“Get Over Yourselves... We are Doing This as a Team:”

Teaching Grade 10 Canadian History Beyond the Eurocentric Lens

By

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Abstract

The Ontario History curriculum has undergone significant changes since the 1970s to better represent the voices, experiences, and perspectives of ethnic minority groups living in Canada. These changes indicate that more secondary school educators are committed to teaching Canadian History beyond the Eurocentric lens. By using a qualitative research approach involving a literature review and semi-structured interviews, this study explored the ways in which two History educators implement diverse content and perspectives in grade 10 Canadian History. Both participants believe that implementing diverse content in Canadian History improves the quality of their lesson plans, helps students understand the complexity of Canada’s national narrative, and better prepares students to handle real-life conflict as they develop strategies for dealing with controversial issues. These findings suggest that secondary school History teachers who are dedicated to infusing diverse content are highly sensitive to the needs of others and aware of how their own privilege and social position may contrast that of their students. They are determined to fostering a generation of active Canadian citizens who will be strong advocates for social justice issues.

Key Words: secondary school teachers, Canadian History, multicultural education
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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2015, CBC News gathered roughly 7,000 international educators who teach courses about Canada and asked them how they believe their students view Canadians and Canadian culture. One language professor living in Poland responded that her students “first and foremost, envision Canada as a country of immigrants cherishing its multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious heritage” (Schwartz, 2015, para. 1). The belief that Canadians embrace multiple heritages was similarly echoed by many other international teachers in the CBC study; and while such perspectives make it seem that the concept and practice of multiculturalism has been a long-standing tradition in Canadian history, it was just in 1971 when former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau issued an official multicultural policy to help ease the ethnic and racial tensions of the period. The policy hoped to “create a neutral state where society would not deliberately impose any particular culture on its members, nor disrupt or destroy less powerful groups and cultures” (Forbes, 2007, p. 28).

Trudeau’s policy was introduced in a timely manner as the city of Toronto underwent a major demographic change in the 1970s as well. “According to the OECD, more than two million people have immigrated to the Toronto region in the last thirty years from countries where the prevailing racial background was not Caucasian” (Relph, 2014, p. 133). Toronto went from having a predominately White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant population to being the “destination of choice for almost half of the two hundred thousand immigrants who enter Canada every year” (p. 133). It is no surprise then, that Trudeau’s multicultural policy continues to define and shape modern Canadian identity, which is particularly evident in the guidelines and expectations of Ontario’s History curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). The document focuses on three essential criteria designed to reflect the Canadian government’s
commitment to be accepting of and respectful towards cultural diversity: (1) the social, economic, political context, (2) communities, conflict, cooperation, (3) as well as identity, citizenship, and heritage throughout the twentieth century to present day.

To help students gain a critical lens and other related expectations, the Ontario curriculum also expects secondary school History teachers to incorporate linguistic and cultural diversity in their instructional programs and classroom environments. The content in the History curriculum document is not only a by-product of Trudeau’s policy, but also closely aligns with the values of multicultural education which Nieto and Bode (2012) describe as “education for social justice where the main goal is to enable students to understand social inequalities and learn how to improve society” (as cited in Howe and Lisi, 2015, p. 17). Doing so enables students and teachers to critically explore an event, issue, idea, and/or phenomenon from various sociocultural lenses and think of ways to actively change current societal inequalities and prevent future acts of hatred, violence, and discrimination.

1.0 Research Context

Despite this progressive multicultural curriculum, teachers may not be adequately prepared to fulfill its promise. Some studies have found that “even though most teacher education programs report that they have thoroughly incorporated diversity perspectives and multicultural content to the curriculum, external examinations often prove contrary” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005 as cited in Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010, p. 115). While the current History curriculum has been carefully constructed for teachers to be inclusive of diverse narratives and perspectives, not all educators put this pedagogy into practice. Many of those entering the field of teaching also “lack knowledge of the experiences and needs of culturally and linguistically diverse populations” (Sleeter 2001 cited in Cho and DeCastro-Ambrosetti, 2006, p. 25).
This issue is further problematized when considering the influence teachers can have on student learning. The content and information that teachers choose to disclose affects “the quality of discussions and what students think they are learning” (Hess, 2009, p. 106). When teachers approach Canadian History content through a dominate cultural lens, students could internalize that specific school of thought as inevitable truth. Similarly, when teachers deliver content that conveys mainstream perspectives, the likelihood of a student challenging that system or perspective is narrow. To avoid this, teachers ought to challenge conventional methods of teaching Canadian History and empower students to learn about and from, diverse groups of people who have been previously denied the right to voice their views.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study explored the ways in which two History teachers reportedly implement multicultural perspectives and content in grade 10 Canadian History studies. I furthered my understanding of this topic by interviewing teachers about: their reported practices for incorporating multicultural perspectives and perceived outcomes/effects on students; any pedagogical barriers that prevented and/or hindered them from integrating multicultural content in this course; how they understand multicultural education in theory and practice; and finally, what support they received to effectively include these perspectives. By implementing diverse content and perspectives in Canadian History, I believe secondary school teachers will help challenge conventional ways of teaching Canada’s national upbringing and better reflect the growing multicultural demographic in Canada. It is imperative now more than ever, for educators to instill multicultural content in their everyday lesson plans so that it becomes the norm in Canadian History studies, rather than an additive or supplementary curriculum.

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1 Scholars in the field of multicultural education generally agree that the mainstream perspectives in social studies curricula is Eurocentric, meaning that “the content and perspectives offered are dominated by Anglo, male, middle-class, Protestant thinking” (Howe & Lisi, 2014, p. 10).
1.3 Research Questions

The central research question that guided my study was: how are Ontario grade 10 Canadian History teachers integrating multicultural content and perspectives? Sub-questions that further explored this inquiry include:

- How do grade 10 Canadian History teachers understand multicultural content both in theory and in practice?
- What type of barriers do these teachers encounter when implementing multicultural perspectives in grade 10 Canadian History?
- What training and/or other supports do these teachers receive in order to effectively incorporate diverse perspectives and multicultural content in Canadian History?

1.4 Background of the Researcher

In December 1995, my parents arrived in Toronto with six children, no assets, and absolutely no English skills. I am the youngest of six children and now, I call Toronto, Canada my home. Coming from a small rural village located in Southern Poland, my family’s experience living in Toronto was one of culture shock and financial difficulties. Although Toronto provided us with a space to worship in our native language, celebrate our cultural festivities, and have access to our cultural foods, we also struggled learning English as a second language and had a difficult time adapting to Toronto’s urban way of life. In light of my family’s personal hardships, I developed a deep understanding of how prejudicial remarks and actions could have severe implications on a person’s well-being and impact their performance in work and other settings.

When my family and I moved to a neighborhood located in Northeastern Mississauga, we felt a strong sense of community as it was (and still is) composed of various immigrant families who underwent similar experiences as we did coming to Toronto. Living in the same
multicultural neighbourhood for over twenty years enabled me to form long-lasting bonds and friendships with people of diverse backgrounds. Talking with others about their immigrant experiences made me become more culturally-sensitive of the social injustices that occur within the work and school environment. I particularly remember discussing how the experiences of various ethnic minority groups were omitted in Canadian History discourse. During my adolescent years, I came to the sad realization that there really is such thing as ‘white-privilege’ and it was self-evident in grade 10 Canadian History course content. Canadian History as I recall it, was a recitation of dates, war battles, and reading out of the textbook. Some students, including myself, felt disconnected from the course content because most felt that they had no meaningful connection with the material or with Canada’s national identity.

As someone who is personally committed to promoting social justice and diversity in Canadian History studies, I hope my research helps secondary school History teachers see the value of effectively implementing diverse content in grade 10 Canadian History. I believe that when teachers create and nurture a safe space where students take charge of their learning experience and immerse themselves in resources where they understand multiple perspectives, it fosters a community in which the experiences and voices of various cultural and ethnic groups are cherished and recognized for playing a major role in building Canada as we understand it today.

1.5 Preview of the Whole MTRP

This MTRP has five chapters. In Chapter Two I review literature in the areas of History education in English-Canadian secondary schools, particularly on how multicultural content is perceived and implemented by secondary school teachers. In chapter three, I discuss the research design of my study and procedures, including data collection and methodological weaknesses
and strengths. Chapter four reviews and discusses my research findings and chapter five will provide recommendations for the educational community.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter reviews literature in the areas of multicultural education, History curriculum, and pedagogy to explore how teachers perceive multicultural education and the extent to which they incorporate diverse content in History studies. I start by reviewing research findings that reveal teachers’ personal and professional commitment towards spreading diversity in and outside the classroom environment. From there, I discuss findings that explore the pedagogical challenges some teachers encounter when integrating multicultural curricula. These research findings are an integral part of my study because they reveal the extent to which ethnocentrism – “the act of judging another culture because it does things differently” (Kehoe, 1984, p. 143) – continues to negatively impact how some teachers view multicultural curricula. Finally, I review studies that report best practices for secondary school teachers who are committed to transforming the curriculum for the purposes of promoting diverse perspectives in Canadian History classrooms.

2.1 Teacher Beliefs about Multicultural Education

This section reports findings of teachers who express feeling optimistic about promoting the goals and values of multicultural curricula. Teachers who have participated in multicultural workshops or who actively seek resources that represent the core values of diversity felt proud of their commitment and efforts towards spreading diversity (Lawrence, 2005). In Lawrence’s study, four secondary school educators proclaimed that after completing a course in multicultural education, they felt more dedicated to teaching from an antiracist framework (p. 354). Similar sentiments were expressed by secondary school teachers in Cho and DeCastro-Ambrosetti’s study (2006) which explored the effects of multicultural education on pre-service teachers. Most
of the participants in their study indicated that “their attitudes toward working with diverse student populations were positively influenced by taking the multicultural education class…and experienced an increased self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures” (p. 26). Another teacher in Ritchie’s et al.’s (2013) study expressed having “a whole new lens through which [they] see the world [and] now that [their] eyes have been opened, [they] cannot go back to the old ways of thinking” (p. 71). These educators were able to gain insight into some of main issues associated with diversity. The process also encouraged them to “reflect on their own educational experiences, their role as teachers, and to develop strategies that they might use to help students understand their social situations” (James, 1995, p. 42).

Teachers’ commitment to developing better instructional strategies is also found in Lund’s (2003) study which explored how several Canadian teachers conceptualized and practiced multicultural education. One teacher expressed his personal commitment to “discussing ideas and problems with colleagues and making an effort to incorporate new ideas [into the classroom]” (p. 10). Working with other professionals for the purposes of promoting diversity was also reported in Stevenson and Gonzalez’s (1992) study which found that cooperative learning was the dominant instructional mode used by educators who teach by the multicultural curriculum. “Some respondents reported that team teaching was also used along with student-directed learning and peer instruction” (p. 361). These findings suggest that some educators believe the success of multicultural curricula depends on the support and assistance from other professionals who are equally committed to the values and goals of multicultural education. This is further supported by research findings discussed in sub-section 2.2.1 which explores how the lack of professional support impacts the way multicultural education is viewed and practiced.

2.2 Challenges Teachers Encounter when Implementing Multicultural Curricula
Although section 2.1 highlighted how teachers expressed feeling more culturally aware of diverse populations after attending workshops that emphasized multicultural values, this section discusses some of the pedagogical barriers some teachers encounter when implementing multicultural curricula and diverse content. Sub-section 2.2.1 shows how educators lack support from other staff members particularly because of racial tensions within the school community. This issue is further problematized when teachers report having difficulty transferring multicultural theory into practice which is discussed in sub-section 2.2.2. I conclude this section by showing research findings that reveal how Eurocentric attitudes negatively impacts how some teachers incorporate diverse content and perspectives in History studies.

2.2.1 Lack of professional support

In Lawrence’s (2010) study, some teachers reported feeling a lack of professional support from their staff members predominately because of conflicting values and beliefs. For example, one teacher returned to school upon taking a multicultural course and “had a lot of theory and information [to share], but nobody wanted to hear it” (p. 353). One Puerto Rican teacher experienced a similar situation where her colleagues did not “support her multicultural efforts” and “refused to acknowledge racism in their school” (p. 354). This teachers experience suggests that racial tensions among staff members can severely impact the degree to which multicultural education is promoted and practiced in and outside the classroom environment.

This is an issue echoed in Carr’s and Klassen’s (1997) study where racial minority teachers working in Toronto reportedly showed more support for antiracist education than white colleagues (p. 74). Their study also found that racial minority teachers played a more effective role in advocating for diversity in the school community by participating and leading various social clubs. This is particularly problematic as it implies that the majority of teachers who
support the spreading and teaching of diverse content and perspectives in Ontario schools are likely ethnic minority teachers. One ethnic minority teacher in Goodwin’s study (2004) noticed a similar occurrence in her respective school community stating that “she sees a passion (in European American teacher educators) for producing students who can read and write but [she] doesn’t see a commitment to community transformation” (p. 13). The lack of support in community transformation goes hand at hand with the lack of support in promoting multicultural education. As afore mentioned, one of the fundamental goals of multicultural education is to challenge mainstream knowledge so that ethnic minority groups could be fairly represented in the History curriculum. These research findings reveal that some teachers, particularly those who identify as ethnic minorities, have trouble gathering support from white staff members because they do not share common goals and values.

2.2.2 Putting multicultural education into practice

In addition to lacking professional support, some secondary school teachers also expressed feeling “ill equipped for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students because of their limited cultural knowledge, teaching experience, and exposure to issues of diversity” (Cho & DeCastro-Ambrosetii, 2006, p. 27). These teachers reported feeling this way even after enrolling in multicultural courses and workshops. Feeling “ill-equipped” is often coupled with feelings of “uncertainty about how to address diversity in their field-based courses” (Assaf et al., 2010, p. 123). One teacher stated that “diversity presents challenges because [they are] not and [their] interns are not knowledgeable on all of the different cultures and language backgrounds" (p. 123). In other words, some teachers, particularly of Caucasian decent, may feel underprepared or uncomfortable teaching from a multicultural framework because they cannot fully understand the experiences and viewpoints of ethnic minority groups. Teachers who
express concerns about teaching diversity, or using multicultural content, are less likely to include multiple views in Canadian History discourse because from a pedagogical standpoint, the process in itself “requires teachers to question multiple perspectives, works across differences…and to motivate students to think in different ways” (Bruno-Joffré & Schiralli, 2002, p. 124). Therefore, when a teacher does not feel confident teaching in a multicultural classroom, promoting diversity in History curricula may ultimately be compromised.

Some scholars in the field of History education believe that the most effective way to remedy this issue is too guide students to “see people of the past through their own eyes, telling their stories as they experienced them” (Osborne, 2006, p. 126). Some teachers agree that by “being able to look at society through different eyes,” it enables students to understand “the relevance of discriminatory practices” (Goodwin, 2004, p. 14). However, a study conducted by Cunningham (2009) found that some high school teachers expressed feeling “skeptical” with the notion of “pretending” or “play-acting” to better understand a person’s situation from the past. According to one teacher in the study, “‘there is a certain arrogance in assuming that we can act how people acted in the past’” (Cunningham, 2009, p. 688). This belief again reflects the anxiety some teachers feel of simply not knowing enough, or not being in the position to discuss a topic or issue with which they have little personal connection with. Several teachers in Fogo’s (2014) study also shared this view when discussing the effectiveness of role-play activities. While most acknowledged its purpose for engaging students, they stressed the “potential for encouraging presentism” (p.164): understanding or interpreting the past through a modern-day lens. Consequently, role-play activities could place the teacher and students at risk of reinforcing cultural stereotypes because both parties lack the historical knowledge and perspective that is required to understand the topic in question. Putting multicultural education into practice is
especially challenging when teachers *think* they are infusing diverse content fairly and effectively (e.g. using role-play activities), but are actually obscuring the voices and experiences of ethnic minority groups by imposing modern beliefs and values.

2.2.3 “Things are OK as they are:” Teaching within the Eurocentric Lens

Ontario’s History curriculum and textbooks have been previously criticized for “constructing the dominance of Europeans as inevitable and natural” (Stanley, 2006, p. 34). As a result, minority groups were often generalized into a single category where their individual identities were obliterated. When “curricula and texts espouse the cultural values and traditions of Western Europeans while excluding the contributions of minority groups, many minority students encounter difficulty relating to what is being taught” (Hilliard, 1991 as cited in Stevenson and Gonzalez, 1992, p. 356; see also Gill, 1991). The prevalence of Eurocentric attitudes in textbooks is further problematic when teachers’ attitude towards infusing multicultural content is met with indifference or resistance. Stevenson and Gonzalez (1991) found that one of the major inhibitors of multicultural education among teachers was the belief that “society as [nonminority teachers] know it, will disappear if multicultural education is implemented” (p. 364). These teachers were also trained from a Eurocentric perspective and were not willing to learn about, or emphasize different cultural experiences in their lessons. Such attitudes are similarly found in Carr’s and Klassen’s (1997) study where some teachers believed “anti-racist education is an unnecessary fad” and question its relevance (p. 73).

The problem then, “is not simply biased curriculum, but that teachers bring their own biases to their reading of history-popular stereotypes of racial, ethnic, and religious groups, as well as assumptions about where and when different groups belong in history” (Wills, 1996, p. 384). Wills observed the consequences of teacher bias in his research study. He recognized how
one particular teacher’s choice of content and terminology on the African American experience in the Civil War South resulted to some white students “examining the experiences of African Americans under slavery while ignoring the experiences of African Americans outside of slavery - for example, communities of free blacks in the North and the South” (p. 378). By lacking diverse knowledge of a historical event and failing to present alternative resources to challenge conventional historical knowledge, both the teacher and students may fall victim to learning about the African-American experience through a Eurocentric lens: where a minority group is represented as and perceived to be inferior.

2.3 Best Practices for Effectively Implementing Diverse Content in History Studies

The research studies presented thus far suggests that the promotion and implementation of diverse perspectives still needs major support on a pedagogical level. Scholars in the field of multicultural education generally agree that “the way to include diverse groups is to place them in many different times and places and study them as historical actors with political voices” (Wills, 1996, p. 380). With an accurate understanding of why certain barriers exist, and an increased awareness of the main issues that prevent some educators from implementing multiple views in Canadian History, the sections below demonstrate how pedagogical solutions are not just excellent in theory, but are transferable to real-life practice as well. In sub-section 2.3.1, I report findings of best teacher practices in the History classroom. Sub-section 2.3.2 reveals how some teachers transform the current curriculum to promote the teachings of diverse content.

2.3.1 Teaching strategies for infusing diverse perspectives in Canadian History

Exploring Canadian History through multiple viewpoints goes beyond the mere presentation of diverse perspectives; it is a process where teachers are encouraged to think of various instructional methods that would best represent the voices and experiences of ethnic
minority groups. The strategies presented in this section reveals how teachers committed to multicultural education are more interested in teaching students how to become independent learners and thinkers. For example, in Carroll’s (2013) study one of his participants encouraged students to examine documentary evidence by “exploring the author, the context in which the document was written, and the intentions of the document” (p. 79). This activity not only prompts teachers to find diverse resources that exceed textbook knowledge, but also helps students to explore a historical event or issue through multiple perspectives. Another teacher in this study also encourages his students to “examine a topic from different textbooks from around the world to see different interpretations of the event. He and his students then engage in a discussion as to why there may be different perspectives on the event” (p. 81). This activity lends itself to historical empathy as students are attempting to understand the thoughts and actions of people located in a different time and place. Instead of assuming the identity of a particular person to understand their circumstance, this activity encourages educators to question why a specific issue or event took place and under what sociopolitical and economic context it had occurred.

This instructional approach was also found in Monte-Sano’s (2014) study where some teachers emphasized “understanding the beliefs and intentions of people who lived in another time and place” (p. 229). The participants in this study often used writing prompts that focused on historical perspective. Another activity to achieve this goal is to “annotate sources daily where students underline words or write notes, questions, and ideas in the margins” (p. 224). The fundamental goal in annotation according to one teacher who practices this method is for students to “have a dialogue with themselves as they read… raise questions to themselves…and to have a dialogue with the author” (p. 224). This process encourages students to develop self-
reflexive skills where they are aware of their own thoughts and feelings while reading another person’s testimony. Doing so allows students to develop historical empathy and understanding without assuming personal ownership over another individual’s voice or experience. Therefore, instead of focusing on presenting multicultural content for the sake of including diverse perspectives, these teachers worked towards encouraging students to think about the content they are reading in order to gain a well-rounded view of history.

2.3.2 Transforming the curriculum

Teachers are also in an incredible position of agency to modify and interpret the material contained within a history textbook. A teacher may be guided by a curriculum or resource that expresses racist views, personal bias, or misleading information, but they can convert this issue into a critical thinking task for students to examine and challenge perspectives asserted by other historians. In Lawrence’s (2005) study, seven teachers discussed curricular changes that they made, including but not limited to: “teaching the ‘truth’ about Columbus, selecting literature that was representative of cultural diversity and, dismantling the myths about people of colour” (p. 352). Teachers who modify the History curriculum by including multicultural content not only deepen their understanding of a particular historical event, but also permit students to “re-examine the assumptions, purposes, and nature of the curriculum” (Banks, 1993, p. 12). In such cases, the teacher can exceed textbook delivery methods by establishing a lively classroom dynamic where students could actively engage with the text, experiment with other resources, and learn how to think independently.

This finding is similarly shown in Dover’s (2010) study where six secondary school teachers expressed the belief that the curriculum “can and should reflect students’ personal and cultural identities.” (p. 82). To include students’ personal identities these teachers prepared
lessons such as “free writing, personal reflection, analyzing student-produced literature, and inviting students to make connections with family and community members (e.g., through family interviews, attendance at local cultural events, and interactions with younger students)” (p. 82). These teachers saw opportunity within their classroom and used students’ personal and familial background to promote multiple perspectives. In Ritchie’s (2013) study some teachers developed specific lesson plans to help students see the “necessity of a sociopolitical analysis of issues, driven by multiple perspectives” (p. 74). The purpose of constructing these lessons according to one teacher was so that students could “look at multiple perspectives of different groups that are not normally represented in school curricula… and not only talk about racism but the other ‘isms,’ to see perspectives from all social groups” (p. 74). These findings show how transforming the curriculum can help meet the needs of diverse populations because they have the opportunity to advocate for inclusion and explore topics that they can personally identify with.

2.4 Conclusion

This literature review has found research studies that reported teacher beliefs and practices of multicultural education in and outside the classroom environment. Section 2.1 explored how some teachers had a positive outlook on the implementation of diverse content because it helped them develop better self-reflexive skills and understand the perspectives of other cultures. Section 2.2 reported several barriers that educators encountered with multicultural education. This part of my literature review explored how some teachers felt underprepared with infusing a multicultural framework into practice and lacked professional support from other colleagues. It was also evident in a few empirical studies that some teachers continue to maintain Eurocentric attitudes while teaching historical content. This finding was particularly noteworthy
because it revealed how teaching through a Eurocentric perspective also lends itself to having a negative understanding of multicultural curricula. The final section of my literature review reports on best practices from teachers that are committed to teaching History from diverse perspectives and content. Here, I shared findings of teacher practices for implementing multicultural narratives and perspectives. In light of these research findings, the purpose of my study is to explore how some Ontario secondary school teachers actively promote and engage with multicultural content in grade 10 Canadian History. In the following chapter, I discuss the research approaches and procedures that I used to help achieve the goals outlined in this study.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter describes the research methodology that I used to conduct my study. First, I briefly explain the merits of using a qualitative approach in relation to my topic. Next, I review procedures and data collection instruments before elaborating, more specifically, on participant sampling and recruitment. I provide my rationale for these decisions through my research purpose and questions. Then, I explain data analysis procedures and review ethical procedures relevant to my study. Lastly, I conclude the chapter by identifying a range of methodological limitations and strengths.

3.1 Research Approach & Procedures

My study was conducted using a qualitative research approach involving a literature review and semi-structured interviews with two secondary school History teachers. Addressing the merits and challenges of implementing multicultural content through two specific case-to-case instances provided these educators an opportunity to share their unique professional experiences by adding “insights into the complicated nature of teaching and learning” (Cooley, 2013, p. 250). I fostered a positive and welcoming environment that encouraged volunteers to feel comfortable sharing their experiences and views about the implementation of multicultural content in Canadian History. Given the nature of my research purpose and question, it was also important that I collected and examined data that allowed me to explore the beliefs, perceptions, behaviours, and interactions of teachers working with students in a grade 10 Canadian History classroom. Doing so helped further my understanding of how and why implementing multicultural content in grade 10 Canadian History classes either worked or failed to materialize in the classroom setting.
Taking a qualitative approach to this study therefore allowed me to assume “the role of the ‘other’ and understand the situation from within the framework of the participants.” (Bergen, 1999, p. 57). As the researcher, I not only questioned my social position within the broader scope of this study, but also critically evaluated, recognized, and assumed “responsibility of my situatedness within the research and the effect it may have on the setting, people researched, and questions being asked” (Berger, 2013, p. 220). Some scholars argue that the subjective and personal nature of qualitative work cannot formally “contribute to theory building due to its specific and non-generalizable documentation and analysis of social life” (Cooley, 2013, p. 257). However, this characteristic of qualitative methodology encourages the researcher to gain a heightened sense of self-awareness which in turn adds value to the topic in question. The researcher gains empathy and sensitivity for the participants and their experiences thus providing a new level of respectability and importance (Allen-Meares, 1995, p. 6). Being mindful of my internal understanding of a teacher’s experience with multicultural content was indeed an essential process during the data collection because I was more aware of my misconceptions and ideological stances which enabled me to be more honest and judicious while selecting data.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Qualitative interviewing requires physical, social, mental, and communicative skills that help determine the “relation between what was said, how it was said, what the listener was attempting to ask or hear, and what the speaker was attempting to convey or say” (Dilley, 2004, p. 128). When I asked the participants to share details of how they incorporated diverse content, it helped enrich the quality of my study as it enabled me to imagine and visualize how an event or experience took place.

To maximize the quality of the participants’ interview experience, I used a semi-
structured interview protocol as the primary instrument for data collection. A semi-structured interview is a “powerful and flexible tool to capture the way people make meaning of their experiences” (Rabionet, 2011, p. 63). As the researcher, I carefully crafted questions that encouraged open-ended discussion. For example, when I wanted to know more about how History teachers incorporate diverse content in their practice, I phrased my question in a manner that prompted recruiters to answer thoughtfully and truthfully:

- Suppose it was my first day as a student in your Canadian History class. Walk me through what a typical day would look like.
- What type of resources would I typically engage with?
- What type of activities would I participate in?

In these sample questions, I intentionally positioned myself as a ‘student’ to reduce the power relations that is often felt between the researcher and research participants. I did not want the participants to get the impression that I was searching for the ‘correct’ answer and judging their response according to my belief system. Therefore, by asking them to think about their daily routine, it allowed them to openly talk about how they began their lesson, why they chose to use certain resources, what issues they encountered, and how they managed to overcome some of these challenges.

Using a semi-structured interview also permitted recruiters to recognize that I was genuinely interested in learning about their teaching pedagogy for the sake of incorporating some of their instructional methods into my own future teacher practice. At the end of the interview I asked them: “what advice might they have for novice teachers such as myself who are committed to implementing multicultural content in the History classroom?” Doing so shows that I am not just exploring their teacher practices and beliefs, but also seeking guidance and knowledge from
experienced professionals who have an understanding of my research question. By using a semi-structured interview, I was able critically explore the ways these teachers responded to the idea of incorporating multicultural content in theory and teaching practice which subsequently helped me re-examine my own misconceptions and ideologies throughout the interview process.

3.3 Participants

In the following section, I provide specific information about how I selected the teachers who participated in my study. Sub-section 3.3.1 explains the sampling criteria that I used to select the participants. In sub-section 3.3.2, I discuss my qualitative sampling procedures and justify this reasoning with citation support. Lastly, I provide a brief biography of these teachers.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

For my study, it was paramount that participants have a minimum of five years teaching experience in grade 10 Canadian History content. This provided an opportunity for “information-rich cases where [I] learned a great deal about the issues of central importance” (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). Teaching History at a different grade level or a topic could have provoked answers that stretched beyond the scope of this research study. By sampling teachers who have specific knowledge and years of experience teaching grade 10 Canadian History, it helped the participants focus their answers within a Canadian context and also helped me collect useful and relevant data on my topic. My second sampling criterion aligned closely with the first as participants must have experiences with incorporating multicultural content in their teaching of grade 10 Canadian History. Drawing from lucid examples allowed me to gain insight into how the participant understood, promoted, and, incorporated multicultural content in meaningful and unique ways. It also revealed their level of dedication towards inclusivity in the classroom. Finally, the teachers interviewed for my study did not have to be teaching grade 10 Canadian
History at the time of the interview, but were still required to meet the first two sampling
criterion noted above.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures

“Purposeful sampling requires access to key informants in the field who can help in
identifying information-rich cases” (Suri, 2011, p. 66). In other words, the researcher specifically
selects recruiters who are personally familiar with the research question and topic. Although
purposeful sampling tends to be bias because it often reflects the researcher’s beliefs (pp. 66),
“the rationale for selecting participants must reflect the purpose or goals of the study” (Arcury &
Quandt, 1999, p. 128). For this reason, I used purposeful sampling to select recruiters. Not only
did purposeful sampling ensure that the teachers in my study met the criteria noted in sub-section
3.3.1, but it also helped me collect data that answered my research question. Given the
methodological parameters that I worked in, my sampling procedures also relied on convenience
and networking sampling. Time and financial restrictions prompted me to select recruiters that
worked nearby my neighbourhood and/or my work environment. During the recruitment process,
I contacted educators who had previous, or current experience teaching grade 10 Canadian
History. In the next sub-section, I provide a brief description of these participants’ background.

3.3.3 Participant biographies

Kinga was born in Eastern Europe and moved to Canada when she was a young child.
She lived in Etobicoke for a couple of years before settling in Brampton. Currently, Kinga works
for the Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board and has been teaching in the same school for over
ten years. This school is located in a low-income neighbourhood composed of many non-
Caucasian immigrant families. During the first five years of her teaching career, Kinga taught
various History courses including: Canadian History, American History, and World History. She
enjoys teaching Canadian History in particular because it gives students the chance to critically analyze and deconstruct some of the national myths that they have been taught to believe growing up. Her favourite units to teach are World War II and the Cold War.

Wanda was born and raised in the West end of Toronto. She has been teaching with the Toronto District School Board for almost 20 years. During this time, Wanda was a Department Head in three different schools and participated in various school board initiatives such as Arts, Equity, and Community partnerships. Wanda currently teaches in a large school with students from mixed ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds. For over ten years, she has taught grade 10 Canadian History at least once a semester. She enjoys teaching Canadian History because it allows her to incorporate various activities and lesson plans that she learned from her research in Equity and Social Justice Education.

3.4 Data Analysis

In this section, I explain how I organized and analyzed my data. I began by transcribing both interviews and proceeded to code this data information. “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based data” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3). One of the fundamental goals of coding is to find “repetitive patterns of action and consistencies in human affairs as documented in the data” (p. 5). By doing so, the researcher is able to synthesize themes where appropriate as well as divergences relevant to their research question. Before coding data, it is also recommended for researchers to think about how they want to organize their research (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 241). For my study, I used five main coding strategies that guided me with the collection of my data including: attribute codes, descriptive codes, in vivo codes, value codes, and process codes. The majority of my research findings
derived from examining descriptive and value codes. I began by highlighting similar values that both teachers shared, and then proceeded to highlight the differences in their teacher practices and beliefs. This process helped me recognize broader themes in my data and allowed me to effectively analyze the participants’ experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge of intergrading multicultural content and perspectives. Coding methods for qualitative research therefore enables the researcher to “organize and group data into categories that share some characteristic” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 8) and begin to “look for the underlying, implicit, meaning in the content of a text” (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 223).

After I coded my data and organized these codes into broader themes and categories, I recorded my thought process by keeping analytic memos. Analytic memos “are sites of conversation with ourselves about our data” (Clarke, 2005, p. 202 cited in Saldaña, 013, p. 32). I reflected on my research question, my relationship with the participants, and emerging patterns within my data. More importantly, I was able to clearly identify the broader implications of my research findings and recognize issues in education that require further research (discussed in Chapter 5). Brantlinger et al. (2005) also recommend that researchers ought to “provide a rationale for what was or what was not included in the research as it helps assure the value of the study” (Brantlinger et al. 2005 cited in McDuffie & Scruggs, 2008, p. 93). As per this suggestion, I briefly looked at “null data” (what the volunteers choose not to speak to) as a method to gain additional insight about the participant’s response to the research problem. I also had a third party review my coding strategies and themes to “help alleviate researcher bias and eliminate over-analyzing data (Turner, 2010, p. 759). By following these specific strategies during my data analysis, I was careful not to select information that adhered to my personal preferences or interest which ultimately ensured that “participants [were] fairly represented in the
reporting of the research findings” (McDuffie & Scruggs, 2008, p. 93).

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

Despite how cautious a researcher tries to be while undertaking a qualitative research approach, scholars have raised issues with the level of flexibility and freedom that a researcher has over their data collection and analysis. Qualitative research methods are “generally less canonized which makes it difficult to foresee what sort of data will be collected” (Flick, 2009, p. 43). As such, participants may be a risk of having their experience, opinions, and views misinterpreted or undermined. This issue lends itself to the struggle of establishing power and trust between the researcher and the participant. The researcher has an “unyielding ethical responsibility to guide, protect, and oversee the interest of the person or people being studied” (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 47). Since the nature of qualitative studies focuses on trying to understand people’s thoughts, actions, and reactions to a particular social problem or event, it is possible to place participants in a “highly stressful, anxiety-producing, or unpleasant situation” (p. 48).

To ensure that the participants in my study did not feel discomfort or anxiety, my research study followed the ethical principal of voluntary consent which ensured that both recruiters were not forced to participate in my research (see Appendix A) and withdraw from participation at any time during the interview (Neuman & Robson, 2009, p. 50). They were also not required to answer any question that made them feel uncomfortable. They were made aware of “their rights and what they were getting involved in when they read and signed a statement giving informed consent” (p. 50). Doing so made sure that each participant volunteered “according to their own values, preferences, and wishes” (Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2010, p. 28). To maintain the participant’s anonymity, they were each
assigned a pseudonym (Wanda and Kinga). The participants do not have their school name or any other content (city, town name, etc.) revealed in my written work or oral presentations (see Appendix A). The security of all data is stored on my password protected laptop. Again, this maintained the participant’s integrity and helped to establish trust between myself and the recruiters (Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 2010, p. 58).

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

The ethical parameters of my study posed some limitations to my research purpose. For instance, sampling two teachers who work within the proximity of my neighbourhood and work environment puts me, as the researcher, at risk of selection bias. Qualitative methodological procedures have been criticized for producing bias data and analysis, specifically through the selection process where the researcher knowingly interviews participants’ who will share experiences to produce the desired dependent variable (Collier & Mahoney, 1996, p.60). This methodological limitation puts to question the credibility and value of virtually any qualitative research study because the role and motive of the researcher is under constant critical examination. While subjective interpretation of data is expected to occur, the process of finding two specific participants’ raised some concern of how and why I as the researcher, decided to choose the selected interviewees.

My research findings are also specifically relevant to the circumstances that I, and the interviewees, are situated in and therefore, cannot testify to the experiences of other teachers who teach diverse content in the grade 10 Canadian History classroom. Similarly, interviewing two teachers restricted me from learning about student experiences with, and perceptions of, multicultural content in Canadian History classrooms. The details and experiences revealed by Kinga and Wanda only captured their personal understanding and interpretation of a student’s
reaction. Meaning, my research cannot support or refute the claim that multicultural curricular content increases student engagement or reduces ethnic/racial prejudice because such findings are required from a pupil perspective.

Notwithstanding some of these limitations, qualitative methodology ultimately “provides data on some vexing issues which quantitative data cannot answer, such as the quality of the educational experiences” (Bergen, 1999, p. 58). It is an exceptional way to attain a rich account of a teacher’s personal and professional experience with the topic in question. This is precisely the main goal of qualitative research - to understand specific circumstances of how and why things happen (Dilley, 2006, p. 130). Given the nature of the semi-broad research questions, Kinga and Wanda were able to openly express any thoughts, feelings, and experiences that came to mind. In other words, “there [was] no active manipulation of variables nor any attempt to control or isolate variables in a qualitative study” (McDuffie & Scruggs, 2008, p. 95). This added a powerful element of authenticity and credibility to my research because both participants reflected on their professional practices without anyone or anything intentionally trying to restrict their thought process or sharing of knowledge. Therefore, the interview process was one of the most significant qualities of this study because the experience permitted Kinga and Wanda to discover themselves in and outside of the research context. It was a chance for them to reveal some of the complexities within the current educational system and generated discussion that led me to think of other research questions that demand further exploration.

3.7 Conclusion: Brief Overview and Preview of What is Next

This chapter provided a summary of key methodological decisions guiding my research. I began by explaining how qualitative research added value to my study and reviewed general approaches, procedures, and data collection; specifically focusing on semi-structured interview
protocols. I then elaborated on participant sampling and recruitment by introducing my criteria for the study and the ways in which I analyzed my data. I also briefly reviewed a range of ethical procedures that directed my study. I concluded this chapter by discussing the methodological limitations and strengths. In Chapter 4, I report my research findings.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction to the Chapter:

In the first chapter of my MTRP, I wondered how Ontario’s progressive multicultural curricula is being put into practice by grade 10 Canadian History teachers who report implementing diverse content and narratives. This central question prompted me to complete a literature review in Chapter Two where I discussed findings that revealed how some secondary school teachers value the goals of multicultural curricula, but have difficulty transferring their knowledge into practice. These findings were significant to my study as they put to question why some barriers continue to exist despite the efforts made by Ontario’s school boards to include multicultural perspectives in the History curriculum. To ensure that my research findings shed light on some of these issues, Chapter Three explained the sampling criteria that I used to conduct this study. It was paramount that the participants, Kinga and Wanda, had a minimum of five years teaching experience in grade 10 Canadian History content in addition to having experience with incorporating diverse perspectives.

This chapter presents my research findings based on the data collected from two semi-structured interviews with Kinga and Wanda. Data analysis yielded four major themes that reveal how these History teachers understand multicultural education in theory and practice, as well as, the barriers they encounter due to their professional environment, beliefs and implementation of diverse curricular content. These themes include:

- The racial identity and socioeconomic status of teachers and students reportedly impacts how educators choose to implement diverse content in Canadian History.

- Teachers believe that incorporating multiple views in Canadian History better prepares students for the future.
• Teachers believe that teaching students how to identify and apply historical thinking concepts is more valuable than teaching historical content.

• Infusing multiple perspectives in Canadian History is reportedly challenging when students feel marginalized and disengaged, and when teachers lack support.

Overall, both participants believe that implementing diverse content in Canadian History improves the quality of their lesson plans and helps students understand the complexity of Canada’s national narrative. With this knowledge, my goal is to highlight the importance of creating and maintaining a supportive professional community where resources, ideas, and professional experience can be openly shared and discussed for the purpose of welcoming diverse perspectives in the Canadian History classroom.

4.1 Me, Myself, and Us – Identity and Status Guides Pedagogy

The first finding I will share is that the racial identity and socioeconomic status of teachers and students reportedly impacts how educators choose to implement diverse content in Canadian History. Contrary to Sleeter and Grant’s finding (1995) that “most educators do not examine how their cultural and gender biases impact instructional practice” (cited in Huerta, 1999, p. 153), my data reveals that some teachers not only recognize the privilege of their white racial identity, but also examine the ways in which their identity influences how they conceptualize and implement diverse content in the Ontario Canadian History course. This finding was similarly found in Romanowski’s (1997) study, where History teachers in the U.S “indicated that the family and social class structure in which they were raised played an intricate role in constructing their identities, thus maintaining a significant role in shaping their teaching and views toward various historical events” (p. 14).

4.1.1 Recognizing racial and socioeconomic privilege
Teachers who openly identify their racial and socioeconomic privilege show greater awareness of how their position contrasts with others, and the historical content in question. Kinga’s perception of herself reflects what Guskey and Passaro (1994) found in their study which showed how teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy felt “a strong conviction that influences student learning, including the learning among students who may be more challenging” (Guskey and Passaro cited in Medina, 2013 p. 50). When I asked Kinga to describe the community in which her current school is situated, not only did she identify the demographics of the community, but she also situated her position within the community:

I am a white middle-class woman who was raised in Canada, in a white middle-class neighbourhood and that is the lens in which I view the world…that’s my neutral setting. So, I have to remind myself to sometimes get out of neutral, and look at things from a different setting, from a different lens, and put myself into the shoes of somebody else…and it takes practice to be able to do that, and to remember to do that. So just pointing it out to students because [they see the world] from whatever lens is their neutral.

Kinga’s recognition of her racial and class privilege here shows that she is highly aware of how her social status may impact her way of thinking and teaching. Looking past her “neutral setting” to better understand the perspectives, beliefs, and values of others who come from another socioeconomic and cultural standpoint suggests that Kinga routinely challenges her personal ideologies to ensure that she is practicing a true appreciation of other worldviews. This is especially important while teaching Canadian History through multiple lenses because it demonstrates “a deep cultural appreciation and understanding of who [people] are and where they are coming from” (Wanda). It also encourages teachers to recognize that they are on a
learning journey *with* their students, where they gain new insight and perspectives from other beliefs and practices. Similar to Kinga, Wanda also understands the value of acknowledging how her racial background and social-class upbringing impacts how she views her surroundings:

> I grew up in a predominately Eastern European neighbourhood…in a middle class family. The teachers I had in school were a reflection of my cultural background, they were either Canadian born or lived in Canada for a really long time, so when I became a teacher, there were times where I was the only Canadian born in the room. So you really have to front your privilege, you have to front your culture…I’m not an immigrant, I’m a settler and I am third, fourth generation Canadian.

Here, Wanda expresses the need for teachers to be honest with how one’s racial background can add to their sense of entitlement. For teachers to ‘front their privilege’ ultimately suggests that they ought to be honest with how their social status, ethnicity, and culture can help them advance in ways that other groups of people cannot. Later on in the interview, Wanda shared with me that she often begins her classes with identifying her position so that students understand how her identity can contribute to having a personal bias.

### 4.1.2 Socioeconomic makeup of students

While some studies found that changes in demographics do not influence or reform educators’ pedagogical approach due to the general belief that students’ learning processes are universal (Huerta, 1999, p.157), my data shows an alternative view of educators who consider the ethnic make-up of students while infusing multiple views in Canadian History. Wanda currently teaches at a school with many students who are “from 40 to 50 different cultural backgrounds” while Kinga teaches in “a low-income neighbourhood where there are many
immigrants, cultures, and religions.” Wanda and Kinga both teach to their students’ ethnic and cultural identities. Kinga for example, was mindful of the ethnicities in her classroom while conducting a lesson on reservation schools. In fact, she viewed the ethnic diversity in her classroom as an advantage because she was able to specifically refer to their cultural background while emphasizing the impact of Western colonization:

It’s all about the students and their reactions, and what they got out of it…where I teach now (name of community), our population is so multicultural that in my class, I can have students from 15 different countries who are not just second or third generation Canadian, but who actually were born in that country and who have a very close tie to their mother culture…and so seeing that perspective…okay, how would you feel if this part of your culture was taken away from you?

For Kinga, having a classroom with a lot of diversity makes it easier to infuse multiple perspectives. When teachers also create an environment where students feel comfortable enough to openly share their personal knowledge, experience, and insight, they can allow students to be the voice of diversity in the classroom. Mansfield and Kehoe (1994) claim that this is one of the central goals of multicultural education because teachers are “able to meet the needs of ‘disadvantaged’ groups in society by focusing on promoting intergroup harmony” (Mansfield & Kehoe cited in James, 1995, p. 41). Teachers are less likely to superficially add diverse content when the students themselves are the physical embodiment of multiculturalism and are given the opportunity to tell their stories.

While Kinga and Wanda discussed how multiculturalism guided the way they teach Canadian History content, I also wondered how their approach to teaching Canadian History might have been different if they were working in a white, middle-class community. To my
surprise, neither of the participants were able to give me a clear answer when I asked this question. Wanda admitted that she “does not know” because “she never taught in a middle class neighbourhood.” Kinga diverted from my question by providing an example of her friend who currently teaches in a “super white community, but that does not mean she is any less capable of infusing multiculturalism.” Both responses made me question if white History educators teaching in a diverse community feel more inclined to incorporate multiple perspectives in urban schools because it reflects the identity of their students.

4.1.3 Academic interests

Thus far my research findings explain how the socioeconomic status and racial identities of teachers and students reportedly influence the way educators chose to incorporate diverse content in Canadian History. I will now discuss how teachers’ academic interests influence their choices in choosing diverse content. This finding is essential to my research question because it shows how identity, in the context of teachers’ academic interests, can impact the way educators conceptualize multicultural content in theory and practice. Therefore, while some educators may share similar teaching philosophies (discussed in section 4.2), their academic interest makes their teaching practice unique (discussed in section 4.3). For example, Wanda considered herself as a “world traveler” and acknowledged that she “made conscious decisions about travelling and learning about different cultures so that [she] can bring this knowledge into the classroom.” She also believes that “a lot of [her] teaching decisions are informed by [her] travel experiences.” Self-identifying as a world traveler has clearly impacted Wanda’s perception of herself and the cultures around her. She views herself as a resource who is able to bring in real-life experiences and stories from people of various different backgrounds into the curricular content. Wanda also recognized how her Masters degree in Social Justice and Equity Education is “reflected in her
professional development and course choices.” She uses a bio-poem activity (an idea learned through the Equity Studies courses that she taught) to begin discussing historical perspective. Her central aim is to know who students are and for them to “figure out who [they are] in relation to everybody else.” Her academic research in History also led her to do activities where students look through history textbooks to see if and/or how they are represented in the curriculum, and to advocate for inclusion if they are wrongly misrepresented or not present at all.

Similarly, Kinga’s approach to teaching History from multiple lenses interlocks with her academic preferences as well as her familial background. She enjoys teaching WWII and the Cold War because she can personally identify with the material:

Both my grandfathers were in the war, and I’ve heard stories from them about it.

Growing up hearing their stories gives me a personal connection. I think that as a teacher having a personal connection makes it more interesting for my students because I can add that while I’m teaching. My grandfather was in a prisoner of war camp and he was an artist…so bringing those in and talking about them is pretty cool.

Kinga’s academic interest in teaching World War II is clearly linked with her family’s war history. This shows the flexibility and agency that a teacher has when choosing which multicultural material to introduce in the History classroom. This also offers insight into how personal preference in academia shapes the direction of a course. In Kinga’s case, bringing her personal artifacts may help students feel more comfortable with sharing their individual knowledge and experiences into the History curriculum. It is clear from Wanda’s and Kinga’s answers that their academic interests shape the way they teach Canadian History and implement diverse content and perspectives. While their personal preferences in academia guide their
pedagogy, section 4.2 shows how their teacher practices are also influenced by the belief that implementing diverse content and views better prepares students for the future.

4.2 Preparing Students for the Future

Teachers believe that incorporating multiple views in Canadian History better prepares their students for the future. While I expected these educators to discuss how incorporating diverse perspectives helps students make meaning of the History curriculum, I was surprised to learn that they also believe infusing multicultural content can better prepare students to identify and deal with real-life problems. This section will therefore demonstrate how teachers believe multicultural content in Canadian History gives students the opportunity to make meaningful connections with the historical narrative in addition to developing effective social skills (such as empathy and collaborative learning) to prepare them for real-life conflict.

4.2.1 Making meaningful connections

The participants in my study support this finding as they strongly believe that students must have a personal and meaningful connection with the content, so that they can understand why an event or issue is important to analyze, discuss, and critique. In other words, helping students develop historical empathy “as a way to focus upon understanding perspectives held in the past, while highlighting the importance of context and expressing some degree of wariness about injecting one’s own views into the effort” (Cunningham, 2009, p. 684). Wanda believes that when students “do not understand what [their] own perspective is, or where [they are coming from, then they] will struggle to understand why historians interpret events in certain ways.” Before discussing a historical event, Wanda often begins her lessons with a hypothetical scenario where students have the chance to personally identify with a conventional issue or situation. In one class, she used an example of a black student getting struck by a white driver near the
intersection of the school and asked students to discuss how current racial tensions play into Canada’s history with racism. Kinga also reports using personal, real life examples to help students better understand historical context. She believes that in doing so, “it helps us understand social history…and the impact that an event had on everybody in the world.”

Wanda’s and Kinga’s commitment to helping students making meaningful connections to history shows that their views on multicultural content goes beyond presenting resources with multiple views; it is also a matter of discussing and challenging current trends where students understand sociopolitical and economic tensions from various perspectives. They reportedly achieved what Steinberger (1991) asserted as “reaching the goal of equity” where teachers “emphasize on social skills and higher order thinking skills to help them develop meaningful interpersonal relationships, resolve conflict, and redress stereotypes and prejudices” (cited in Stevenson and Gonzalez, p. 357)

4.2.2 Teaching effective social skills

Kinga and Wanda acknowledge that certain topics in Canadian History (e.g. Japanese internment camps, reservation schools, the Holocaust, etc.) can cause tension within the classroom, but this does not prevent them from teaching controversial topics. Instead, they use the opportunity to understand students’ point of view and construct lessons where students can learn effective strategies to deal with real-life conflict. Wanda believes that teaching students the skill of “working together, collaborating, and socializing” is more important than the history content itself:

I think history teachers have a real obligation to teach soft skills, about how to be more involved with the community, and work with one another. Group based learning I think is really important to because the reality is that a lot of the
soft skills we’re teaching kids, like how to work with others, how to collaborate, how to socialize, and so on…is going to help them in the future. At the end of the day, we’re teaching kids how to learn, the content is whatever.

Wanda expresses the belief that learning content in itself will not help students develop transferable skills that could help them in practical situations. This belief shapes the way she conducts lessons in the classroom as well. For example, many of her activities focus on “building community” where she tells students that “by the end of the lesson, students should be able to work with any student in the room and that should not be a problem.” Students can attain a rich understanding of Canada’s history by working through different resources and also share their ideas with peers. In others words, she is not teaching at students, but rather facilitating classroom discussion and guiding their learning process. Kinga also shares the belief that teaching content is not as important as teaching students why historical knowledge and information matters:

I feel like students need to know the timeline when all of this took place, but the specific date of each battle doesn’t matter, it’s the social history that matters because that’s what lasts. It’s all about the people, and their reactions and what they got out of it, so that we can learn from that…and unfortunately we are a desensitized culture and you have to break through that…if it doesn’t get to students’ hearts, then it’s not going to matter, and it has to matter.

Focusing on how people interacted with each other in the past and the impact it has had on modern-day life also lends itself to teaching effective social skills. In Kinga’s case, she is more interested in helping students understand the behaviours and attitudes of people living under a specific sociopolitical context so that students could learn from their success and/or failures. Hoping to spark feelings of historical empathy is also a transferable social skill in practical
situations where students attempt to understand another person’s experience or perspective. This is a particularly useful ability in workplace environments where students may interact with people from various cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and will need to learn how to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and attitudes. Teaching effective social skills through Canadian History content shows Wanda’s and Kinga’s commitment towards helping students develop interpersonal skills that will be useful in working with various people and handling unexpected conflict. Section 4.3 shows how they combine this strategy with teaching historical thinking concepts where students are taught how to explore a topic through different lenses.

4.3 Teaching Historical Thinking Concepts

These teachers believe that teaching students how to identify and apply historical thinking concepts is more valuable than teaching historical content. Before I interviewed the participants, I was skeptical of educators who proclaimed they implemented diverse content in Canadian History. This finding particularly surprised me because I did not realize the extent to which some teachers are creating and fostering a classroom environment where the voices and experiences of multiple ethnic and cultural identities are valued, represented, and included in the History curricular content. Sub-section 4.3.1 discusses how the participants in my study challenge mainstream knowledge by questioning the validity of Canada’s national narrative and analyze various primary source documents that deepen students understanding of Canada’s history. Sub-section 4.3.2 explores how teaching beyond the history textbook enabled Wanda and Kinga to include diverse resources and examine a topic from multiple lenses.

4.3.1 Challenging the narrative: exploring bias in History textbooks

Both Wanda and Kinga recognize that history textbooks omit and/or misrepresent the experiences, voices, and stories of ethnic minority groups. As such, they both share the belief
that it is important for teachers to help students learn about “the power relationships and power dynamics, and the social justice issues that are happening underneath them” (Wanda). Wanda’s teaching philosophy is reflected in her practice as she encouraged students how to “identify bias, gather sources...and deconstruct the language.” In one culminating activity, students were required to challenge the curriculum and historical narrative by advocating for the inclusion of a person or event that was not represented. This task required students to critically examine what events were included in their textbooks, how they were written, and for whom were they written for. According to Wanda, many students chose to write about someone from their own cultural group which indicates that these students did not see themselves represented in the curriculum and therefore chose to challenge conventional knowledge by writing about their specific cultural group.

Kinga also discussed how she focused “a lot on bias, who’s telling the story, and their motivation behind telling the story.” She uses a variety of different resources such as video clips, memoirs, and photos to teach a well-rounded view Canada’s history. By showing students pictures, videos, or memoirs that are not included in the history textbook, Kinga reportedly had more engaging classroom discussions that enriched the students’ understanding of Canada’s national narrative. For example, when Kinga conducted a lesson on trench warfare, she aimed to “elicit an emotional, mental, and physical reaction” from her students so that they can better understand how people’s personal lives and well-being were impacted. By exploring different resources that promote multiple views of a historical event and/or issue and by critically examining the information in history textbooks, both Wanda and Kinga show their commitment to presenting an honest account of Canada’s national upbringing. This finding is further
supported in sub-section 4.3.2 as Kinga and Wanda report teaching Canadian History beyond the classroom textbook.

**4.3.2 Teaching beyond the textbook**

While some studies show that teachers often infuse multicultural perspectives by simply adding new content to existing course material on the surface level (Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010, p.116), Wanda and Kinga challenge the existing narrative by exploring other resources (e.g., videos, photos, primary documents, etc.) that can better explain an event or phenomenon. Both interviewees acknowledged that over the course of their professional career, finding diverse content has been easier with increasing access to technology. Teaching beyond the textbook has reportedly allowed them to explore stories, facts, opinions, and events not conventionally found in history textbooks. For example, Wanda’s research in Social Justice and Equity Education motivated her to find ‘outside’ sources where the voices of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) community are incorporated in her lesson plans. Her activities often follow a “pre-, during-, and after-” methodology where students reflect on their learning progress. This practice suggests that teachers should “set the stage” for incorporating multiple views where they are not merely ‘showing’ what others believed or experienced, but rather critically exploring and learning from the perspectives of others.

Kinga’s approach to teaching multiple views differs from Wanda’s as she combines Power Points and video clips to facilitate open-ended discussions. From her perspective, infusing multicultural perspectives in practice should allow students to understand “the impact of an event” through oral debate or written reflection. While both interviewees see the importance of infusing diverse content in Canadian History, the ways in which they achieve this in practice is clearly different; indicating that infusing diverse content depends on various factors such as: the
community culture, interest of students, and the teacher’s pedagogical preference. Despite differences in practices, it is clear that Wanda and Kinga demonstrate professional and personal dedication to teaching historical thinking concepts that allows learners to engage with the course content rather than passively consume mainstream knowledge. In the section below, I will show how their commitment towards implementing diverse views and content is at times challenging due to student resistance and lack of professional support.

4.4 Teacher Challenges with Implementing Diverse Content

These teachers perceive that infusing multiple perspectives in Canadian History is challenging when students feel marginalized, disengaged, and when teachers lack professional support. This finding is particularly important to my study because it reflects similar challenges discussed in Chapter Two, such as how including diverse views continues to present serious pedagogical challenges that require more attention and support. In sub-section 4.4.1, both Wanda and Kinga discuss student reactions to the implementation of diverse content and perspectives. In Wanda’s case, she believes that students feel marginalized, whereas Kinga interprets students lack of participation as showing their disengagement with course content. Sub-section 4.4.2 reports how a lack of professional support makes it challenging to effectively include diverse content and narratives.

4.4.1 Student resistance: speaking out and keeping silent

While including multiple perspectives in Canadian History allows educators to advocate for inclusion, teachers also risk having students feel like they are being targeted or personally attacked. This barrier was discussed in Chapter Two which showed how some teachers expressed feeling afraid to discuss racial or socioeconomic issues because it might create resistance and situations that they cannot manage (e.g., Assaf et al., 2010). Although the participants in my
study did not express experiencing feelings of fear, they did highlight some students’ reactions to multicultural content which may reveal a possible barrier that teachers could encounter if they are not careful with how they include topics related to diversity. During my interview with Wanda, she shared a story where one student (from a previous school) reacted to a lesson saying, “oh my god, she gave an example about the gays again!” According to Wanda, this particular school community did not accept people or opinions identified with the LGBTQ community. Teachers who infuse multiple perspectives where some ideas are not typically discussed in the school community or avoided at home, must be equipped to handle students’ reaction. When students vocalize their frustration or disagreement, other classmates who identify with the topic may feel ashamed, shy, or timid. This reveals that including multicultural content in Canadian History could also heighten feelings of discomfort and marginalization when a student “sees themselves” in a topic or “can relate to an issue,” but is too afraid to share their ideas.

Kinga on the other hand, encountered resistance by silence. She recalled a lesson where students were asked to look at an event from a different cultural perspective, but they appeared confused and “stared at her like deer caught in headlights.” She described feeling “devastated” because she put a lot of time and effort planning this activity:

I think it could be challenging when the students are not invested…and you’re trying to do all those different activities that I talked about, and get them motivated, get them into it, and you’re not getting anything from the student…then so much of that relies on student buy in and student participation, and them saying, ‘okay yes, I will put myself in the shoes of other cultures, or this other person, and actually giving you ideas and perspectives. And when they don’t, it’s like pulling teeth…it’s very painful to do, and then really you can’t do anything because I can say, “okay well I think it would be like
this…” but that’s not the point, right? The point isn’t for me to tell them, it’s for them to come to the conclusion on their own, and so when they don’t want to then it’s hard.

In Kinga’s scenario, resistance is accompanied with silence and indifference. Kinga’s and Wanda’s experiences with student reactions raises the question if the success of multicultural content in grade 10 Canadian History is determined by student response. It is important to keep in mind the way educators present historical content in communities where students identify as a minority group. Blank stares may not necessarily be caused by feelings of disengagement or confusion. It is possible that the content of the activity made them see themselves or others in a ‘different’ way, causing them to ‘shut down’ and avoid addressing feelings of discomfort, anger, or sadness. The paradox then, is that while multicultural content encourages educators to help students personally identify with the material, it may also “hit too close to home,” thus creating a classroom atmosphere where students may feel exposed or isolated.

4.4.2 Limited professional support

Student response presents some barriers for educators who implement diverse content in Canadian History, but how about the influence of other staff members? While Kinga mentioned that she feels supported by her social science department, she did not delve into detail how and diverted from the question. The lack of information of how she is supported raises the question if there truly is a system of support where she can openly discussion ideas and challenges with the implementation of diverse content. Wanda on the other hand expressed a great deal of frustration with the lack of support in her department:

I work with teachers who are very traditional in their pedagogy and while I try to share some of my resources, we actually agreed in our department that our philosophy’s on teaching is so different, that I will teach my way, you will teach your way, we will have a
common independent study, and final independent exam with options, and then we just do our own thing. We just agreed that it is better for our students in order to just teach the content that we agree to teach but in the ways in which will benefit our own students. So do we do things collaboratively in our department, uhm no.

Educators who ‘agreed to disagree’ may be avoiding conflict, but this resolution ultimately pushes teachers to work independently because they do not share the same values. Much like the participants in a study conducted by Smolen, Colville-Hall, and MacDonald (2005) where teachers had conflicting “beliefs and attitudes about effective ways to address the impact of diversity in their teacher education programs” (Smolen, Colville, and MacDonald cited in Assaf et al., 2010, p. 119), Wanda expressed her frustration with educators who refused to modify their teaching style despite demographic changes in the school community. When educators are reluctant to change their methods of teaching or do not share resources with one another, then it is challenging to promote a framework that advocates for inclusion of multiple perspectives.

**4.5 Conclusion of the Chapter**

Based on my analysis of the data, I found that educators who implement diverse content in Canadian History are less concerned with covering course content, and are more interested in helping students develop critical thinking skills where they learn strategies to handle conflict appropriately. These educators are also highly sensitive to the needs of others as they are aware of how their own privilege and social position contrasts with other groups of people. An educators’ identity, specifically in the context of their race, class, and academic interests, also revealed to play a major role in how teachers conceptualize and infuse diverse content. Despite the overall success these teachers reportedly experience with infusing diverse content in Canadian History, there are barriers that prevented Wanda and Kinga from fully engaging with
diverse content in practice. In the next chapter, I will discuss how the research findings presented here impacted my professional growth and identity. I also address the broader implications of my study to the educational community, specifically secondary school educators teaching grade 10 Canadian History and school administrators. Based on what I have learned, I provide recommendations to teachers and school administrators to better prepare educators in a diverse classroom setting.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0 Introduction to the Chapter

This final chapter of my MTRP presents the implications of my research findings. Given what I have found, this chapter provides recommendations to high school educators in Ontario for promoting diverse content in Canadian History. I will also raise important questions that require further research in the field of multicultural education. Then, I conclude this chapter with a summary explaining why this research is significant to History educators who wish to create an academic environment where students apply their learning in real-life contexts and become active, responsible Canadian citizens.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance

My findings reveal that the participants interviewed in my study successfully implement diverse content in grade 10 Canadian History. The participants in my study strongly believed in helping students gain effective social skills that enabled them to personally identify with the course material and further their understanding of contemporary social justice issues. In practice, they reportedly infused resources and activities where students applied various historical thinking concepts to better understand the experiences of ethnic minority groups. My findings also revealed that despite the overall successful implementation of diverse content in grade 10 Canadian History, some educators continue to encounter issues with student engagement and lack professional support. In light of these barriers, this study addresses the importance of creating and maintaining a supportive professional community where resources are shared between educators in order to strengthen collaborative learning among professionals and help promote the belief and practice of diverse perspectives in the Canadian History classroom.

5.2 Implications
In this section, I address the broader implications of my study to the educational community, specifically secondary school educators teaching grade 10 Canadian History and school administrators. I also briefly discuss how this research study has helped me grow in my professional identity and practice.

5.2.1 Broad: The educational community

The participants in my study have observed that some educators, in and outside their school community, use one or two history textbook(s) as the ultimate source of knowledge. This indicates that not all History teachers working in Ontario infuse diverse content in Canadian History. For some, teaching from one textbook is a personal preference while for others, it could be a financial lack of resources. Nonetheless, educators who teach Canadian History content predominately through one source may be more susceptible to reinforcing long-standing stereotypes and prejudices because there is little, and sometimes no, additional resources to challenge the ideologies within the respective textbook used in the classroom.

The implementation of diverse content is also effected by external factors (population, community identity, resources available, etc.) which may impact how teachers view and practice multicultural material. For example, if educators teach in a densely populated metropolis, then this context can change the systematic operation of the school community (funding, access to resources, technology, more professional workshops, etc.) and consequently, the way teachers think about and incorporate multicultural content. In other words, successfully infusing diverse content in the History curriculum may go beyond the teacher’s personal background, practices and self-identity; it may be more influenced by institutional supports and/or barriers.

5.2.2 Narrow: My professional identity and practice
Before the interview process, I believed that the main purpose of incorporating multiple views in grade 10 Canadian History was to achieve a broader, more accurate historical narrative. My initial understanding of ‘implementing multicultural content’ was in fact within the framework of what teachers choose to present. I never considered how infusing diverse content can help students develop social skills to handle real-life conflict. Nor did I understand that this process demands both teachers and students to reflect on their own identity, privileges, and socioeconomic standing. Now, I realize that infusing multiple views is more than just using diverse resources and presenting multiple views; it is also about how teachers use the resources to build meaningful connections with students, and foster a learning environment where issues and topics are discussed in a genuine manner. This is a teachable moment in my professional practice as I gained a better understanding of how to handle sensitive topics. For example, it may be better for teachers to openly share their identity (and privileges) at the start of a lesson and/or unit and discuss how our personal identities shape the way we perceive people, places, and situations. Since some topics can potentially trigger emotional responses, it is imperative that teachers are prepared to address unexpected viewpoints raised by students. Dismissing someone’s opinion as wrong or incorrect is counterproductive to the goals of multicultural education and hinders community learning.

I also learned that a common belief and practice among History educators is to help students make ‘personal connections’ with the course material. While I have witnessed and experienced the value of such activities and discussions, I wonder if making ‘personal connections’ can have the reverse affect: where it becomes less about the cultural group/social issue, and more about the individual’s personal experience. To what degree must we distance our personal connection in order to truly emphasize with the ‘other?’ Do I want to encourage
students to understand another person’s perspective by asking them to make personal connections to themselves, and if so, can this instructional method feed into their privilege without them knowing? Asking myself these questions has played a significant role in developing my teaching pedagogy and reshaping my professional identity.

5.3 Recommendations

It was mentioned earlier that some History educators working in Ontario may depend on one or two textbook(s) which could potentially limit them from using diverse content. To remedy this issue, teachers may ask students to take note of the textual space devoted to a particular event and analyze how the language is being used to transmit this information. Doing so can spark a fruitful discussion where students explore what content is being emphasized and what voices or stories are omitted. More importantly, such activities can avoid “multicultural add-ons to the historical grand narrative” (Stanley, 2006, p. 36) because students are not just learning about the experiences of diverse ethnic groups but instead, trying to understand why some of their experiences have been disregarded in the curriculum textbook. The participants in my study also emphasized the importance of sharing resources and lesson plans with other colleagues. Wanda, for example, shares her lesson plans and activities with a teacher working in Thunder Bay. The issue is not whether History teachers are able to collaborate with one another in and outside their respective school boards, but if they are willing to work together. Infusing multicultural content in the History curriculum is a process that goes beyond the walls of a classroom as it invites History teachers to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges associated with multicultural education in the History curriculum.

To better prepare educators in a diverse classroom setting who also wish to include multicultural content and perspectives, Courchène (1996) also proposes that “teachers ought to
spend at least one practicum in a multicultural classroom [and] have extensive practice in preparing materials for a multicultural classroom” (p. 12). Studies that examine teacher beliefs on multicultural education report that many teachers would enjoy working at field-based schools to gain an authentic understanding of working among diverse populations. In Assaf et al.’s (2010) study, one teacher stated that it is the best way for educators to gain “first-hand experience” with what diversity in a classroom “looks like” (p. 124). This provides teachers the opportunity to place themselves in an environment that some may not typically experience in their professional career. More importantly, it provides teachers the chance to attain materials specifically catered to promote multiple views and therefore increase their knowledge and understanding of a specific topic, idea, or issue.

School administrators could help organize professional development workshops where teachers have the chance to discuss the challenges they experience with infusing diverse content, and work towards building a plan that helps eliminate, or reduce barriers. Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) found that “school administrators can play an important role in shaping school contexts, which can influence individual teacher success” (cited in Lawrence, 2005, p. 355). Therefore, professional workshops that include additional resources (e.g. lesson plans, texts, activities) and guidance from an educator who is familiar with implementing diverse content may also assist some teachers. For these efforts to be successful, “research indicates that active support by principals during educational efforts is necessary” (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Stallings & Mohlman, 1981, cited in Lawrence, p. 355).

5.4 Areas for Further Research

Both participants in my study identified as white, upper-class females who have been exposed to multiculturalism since the beginning of their teaching career. History educators may
find it easier to promote diverse content in a multicultural school because of the school’s ethnic makeup. It would be interesting to explore how History teachers working in a community that is predominately white, middle-upper class promote and include diverse perspectives compared to teachers working in a multicultural school. Conducting this research may shed light on how the ethnic make-up of the school’s community influences the extent to which educators infuse diverse content in the Canadian History classroom. Another interesting topic for further research that was brought to my attention in Chapter Four is the notion of being a ‘teacher-researcher.’ It was evident that Wanda’s research in the field of Equity and Social Justice Education influenced her pedagogy, making her a strong advocate for incorporating diverse perspectives in all her classes. This made me question if being a teacher-researcher significantly alters the way educators view themselves as professionals and how might this self-perception impact the way they infuse multicultural theory into practice.

5.5. Concluding Comments

I began my MTRP thinking that most secondary school History educators were not adequately prepared to implement diverse content in Grade 10 Canadian History despite Ontario’s progressive multicultural curriculum. The researching findings presented in Chapter Two confirmed my suspicions and thus led me to assume that many History teachers in Ontario taught Canadian History predominately through a Eurocentric perspective and disregarded the voices, experiences, and stories of ethnic minorities. My research findings presented an alternative perspective, where some secondary school History teachers were personally and professionally committed to providing students with an authentic depiction and understanding of Canada’s history by infusing diverse knowledge into their pedagogy. According to the participants in my study, teaching Canadian History through a multicultural lens better prepares
students to handle real-life conflict as they develop strategies for dealing with controversial issues. This finding suggests that secondary school History teachers who are dedicated to infusing diverse content, are equally determined to fostering a generation of responsible Canadian citizens who will be strong advocates for social justice issues.

In fact, teaching students how to think instead of what to think was the essence of both participants’ pedagogy. This pedagogical approach is a tremendous breakthrough in Canadian History education considering that it was just in 1968, where A.B Hodgett’s report on, What Culture? What Heritage? A study of Civic Education in Canada claimed that the History curriculum places too much emphasis on constitutional and political developments with little regard for Canada’s social and political problems (Bruno-Jofré & Schiralli, 2002). The History curriculum made significant strides since Hodgett’s (1968) report as it no longer focuses on covering political content, but rather exploring historical thinking concepts to better understand an event and/or issue through multiple lenses.

It goes without saying, then, that the changes in the History curriculum has significantly impacted how secondary school educators cover course material. More teachers are showing a stronger commitment to helping students develop better intercultural skills that challenge social and personal biases. As someone who immigrated to Canada and has personally witnessed and experienced how discriminatory attitudes impact an individual’s well-being, my hope is for teachers to continue showing an appreciation for diversity in Canadian History studies so that students can learn how to handle controversy without resorting to prejudice behaviour. Although teaching Canadian History through multiple lenses does not prevent injustices from happening, it can certainly bring awareness to contemporary problems that have deep historical roots. Therefore, teaching Canadian History through diverse perspectives goes beyond teaching to the
curriculum, it is a social justice movement that promotes a change in attitude and behaviour so that future Canadian generations do not commit, or fall victim to, inhumane acts of segregation and discrimination.
Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date: _________________
Dear ____________________,

My name is Jolanta Gdula and I am a graduate student at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), currently enrolled in the Master of Teaching program. A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study.

As a person who is personally committed to promoting social justice and diversity inside the history classrooms and within the school community, my research aims to understand the ways in which secondary school teachers implement multicultural content in a grade 10 Canadian History course. I am interested in interviewing teachers who are professionally and personally committed to teaching Canadian History through a multicultural lens in order to promote diversity and diverse perspectives into the classroom. I sincerely believe that your knowledge and years of teaching experience will provide valuable insights to my research topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 60 minute interview. As a part of my data collection, your answers will be audio-recorded and transcribed. The interview will take place at time and location most convenient for you. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as an informal presentation to my classmates. To maintain your anonymity, you will be assigned a pseudonym. I will also not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain entirely confidential. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer as well as in a locked filing cabinet. The only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor, Dr. Lee Airton, who is supporting me throughout my research study. 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 (maximum of five years) and after the data has been collected.

Please sign this consent form if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you for participation and I am looking forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Jolanta Gdula
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 Jolanta Gdula 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 secondary school teachers implement multicultural curricular content in grade 10 Canadian History. This interview will last approximately 60 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on teacher perspectives and practices as well as supports, potential challenges and next steps in response to these barriers. 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 A - Background Information:

1) Tell me a bit about yourself. Where did you grow up?
   - Does (x) differ from the community in which you work now?
   - Can you describe the community in which your current school is situated?

2) How many years have you been teaching at (name of school)?
   - How many years have you been teaching grade ten Canadian history?

3) What do you enjoy about teaching grade 10 Canadian History?

4) What is your favourite curriculum to teach in grade 10 Canadian History?
   - Could you tell me why?

Section B - Teacher Perspectives/Beliefs on Multicultural Education
5) Can you describe how you understand the phrase ‘content’ or ‘multicultural curriculum’?

6) How does incorporating multiple content make your teaching experience in grade 10 Canadian History more enjoyable for you?

7) Are there some strands or topics in the grade 10 Canadian History course in which it is easier to integrate multicultural content?
   • Why easier?
   • Are there some for which is difficult or doesn’t seem feasible?

8) Can you give me an example of a time when you implemented multicultural content in grade 10 Canadian History?
   • What did you do?
   • How was it done?
   • What motivated your decision?

9) Was there a time when the implementation of multicultural content did not go as planned?
   • How was the lesson plan designed?

Section C - Teacher Practices to Incorporate Multicultural Education in Canadian History:

10) Suppose it was my first day as a student in your Canadian History class. Walk me through what a typical day would look like.
   • What type of resources would I typically engage with?
   • What type of activities would I participate in?

11) How would you formally assess my learning?
12) What are some specific teaching strategies, activities, or assignments in your class that encourage students to look at an event in Canadian History from a diverse non-dominant culture perspective?

13) In addition to teaching strategies, activities, or assignments, is there anything else you do in your role as a teacher, to include diverse perspectives in your grade 10 Canadian History course?

• (if yes) Could you tell me about some of these?
• What motivates you to do so?

Section D - Supports and Challenges:

14) Could you walk me through a time where intergrading multicultural content in grade 10 Canadian History was challenging?

• In what ways was it challenging?
• How?

15) Did you manage this particular challenge?

• (yes): How?

16) Were there resources or support available to help you overcome this challenge?

• (yes): Can you expand on what these supports/resources looked like?
• (no): What type of resources may have helped you manage this challenge?

17) Do you feel sufficiently supported integrating multicultural content and non-dominant perspectives in grade 10 Canadian History?

• Why/why not?
• Do you receive support from other colleagues, staff members, or volunteers?
• What supports would you like to have?
Section E - Next Steps:

18) As you already know, my teachable is History and soon enough I may have the opportunity to teach a Canadian History course. What advice might you have for novice teachers such as myself who are committed to implementing multicultural content in the History classroom?

19) Do you have any final thoughts?

Thank you for your participation in this research study.
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