

Yugoslavian Refugee Children in Canadian Schools: The Role of Transformative
Leadership in Overcoming the Social, Psychological, and Academic Barriers to
Successful Integration

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Abstract

In Canada, there have been limited studies focusing on refugee children from war-torn countries and their transition to Canadian schools. Even less documentation exists about refugee children from the former Yugoslavia. Using a transformative cross-cultural leadership lens, this study explores the barriers and challenges refugee children from former Yugoslavia faced as they transitioned to the Canadian educational system, as well as strategies children and their teachers used to ease this transition. This study is a systematic literature review that is also informed by the researcher's refugee narrative. In this paper, I argue that there is limited literature concerning former Yugoslavian (e.g. Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian, and Slovenian) refugee children who migrated to Canada between 1995 and 2015. Exploring the challenges and effective strategies used in easing this transition for former Yugoslavian refugee youth can facilitate the integration of Syrian refugee children currently entering Canadian schools. While cultural backgrounds and experiences of Syrian and former Yugoslavian refugee children differ, language barriers, lack of support, and lack of refugee children-related policies in the Canadian schools remain universal challenges for all refugee students. Based on this literature review, I identified the challenges encountered by Yugoslavian refugee children in the Canadian classroom and presented individual strategies teachers used while working with this group of children. This paper contributes to the debates on how to effectively address the 'sink or swim' phenomenon many former Yugoslavian children experienced while demonstrating that the transformative cross-cultural leadership approach can be a powerful strategy in integrating refugee students' in schools and societies.

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my parents, Milan and Nevena. Their courage, work ethic, and dedication inspire me each and every day to be better, to work harder, and to keep swimming - always.

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CHAPTER ONE: RESPONDING TO REFUGEE CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Canada, more than ever before, has come to be known as a land of refuge for those fleeing their homelands due to war, economic hardship, and environmental disaster (Government of Canada, 2016a). The Syrian refugee crisis has put immigration and refugee concerns at the forefront of international headlines, demonstrating the significance of immigration and refugee issues for Canada. As of November 2015, Canada has received 29,207 Syrian refugees (Government of Canada, 2016a). This number is mainly comprised of women and children, and in this context, the education of refugee and immigrant children has become an important topic for the Canadian schooling system (Government of Canada, 2016b). Canadian media outlets have voiced concerns regarding the lack of preparation and guidance teachers have received in order to meet the various needs of refugee children integrating into Canadian classrooms. In 2015, for instance, Suzanne Dufresne of CBC News interviewed Jan Stewart, a noted University of Winnipeg researcher and former school teacher. Stewart (2011) stated: "Teachers are telling me they don't know how to respond [to refugee students' needs]. They don't know what they should be saying [to refugee students]" (Dufresne, 2015, para. 4). This growing concern and ambivalence is also noted by Ryeburn (2016) of the BC Teachers' Federation, who stated: "MANY TEACHERS [sic] have many questions...what resources and strategies can teachers use to best support their new students, especially in the face of cuts to English language learning (ELL), specialist teachers, and support programs" (Ryeburn, 2016, para.1).

Canadian educators and media are concerned about the lack of support and strategies available to help newcomers transition to Canadian schools (Dufresne, 2015;

Ryeburn, 2016). Providing teachers with support and training in effective strategies is critical because refugee children have difficulty in transitioning to their host country after migration (Bursztyn & Korn-Bursztyn, 2015). The degree of difficulty in transitioning is influenced by a myriad of factors, including the social, psychological, and academic changes youth experience in the settlement process (Gagné, Shapka & Law, 2012). Research shows that the current educational system is unequipped to facilitate this transition and combat the social and psychological issues refugee students face as they enter the system. Refugee students are often left to ‘sink or swim,’ and very few strategies have been implemented in the educational system to support them to the degree they require (Gagné et al., 2012). As a result, many refugee students struggle to excel overall, and these factors contribute to academic underachievement (Bhabha, 2014; Kilbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef & Kattar, 2000; Kondic, 2014). Furthermore, the rather contested and ambiguous nature of the term *refugee* presents another set of challenges for refugee children entering the Canadian educational system. According to the United Nations 1951 UN Convention (1993), a *refugee* is defined as:

any person, who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself/ herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his/her former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (p. 1)

While this definition does provide some categorization and definitive guidelines, it is rather generalizing in its nature and does not reflect the complexity of differences within the refugee category such as ethnicity, age, race, gender, religion, education, and physical ability (Ratković, 2014). More specifically, the definition presented here does not take into account the challenges refugee children face, and the impact these challenges play in their integration. According to the United Nations High Commissioner (1994):

The 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol (Relating to the Status of Refugees) set standards that apply to children in the same way as to adults:

1. A child who has "well-founded fear of being persecuted" for one of the stated reasons is a "refugee,"
2. A child who holds refugee status cannot be forced to return to the country of origin (the principle of non-refoulement), and
3. No distinction is made between children and adults in social welfare and legal rights. (p. 4)

The definition of *refugee child* is broad, and does not recognize the multiplicities and intersectionalities of social constructions. This includes, but is not limited to, ethnicity, age upon arrival, class, race, gender, religion, education or lack thereof, and physical ability (Ratković, 2014). These factors play a significant role in refugee children's integration process, but are not considered when teaching and integrating refugee children in Canadian schools. Nonetheless, both definitions provide a foundational understanding of how members of the UN define a refugee, and presents a starting point for a systematic exploration of refugee children's experiences in Canadian schools. Refugee children from the former Yugoslavia faced numerous issues when they migrated

to Canada and were placed in the Canadian educational system. The children encountered multiple barriers and experienced unique challenges because of the significance and sensitivity surrounding their ethnicity and identity (Kondic, 2011). While cultural backgrounds and experiences between Syrian and former Yugoslavian refugee children differ, language barriers, lack of support, and lack of policies are challenges both refugee groups shared. Former Yugoslavian refugee children came to Canada after experiencing a violent civil war. Many witnessed bombings and brutality, which increased their risk of developing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Kondic, 2011). Syrian refugee children are arriving from a war-torn country, where many have witnessed violence and bombings which are likely to increase the risk of PTSD, trauma, and nightmares associated with war. In addition, both were portrayed negatively in Western media, and attacked by NATO members during the wars (King, Welch & Owens, 2010; Parenti, 2000). It was especially difficult for former Yugoslavian children to identify positively with Canada because it was one of the nations that actively participated in the bombings of Yugoslavia as a NATO member (Kondic, 2011). As a result, building trust was a challenge many refugee children faced because they felt, “a sense of betrayal and even resentment towards Canada” (Kondic, 2011, pp. 32-33). Similarly, Canada has played an active role in the Syrian civil war, and as a result, many Syrian refugees coming to Canada feel a sense of distrust and ambivalence towards this nation (Ryeburn, 2016).

The similar challenges between these two refugee groups point to the increasing need for not only longitudinal studies on the integration of former Yugoslavian refugees in Canadian schools, but also the need for conducting a systematic literature review on effective strategies that were used in Canadian schools to help both Yugoslavian and

Syrian refugee children integrate into the system. Such studies are imperative in providing educators and society with the tools and knowledge of how to facilitate the integration process for refugee students while decreasing the likelihood of marginalization and othering. The literature demonstrates that many former Yugoslavian refugees, particularly the Serbian population, experienced marginalization and othering due to stereotypes and demonization in Western media outlets (King et al., 2010; Parenti, 2000). It is thus fair to assume that many Syrian refugee children will likely face marginalization and othering as well. Many former Yugoslavian refugee children entered Canadian schools with little to no English skills, and that is also a key barrier for many – if not, for most – refugee children from Syria (Ryeburn, 2016). Throughout the examination of the existing literature, it is evident that teachers still do not know how to respond effectively to refugee students. Furthermore, it is difficult to determine what kind of implications the transition process currently poses for Syrian refugees because very little documentation exists on how Syrian refugee children have integrated into schools – and Canadian society – to date.

As a refugee child from former Yugoslavia myself, I am passionate about this topic. My refugee story presents a perfect example of experiencing a challenging integration process in the Canadian classroom. I was placed in a classroom to ‘sink or swim,’ and experienced marginalization and othering due to my Yugoslavian origin. Increasingly, literature has focused on the marginalization and othering visible minority refugees experience as they integrate into Canadian classrooms (Henry & Tator, 2000). While this is a significant area of study, I was fascinated by the experiences of people from the former Yugoslavia who describe themselves as being ‘white Europeans,’ but

once in Canada, they are viewed as being ‘not white enough’ (Ratković, 2014). It is the intent of this paper to explore the racialization and marginalization of Yugoslavian refugee children in Canadian schools, and identify the ways in which racialization and marginalization might be addressed or prevented.

In this paper, I review the existing literature from 1995 to 2015 exploring the barriers and challenges former Yugoslavian refugee children encountered, the socio-psychological implications they endured, and the supports and strategies they found beneficial in the process of learning, settling, and belonging in Canada. It is evident from this literature review that former Yugoslavian refugee children are underrepresented in the literature, and more studies need to focus on this topic. Although Yugoslavian refugee children are not entering Canada at a substantial rate at this time, this is still a highly relevant topic. The Syrian refugee crisis, in some ways, mirrors the underpinnings of the political breakup of Yugoslavia. The Syrian refugee crisis is the result of further U.S. imperialism (Petrowski, 2015). There is also the question of the complexity of one’s experiences and identities, and its impact on the integrative process. I explore Yugoslavian refugee children’s experiences of transitioning to the Canadian education system. To understand former Yugoslavian refugee children’s experiences in the Canadian elementary and secondary classroom, I explore the following four research questions:

1. What challenges did former Yugoslavian refugee students encounter during their transition to the Canadian elementary and secondary classroom in the past two decades (1995-2015)?
2. What strategies did the refugee students find beneficial during this transition?

3. What were the social, psychological, and academic implications for refugee children who transferred from former Yugoslavia to the Canadian elementary and secondary classrooms?
4. What is the role of transformative leadership in creating a supportive learning community for refugee children attending K-12 schools?

The findings of this research can thus inform educators, school administrators and the educational sector as a whole about the specific barriers that former Yugoslavian refugees have faced and strategies they found beneficial as they transitioned in the Canadian educational system, enabling them to create and implement effective strategies for alleviating such barriers for Syrian refugee students currently entering Canadian schools. This is an important area of study that requires further exploration as globalization, environmental disasters, and political and economic instability produce unprecedented numbers of refugees and immigrants. There is a need for our education system to be better prepared to respond to and support the increasing numbers of refugees entering the Canadian elementary classroom.

Historical Context

The Balkan region of Eastern Europe has faced great instability since the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of US dominance, with the culmination of the Yugoslav civil wars from 1991 to 1995. Throughout the wars, the North American media characterized Yugoslavian people as primitive savages (King et al., 2010; Ratković, 2014), with the conflict being portrayed, as Batinic argues, as “a product of ‘centuries of ethnic hatred,’ of irreconcilable ancient and ahistoric ethnic, religious and cultural differences, and of an everlasting tribal mentality, all of which were alien and

incomprehensible to the ‘rational West’” (as cited in Ratković, 2014, pp. 4-5). As Parenti (2002) notes, Western media outlets were far from critically independent and objective, justifying NATO’s destabilization and violent interventions in the breakup of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, in 1999, the U.S. and NATO allied members (Canada included), “launched round-the-clock aerial attacks against Yugoslavia, dropping twenty thousand tons of bombs and killing upwards of three thousand women, children, and men. All this was done out of humanitarian concern for Albanians in Kosovo- or so we were asked to believe” (Parenti, 2002, p. 9). As Ratković, (2014) noted, the continuous bombing operation targeting Serbia destroyed civilian bridges, housing complexes, media stations, hospitals, and the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. Furthermore, “Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International accused NATO of deliberately breaking international law and committing war crimes by targeting civilians and using cluster bombs as well as bombs laced with depleted uranium” (Ratković, 2014, p. 5). In reality, motivations behind this continuous bombing operation were not ‘humanitarian’ in nature; rather, the intervention of NATO in Yugoslavia, as Parenti (2002) argues, stemmed from:

...a desire to put Yugoslavia ... under the suzerainty of free-market globalization...

The goal of these politico-economic elites is to transform the world into a global economy under the tutelage of the transnational corporations, backed by the unanswerable imperial might of the United States and its allies. A key component of that global strategy ... entails capitalist restoration within the former Communist countries. (pp. 2-3)

With NATO’s bombardment, and the aftermath of the civil wars in 1999, four million people became refugees in the now torn-apart regions of Yugoslavia (Kondic, 2010;

Ratković, 2014). These people fled to various countries in Europe and North America. Between the period of 1995 to 2000, Canada accepted approximately 390,000 refugees from former Yugoslavia (Kondic, 2010). From 1995 to 2000, between 21-28% of refugees who entered Canada were from this region (Statistics Canada, 2003-2004), with nearly two-thirds of this statistic settling within Ontario (Kondic, 2010). This large influx of refugees faced many social, cultural, psychological, and academic challenges as they transitioned to Canada, and certainly, the greater impact was made on the Yugoslavian refugee children entering Canadian schools for the first time.

I was one of the approximately 390,000 refugees who fled to Canada after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. I arrived at the age of 4 (turning 5 one month after my arrival) with my parents, and my 5 month-old brother, who was the youngest passenger on the plane. We came with two luggage bags, and no winter clothing in a snowstorm in January of 1997.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The creation of inclusive classroom communities across schools is an important factor in not only improving an educational organization, but also creating more equitable environments which ensure that each child succeeds, regardless of his or her circumstances. A commonly applied leadership model in schools facing a rapid influx of changing demographics is *transformative leadership*, which has proven to be a valuable approach used to critique systemic inequities within schools in order to improve student achievement. To understand transformative leadership theory, the original theory from which transformative leadership stemmed needs to be explored.

Transformational leadership was arguably one of the earliest leadership approaches in organizational theory to contain a moral and ethical tone (Shields, 2010). Burns (1978), the original proponent of transformational leadership, described the approach as an ongoing process, not a set of specific actions performed by a leader. Thus, transformational leadership operates as a process through which, “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (p. 20). While transformational leadership focused on creating an effective and harmonized organizational structure, transformative leadership, “begins by ... challenging inappropriate uses of power and privilege that create or perpetuate inequity and injustice” (Shields, 2010, p. 7). While transformational leadership focused on the internal workings of an organization, transformative leadership begins by recognizing that wider socio-political events affect a person’s ability to perform and achieve within the educational organization (Shields, 2010). Transformational and transformative leadership have similar roots. Both focus on having a *transforming* effect as the end result; however, transformative leadership is centered on pedagogical leadership (as opposed to instructional leadership) and the relationship dynamics of the participants involved – not on power and leadership in the traditional sense. Due to its pedagogical focus, transformative leadership is well-suited for application in the Canadian classroom.

Using transformative leadership enables educators to form close relationships with their students; this relationship and engagement inspires students to work toward social, psychological, and academic success. Refugee youth who are encouraged to participate in academic and social activities are more likely to acquire an engaged attitude and become leaders themselves (Roxas, 2012), improving their academic and social

achievement and potential (Kondic, 2011; Stewart, 2011). The transformative leadership approach advocates active participation and engagement with one another, while working toward a unified goal (Shields, 2010). Burns' (1978) transformational leadership approach was originally a departure from the traditional view of leader-focused management theory to a more modern approach of process-focused management. Even though Burns' (1978) model of transformational leadership was a dynamic approach at the time of its inception, it remained leader-focused and was geared towards the business sector – not education. Burns' (1978) transformational leadership is primarily mentioned in this paper because it features two modern characteristics of the transformative approach: ethics and morality. As Burns (1978) concluded, “[Transformational leadership] becomes *moral* in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both” (p. 20). At the educational level, transformative leadership can create more effective and positive outcomes when teachers, administrators, parents, and children work together to break down barriers and marginalization. While Burns' (1978) model is beneficial in setting the foundational understanding of transformative leadership, it is focused on business enterprises, not educational organizations. The foundational concepts of Burns' (1978) model have been adapted by Shields (2003) and Nur (2012) to create practical equity in Canadian educational organizations through transformative leadership.

Characteristics of Transformative Leadership

Based on Burns' (1978) model, Nur (2012) examines three components of becoming a transformative leader that would benefit educators working with students and parents to create an equitable community. The three components Nur (2012) outlines are:

an *ethic of care*, an *ethic of justice* and *dialogue and understanding* (p. 47). Nur's (2012) three components help distinguish key aspects of the transformative leadership model. This set of principles are useful to educators who wish to take formal equity policy framework and establish practical equity in school environments.

Ethic of Care

The first component, an *ethic of care* (Nur, 2012), emphasizes the establishment of a deep emotional connection between leaders and students. Noddings argues that school leaders must interweave care into their leadership approach and encourage teachers to adapt this approach as well (as cited in Nur, 2012). Teachers can demonstrate their ethic of care by starting discussions with students in order to gain an understanding of the individual child's social, academic, and psychological needs (Nur, 2012). Furthermore, Cox (2007) concluded that genuine trust is required between the school community in order to build a solid moral and ethical foundation.

Ethic of Justice

An ethic of justice is the second key component of transformative leadership that works to motivate and encourage refugee and immigrant students as they integrate into the Canadian school system (Nur, 2012). Transformative leaders who work to create a school where the collective interests of the community are emphasized motivate and encourage refugee students who previously experienced marginalization to feel accepted and supported in their school communities. The ethic of justice permits student and parent voices to be heard, thus working to eliminate marginalization, subordination, and the perpetuation of the hidden curriculum (Jay, 2003; Nur, 2012).

A key component of the ethic of justice in Nur's (2012) work is for leaders to promote, "discussion of a multicultural curriculum ... [and] focus not only on ways to promote an understanding of different cultures with a school but also ... involve the historical and current conditions that have contributed to unjust relationships between different ethnic groups and cultures" (p. 47). Transformative leadership takes place through reciprocal learning, motivation and encouragement. Both leaders and followers interchange power and responsibilities, motivating and inspiring one another.

Dialogue and Understanding

The third characteristic Nur (2012) outlines is *dialogue and understanding*, which improves inclusion in schools and builds strong relationships amongst teachers, parents, administrators and students. Dialogue and mutual understanding not only enable traditional assumptions to be questioned, but it establishes authentic relationships between community members, which is a key component in creating a strong support system for refugee students. This component of transformative leadership encourages educators to consult with refugee students and ask for their input in the creation of effective strategies that will better support their needs as they integrate into the system.

Using the transformative leadership framework in the context of education, Nur (2012) defines transformative leadership as an approach that, "seeks to improve schools and turn them into socially just democratic environments for schools to attend to the diverse needs of all students" (pp. 42-43). Transformative leadership is grounded in the values of enhancing equity, respect for diversity and encouraging civic responsibility, while promoting the need for cultural competence and personal freedoms (Nur, 2012).

Shields (2003) has adapted transformative leadership to specifically target newcomer refugees in North American schools, naming it the *transformative cross-cultural model*. This model specifically works to improve problems of inequity due to power, class, social and ethnic constructs by providing a framework for principles to implement in their schools (Nur, 2012). This approach borrows the original components of Burns' (1978) transformational leadership model by encouraging teachers to become fully immersed in the authentic and moral cause of creating truly inclusive schooling. First, the model urges teachers to gain cultural competence, and recognize that systemic discrimination and marginalization exists. Second, educators must work toward encouraging differences within schools. As illustrated by Shields, a transformative cross-cultural leader must set the example for the rest of the community when it comes to making ethical and equitable decisions (as cited in Nur, 2012). When making decisions, Shields urges educators to ask themselves the following questions before following through with action:

1. Who benefits, and who is disadvantaged?
2. Who is included, and who is excluded?
3. Who is privileged, and who is marginalized?
4. Who is legitimated, and who is devalued?
5. To whom are we listening, and who are we not hearing?
6. What data are we using for our decision making? (as cited in Nur, 2012, p. 39)

Building on the transformative leadership theory, I will use a transformative cross-cultural leadership approach in this study because it encourages cultural competence of educators, parents and the wider community as a whole. The

transformative cross-cultural leadership approach also aids in dispelling deficit perspectives of refugee students by making sure ensuring that their voices are heard, and breaking stereotypes associated with the refugee label. When educators are culturally competent and ask themselves the above questions before acting, they decrease their probability of categorizing, separating or stereotyping refugee students. Many refugee children struggle in school if they are not included or encouraged to participate in the classroom, both academically and socially (Stewart, 2011). Furthermore, the transformative cross-cultural model allows leaders to see the cultural contexts in which they are submersed, and to understand how to create a unique culture within their own classroom that promotes diversity and creates authentic equity – not only through formal policy and written guidelines, but also through effective strategies and practices (Nur, 2012). The cross-cultural model, as Shields argues (2003), raises awareness of how marginalization, discrimination and othering is upheld and perpetuated, while recognizing a school as a heterogeneous entity, an entity built on collaboration, practical inclusion, and mutual respect (as cited in Nur, 2012). Roxas (2012) suggested that the use of transformative leadership was a key factor in creating stronger relationships within classrooms. The author demonstrated how motivation – the key component of Cox’s (2007) model of transformational leadership – was effective in creating close relationships and directly improved the integration and academic achievement of refugee students. Roxas (2012) stated, “by creating classrooms and schools where students and parents feel a part of a community, educators help students feel valued in their school experiences and, as a consequence, feel more motivated to do well academically” (p. 2).

The transformative cross-cultural leadership approach allows scholars to examine the complexity and intersectionality of culture, societal norms, dynamics of power, relationships and ethnicity that are challenges and obstacles to refugee students who enter the Canadian educational system. The transformative cross-cultural leadership approach is an effective approach to adopt in the investigation of the issues former Yugoslavian refugee students encountered because it examines the intersectionality of these issues, and how they impact the integration process of refugee children. Encouragement leads to motivation, and motivating refugee children encourages them to motivate themselves, while also enabling them to motivate others (Coll, 2012). Transformative leadership has shown to lead to a greater sense of belonging which was found to be a key factor in decreasing the likelihood of feeling othered and marginalized (Kondic, 2011; Roxas, 2012). The transformative cross-cultural model encourages educators, parents, administrators and communities as a whole to gain cultural competence in order to decrease the marginalization of refugee students (Peček, Čuk & Lesar, 2008). This could help ease the transition and combat the inequity Syrian refugee students currently face as they enter the Canadian educational system. The transformative cross-cultural model also works to dispel deficit thinking about refugee students, breaking stereotypes associated with the refugee label.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

In this chapter, I present the methodological approach I used to explore the experiences of Yugoslavian refugee students transitioning to the Canadian education system. My methodological approach was three-fold: conducting a systematic literature review on the topic, reflecting on my experiences of being a Yugoslavian refugee student

transitioning to the Canadian educational system, and engaging with writing as method of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Review of Databases

I reviewed two databases and one search tool with the search terms “Yugoslavian and refugee children and Canadian schools,” “Eastern European and refugee children and schools,” and “Eastern European and refugee children and Canadian education” from the years 1995 through 2015. The databases searched were JSTOR and ERIC. I also used the University of Toronto Library search tool that includes the following databases: EBSCO, Engineering Village, Compendex, Geobase, Factiva, Google Scholar, JSTOR, OVID, Medline, Embase, PsycINFO, Social Work Abstracts, Project Muse, ProQuest, ERIC, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, MLA International Bibliography, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, PsycINFO, Sociological Abstracts, Worldwide Political Science Abstracts, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. The University of Toronto Library search tool was used because it is interdisciplinary and compiles information from a variety of sources including books, articles, book reviews, dissertations, theses and government documents. Using this tool allowed me to see the overlap of both available and reliable sources. It also allowed me to see that there is a limited amount of information on this topic, demonstrating a gap in the literature.

I also used bibliographic branching and referrals from other researchers to expand my search results. *Bibliographic branching* is the examination of bibliographies of articles and books that were gathered during the database search (Aquino-Sterling, 2009). Bibliographic branching was used because limited sources were available on the topic. Thus, this allowed for a comprehensive scan of available literature to demonstrate

the kind of topics that have been researched. First, I reviewed the journal article title, and examined the key words that were highlighted in the search phrase for relevance. Then, abstracts of articles were read to ensure further relevance to the search topic.

I reviewed only peer-reviewed journals and required that authors use the terms “Yugoslavia” “refugee children” “school” and “Canada” somewhere in the article. This database search was challenging due to the contested nature of the term “Yugoslavia.” The term might have had negative connotations for some research participants due to the highly politicized and intertwined nature of ethnicity and geographical location in the Balkan region. Therefore, participants in some studies might not have labelled themselves “Yugoslavian,” but rather a Serb from Croatia, or a Croatian, or a Macedonian. To address this challenge throughout the search, “Yugoslavia” was interchanged with the terms “Bosnia,” “Croatia,” “Macedonia,” “Montenegro,” “Kosovo,” or “Serbia” to locate research studies that used the names of the former Yugoslav republics (i.e. provinces) or regions rather than the term “Yugoslavia” to describe research participants. Exchanging the term “Yugoslavia” for “Eastern European” as part of the key terms in the search produced a greater number of results, thus demonstrating that the term Yugoslavia is contested. The exchange of “Yugoslavia” for “Eastern European” also ensured a comprehensive search which allowed a myriad of perspectives and encounters to emerge.

In addition to peer-reviewed journal articles, I also incorporated books in the systemic literature scan and review. Where journal articles did not comprehensively examine effective strategies for facilitating refugee children’s transition to the Canadian educational system, books were used. Some books were found to be more comprehensive

than journal articles. Books helped answer the research questions and built on emerging and prevalent themes and theories presented in journal articles. While journal articles presented numerous seminal theoretical works, books deepened my understanding of theories, such as transformative leadership, the political and historical context of former Yugoslavia, and general challenges and barriers refugee children face when they arrived to Canada. In combination, books and journal articles allowed for a comprehensive understanding of available literature and highlighted gaps in the literature. Examples of some books used were *Long and Winding Road* (Tyyskä, 2001), *Supporting Refugee Children* (Stewart, 2011), *Managing Two Worlds* (Kilbride, Murphy, & Anisef, 2003), *Racism in Canadian Education* (Henry & Tator, 2010), and *Immigrant Children and Youth: Psychological Challenges* (Bursztyn & Korn-Bursztyn, 2015).

I reviewed studies that pertained to formal education (e.g., in classrooms and schools), informal education (e.g., ESL programs, after-school programs, and international language and heritage school programs), and the experiences former Yugoslavian refugee children have encountered when they entered the Canadian educational system. Due to limited literature about former Yugoslavian refugee children, the educational experiences encountered by Eastern European refugee children who entered the Canadian school system were also examined. The review focused on this type of data in order to ascertain the social, psychological, and academic experiences of refugee children and adolescents from former Yugoslavia who transitioned to the Canadian educational system between 1990 and 2000. I wanted to explore a range of perspectives, challenges, barriers, attitudes, and experiences, approaches and theories in

the available literature that specifically examined the experiences of former Yugoslavian refugee children entering Canadian schools.

The first database that was searched was JSTOR. The terms “Yugoslavian,” and “refugee children” and “Canadian schools” garnered 34 results. I examined the titles and abstracts of these, and found that only three articles examined refugee children from Yugoslavia or pertained to this topic in particular. Of these three, only one article discussed the struggles, barriers, challenges and strategies used to help refugee students in Canadian classrooms and throughout the integration process. Using the University of Toronto Library search tool with the same search word terms, I garnered 98 results. Of these 98 results, 10 results were found to be relevant to this literature review. Three results overlapped with JSTOR, demonstrating the comprehensive nature of the search. Using ERIC with the terms “Yugoslavian and refugee children and Canadian schools,” I garnered zero results. I then broadened the search to “Eastern European and refugee children and schools” and obtained three results. One result was applicable to my review because it discussed the barriers Albanian and Roma refugee children face as they enter a new school, the effective strategies educators have used and a successful case study in a Canadian school. Using the University of Toronto Library search tool, I searched “Eastern European and refugee children and Canadian education,” and obtained five results. Of these five results, one result examined Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian, and Roma refugee children experiences in European educational institutions. All five results were based on European educational systems and, therefore, were indirectly related to the literature review.

In addition to conducting a systematic review of available literature, I also kept a research journal throughout the process of writing this paper. My rationale in keeping a reflexive research journal was two-fold. First, I am a refugee from former Yugoslavia who was placed in a Canadian school to ‘sink-or-swim.’ I found that, as I read through the existing literature, I had some critiques of my own regarding what has been researched – and what has not been researched. Second, I also wanted to present journal entries to illustrate some challenges, barriers and strategies that were omitted in the existing literature.

My narrative and my research journal aided in identifying common themes across the literature. I wrote my refugee narrative before I conducted a systematic literature review to document my personal perspective of the transition process. In my narrative, I discuss how I felt a lack of belonging, isolation, and othered. These were the themes I also found throughout the literature, thus demonstrating the lack of understanding and support refugees face when they integrate into Canadian schools. My narrative also confirms a lack of strategies being available for facilitating refugee children’s transition and integration. This is a significant finding because the literature, too, points to the fact that not many strategies or a comprehensive approach has been created to help refugee children who are entering the Canadian school system. My research journal allowed me to pick out memories or moments that demonstrate the kind of trauma children experience as refugees from war-torn countries. It also demonstrates how class activities can trigger unpleasant memories, which is a key theme in the literature, specifically in Stewart’s (2011) work. Using three data sources strengthened my overall study by not only confirming what is presented in the literature, but also expanding on the existing

knowledge in the literature by acknowledging the barriers, strategies and challenges I faced in the Canadian classroom. The research journal also strengthened the writing process by guiding my questions, clarifying my understanding of the topic and narrowing my focus as I wrote my first research paper.

Limitations of the Study

Due to time constraints, I did not conduct my own empirical study using participants, which is the biggest limitation of my paper. Invaluable knowledge could have been gained if I had conducted my own research using a mixed methods study. This would have enabled me to formulate my own ideas and themes examining the challenges, barriers, and strategies former Yugoslavian youth encountered as they entered the Canadian schooling system. The purpose of conducting a literature review was to also produce knowledge about these barriers, challenges and strategies, and bring awareness to the limited information available, which generated recommendations for future research. No study demonstrating transformative leadership in Canadian classrooms was available on which to draw conclusions and further recommend transformative leadership as an effective approach in easing the transition for refugee students entering the Canadian educational system. Furthermore, because there were no Canadian studies examining transformative leadership, there were consequently no assessments of its implementation. Although there were studies examined in this paper discussing American-based findings regarding transformative leadership, they cannot be simply imported to Canadian schools. The literature review would have been strengthened if Canadian studies explored transformative leadership and its effectiveness in minimizing marginalization, isolation and helping ease the transition for newcomer students entering

Canadian schools. Thus, conclusions of U.S studies exploring transformative leadership were interpreted through patterning, allowing for the personal interpretation of results. Over-generalization of the former Yugoslavian refugee experience could have occurred as a result. Finally, a limitation of the study was my own lack of teaching experience. Due to my limited teaching experience as a current graduate student and my limited exposure to effective teaching practices as a refugee child, I found it difficult to imagine innovative strategies to assist teachers when working with refugee students. Professional teaching experience would have added greatly in producing innovative strategies when working with refugee youth, and would have further strengthened my paper.

Risk of Bias

As a refugee child who fled from former Yugoslavia in 1997, I have a vested personal interest in this topic. Based on my experience and this systematic literature review, I feel that I was one of the refugee students who were placed in the classroom to either ‘sink or swim’. I was unsupported by my first grade teacher. I felt isolated, othered, and was only friends with children who shared a similar background and story to my own. In writing this paper, my intention was also to share my story. This, I believe, adds greatly to the limited body of literature about refugee children from the former Yugoslavia and offers a rich and detailed account of what I experienced first-hand as a refugee growing up in the Canadian educational system. However, my experience could have led me to seek results that discussed similar experiences to my own experience. This could have influenced the design of my research questions, and could have guided the findings I uncovered. To control for bias – and to demonstrate the complexity and myriad of encounters people experienced through a single war in one geographical region – I

searched for the transition experiences of refugee students coming to Canada from all the regions of the former Yugoslavia. This meant that my search for literature covered Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. This does not mean, however, that I found literature pertaining to refugee students from all these regions, but shows that an attempt was made to have balanced coverage and ethnically-diverse experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCHER'S POSITIONING

School and I never really did get along. The first experience I have of school was during daycare in former Yugoslavia. I brought my doll from home to school to share her with my classmates during playtime. My teacher at the time believed it to be a doll that the school owned, and had put her away on the shelf next to the other dolls. I remember seeing the doll sitting up on the shelf and I went to take her. My teacher, believing that the doll was school property, stopped me and scolded me for trying to take the doll home with me. I remember feeling wronged by this teacher, who had taken something that was not hers, and had punished me for doing what she had actually done. In former Yugoslavia, teachers were highly respected individuals who we looked up to as role models. This was my first memory of a teacher-student relationship, and it was quite a negative one. Several weeks after this incident, I ran away from that daycare during recess and walked all the way home. My mom discovered me at the front gate of our home as she watered the plants. I guess you could say I was not the most exemplary student or one impressed by the schooling system. The war soon broke out all throughout Yugoslavia; I immigrated to Canada and I never did get my doll back.

Coming to Canada is a murky memory now; however, I have a few memories and powerful emotions of that time that have stuck with me throughout my life. The first memory I recall is being at the airport in the customs line as both my grandmother and my mother cried. I remember being confused as to why my grandmother and mother were sobbing. I began to realize that we were going far away and that we would not see my grandma for a long time, if ever again. My grandmother repeatedly asked my mother if we would ever see her again or return home. I was afraid because I did not know where I was going, or how we were getting there, and if I would ever see my grandparents again. I was one month shy from my fifth birthday when we arrived to Canada on January 16th, 1997.

The first friend I made in Canada was Aboriginal. We were housing together for two months through a government-assisted refugee program with bunk beds until my parents found permanent housing. Serbian was my first language, and I did not speak English. My Aboriginal friend and I did not speak a lot, but we had an understanding that cannot be described in words. We were friends because we were able to recognize each other's struggle and saw it reflected within ourselves. The human connection was vital and taught me that even if you cannot speak to someone, you can still understand them.

After we settled in Mississauga and found housing, I shortly began first grade at an Ontario public school. One of my only memories of this time was not understanding my classmates or teachers. One particular day, my shoelace had become untied. The bell had rang for recess, and my classmates ran outside to play. I was having trouble tying the laces on my own and struggled to find someone who could help. I came across a classmate who had taken longer to dash out of doors. I began explain the troubles I was

having with my laces, in the hope that he would help me. He did not understand me and it became a game of charades to communicate. I became frustrated and my shoelace stayed untied for the remainder of recess. That was one of the numerous moments when I felt helpless in the classroom. Tying laces and communicating to classmates was something that was so simple, yet so frustrating. I believe I was always a bright and independent child for my age (I mean, I escaped my daycare and walked all the way home at age four, and that takes talent), and not being unable to articulate my thoughts made me feel inadequate, powerless and helpless.

Growing up, I had a strong presence of music around me. I spent the first years of my childhood surrounded by my grandfather and uncles who all played the accordion. I used song and melodies to learn English. The first song I remember learning in English was *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. Since my parents did not speak English at home, the only other ways I learned English were from children's shows on television, and hearing children in my classroom speak to one another. I picked up English fairly fast, and do not remember many struggles apart from the shoelace incident and the few memories I have playing on my own during recess. My classroom environment did not offer much in the way of support. I did not have a teacher (or any person in school) who spoke my mother tongue, nor did I receive any extra attention than other students whose English was their mother tongue. I do not remember my teacher knowing I was a refugee. I do not remember ever speaking to her one-on-one or practicing English with her. She did not provide additional instructions to me. I was not asked if I understood the work that was assigned. My argument here is not that refugee students must receive extra attention and

instruction. I just mean to say that I was not provided any support as a refugee child who did not speak English and was in a Canadian classroom for the first time in her life.

In Grade 1, I spent a majority of recess time alone. I remember everyone had yet again rushed out to the playground. I stood in the classroom and walked around. I remember taking in the boards' contents and projects on the wall, I remember looking at the tables and taking in my surroundings, and taking in desks' locations and classroom space. It was different from the classroom setup I had first come to know in former Yugoslavia. I remember going to my cubby where we kept our shoes and jackets and looked outside the door at the jungle gym. I remember the kids playfully screaming, laughing and playing on the monkey bars. This moment stuck out for me because as they played there, I watched them. I did not join in. I think in this moment I felt a sense of divide between 'them' and 'me.' Those first few months at school were an isolating time for me because I felt othered. Not that my classmates had othered me, but that I just was *the* other. Even though I was white, I lacked a sense of belonging to this school and the surrounding community. It could be argued that I felt this way because these people were unfamiliar to me, the school was new to me, and loneliness and not belonging are natural emotions youth feel when they move to a new place. I would argue that I moved around Yugoslavia on three separate occasions by the time I moved to Canada, and I never felt this sense of otherness or lack of belonging in new schools in Yugoslavia. So was it really me who othered myself? If it was not me, why did I feel this distinction? What was the distinction?

I did not yearn to go to school each and every day because I did not feel that I belonged at school. However, I also did not avoid attending school. I was a naturally

curious individual who wanted to learn, and I simply had no other choice but pick up English at an unusually rapid pace. I believed that if I was able to converse with classmates, I would fit in and belong. As I gained competency in English, I began translating for my parents. I helped them with work emergencies, service provider calls, conversations with neighbours, and the Canadian citizenship test. I bridged this language barrier for my family. My parents supported my schooling both emotionally and financially. I did not have to work and attend school simultaneously, and I was always encouraged to work hard at school. Although I received emotional and financial support, my parents were not actively involved in my schooling. For example, they were unable to speak to my teachers because of the language barrier. They also worked long hours, were stressed about job insecurity, and were busy raising my brother. I did not receive help with my homework, nor could they have helped me with acquiring English language proficiency.

I did not make many connections in that first year with people outside of my own culture and ethnicity. Through the refugee assistance-ship program, my parents met other Yugoslavian refugees. We were all moved to the same building in the Greater Toronto Area. My best friend was a Serbian from Bosnia who lived in my apartment building. She was my best friend because we shared the same cultural background. We did not have the same homeroom in school, but we were able to communicate in Serbian and help each other learn English after school. I felt supported by this friendship because we faced similar re-settlement struggles together. Our parents were friends because they too understood each other's struggles, and could help each other whenever support was needed. They could speak to each other without having to translate their conversations to

English. Having a friend network helped during this re-settlement process because we felt understood and felt that we belonged somewhere during this transition.

My Grade 2 teacher was the first educator that made me feel that I belonged, that I was supported, and that I could come to her if I ever encountered a problem. We were her first class, and I could tell she cared about us; as a child, I felt her genuine nature and how she tried to make her class inclusive in every way. One thing that she included in her teaching was an exercise entitled *Multicultural Story Share*. I shared my journey of immigrating to Canada, Serbian folklore, the language school I attended, and pictures of my childhood from Yugoslavia. My classmates were fascinated by my story. My teacher had also been intrigued by my story and my classmates asked additional questions about my culture. This was the first time I felt a sense of belonging to Canada. It was also the first time I felt my classmates' positive curiosity about my cultural background. This kind of activity helped me feel accepted, and enabled me to further integrate into the Canadian educational system.

CHAPTER FIVE: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study aims to critically examine the social, psychological and academic challenges many refugee children from the former Yugoslavia faced during their transition to Canadian elementary and secondary classroom between 1995 and 2015. In addition, the classroom-based pedagogical and mental wellness strategies educators have used and found beneficial during this transition will also be explored. Based on the literature review, it is clear that the social challenges of transitioning to Canadian schools is rather undocumented and inconspicuous in terms of how it plays out on the school yard, within schools and the larger social community as a whole (Stewart, 2011). Psychological

challenges are usually further worsened due to social challenges refugee students experienced. Facing both psychological and social challenges simultaneously contributes to poorer academic performance and overall underachievement for refugee students. While I have broken down the challenges into three main categories (e.g. social, psychological, and academic challenges) for clarity purposes, I am cognizant that none of these factors are isolated; rather, these categories affect one another in multiple and diverse ways, and to varying degrees. Refugee youth have their own set of unique backgrounds, history, predispositions, traits and family influences that impact each child differently. Therefore, many of the implications resulting from social, psychological and academic challenges will overlap. Nonetheless, I have organized them into sets of themes evident throughout the literature starting this review with the most frequently discussed themes and concluding the section with the least discussed themes.

Social Challenges and Their Implication for Refugee Youth

Social support is one of the highest mediators for refugee children and adolescents in creating a smooth transition process to the Canadian school system (Gagné et al., 2012). It has also been discovered that the younger a child is, the easier it is for her or him to transition (Kildbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef & Khattar, 2000; Kondic, 2011). In this section, I present social challenges categorized into three sub themes: *lack of peer support*, *lack of family support*, and *the challenge of adolescence*, with special attention to literature pertaining to youth from former Yugoslavia. I also discuss the role of age in refugee youth's socialization and integration.

Lack of Peer Support

One of the biggest challenges refugee youth encounter in their new country is a lack of peer support. This lack of support is often rooted in diminished pre-exile friend networks and post-exile exclusion or bullying. In a study by Gagné et al. (2012), the researchers used a sample of 733 youths, both new-comers and non-newcomers, to British Columbia, ranging from Grade 5 to Grade 12 from six secondary schools and two elementary schools, including 33.7% of students of European descent. The researchers explored how social contexts (e.g., perception of racial and ethnic differences, linguistic differences and peer support in terms of socializing) impact newcomer youth in comparison to youth who are non-newcomers. The researchers discovered that social support in the form of peer support is a key factor in breaking down barriers and overcoming challenges, such as language and difference in teaching styles, contributing to a healthier mental state (Gagné et al., 2012; Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Rejection by peers increases self-esteem challenges, anxiety and the risk of depression, as well as early school withdrawal and the risk of criminal behaviour (Gagné et al., 2012; Stewart, 2011). This demonstrates that social implications can positively or negatively impact mental health and the academic success of refugee children (Coll, 2009; Kilbride et al., 2000). Overall, Gagné et al. (2012) demonstrate that social support is one of the highest mediators for refugee youth in creating a successful integration process to the Canadian school system.

In her study about former Yugoslavian refugee children and their integration into the Canadian educational system, Kondic (2011) discovered that, “making friends was extremely important to feeling accepted and well integrated” (p. 33). Bullying and teasing

by children at school due to a perceived difference in culture – even something as simple as an ‘unusual North American name’ – sets refugee children apart from the group and contributes to bullying and otherization. Kilbride et al. (2000) also conclude that, “the lack of acceptance by peers can impede the academic performance of a newcomer and be a source of stress” (p. 17). These challenges are further heightened by family stressors and responsibilities.

Lack of Family Support

Family stressors and additional responsibilities create time constraints for refugee youth, thus adding difficulty in dedicating time for establishing friend networks and completing homework and assignments. Omidvar and Richmond (2003) noted:

...stresses of the settlement process experienced by their [refugee youth’s] parents had a great impact on the newcomer youth. Parents who had to work longer hours for lower pay had less time for involvement in family activities, and youth were often obliged to take up correspondingly greater obligations such as staying home alone, caring for siblings, doing grocery shopping and cooking, finding paid employment and translating and interpreting for their parents. (p. 6)

In the excerpt above, Omidvar and Richmond (2003) illustrate the complexity of refugee youth’s lives. Caring for siblings, running errands and translating for parents adds great stress on children because they do not have time to bond with their family or friends. Caring for siblings or finding employment constrains refugee youth’s time for socializing with their peers, which is another important factor of creating stable and supportive friendships (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Wilkinson, 2001). Wilkinson (2001) noted that role-reversal between refugee parents and children often takes place

because children adapt more quickly to a new society than parents do, ultimately forcing children to take on adult responsibilities. Youth reported that, “helping their parents adjust was stressful for them and strained relationships with their parents” (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 107). Added family responsibilities also force refugee children to spend a large amount of time indoors maintaining adult responsibilities rather than playing outside. This negatively impacts refugee youth’s sense of belonging. Non-newcomer children do not share the same amount of familial obligations and, therefore, refugee children often feel different from non-newcomer youth. This also plays a heavy role in producing notions of otherness for refugee students, and will be explored further in the psychological challenges section of the literature review.

Many refugee parents work overnight shifts (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Stewart, 2011; Wilkinson, 2001). As a result, many children go two to three nights without seeing their parents. Receiving help with homework is thus difficult because there are often language barriers preventing the parents from assisting their children in completing the homework or preparing for a test. This often leaves refugee youth feeling helpless, frustrated and unsupported (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). This also has psychological and academic implications, leaving refugee children to fall behind academically.

The Challenge of Adolescence

Kilbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef, and Khattar (2000) – who conducted a mixed methods study on newcomer youth, including youth from former Yugoslavia, aged 16 to 24 who had been educated in Canadian elementary or high schools – discovered that age plays a key role in how quickly and easily youth adapt when they transition to Canadian

schools. The researchers noted that the younger a child is, the easier it is for him or her to transition. This, in large part, is due to the lack of strong social ties younger refugee children could have made during their time in their home countries. This lack of established social relationships enable younger children to create new social ties without being heavily impacted or feeling a sense of loss of initial social ties from their home countries. As a result, younger refugee children are more resilient to social impacts, and, therefore, are less likely to develop mental health issues or suffer academically (Kilbride et al., 2000; Wilkinson, 2001). These conclusions were further posited in the study conducted by Omidvar and Richmond (2003). The authors discovered that age and friendships had a significant tie because the younger the refugee child, the more time he or she has to adapt to Canadian customs, society and culture. Immigrating to Canada at a young age was seen as key in the process of transitioning smoothly to the Canadian elementary and secondary educational system.

Likewise, Kondic (2011) explored the schooling experiences of refugee adolescent youth from former Yugoslavia in Canada and discovered that adolescent refugee students who transitioned to Canadian schools felt more isolated and had a harder time transitioning because they already had well-established social relationships prior to exile. These students reported greater difficulty in making new friends in Canada. Moreover, the students were doubly vulnerable; first, because they entered a new and unknown environment where they had to establish new social relationships and second, they had to come to terms with the loss of old social relationships and a well-established network (Kondic, 2011).

As Gagne et al. (2012) noted, adolescent refugees have a higher risk of experiencing isolation than refugee children, meaning they have a higher risk of experiencing greater psychological and social challenges. Furthermore, “adolescents have a tendency to form friendships based on perceived similarities with others” (Gagne et al., 2012, p. 20). This is a conclusion that was also drawn by Kondic (2011). She points out that the perception non-newcomer students had regarding refugee children, and the ways in which non-newcomer students treated refugee students based on their home countries, had a negative impact on refugee children’s sense of self-identity. Kondic (2011) explains:

Youth would often get questioned by others about the war, not to help, but rather, to taunt and make fun of the youths’ misfortunes. Once in Canada, the youth ... realized that there were many cultural differences both along traditions and customs, as well as simple things, such as having an ethnic name. (p. 33)

Such differences often resulted in teasing and produced notions of otherization. This perception and reception of refugee children (which is often ambivalent in nature) by non-newcomer children within Canadian classrooms is linked to socialization issues and academic underachievement (Kondic, 2011). Evidently, rejection by peers impacts self-esteem, increases anxiety, the risk of depression, early school withdrawal and even criminal behavior, demonstrating the significant role that gaining a sense of belonging and having a supportive family, friends and teachers plays in creating a smoother transition process (Kilbride et al., 2000). If students feel accepted and supported, they are more likely to perform well academically, hence the significance of the social implications many refugees face when they enter the Canadian educational system.

Psychological Challenges and Their Implications for Refugee Youth

Psychological challenges for refugee youth include trauma and stressors from the result of separation from family members, malnutrition and exposure to war crimes and political violence (Birman, Ho, Pulley, Batia, Everson, & Ellis, 2005). In this section, psychological challenges are categorized into the sub themes of *lack of trust*, *lack of belonging*, *unknown triggers* refugee youth face as they enter the system, the ‘*us versus them*’ mentality, and *misdiagnosed children*, with special attention to literature pertaining to youth from former Yugoslavia. The theme of lack of trust was repeatedly discussed throughout several of the works explored in this paper. Kondic’s (2011) research demonstrated that former Yugoslavian refugees have a mistrust of Canadian people due to their experiences in the war. As a result of this mistrust, young children who enter Canadian schools have a difficult time establishing friendships and forming relationships with teachers. Furthermore, the separatist and sense of othering is even greater for former Yugoslavian refugees because of Canada’s participation in the NATO bombing of Serbia (then Yugoslavia). Canada’s position in the war created a deep lack of trust, and perpetuated and upheld a sense of ‘us versus them’, thus impacting not only the socialization of refugee youth, but also contributing to the development of negative and conflicting concepts of sense of self. Lack of belonging was also proven to greatly impact socialization further increasing the stress levels and mental well-being of refugee youth. Misdiagnosis by Canadian educators and assessment practices that do not take into account cultural and linguistic differences also increased psychological challenges and marginalization by peers.

Lack of Trust

A lack of trust had clear effects on former Yugoslavian youth when they came to Canada. This was evident where a male Yugoslavian youth participating in Kondic (2011) study reflected on the war:

[war] made you less trustful, trusting, made you more cautious, made you look for hidden meanings ... I don't think I would have been as mistrusting as with people if there was no war vs. what I am right now, I just I was always looking [sic] for what you mean by what you say. (pp. 51-52)

This lack of trust negatively impacted the manner in which refugee students established friendships early on in Canadian schools. The highly politicized nature of the war made former Yugoslavian youth feel misunderstood by the world at large. As Wilkinson (2000) demonstrated in her study where she interviewed 91 refugee youth from the former Yugoslavia, this lack of trust was also due to how refugee students felt that they were being perceived by non-newcomers. One refugee youth noted, "sometimes a new person from a different country is treated like they're, you know, less. Like they don't have any intelligence, any knowledge of anything" (Wilkinson, 2000, p. 83). Both Canadians and former Yugoslavians displayed an ambivalent and cautious attitude in trusting one another, making it increasingly difficult for refugee students to integrate successfully into the system.

'Us Versus Them'

Refugee youth feel that they do not fit in anywhere and encounter additional transitory problems in comparison to voluntary immigrants (Rummens & Seat, 2003). The age at migration also plays a significant role in the degree and the type of

psychological challenges refugee students face (Rummens & Seat, 2003). Kondic (2011) discovered that, “older youth surveyed seemed to perceive themselves less positively than the younger youth which put them at a greater risk of anxiety, chronic stress, problematic behaviour, depression, and substance abuse” (p. 32). She stated that refugee youth who were exposed to war related trauma in former Yugoslavia were more likely to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Kondic, 2011). For former Yugoslavian refugee children, the ‘us versus them’ notion was strongly felt because, “Canada is an active member of NATO and the fact that these youth witnessed the killing of innocent people during the NATO bombardment of Serbia evoked a sense of betrayal and even resentment towards Canada, once again questioning the process of acculturation” (Kondic, 2011, p. 33). The sense of betrayal and resentment many refugee youth felt was in direct opposition to their desire to ‘fit in’ and ‘belong to’ Canada. This condition generated confusion regarding their sense of self-identity and made it difficult for former Yugoslavian refugees to commit to building strong relationships with non-newcomers. This was especially evident in Kondic’s (2011) study of former Yugoslavian refugees. A refugee male from former Yugoslavia stated:

Honestly I didn’t want to do anything with anybody who wasn’t Serbian when I got here. My problem with Canada was it became part of NATO, as such it was part of all the bombings it was a part of all the pressures from the western nations and it was also part of all the decision making of what was going to happen to my country which I didn’t believe I still don’t believe they had any right to do. (p. 45)

Some refugee students were old enough to understand the impact of NATO on Yugoslavia and the role Canada played within it, making it difficult to create positive

impressions of Canada. Similarly, it was difficult for Canadians to gain positive impressions of refugees from former Yugoslavia. Two out of four of the participants in Kondic's (2011) study did not feel welcome by Canadians. As stated by one participant, this was in large part because of how former Yugoslavia was portrayed in the media. Former Yugoslavians were portrayed, "as some kind of savages, especially with Serbian part of it was even having worse reputation" (Kondic, 2011, p. 45). Canadians were ultimately suspicious of these refugees. This was a challenge many students had to overcome because it weakened their sense of belonging to Canada.

Lack of Belonging

Gagne, Shapka and Law (2012) define a *sense of belonging* as, "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment" [that] helps satisfy an individual's social needs" (p. 18). To clarify, a sense of belonging does not mean to feel a sense of belonging to one particular nation, but as individuals move, they gain a sense of belonging in new communities (Kondic, 2012). Gagne et al. (2012) demonstrate that social support is the number one mediator for young child refugees in the process of a successful integration. The researchers discovered that when refugee students felt a high sense of belonging, the refugee students reported that they were happier, more content, and were generally calmer in a school setting. As a result, a strong sense of belonging had positive implications on well-being, socio-emotional growth, and academic achievement (Gagne et al., 2012).

A study conducted by Omidvar and Richmond (2003) also identified sense of belonging as a key to a smoother integration process for refugee children. The reported

findings from Omidvar and Richmond's (2003) study demonstrated that refugee children felt neither a lack of belonging to their home country or to Canada. Furthermore, they felt a sense of confusion regarding how to gain a greater sense of belonging, adding greater stress on their mental health. Omidvar and Richmond (2003) stated, "refugee youth felt pulled in opposite directions, between what seemed to be irreconcilable values or cultures, and a desire to adapt and fit in to their new homeland" (p. 5). Gaining a strong sense of belonging significantly impacts their well-being throughout the settlement process. Thus, a lack of belonging had both psychological and academic implications, making it a key barrier to a smoother integration that many refugee children reported. A lack of belonging is a barrier to the transition process, as it increases the difficulty in establishing supportive friend networks and relationships with teachers.

Unknown Triggers

Many children from the former Yugoslavia have witnessed brutal violence, especially refugee children from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Kilbride, Murphy & Anisef, 2003). These students have triggers that both parents, and teachers are unaware of. According to Stewart (2011) "a trigger is something that reminds you of an unpleasant event. If you have experienced a traumatic event, a trigger (something presently happening) can bring back the same kind of response that you had when you experienced the traumatic event" (p. 220). This trauma has social, psychological and academic implications for refugee students (Somach, 1995). As Rummens and Seat (2003) note, "the literature indicates that children who have experienced the violence and dangers of war are at high risk of experiencing 'prolonged psychological disturbances, compromised academic performance and various mental health problems'" (as cited in Kondic, 2011, p.

32). Furthermore, Stewart (2011) noted that one refugee student in particular faced several triggers on a regular basis. If he heard a loud noise, it triggered memories of gunshots (Stewart, 2011), and if the student was in a large crowd without friends, he feared being attacked (Stewart, 2011). Historical films about war and attending large assemblies can increase the risk of triggering memories or flashbacks for some refugee students (Stewart, 2011). Many refugee children from the former Yugoslavia can have, “psychosomatic reactions, regressive behaviour, adjustment and psychological problems, over-dependence, grief, fear, sleep disturbance, pessimistic expectations regarding survival, and poor school performance” (Kondic, 2011, p. 32).

Youth, especially those who were forced to flee at the age of 12 and older, were further challenged because they experienced adolescence and the challenges that come with that stage of life as they transitioned to the Canadian educational system. Refugees from war-torn areas must cope with stolen youth. This was especially true for refugees from former Yugoslavia, and is often an overlooked trigger that has psychological implications. In Kondic’s (2011) work, one male Yugoslavian participant stated that he felt as though his childhood was stolen from him:

I do feel that sort of that my youth was in a sense stolen from me because I didn’t get a chance to go through all the steps normally you know elementary school, high school, etc at the end of the elementary school I had to come here and then well I was sad and you’re in a foreign speaking country so you don’t know all the people you just know a handful of them everybody else is a stranger so in that sense I did miss out on a lot. (p. 51)

Coping with these challenges has relatively unknown effects, and the ramifications of stolen youth can trigger certain memories, associations and negative psychological ramifications. However, not many studies have been conducted on the psychological ramifications of stolen youth. The limited literature that has focused on stolen youth demonstrated that it has a significant impact on socialization, mental health and other aspects of a refugee youths' development and integration process (Brochu, Duessing, Houme & Chuy, 2013). For example, Rummens and Seat (2003) discovered that the, "mental health and well-being indicators used ... provided consistent and compelling evidence of the retention of the effects of both primary and secondary Kosovo traumata among surveyed Serbian children and youth two to three years later" (Rummens & Seat, 2003, p. 35). This demonstrates that the psychological challenges are long lasting, rather undefined and affect both the social relationships and academic careers of refugee students who have gone through the stresses of war.

Transitioning to an unknown country during the stage of adolescence increases the probability that refugee youth will experience psychologically challenges as they enter the Canadian school system for the first time. As Kilbride et al. (2000) conclude:

The subsequent adjustments to life in a new country often result in the increased risk of trauma or psychosocial problems, school failure and drug abuse, as well as other delinquent behaviour. James suggests that the early identification of immigrant children at risk for these problems can help school personnel and health care providers plan culturally appropriate and effective interventions. (p.

17)

Misdiagnosed Children

Misdiagnosis and mislabeling of refugee children by educators, administrators and counsellors play a key role in both how refugee children perceive themselves, and is a challenge they have to overcome when they enter the Canadian educational system. Refugee students that performed at a lower level were often misdiagnosed by teachers and labelled with a learning disability that was inaccurate. If refugee students were unable to grasp a concept, time was not given nor taken to comprehensively observe and diagnose the issue the student faced (Kaprielian-Churchill, 1996; Rummens & Seat, 2003). Educators streamed newcomer students into English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, assuming it would solve the issues students were facing (Kilbride et al., 2000). Kilbride et al. (2000) discovered:

...many teachers, health professionals, settlement workers, counsellors, and other relevant persons, [through] inexperience or/and ignorance of psychological distress and changes experienced by newcomer youth, grossly underestimate or minimize suffering, conditions and the personal and behavioural problems of these youth. (pp. 42-43)

Furthermore, current skill assessments, tests and practices have negative academic implications and act as barriers for refugee students because they do not take into account knowledge under different educational systems (Kilbride et al., 2000). This sentiment is also expressed by Tong, Huang and McIntyre (2006) when they discovered that the culture and expectations of the home country are often vastly different from those of the Canadian schooling system. Tong et al. (2006) conclude that due to this, “culturally and linguistically different children are frequently misclassified as having disabilities when

none actually exist” (p. 203). Furthermore, it was discovered through several of the studies that those educators and administrators directly dealing with refugee students at the beginning of their Canadian academic careers have both time and resource constraints (Kapriilien-Churchill, 2003; Kilbride et al, 2000).

Academic Challenges and Their Implications for Refugee Youth

Many academic challenges are rooted in the social and psychological challenges previously presented in the literature review. The sub-themes were difficult to extrapolate, as academic challenges were scarcely formally documented other than a mere mention using a social and psychological lens. However, it is evident that social and psychological challenges, such as a lack of social networks, an increased risk of developing or coping with anxiety, PTSD, depression and greater familial responsibilities, negatively impacts the academic performance of refugee students. The key sub themes found were *lack of comprehensive programs* and a *lack of diverse pedagogical approaches used*. Refugees from war-torn or impoverished countries are often impacted by years of disrupted schooling before entering the Canadian educational system. Disrupted schooling creates problems for refugee students even after they have entered the Canadian educational system because little to no programs are in place for students with disrupted learning to be placed, contributing to earlier drop-out rates. English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are often used as a ‘universal go-to’ by many educators and administrators. This in part, is due to a lack of any other programs being in place that specifically target refugee youths’ needs. Although the ESL program helps refugee students with the language barrier, it also hinders them because many of their problems are much greater than and largely unaddressed by the ESL program

(Kilbride et al., 2000). Pedagogical differences also contribute to poorer academic performance. Current classrooms are a place of diverse populations, with various educational experiences. Many refugee students have been accustomed to a different style of teaching than the styles used by Canadian educators. In several studies, refugee students argue that the teaching styles of educators has been unsupportive in the integration process (Kilbride et al., 2000). While recent policies strongly advocate for equity and multicultural education in the Canadian classroom, policy implementation has been vague, inconsistent and subjective (Mitchell, 2012). This has led much of multicultural education to be additive, rather than integrated throughout the system, pointing to bigger socio-cultural issues and discrimination throughout the educational system as a whole.

Lack of Comprehensive Programs

Refugee children whose schooling was disrupted greatly impacted their ability to achieve and problematized which grade level they were placed in once in Canada. However, many of the studies did not detail the procedure often taken to manage disrupted schooling. As Stewart (2011) noted, disrupted schooling occurs as a result of war, financial hardship and migration. Furthermore, many Canadian schools do not have the resources, nor programs or procedures, in place to deal with students who have gaps in their schooling. The 'pre-beginner program' was designed to specifically target students who have faced disrupted schooling, yet many teachers have stated, "that there is too much bureaucracy for getting into the program and it needs to be a lot more flexible" (Stewart, 2011, p. 71). This program is further problematized because administrators and educators wonder what the appropriate placement is for students who are 16, 17, or 18

years-old and who have little to no educational background. This clearly emphasizes that gaps in the literature do exist and that little to no programs addressing these kinds of issues exist for teachers to use to help refugee students entering the Canadian schooling system.

Many students are placed into ESL program, but ESL does not deal with the larger issues refugee students face. For instance, it is common for refugee students to experience disrupted schooling. It is also common for these students to have little to no computational skills, zero educational experience or literacy skills (Stewart, 2011). Furthermore, while the ESL program does help many students learn English, it has also been found to create further alienation in some cases. Refugee students who have attended the ESL program have stated it is often perceived as ‘uncool’ (Kilbride et al., 2000) by non-newcomers who tease, taunt and bully newcomer students because of their participation in the program (Wilkinson, 2001). As Wilkinson (2001) states, “one-third of all refugee youth reported that students teased or bullied ESL students” (p. 83). This is significant because her study examining the integration of former Yugoslavian refugee youth into the Canadian educational system concluded that, “spending time with Canadian-born friends is believed to have a positive impact on secondary school completion for ... refugee youth ... ESL students without Canadian-born friends were less likely to finish high school” (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 102). This sets off a chain reaction that affects refugee students’ participation in the program. Their participation in the ESL program results in marginalization and othering by peers. As a result of this marginalization and othering, refugee students avoid attending ESL classes, which has negative academic implications. Peer support is one of the highest mediators of

successful integration and academic success. If students are having difficulty establishing a friend network because of their participation in this program, they are less likely to continue with the program and dropout as a result. The study conducted by Kilbride et al. (2000) concluded that, “all of the participants saw ESL programs as something which automatically separates and excludes newcomer students from others in the school who usually make fun of such programs and look at those who go to ESL differently” (p. 44). The stigmatization of ESL has social implications for refugee students, and the psychological challenges these students face are largely unaddressed by English language acquisition. This leaves many refugee students socially and psychologically unsupported.

Lack of Diverse Pedagogical Approaches Used

Kilbride et al. (2000) noted that, “while immigrant youth generally view ESL classes in positive terms, they often find the teaching approaches that are used to be non-supportive of integration” (p. 43). Many of the refugee youth interviewed in several of the studies incorporated in this literature review found that teaching approaches and styles drastically helped or hindered their academic performance. Furthermore, refugee students in the study by Kilbride et al. (2000) said that Canadian teachers frequently used a style of teaching that was disengaging and difficult to comprehend. Teachers who received high ratings from ESL students were those that used both diverse and valuable teaching approaches and intense language instruction (Kilbride et al., 2000). This demonstrates the importance of diverse teachings styles to refugee students. Similarly, pedagogy also presents an academic challenge for refugee students. This is made evident by Kaprielian-Churchill (1996) where she states, “the differences in pedagogy between schools in former countries and those in the host society can be a source of great

frustration for refugee families, especially for those who come from educationally conservative societies” (p. 361). Tong et al. (2006) concluded that many of the administered assessments focused on one style of knowledge that prohibited some groups of newcomer students from demonstrating their knowledge. Teachers must be equipped and prepared to differentiate their instruction and diversify their teaching approaches based on the needs of their classrooms.

Strategies for Successful Integration of Refugee Youth

There are limited empirical studies and literature presenting developed educational strategies or programs specifically aimed to help refugee youth during the transitory process of their migration. This leaves teachers unprepared and unequipped to support refugee students. Based on the literature review, I have compiled strategies and sources that are available to educators, administrators and parents to help refugee students overcome challenges and barriers in the integration process. The strategies are separated into sub-themes entitled *pedagogical strategies* and *mental health strategies*. First, pedagogical strategies for educators of refugee students are explored through the examination of cultural competence, teacher-student relations, clear expectations, and community based support.

The second sub-theme that will be discussed is mental health strategies for educators of refugee students. Youth from former Yugoslavia reported witnessing and experiencing violence during the war. This is why it is important for effective mental health strategies to be explored by teachers and peers together in the classroom. Promoting mental health management and In addition, it is an effective method educators can use to establish strong bonds with students. This strategy would also ensure students

feel comfortable reaching out to an adult if they experience mental health issues.

Promoting mental health management can help de-stigmatize mental health issues and encourage students to be both proactive and vocal about the concerns and issues they face.

Pedagogical Strategies

Cultural competence. Cultural competence plays a significant role in easing the transition of refugee students to the Canadian educational system. An educational organization that developed cultural competence demonstrates:

a clear capacity to integrate cultural diversity into all aspects of its structure and functions. It has a coherent, coordinated strategy or plan to effectively deal with cultural diversity in the community. The system or organization is committed to the principles of social justice, equality, equity and inclusion. Cultural competence is its core business, not an add-on function. (Ngo, 2008, p. 34)

This description ties in with the strategies Tong et al. (2006) developed to help refugee students. When teachers are culturally incompetent, students and their behaviour are easily mislabeled by Canadian teachers because the child's behaviour is seen as wrong or concerning (Tong et al., 2006). Teachers should be aware of the kinds of political, cultural, ethnic and social underpinnings their students experience. Cultural competence allows teachers to develop observatory skills, providing them greater awareness of a child's behaviour. Cultural competence also enables teachers to practice and promote a more understanding and celebratory attitude towards diversity within their own classroom, the school and their community at large. In order to gain cultural competence, teachers must first value diversity. Recognizing the significance and positive effects

diversity can have is a key step in this process. Cultural competence can additionally be fostered by educators who use diverse teaching styles. This positively impacts the diverse student population found within Canadian classrooms. As the National Educational Association (2008) describes:

Culturally competent teachers contextualize or connect to students' everyday experiences, and integrate classroom learning with out-of-school experiences and knowledge. Helping learners make the link between their culture and the new knowledge and skills they encounter inside school is at the heart of ensuring that all students achieve at high levels. (p. 2)

An effective strategy to promote cultural competence is to have the teacher talk to the student to discover the preferred learning and teaching style of the student. While it is significant for all students to be taught using different styles and methods of instruction, the teacher can adapt to a particular student's preferred learning and teaching style during one-on-one lessons if the student is having difficulty with a particular lesson (Roxas, 2012). Learning in different styles allows all students to become adaptive learners. This was concluded in Tong, Huang and McIntyre's (2006) study, as they found that "teachers should be helping pupils to develop competence in other styles. For example, ESL students who prefer visual learning could benefit from training in auditory learning as well" (p. 204). Furthermore, "exclusive use of assessment that focuses on one style of knowledge may pigeonhole cultural groups and therefore deny students new ways to learn and or show knowledge" (Tong et al., 2006, p. 205). The Ministry of Education (2013) has recommended that teachers use differentiated instruction and the universal design for learning (Ministry of Education, 2013). Tong et al. (2006) demonstrated that

many students have a difficult time understanding content due to the style in which it is taught. Language already makes it difficult, but sometimes:

Contrast in styles can negatively affect learning rate and classroom behavior, it is important to determine the learning preferences of recently arrived immigrant students and then teach to that style. Henry and Pepper (1990) recommend that 65% of lessons and activities be presented in preferred learning styles. At the same time, teachers should be helping pupils to develop competence in other styles. (Tong et al., 2006, p. 204)

This is also significant for transformative cross-cultural leadership because it requires educators to develop a deeper understanding of their students in order to encourage and inspire pupils to succeed not only academically, but socially as well. Diverse classrooms are a reality. As such, teachers must be equipped with different teaching methods and styles in order to allow each student to succeed. Tong et al. (2006) state that students who establish a close relationship with teachers are much more likely to academically succeed.

Teacher-Student Relations. Another pedagogical strategy for educators working with refugee students is to build one-on-one relationships with students. Principals should eagerly hire teachers who have experienced *refugeeism* or immigration because they will be more likely to offer support and understand the challenges children face, and how best to help them. Teachers who have experienced refugeeism and immigration can be connected with refugee students in a buddy style system to address any concerns refugee students may have. As Gagne et al. (2012) concluded in their study, “it has been established that the role of the teacher is important to students, not only academically, but

also socially and emotionally” (p. 21). Teacher support on personal and academic levels were found to be even more important more than peer support and socializing. Burszytn and Korn-Burszytyn (2015) concluded:

Academic experiences when associated with negative expectations and stereotypes, may doom not only students’ achievement but also their self-concept. Having teachers who resemble the children’s parents and speak their languages adds credence to their desire for success. But all teachers, regardless of race and bilingual abilities, can play a pivotal role in communicating warmth, acceptance, and high expectations. (p. 108)

Educators can gain knowledge about a particular student’s culture from community cultural centres if they are seeking more information about their traditions to build a relationship. This relationship also helps to create more cohesion throughout the community, and stronger ties between the community centres and the schools. As Tong et al. (2006) note, teachers should, “create mini-schools within larger schools in order to promote a greater sense of community and familiarity among staff and students” (p. 206). Building community and stronger relationships between teachers and students is a key component in transformative leadership, and contributes to academic success. Furthermore, Tong et al. (2006) state that, “getting students to talk about their prior schooling and life in their country will not only help the teachers become familiar with their concerns, but will also provide emotional support” (p. 206). The creation of an open space where students are free to ask questions without fear of judgement should be stressed. As Kondic (2011) notes, “if an immigrant student feels accepted by the teacher as they are learning the language of the dominant culture, while retaining their own

mother tongue, the post-migration stresses seem to be reduced” (p. 20). The teacher can initially approach the student and demonstrate that the teacher is someone the student can go to for support, thus creating a positive and open relationship at the beginning of their educational career in Canada.

Teachers can also learn some elementary words from the newcomer students’ language to encourage bonding. Teachers who have used this strategy have had positive reactions from refugee students (Roxas, 2012; Tong et al., 2006). In both Roxas’s (2012) and Tong et al. (2006) studies, teachers learned common greetings and phrases such as, “hello,” “thank you,” and “goodbye” (p. 206) to help students feel welcomed. Furthermore, as Tong et al. (2006) concluded, “knowing some words in students’ home languages can help make critical intercultural connections that provide incentives to learn the English language” (p. 206).

Clear expectations. Contrastingly, what can also be done are class-wide instructional strategies to create and foster an open and supportive classroom environment. First and foremost, several sources stated that educators who maintained high academic expectations from their refugee students would foster and promote academic success (Burszytn & Korn-Burszytyn, 2015; Kapriellian-Churchill & Churchill, 1994; Kondic, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2013; Tong et al., 2006).

An effective strategy to help integration is the maintenance of concise and consistent behavioural expectations (Stewart, 2011). Educators should practice reinforcing positive behaviour in a verbal manner. Teachers must be specific in the behaviour they reinforce. Rather than vague praise, such as, “good job, Jane,” educators should be specific. For example, “great job tucking in your chair, Daniel” (Ministry of

Education, 2013). This specific praise of a behaviour provides the student with positive feedback about the type of behaviour that is acceptable in the Canadian classroom. This is also reinforced by Stewart (2011), who discovered that setting clear and high expectations of refugee students helps them focus on attaining specific goals. Teachers' belief in the student fosters motivation and persistence in the student to overcome and achieve despite the challenge or barrier the student is facing (Tong et al., 2006).

Community-Based Support. Teachers should inform parents of the support service resources recent refugees have access to. As mentioned at the outset of the paper, recent refugees found being partnered with other newcomer youth helpful for their integration. If this was not an option in the classroom, the student can also be paired up with one or two non-newcomer youth, as this have been shown to positively impact the academic achievement of refugee students (Tong et al., 2006).

Churches provide support and provide a space where people of similar religious or cultural backgrounds to come together. This enables refugee youth to discuss the challenges they face with those who are more likely to understand these challenges and offer helpful suggestions. Establishing culture clubs in schools promotes diversity, fosters student awareness and provides students with an outlet where they can talk with students of similar backgrounds and circumstances (Tong et al., 2006). Furthermore, as Tong et al. (2006) conclude,

Getting students to talk about their prior schooling and life in their country will not only help the teachers become familiar with their concerns, but will also provide emotional support. Highlight special holidays, birthdays ... and discuss ... similarities, and differences existing between the home and host cultures. (p. 206)

The above excerpt provides some specific and practical examples of establishing stronger relationships between teachers and students, and how community centres can be used as a resource for teachers, and a tool for students to ease the integration process.

Mental Health Strategies

Promote Mental Health Management. Refugee children are at a higher risk of developing depression, anxiety and stress compared to youth who have not experienced the brutality of war (Stewart, 2011; Wilkinson, 2001). Therefore, reducing the stigmatization surrounding mental health is a key to overcoming psychological challenges refugee students face during the integration process. Teachers should provide students with general information on warning signs of developing mental health issues and coping mechanisms to alleviate these symptoms.

In *Supporting Minds* (2013), the Ministry of Education provides educators, administrators, teachers and community members with simple but beneficial methods in promoting positive mental health in refugee youth. These strategies include time management strategies to complete homework and assignments on time, and study approaches that could benefit every students at an early age. The document is organized in two major sections. The first section discusses mental health problems and the strategies educators use to support students experiencing mental health issues. The second section examines specific mental health issues students can face such as, general stress, anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This section provides educators with knowledge in identifying students who may be coping with a mental health problem, and helps teachers offer the student appropriate information about services available to them. The purpose of the *Supporting Minds* (2013) document is to

promote positive mental health in schools across Ontario, to help teachers identify students who are struggling due to a mental health problem, and to connect students to beneficial services.

Overall, the *Supporting Minds* (2013) document provides numerous strategies educators can use based on the type of mental health issue a student is facing. If a student expresses apprehension about open-ended questions, educators should use multiple-choice questions for testing (Ministry of Education, 2013). *Supporting Minds* (2013) provides several other strategies for educators working with refugee children coping with stress, anxiety, PTSD and depression-related symptoms, and would be beneficial to educators seeking to foster a positive supportive classroom environment to further support refugee children.

In *Supporting Refugee Students* (2011), Stewart provides detailed exercises for teachers to support refugee and immigrant students using a holistic approach to relieving psychological challenges and mental health issues. Stewart (2011), who conducted a study interviewing teachers, parents, and principals that work with refugee youth, discovered similar challenges that these students faced upon arrival to the Canadian educational system. She provides effective strategies in the form of lesson plans that include drawn, written and reflective exercises which have been proven to help children work through trauma, stress, anger, depression and anxiety. These strategies are not intended to be used as substitutes for counseling or therapy but, rather, to provide support in a classroom setting and help students affected by war transition to the Canadian school system. The lessons are meant for children to complete individually, or in small groups during class hours. While some newcomers should seek counseling or therapy options,

Stewart (2011) stresses many students simply do not know of the services they have access to, nor wish to seek counseling. These exercises serve to encourage refugee students to trust the school system, to understand the role that counsellors play, and to be aware of the additional support they have at their disposal if they wish to seek it (Stewart, 2011). This resource serves as a significant tool for teachers if exercises to help support refugee students are required. These are similar to the approaches the Ministry of Education (2013) developed and encourage educators to use in *Supporting Minds*.

Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature review focused on exploring and answering the initial research questions asked in the introduction of this paper. The literature review made it evident that there are several gaps in the literature. Very little documented research currently exists on former Yugoslavian refugee children regarding the barriers they faced, the challenges they experienced and classroom-based strategies educators used and found to be effective in working with former Yugoslavian refugee children. The former Yugoslavian population who migrated had immigrated at a rapid pace and is comparable in size and pace to the Syrian refugees currently entering Canada. It would be invaluable to know the kinds of barriers, challenges and implications former Yugoslavian refugee children faced. This would prepare teachers with the knowledge and tools to assist future refugees.

It is evident that social and psychological challenges are well documented areas of research available on refugee students. This is likely because refugee students are a troubled population or are perceived as being such. Therefore, this area of study is disproportionately more explored than the academic challenges or even those that have

proved resilient to these challenges has been explored. The studies that were readily available used a deficit approach in assessing the experiences of refugee children and their transition to the Canadian educational system. Very few studies examined refugee students who were resilient and ‘swam’ instead of ‘sank’ in the educational system. Many studies employ a deficit lens in their analysis of refugee students, and this, perhaps, is the reason why so many social and psychological challenges are well-documented, while success stories were difficult to find. This also is a key contributing factor to the persistent stigma and stereotype of refugee settlers. Researchers focus on mending refugee children, instead of establishing or researching effective strategies to support refugee students in their academic journey (Taber, 2015). Challenges exist for refugees of former Yugoslavia, and are explored in this paper with the intention of alleviating the stigma associated with the label *refugee*, and to help educators construct a toolkit of effective strategies when working with refugee students having difficulty in educational settings. It is also significant to note that it was my intention to explore academic challenges for refugee youth from former Yugoslavia; however, I was unable to further develop them through subthemes, demonstrating clear gaps in the literature.

CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Research identified the strategies for supporting, encouraging and including refugee students in the Canadian elementary classroom (Bishop, 2010; Kondic, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2013; Roxas, 2012; Stewart, 2011; Tong et al., 2006). However, no research identified whether these strategies have been implemented, nor if they are effective in Canadian schools. Furthermore, the literature did not identify whether many of these strategies helped refugee students feel included, supported and less discriminated

against within their new Canadian classrooms. Working with the available literature, the review offers information on the kinds of hardships these students faced and the social, psychological and academic implications these barriers and challenges posed, while calling for more research in this field. Changing demographics within Canadian classrooms are a reality. As such, these changes need to be reflected in our classroom practices (Peček et al., 2008). Teacher preparation programs need to inform future educators of the kinds of challenges newcomer youth face as they enter Canadian schools, and the strategies that help students overcome these challenges. This would reduce the risk of students developing or experiencing anxiety, depression and other mental health problems, thus positively impacting their academic achievement.

Policy implementation is another key area that needs improvement. Policy actors have established formal policy that encourage equitable schooling through the extensive creation of the multicultural education platform and the “Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario School” policy (Mitchell, 2012). However, the policy implementation and evaluation is at best inconsistent and additive, rather than integrated throughout Canadian schools (Jay, 2003). Formal policy must be consistently implemented and evaluated to ensure that target goals are being met and achieved. No research has examined the degree of effectiveness of the Ministry’s *Supporting Minds* (2013) document, nor other documents that discussed strategies for educators working with refugees. Longitudinal studies would improve the available knowledge pertaining to the challenges refugee students faced as they entered Canadian schools, and the impact refugeeism had on their integration to inform policy actors, educators, administrators and parents.

Finally, it was clear that when components of transformative leadership were employed, they positively impacted the academic experience of refugee students. This demonstrates that transformative leadership, if implemented throughout Canadian schools, would positively impact the integration process for refugee students. The preceding section provides several recommendations based on the conclusions drawn from the challenges and strategies found within the literature review.

Transformative Leadership

The literature review demonstrated that strong relationships between students and teachers, children and parents, administrators and teachers, and teachers and parents were a key factor in overcoming several challenges and barriers former Yugoslavian refugee children faced when they integrated into the Canadian educational system (Coll, 2012; Kondic, 2011; Roxas, 2012; Tyyskä, 2001; Stewart, 2011). Thus, transformative leadership likely could have helped former Yugoslavian refugee students integrate into the Canadian educational system, and can also help current refugee children entering Canadian schools.

Motivation and encouragement were seen as key factors in helping students establish and maintain positive self-perception (Dailey, 2009). Furthermore, encouragement through a positive perception of different cultures and customs former Yugoslavian students received from their teachers helped them to overcome barriers and the social and psychological challenges they encountered in the Canadian classroom. Encouragement and motivation also translated to high academic achievement (Coll, 2003). This aligns with Stewart's (2011) recommendation to teachers to, "encourage students to use their experiences to advocate for change either in schools or in their

community” (p. 291). Former refugee children who were once ‘followers’ became ‘leaders’ to novice refugee children in the classroom by using their experiences of transitioning to ease the transition for novice children (Stewart, 2011). Furthermore, Stewart (2011) discovered that teachers who had been immigrants or refugees were highly motivated to work with those of refugee and immigrant origin because it inspired them to find new approaches for working with refugee students. As Stewart (2011) states, “for the most part, the outcomes of this reciprocal learning kept the adults motivated to continue working and it provided encouragement that what they were doing was meaningful” (p. 178). In Nur’s (2012) work, encouragement and motivation are key components of the ethic of justice in which transformative cross-cultural leaders encourage the creation of spaces where dialogue can take place, promoting problem-solving, teamwork and stronger bonds within the school community between teachers and students. Thus, the components of transformative leadership are key to a smoother integration of refugee children in the classroom – even if they were not formally recognized in the literature as components of the transformative approach.

The literature demonstrated that dialogue, integrative thinking and collaboration can be effective approaches to use when developing strategies to facilitate refugee children’s integration in Canadian schools. Teachers who listened to the concerns and comments of refugee students positively impacted the student socially and academically (Coll, 2012; Stewart, 2011; Tong et al., 2006). Dialogue and mutual understanding are also key steps in overcoming the deficit thinking and biases about refugee children that currently pervade the educational system. Teachers and administrators must actively question, seek and challenge the biases they hold about

refugees by providing refugee youth with opportunities to speak out in the classroom (Nur, 2012; Stewart, 2011). When educators are culturally competent and ask themselves the questions Shields (2010) outlined in her work, educators are less likely to categorize, separate and stereotype refugee students. Transformative cross-cultural leadership promotes the exploration of the kinds of marginalization refugee students face, and in particular, the marginalization former Yugoslavian refugee students faced. Once the challenges are explored, educators can produce effective strategies that can be used to ease the transition, and create inclusive and equitable environments.

Students who feel that their teachers care reported feeling motivated and encouraged to learn (Nur, 2012). Stewart (2011) states that, “when students do share about their past, listen. Listen actively and give them your undivided attention, paraphrase what you hear them say, ask for clarification if needed. Thank students for sharing their stories or personal experiences with you and keep them confidential unless safety is a concern” (p. 292). In Nur’s (2012) study, two components of transformative leadership, *ethic of care* and *dialogue and understanding*, proved to be major contributing factors to academic and social improvement and integration. As Nur (2012) concluded in her interview with a refugee student, when asked what helped her adjust to school in North America, “Anab mentioned that without the care and support that she had received from...teachers, she would not have been successful in school” (p. 96). Furthermore, the teachers and administrators created a culture of care which contributed to student academic success. This was summarized by another refugee student who concluded that, “the administrators were involved in whatever students were doing. For instance, if we succeed in something, the administrators would come and visit us in the

classroom. If a student has a problem with something, he or she would turn to the administrators and seek their support” (Nur, 2012, p. 96). It is evident that the key components that comprise transformative leadership can bring about a positive and effective improvement in overcoming and easing the challenges newcomer students face.

Transformative leadership would foster a strong sense of community and would work to improve the conditions of schools for each and every child, regardless of their origin or circumstance (Wyper, 2014). The strategies explored by the Ministry of Education, in the *Supporting Minds* (2013) document and the recommendations Stewart (2011) shares in her work on working with refugee children are transformative in nature. For example, The Ministry of Education (2013) recommends that educators and refugee students collaborate on assessment practices and strategies that the student is comfortable with. This provides the educator with information about the student’s strengths, learning ability, and achievement level, while the student sets concrete goals they can work towards achieving. Furthermore, test scores and the overall integration process has improved when teachers worked with students to set progress goals, and provided detailed feedback to the student (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Transformative leadership provides refugee students with opportunities to lead, allowing them to support one another and advance their own skills, thus positively impacting their socialization skills, self-confidence, and academics (Coll, 2012). While some effective transformative strategies were documented, these studies were on transformative leadership adapted in American schools. Therefore, although much has been conceptualized and written about transformative leadership, this framework has yet to be evidenced and researched in real-life Canadian settings (Shields, 2010). Research

focusing on transformative strategies being practiced in Canadian schools is required to measure whether the transformative leadership approach can help Canadian refugee and immigrant students. Although some educators were evidenced to be using strategies that could be seen in transformative leadership, the degree of implementation and the effectiveness of these strategies has yet to be uncovered.

Teacher Preparation Programs

A key recommendation as demonstrated in the literature would be to adequately equip teachers with effective strategies in teacher preparation programs along with providing teachers additional professional development days to strengthen their current knowledge and practices (Stewart, 2011; Tong et al., 2006; Wilkinson, 2001). Teacher candidates should be required to attend workshops and conferences specifically pertaining to issues of both immigrant and refugee populations and the growing diversity in Canadian classrooms. These workshops and conferences should specifically target the cultural, social, political and economic challenges refugee and immigrant children face as they enter the Canadian schooling system. Once challenges are discussed, barriers and effective strategies can be examined to prepare teacher candidates for the issues they will face in the classroom.

Refugee students stressed that perceived teacher support is of high importance to them both academically and emotionally (Gagne et al., 2012). It is evident that cultural competence and understanding international issues were areas that need to be emphasized in teacher preparation courses if we wish to improve the equity in the Canadian educational system and create more community based leadership approaches (Coll, 2012; Roxas, 2012; Stewart, 2011; Tyyskä, 2001). Educators teaching ESL programs need to be

conscious of the different methods that help or hinder their students' ability to learn. Educators must be taught a variety of approaches and diversify their instruction to help meet the needs of their students (Kilbride et al., 2000).

Throughout the literature, it was clear that depression, anxiety and PTSD negatively impact academic achievement (Kondic, 2011; Stewart, 2011; Wilkinson, 2001). Many refugee students are unaware of the resources available to them and where to seek professional help (Stewart, 2011). Newcomers and non-newcomers are unaware of the coping mechanisms and techniques they can employ to deal with general stress in a healthy manner. In Appendix A, I present two exercises I created for classroom-based instruction to help educators and students discover stress relieving activities according to the sensory preference of the student. The exercise is a holistic approach to identify coping mechanisms they can use to promote a healthy mental state. Many students are unaware of the coping strategies available to them. Providing students with the knowledge to cope with general stress would greatly improve their settlement process. This knowledge would benefit non-newcomers with general stress relieving strategies to incorporate in their daily lives. Although teachers do not have the means to help diagnosis and treat mental health issues, they are able to equip students with support services that are available to them if they experience depression, anxiety, PTSD or other mental health issues. Finally, educators need to be aware of warning signs, and observe students closely to determine whether additional support or counseling is required for students (see Appendix A).

Focus on Policy Implementation

While formal policy states that classes are equitable, this has not been the reality in Canadian schools according to the experiences of newcomer youth. Banks (2003) stated, “the primary goal of multicultural education ... [was that] ‘all students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in an ethnically and racially diverse nation and world’” (as cited in Jay, 2003, pp. 2-3). This is also one of the primary goals of PPM No. 119, the *Supporting Minds* (2013) document, and of transformative leadership. Ultimately, these formal policies are weak in their implementation, and contribute to the perpetuation of social inequality, marginalization, and otherization. This is attested by Jay (2003) who concluded that, “although some significant advances have been made in adding multiethnic content to school textbooks and curriculums, multicultural education remains on the margins rather than at the center of educational philosophy and practice” (p. 4). In policy development, refugee concerns are much the same. While policy has been developed, very little has been done to ensure or even recognize how both equity and multiculturalism in the classroom has been implemented. Equity and multiculturalism are very much tied to refugeeism and immigration because Canada’s elementary and secondary school population continues to diversify – yet many newly minted policies are not implemented or adopted by the educational system coherently, consistently, and adequately. Similar to PPM No. 119, the strategies established by the Ministry of Education (2013) in the *Supporting Minds* document have similar implementation and assessment issues. Once these strategies are incorporated into the classroom, no records indicate the degree of implementation, nor is an assessment conducted which examines the effectiveness of the strategies and whether they were

positively received by teachers and students. In order to establish and strengthen these policies, policy actors need to assess the degree of implementation and effectiveness of strategies that are being used to help refugee children with the transition process.

The informal components of transformative leadership that have been used in the literature demonstrate that when educators and administrators work together and engage in work that can be *transforming* in nature, it produced equitable changes in schools and contributed to the improvement in the academic success of refugee students. Thus, the theory of transformative leadership must inform administrators' practice help create socially just environments in the Canadian educational system. Furthermore, teachers would benefit to learn more about this leadership approach and how it could improve their ways of working with refugee students during additional professional development days, workshops, and conferences.

Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal, empirical research needs to be completed with former Yugoslavian populations (and other refugee populations) to learn from this populations' experiences. Furthermore, these studies need to focus on how refugee youth overcame challenges and barriers, and how the strategies that educators used – or did not use – impacted the refugee youth's academic careers. Longitudinal studies focusing on former Yugoslavian refugees who entered the Canadian educational system as youth and transitioned into the Canadian workforce would provide invaluable knowledge about the effects refugeeism has on educational attainment and social integration. The data gathered would help educators see how the strategies refugee youth used or the challenges the youth faced impacted their post-secondary educational aspirations and career attainment. Empirical

studies using a mixed methods approach to document teachers' attitudes about working with refugee students and the practices and strategies they found to be effective would provide invaluable resources for practicing teachers currently working with refugee children as well as teacher candidates.

It is apparent that little research exists on refugee children from former Yugoslavia in terms of educational attainment and the degree to which this cohort adapted into Canadian society through occupational attainment and the school-to-work transition. If longitudinal studies or research was conducted on this cohort, it would benefit and inform current educators, administrators and researchers about the ways in which they could support future generations of refugee children and how the educational system could be improved to help not only successful integration to school, but also to society and workforce. Rajulton (2001) highlighted the importance of conducting longitudinal studies:

Most of us accept today that longitudinal information is necessary especially for causal studies on individual behaviour. This acceptance rests on the understanding that longitudinal studies can show the nature of growth, trace patterns of change, and possibly give a true picture of cause and effect over time. Social processes have become increasingly complex and if we would like to grasp this complexity, we need longitudinal data for establishing temporal order, measuring change and making stronger causal interpretations. (p. 171)

It would be beneficial to know the barriers, challenges, and strategies refugee children from the former Yugoslavia encountered and used to equip practicing teachers and teacher candidates with the knowledge and tools for supporting future refugees

entering Canadian schools. Another gap in the literature lies in the area of effective classroom-based strategies educators have used and found beneficial in working with refugee children to ease the transition process. Once Canadian educators and school administrators are informed about and equipped with effective strategies for supporting refugee children, they will be able to support transition of Syrian refugee children currently entering the Canadian schooling system. Further research on teaching strategies and academic challenges is required if schools are to help refugee students overcome the myriad of barriers currently pervading the Canadian educational system.

The themes that emerged from the literature review, such as otherness, isolation, friendships with peers from similar backgrounds, added responsibilities, lack of belonging, lack of comprehensive programs, and effective strategies in the form of an activity, were also reflected in my refugee narrative. Part of the intent of this paper is to demonstrate the positive and negative aspects of refugee children's transition to the Canadian educational system and minimize the possibility of refugee children's isolation, othering and marginalization during this transitory process. It is important to note that while I have proven to be resilient in my transition to the Canadian educational system – and have 'swam' through the system – other refugee children may not have the kind of family support I had and might not prove as resilient as I was. Therefore, the intent of this paper is to highlight the importance of longitudinal studies in decoding the myriad of challenges refugee students encounter and in establishing a comprehensive approach for supporting refugee children's education and well-being.

Conclusion

The current educational system and the Canadian educators within it are unequipped and unprepared to assist refugee students with the social, psychological and academic challenges they face as they enter the system. As a result, students are often left to combat social, psychological and academic challenges on their own without a specialized supportive community of educators and friend networks. As of today, very few strategies have been implemented in the education system to support refugee students to the degree they require (Gagné et al., 2012; Stewart, 2011). As a result, these students struggle to excel, and these factors contribute to academic underachievement (Bhabha, 2014; Kilbride et al., 2000; Kondic, 2014). The literature review clearly demonstrated that a lack of peer support in the form of bullying, exclusion and decreased friend networks increases the risk of developing mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. It also hindered English language learning and adjusting to different learning styles. Furthermore, rejection by peers impacted self-esteem, and increased the risk of early school withdrawal and criminal behaviour. This demonstrates the degree of significance that peer support and a sense of belonging play in the academic and psychological well-being of refugee students. Added family responsibilities, time constraints and little-to-no parental support for academics leaves refugee youth feeling unsupported. Family stressors have negative academic implications as well as negative social implications on establishing friend networks.

Refugee youth who feel unsupported by educators, peers, administrators and the Canadian society as a whole are more likely to develop a lack of trust and an 'us versus them' mentality. This lack of support has psychological ramifications. Refugee youth

have a greater risks of feeling isolated, an increased risk of depression and anxiety as well as coping with PTSD, which all hinder academic achievement and performance. The psychological ramifications of a continual lack of trust and ‘us versus them’ mentality also impact the establishment of peer support, friend networks and forming positive and strong relationships with teachers. Children who have witnessed or experienced the violence of war are at a greater risk of coping with unknown triggers, which impact their academic success. Furthermore, misdiagnosis also impedes academic success, and current academic assessments do not take into account the knowledge in different educational systems, leaving many students to be misdiagnosed – only further creating psychological, social and academic ramifications.

The strategies highlighted throughout this paper demonstrate the initial attempts some educators and schools have taken to assist refugees in the transition process. The strategies that have been incorporated have had positive and effective results for refugee students. The initial implementation of these strategies serves to demonstrate that when the appropriate time and knowledge is allotted to this endeavour, real and substantial progress can be made. However, a considerable amount of work is still required in this field. More research, specifically longitudinal studies on former Yugoslavian refugees and other refugee populations are required. A comprehensive leadership approach, such as transformative leadership, needs to be implemented to help mitigate the challenges refugee children face as they enter the Canadian educational system. The research gathered throughout this paper adds great depth to an educator’s frame of reference and knowledge base regarding the challenges and barriers newcomer students face as they enter a Canadian classroom. This paper examined the strategies that have been effective,

and can be used for further strategy exploration. While this paper explores the challenges many students have faced during the transition process, it is significant to note that some refugee youth have proven resilient in adapting and integrating, while some may need additional support. Thus, these issues must be handled on an individualistic basis to prevent misdiagnosis, and deficit thinking from occurring. Real and authentic change cannot occur without desire for deep structural change to take place (Shields, 2010). However, it is not enough to desire change; real change can only take place if action is taken. True authenticity in leadership, a desire for change, and action that works toward this change are the key components in creating a better educational system for all students. The attitude and determination behind these actions is what will inspire other educators to embrace transformative leadership in the classroom, change their teaching practices and attitudes, and ultimately, change society as well.

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Appendix A

Class-Based Activity

Students should be encouraged early on to discover their own methods of stress relief.

This can be completed through a class-based activity. The first classroom based activity involves several questions that will help determine the method of stress relief would find most helpful. Questions include:

1. Does the student prefer to talk through their problems with a close friend?
2. Does the student prefer to sing out loud?
3. Does the student prefer to watch their favourite movie?
4. Does the student prefer to watch something comedic, or tell jokes amongst friends?
5. Does the student prefer to paint, draw, or do something hands-on?
6. Does the student prefer to listen to relaxing music or sounds such as ocean waves, or a motivational podcast?
7. Has the student tried meditation or relaxing breathing exercises?
8. Does the student prefer exercise such as, yoga or playing sports such as swimming, or basketball?
9. Does the student prefer to play with animals, or have a pet they can spend time with?
10. Does the student prefer hiking and spending time in nature alone?

Based on this activity, suggestions for stress relief can be provided to students in the classroom. This could be in a handout style form. Some blank spaces should be left where students can add their own suggestions. These hand outs could be glued into their

agendas, or brought home. If students feel particularly stressed, they can reference this exercise. The second exercise could focus on different methods of stress reduction:

Table A

Visual	Hands-On	Auditory	Verbal
Watch a favourite movie or comedy.	Activities such as, arts and crafts, computer programming, robotics, and knitting.	Listen to motivational podcasts	Talk through problems with a close friend
Paint, draw, colour, or sculpt.	Playing with animals	Listen to relaxing music	Sing or join a Choir class.
Draw a map of the places they would like to travel.	Baking or cooking	Listen to nature calls, rain, or ocean sounds.	Tell jokes amongst friends.
Create a 5 year plan of the goals you wish to achieve.	Doing exercise or recreational sports such as, swimming or basketball.	Listen to a friends' concerns, lend a supportive ear to a significant person in your life.	Scream loudly in a secluded area
	Meditation, yoga, or relaxing breathing exercises.		