in spite of Canada’s 1971 Multicultural Policy that promotes racial and ethnic harmony among its citizens (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012; Minister of Justice, 2014), it seems that there is still work that needs to be done by society as a whole so that this idealized view can be achieved, especially through the perspectives of future generations to come.
Furthermore, as both interviewees live in a multicultural city, it also informed their dedication to teaching CRRP in their Catholic schools. For example, Naomi explained that especially now living in a country like Canada and in a multicultural city like Toronto that prides itself in being multicultural, the importance of incorporating this concept into teaching practices is extremely necessary for educators. Mason added that living and working in a multicultural community and neighbourhood for his entire educational experience and professional career emphasized the importance of incorporating a multicultural and CRRP perspective into his teaching practice. Statistics have shown that due to the increase in ethnic immigration within Canada, educational institutions, such as Catholic elementary schools, have had to reorganize and modify their policies and procedures to better suit the needs of their diverse student population (TCDSB Policy Register, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2015). Therefore, these participants’ actions to teach multicultural education through a CRRP lens accurately supports the development of inclusive educational initiatives.

4.1.2 Interviewees indicated that formal and informal opportunities for learning informed their commitment to enacting CRRP in Catholic schools

As both participants experienced formal and/or informal opportunities to learn about the diversity of this world, it supported them in continuing their work in CRRP. Naomi and Mason were both able to learn about the world either through reading the newspaper, listening to the news, or travelling to parts of the world to help them understand varying perspectives that exist among us. For example, reading the newspaper and listening to the news about the cultural injustices that occur in this world informed Naomi that social action needed to take place in order to solve these issues. Naomi pointed out:
To be culturally isolated right now, and to have that view, it’s not fitting with the society we live in. The problems that we as a society and world are facing, those solutions are not going to be driven by one single country or one single group of people. It’s going to have to be a huge communal thing.

Mason supported this mentality of acceptance for others and the need for change as he claimed that the world is more connected now through the use of technology such as the Internet; therefore, it is important to adopt a perspective in support of multiculturalism and have that awareness and sensitivity towards others in the world.

Mason was able to further his knowledge by taking part in more formal learning opportunities such as gaining a higher education and professional development. Being able to take his Masters in Literacy Education enabled him to realize other perspectives that were missing in the curriculum aside from the dominant Eurocentric perspective that has always been idealized. Mason affirmed, “When I took my masters, it was really good because they looked at literacy and how the literacy that’s often taught is from the perspective of whatever the dominant group is.” This insight helped Mason be more aware of ensuring to bring in other cultural literature into his classroom teaching so that his students may be exposed to varying perspectives. Additionally, participating in professional development workshops about multicultural education over the years also supported Mason in doing this work. This aligns with research that suggests appropriate professional development can result in educators implementing an in-depth approach to multicultural education (Castro et al., 2012). Similar to prior studies conducted, both Naomi and Mason used their acquired knowledge about multiculturalism as the basis for teaching the curriculum content. They both centered their instruction on cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness, and challenged dominant
perspectives with alternative perspectives (Castro et al., 2012). Moreover, both participants demonstrate culturally responsive teaching as they see themselves as responsible for, and capable of bringing about, educational change in hopes to make schools more responsive to all students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Brown, 2007; Milner, 2011). Therefore, these educators’ initiative to be more knowledgeable in multicultural education enables them to critically challenge traditional perspectives and implement effective practices within their Catholic school environments.

4.1.3 Interviewees indicated that gaining feedback in the form of positive responses from others informed their commitment to enacting CRRP in Catholic schools

Gaining positive feedback from others such as parents, students, and other influential teachers encouraged these participants to continue their work in teaching CRRP in their classrooms. The decision to implement multicultural education through CRRP in their teaching enabled Naomi and Mason to share the commonality of having their students and parents take an interest in what was being taught. For example, Naomi reported, “They [the students] really love to study other countries and learn about them. The multicultural fair and their country studies is always one of the things that they really seem to enjoy.” She continued by claiming that the parents are interested and happily surprised that she teaches multicultural education, as this is something that is not commonly taught by all teachers. Mason echoed this positive reaction from students and parents as he noted, “When you bring in something from their [students’] culture in particular, they’re [students] pretty excited about it and they very much want to be a part of that. Parents are also eager to come in and share their experiences.” Both Naomi and Mason used this positive support from the students and parents to enhance their teaching as they took their input into consideration when planning their lessons and/or for the school environment.
Furthermore, having experienced influential teachers in their lives inspired and motivated both Naomi and Mason to remain committed to enacting multicultural education. Naomi acknowledged, “People have done that for me. I mean there are people and teachers that I’ve had that have impacted my life and made me more aware of world issues, and more compassionate about contributing to something good.” Similarly, Mason had the personal experience of a high school teacher who exposed him to different perspectives and taught him about diverse faiths. This reflects research as studies suggest that having the ability to learn from experienced educators who effectively model how to integrate cultural learning practices encourages teachers to have an appreciation and respect for cultural differences, and implement this into their own teaching philosophy (Castro et al., 2012). Also, having the positive support from students and parents enables Naomi and Mason to display characteristics of a culturally responsive teacher, as they are able to see resources for learning in all of their students, and use their knowledge of the students’ lives to design instruction (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Brown, 2007; Milner, 2011). This validates research as having the experiences of such positive supports in educators’ school environments encourages and motivates them to continue their practice in this work.

4.2 Educators Overcame Challenges Related to the Curriculum, Competing Influences on Children, and Lack of Knowledge and Time through Acquiring Further Knowledge about Multicultural Education and Implementing Effective Teaching Strategies

Although participants acknowledged positive personal experiences that informed their commitment to teaching multicultural education, they also mentioned several elements that made an effective integration difficult. Factors such as the curriculum, children’s influences, and lack of knowledge and time all hindered the delivery of an in-depth multicultural education. These
findings are beneficial in understanding the difficulties that may arise when striving to implement successful multicultural practices and ways in which they can be overcome.

4.2.1 Educators indicated that the curriculum challenged their effective implementation of multicultural education

As there has always been speculation around the curriculum document promoting mainly Eurocentric perspectives, participants found it challenging to cover its extensive requirements while attempting to seamlessly incorporate a multicultural lens to their teaching. For example, Naomi reported that there was a lack of an in-depth learning of multiculturalism in the curriculum, and that in her experience she discovered that there were Catholic schools in which she taught that the students knew very little about some of the major ethnic groups found in the schools. She added that the challenge lay in the school system in the sense that students were not always being taught about concepts that were relevant to their personal lives. Therefore, as Naomi pointed out, this challenged teachers to naturally and seamlessly integrate multicultural education into the curriculum. She stated, “You want that [teaching multicultural education] to be more natural than a big put-on, like you have to do this.” Likewise, Mason reiterated this notion as he explained that in North America, the curriculum is mainly based on Eurocentric perspectives and therefore is seen as the “gold standard” in subjects like Literacy in particular. He added that also in terms of class, it is usually the rich, powerful, dominant class that is the one that dictates what is taught in schools, hence he stated, “trying to bring in that perspective of the working-class or the less privileged is difficult unless you’re really attuned to it.” Mason furthered Naomi’s perspective as he agreed that there should be more impactful and in-depth multicultural practices put in place when enacting multicultural education, rather than schools hosting one-off events to celebrate diverse cultures or teachers haphazardly putting something
together to represent multiculturalism. The challenge of dealing with a Eurocentric curriculum aligns with previous studies, as this is stated to be difficult for most educators who strive to promote a multicultural learning environment for their students (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Lucas, 2010). Therefore, these educators are experiencing common issues in needing to find alternative effective methods to implement multiculturalism.

Participants indicated that implementing effective teaching strategies helped them overcome these challenges. These strategies included providing the students with continuous exposure to multicultural education whenever possible, teaching in more relevant ways, and drawing from their personal experiences and/or the experiences of their students. Naomi believed that enabling her students to have continuous positive influences of diversity and exposing them to differences helped foster an acceptance for others and brought about a positive change to in her students’ own values and practices. She accomplished this by implementing multicultural education in every lesson that she could to signify the importance of the concept for her students. Naomi also believed in involving the whole school to spread the message of multiculturalism, gain their interest, and have them be involved. She affirmed, “When I teach something like cultural studies, I want to excite the whole school because I want everybody to learn something.” Mason echoed this belief by taking his role as a principal to personally influence the importance of multicultural education for his school environment. He achieved this by conducting himself in a positive manner, promoting multicultural school-wide events, and upholding certain expectations of his school. Mason stated, “Hopefully through the things I do every day, and the things that I press upon students and teachers every day, would be culturally sensitive and would bring an awareness.”
Interviewees also discovered that teaching in ways that were more relevant to their students’ lives assisted in overcoming these challenges. Naomi and Mason both pointed out that it was important to look at the students and community that was in front of them and plan their lessons from there. Mason affirmed:

I mean any good teacher has to look at who’s in front of them and make sure that whatever they’re teaching is relevant to the kids in front of them, and engages them, and brings part of them into it.

Seeing what was significant to their students to learn about, and trying to understand their perspectives and teach towards that, supported both participants in implementing a multicultural education where their students could see themselves reflected in their learning. Also, providing the students with opportunities where they could learn about diverse cultures by becoming involved with the community or different parts of the world through contribution, and taking field trips to cultural places that were relevant to students helped what they were learning be meaningful to them. It also provided the students with lived experiences in their learning. Naomi and Mason also believed that it was essential to address issues about multiculturalism in terms of racism and/or discrimination that arose in the school by having open, honest, and difficult conversations with their students so that they may broaden their perspectives and deepen their understandings. Both educators further believed in fostering critical thinking by making their students aware of what is around them and challenging those perspectives as they held the notion that everyone has a bias and there is no single truth.

Furthermore, using the teaching strategy of applying their personal experiences and/or the experiences of their students enabled these participants to move past these curriculum challenges. For example, Naomi explained that she used experiences that she endured in her life
as inspiration for how to teach multicultural education. As she came from an ethnic minority background, she reported taking herself back to the experiences that she endured while growing up in order to inspire some of her lessons on multiculturalism. Naomi also provided the strategy for educators to take the opportunity to learn from the diverse students in front of them, if they themselves are not able to bring in the experiences of being an ethnic minority. Mason applied the same approach as he also took what he learned from his personal experiences of being an ethnic minority in schools and ensured that all his students were reflected in their learning so that they were able to have a sense of belonging to their school environment. These teaching strategies align with research as it promotes a CRRP approach to teaching multicultural education (Ladson-Billings, 2006); therefore, enabling the students in these participants’ care to have more personally meaningful learning experiences that align with their interests, and promotes their academic success (Gay, 2002; Brown, 2007; Milner, 2011; Petty & Narayan, 2012). Therefore, despite having a challenging Eurocentric curriculum to teach, these participants’ use of culturally relevant and responsive teaching supports optimal educational initiatives to help children feel a part of their learning.

4.2.2 Educators indicated that other influences on children challenged their effective implementation of multicultural education

Both interviewees were challenged in broadening their students’ minds to multicultural education as the influence of their parents and the larger society also significantly impact children’s perspectives while growing up. Society and the media in most cases tend to promote certain behaviours that may be contextually offensive to certain groups of people. This is exemplified when Naomi reported, “There’s this student who called other Black students the N-word.” She explained that certain types of music for example, encourage this type of allowance
as such terms are used throughout the lyrics, thus enabling students to believe that these types of words are acceptable to use towards others, when in reality they should not be. Similarly, Mason also experienced hearing racial slurs and derogatory name calling among his students in spite of the school itself having a diverse student population. He came to recognize that this was a lack of students understanding how their actions and words impact others due to their lack of experience in life. Naomi believed that children today have a narrow view of the world around them despite having easily accessible and readily available information at their fingertips through the use of technology. She believed that this was a result of some parents lacking a multicultural belief system; therefore, unintentionally influencing their children to have similar beliefs, which reflected in these students’ actions in school. This supports research as prior studies have shown that children’s discussions are inclined to gravitate towards the topic of ethnic diversity with or without teacher influence, similar to the experiences of Naomi and Mason witnessing their students having negative discussions about cultural diversity in the form of racism and discrimination. Therefore, it is essential for educators to address these conversations with their students so that they are able to have a clear understanding of the value in ethnic diversity to avoid racism and discrimination in their school environment (Aukrust & Rydland, 2009). This validates research, as it is evident that to this day discussions of ethnic diversity are still prominent among children.

4.2.3 Educators indicated that lack of knowledge and time affects one’s comfort level and therefore challenged effective implementation of multicultural education

Participants specified that lack of pre-service preparation, teaching experience, and the fear of promoting a xenophobia attitude were reasons why educators felt they lacked the knowledge or time to enact multicultural practices. Mason pointed out that most teachers who
have been trained years ago and still are practicing today were not always aware of the importance of multicultural education in pre-service teaching. Therefore, many teachers who are still teaching in schools today do not have the pre-service training required to teach multicultural education effectively in their schools. Consequently, this lack of teacher preparation often prevent students from having an in-depth learning experience of the concept, unless educators make it their goal to provide this learning for their students. Neither Naomi nor Mason received pre-service training on multicultural education; however, their personal experiences and values led them to understand the significance of ensuring to implement this concept in their practice. Mason also reported that the amount of teaching experience that an educator has plays a factor in proper multicultural integration. He explained that it is difficult for new teachers to bring in other concepts into their teaching as they are usually focused on covering the curriculum expectations and adjusting to the requirements of being a teaching; therefore, this lack of time affects their comfort level in incorporating multicultural education. Mason stated, “So as you get more experienced and more comfortable [with teaching], you can bring more things into it [one’s teaching practice].”

Furthermore, lack of knowledge in the area of enacting proper multicultural education runs the risk of teachers encouraging a xenophobic attitude among their students. Both Naomi and Mason addressed the importance of educators refraining from focusing on one culture more than others as this may influence students’ perspectives. This reflects research as one of the main challenges reported for educators in implementing effective multicultural education is their limited knowledge in the area, and lack of proper professional development to prepare them with integrating successful strategies within their teaching (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Hammett &
To overcome these challenges, participants indicated that learning more about multicultural education helped them. Various ways that these educators learned more was either through professional development, support from the Catholic School Board, and networking with students, parents, the community, and other administration. For example, Mason acknowledged that doing the work that he did in his Masters in Literacy and attending several multicultural workshops hosted by the Ministry of Education and the Catholic School Board all provided him with the knowledge that he required to be more effect in his practice of integrating multicultural education. Mason also pointed out that as multicultural education has recently been more prioritized now than before in the educational system with the increase of immigrants, the Catholic School Board now has several resources available through their Race and Ethnic Relations Multiculturalism Department for educators to access. He also mentioned that the Ministry’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy document is a beneficial guideline for teachers. Moreover, both Naomi and Mason emphasized the significance of networking with others. Naomi asserted that speaking to the students and parents to find out what they wanted to know and have their children learn about multicultural education assisted her greatly in establishing her teaching focus. She stated, “Talk to them [students and parents]! What do they want? What do they want to know?” Mason agreed with this perspective as he added that the students show and teach educators many things; therefore, all teachers should take the opportunity to learn from the students in front of them to better their practice. Mason furthered his belief in networking by reporting that the community has many resources available for educators to use and in most cases are just waiting to be asked to help schools. Both participants
added that taking the time to speak to other educators and administration in other schools also supported them in gaining ideas and resources for providing a rich multicultural education for their students. These strategies align with and validates research as providing on-going professional development is beneficial for educators’ growth, and building positive relationships with students and parents by learning about students’ home environments and cultural backgrounds, is one way of achieving effective multicultural education (Russo et al., 1998; Milner, 2011; Alban & Reeves, 2014), as exemplified through the actions of these participants.

4.3 Educators Were Supported by a Range of Personal and Administrative Resources When Implementing Culturally Relevant Curriculum

While the previous section outlined challenges experienced by the interviewees and ways they handled the challenges, this section will discuss the supports available that continued to encourage participants in their work in multicultural education. These types of support involved various kinds of personal networks and administrative resources. The supports discussed may inform educators of available resources that can be utilized for their own teaching of multicultural education.

4.3.1 Educators indicated that support from administration facilitates the implementation of multicultural curriculum

Interviewees mentioned that administrative supports such as their active school, the Catholic School Board, and the Ministry of Education all assisted in easing the integration of multicultural education. Both participants acknowledged their active schools as being open to various school-wide and classroom multicultural practices that they wished to embark on. For example, Naomi’s school permitted school-wide fundraising initiatives to help the poor and vulnerable around the world while also educating the students about the countries they were
helping. Likewise, Mason’s school enabled classroom celebrations such as multicultural potluck lunches, and supported him taking class field trips and/or overnight trips to cultural environments. He also reported school-wide practices such as cultural presentations at school assemblies and concerts, and announcements acknowledging cultural diversity. Mason stated, “We did have different celebrations, school-wide celebrations, classroom celebrations, whether they be special lunches, events, multicultural days, or recognition of a particular group or all sorts of groups on different events.” Both educators also affirmed having the ability to freely choose the types of multicultural curriculum material that they wished to incorporate into their lessons, which overall aided in maintaining a seamless implementation.

Moreover, the Catholic School Board also supported these participants’ work by establishing a Race and Ethnic Relations Multiculturalism Department that provides educators with resources such as supplies and workshops to assist and educate them in relevant multicultural concepts. The Catholic School Board recently also made it mandatory for their schools to acknowledge and celebrate various heritage months of different cultural groups. Mason noted, “Over the years, more recently, the school board made it a priority where they’ve designated specific months for Asian heritage, Italian heritage, Celtic heritage, African Canadian heritage, etc.” He added that with the Catholic School Board supporting the recruitment of other ethnic minorities in the school system, it brought in more diversity within schools, which enabled more teachers to bring a multicultural perspective to teaching. Both interviewees also addressed that teaching in a Catholic school in general embodied the philosophy of inclusivity and acceptance of others, regardless if some educators were more attuned with acknowledging it than others. Mason further reported that the Ministry of Education’s document on Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and their multicultural workshops provided for educators were
great resources to learn more about effective multicultural integration. These positive supports reflect scholarly suggestions for best practice in multicultural education, as there is evidence of these educational leaders, like the Catholic School Board, recruiting qualified minority candidates as educators, encouraging professional development, supporting ongoing culturally enriching activities, and enabling the use of culturally inclusive teaching materials and methods to create an inclusive school environment (Banks, 1992; Russo et al., 1998; Cattaro, 2002; Montejano, 2010). Therefore, these practices validate research, as they are currently successful in supporting educators in their work of effective multicultural education.

4.3.2 Educators indicated that drawing on their own personal networks helps them empathize with students and collect valuable educational resources

Being able to depend on their personal networks that included students, parents, administration, and the community enabled both participants to have a better understanding of their students and provide them with an in-depth multicultural learning experience. As mentioned earlier, asking questions and learning from their students and parents greatly supported Naomi and Mason in getting to know their students and how to effectively teach them. Both educators affirmed that students were significant tools for knowledge in teaching multiculturalism and that parents were always willing to support and help wherever possible. Naomi and Mason reported that taking the time to do this resulted in their students being actively engaged and interested in their learning, thus enabling an effective multicultural integration. Additionally, having responsive administration and staff not only assisted Naomi in facilitating multicultural education as previously indicated, but also assisted her in enacting cultural practices. She was able to network with other teachers to enhance her teaching practice. In the case of Mason, being on the administrative team as a school principal and gaining insights from
his master’s course enabled and encouraged him to implement a school-wide approach to multicultural education. His position also allowed him to network with other administrators to gain ideas and resources to incorporate within his own school. Furthermore, both participants addressed that living in an ethnically diverse community also benefited their multicultural teaching practice, as this permitted them to draw on the experiences of their diverse student body that gain resources from the cultural community. Mason stated, “There’s lots of groups in the community that will be more than willing to come in and speak and help…often times they’re never asked, and they’re more than willing to come in.” Therefore, this emphasizes the importance of educators connecting with the community for support in their work. Building and maintaining these meaningful and authentic relationships with students and parents aligns with research as it reflects an educators’ appreciation for their culturally diverse students (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002; Brown, 2007; Groulx & Silva, 2010; Milner, 2011; Petty & Narayan, 2012; Alban & Reeves, 2014). Also, in support of former claims mentioned, having a supportive school administration is essential to providing an ideal multicultural learning environment (Gay, 2002; Brown, 2007; Milner, 2011), as these participants gained valuable resources through their administrators’ support. The fact that these educators were able to gain such resources helps to validate existing research, as it is through having these positive supports that educators are encouraged and assisted to continue their work in proper implementation of multicultural education.

4.4 Participants Indicated a Shared Interest between Multicultural Education and the Catholic Faith in Becoming a Better Person

Participants were able to easily connect multicultural education to the Catholic faith in their teaching practice. Participants achieved this by encouraging appreciation, acceptance, and
respect for others, and by emphasizing a responsibility to others in their classrooms. These valuable insights provide Catholic educators with effective strategies to assist them in delivering a rich multicultural education in relation to the Catholic faith. It also helps educators see the commonality between multiculturalism and Catholicism that may help them in their practice.

4.4.1 Participants indicated that fostering an appreciation, acceptance, and respect for others through multicultural education also assisted in fore-fronting the Catholic faith

Both educators believed that being Catholic and a follower of Jesus meant that it was essential to appreciate, accept, and respect others, as this is what Jesus himself stood for. Mason affirmed:

To be accepting of everyone is to be a follower of Jesus. You have to know to be accepting, be open, and when you think of the experiences Jesus had and whom he chose, for example, as his apostles, they weren’t the high priests, they weren’t the ones in power; he chose fishermen and laborers. He chose those people who others may not have chosen…Jesus was often with people who were marginalized.

It is through this perspective and following the Golden Rule of “treating others as one would wish to be treated” that both participants fostered an appreciation for diversity and inclusivity in their classrooms and/or school environments. By emphasizing Jesus’ teachings, both educators were able to teach about the differences in others in terms of cultural practices, beliefs, and traditions as Catholics come from all over the world. They were also able to create a sense of community in their learning environment by helping students acknowledge their cultural differences, yet understand that they were all connected and united through their Catholic faith. This practice reflects effective multicultural integration as both interviewees ensured to help their students compassionately understand diverse peoples and cultures and be aware that these
cultures are unique in their own way (Heft, 1997; Russo et al., 1998; Montejano, 2010); therefore, providing an effective strategy and new perspective to teaching multiculturalism through the lens of the Catholic faith. Research (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lucas, 2010; Castro et al., 2012) emphasizes that multicultural education fosters appreciation, respect, and acceptance of others; however, research does not speak to how this can be taught in relation to the Catholic faith. My findings contribute to this area of research, as my participants have pointed to ways that multicultural education aligns with Catholic values.

4.4.2 Participants indicated that teaching multicultural education through promoting a responsibility to others assisted in fore-fronting the Catholic faith

Interviewees addressed that having the responsibility to be a positive influence in others’ lives was part of being a Catholic and a Catholic expectation. Therefore, they believed that it was their obligation as Catholic educators in Catholic schools to link everything they taught back to the Catholic faith, and promote a positive perspective in getting to know and helping others. By teaching about others through multicultural education and how to help others in need, Naomi and Mason were able to encourage their students to be true contributors in this world and over all better people. Naomi furthered this perspective by asserting that working for the common good in this manner would lead to a solution for world peace. These participants’ actions align with Catholic tenets on making the world a better place by fostering a responsibility to others in their students (Sister Fitzgerald, 1999, as cited in the Institute of Catholic Education Resource Material, 2006-2007). Although this demonstrates an alignment between Catholic values and multicultural education, in research it has been questioned if multicultural education can be implemented effectively in Catholic schools if the faith maintains a focus on unity (Russo et al., 1998; Altena & Hermans, 2003; Breen, 2009). The inclusive work by these participants suggest
it is possible, as they consider themselves compelled to teach multicultural education due to the Catholic belief in being responsible to others. Both educators were still able to effectively implement multicultural education within their teaching so that their students may come to know themselves and others around them in hopes to be inclusive future adults in this world.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed my research findings by categorizing them into four main themes with subsequent sub-themes. I interviewed two Catholic elementary school educators who were dedicated to providing their students with an in-depth multicultural education, so that their students may see themselves reflected in their learning. The findings suggested that drawing from personal experiences and available networks significantly assisted participants in their work by enabling them to empathize with their students and gain valuable resources to support their work. Also, students were actively engaged and interested in their learning as they could make personal connections to what they were being taught. Moreover, participants were in fact able to teach multicultural education effectively while still connecting it back to the Catholic faith by recognizing and acknowledging diversity and encouraging a responsibility to others. These findings indicate that through dedication, proper knowledge, and support educators are able to offer Catholic students an optimal multicultural education through CRRP in Catholic elementary schools. The findings contribute to research by providing a new outlook to traditional Catholic elementary school teaching perspectives and practices in regards to effectively addressing multicultural diversity within its schools. Previous research looked at the benefits of incorporating multicultural education within the curriculum; however does not describe how this relates to Catholic values. My research demonstrates how effective multicultural education is possible in connection to the Catholic context. Furthermore, as prior studies questioned a
successful integration of multicultural education within Catholic schools that emphasize unity, my research validates that this is achievable through promoting the Catholic notion of responsibility to others. Next, in Chapter 5, I discuss the implications of my research study and my recommendations for the educational community.
Chapter 5: Implications

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the implications of my research study. I begin by providing an overview of the key findings of my research and their significance. I then discuss the implications of my research, both in terms of the broad educational research community and for my own professional identity and practice as an educator and researcher. Next, I make recommendations for policy and practice, including various stakeholders in the educational community such as teachers, administrators, Catholic school boards, and faculties of education. I then identify important areas for further research. Finally, I conclude by summarizing my findings and speaking to the significance of my research.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance

My key findings were categorized into four main themes. The first theme is educators’ backgrounds and personal experiences within their school and community informed their commitment to enacting CRRP in Catholic schools. Both participants reported that their personal identity, having the opportunity for formal and informal learning, and gaining positive feedback from others all encouraged them to continue in their work. As both educators are ethnic minorities and live in a multicultural city, it enabled them to understand their students’ perspectives and appreciate the need to implement a curriculum that included CRRP in their lessons. This personal experience also inspired these educators to advocate for cultural tolerance in this world. Formal and informal opportunities such as either gaining a higher education, professional development, reading the newspaper, listening to the news, or travelling to parts of the world helped these participants understand varying perspectives that exist among us. Furthering their knowledge in diversity enabled these educators to critically challenge traditional
perspectives and implement effective practices within their Catholic school environments. Moreover, receiving positive feedback from students and parents allowed these participants to enhance their teaching by incorporating their perspectives into their lesson planning and/or within the school environment. Also, having influential teachers during their own educational experiences, inspired and motivated both educators to remain committed to enacting multicultural education and teach it through a CRRP lens. These participants’ practices accurately support the development of inclusive educational initiatives.

The second theme is educators overcame challenges such as, the curriculum, competing influences on children, and lack of knowledge and time by acquiring further knowledge about multicultural education and implementing effective teaching strategies. Both participants described that it was challenging to cover the extensive Eurocentric curriculum’s requirements and provide a seamless incorporation of multicultural education. Therefore, effective teaching strategies such as providing the students with continuous exposure to multicultural education whenever possible, teaching in ways that were more relevant to their students’ lives, and drawing from their personal experiences and/or the experiences of their students all assisted these educators in overcoming the challenging curriculum. Additionally, participants found that it was essential to address conversations of diversity with their students, as there were occurrences of racism and discrimination within their schools. Also, since the students’ parents and the larger society significantly influence students’ perspectives while growing up, these educators were able use this strategy to overcome the difficulty of broadening their students’ minds on multicultural education. Furthermore, participants indicated that lack of pre-service preparation, teaching experience, and the fear of promoting a xenophobia attitude were reasons why educators felt they lacked the knowledge or time to enact multicultural practices, and thus it
affected their comfort level in this work. Various ways that these educators suggested to overcome these challenges included gaining professional development, support from the Catholic School Board, and networking with students, parents, the community, and other administrators to learn more about multicultural education. In spite of experiencing such challenges in this work, these participants were still able to use these practices to overcome them and help their students feel a part of their learning. These findings are beneficial in understanding the difficulties that may arise when striving to implement successful multicultural practices and providing insight on how they can be resolved.

The third theme is a range of personal networks and administrative resources supported educators with implementing culturally relevant curriculum. Both participants acknowledged that drawing from their personal networks such as their students, parents, administration, and the community enabled them to have a deeper understanding of their students and collect valuable educational resources to teach an in-depth multicultural education. Taking part in these practices resulted in these educators’ students being actively engaged and interested in their learning, thus enabling an effective multicultural integration. In terms of administration, gaining support from their active school, the Catholic School Board, and the Ministry of Education also assisted in easing the implementation of multicultural curriculum. These supports discussed helps to inform other educators of available resources that can be utilized for their own teaching of multicultural education.

Finally, the fourth theme is educators indicated a shared interest between multicultural education and the Catholic faith in becoming a better person. Both participants were able to easily connect multicultural education to the Catholic faith in their teaching practice. This was accomplished by encouraging appreciation, acceptance, and respect for others, and by
emphasizing a responsibility to others in their classrooms. Although previous research (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lucas, 2010; Castro et al., 2012) emphasizes the significance of teaching multiculturalism, it does not provide ways of how to teach it in relation to the Catholic faith. These educators’ experiences contribute to this area of research as they have pointed to ways that multicultural education aligns with Catholic values. Additionally, while promoting a responsibility to others connects with Catholic tenets on making the world a better place (Sister Fitzgerald, 1999, as cited in the Institute of Catholic Education Resource Material, 2006-2007), critics have questioned if multicultural education can be implemented effectively in Catholic schools if the faith maintains a focus on unity (Russo et al., 1998; Altena & Hermans, 2003; Breen, 2009). These participants’ inclusive work suggest it is possible, as they consider themselves compelled to teach multicultural education due to the Catholic belief in being responsible to others. Overall, these valuable insights provide Catholic educators with effective strategies to assist them in delivering a rich multicultural education in relation to the Catholic faith, and help them see the commonality between multiculturalism and Catholicism.

5.2 Implications

In this section, I outline the implications of my research findings. I begin by discussing the broad implications for the educational research community, and then discuss the implications for my own professional identity and practice as an educator and researcher.

5.2.1 Broad: The educational research community

The research on multicultural education and my participants’ experiences has emphasized the significance of incorporating its effective implementation within Catholic elementary schools. As my participants have indicated through their experiences, it is important for this work to be widespread among the educational community and school environments so that an
effective integration can occur. Educators participating in one-off multicultural practices do not do the concept justice, as many ethnically diverse students fail to see themselves represented in their learning, thus affecting their overall academic performance and student well-being. Therefore, successful implementation of multicultural education promotes greater student engagement, as they are more interested in their learning when they see themselves reflected in what they are being taught.

It is important for educators to understand that multicultural education can be implemented effectively through the use of culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy. This enables students to have a sense of belonging within their learning environment and feel appreciated for who they are. More specially, Catholic educators should be aware that multicultural education can be taught properly within Catholic schools as its teachings align with the Catholic faith. Additionally, gaining support from personal networks and administrative resources encourages educators to continue their practice in this work. A significant motivator for educators who take part in this work is receiving positive feedback from others for their efforts. Finally, educators should remember that with deepening their knowledge and sufficient practice, they can increase their experience and gain confidence in implementing a rich multicultural education for their students, whether it is to cater to a diverse student body or to help students in general become better acquainted with the diversity of this world.

5.2.2 Narrow: My professional identity and practice

In this section, I identify and discuss the implications for my own professional identity and practice as an educator and researcher. As I was inspired to conduct research on multicultural education due to my lack of significantly experiencing it as a child within my Catholic elementary school, taking part in this study has helped me gain a deeper understanding
of the concept from an educator’s perspective. Having the ability to interview my participants who are committed to this work has enabled me to gain valuable insight on the strategies and techniques that I may require when attempting to implement this concept within my own classroom. Although my participants both indicated that this work will not be easy if I truly hope to teach it accurately, they still affirmed that it can be done. With the proper knowledge and support, I can gain the confidence and experience that I need to provide my students with an in-depth multicultural education aside from the one-off events usually implemented by most educators.

The greatest insight that I learned from my participants and research was to utilize the funds of knowledge that will be right in front of me - the students. It is through taking the opportunity to learn from my students that I can hope to have an in-depth understanding of who they are, where they come from, and what is important to them. This knowledge of getting to know my students will then significantly assist me in planning culturally relevant and responsive lessons that will help my students see themselves reflected in their learning. It will help me plan and teach curriculum that is meaningful to them and that helps them gain a greater appreciation for themselves and for others.

To ensure that I remain informed on the topic of multicultural education, it is important to take opportunities to learn more through professional development workshops; networking with other colleagues and administration; speaking to students, families, and the community; and staying informed about current events in the world. With appropriate knowledge on multicultural education, I can then take opportunities to influence whole-school approaches in implementing the concept so that it becomes part of the school culture. This in turn can hopefully inspire other educators to find a passion for integrating this practice for themselves.
As research has emphasized the uncertainty of multicultural education’s effective integration within Catholic schools, I have learned through my participants’ experiences that I can in fact teach it by connecting it to Jesus’ teachings, the Golden Rule, and having a responsibility to others which helps to forefront the Catholic faith. By highlighting this relation between multiculturalism and Catholicism, I can help my students create a unified community who learns about and appreciates difference. Finally, through taking the time for constant reflection of my teaching practice, I can hope to be self-aware and mindful of my approaches in putting my best self forward to be an advocate for the significance of effective multicultural education within Catholic elementary schools.

5.3 Recommendations

In order for an effective integration of multicultural education to occur within Catholic elementary schools, all groups and individuals involved must make changes. This includes teachers, Catholic school boards, and faculties of education. Although there are existing policies and procedures that support this notion, I make recommendations based on my research findings to ensure that these policies and procedures are being enacted. I have organized my recommendations into three key areas: teachers, Catholic school boards, and faculties of education.

5.3.1 Teachers

- Educators should teach multicultural education through a culturally relevant and responsive lens so that their students are reflected in their learning and appreciated for who they are (e.g. chose literary texts that resemble the cultural perspectives of various ethnic groups aside from the dominant mainstream culture, inform students of ethnic heroes and heroines, etc.).
Specifically, Catholic teachers should teach multicultural education effectively in Catholic schools by aligning multicultural practices with Catholic values, and continuing to create a unified community, however one that acknowledges and appreciates diversity.

Educators should take formal and informal opportunities to learn about multicultural education to deepen their knowledge (e.g. acquiring professional development, support from school boards, and networking with students, parents, the community, and other administrators), and take every chance to integrate multicultural education within their teaching as with practice comes experience and confidence.

Teachers should ensure that multicultural education is incorporated seamlessly into the curriculum and school culture to avoid one-off practices.

Challenges in regards to the curriculum, competing influences on children, and lack of knowledge and time can be overcome by becoming more familiar with the topic and implementing effective teaching strategies (e.g. providing students with continuous exposure to multicultural education whenever possible, teaching in ways that are more relevant to students’ lives, and drawing from personal experiences if possible, and/or the experiences of students).

Educators should address conversations about diversity, as it is beneficial in expanding students’ perspectives on multicultural education.

Teachers should remain motivated and resilient in their practice of implementing effective multicultural education so that other teachers may be inspired by their work and commitment.

Educators should engage in constant reflective practice so that they are able to be aware of and address their biases, stereotypes, and misconceptions of others as they embark on
and take part in this work.

5.3.2 Catholic school boards

- Administration, the school board, and the Ministry of Education should work collectively with teachers in order to support effective implementation of this work (e.g. through whole-school approaches, on-going professional development, accessible educational resources, etc.).

- Catholic school boards should emphasize the significance of educators furthering their knowledge of multicultural education through the implementation of mandatory professional development courses and workshops.

- Catholic school boards should make an effort to hire more ethnically diverse staff as having ethnic minority educators assists in having a deeper understanding of ethnic student perspectives and in most instances have relatable life experiences to bring into their teaching.

- Catholic school boards should take more initiative in incorporating more meaningful multicultural practices and events within the school year aside from the one-off designated heritage months.

- Catholic school boards should maintain the philosophy of creating a unified community; however, should adopt the notion of acknowledging and welcoming difference within their school communities.

5.3.3 Faculties of education

- Faculties of education need to support and properly train pre-service teachers on the concept of multicultural education and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (e.g. implement required fundamental courses on the concepts).
- Faculties of education need to teach, encourage, and provide pre-service teachers with numerous opportunities to take part in critical analysis of their learning so that educators graduate with the confidence to critically challenge current perspectives and initiatives.

- Faculties of education should emphasize the importance of pre-service teachers practicing the implementation of effective multicultural practices within their assigned practicums.

- Faculties of education should place teacher candidates in practicum schools with ethnically diverse student bodies so that pre-service teachers have the opportunity to be exposed to and teach students of various cultures.

- Faculties of education should inform and educate pre-service teachers of available resources, workshops, and professional development opportunities for multicultural education so that educators may graduate with the knowledge and reliable resources that they may require to effectively take on this work within their teaching practice.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

In this section, I outline areas for further research based on the findings of my research and the knowledge that I have gained from conducting this study. One area for further research is incorporating student, parent, and community voices in research, as there is a lack of these voices in the literature. This is significant because it would enable educators and researchers to have a deeper understanding of these missing perspectives and values, as the work of educators is to teach the people of the community, after all. Moreover, as this is a relatively new topic in research, more work should be conducted around the outcomes of students who have been exposed to an effective implementation of multicultural education. Research accomplished in this area will help to solidify the advantages and benefits of promoting a multicultural inclusive learning environment for all students, especially those within Catholic elementary schools. This
can then help other educators understand the significance of providing this type of education for their students and can influence more teachers to adopt this practice.

5.5 Concluding Comments

This research study has helped me to conceptualize multicultural education and what is required for an effective integration within Catholic schools. Even though Catholic schools are admired and valued for their idealized guidance in student behaviour, morals, ethics, and values, they still need to be cognizant of recognizing and appreciating the value in the differences that their students bring. Through my exploration of the research literature and my interviews with my participants, I have become more aware of the challenges that I may endure when enacting this work within my own teaching practice. Nevertheless, I have also gained valuable knowledge on strategies and techniques to overcome these difficulties. Finally, this research study has further strengthened the importance of multicultural education for me. I have come to understand how students are significantly impacted by the presence or lack of their personal identities within the curriculum, and how important it is for students to see themselves reflected in their learning, as this contributes to their academic performance and overall well-being. Educators should remember that although they hold the title of instructors, they are still learners. Therefore, it is important to always look at and learn from the students within the classroom and encourage opportunities where there can be a change in the power dynamics. Overall, my personal childhood experience and this study, particularly the research process and the insights gained from my participants, has inspired and motivated me to conduct this work on implementing effective multicultural education within my teaching.
References


Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interviews

Date:

Dear ____________________________,

My Name is Nikita D'Sanges and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on how a sample of Catholic teachers are enacting multicultural practices into their teaching and curriculum planning through using culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP). I am interested in interviewing teachers who teach in Catholic elementary schools, with five to ten years of teaching experience, who believe in the significance of multicultural education and CRRP, and are consistent with implementing its practices within their classroom and school environment. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor Dr. Angela MacDonald. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a
maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Nikita D’Sanges

(XXX) XXX-XXXX
nikita.dsanges@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Instructor’s Name: Dr. Angela MacDonald

Contact Info: angela.macdonald@utoronto.ca

Consent Form

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

I have read the letter provided to me by Nikita D’Sanges and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ________________________________________

Name: (printed) ______________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, and for making time to be interviewed today. This research study aims to learn how a sample of Catholic teachers are enacting effective multicultural practices into their teaching and curriculum planning through using culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP) for the purpose of sharing these findings with the educational community, and for informing my own teaching practice as a beginning teacher. This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on your teaching perspectives/beliefs, practices, supports and challenges, and next steps in implementing multiculturalism in your classroom/school environment. I want to remind you that you may refrain from answering any question, and you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audio-recorded. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Section 1: Background Information

1. What is your name and current position?
2. How long have you been working in your current Catholic school?
3. How long have you been/were you a teacher?
4. What grade levels have you taught throughout your career?
5. What grade levels do you currently teach? (If applicable)
6. For how many years have you taught in Catholic schools?
7. Have you always taught in Catholic schools?
   a. How many catholic schools have you taught in?
8. Of these schools, how common was it for you to see multicultural education being prioritized within them?
9. How did you develop a commitment and interest in multicultural education?
   a. What experiences or factors informed your interest and commitment?
   b. What experiences helped prepare you and continue to support you in this work?
10. What type of pre-service preparation did you receive on this topic, if any?
    a. What are some of the main ideas you remember learning about multicultural education in your program?

Section 2: Teacher Perspectives/Beliefs

11. How would you define multicultural education?
    a. What does multicultural education mean to you?
b. In your view, what are the aims of multicultural education?
12. Why do you believe that multicultural education is important?
   a. Why do you believe it is beneficial for students?
   b. Do you believe it is more and less beneficial for some students more than others? If yes, can you please explain why? If no, why not?
13. Can you tell me more about why you believe it is important to teach multicultural education in Catholic school contexts? Is there anything specific about a Catholic school context that you feel is important in relation to multicultural education?
14. How do you understand the concept of “culturally relevant and responsive teaching” (CRRP)?
15. How do you see this aligning with the aims of multicultural education?
16. From your perspective, are teachers adequately prepared and supported to enact multicultural education and CRRP?
17. In your view, is multicultural education commonly enacted in Catholic schools?
   a. When you have seen it enacted, what are some of the practices and approaches that you have observed?

Section 3: Teacher Practices

18. How do you promote multicultural education in your teaching/school environment in Catholic school contexts?
19. Can you give a few examples of how you have implemented multicultural education in your teaching practice/school environment?
20. How do you know that these multicultural practices are effective, based on your experience?
   a. How do you perceive the impact this instruction/atmosphere has on your students?
   b. What indicators of learning do you see?
21. In terms of CRRP, can you describe, in as much detail as possible, a situation in which you adapted specific teaching/administration approaches to suit the diversity in your classroom/school?
22. What materials and resources have you found useful for implementing multicultural education and CRRP? *Probe for specific titles of books, website names etc. as necessary
23. Can you tell me about a situation(s) in which you observed a student being discriminated against or excluded due to being a visible minority? How did you respond to this situation(s)?
24. How do you teach/incorporate multicultural education and CRRP in ways that align with Catholic teachings?
25. Given that Catholic schools follow a single faith-based education and emphasize unity, how do you promote an acceptance for valuing ethno-cultural differences among your students?

Section 4: Supports and Challenges

26. Can you describe the types of feedback you have received regarding your approach to incorporating multicultural education in your classroom, from either students, parents or administration?
27. Have you ever experienced any negative feedback or response to your approach to teaching/incorporating multicultural education? If yes, can you tell me more about that? How did you respond?

28. What (other) challenges, if any, do you experience when enacting multicultural education and CRRP in a Catholic school context?
   a. What would further support you in being able to meet or mitigate these challenges?

29. In what ways, if any, do your colleagues and school administration support you with respect to incorporating multicultural education in your teaching?

30. What resources are available to teachers and students to support multicultural inclusivity in your school and/or board?

Section 5: Next Steps

31. What are your future goals for teaching/incorporating multicultural education and how will you go about achieving them?

32. What resources would you recommend for new teachers who aspire to create a multicultural inclusive classroom with their students?

33. Do you have any advice for new teachers who are committed to working within Catholic schools and to incorporating multicultural education in their teaching?

34. Is there anything else you would like to mention that you feel is valuable which you have not already?

Thank you for your participation in this research study.