Approaches to World History Education:
The Merits and Challenges of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

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A research paper submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Master of Teaching
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Abstract

In 2015 the Ontario Canadian and World Studies curriculum broadened the scope of the CHY4U/C course from The West and the World to World History since the Fifteenth Century. Teachers of this course are now being asked to cover the same 500-year period with a less Eurocentric focus, and are largely given the freedom to choose the specific events or themes they want to cover. This qualitative study explores the use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) as a potential tool for negotiating the content selection of World History since the Fifteenth Century and asks whether it is practical for teachers to cater this content to the cultural demographics of their classrooms or schools. This question was explored through the use of two semi-structured interviews with experienced Ontario educators. The data from these interviews revealed the importance of student-selected, inquiry-based projects in negotiating gaps in teacher knowledge; understandings of CRP that differed from those found in the literature; and the poor quality of course materials which force teachers to seek outside resources.

Key Words: World History, History Education, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), CHY4U/C, Grade 12
Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my family. Your unwavering and unconditional support have nurtured my academic success for my entire life. In particular, I would like to thank my parents Melissa and Howard who taught me the importance of empathy, caring, resilience, and tenacity.

I would also like to acknowledge Professor Garfield Gini-Newman and Dr. Arlo Kempf for their guidance and feedback in the early stages of this project. Thank you for directing me toward a worthy area of study and helping me narrow my focus into an accomplishable task.

A very special gracias to Dr. Cristina Guerrero whose dedication and drive, to not only my research but that of my entire cohort, undeniably helped raise the quality of all our finished products. Your careful eye for editing, willingness to sit down and hash out ideas, and, in particular, your help in developing my fourth chapter, saved me hours of work and years worth of stress.

To the participants of this study who gave up valuable time in their busy lives to talk with me: without your priceless insights and motivational philosophies this entire project would not have been possible. Your dedication to both your students and craft is genuinely inspiring. Thank you.

Finally, I must wholeheartedly thank Alicia Krol who went out of her way to learn as much about CRP as I did in order to better edit this paper. Your countless revisions, unrelenting motivation, and certainty in my success truly encouraged me throughout this long process. My ability to unquestionably rely on you at every stage of this project was the most important factor in its completion. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. 1  
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................................. 2  
Chapter 1: Introduction ........................................................................................................................... 5  
  1.0 Introduction and Research Context ................................................................................................. 5  
  1.1 Research Purpose ............................................................................................................................ 6  
  1.2 Research Questions .......................................................................................................................... 6  
  1.3 Reflexive Positioning Statement ...................................................................................................... 7  
  1.4 Overview ......................................................................................................................................... 8  
Chapter 2: Literature Review .................................................................................................................. 10  
  2.1 World History as Seen by World Historians .................................................................................. 10  
  2.2 World History Education ............................................................................................................... 12  
    2.2.1 Regional structures ..................................................................................................................... 12  
    2.2.2 Chronological or periodized structures .................................................................................... 14  
    2.2.3 Conceptual and thematic structures ......................................................................................... 16  
  2.3 Eurocentrism ................................................................................................................................... 17  
    2.3.1 World history education in South Korea .................................................................................. 18  
    2.3.2 Eurocentrism in course textbooks ............................................................................................ 20  
  2.4 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Inclusive Education .................................................................. 22  
    2.4.1 CRP in the Canadian and World Studies curriculum ................................................................. 23  
    2.4.2 Benefits of CRP. ....................................................................................................................... 24  
  2.5 Problems with implementation of CRP and some solutions ......................................................... 26  
    2.5.1 Teacher knowledge base and extra preparation time ............................................................... 27  
    2.5.2 Culturally responsive mindsets ............................................................................................... 29  
    2.5.3 CRP in culturally homoegenous classrooms ......................................................................... 30  
  2.6 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 31  
Chapter 3: Research Methodology ....................................................................................................... 33  
  3.0 Introduction .................................................................................................................................... 33  
  3.1 Research Approach & Procedures ................................................................................................ 33  
  3.2 Instruments of Data Collection ...................................................................................................... 34  
  3.3 Participants ..................................................................................................................................... 35  
    3.3.1 Sampling criteria ....................................................................................................................... 35  
    3.3.2 Sampling procedures ............................................................................................................... 36
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction and Research Context

In 2015, the Ontario Ministry of Education updated the Canadian and World Studies curriculum for grades 11 and 12. One of the more significant changes was to the former “The West and the World” grade 12 world history course, which was changed to “World History since the Fifteenth Century,” (CHY4U/C). This change saw the focus of the course shift from a western-centric conception of the past 500 years of world history to one that allows for more flexibility in content selection and therefore opening new possibilities for inclusivity. Prior to this change, teachers only had to focus on about five and a half centuries from the 1400s to the present with an almost exclusive focus on Europe. Now the scope has expanded to allow for the inclusion of six more continents in the same allotted time. This means that, inevitably, certain topics, countries, and figures must be left out of the discussion. Given the updated scope of this course, how can teachers determine which world events, figures, and regions bear enough historical significance to include in their courses? Furthermore, how might this selection affect students of various cultural backgrounds?

The updated curriculum document speaks to the intention of being more inclusive, stating that all students must see themselves reflected within the material they are learning. I am interested in determining the degree to which teachers are seizing this opportunity to become more culturally relevant in a time when there is a lot of pressure from the ministry to include a variety of cultural perspectives. I will focus my examination on the merits of a culturally relevant approach as a tool for teachers to be more inclusive within the context of “World History since the Fifteenth Century.”
1.1 Research Purpose

The purpose of my research is to determine how teachers are managing the new change in the curriculum, and the degree to which they have changed or plan on changing their course plans to reflect the new curriculum. The main goal of my research is to establish whether structuring a world history course around the cultural demographic of a specific classroom is a feasible practice. I wish to determine how teachers can work with the new curriculum to implement these histories and how much their previous knowledge of various cultures affects their ability to convey cultural capital and cover the requirements of the course at the same time. This research may serve as a reference for teachers who wish to foster more culturally aware students and to promote higher levels of student engagement in history courses.

1.2 Research Questions

The main question I seek to answer through my research is: How feasible is it for teachers to cater the content of a world history course to the cultural demographic of their school or classroom? For the purposes of this study, culture will be defined as the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group, defined by (but not limited to) everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts (Zimmermann, 2015). Other questions my research seeks to address are:

- To what degree were teachers already adopting a more global or a more culturally responsive approach to the course before the change? How are teachers negotiating the change made in 2015?
• If teachers focus on their own classes’ cultural demographic, how will classes with less diversity (for example, schools in rural areas as opposed to urban schools) receive a different historical understanding? Is this for the better or worse?
• How much do textbooks and their content shape what is covered in a world history classroom?
• What merits might there be to any particular historical approach (i.e. thematic, chronological, regional) in regards to culturally relevant pedagogy?
• What are some of the limitations that teachers face when trying to implement a more culturally relevant approach?
• How can teachers teach well what they do not know well? How might lived experiences affect a teacher’s ability to be culturally relevant?

1.3 Reflexive Positioning Statement

As someone who comes from mostly mixed-European decent, much of my cultural history was covered in my secondary history education. Furthermore, much of my post-secondary academic interest was tailored by what I was taught in my grade 11 and 12 history classes. Michelle Commeyras and Donna E. Alvermann (1994) examined this issue with respect to world history textbooks. They write:

…students [learn] that Western civilization was supremely important, dominant, and powerful in shaping the histories of all people. They [also learn] that the histories of the Third World, on the other hand, are primarily about their colonization by the West and their recovery from Western imperialism (p. 273).
This statement summarizes much of my high school history experience, and research suggests that my experience was far from unique. This has only increased my concern that certain students’ cultures are given more weight in the curriculum. I am optimistic that the recent change in the curriculum will allow teachers more freedom in providing students a broader perception of world history.

Finally, what worries me further is that the arguments against a Eurocentric curriculum can be dated back to the early 1950s, when academics expressed concerns that the history of the world was being taught as the history of the west with a few unrelated chapters on the remainder (Duchesne, 2009). As this is by no means a new problem, I am interested in determining what limitations teachers face when trying to implement a more culturally diverse curriculum. As a future teacher, I would not want to marginalize any student’s cultural history, and, through this research, I hope to learn practical ways as well as develop a theoretical framework that will allow me to structure a world history (or any history) course that can engage all students on a personal level.

1.4 Overview

My research questions will be explored using a qualitative research study where it is my hope that in-service Ontario history teachers will be able to shed some light on effective ways to structure a broad, open-ended curriculum. In chapter 2, I will review the literature regarding cultural education and its place in world history classrooms. I will examine course structuring; strategies involved in teaching world history at the secondary level; and potential challenges to a culturally relevant pedagogical approach. In chapter 3, I will discuss the research design of my study; detail the ways in which data was collected; introduce the study’s participants; and review
its methodology. In chapter 4, I will present the results of my research and interviews categorized into three primary themes; culturally responsive mindsets and philosophies; pedagogical approaches and strategies; and challenges and solutions to successfully implementing CRP. The final chapter will provide an overview of the study’s key findings and will discuss the impact that they may have on the educational community.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 World History as Seen by World Historians

In order to best understand how world history should be taught in high schools, it is important to understand how world historians negotiate the complexities of their own subject. An ancient discipline dating back to before Herodotus (the ancient Greek historian credited as the father of western historical thought), the study of world history is not without its complications. These complications arise primarily out of the difference between world history and other types of histories. Michael Marino (2010) addresses this problem in his paper on world history and teacher education. He writes; “the historical profession itself, with its emphasis on deep, area specific knowledge, is often at odds with the views and ideas that world historians articulate” (p. 7). This version of the “historical profession” tends to be taught at the post-secondary level. Often, first year general history courses offer surveys of a variety of countries, nations, or events, with upper year courses tending to narrow their scopes (Marino, 2010, p. 6). The study of world history is quite the opposite, tending to focus more on connections between regions rather than on “deep, area specific knowledge”.

In the West, the subject of world history was driven for centuries by the desire to divide human history into comprehensible, rationalized processes in order to develop a universal scheme into which all of human history could be understood (Duchesne, 2009, p. 138). It was not until the 1960s (though claims range from then until the mid-1990s) that most historians began to incorporate broader scopes into their conceptions of world history instead of just focusing on European influence and the world’s reactions to these influences (Duchesne, 2009, p. 138; Marino, 2010, p. 4). This movement away from Eurocentrism has led to a variety of world
historical perspectives and approaches in and out of the classroom. In an attempt to improve world history instruction in classrooms, Lauren McArthur Harris (2012) set out to identify the specific conceptual devices world historians use in their own studies.

McArthur Harris (2012) analyzed hundreds of articles from the academic Journal of World History (JWH) from its inception and discovered that there are three main conceptual devices used by the experts when examining world history. These devices are: (1) the use of a variety of periodization schemes; (2) employing multiple geographic and conceptual units of analysis; and (3) incorporating multi-disciplinary methods and concepts (p. 322). A great deal of her study is spent analyzing these techniques at work in the JWH articles. McArthur Harris concludes that what differentiates world history from others is a “focus on, or connections to, large interregional or global patterns of change over time” (p. 329). This idea of making connections and finding patterns returns consistently throughout the discourse surrounding world historical study and instruction.

While McArthur Harris’ findings do not necessarily surprise, they do highlight a disparity between academia and Ontario’s ‘Canada and World Studies’ curriculum. Trends in world history that are upwards of a quarter century old are only now beginning to make their way into Ontario’s high school classrooms, and even still there are aspects that are not being considered. The recent change to the CHY4U curriculum demonstrates further attempts to incorporate these developments. Prior to the change in 2015, the course was organized around thematic guidelines. Now it is organized around a single periodization scheme (as opposed to McArthur Harris’ variety of periodization schemes). Moving away from the more thematic structuring of the past, the new rigid breakdown of timeframes of the course does not allow for the variety that McArthur Harris observed to be a necessary facet of world historical research. The limitations of
this rather Eurocentric framework for the course will be examined below (see section 2.3). The other two devices are neither promoted nor denied within the scope of the new curriculum.

2.2 World History Education

Periodization problems are only one of many inherent complications within a world history course. World history is often seen as the most challenging subject for teachers to teach and for students to learn (Bain, 2010, p.30). Robert Bain attributes this mostly to the courses tending to be taught as “lists of disconnected facts” (p. 30), however, it appears as if this lack of connection is symptomatic of larger difficulties in structuring world history courses. Many authors propose their views on which approaches or frameworks are best suited for world history instruction. This section will examine these approaches and the benefits and detriments of each. It is important to preface this discussion by saying that a course structured around any one of these frameworks exclusively would likely be lacking many critical components of a comprehensive world history course. Most research around world history instruction emphasizes the importance and benefits of creating connections between these frameworks. However, being aware of some of the issues with each approach can assist teachers in avoiding some dangerous pitfalls.

2.2.1 Regional structures. Firstly, recall that using “multiple geographic and conceptual units of analysis” was the second of McArthur Harris’ (2012) three conceptual devices found in her analysis of the JWH. This suggests that there is somewhat of an academic basis for structuring a course around such a frame. Sunjoo Kang (2003) analyzed the world history curriculum in South Korea as compared to Europe and explained that the curriculum developers
there decided to adopt a regional approach for their world history course structure. Kang argues that:

A region-based structure has the merit in helping students understand the formation and style of each of the major cultural traditions. [But] when organizing the history of modern and contemporary periods, region-based world history instruction risks obscuring students’ comprehensive understanding of modernity as a global event (p. 219).

This is tied closely with Kang’s (2003) idea that region and culture need to be studied together closely. Therefore, depending on the goal of the course, a regional approach might very well be practical. However, as mentioned above, a major focus of world history education is to create connections between events, people, and places. This approach, as Kang seems to suggest, runs the risk of minimalizing the globalized viewpoints of the course, or in other words, obscuring the connections between the regions.

Bain (2010) also investigated different structural approaches to world history education. He interviewed a number of history teachers and discovered that criteria surrounding course structure could differentiate the “novice” from the “expert” instructor. He concluded that the more experienced teachers were more likely to use regional approaches, but mostly as a tool to situate events in their respective historical places and to emphasize the connections across time frames or themes.

Berman (1995), examined the classroom practices of world history instructors. He cautioned against an exclusively regional approach as it tended to result in instructors adding too many regions and leaving the courses overcrowded. His major critique of regional approaches (but also of world history courses in general) was that often “coverage [was] substituted for depth, and learning data substituted for the teaching of patterns and connections” (Berman, 1995,
p. 427). Berman argues that the teaching of “patterns and connections” can be more readily achieved by focusing the scope of the regions explored.

While looking in detail at the history of a handful of regions can give students a detailed understanding of a set of particular regions, this is not the primary goal of a world history course. Histories of different regions should be taught collectively, rather than independent of each other (Marino, 2010). Though, as Kang (2003) argues, the examination of regions can be helpful to gain deeper cultural understanding, it seems as if this would not necessarily be desirable if connections cannot be made on a more global scale between those cultures and others around the world.

2.2.2 Chronological or periodized structures. Robert Bain (2010) also discusses this structural technique, however he attributes it to the “novice” instructors. His argument is that when proceeding along a chronological or periodic timeline, instructors are less inclined to draw meaningful connections between events and more likely to leave students with disconnected facts. Bain believes that the goal of a world history course is to create world-historical thinkers, and that this “requires content knowledge of connections and interactions across multiple scales of time and space, and the turn of mind to analyze plausible connections among the personal, national, regional, interregional and global” (Bain, 2010, p. 34). He goes on to posit that world-historical thinking is defined by a “turn of mind [that moves] among and sees the relationships between different temporal-spatial scales” (p. 34). By relying on only one periodization scheme, or solely on a chronological order of events, instructors may actually be hindering their students from drawing connections between important events. If there is a meaningful connection that could be made, it having happened 100 years earlier or later should not stop an instructor from tackling the topic and using it as an opportunity to elicit critical thinking.
Periodization is closely tied to a chronological approach. As a mix between that and thematic, periodization schemes identify certain turning points and group events generally into different time periods. However, as McArthur Harris (2012) explains, “although periodization schemes may make time more manageable and meaningful, determining periodization schemes is not easy in any historical work… in world history, with its multitude of perspectives, the task may be even more complex” (p. 323). This complexity seems to have been present in the planning of the new CHY4U/C curriculum. Even a cursory glance at the new periodization schemes shows that, in its design, the creators ignored that multitude of perspectives. The four periods of the course are: (a) 1450-1650, (b) 1650-1789, (c) 1789-1900, and (d) 1900-the present. For anyone remotely versed in European history, the Eurocentric bias to this supposed world history Periodizing is immediately apparent. For those who are not, a simply internet search of these time frames will confirm this. The years 1450-1650 constitute a common periodization of both Reformation and Renaissance Europe, and 1789 marks the beginning of the continentally influential French Revolution. Though he was writing five years earlier, it is almost as if Michael Marino (2010) was talking about this curriculum directly and not about world history textbooks when he wrote that they tend to rely on “western conception[s] of historical time” and that “major events of European history such as the French and Industrial Revolutions, imperialism and the World Wars frame the narrative and organize the content” (p. 5). World history and Eurocentrism will be further explored below, however suffice it to say that superficially, the new curriculum is structured in such a way that certain perspectives are prioritized over others.

It is unclear whether or not chronological or periodized structures for a world history course are viable options. It would appear that they maintain the potential for a powerful
structure, however more often than not they fall into one of the major pitfalls of world history courses, Eurocentrism. Furthermore, should the course stick to a specifically chronological progression, it could lose opportunities to highlight important trans-regional and trans-spatial connections.

2.2.3 Conceptual and thematic structures. When it comes to a conceptual or thematic framework, there are split conceptions in the literature. Michael Marino (2010) argues that a conceptual or thematic approach is one of the better ways in which to structure a course because it allows for the crossing of multiple historical periods and regions. In other words, it helps solve the problems that were presented by the previous two frameworks. He writes:

World history, if taught properly, is conceptual in orientation and less reliant on covering specific events and personalities. It is therefore important to… move away from a focus on specific events and people toward concepts and themes that cross historical periods and geographic regions. (p. 6)

Marino believes that structuring a course around these themes will best help students understand the world as a whole. What Marino would consider “proper teaching” would conform to the conception of many in that he believes the course should focus on the “increasingly interconnected and interdependent world” (Marino, 2010, p.3).

Bain, however, takes a different stance on thematic instruction. He does not support conceptual structuring on its own, again observing that less experienced teachers tended to use this technique (or a chronological one) exclusively (Bain, 2010, p. 32). The risk here, Bain argues, is the inability to draw connections, connections that he believes are what make the difference between world history and other histories.
In the end, it appears as if each approach has substantial drawbacks when used independent of the other approaches. In Bain’s study, for example, more experienced teachers “situated events in their respective historical place, using global, interregional and regional scales, linking and nesting them, demonstrating multiple connections and pathways, suggesting complicated understanding of change over time and space” (Bain, 2010, p. 32). It appears as if the best way to structure a world history course would be to choose content that most readily highlights global connections.

While McArthur Harris does not come up with a single comprehensive scheme or framework that teachers should follow, she does propose some guidelines that may be helpful for teachers to create the most meaning. She argues that teachers must think about periodization schemes, spatial scales (regional vs. global), and global patterns, all connected by a central driving question (McArthur Harris, 2012, p. 330). She does not provide a simple answer, but instead invites world history educators to consider many different aspects when planning their courses. Based on the diverging views in the literature, it would seem that besides using a variety of approaches within a course, an awareness of the shortcomings or limitations of each approach is important for a successful class.

2.3 Eurocentrism

One of these dangers mentioned earlier was the Eurocentric approach to world history academia and education. Marino (2010) again argues the dangers of this approach:

By organizing events through a Western civilization chronology, the interpretations associated with world history are to an extent lost, as non-Western content is consigned
to a subsidiary place alongside a Western dominant narrative… adherence to [this] chronology undermines attempts to present an inclusive version of world history. (p. 6)

The idea of certain places being included at the expense of excluding others is something that has been remarked upon before. In 2005, when the curriculum was changed from ‘Modern Western Civilization’ to ‘The West and the World,’ Toronto Star journalist Huang Nali (2005) wrote an article condemning the Ontario curriculum, saying that the category of ‘Canadian and World Studies’ would more befit the title of ‘Canadian and Western World Studies.’ Though the course was recently updated, the inclusivity of the 2015 curriculum is still largely up for debate.

The number of changes that CHY4U/C has undergone over the past 20 years do show a progression away from Eurocentrism. This can be seen most easily through the course titles, which were changed from ‘Modern Western Civilization’ to ‘The West and the World,’ and finally to ‘World History since the Fifteenth century.’ Superficially this would seem like progress, yet, as was mentioned earlier, this transition within the curriculum is coming almost 40 years behind this change of thought within the academic world. Even more embarrassing for Ontario is that many countries around the world have long since moved away from their focus on the west within their secondary level curricula (Duchesne, 2009).

2.3.1 World history education in South Korea. South Korea provides an excellent example of a more progressive approach to world history education. As previously mentioned, Kang (2003) presented some interesting points of comparison in her article Asia vs. Europe: Conceptual Framework of the High School World History Curriculum in South Korea. In it, Kang outlines the various changes that the South Korean curriculum has undergone over the past 60 years and the results of these changes. Even in South Korea there has been some Eurocentric bias that has been targeted with more vehemence than it ever has been in Canada (Kang, 2003).
This is not to say that their approach is completely free of bias. Kang recounts the various Sinocentric (a focus on China and Asia, as opposed to Eurocentric) aspects in the South Korean curriculum, how they tend to view Europe as a singular civilization, and how they emphasize the influence of Asian inventions (p. 218). Even with these biases, the Korean approach does take a much more balanced treatment to each of the different cultural regions (p. 218). This “balance” is something that is still missing from our curriculum. A recurring theme among world history courses (at least North American ones) is that they tend to give the same amount of time to European history as they do the rest of the world (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Marino 2010).

Similarly to Marino, Kang (2003) outlines a number of important reasons why world history education should adopt a more broad approach to its topics. Her three main points are that there is a “multipolarization of world politics,” an “increase in global interdependence,” and “[a promotion of] international understanding and cooperation” (Kang, 2003). She argues that the curriculum is “too Eurocentric to enable students to understand the status of cultures other than European and to appreciate non-European people as participants in the world historical process” (Kang, 2003, p. 222). It is important to note that Kang is writing this from, in her own words, a Third-World perspective. She attributes the growth of the Third World, one in which she includes South Korea, to be the cause of the multipolarization of politics (Kang, 2003). Furthermore, she attributes Korea’s comparatively progressive approaches to world history to its status as a Third World nation and to its solidarity with other such nations (Kang, 2003, p. 223). Kang’s three reasons why a broader approach to world history education should be adopted can really only be seen as beneficial to today’s students in this ever globalizing environment.
2.3.2 Eurocentrism in course textbooks. One of the main problems with the newly updated course is that it is still, in a word, new. This means that textbooks have not yet been produced to reflect the less Eurocentric approach, and probably will not be available for a number of years. Teachers are therefore left with dated materials to supplement their instruction. The older a history text is, the higher the risk that a variety of cultural groups will have their beliefs and values marginalized (Commeyras & Alverman, 1994, p. 268). Additionally, less affluent schools will likely have to wait longer to acquire these new textbooks and will be forced to use the increasingly older versions for longer (Lopez, 2011).

History textbooks in general present many problems to teachers, as representations of different histories can vary between texts and can place limitations on teachers (Bain, 2010; Marino, 2010; McArthur Harris, 2012). These specific limitations were studied by Michelle Commeyras and Donna E. Alvermann (1994) in their article Messages that High School World History Textbooks Convey; Challenges for Multicultural Literacy. The purpose of their examination of the top three U.S high school world history textbooks was to explore how the meanings that could be conveyed by these texts were influenced by the way power relations were presented within them (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994, p. 268).

They found that all three textbooks had very similar problems. First, they found that many non-European histories were subject to ‘parallel coverage.’ This means that topics and timeframes were identical, which can give the appearance of homogeneity among Third World countries (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994), another issue of periodization. The other major issue was present in the history of countries that have historically been subject to imperialism and colonization. Often their histories were only mentioned in a damage-centered frame of reference to their colonization and from 1945 onward their futures were presented as bleak, with
little to no focus on positive events or optimistic futures (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994). Also, imperialism itself was often only looked at through the European lens, ignoring other incidences of imperialism such as that of the Mongolian Empire (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994).

Commeyras and Alvermann argue that textbooks which ignore or minimize the contributions of non-Western civilizations or that do not give fair treatment to Third World nations “do little to build common understanding among people of different cultures” (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994, p. 268). However, their solution to this problem is similar to that of many other researchers: promoting critical literacy (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Marino, 2010, Murray, 2011). Treating the knowingly flawed material as such and encouraging the students to locate these flaws is one way that Commeyras and Alvermann recommend to “counteract the damaging effects of textbooks” (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994, p. 269). Their goal in counteracting these effects is quite interesting: “… such an approach… will lead to a more just and democratic society – one, for example, in which the present unequal social and economic relations between dominant and Third World cultures will lessen or cease to exist altogether” (p. 269). This goal, in a Canadian context, can seem rather lofty. It must be seen through the American context in which it was written.

In Ontario, the only mandatory history course is the grade 10 ‘Canadian History since World War I,’ but in the U.S. there has been a steady growth of student involvement in world history courses for a number of years (McArthur Harris, 2012). In fact, in the majority of states, world history is a requirement of graduation (McArthur Harris, 2012). For a time in New York, two years of world history were required (Berman, 1995, p. 424). While not compulsory across the country, a 2005 study showed that there was a steady increase in students taking world
history courses over 15 years, with about 77% of all American students having taken at least one world history class by the time they graduated (McArthur Harris, 2012, p. 312). This is to say that a world history textbook in the U.S. would have a much larger audience than one in Canada. Only four provinces in Canada mandate a high school history course, and whenever it is required, it is in Canadian history. Most of the provinces only require students to take a certain number of social studies credits that do not need to be in history (Brown, 2016).

This is to say that the repercussions of more culturally aware world history textbooks proposed by Commeyras and Alvermann (1994) would likely not have as profound an effect were they to be pursued north of the border. However, there are a number of benefits to being culturally aware that, while not leading to a more just society, may lead to a more just classroom.

2.4 Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Inclusive Education

The updated curriculum for CHY4U/C does not prescribe any specific events, people, or regions to be examined throughout the course. Though it does provide examples of topics that would be relevant to cover for each unit, there is nothing in the document that requires a teacher to look at any given item. Given this freedom to decide course content, the lack of consensus among the literature regarding the best conceptual structure for a world history course, and the fact that there is no way in which a teacher could cover every significant event in 500 years of world history, how might a teacher go about selecting which events to include within the scope of the course? One potential tool to be considered may be Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP).

Ground-breaking theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings defines CRP as “a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other
institutions) perpetuate” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469). A major one of these perpetuated inequities has already been outlined (Eurocentric curriculum and materials). More generally, this inequity is exacerbated when we contextualize it using some interesting statistics regarding Ontario’s schools. Hundreds of thousands of people immigrate to Canada every year and help make up the approximate 200 different ethnic groups that live in this country (Rolheiser, Evans, & Gambhir, 2011). Of the approximate one million people who immigrated to Canada between 2001 and 2006, more than half of them arrived in Ontario, specifically in the Greater Toronto Area (Gagne & Gordon, 2011). This positions Ontario as Canada’s most diverse province and therefore, one whose classrooms could most benefit from culturally relevant pedagogy.

2.4.1 CRP in the Canadian and World Studies curriculum. It seems as if the recent change to CHY4U/C was a response to this growing diversity in the province rather than a response to the aforementioned 50-year-old shift within world historical academia. The beginning of the new Canadian and World Studies (2015) curriculum document reads: “It is important that students… see themselves in what is taught” (p. 10). The old Canadian and World Studies (2005) curriculum makes no mention of any such importance in its general introduction. Later on, in direct reference to the history section, the newer curriculum reads “History involves the study of diverse individuals, groups, and institutions… people of the world have many stories and [each] one is significant…” (Canadian and World Studies, 2015, p. 15). The closest the 2005 version comes to making such a statement is when it reads “... [our] problems are not unique – an important lesson at a time when the forces of globalization are drawing people of different cultures closer together” (Canadian and World Studies, 2005, p. 132). Over the course of 10 years, people were apparently drawn close enough together for more than just Europeans to be reflected in the curriculum. While the aim of the new curriculum hints at being more culturally
relevant and responsive, what still needs to be how a culturally relevant approach could work within the specific context of a 12th grade world history course.

2.4.2 Benefits of CRP. Many scholars promote the benefits of CRP particularly as a tool to motivate student engagement. Lopez (2011) performed a study analyzing the impact of CRP in two diverse English studies classrooms. Lopez’s findings suggest that CRP needs to be integrated into the overall planning for courses, and when done well, can significantly assist students in their learning but specifically helps with their level of engagement with the material (Lopez, 2011). Student responses were overall positive, with one student writing that she was pleased to see other students getting more information about her culture and that she hopes the school goes on to examine other cultures as well (Lopez, 2011, p. 11). However, she did note that there was more of an impact on the students whose culture was studied than on those whose culture was not studied (Lopez, 2011).

Closely tied to the concept of student engagement is the idea of academic success, which is often brought up in discussions around CRP. Sometimes CRP is placed under the larger umbrella term of ‘Inclusive Education,’ which Karen Murray says is intended to meet the needs of all students so that they can all achieve academic success (Murray, 2011, p. 32). Ladson-Billings (1995) examines more closely the benefits to the at-risk African American student population. Others have applied these similar principles to address other at risk groups such as Aboriginal students. Yatta Kanu (2011) argues that students need to know more about their “group” so that they can act within the group’s interests in order to “fight for social justice and a better future” (p. x). While these are all certainly worthy causes with which to promote the implementation of CRP, some are less relevant when examined within the context of CHY4U/C in particular.
According to one study, most students who are considered ‘at risk’ tend to drop out of school by the end of the tenth grade (Burrus & Roberts, 2012, p. 3). Therefore, some of the benefits of CRP may be irrelevant by the time they enter the twelfth grade. While the benefits in regard to increased student engagement would certainly apply to a twelfth grade course, in order to engage students most at risk of dropping out and to promote their academic success, this approach would need to be implemented at a much earlier grade. However, increased engagement can still be linked to academic success, but the two can be mutually exclusive. But is addressing a student’s culture always what will get them the most engaged? One teacher recounts his experience with CRP:

In a Canadian history classroom, for example, this year I had lots of Chinese students … I made a conscious effort to seek out better sources, rather than just the textbook, about the involvement of Chinese-Canadians at certain points in history that’s covered by our units. So, we looked at the Chinese head tax and how that affected the immigrants coming into our country at that time, and we looked at Canadian recruitment policies and whether or not they [Chinese-Canadians] were accepted into the army at certain points in time, and why that recruitment policy differed from time to time…. I assumed that the students that come from that background would be interested about hearing about it, and I think it’s a safe assumption because of the questions that they would ask me and follow up to the information … because there was so much involvement, it told me that it was a good practice and to continue doing that in my classrooms when I’m teaching history. (McCready et al., 2011, p. 98)

Based on this example, it would seem as if CRP is a valid tool to use to engage students, however this teacher did base his approach on the assumption that his Chinese-Canadian students
would be interested in Chinese history. While it may be true that many students do find their own cultural history engaging and interesting, not every student will be most motivated by their own background. This is an assumption that is made repeatedly in the literature on CRP. If the main benefit of CRP within the context of CHY4U/C is to increase student engagement, it would be important to first assess where the students’ interests lie and then attempt to teach accordingly to maximize their engagement with the material. However, customizing courses for students, either based on their interests or their culture, may present an obstacle for instructors. This is shown in the above example by the effort it took this instructor to “seek out better sources”. This is only one of a few difficulties associated with integrating CRP into the classroom.

2.5 Problems with implementation of CRP and some solutions

Editors Rolheiser, Evans, and Gambhir (2011) address some of the issues with CRP and inclusive education at the very beginning of their journal on the subject:

Because of the breadth and depth of learning goals associated with inclusive curriculum, a more sophisticated knowledge base and repertoire of teaching and learning practices are required. Teachers who try to work with the complexities of diversity and inclusion often have inadequate preparation, and they may also encounter the challenges of lack of time, funding, and age-appropriate resources. (p. 6)

Many of these issues are discussed throughout the literature on the subject. With regard to the new CHY4U/C course, there are a few that are more inhibitive than others. The fact that CRP requires a specific mindset, a wider base of knowledge, and significantly more preparation time than other pedagogical approaches, are three of the main issues that will be discussed in this section. Furthermore, there is very little in the literature that speaks to the effects of CRP on
culturally homogeneous classrooms. The repercussions of this will be examined later on in this section.

2.5.1 Teacher knowledge base and extra preparation time. Unless a teacher studied world history throughout their university career, they were likely to have specialized in certain areas and time periods. One major issue with this, as was discussed earlier, can be with conceptualizing and organizing a course in which a teacher has little experience. Yet there is another problem; even if the best structural approaches were studied, many teachers simply do not have the background in such a variety of regions, countries, and cultures to do all of them justice in a classroom setting. Many researchers claim that teachers must have a deep understanding of the discipline of world history in order to teach it effectively (Kanu, 2011; Murray, 2011; McArthur Harris, 2012; Naili, 2005; Rolheiser et al., 2011). Marino (2010) claims that the connections and interpretations, which are the bread and butter of a world history course, require a significant degree of preparation and reading in order to “command the content properly” (p. 6).

Given that many teachers do not have a broad knowledge of all cultures of the world, should a teacher choose to adopt a culturally relevant approach, they will have to plan to invest a significant amount of preparation time. Lopez (2011) explains that CRP involves teaching approaches that are “authentic” and therefore take more time to prepare, plan, and research (p. 54). Because of the time commitments that CRP can elicit, many teachers let cultural relevance fall by the wayside to allow for the many other curricular expectations for which they are responsible (McCready et al, 2011, p. 95). This could provide an even greater barrier to newer teachers with heavy workloads. They might find it easier to make a lesson based on familiar concepts rather than ones that require additional outside research.
This point is exacerbated when the added complication of inadequate textbooks is added to the equation. Recall the teacher who used CRP with his Chinese-Canadian students; this teacher had to make “a conscious effort to seek out better sources, rather than just the textbook” (McCready et al., 2011, p. 98). Often the suggestion of the professionals to counteract poor textbooks is to supplement them with additional materials (Commeyras & Alvermann, 1994, p. 272; Lopez, 2011, p. 54). Of course, this can significantly add to the amount of preparation time a teacher would need to commit. Furthermore, in order to be consistently inclusive or culturally relevant, a multicultural school would likely have a variety of cultural backgrounds move through a given classroom from year to year. Given the already acknowledged time constraints, it would seem increasingly impractical for a teacher (especially a newer teacher) to adjust their course content from scratch on a yearly basis to include content with which they are potentially unfamiliar.

Various potential solutions to these problems have been proposed throughout the literature. Berman (1995) is a strong supporter of national (American) standards for world history in order to help teachers with unfamiliar areas, as well as train teachers specifically on how to deal with world historical perspectives. Bain’s (2010) research also supports varying types of Professional Development (PD) in helping teachers improve at connecting events and conceptualizing their courses. Bain suggests that teachers need more coursework on various nationalities, but that the true benefit of increased PD would be to help novice teachers learn how to create connections (p. 34, 35). Bain sees more benefit in showing teachers how to make connections than trying to teach them 500 years of world history in its entirety (an unsurprising standpoint from the author of an article called “I Gotta Learn All that Stuff?”). The problem is that there has been sparse PD aimed specifically at world history teachers (McArthur Harris,
2012, p. 314), which means that there is little evidence to show the effect of more PD on assisting world history teachers in general, much less in regard to their CRP.

### 2.5.2 Culturally responsive mindsets.

Arguably a more difficult hurdle to overcome in terms of CRP is that of teacher mindsets. Lopez (2011) comments on this idea when she writes:

> Teachers [need] to go beyond their comfort zone and learn about other cultures in non-stereotypical ways…. A mindset that values diversity, combined with a conscious effort and desire to challenge existing norms and power relations in schools and teaching [is important]. (p. 54)

Ladson-Billings (1995) concurs with this idea, explaining that in order to teach CRP properly teachers must have some specific theoretical underpinnings in regards to their conceptions of Self and Other, to the manner in which they structure social relations, and to their conceptions of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 476). She places much less stress on content knowledge and much more on critical philosophy, essentially saying that teachers who are most likely to be culturally relevant are those who truly care about student success and individuality, not those with the broadest cultural knowledge base. This conception would seem to alleviate some of the pressures outlined in the previous section, but structuring a teacher’s mindset can be difficult in its own right.

In 2005 a group of 25 Canadian teachers traveled to China as part of a “peace and reconciliation study tour” to meet victims of WWII Japanese aggression. After being exposed to the tragedy of these people, the teachers returned to Canada determined to bring a more balanced view to how history taught the often overlooked aspects of the Second World War, and upon their return wrote to the Ministry of Education to urge them to include more neglected histories (Naili, 2005). These teachers could be said to have had their mindsets reconfigured by this
meaningful experience, however, this trip was paid for by the Association for Learning and Preserving the History of World War II in Asia (ALPHA). This organization also helped provide teachers with additional resources to address some of these “neglected histories.” As wonderful as this program has been in helping shift teacher mindsets to more culturally responsive ideals, it seems impractical to rely on organizations to ship teachers around the world in order to give them the required experiences to shift these mindsets. I believe that more research needs to be done that concretely outlines the benefits of CRP for teachers to see widely shift their mindsets.

2.5.3 CRP in culturally homogenous classrooms. One area that the literature on CRP does not address is the benefits to classrooms that may be culturally homogenous or that may include a majority of students who come from the same or similar cultural descent. While it has been shown that Ontario is one of the most multicultural provinces in the country, and therefore would also have some of the most multicultural schools, much of the multiculturalism is focused in more urban areas (though there has been expansion away from urban centers on the parts of many immigrant families). Classrooms outside of urban areas can be much more homogenous than those on the inside. One interpretation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogical thought could be that if a class was ethnically or culturally homogenous, then there would be little need (in terms of the student engagement or academic achievement) to explore other cultures. In other words, the literature on CRP does not address the benefits of learning about other cultures to students who do not share that culture. Using the example from earlier, if there were no Chinese-Canadian students in a class, does that mean that Chinese history is less relevant to that particular class? It is here, at the intersection between multicultural education and CRP, that there appears to be a hole in the literature. The question remains; if there are supposedly so many benefits to being culturally relevant, would multicultural education be considered culturally irrelevant, and
therefore, somehow undesirable? In Lopez’s (2011) study, she observed that the greatest impact of the integration of South Asian material was on the South Asian students. Exploration into the effects of CRP on students who are not being represented is lacking in the research.

This notion can help cement the outlines of CRP. Is this approach only beneficial to marginalized students whose histories tended in the past to be overlooked in favour of a more Eurocentric approach to history education? Through the lens of CRP, what are the benefits of teaching a classroom of students from exclusively from European decent anything other than western history?

2.6 Conclusion

There is still a disparity between the conceptions of world history in academia and within high school classrooms. Though there have been strides made recently to try and reduce this disparity, there are still areas of concern that present problems when trying to make the new CHY4U/C curriculum inclusive. The structural approach that is provided within the curriculum, while less so than before, is still Eurocentric. Such a structure prohibits students from gaining a true understanding of what it means to live in a globalized world and can also be motivationally detrimental to students who do not see themselves reflected in what is being taught. This problem is worsened by the fact that there is still no new textbook for the course, leaving teachers to use dated, biased materials to supplement their instruction. Additionally, world history textbooks from the U.S. show that even should a text book be written for this new course, it will likely continue to hold certain Eurocentric biases.

The proposed method of combatting these issues was to integrate a culturally relevant approach to structuring this course, the benefits of which stand to increase the engagement of
students whose culture has traditionally been overlooked in the curriculum. The benefits of this approach for such students have been documented and studied, however there is little to show the benefits of increased cultural awareness on students who are already reflected in what is taught. Furthermore, there are some drawbacks to a culturally relevant approach, primarily getting teachers in the mindset that will allow them to value an approach that will likely require significant extra reading and preparation to compensate for any holes in their historical narrative or knowledge. In light of this, the purpose of my research is to determine how teachers are negotiating the recent update to the course and how they weigh the value of a culturally relevant approach against the problems mentioned above.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I will examine and explain the research methodology of this study. I will begin by reviewing the research approach and procedures and their relevance to my primary research question. I will then explain which instruments of data collection were used and include an account of the participants involved. This will include details regarding the various sampling criteria used to select participants, the sampling procedures adopted, and brief biographies of each participant. I will then describe the data analysis procedures and review the ethical considerations and procedures relevant to this study. I will conclude with a summary of the methodological limitations and strengths associated with this type of study and the ways for which these have been accounted.

3.1 Research Approach & Procedures

This study utilized qualitative research methodology relying on a review of the relevant literature and existing research. This informed a series of questions that were asked in two semi-structured interviews with registered OCT certified teachers. While both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have their own corresponding strengths and weaknesses, they each provide different types of results. Whereas quantitative studies aim to test a pre-determined hypothesis and produce results that are more generalizable, qualitative studies strive to answer the more humanistic questions of “how” and “why” (Marshall, 1996). When attempting to determine whether teachers should cater the content of their history courses to the cultural demographic of their classrooms, these types of questions serve to better answer this question than the “what” questions of a quantitative study.
The qualitative concern with understanding the experiences of human beings - in this case teachers - through interpretation (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007) aligns with the goals of this research study. Jones (1995) writes that “Qualitative research begins by accepting that there is a range of different ways of making sense of the world and is concerned with discovering the meanings seen by those who are being researched.” A quantitative study would not have permitted as effective an examination of said range, and would not have allowed for an in-depth look at these “meanings.” Qualitative research relies on the participants being interviewed to offer responses that show how the teachers have constructed or understood their experiences (Jackson et al., 2007). As the previous literature has shown, the success of CRP can be very circumstantial. Qualitative methodology allows for the teachers to outline their success or failures in implementing CRP within their own specific contexts.

One of the primary aims of qualitative research is to describe and understand certain aspects of a phenomenon (Carr, 1994) and in this study that phenomenon is CRP in history classrooms. Understanding the reasons why or why not such a phenomenon has been implemented practically is often best achieved through qualitative research (Jones, 1995). While there is certainly a plethora of valuable data that could be achieved through a quantitative examination of the phenomenon, this study’s research focus is more reliant on the types of information that can be garnered from qualitative methods and through this study’s primary instrument of data collection: semi-structured interviews with teachers.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

As previously stated, the sole instrument of data collection for this study was two 45 minute semi-structured interviews with teachers. Barbara DiCicco-Bloom and Benjamin
Crabtree (2006) explain in that “semi-structured interviews are often the sole data source for a qualitative research projects… [they are] generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee/s” (p. 315). The latter point is one of two reasons why a semi-structured approach to data collection was best suited for this study. Semi-structured interviews offer a more informal and flexible format which creates space in the interview for themes to emerge of which the researcher may not have been previously aware (Jackson et al., 2007). This is important for bringing to light factors which the literature may have overlooked. The second reason semi-structured interviews are preferable, particularly over structured interviews, is because structured interviews tend to produce strictly quantitative data (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Quantitative data could not have spoken to the lived experience of the teachers which was so important for this study. This is also why the semi-structured interview questions were framed in such a way as to highlight these lived experiences in order to determine if teachers should or should not cater the content of a world history course to the cultural demographic of their classroom.

3.3 Participants

In this section I review the sampling criteria I established for participant recruitment as well as examine possible methods with which to execute said recruitment. The final subsection will introduce each of the participants.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria. The following Criteria will be used to determine teacher participants in this study:
1. Teachers will have experience using Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in their classrooms at the secondary level.

2. At least one participant will teach in a culturally homogenous school, likely in a rural area.

3. At least one participant will teach in a culturally diverse school, likely in an urban area.

4. At least two participants will have experience with either the West and the World course or the more recent World history course. Any others should have some familiarity with the history curriculum.

The first criterion is important as the study hinges on the practicality of implementing CRP in classrooms. It is important to note that with this criterion it is not crucial that the teacher have permanently adopted a culturally relevant approach or that their experiences with CRP be positive. I needed teachers who have attempted it in their classrooms, either successfully or unsuccessfully. The second two are equally important because being culturally relevant can mean very different things depending on where a teacher is trying to accomplish this relevance. Seeing how teachers negotiate CRP both in situations where there are many cultures to address as well as situations where there are few are critical to this study. Of course it is also important to speak to history teachers and see how they negotiate CRP in their classrooms.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures. As a teacher candidate, I am immersed in a community of teacher colleagues and mentor teachers and I largely relied on my existing contacts and networks to recruit participants. Meetings were arranged with relevant scholars at OISE to discuss research and to be directed toward teachers who are practicing relevant approaches in their classrooms.

This study largely relied on convenience sampling, using judgement sampling where possible and appropriate. Since this study did not look for a representative sample and did not
attempt to make generalizations with the findings, random sampling was not used (Carr, 1994, Marshall, 1996). According to Martin Marshall (1996), “In a random sample the nature of the population is denied and all members have an equal chance of selection.” This type of sample, largely used by quantitative studies, would eliminate the important factor of teacher experience. Randomly selecting participants for this study would likely not have returned any valuable results, especially because of the specificity of my sampling criteria.

Therefore, a combination of convenience and judgement sampling were used. Due to the temporal and monetary restraints placed upon this study by the confines of the two year Masters of Teaching program, convenience sampling made the most sense. It is commonly seen as the least rigorous and least costly both in terms of time and money (Marshall, 1996). However, convenience alone did not dictate the participants used in this study as, similar to random sampling, it would likely not have returned useful results. Because of this, judgement sampling, or sampling where the researcher selects the most productive sample (Marshall, 1996), was also used to determine the most appropriate participants wherever possible.

3.3.3 Participant bios. In the interest of maintaining the anonymity of the participants involved, and in accordance with the ethical guidelines of this project (see section 3.5), both participants in this study have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

The first participant, Frida, obtained her undergraduate degree in Ontario in 2001 focusing her studies on French, Native and Indigenous studies, and military history. She then obtained her teaching degree in history and French and immediately began teaching at a Toronto high school where she stayed for 12 years. While there, she taught in the International Baccalaureate program as well as academic and applied level classes. She taught specific courses in the History and French department as well as courses on leadership and peer support, equity
and social justice. Following her time in Toronto she relocated to a high school in the North York region where she was temporarily the curriculum leader for the Canadian and World Studies department and where she earned national recognition for teaching history. Her current school has around 1600 students, 125 staff, and has students from upwards of 80 different cultures from around the world. Frida has also spent time in 42 countries across 5 of the globes continents which she claims has helped her develop a deeper sense of cultural understanding which she consciously and regularly implements into her classroom.

The second participant, Joan, has been teaching for sixteen years. She started her career teaching in a rural Ontario school board and then moved to the Toronto District School Board where she has been teaching at several schools for the past eleven years. Joan’s focus and passion has largely been in English Language Arts education, having taught all streams and variations of the program from grades 9 to 12, from locally developed to academic. Joan has been at her current school for four years and describes it as “extremely diverse” with students and teachers having a variety of cultural backgrounds from around the world. Joan works closely with her colleagues to continually update their course plans and find areas that could be more culturally relevant and engaging for the students.

3.4 Data Analysis.

Qualitative data analysis involves the inductive sorting, organizing, refining, and interpretation of the data collected (Thorne, 2000). Once the interviews had been completed, the audio recordings were transcribed using the research questions as an interpretive tool. Inductive reasoning was used to analyze and sort the data by identifying and coding broad trends from both interviews and looking for commonalities and divergences from the existing research. These
codes were then synthesized into the following themes: culturally responsive mindsets and philosophies, pedagogical approaches and strategies, and challenges and solutions to successfully implementing CRP.

The meaning making process was a later but crucial stage of the analysis. As Krauss (2005) explains “what has a common meaning to a group of people may have a unique meaning to an individual member of the group” (p. 763), and that was certainly the case for this qualitative study. Particularly through the understanding of CRP, the individual understanding of each participant differed from the overall understanding found in the literature. Meaning-making was further used to understand the individual views of each participant. Finally, null data – or what the participants did not overtly speak to - was also coded, analyzed, and accounted for in the data.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

Various ethical review procedures have been taken into account, particularly in regards to participant privacy and maintaining informed consent. Firstly, in terms of privacy, Clifford G. Christians (2000) writes that “Codes of Ethics insist on safeguards to protect people’s identities… Confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure” (p. 139). With this in mind, many strides have been taken to ensure participant confidentiality and privacy. One step often used in qualitative research is to assign all participants a pseudonym (Christians, 2000). Furthermore all identifying markers related to their schools or students were excluded from the study. This ensured that all “information [remained] anonymous and protected from those whose interests’ conflict with those of the interviewee” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 319). Additional steps will be taken in order to secure and
conceal all personal data (Christians, 2000). All data, including audio recordings and transcripts, will be stored on my password protected laptop and smartphone and will be destroyed after five years.

To ensure informed consent, participants will be asked to sign a consent letter (see Appendix A) giving their consent to be interviewed as well as audio-recorded. This consent letter provides an overview of the study, addresses ethical implications, and specifies expectations of participation (primarily one 45-60 minute semi-structured interview). Informed consent is widely seen as the foremost safeguard in protecting human rights in research studies (Carr, 1994). As social sciences in general insist that research subjects maintain the right to be informed about the research in which they are going to be involved as well as any consequences of said research, Christians (2000) writes that this requires that “subjects must agree voluntarily to participate.” In order to achieve this requirement, all participants were recruited by proxy; my personal contact information was provided to them through an intermediary and they then had full agency in whether they would like to participate or not upon reading the letter of consent. They were notified of their right to withdraw from participation in the study at any stage in the research, were notified of their right to refrain from answering any questions, and were given the opportunity to review the transcripts of the interviews in order to clarify or retract any statements before I conducted my analysis.

Finally, I perceive very minimal chance of risk associated with participation in this study. Because of this I did not send out the interview questions ahead of time as I did not believe they would trigger intense emotional responses. However, there can occasionally be “unanticipated harm” that may arise through the interview process surfacing feelings of grief or other unprocessed feelings (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). As DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree
suggest, “investigators must be prepared to provide psychological support if their interviews create undue stress or raise psychological complications” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 319). These supports were made available through the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

Carr (1994) concludes his article *The Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative and Qualitative Research* by stating that “one approach is not superior to the other,” as there are “corresponding weakness” in both types of studies. Some of the major weaknesses that Carr (1994) points out in qualitative research are shared with this study, the largest of which is that qualitative studies do not produce findings that are generalizable. This is exacerbated by the fact that I am using convenience sampling, which according to Carr (1994) further inhibits the possibilities of generalization. This drawback is widely acknowledged among qualitative studies as they often have very few participants, but is considered to be traded for more depth of detail from the participants being studied (Jackson et al., 2007). Carr (1994) argues that qualitative studies “[allow] for flexibility and the attainment of a deeper, more valid understanding of the subject than could be achieved through a more rigid [read quantitative] approach.” This follows a general feeling that quantitative data is more reliable whereas qualitative is less so because the process relies on “insights” (Carr, 1994). Carr (1994) goes on to explain that this lack of reliability can be counteracted by corroborating results with independent experts, however this is unfeasible for such a small study as this.

That being said, there are certain benefits to the qualitative data that such a study can return, particularly in that it accounts for “lived experience” and a clearer understanding of these experiences (Carr, 1994, Jackson et al., 2007). These experiences have the potential to provide
very clear answers to my research question, which is largely framed around the experience of teachers and their pedagogy. The ethical framework of the MTRP actually restricts the subjects of the study to teachers alone, which could also be seen as a weakness to the study in that it does not allow for a range of perspectives to be shared (notably students and parents). However, this restriction simply allowed for a more in-depth delving into the perspectives and experiences of the teachers being studied. The teachers were therefore able to speak more about what matters to them, whereas quantitative studies (such as surveys) strip the data from its natural context (Carr, 1994).

3.7 Conclusion

I began this chapter with a discussion of the qualitative research methodology that was used and how it is appropriate to this study and its research question, particularly in its ability to answer the questions of how and why CRP should be used in a history classroom. I then moved on to discussing the data collection instrument that was used in this study – semi-structured interviews with teachers – and how these are preferable to other methods of data collection in that they allow for teacher experience and context to show through the interview process. The four sampling criteria that were used in this study were discussed and rationalized followed by the outlining of a combination of convenient and judgment sampling that was used to determine participants. The ethical considerations were then examined with appropriate considerations discussed. Notably, the explicit letter of consent that will be used to assure participants of the study’s commitment to confidentiality and professionalism. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of a qualitative study were outlined, with the foremost weakness being the ungeneralizability of the results. In the next chapter, I will report on my research findings.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings of this qualitative study and how they inform the answer to its main research question: How feasible is it for teachers to cater the content of a world history course to the cultural demographic of their school or classroom? As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the data was collected from two 45 minute semi-structured interviews with current Ontario secondary school teachers. Both Joan and Frida - recruited by convenience and purposeful sampling – have been teaching for over a decade and have taught the previous version of the CHY4U world history, *The West and the World*. After the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed, coded using descriptive methods and thematically analyzed. This analysis resulted in the establishment of the three themes and subthemes of which this chapter will consist.

The first of these themes – Culturally Responsive Mindsets and Philosophies – centers on the relationship between a teacher’s philosophy of teaching and learning and their understanding of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). The different philosophies of each educator and the experiences which helped develop these philosophies will be used to inform an analysis of the ways in which each teacher has already implemented elements of CRP into their teaching. The second theme – Pedagogical Approaches and Strategies – will analyze the effectiveness and feasibility of the pedagogical approaches and strategies that each educator has demonstrated in addressing CRP in their classroom. This section will look specifically at ways in which the teachers have addressed various cultures not found amongst their students, how their course structures affect their ability to be culturally relevant, and a specific assessment practice used to
help address many of the issues associated with CRP presented in Chapter 2. The third theme – Challenges and Solutions to Successfully Integrating CRP – will examine one of the biggest challenges that the participants faced when implementing CRP, lack of resources, and some of the strategic solutions used to manage this challenge.

4.1 Culturally Responsive Mindsets and Philosophies

It became apparent through the interview processes that Frida and Joan had different foci in their teaching philosophies. These foci seem to have affected their understanding and practice of CRP. An understanding of the differences between the philosophies of the two participants will help to answer the research sub question: to what degree were teachers already adopting a more global or a more culturally responsive approach to the course before the curriculum change in 2015? This section will extrapolate and compare each participant’s philosophical priorities and examine how this relates to their understanding of CRP.

4.1.1. Equity and inquiry. Frida is an example of an educator whose experience has heavily informed her teaching philosophy, with an emphasis on two tenets: equity and inquiry. A major catalyst for this focus seems to be her extensive travels around the world which she mentions several times throughout the interview, often in relation to her practice:

… I mean I think one of the things about me is because I have travelled a lot around the world – I have spent time in 42 countries around the world – that my experience in working with different communities and living… with many different communities has informed me about sort of cultural understandings about how do you work with different individuals and how do you negotiate- and how pedagogically you can use different
strategies that are inclusive of all individuals… I think that those experiences inform my practice…

This quote suggests that Frida’s travels were culturally immersive. She mentions that her experience involved “working” and “living” with many different communities, suggesting that she was acting in less of the role of a tourist and was deliberately developing cultural awareness. Though she does not mention this deliberation outright, this idea is supported by her trip to China in particular. Her trip there was with the Association for Learning and Preserving the History of World War II in Asia (ALPHA). ALPHA’s trips were described back in Chapter 2 as being able to instill a sense of cultural awareness and a mindset that motivated the teachers involved to include more neglected histories and a multiplicity of perspectives in their teaching (Naili, 2005). While it may be argued that not all of Frida’s expeditions were as eye-opening or influential, it could also be argued that the ALPHA trip and their proven ability to create culturally aware mindsets in teachers is enough in itself to give Frida an advantage over others when it comes to the implementation of CRP in her classroom. Furthermore, though Frida did not mention this directly, she implied that at least the majority of these travels were conducted, if not for the purpose of cultural awareness, than with an open mind to such things.

Frida’s experience informs not only her practice (practice will be explored more thoroughly in section 4.2) but also provided her with tools that help her be inclusive of a wide variety of individuals. Though Frida downplays the value of her experience, it is difficult not to recognize the impact her unique experience has on her teaching. This is especially apparent when compared to a more typical Ontario teacher, who likely has not spent time on “five continents around the world.” While she may not be an expert, she certainly acknowledges that this experience led her to a better pedagogical understanding of how to be equitable to different
cultures within her classroom. While there were no questions specifically asking about teaching philosophy in the interviews, she does refer to her “model” – which for the purposes of this section will be interpreted as her philosophy – and describes that it has, “at its core,” the tenets of equity and inquiry. Her focus on inquiry and how this philosophical tenet manifests as a pedagogical approach will be explored specifically in 4.2.

While Frida suggests that she caters the content of her history courses from year to year based on the cultural demographic of her classroom, it does not seem feasible to make global travel a pre-requisite for a culturally responsive approach to history education. However, in addition to instilling equity as a priority in Frida’s teaching – and therefore helping to develop the particular “mindset” discussed by Ladson-Billings (1995) and Lopez (2011) – her travels, especially her trip with ALPHA, helped Frida develop the other skill-set that may prohibit some teachers from adopting a culturally relevant approach: a deeper understanding of world history (Kanu, 2011; Murray, 2011; McArthur Harris, 2012; Naili, 2005; Rolheiser et al., 2011). This being said, it is certainly unfair to expect all teachers to develop an equitable teaching philosophy and a thorough understanding of world history solely through extensive travel. Section 4.1.3 will examine the links between Frida’s philosophical focus and her understanding of CRP. However, before those connections can be made, let us first examine Joan’s philosophy and how it differs from Frida’s.

4.1.2. Student engagement. There was a clear difference in Joan’s philosophical focus than in Frida’s. Joan places a far greater emphasis on student engagement in her teaching than on equity or inquiry. This is not to say that Joan is not an equitable teacher or does not see the benefits of inquiry; however, it was clear that her major concern was the degree to which her lessons engaged her students. I came to this conclusion based on several different answers to a
variety of questions. Her desire to engage all her students was clearly the motivation behind modifying unit plans, including new methods of assessment, and responding to her classes’ cultural demographics. One example of this desire was made evident when she was asked what initially sparked her interest in CRP. She explained that she responds to “the lack of interest from students.” This led her to ask herself “how can I engage the students?” Referring to her decision to implement elements of CRP she said “It just kind of came out of necessity.” Anything that the students enjoyed or found relevant was reused, whereas lesson plans or assessments that did not meet these criteria were either reworked or pushed aside to make way for something more engaging.

I believe that her primary goal being student engagement is why the elements of her lessons that were culturally relevant were prompted or provided by other educators. Joan discusses two examples of her CRP. The first, an inquiry based assignment in her West and the World course, was introduced to her by another instructor, and the second, a decision to use a more culturally relevant novel in an English course, was a collaborative decision between her and the teachers of the other sections of that course. Both of these examples were either responding to a lack of student interest or engagement with the course material, or were kept in the course syllabus because of an observable level of student enjoyment.

I draw three conclusions from these examples. The first is that Joan’s and Frida’s observations of student engagement concur with Lopez’s (2011) findings that CRP has the potential to raise student engagement with the course material. Second, this highlights the importance of a teacher’s philosophy in terms of their proactive engagement with CRP in particular. Joan’s philosophy does not prohibit her from the inclusion of culturally relevant material; however she has different priorities when it comes to lesson planning. Joan is more
likely to respond to students’ lack of engagement by adopting a different approach, where cultural relevance specifically may be seen as useful or not. Thirdly, this highlights the importance of teacher collaboration for the successful implementation of CRP, particularly for teachers who may not have CRP or other equity based pedagogies at the core of their philosophies. This makes it apparent that teachers who develop successful culturally relevant lesson plans and assignments should openly share them with others who are teaching the same material.

It must also be noted that even though engagement may not be at the core of Frida’s philosophy, it is still an important aspect of her teaching. She mentions that “the case studies [or course content] to me are irrelevant, as long as the students are engaged.” However, it should be noted that Frida sees student engagement as a by-product of equity and inquiry based practice. This idea is clarified when both teachers’ understandings of CRP is explored.

### 4.1.3. Understanding of CRP.

Knowing the educational philosophies of Joan and Frida, as well as knowing how they both understand CRP, provides some context to explain why one teacher was already adopting a culturally relevant approach prior to the course change in 2015, and why one teacher is retroactively reacting to the change. Both instructors’ understanding of CRP is multilayered. First we will look at Frida’s: early in the interview she says that “obviously… it’s culturally responsive to use resources and content that relates to the students that are in the room,” however, this is only a part of what she sees as being responsive. She later says how new equity based models of education like culturally responsive pedagogy inherently looks more at sort of social-cultural… framings or understandings. But there are so many intersections that exist now in this, in the learning of history… This idea of like looking
at the intersectionality... of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, all of those different levels... so I wouldn't say that I would look only at CRP, but I would also look at a more intersectional model where equity is at the core of it and where inquiry informs it.

Frida sees CRP as only one of several tools which a teacher must use. In fact, she later explains that being “tokenistic” with these pedagogies – or using them without a thorough theoretical understanding – could be dangerous. This suggests that Frida sees her pedagogy as being culturally relevant, but would not say that she exclusively uses CRP in her teaching.

Joan’s understanding of CRP is largely couched in her focus on student engagement. When asked about her understanding of CRP, she said that it involved bringing material into the class that the students will find interesting, will be engaged in, they'll be able to relate to it... I think that’s what it comes down to... If you're providing much more of a diversity [of materials] you're taking into account all the different kids that are in your class and where they come from, it just creates more engagement, absolutely, it does. Right? And so I think that's what Culturally Relevant means, the kids can relate to it a little better than, you know, maybe some other things that might be more... Eurocentric.

However, Joan also had her reservations when it came to this pedagogy, saying “just because we think it’s culturally relevant and we think this will be great, doesn't mean that the students are gonna [say] ‘oh my god miss! This was the best lesson I've ever had in my life!’” Whereas Frida’s misgivings about CRP relate to her philosophy because of her foreseeing difficulties being equitable to students beyond just their cultural identity, Joan hesitates to unreservedly praise CRP because, in her experience, it does not always necessarily result in increases in
student engagement. Joan mentions at one point “jumping through hoops” to engage students culturally only to have them not respond positively to the lesson.

However, it is Joan’s comment about Eurocentrism that I would like to examine a little more in depth, particularly its relation to teacher mindsets. As discussed in Chapter 2, a big reason for the change for this course in 2015 was to move away from the Eurocentric framework of the history curriculum. When asked, both teachers immediately acknowledged a heavy Eurocentric bias in the old *West and the World* curriculum. Later, when questioned about the content traditionally included in her world history course, Joan rationalized her Eurocentric choices, much in the tradition of the old *West and the World* course:

… we live in Canada, it’s part of the West, and so I think the way that I choose [the content] is how did we get here today, where did this idea of you know democracy come from? Where did this idea of capitalism come from? [I say] let’s look at what, kind of created Canada.

Where the previous version of the course did not require teachers to be culturally relevant, Joan’s philosophy did not compel her to go far beyond the curriculum’s western focus. That being said, Joan did mention how she would sometimes pull in some more culturally appropriate material when prompted by student interest. For example, some of Joan’s students expressed an interest in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and colonization more broadly. Although Joan mentioned that she already covered this theme in the course, the student interest led her to “delve into it a little bit more” and compelled her to perform some more research so that she could create a “small, mini unit around [the interest].” Joan was not averse to diverging from her more traditional approach when prompted by student interest.
Interestingly, Frida also mentioned the teaching of the Atlantic Slave Trade, though her handling of that material was different than Joan’s. Answering the question about what world history content she tended to focus on in the past, Frida brought up the Atlantic Slave Trade and explained that “the conversation is not restricted to Africa, we would compare [the Atlantic Slave Trade] to what was going on in China and in Manchuria and in Japan, and so on at the same time.” Frida took an event directly involving the West – the Atlantic Slave Trade – and expanded the scope of the conversation to incorporate other thematically similar historical events. The creation of these types of global connections and parallels could be seen as one of the primary goals of the new CHY4U curriculum, yet, Frida was already making these connections prior to the update. Frida further explains how her reason for the incorporation of these expanded viewpoints was to create cross-cultural connections; a motivating factor closely tied to her teaching philosophy.

Therefore, a teacher’s philosophy is very important to consider when examining how likely they are to have included more of a culturally relevant or responsive approach to the teaching of world history prior to the de-westernized focus of the new curriculum. Frida is a teacher whose focus on equity and inquiry, combined with her vast global experience, lends itself more easily to a broader approach to the instruction of world history and its cultures. Frida did not mention having to perform substantial additional research in order to speak to the thematic parallels of slavery in China and Japan. On the other hand, based on Joan’s various examples, she seems to have a more comprehensive background in Literature than in world history. For Joan, attaining such high degrees of cultural relevance requires additional research into areas in which she may not be as experienced.
It is important to note however that Joan is not opposed to opening her world history curriculum to other non-western cultures. One of her stated goals for the future of CHY4U was to explore and incorporate more diverse materials. However, this does show that the Eurocentric structure of a course itself is not enough to stop a teacher with an equity-inclined philosophy from being culturally responsive. A question potentially worthy of further research could be: To what degree does identifying and removing the explicit Eurocentric biases from the curriculum actually change what teachers focus on in their classrooms? The next section will examine some ways in which Frida and Joan used various pedagogical approaches to achieve their different degrees of cultural responsiveness.

4.2 Pedagogical Approaches and Strategies

While Frida and Joan have distinctive teaching philosophies, when employing culturally relevant approaches and strategies in their classrooms they use similar techniques. These similarities will help answer two of the sub-research questions of this study. The first subsection will help answer how teachers can implement CRP in classes with less cultural diversity, and the second will illuminate the benefits of a particular combination of historical approaches in a world history course. The third subsection will examine both teachers’ use of assessments founded in student inquiry and the several benefits that this technique has been found to have.

4.2.1. Culturally Irrelevant Pedagogy or speaking to cultures outside the classroom.

As mentioned in section 2.5.3, one of the gaps found in the literature on CRP had to do with the implementation of this pedagogy in classrooms that are culturally homogenous. While both teachers shared an interesting perspective on this issue, it must first be noted that both Frida and Joan identified their schools as “extremely diverse,” meaning that neither of these teachers were
currently teaching in a classroom with a narrow cultural spectrum. However, Joan mentioned that closer to the beginning of her teaching career she worked in a rural Ontario school that consisted almost exclusively of “middle class, white students.” Joan discussed the introduction of a unit on the Harlem renaissance into one of her English classes at this school that “the students really liked.” Joan explained that she included this unit because: “…[multiculturalism] is a reflection of our society today” and that even though a student may “live in a rural [or] suburban part of town that’s mostly white, but you drive a little bit and then you're in the city and then it’s totally different….” This is related to another interesting element of Joan’s understanding of cultural relevance. Joan believes that CRP must speak not only to the cultures within the classroom, but to cultures that students may encounter outside of the classroom.

Frida expressed a similar understanding when she said “in order to have a full appreciation and understanding of the world you have to learn that which is beyond your own windows and beyond your own walls”, and that it is a pedagogical necessity to include these outside perspectives in order to prepare students for living in a “neo-liberal” world. Both teachers demonstrated this desire to use their history courses to teach students about diversity; however, the extent of the diversity explored was different for each teacher. Frida’s goal was to provide students with “an all-encompassing understanding of the diversity… of the World.” For example, Frida explains that if she were teaching the Rape of Nanjing to a classroom in which there were only Chinese students, she would still teach it through a multiplicity of perspectives. Frida claimed that to not include these different perspectives would be “ignorant.”

This suggests an additional benefit – and perhaps even a new understanding – of CRP. While the elements of the pedagogy that engage students interested in their own cultural histories have been explored, being culturally relevant for these teachers also means taking into account
the multicultural societies in which the students are living. Learning history in a culturally relevant way better prepares students to navigate an increasingly multicultural world and its values. Ultimately, the course content is up to the individual teacher. The next section will examine ways in which a world history course can be structured in order to make an instructors’ choices about content easier and the learning experience better for the students.

4.2.2. Thematic and chronological structure. Another point of similarity between Frida and Joan was their decision to use a combination of thematic and chronological structures. Joan was explicit about her thematic approach, but only implied she was following the themes in a chronological order. Frida, on the other hand, seemed aware of the debate between the different conceptions as outlined back in 2.2, but clearly concluded that both a thematic and a chronological approach must be taken. Though both teachers used a similar approach to their structuring of the course, they each had different rationales behind their choices, both of which fit with their philosophies as outlined in 4.1.

Joan explained that using a thematic framework allows for the exploration of particular themes that are important to her conception of what global historical events led to Canada becoming “what it is today.” She also states that organizing a course thematically “seems to get the kids much more engaged.” This rationale does not necessarily conform with what the literature stated were the benefits of this type of approach. Marino (2010) mostly proposed that conceptual structures helped with bettering student understanding of global connections. It could be extrapolated that the more engaged Joan’s students are the better they will understand these connections, though this was not directly mentioned during the interview.

Frida was much more explicit about the benefits of combining both thematic and chronological structures for a world history course. She stated three primary reasons for her use
of these structures. The first had to do with her prioritized notion of showing students the intersectionalities between several cultural groups or points in history. She said “[the] course itself inherently forces you to take a thematic approach and move cultural groups or move history a certain distance to the point when you have an intersectionality.” These are exactly the types of connections which Bain (2010) argued were at risk of being lost when a thematic approach was used exclusively. Frida negotiates this complication by teaching the cases in which the themes are explored in chronological order. Frida’s second reason is

… [if you] do a thematic slash chronological progression in teaching… you definitely have to make choices, like you definitely have to. I think that I was making probably more choices that reflected sort of an African-Caribbean response because those were the students that I was dealing with in front of me…

This suggests that this structure also has potential benefits to the implementation of CRP in the world history classroom. Frida implies that this particular approach for the course’s structure allows for more flexibility in course material. This allowed Frida to respond directly to her class’s cultures - in this case, Afro-Caribbean. This benefit of flexibility was not discussed in any of the literature on the subject. Her third reason is that the use of this approach allows students to gain historical perspectives that may “have been overshadowed or deemed by the textbook writers to [not] be as important.” Frida adds that thematic approaches must be accompanied by the use of inquiry to achieve historical perspective. The implications of the use of independent inquiry will be the exclusive focus of the following section.

4.2.3. Independent inquiry. One very important element that came up several times in both interviews was the use of student led independent inquiry projects. Both instructors used this type of assignment in their previous western history courses and both praised the many
benefits of its inclusion. This type of project could take various shapes and the specific criteria could change, but the general idea as put forth by both teachers was that students would have an opportunity at some point during the course to perform some research on a topic, usually of their own choosing, that intersected with another element or theme or idea of the course. These following benefits are not always inherent in this project, but the various structures needed and the benefits themselves will be discussed in this section.

The first of these benefits was that independent student inquiry allowed for some elements of CRP to make their way into a previously (and arguably still) heavily Eurocentric curriculum. Particularly in Joan’s West and the World course, which had more of a western focus than Frida’s, this type of assignment allowed students to “choose different empires that were happening… during the same time period… and [look] at what else was happening in the world outside of the West.” Therefore, in a course that was largely following the Eurocentric curriculum, independent inquiry where students were able to choose the subject of their inquiry allowed students to “go outside the west.” While it does not necessarily allow students to feel as if their cultural identity is being directly reflected in the curriculum, it at least allows students to remove themselves from a western narrative.

Independent student inquiry also allows students to pursue their own interests, whether they lie in their own cultural histories or beyond. This was another interesting similarity between the two teachers: both suggested that students may not always be interested in their own cultural history. Joan spoke to this when discussing her inquiry project:

[it was] not necessarily because… if [a student’s] background was Chinese they wanted to [research] the Chinese Empire but because they were able to kind of go outside of the
While Frida said that students who “didn’t see that their own cultural groups [reflected] would often choose their own… in assignments that they were doing,” I think that the emphasis both teachers placed on student choice is significant. The element of choice, within the various criteria of the assignments, allows students to fill any gaps they might have in their own interest in the course material. However, this choice would certainly require some limiting guidelines so as to properly address course expectations. These guidelines are both the next benefit, but also contribute to a potential drawback.

Frida outlined how her independent inquiry projects also encourage students to think historically and interpret historical thinking concepts inherent in the history curriculum. Frida explains how the research that students perform is on “events that they deem to be historically significant,” however, this significance must be “based on the criteria… determined in class.” The cultural responsiveness of this assignment depends on what criteria have been developed in class, and more importantly, whether the student sees their culture or interests as meeting these criteria. This is not to say that the use of independent inquiry should be limited based on the historical thinking concepts, but this potential for limiting student interest (which is a large element of this type of assignment) should be noted in the construction of the criteria.

Finally, independent inquiry projects can help stem the problem of a teacher’s lack of expertise. Specialized knowledge of all cultures has already been highlighted as a requirement needed to teach content effectively, particularly in the creating of connections that are so important for world history (Marino, 2010). Frida acknowledges this issue directly:
…history specialists either have a specialization in European history predominantly or African and colonial or post-colonial, or indigenous history… Those are my three expert groups. But when I taught in the International Baccalaureate program, we were teaching the Russian revolution [and] Mao’s China, and I was learning as I went. You can’t be an expert in all of it…

To this problem of lack of expertise, Frida proposes that “inquiry is part of the answer.” Student inquiry can help fill the blanks in a teacher’s expertise that otherwise may not have found their way into the curriculum, particularly if, as Frida suggests, the students “would then teach [what they researched] in a seminar format to the other students in the class.” Of course, this is not a substitute for a teacher’s solid knowledge and understanding of their course content, but it may be a possible answer for teachers who may have limits on the amount of extra time they can spend researching the various elements of world history. These limits of knowledge and the impediment they put on teaching the new course are just one of the challenges that will be discussed in the next section.

4.3. Challenges and Solutions to Successfully Implementing CRP

The challenges experienced by the teachers in the implementation of CRP in world history classrooms were very much in line with what was found in the literature. The issue of teacher mindset, the difficulties associated with obtaining this mindset, and the consequences on a teacher’s use of CRP when they do not having this mindset were discussed earlier in this chapter (4.1). The data also show another serious challenge to teachers in terms of CHY4U: a lack of ‘good’ resources. The meaning of “good” can change with each teacher, but usually they are referring to materials that are useful, engaging, and promote good historical learning). The
first subsection will discuss the specific difficulties the participants have faced when managing resources for their history courses and the ways in which this largely corresponds with the literature on the subject. The second subsection will examine some solutions that Frida and Joan suggested that pose some potential solutions to the problem of inadequate course materials and the subsequent problem of the increased teacher workload needed to compensate for those materials.

4.3.1. Resources and course materials. The biggest impediment to the implementation of effective CRP in the world history classroom seems to be related to course materials. For example, Frida’s method is to create courses from scratch without any established lesson plans or textbooks. She says that in relation to using CRP “the issue I’ve faced most is a lack of resources.” For the purposes of this section, the resources discussed will be classified as either textbooks or online resources. I will start by examining the resource that both teachers tended to use significantly less, if at all; textbooks.

Neither Frida nor Joan seemed to think very highly of the use of textbooks in their classrooms. Joan said outright that she does not like to follow the textbooks and Frida said that she was not “married to a textbook.” They each provided various reasons for their feelings. Joan cited the impediment that the textbooks placed on her ability to pull in more diverse material. This is mostly because of how the books available for her use are, in her words, “slightly dated.” I would add here that she mentioned the world history textbooks from her school were published in 2001. To put that in context, recall back in Chapter 2 the discussion of the evolution of the grade 12 world history course. Before it became The World in 2015, for 10 years the course was called The West and the World. That means that in 2001 the course was still an even older and more Eurocentric version called Modern Western Civilization. This directly complies with what
Lopez (2011) argued would happen with “less affluent schools” such as the one in which Joan is currently teaching. The increasingly older versions have driven Joan to the point where she will not be using her school’s textbook at all.

Frida’s perspective on textbooks was clear. She says at one point that “today’s textbook is tomorrow’s boat anchor.” Frida stated three main reasons why she felt weighed down by course textbooks: textbook materials are locked in time, they are usually “uni-perspective,” and the good ones are often too academic for high school students. Her first point is related to Joan’s primary concern with her school’s textbooks; their often dated nature detracts from their relevance. Textbooks she’s had available dated back to the mid-1990s which posed a number of issues including inappropriate language, out-dated materials, and the material not being culturally relevant. This last point in particular coincides with Commeyra’s and Alvermann’s (1994) argument that the older a history text is, the higher the chance that it will marginalize a larger variety of cultural groups. Frida’s second issue was that textbooks often present only one perspective of an issue. This is a problem for Frida who prioritizes intersectionalities and the use of a variety of perspectives, as demonstrated through her approach to the teaching of the Rape of Nanjing (described in section 4.2.1). Thirdly, she argues that textbooks that would be of any use in this course are predominantly being written for university students. With these she has found that “the level of language is pitched too high” and that they are too academic for her high school students.

To respond to these various issues both instructors have taken to the internet to try and find additional resources. Joan mentioned going online to supplement the textbook materials with “texts that were a little more recent.” Frida also praises the internet for its ability to help teachers specifically locate primary source materials: “I think that the internet is the most
incredible resource we have now in terms of primary materials… [There are a lot] of online digital archives.” This works well with Frida’s approach to history education more generally because she argues that primary source materials are “the foundation of good history education” and that secondary sources are too clouded by “historical interpretation.” However, it can be difficult to locate “authentic materials,” and while Frida may already be aware of several good online databases that can help supplement the textbooks, Joan says she still has to “figure out if there are any other resource sites” beyond the one she mentioned in the interview.

While the internet may pose a possible solution to outdated hard-copy textbooks in schools, learning of and staying up to date with online databases and resource banks can be difficult. Particularly because, as with both teachers in this study, continually updating their own material is a priority. However, while managing and updating resources may require some extra work, Frida suggested another benefit to “un-marrying” herself from the textbooks. Because she is not going through material “page by page” she is more “open to the integration of [and] the inclusion of different perspectives.” Therefore, if teachers do take this approach of distancing themselves from a set course narrative as outlined though the use of textbooks, they are potentially better able to be culturally responsive to the students in their classes from year to year. While a textbook could help reduce prep time, it does potentially dissuade some teachers from continually updating their resources.

Therefore, in answer to the research sub-questions of how much textbooks and their content shape what is covered in a world history classroom, at least for these teachers who seldom use their textbooks, the answer is not much at all. Particularly when teachers such as Frida and Joan have an acute awareness of the limitations of their school’s textbooks they are prompted to buttress their course material with online resources. That being said, it can be quite a
foreboding task to create all materials for a class from scratch. If these textbooks are not being used, the issues of imbalanced power relations and skewed understandings of Third World nations that Commeyras and Alvermann (1994) discovered in their study of world history textbooks may become moot. However, these issues could just as easily re-emerge in teacher created materials as they did in published materials. Commeyras and Alvermann’s (1994) solution of using critical literacy to expose the flaws in the materials is not one that can be abandoned when textbooks are not being used. This complication, again, ends up manifesting itself in the form of increased teacher workload and preparation time. The ways in which the subjects of this study manage this serious issue will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.2. Previous experience and collaboration. The lack of good resources appears to be more of a problem for Joan than for Frida. When discussing Joan’s dislike of her outdated textbooks and her impending search for better and more diverse resources, she said “I’ll have to do the work, I’ll have to definitely do a lot more work, which I don’t mind…” So while this may not be seen as an particularly daunting task for an experienced teacher, it is nonetheless one that will require a significant time commitment. Frida, on the other hand, suggested a different attitude to the search for more and better resources:

I think that I'm constantly looking at working with new resources and new materials… so I think I'm going to keep doing that. I don’t think that for me it’s like I'm going to start doing that, it’s something that I already do and its part of my pedagogical practice.

So where Joan is beginning her hunt for better and more culturally diverse resources, Frida has been doing so already. That being said, it is important to create a distinction between Frida and Joan’s previous experience with cultural education. Frida has a significant advantage over Joan in this regard because, for one, she has a unique set of cultural experiences obtained through
extensive world travel with organizations like ALPHA, but she also has the experience of having previously taught and created all the material for the world cultures course. Frida explains that, in addition to finding new materials on the internet, she “…picked and chose from courses that [she] had taught before…” Because of this she already has a significant resource of materials that are culturally relevant. She is able to select which materials would fit in the new curriculum and with the demographic of her classes, and which would not. Where Frida has a potential database of already curated materials that could respond to students changing cultures, Joan will have to “figure out if there are other resource sites that [she] can go to” and start the process of implementing new lesson plans and then subsequently refining them over a period of time.

A potential solution to this problem, and one that has already been alluded to already, is that of teacher collaboration. Recall that all of Joan’s previous instances of CRP were created with or obtained from other teachers. In fact, this was one of Joan’s first impulses when asked about future steps: “I’ll pick some people’s brains about [their strategies] who have taught history…” As it did when Joan first established her independent inquiry assignment, getting material that has already proven effective and engaging in a classroom from other teachers can save teachers a lot of time tweaking and refining assignments. Frida also mentions the importance of collegial collaboration in her suggestions to new teachers interested in CRP:

I would say… look to ally yourself with other educators in your school that are doing that kind of work, whether that's inquiry based learning, whether that's CRP, whether that's equity based education, whatever that looks like. Because I think that teachers working in isolation when doing CRP are doing themselves and their students a disservice to a certain degree, because if all that they're seeing is that pedagogical approach in one subject area, they're not really seeing it in its big picture form…
Not only is this useful advice for teachers just starting out, but it could be particularly useful for teachers transitioning their world history courses from a more Eurocentric approach to a more culturally relevant approach. Not only has it been shown to emphasize best practices, but it also must be restated that CHY4U is a 12\textsuperscript{th} grade elective course. As such, there are a number of schools that do not offer it at all, let alone have multiple sections and teachers. In those schools, there may not be any other teachers with experience diversifying their world history curriculum with whom a teacher could ally themselves. Therefore, as Frida suggested, it could even be a disservice to your students to not actively seek out ways in which other teachers are responding to their classes’ cultures. In any case, though collaborating with colleagues is by no means a novel concept, it is one that the data suggest could help teachers better facilitate culturally relevant approaches in their classrooms.

4.4 Conclusion

In the end, how feasible is it for teachers to cater the content of their courses to the potentially ever-changing cultural demographics of their classroom? It depends on several factors. For example, in the first section of this chapter I discussed how teacher philosophies and mindsets relate to their desires to be culturally relevant in their classrooms. It seems as if much of this is informed by teacher experiences, such as Frida’s global travels. This alone would present CRP as infeasible. Despite her lack of similar experiences, it was shown that Joan still demonstrated a degree of cultural responsiveness, even if she did tend to follow the Eurocentric curriculum of the previous CHY4U course. This section also showed that the Eurocentric curriculum of a course does not prohibit teachers from being culturally responsive if that type of pedagogical approach is part of their philosophy.
The second section focused on actual practices that these teachers used that responded to the cultural demographics of their classrooms. Interestingly, both saw it as a necessity to speak to the cultures that were not present within their classroom’s “windows and walls.” This showed an understanding of CRP that was not present in the literature: the need to be responsive not just to students’ cultures, but also to the cultures that students may encounter. This section also looked at how both instructors use a combination of a thematic and chronological approach to the structuring of their courses. This was shown to help them create the connections between different histories that was found to be important in the literature. This approach was also found to be useful in promoting flexibility in content which allowed Frida to respond more easily to the changing cultures in her classroom. This section focused on the importance and benefits of independent inquiry assignments in world history classrooms. This approach was shown to be beneficial in introducing culturally responsive material in Eurocentric courses, allowing students to pursue their own interests and thus promoting higher levels of engagement, helping students to learn the historical thinking concepts (significance specifically), and helping support any gaps in knowledge that teachers might have. This final section in particular helped lend credence to the idea that it is feasible for teachers to respond to their changing classroom cultures, if not directly through course content than at least indirectly through student inquiry.

The third and final theme of this chapter addressed challenges and solutions to the implementation of CRP. This theme examined what the data suggested was the most significant challenge, that of outdated or level-inappropriate course materials. It was found that both teachers in this study largely abandoned the school’s texts because of these problems and went to the internet in search of better secondary and, more importantly, primary source materials. In this domain, the teachers had various successes identifying useful resources and databases. However,
it was also found that by drawing information from the vastness of the internet, one teacher was better able to respond to the changing demographics of her classroom. It was found that while this approach to course resources may require more work and preparation on the part of the teachers, it does present opportunities for teachers to be more responsive to their student’s cultures than the more static narrative presented in most textbooks. This extra work was also found to be lessened by teacher collaboration and the sharing of useful resources amongst teachers who share similar philosophies and priorities.

The following and final chapter will discuss further implications of these findings on my personal practice and on the wider educational community. It will also propose some areas in which future research could be performed.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This study has sought primarily to answer the question of how feasible it is for teachers to cater the content of a world history course to the cultural demographic of their schools or classrooms. This final chapter will first provide an overview of this qualitative study’s findings. Then it will outline some of the implications of these findings both to the educational community and to my personal professional identity and practice. I will also put forth recommendations as they relate to these implications and suggest directions for acting on some of these recommendations. Finally, I will discuss potential areas for further research that have become apparent through the findings of this study.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance

The first of my key findings speaks to the importance of including student selected inquiry based projects in world history classrooms. This inclusivity allows teachers of courses with lingering Eurocentric biases to introduce more culturally responsive materials, which the data suggests can simultaneously encourage the development of several historical thinking concepts. Another significant aspect of this finding is that this type inquiry based project can allow students to independently explore areas of world history in which teachers may have little expertise.

The second key finding is how the participants understood Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and how this understanding differed from the literature. Both teachers expressed a distinct need to be relevant and respond to not only the various cultures present in the classroom, but also to cultures that may not be immediately represented among their class or even their school.
Though Joan and Frida commented on the increased student engagement that resulted from responding to cultures of their students, both also professed the benefits of exposing students to cultures which they may encounter outside of school. This is not only significant because it suggests another interpretation of CRP in schools than present in the literature, but it also adds to the aforementioned problem of teacher expertise. If cultures beyond the classroom need to be addressed along with those present within the class, a larger breadth of knowledge is needed for a teacher to speak to such a wide array of cultures in a meaningful way.

The final key finding was that the textbooks prescribed to world history teachers are outdated and virtually unusable. Some of the texts available were originally designed for the grade 12 world history course when it had an exclusive Eurocentric focus and are therefore often politically incorrect and culturally unresponsive or irrelevant to many of today’s students. This has forced teachers to turn to the internet for supplementary materials that will better engage their students. This approach was shown to require more time commitments for preparation, however it also permitted teachers to better cater the material to the ability level, interests, and cultures of their classrooms.

5.2 Implications

In this section I will discuss both the broader and more personal implications of my findings. As this study’s primary research question focused on the feasibility of a particular teacher practice (the integration of CRP into the world history classroom), many of the implications in the first sub-section relate directly to teacher classroom practice itself. The second sub-section will discuss the ways in which my findings led me to re-conceptualize elements of my personal professional identity and practice.
5.2.1 The educational community. Both teachers sampled in this study used culturally relevant practices in their world history courses prior to the change in 2015, but the difference in their philosophies affected how much and how often these practices were utilized. Frida centered her teaching practice around equity and social justice and was more likely to seek out and implement culturally responsive practices than Joan who more deeply valued high levels of student engagement and interest. When responding to my interview questions about how they planned on responding to the changes made to CHY4U/C, Joan expressed a desire to increase her culturally relevant practices. Frida, on the other hand, said she would continue to be culturally responsive. This difference has an interesting implication that speaks to the gap between teacher practice and policy and curriculum development. If the Ministry of Education intends to encourage teachers to be more culturally relevant, in addition to changing curriculum guidelines they should also target the development of pre-service teacher philosophies. Doing so could result in more culturally relevant practices being used in courses beyond CHY4U/C and perhaps even beyond history and social science disciplines without necessarily having to broaden the wording in the curriculum to allow for the integration of more diverse perspectives.

Another revelation of this study directly related to teacher practice is the intersectional nature of teacher philosophy and its effect on conceptions of CRP. The breadth of CRPs learning goals and the heavy knowledge base on which the pedagogy relies often see CRP presented in the literature as an all-encompassing pedagogy that requires substantial amounts of teacher focus and attention (Rolheiser et. al., 2011). Among the two teachers interviewed in this study, this was not the case. Rather than exclusively practicing culturally relevant pedagogy, they instead implemented elements of CRP into their already existing practices to develop a pedagogy that was culturally responsive and relevant. The implication here is that even though teachers who
value equity based practices are more likely to focus on CRP, the pedagogy does need not be seen as a hurdle or a roadblock that necessarily requires a complete re-evaluation of a teacher’s core philosophy in order to see it implemented successfully in the classroom. As opposed to the previous implication which focused more on the proactive intervention of pre-service teacher philosophies so as to spread culturally relevant practices across various curricula, this implication focuses instead on in-service Ontario teachers interested in updating their world history curriculum to reflect the recent change. Such teachers can implement elements of CRP into their current philosophies and achieve some degree of cultural relevance in their classrooms and their lessons without having to start from nothing. This could encourage other teachers who have yet to incorporate elements of CRP to consider giving it a try.

The final implication for the educational community is the way in which the findings illuminate both an understanding of CRP that reflects aspects of multicultural education and, therefore, how CRP has broader application when used intersectionally with other pedagogies. This relates specifically to the research sub-questions: if teachers focus on their own classes’ cultural demographic, how will classes with less diversity receive a different historical understanding? When questioned about how they saw CRP working in classrooms with little cultural diversity, both Frida and Joan provided an understanding of CRP that differed significantly from the literature. CRP is often conceptualized as a response to a student’s individual identity and personal cultural background, often focusing on cultures that are marginalized in our educational system and practices. Both Frida and Joan showed an intersectional understanding of CRP that reflects aspects of multicultural education more broadly. While understanding the value of CRP in its traditional sense, Frida and Joan also argued that students must also be exposed to that which is “beyond their own windows and
walls” in order to develop an understanding and an awareness of cultures which they may encounter (particularly with an understanding of Canada’s multicultural nature). This suggests a certain impracticality to CRP when used in isolation from other pedagogies. Instead, it is best used intersectionally with other pedagogies to provide students with the fullest and most valuable educational experience.

5.2.2 My professional identity and practice. Though inquiry-based learning has already made its way into the Ontario curriculum documents for Canadian and World Studies, the correlation between this style of learning and CRP is one that will have implications on my future practice. Primarily, my research has led me to re-conceptualize the importance and value of inquiry based projects in the history curriculum, particularly with the consideration of student choice. This approach stands to foster two particular benefits, allowing students to pursue their own interests, whether those interests are couched in their own cultures or not, and buffering teacher expertise. However, there are also interesting implications for how this could re-appropriate systems of power within the classroom by turning learning into a more collaborative experience. It is my hope that by carefully organizing a course where students conduct their inquiry in tandem with the regular course instruction, learning can become less of something that is done to the students and become a more powerful and informative collective experience. This forced the reconceptualization of CRP from its commonly viewed position as a teacher-centered strategy. Furthermore, this approach holds the potential to reaffirm the cultural identity of students while simultaneously increasing levels of engagement and helping to create the global connections that form the basis of world history education.

My research has also allowed me to more fully appreciate the importance of teacher collaboration as a way to not only share effective lessons, but also to share effective culturally
responsive practices. Both Frida and Joan proclaimed best practices are not developed in a vacuum, especially when it comes to content that may be unfamiliar. Drawing upon and working with other educators to develop plans that work within a given culturally responsive mindset have been shown to increase the degree of cultural relevance in a classroom. I plan on collaborating with future colleagues and using other teacher sharing resources (social media, etc.) to develop my own professional practice. The first of the recommendations in the following section is directly related to teacher collaboration and the problem of resources for CHY4U/C.

5.3 Recommendations

The first recommendation I would make on the basis of my findings is for world history teachers to participate in the creation of a database of accessible, culturally relevant, and diverse resources. One of the challenges that arose out of this research was the difficulty in finding level appropriate resources that would allow teachers to teach beyond the culturally constraining, outdated textbooks. Both Joan and Frida explained how turning to the internet was the best solution for locating better resources but that this approach stands to be rather time consuming. In the interest of both saving teachers prep time and working towards the creation of better and more culturally responsive lessons through collaborative development, I am proposing a properly indexed, user-friendly and accessible database. Teachers would be able to draw on this database to gather materials that would allow them to respond to the fluctuating cultural demographics in their world history classrooms. Understandably, the nature of such a project would require a degree of funding to achieve the user-friendly interface (required to reach more teachers), keep the index accurate and up-to-date, and to become widespread enough that a large enough number of teachers are using it and contributing to it. However, the fact that this is a world history
education database (as opposed to a Canadian history database, for example) allows for this project to transcend Ontario and even Canada to become a global effort. In the meantime, I would alternatively recommend teachers take advantage of some already well-established resources that educators have coopted for their collaborative purposes, such as Twitter and Pinterest.

The second recommendation is to attempt to cultivate philosophies that value cultural relevancy and responsiveness in pre-service teachers. Having a mindset that values these things can go a long way to creating more culturally responsive classrooms as it has been identified that this factor above most is responsible for the proactive inclusion of various perspectives in the classroom. However, the way in which Frida cultivated this mindset – through extensive world travel – is certainly not an approach that is feasible for all pre-service teachers. Therefore, I can see two possible avenues for the achievement of this recommendation.

The first is to include CRP instruction into subject-specific teachable courses in teacher training institutions. Pedagogies taught in teacher training programs contribute to the development of a pre-service teacher’s philosophy, so introducing CRP as well as its challenges and benefits alongside traditional approaches in subject-specific courses stands to be the most effective approach to influence pre-service teachers to use it in their practice. This way teachers could be exposed to both practical and theoretical elements of the pedagogy and could put them into practice during practicum placements.

Another way in which this mindset could be cultivated would be through less extensive, and therefore much more feasible, travel opportunities for pre-service teachers. It is important to note that these travels would have to be with the express purpose of cultivating a more culturally aware and responsive mindset. While there are already plenty of issues concerning the
administration and organization of student teachers into their more local practicum placements, even providing the opportunity for some teachers to travel – and perhaps even teach – abroad would allow for deeper cultural understandings. Arguably, such teaching experiences will not necessarily prepare teachers for North American teaching contexts, so these experiences would need to be coupled with local teaching placements as well. Not every pre-service teacher can travel away from home, just as many recently certified teachers are unable or uninterested in teaching abroad, whether due to financial restrictions or personal ones. One possible solution to this would be to rely on collaborative networks and partnerships, such as the one previously proposed, to help teachers share their experiences and the lesson ideas developed therefrom. Although the first recommendation of cultivating teacher mindsets is perhaps the more feasible of the two, the data from this study suggests that the latter has the potential to be more effective.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

Further research into CRP and world history education should be focused on student experience. The restrictions placed upon this study by the MT program have limited the participants to currently practicing teachers. While gathering the perspective of these educators and determining the practical application of CRP in world history classes has proven to be valuable, the students who are exposed to this material and style of teaching must also be studied to determine how the material is being received. Research could examine how this recent change in the curriculum and implementation of culturally relevant practices in the classroom could affect student success and the affirmation of their identities.

A possible research study would utilize a mixed methods methodology and involve several CHY classes across several boards. The study would involve pre- and post-course phases
through which students complete surveys as well as interviews. The questions in these data collection processes would address to what degree their identity was affirmed through their exploration of world history; if their curiosity or interest in particular elements of world history were met; how engaged they were with the material; and what their final grade was in the course. This research could help to determine which teacher strategies are most effective and provide platforms from which other teachers could learn and adopt strategies into their own teaching.

5.5 Concluding Comments

This final chapter has sought to emphasize this study’s key findings, extrapolate implications from these findings, and propose some recommendations as well as some areas for further research and suggestions for what form that research could take. This has all been done in the hopes of answering the primary research question of this paper: how feasible is it for teachers to explicitly cater the content of their world history classes to the changing cultural demographics of their classrooms? A teacher’s personal philosophy and their access to resources will significantly impact their ability to implement CRP in their classrooms. The findings of this study would suggest the first hurdle a teacher must overcome if they were interested in being more culturally relevant is the time-consuming process of locating and implementing additional resources to supplement course textbooks which tend to be woefully outdated. However, it has also been determined that a teacher is unlikely to dedicate the requisite time that this would require if they do not consider equity and cultural responsiveness to be part of their teaching philosophy.

That being said, one of the implications of this research was that teacher practices do not need to become wholly culturally relevant in order for elements of the pedagogy to be integrated
into the classroom. There is a much more practical middle ground where teachers can still respond to changing demographics while not having to fully re-evaluate their philosophies. It was one of my recommendations to make this approach more accessible for teachers through the development of a carefully indexed, user-friendly database filled with resources that would have the potential to seriously reduce the amount of preparation time and to further support teachers with their commitment to CRP.

While the proposed approach to world history education is not impossible, this research has made it clear that there is much work that remains to be done. This is why the primary area for further research proposed involved the examination of student response to CRP in world history classrooms to determine whether this work is worth the effort. The data does confirm that CRP has the potential to increase levels of student engagement, however further exploration of the contextual student benefits would help to further validate the proposed approach.

In the meantime, there are approaches available for interested teachers before this kind of research is conducted and before potential databases are created. Independent student-selected inquiry projects that work in tandem with the new curriculum have been shown to allow for students to feel as if their cultures are being included while simultaneously allowing teachers to have areas or cultures explored in their classroom of which they may not have in depth expertise. CRP can seem like a daunting teaching style to implement considering the time investment and amount of outside research required to cater to a specific classroom demographics. The potential of this practice to validate an element of a student’s identity which may not have previously been addressed in school and to allow them to share this with other students is a compelling reason, in my opinion, to at least make the effort.
References


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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview

Date:

Dear ______________________________,

My Name is Josh Hofland and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on the benefits and challenges of adopting a culturally relevant approach to the newly amended Grade 12 World History curriculum. I am interested in interviewing teachers who have experience with the Ontario history curriculum and/or experience using culturally relevant pedagogy in their secondary level classrooms. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

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

Sincerely,
Josh Hofland

Course Instructor’s Name: Dr. Arlo Kempf
Contact Info: arlo.kempf@utoronto.ca

**Consent Form**
I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.
I have read the letter provided to me by Josh Hofland 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 to what degree the content of a world history course should be catered to the cultural demographic of the class. It seeks to determine whether culturally relevant practices are an appropriate and practical tool for optimizing student engagement and understanding. This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on history instruction and culturally relevant pedagogy. I want to remind you that you may refrain from answering any question, and you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audio recorded. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Section A: Background Information

1. How many years have you been teaching? How many at this school?
   a. What other schools have you taught at?

2. What grades and subjects do you currently teach? Which have you previously taught?

3. How would you describe the level of multiculturalism among the students in your school? Among the teachers?
   a. Has this affected the way you approach lesson planning?

4. (If applicable) What got you interested in CRP?
   a. Has it always been a part of your teaching philosophy or did something influence you toward it?

5. (If they teach CHY4U) Were you aware of the change made to the CHY4U curriculum in 2015?

6. What courses or parts of a course do you find most interesting or most enjoyable to teach?

Section B: Teacher Perspectives/Beliefs

7. What periods, events, or cultures are the focus of your history courses?
8. (If they teach CHY4U) How do you determined which events/regions/people in 500 years of World history are significant enough to include in your course?
   a. (If not), How do you determine which events/regions/people you include in your history course(s)?

9. To what degree have you noticed a Eurocentric bias in the history curriculum?

10. What does Culturally Relevant Pedagogy mean to you? How would you define the term?

11. What value, if any, do you see in using CRP in a history classroom?
   a. What value is there in using CRP for students who have traditionally been reflected in the curriculum?

Section C: Teacher Practices

12. What approach is most important to you when planning a history course (i.e. Thematic, Chronological, and Regional)?
   a. (If they teach CHY4U) What areas have you traditionally explored in your world history course?

13. Have you ever/Do you take into account the culture of your students year to year when planning your courses?

14. How have you incorporated CRP into your classroom and what responses have you noticed from students?

15. What changes, if any, did you make to your course plan when CHY4U was changed in 2015?
   a. (If no changes were made)

16. How have the instructional materials available to you affected your instruction of the course?
   a. Will the fact that there is no new text book for the CHY4U course make it more difficult to plan?

Section D: Supports and Challenges

17. What are some challenges you have faced in implementing CRP in your classroom?
18. How do you think CRP could be implemented in a classroom that was not culturally diverse?

Section E: Next Steps

19. What advice would you give new teachers who would like to incorporate this into their own classrooms?

20. Do you have any future goals either in terms of CRP or with the new CHY4U curriculum?

Thank you for your participation in this research study.