

Exploring Teacher Candidates' Experience, Perception, and Knowledge of Multicultural  
Education in Two Ontario Universities

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## **Abstract**

In this study, teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education at 2 Ontario universities were used to determine the effectiveness of their teacher education programs in preparing them to teach in multicultural classrooms. The research also strived to highlight the most effective practices in these programs that contributed to the preparation of teacher candidates for employment in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms in Ontario. A questionnaire and interviews were used to determine the effectiveness of the program in preparing them to teach in diverse classrooms. The findings revealed the need for a greater emphasis of multicultural education in teacher education programs at these universities. The data showed that teacher candidates were most critical of the courses and the delivery of the curriculum in relation to multicultural education. Teacher candidates were also concerned with the lack of multicultural education in their practicum placements. In addition, teacher candidates indicated in the questionnaire that they felt competent adapting instruction to the needs of students in multicultural classrooms. However, the results obtained from the interviews were more varied. The interviews highlighted that teacher candidates were hesitant about teaching in culturally diverse classrooms and less likely to state that they were prepared for these teaching environments. As well, many teacher candidates believed their peers were not prepared for multicultural issues. Teacher candidates believed the program could be improved in many ways including specific instruction across all classes, more diverse practicum experiences, guest speakers, case studies, and the creation of new courses that specifically address multicultural education.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

This study used the experiences and perspectives of teacher candidates to determine their satisfaction with how well the teacher education program prepared them for teaching in Ontario's culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. In Ontario, prospective teachers obtain certification to teach in the K-12 education system with the successful completion of a Bachelor of Education degree. This requires prospective teachers to complete an 8-month training program at an accredited university. Within these programs, prospective teachers are required to complete a variety of tasks, such as class assignments and practicum placements, which are used to prepare them for teaching employment. Teacher education programs are the only mandated training that new teachers receive and these programs need to be accountable for the preparation of teacher candidates to work in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. In order to achieve this goal, it is important for teacher candidates to engage in multiple learning situations, such as practicums in diverse settings, that could help to prepare them for the many challenges that might exist throughout their career in education. According to Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004), teacher education programs have insufficiently addressed problems associated with multicultural education because many teacher candidates still feel unprepared to teach in high diverse classrooms. Approximately half (47%) of the student population will consist of visible minorities by 2050 (Begaye, 2007), and immediate action is necessary to help new teachers feel more prepared to teach in diverse classes. Providing a variety of learning opportunities and critically discussing multicultural issues is especially important in Ontario where the demographics continue to become more culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse.

A mixed methods approach was applied using a survey and in-depth face-to-face interviews with teacher candidates at two universities in Ontario. To gain an understanding of the research, the influence of changing demographics, the problems associated with multicultural teacher education programs, the purpose of the study, rationale and research questions, and the limitations of the study are examined within this chapter.

### **Background of the Problem**

The concept of multicultural education has existed for years. Canada implemented a multicultural policy at the federal level in 1971, but it was not officially law until the writing of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 (Ghosh, 1996). The Act “sets the stage for goals that emphasized equality in economic, social, cultural, and political spheres in Canadian life and citizenship” (Chan, 2007, p. 137). However, the growth of multicultural education has taken many years to come into existence, and still there is not enough implementation of multicultural education strategies in Ontario schools. According to Ghosh, the limited growth of multicultural education can be attributed to education being a provincial responsibility as well as the absence of a “national level multicultural education policy” (p. 49) for schools and universities to follow. As a result, school boards have implemented multicultural policies at different times to address the needs of their student body. Despite multiculturalism being prevalent for many years, Chan found that “there are still school boards that have not developed race relations policy as a means of addressing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity” (p. 142). In addition, teacher education programs have also reacted slowly and have had a



tendency not to stress the importance of multicultural education to their teacher candidates (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009).

The province of Ontario extends across a significant portion of Canada and, as a result, it has a population size of approximately 13.1 million people (Ministry of Finance, 2010). The updated projections from the 2006 census state that the province currently has 2.3 million children, up to the age of 14, and this number is expected to rise to 2.8 million by 2036 (Ministry of Finance, 2010). Amongst all the children in Ontario schools, approximately 27% were born in another country and 20% are visible minorities (Levin, Glaze, & Fullan, 2008). From the results of a similar study in the United States of America, Begaye (2007) contends that 28% of the population consists of visible minorities, and he predicts the number to rise to 47% by 2050. Canada's proximal relation with the United States means that these projections may also be applied to populations across Ontario. The expected increase of demographic diversity in these classrooms provides reason for multicultural education in Ontario schools. The extent of this situation is reinforced by Hammett and Bainbridge (2009) who state that "the biggest challenge is responding to local changes in population demographics and economics as increasing globalisation transforms schools and makes new demands on the education system" (p. 152). With increasing diversity in these schools, teachers are expected to address the needs of culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students by being culturally responsive and differentiating instruction.

In addition to this challenge, Ontario is in a difficult position because of large urban areas and very remote rural areas where enrolment has been sharply declining in some areas and rapidly growing in others (Levin et al., 2008). This situation presents a

unique problem for decision makers because it is difficult to rectify issues in a province that is so vast in the challenges that vary with demographics. As a result, multicultural education may appear to have less importance in some school boards and district school board administrators in these boards may consider other pertinent issues, such as declining enrolment, more important than multicultural education. This hierarchy of importance is suggested by Chan (2007), who states that “implementation of existing policy remains problematic due to lack of resources, priorities within schools, and the need for staff development and awareness of racial and ethnic issues” (p. 141).

Therefore, some researchers have looked to the universities and colleges that train teachers and educational assistants as a way of improving the education system for all students (Dunn, Kirova, Cooley, & Ogilvie, 2009; Nicholas, 1999). These institutions have been charged with the task of preparing the next generation of teachers to meet the needs of our diverse students. In recognition of the changing demographics of the Ontario classroom, teacher education departments have begun to make changes to their programs to accentuate the importance of multicultural education (Dunn et al., 2009; Michael-Luna & Marri, 2011).

To begin a discussion about the effectiveness of multicultural education in teacher training, it is first essential to gain an understanding of the important terminology. Multicultural education is described by Sadker and Sadker (2003) as “educational policies and practices (that) recognize and affirm human differences and similarities associated with gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, and class” (p. G-8). With an Ontario population that is growing primarily through immigration, the significance of numerous cultural backgrounds plays an important role in how education should be

delivered. Therefore, multicultural education needs to be prevalent in schools as well as in teacher education programs that provide training for new teachers. As teacher education programs improve their training of teachers, schools will have greater access to teachers that can meet the needs of culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students. A study conducted by Lien (1999) noted that multicultural education is an important topic of discussion on the battleground for education goals. He defined multicultural education as a means to “prepare future citizens in a pluralistic society in which democracy can be understood as mutual respect among social members and communities” (p. 21). In order to shift towards a pluralistic society, tough decisions and changes should be made. A major goal of a multicultural education reform movement should be, according to Nicholas (1999), to provide equity in outcomes for all students. In order to make this happen, modifications in the way that education is delivered need to be made at the school, college, and university levels (Hagan & McGlynn, 2004). In their study on the preparation of students for teaching in a diverse society in Ireland, Hagan and McGlynn suggest that it is important to have practicum placements in diverse school contexts, collaboration among teacher education students from different cultures, and a coherent approach to diversity throughout the teacher education program. In addition, according to Nicholas, as more students with diverse backgrounds enter the classroom, teachers and teacher educators need to act quickly and be prepared to incorporate multiple perspectives into the educational experience to promote social equity.

### **Statement of the Problem Context**

In response to the influence of changing demographics in Ontario schools, teacher candidates should feel prepared to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse

classrooms. It may be suggested that most teacher educators believe that the inclusion of multicultural education in their programs benefits the growth of teacher candidates and helps to support their future teaching opportunities. However, research suggests that teacher education programs have been unsuccessful in providing multiple learning experiences, such as practicum placements with different demographics, which should help to nurture the confidence of teacher candidates and help to prepare them to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse schools upon completion of the program (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004). In response, multicultural education needs to become a more fundamental aspect of teacher education programs, which is used to bring new knowledge and experiences to teacher candidates who are generally White, middle-class, and female. It is reasonable to say that the introduction of multicultural education is viewed by many researchers as a positive step towards social equity, but that the emphasis and importance placed on teaching multicultural education can differ at each institution throughout the province.

My interest in multicultural education at teacher education institutions stems from my experiences as a teacher candidate. Upon graduating, I believed that the multicultural education curriculum within my teacher education program was underwhelming. In consideration of the changing demographics of the province, I discovered that the program did not adequately prepare me to teach in multiethnic classrooms. I believe this is consistent with the experiences of many teacher candidates and that my feeling of being unprepared to teach in multiethnic classrooms is not an anomaly. This hypothesis was based on studies that have shown multicultural education curricula to be lacking and, as a result, these varying programs throughout Canada have been ineffective in preparing

teacher candidates for employment in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse communities (Dunn et al., 2009; Johnston et al., 2009; Lund, 1998; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Pappamihel, 2007). As a result of the emerging issues with multicultural education within teacher education programs, this study may be an opportunity for professional growth and beneficial to my practice as an educator.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to compare teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education at two Ontario universities to determine these candidates' perception of the effectiveness of the teacher education program in preparing them for teaching in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms. It was also the purpose of this study to understand the most effective practices in these programs that contributed to the preparation of teacher candidates to teach in their classrooms in Ontario.

A mixed methods approach was used in this research. The initial phase of the research involved the use of a questionnaire to collect data from a large number of teacher candidates whose experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education were examined. The subsequent phase employed in-depth interviews in order to explore the experiences of some of these teacher candidates more thoroughly. The findings of the research can be used to assist teacher educators in assessing the effectiveness of their programs and help to promote changes in the delivery of multicultural education curricula at these two universities in Ontario.

### **Rationale and Research Questions**

This study was meant to build on and update the work of Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004). In their study, Mujawamariya and Mahrouse reported on teacher candidates' satisfaction with the multicultural education preparation they received in the teacher education program at an Ontario university. The research findings from their study indicated that teacher candidates viewed the multicultural education component of teacher education as deficient. Consequently, teacher candidates in Mujawamariya and Mahrouse's study suggested including mandatory multicultural education courses, more ethnic diversity amongst faculty members, and collaboration among teacher education courses in the area of multicultural education as essential to make improvements to the program.

One of the strengths of Mujawamariya and Mahrouse's (2004) research was the questionnaire design. Teacher education participants answered a questionnaire that contained 5- and 3-point Likert scales in order to rate their perceptions of the teacher education program in regards to multicultural education. The questionnaire contained the following six sections: Program, Curriculum, Courses, Practicum, Readiness and Satisfaction, and Opinion and Experiences. The organization of this questionnaire was successful in obtaining information about teacher candidates' perceptions of multicultural education and, therefore, the same structure was utilized in the current study. Mujawamariya and Mahrouse had participants rate their teacher education program using statements such as "How effective was your program in preparing student teachers to meet the needs of students from diverse ethnoracial backgrounds," by utilizing a 5-point Likert scale that varied from excellent to very poor. In addition, the researchers used

statements that asked participants specific questions such as “I am satisfied with how multicultural issues were taught to student teachers.” In this example, a simple 3-point Likert scale was used that gave three options: yes, no, and unsure. As well, participants in the Mujawamariya and Mahrouse study were asked to define multicultural education in the questionnaire to demonstrate their understanding of the terminology. Moreover, participants were asked an open-ended question inquiring about possible improvements to the teacher education program, in regards to multicultural education that might benefit future teacher candidates. The instruments from the Mujawamariya and Mahrouse study were useful and slightly altered for use in my study to assess the perceptions and experiences of numerous teacher candidates in regards to multicultural education.

However, there were some problems inherent in the research design that limited the reliability of the conclusions derived by Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004). These researchers used a random sampling of teacher candidates in order to acquire a breadth of different opinions, but they chose to look only at the Anglophone division of the program, and more specifically, they only used teacher candidates from one large class of students enrolled in a mandatory course.

Building upon Mujawamariya and Mahrouse’s (2004) study, my research project was designed to measure the effectiveness of multicultural teacher education in two other teacher education programs within the province of Ontario. Another modification from the original study was the breadth of the participants involved. All teacher candidates from the two universities were asked to participate in an online questionnaire in order to acquire information. By increasing the breadth of this study, all teacher candidates had an opportunity to participate. As a result, a better understanding of the whole teacher

education program, including both consecutive and concurrent education students, was, hopefully, represented through this research.

To measure teacher candidates' perspectives more effectively, permission was granted by Dr. Mujawamariya to adapt her measurement tools. Modifications that were made to the instruments include the removal and/or rewording of questions and the addition of questions that focused on the collaboration of community, school, and teacher training. As well, new interview questions were included to directly address the research questions and to discover a more thorough understanding of teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge.

Specifically the research question, "Are dominant culture teacher candidates prepared to teach in diverse Ontario school classrooms?" was investigated. This is an important area of study because the demographics of an Ontario classroom are continuously becoming more diverse with regards to culture, race, and ethnicity. In my study, the following questions were also investigated:

- How do teacher education programs in the two Ontario universities participating in this study address multicultural education?
- How do teacher candidates within these programs perceive the capability of the multicultural education curriculum in their program to prepare them to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms?

### **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study has limitations that restricted the ability to generalize the findings to all teacher candidates. The participants in this research were selected through distribution of invitation emails by faculty of education offices. Consequently, the participants who



chose to engage in the research were likely to be enthusiastically interested in the topic. As a result, the students who chose to participate likely represented strongly negative and/or strongly positive viewpoints of multicultural teacher education. In addition, teacher candidates brought their own experiences and viewpoints to the teacher education program and were likely to have experienced the multicultural education aspect differently from their peers. Additionally, with the inclusion of speciality courses in teacher education programs, the experiences of each participant was very different. The disparity in the teacher candidates' experiences can be attributed to their inability to access these courses because of scheduling conflicts or personal choice.

A further limitation was the uncertainty in providing a provincial assessment of multicultural education using the experiences of teacher candidates at only two teacher education programs. Having participants at two different postsecondary institutions allowed the researcher to make some generalizations, but circumstances within other teacher education programs in the province could be different, and the data that were acquired from students within those programs could lead to dissimilar conclusions.

### **An Overview of the Document**

In this study, teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education at two Ontario universities were investigated to determine their satisfaction with how the teacher education program addressed multicultural education to prepare future teachers for teaching in the province's culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms. The remaining chapters within this document provide a foundation for understanding the area of study, the research itself, and the implications of the

findings. Specifically, the remaining chapters are: Literature Review, Methodology and Research Design, Presentation of Results, and Summary of Findings.

Chapter Two presents a literature review that synthesizes related and pertinent literature, which provides additional knowledge and understanding of the issue under investigation. It presents a working definition of multicultural education that was used as a framework to the study. A historical perspective of multicultural education within Ontario outlines specific reasons for incorporating multicultural curricula into teacher education programs that include changing demographics, education for all, and the importance of social equity. To understand how teacher education programs have addressed the call for multicultural education, an overview of existing programs is provided for background information. The review of the literature then shifts to the issues of multicultural education inherent in teacher training programs around the world. As well, an outline of the future of multicultural education is discussed to help improve the preparedness of future teachers in regards to teaching in multiethnic classrooms.

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology and instrumentation that was used to collect and analyze data for this study. More specifically, the methodology and design, participant and site selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis are outlined with the intention of offering sufficient detail in the event that another researcher would like to replicate the study. In addition, this section discusses the assumptions, limitations, credibility issues, and ethical considerations that are necessary to advance valid and reliable findings. This chapter concludes with a restatement of the purpose of the study.

Chapter Four presents the findings of this study by discussing major themes that emerged from the analysis of the data.

To finish, Chapter Five begins with a brief summary of this research study. It continues with a discussion of the research findings as they relate to the research questions that guided this study. The implications of the results and recommendations for further research are also presented within this chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Chapter Two presents a literature review that synthesizes related and pertinent literature surrounding multicultural education. It begins by operationally defining multicultural education and comparing and contrasting it with antiracist education. The remainder of the chapter deals with historical perspectives on multicultural education, the state of and issues with multicultural teacher education programs, and the future of multicultural education in the Ontario context.

### **Defining Multicultural and Antiracist Teacher Education**

The concept of multiculturalism can be defined as the preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009). With respect to education, multicultural approaches should be considered by teachers who work in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. Multicultural education is defined by Sadker and Sadker (2003) as “educational policies and practices (that) recognize and affirm human differences and similarities associated with gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, and class” (p. G-8). The ability for schools to be able to recognize and affirm these differences is becoming increasingly more important with an Ontario population that is growing primarily through immigration, which increases the number of culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students. Therefore, multicultural education is an important topic of discussion among educators as they strive to meet the needs of all students (Lien, 1999). The major goal of multicultural education is to “prepare future citizens in a pluralistic society in which democracy can be understood as mutual respect among social members and communities” (Lien, 1999, p. 21). Creating a pluralistic society, where all people understand each other and thrive

together, is the ultimate endpoint for multicultural education, but many changes need to take place and develop to solidify social equity. Therefore, multicultural education can be viewed as an educational reform movement and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups will have an equity in outcomes to achieve academically well in school (Banks, 1995; Nicholas, 1999).

Because immigration continues to be a fundamental aspect of our country's policies, the need for multicultural education continues to heighten. There are a plethora of opinions and changes that could take place at the school, college, and university level to address the current and emerging ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity (Hagan & McGlynn, 2004). To mention a few related to universities, Hagan and McGlynn noted practicum placements in diverse contexts, collaboration between students from different cultures, and greater coherence throughout the program. In addition, as more students with diverse backgrounds enter the classroom, teachers and teacher educators need to be prepared to incorporate multiple perspectives into the educational experience to promote social equity (Nicholas, 1999).

Moving towards a multicultural model of education requires a shift from the current Eurocentric education environment that has been in practice for many years. In addition, faculties of education are well known to be resistant to change and often have an educational background that is considered to be excessively Eurocentric (Lund, 1998; Mujawamariya, 2001). One way to encourage change is to reform teacher education programs that prepare new teachers for the classrooms of tomorrow. By assisting teacher

candidates in developing competency towards multicultural education, teacher education programs should produce teachers who can utilize their understanding of culturally, responsive pedagogy and effectively teach in diverse classrooms. The importance of teacher education programs to emphasize in this move towards multicultural education is more thoroughly highlighted by Skerrett (2007) who stated that “teacher education programs must expand to courageously address the challenges of educating in a multicultural world that is fraught with inequities that stem from racial difference” (p. 1824).

Multicultural education in teacher education programs should strive to create equity for all members of society. The preparation that teacher candidates receive in these programs should provide numerous resources, strategies, and understanding to help address the inequities that exist in Ontario classrooms. As Smith (2009) proclaimed, the goals of multicultural teacher education are to “prepare teachers to work with culturally diverse students” (p. 47), and, therefore, “teacher educators [must] draw heavily from the multicultural education literature to organize the curricula and other elements in their programs” (p. 47).

A leading author in multicultural education is James Banks who describes five dimensions to multicultural education that can be implemented to transform schools that will prepare students for a more pluralistic society. The first dimension is content integration which includes the use of examples and content from a variety of cultures (Banks, 1995). This dimension is typically used in programs because it simply adds on to the existing structures. The second dimension, knowledge construction helps students understand how knowledge is created (Banks, 1995). Teacher educators can implement

this by critically discussing whose point of view is evident in textbooks and providing additional information to allow for multiple versions. The third dimension is prejudice reduction, which strives to create racial awareness and identification which helps reduce White bias (Banks, 1995). Racial awareness can be developed through the use of social action programs that might be created by the teacher education programs. The fourth dimension, equity pedagogy, informs teachers that they must modify their teaching to facilitate academic achievement from all students (Banks, 1995). Teacher education programs need to provide enough training in how to accomplish this in the classroom. Finally, the fifth dimension, empowering school culture and social structure, requires the entire school system to restructure, thereby accommodating the other four dimensions (Banks, 1995). A complete restructuring is not likely to take place until all teachers understand all the dimensions that can help them promote social equity.

Another term that is used intermittently with multicultural education is antiracist education. Specifically, antiracist education is described by Tronya and Carrington (1990) as having a “wide range of organizational, curricular, and pedagogical strategies which aim to promote racial equality and to eliminate attendant forms of discrimination and oppression, both individual and institutional” (p. 1815). Similar to multicultural education, antiracist education attempts to “revise monocultural and exclusionary bodies of knowledge” (p. 1813) by focussing on racial inequality (Skerrett, 2007). It achieves these goals by questioning the Eurocentric bias in the curriculum and improves it by including texts that teach against racism and providing opportunities for students to take social action against injustice (Skerrett, 2007). Progressing from multicultural education to antiracist education involves a greater breadth of topics, more complexity, and a bigger

effort to sustain goals. In addition, the antiracist term is more clearly defined and includes political and historical issues of multiculturalism that exist within our society. For the purpose of this study, multicultural education will be the only term used to simplify the discussion of this topic.

### **Historical Perspective**

The concept of multicultural education has existed for years. Canada implemented a multicultural policy at the federal level in 1971, but it was not official law until the writing of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 (Ghosh, 1996). The Act “sets the stage for goals that emphasized equality in economic, social, cultural, and political spheres in Canadian life and citizenship” (Chan, 2007, p. 137). However, the growth of multicultural education has taken many years to come into existence, and still there is not enough implementation of multiculturalism in Ontario schools. According to Ghosh, the limited growth of multicultural education can be attributed to education being a provincial responsibility as well as the absence of a “national level multicultural education policy” (p. 49) for schools and universities to follow. As a result, school boards have implemented multicultural policies at different times to address the needs of their student body. Despite multiculturalism being prevalent for many years, Chan found that “there are still school boards that have not developed race relations policy as a means of addressing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity” (p. 142). When district school boards fail to implement multicultural policy, teachers in these boards do not have guiding principles to follow in regards to diversity (Chan, 2007). This slow process has permeated to teacher education programs, which have a tendency not to stress the importance of multicultural education in schools to their teacher candidates (Hammett &



Bainbridge, 2009; Tan & Lefebvre, 2010; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008). The remaining parts of this section will highlight some of the main reasons for conducting this research in the Ontario context, such as changing demographics, education for all, and social equity.

### **Changing Demographics**

Ontario extends across a significant portion of Canada and, as a result, it has a population size of approximately 13.1 million people (Ministry of Finance, 2010). The updated projections from the 2006 census state that the province currently has 2.3 million children, up to the age of 14, and this number is expected to rise to 2.8 million by 2036 (Ministry of Finance, 2010). Amongst all the children in Ontario schools, Levin et al. (2008) found that 27% were born in another country and 20% are visible minorities. These results are similar in the United States of America where Begaye (2007) argued that 28% of the population consists of visible minorities and he predicts the number to rise to 47% by 2050. Canada's proximal relation with the United States means that these projections may also be applied to populations across Ontario. The expected diversification of these classrooms provides reason for the inclusions of multicultural education in Ontario schools. This problem is reinforced by Hammett and Bainbridge (2009) who stated that "the biggest challenge is responding to local changes in population demographics and economics as increasing globalisation transforms schools and makes new demands on the education system" (p. 152). With increasing diversity in these schools, teachers are expected to address the needs of culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students by being culturally responsive and differentiating instruction.

In addition to this challenge, Ontario is in a difficult position because of large urban areas and very remote rural areas where enrolment has been sharply declining in some areas and rapidly growing in others (Levin et al., 2008). This situation presents a problem for educational decision makers who, according to Chan (2007), may consider issues other than a lack of a multicultural approach to education as more in need of immediate action. As Chan states, “implementation of existing policy remains problematic due to lack of resources, priorities within schools, and the need for staff development and awareness of racial and ethnic issues” (p. 141). Some researchers have looked to the universities and colleges that train teachers and educational assistants as a way of improving the education system for all students (Dunn et al., 2009, Nicholas, 1999). These institutions have been charged with the task of preparing the next generation of teachers to meet the needs of our diverse students. In recognition of the changing demographics of the Ontario classroom, teacher education departments have begun to make changes to their programs to accentuate the importance of multicultural education (Dunn et al., 2009; Michael-Luna & Marri, 2011).

### **Education for All**

Teacher candidates often join the profession wanting to make a difference in the lives of children to help them succeed in the future. To achieve their aspirations of helping students, teachers must try to ensure that the students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for an independent and fulfilling existence (Robson, 2001). Robson suggested that most young people do not start adult life with a basic level of competence and there exists a wide gap in achievement between the higher- and lower-socioeconomic status students. In addition, immigrant and refugee children’s needs are not being

fulfilled within the walls of the classroom (Dunn et al., 2009). These two studies provide reason for the inclusion of multicultural education to help close the gap for these students.

Another issue with today's education system is considered "given the realities of social and institutional inequity, for a large number of people, participation in today's mainstream schooling is not only problematic, but impossible" (Dei, James, James-Wilson, Karumanchery, & Zine, 2000, p. 2). Multicultural education can be used to make schooling more relevant for these students. Teachers who lack expertise in multicultural education or experience in diverse classrooms may feel disconnected from their diverse set of students. This sense of disconnect can often leave a student disengaged and potentially force him or her to drop out of school (Croninger & Lee, 2001). Dropping out is a reality for many students whose needs are not being addressed in schools and this can often lead to "higher unemployment rates, lower lifelong earnings, higher incidence of criminal activity, and a greater likelihood of health problems than students who complete high school" (Croninger & Lee, 2001, p. 549). Thus, teacher candidates need to be aware of the risks that are associated with not meeting students' needs. As well, these disengaged students sometimes feel that their teachers do not care about them and teacher candidates need to be reminded that positive social relationships can create powerful incentives for students to attend school (Croninger & Lee, 2001).

In response to this need to connect with a culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse set of students, teacher candidates need to have access to a wealth of information and strategies that can be utilized in their classrooms. This is troublesome because new teachers often have difficulties with classroom management, providing useful

information, and enabling diverse groups of students to learn an expanding curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2006a). In addition, many teacher candidates do not consider multicultural education to be an important aspect of their training (Assaf, Garza, & Battle, 2010; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001). Many of these candidates, who tend to be White, middle class females, can bring “highly conservative or liberal positions” (p. 123) regarding multicultural education to the classroom (Jenks et al., 2001). This consideration is important because these teachers will be responsible for teaching in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms during their careers. This attitude can be attributed to the existence of communities in Ontario that might not be acclimatized to diversity in their classrooms due to the homogenous nature of their population. However, Hagan and McGlynn (2004) argued that training teachers for multicultural education still needs to be a priority. The knowledge that teacher candidates should receive from these programs can be utilized to promote social equity and meet the needs of all students in every classroom, not just culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms.

### **Importance of Social Equity**

Social equity in education is the belief that all people in society should have access to a fair and valuable education system. However, social equity is yet to be realized in our generation because, as Klees (2008) stated, “we live in a world structured by capitalism, patriarchy, and racism where the dominant ideology leads to policies that help the advantaged accumulate ever more advantages and help maintain poverty, inequality, and marginalization” (p. 339). This does not mean that people should ignore social equity, but rather additional work and collaboration will be necessary to slowly

move towards a pluralistic society. To understand social inequity more thoroughly, racism is defined by Schick and St. Denis (2003), who stated that “racism is a particular prejudice that legitimizes an unequal relationship. In other words, racism is political; it facilitates and justifies socioeconomic mobility for one group at the expense of another” (p. 6). In order to create a level playing field for all people education needs to forge ahead and promote social equity. To accomplish this, education has to be equitable, has to be socially just, and has to prepare all students to be active participants within their society (Michael-Luna & Marri, 2011; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Taylor, 2010). This section will look at the historical shortcomings of education systems as they relate to diverse ethnicities, cultures, and races and how these shortcomings affect teacher education programs.

As discussed previously, minority groups have often received an education that is less relevant to their lived experiences than that which is received by the dominant culture. In the past, exclusionary practices of government have forced the separation and removal of particular minority groups from public schools, which has contributed to the racialization of education (Chan, 2007). As a result, minority parents with children in these separate schools believed their education was exclusionary and they wanted to ensure that their children had equal opportunities for learning to enable them to be successful in the future (Dei et al., 2000). The Multiculturalism Act of 1971 set the stage for social equity to begin by “recognizing cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity as categories of consideration, rather than categories of segregation and exclusion” (Chan, 2007, p. 137). However, this act was slow to create changes in education because it is a provincial responsibility. As a result of creating this act, the federal government wanted

to push schools towards implementation of multicultural ideas, views, and principles that would help to remove cultural barriers to full participation in society (Chan, 2007; Hagan & McGlynn, 2004).

Although the government has tried to create social equity, the education system has failed to produce the results to fully realize this goal. Minority students are still at a disadvantage in schools because the organization of the education system still follows white-middle class, Eurocentric ideals (Finney & Orr, 1995; Frances, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000). Schools foster a political process where “the dominant culture reproduces itself by maintaining social, economic, racial, and gender inequality in society” (Ghosh, 1996, p. 46). The reproduction of this knowledge through curriculum and teaching practices reinforces racist thinking amongst students and teachers (Frances et al., 2000). The problem in education is that “public school programs, after all, are designed for the ‘norm.’ When children do not benefit from those programs, it is because they fall outside of that constructed norm” (Stein, 2004, p. 18). This situation creates an environment of segregation in the classroom that affects minority students by acknowledging their difference, which eventually leads to a lower sense of self and, consequently, limited academic success.

A problem that continuously operates as a barrier to social equity is the teacher candidate’s lack of knowledge in equitable multicultural teaching practices. It is argued that “teachers often had very little knowledge or understanding of other cultures, which inadvertently led both teachers and students to trivialize and stereotype different ethnic and racial groups” (Frances et al., 2000, p. 249). Teacher candidates often come to teacher education programs with preconceived beliefs about minority students that tend

to reflect the ideas of racism and discrimination, and which, consequently, affect the ability of these students to succeed in an academic environment (Nicholas, 1999; Owen, 2010; Taylor, 2010). Multicultural education can be utilized to help remove stereotypes that teacher candidates might have in order to promote the use of social equity within their classrooms. By not addressing multicultural issues, the futures of minority youth continue to be at stake because their minds will be influenced by the Eurocentric curriculum and through their interactions with ill-prepared teachers (Solomon et al., 2005). Teacher education has not received enough attention to enact a significant amount of change at universities for the promotion of multicultural education. Therefore, the goal of equity still cannot exist within our schools. These institutions tend to incorporate a method of colour blindness, which enables the schools to believe that ignoring differences is in the best interest of our students (Michael-Luna & Marri, 2011; Nicholas, 1999; Taylor 2010). In addition, the cultural celebration or tolerance approach is still used in many programs, which tends to reinforce the inequities found in these classrooms. (Assaf et al., 2010; Gainer & Larotta, 2010; Jenks et al., 2001; Young & Graham, 2000).

### **Multicultural Teacher Education Programs**

Teacher education programs provide a rich avenue for investment by governments. To directly alter the landscape of our schools and truly implement a multicultural education system, teachers need the direction and expertise from teacher education programs to help them prepare youth for their future. This is supported by Darling-Hammond (2006b) who stated that “education is increasingly important to the success of both individuals and nations, and growing evidence demonstrates that – among

all educational resources – teachers’ abilities are especially crucial contributors to students’ learning” (p. 300). We are immersed in a multicultural society; therefore, teacher candidates need to attain new knowledge, paradigms, and perspectives to effectively deal with the challenges and opportunities of diversity (Craft, 1996; Hagan & McGlynn, 2004; Lund, 1998; Smith, 2009).

Simply put, education has a tendency of introducing “new” ideas only to return to the original state that the government had initially wanted to correct. This is emphasized by Michael Bottery (2000) who stated that education is often cosy and prone to recent research and pronouncements, but eventually the system usually returns to reality where it is “conformed to the beliefs of the predominant culture” (p. 1). Teacher education programs can model equitable educational opportunities, such as racial awareness, that should help teacher candidates address the cultural realities of education and allow them to work effectively to benefit racially, ethnically, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse students (Dunn et al., 2009; Lund, 1998; Smith, 2009). Implementing a multicultural education philosophy into teacher education programs might be the answer to promote social equity and, therefore, it needs to be developed through all programs that foster career-long staff development (Fullan, 1993; Smith, 2009). In contrast, some researchers (e.g., Fullan, 1993; Lund, 1998) believe that investing in teacher education might not yield the desired results because, according to Fullan, disengaged training and meaningless professional development tend to be the norm for teacher education. In the period before 1997, there was a lot of pressure for teacher education reform, but little activity existed and few successful strategies were developed (Fullan, 2009). In addition, Fullan (2009) also stated that investment and valuing of education began in the period of



1997-2002 where growth of a high quality teaching force started to become reality. According to Fullan (2009), teacher education programs need to build on these successes and, therefore, the future of multicultural education in these programs looks bright as some universities have developed programs that deal specifically with issues in their jurisdiction.

Finally, in a period of extreme globalisation and a heavy reliance on immigration for growth in Ontario, we are presently in an ideal period to deal with multicultural issues. Many researchers (e.g., Finney & Orr, 1995; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Pappamihel, 2007; Portelli, Shields, & Vibert, 2007) believe that it is necessary to determine what teacher candidates understand about multiculturalism and diversity. These researchers believe it is important for teacher educators to question and foster their understanding of these topics to help rectify the social inequities that exist in education. In order to attain this level of understanding, teacher educators need to be experts in their domain and improve the confidence of teacher candidates when they embark on their teaching journeys. Historically, many instructors lack intercultural knowledge and experiences that would be useful to provide comfort to their teacher candidates when addressing multicultural issues (Schuerholz-Lehr, 2007).

A logical way of reforming education is provided by Ghosh (1996) who noted that teacher education needs to become multicultural first if teacher candidates are going to be successful in making the education system more equitable. Responding to the shortcomings of the education system for students of diversity, teacher education programs have begun to address this issue by infusing multicultural concepts into their programs. To effectively prepare teacher candidates for multicultural issues, the teacher

education environment needs to be “inclusive and representative of the diversity of Canadian society” (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004, p. 345). Due to the different teaching philosophies at each institution, each teacher education program may choose to address issues differently than other programs. Some teacher education programs might place greater importance on special education, while others could promote differentiated learning and/or experiential learning. Therefore, the significance these institutions place on the theory of multicultural education may differ at each institution. For example, some may add-on multicultural education courses for instruction (like at the University of Ottawa), while others may completely restructure the program around multicultural education (similar to the University of Saskatchewan), the latter of which is deemed necessary by numerous researchers (Jenks et al., 2001; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008; Young & Graham, 2000). However, most of these programs that are designed to aid multicultural acceptance, often present the idea of “deficit thinking” (p. 3) to teacher candidates (Portelli et al., 2007). Deficit thinking is problematic because instilling this thought in the minds of future teachers is believed to reinforce the inequities that exist in society (Portelli et al., 2007).

In contrast, some of these multicultural teacher education programs have focused on the ideology of Whiteness to help teacher candidates recognize their race and privilege within society. As Solomon et al. (2005) suggested, many of the White, middle class teacher candidates are locked into their personal and meritocratic view of education. Whiteness is developed and understood through antiracist education which deals with the political and historical issues of multiculturalism that exist within our society (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004). By ignoring the political or historical forces,

teachers often are unaware of the differences in educational access, opportunity, and advantage that plague many students in Ontario (de Freitas & McAuley, 2008). By revising program goals to examine these issues, it is anticipated that teacher education programs will provide an opportunity for teacher candidates to discover and critically recognize Whiteness within their own experiences.

Teacher candidates need to understand the issues related to cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity in order to address their assumptions about diverse cultures because these assumptions impact on their daily interactions with students of diversity (Owen, 2010; Solomon et al., 2005; Taylor, 2010). In addition, according to Schick and St. Denis (2003), many teacher candidates' suggestion that "opportunity is equally open to all, and that students can do anything they want as long as they are 'prepared to make sacrifices,' ignores and trivializes the significance of unearned privileges conferred by their own dominant group identity" (p. 1). In recognition of these issues, some teacher education programs have implemented programs that compel students to question dominant cultural ideology and usually provide opportunities for teacher candidates to practise teaching in diverse classrooms. The understanding is that "implementing a multicultural education philosophy supported by immersion experience models can help classroom teachers promote educational equity and social justice while helping all students to reach their academic and social potential" (Smith, 2009, p. 46).

Implementing multicultural education into existing teacher education programs has been difficult for some institutions. Using the work of numerous scholars, de Freitas and McAuley (2008) discussed their attempts to teach an antiracist pedagogy to teacher

candidates at their university. These authors outline three details that they considered essential to their program at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown:

- 1) Programs need to instill a pedagogy of discomfort to open possibilities for more incomplete and ambiguous teacher identity that embraces difference as a source of creativity.
- 2) Course assignments demand teacher candidates address the power of cultural representations to shift awareness of privilege into the political realm.
- 3) Critical pedagogy that incorporates critical media literacy to prepare pre-service teachers to fully address the complex ways in which racism impacts school culture. (de Freitas & McAuley, 2008, p. 441)

The information that de Freitas and McAuley collected examined numerous strategies for preparing teacher candidates to teach about diversity in predominantly White communities. This information provides specific areas in which teacher education programs need to develop to help teacher candidates promote equitable practices within their classroom, which will be discussed in greater detail in the “Future of Multicultural Education” section.

In addition, Solomon et al. (2005) used their experiences with teacher candidates in their teacher education program in Ontario to determine how teachers construct race, racism, and White privilege. These authors recognized the importance of implicating Whiteness into the discussion of societal change because failure to do so allows teacher candidates to reinforce the “normalcy and centrality of whiteness and white reality systems” (p. 159). The authors also realized the importance in providing teacher candidates with “concrete tools and strategies” (p. 165) that they, as future teachers, can

incorporate to promote equitable practices within their classrooms. In addition, Solomon et al. recognize the difficulties that come with creating a multicultural education program, but they note the importance of “reenergizing and restructuring mainstream teacher education programming to advance whiteness and antiracist theories, in addition to establishing inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary partnerships within the academy and outside organizations” (p. 166) in order to promote social equity within schools. Making changes primarily at the university level will only advance social equity to a certain extent. More specifically, partnerships between universities and public schools need to be strengthened because teacher candidates receive their “practical” training within these schools (Darling-Hammond, 2006a). Teacher educators have the responsibility to ensure that these learning environments should encourage the growth of teacher candidates, by providing them with opportunities to extend their learning of multicultural education theory into practice to promote educational equity and social justice (Dunn et al., 2009; Finney & Orr, 1995; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Johnston et al., 2009; Lowenstein, 2009; Muschell & Roberts, 2011; Skerrett, 2007; Smith, 2009; Young & Graham, 2000). One method that teacher education departments have used is service learning which helps to connect theory with practice. These types of programs can also allow students to reflect on and analyze their growing knowledge of diverse learners through collaboration with peers and the use of reflective journals (Assaf et al., 2010; Liu & Milman, 2010; Pappamihel, 2007).

A study by Dunn et al. (2009) used questionnaires, student assignments, and interviews to research how student teachers responded to critical explorations of diversity. The teacher educators involved in this study chose to implement intercultural

inquiry into their subject-area curriculum courses at the University of Alberta. The inquiry method of teaching was useful in providing teacher candidates with multicultural education experiences that connected their courses with practicum placements. Also, the authors concluded that teacher candidates in this program learned the importance of meeting the needs of all students and they believed the program allowed teacher candidates to become more sensitive of issues related to diversity. In their concluding arguments, Dunn et al. outlined the following important aspects that teacher education programs might want to consider to help advance multicultural education in their programs:

(a) drafting statements indicating an institutional commitment to diversity and intercultural inquiry across the curriculum, (b) encouraging the voluntary formation of groups of faculty members to explore collectively possibilities and strategies to promote intercultural inquiry in their courses, and (c) sponsoring opportunities for larger groups of faculty members to come together to share their experiences. We also recommend that faculties of education aim to ensure that all teacher candidates take part in field experiences that involved working in communities with diverse populations. (p. 553)

In a study completed in the United Kingdom by Hagan and McGlynn (2004), the authors surveyed and interviewed 168 students in their final year of teacher education to learn about how diversity issues were taught in their initial teacher education. Their findings indicated that the university needed to make more progress towards their goal of multicultural education, citing limited development over the 11-year span of its

undertaking. The authors noted important philosophical changes to the curriculum that allowed teacher educators to concentrate on

developing specific student skills in handling diverse classrooms such as the use of circle time, peer mediation, drama skills, creative arts and citizenship education with the aim of equipping students with a multicultural ‘toolbox’ they can use in the classroom (p. 249)

rather than focussing primarily on general issues surrounding multiculturalism (Hagan & McGlynn, 2004).

Through significant research on the teacher education program at the University of Alberta (Johnston et al., 2009), teacher educators there decided to introduce changes in several courses “to promote positive attitudes to diversity and to introduce teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches that are more open to cultural difference in the classroom” (p. 3). The University of Alberta created a “Diversity Institute,” with the main goal of creating a curriculum of cross-cultural understanding for the secondary school teacher education program (Johnston et al., 2009). The program was successful because, according to the authors, the program “allowed students to challenge and reflect on personal and professional identities associated with diversity issues, rather than simply to revise teaching strategies and resources” (p. 7). This multicultural configuration was a beginning endeavour for some faculty at the University of Alberta and their research into the program was meant to promote further development of their teacher education program.

The University of Saskatchewan utilizes a teacher education program that has all teacher candidates participate in an integrative antiracist course prior to graduation

(Schick & St. Denis, 2003). This teacher education program is in close proximity with the Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan forcing them to develop methods of training all prospective teachers for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. The authors noted significant difficulty addressing multicultural education in their program due mostly to teacher candidate resistance. This topic will be thoroughly discussed in the following section on “Issues with Multicultural Teacher Education Programs.”

### **Issues with Multicultural Teacher Education Programs**

Multicultural education is a complex concept that teacher education programs have struggled to implement. As a result, there are often many issues that exist with multicultural education in these programs. This is highlighted by Hammett and Bainbridge (2009), who collected data from teacher candidates across Canada using open-ended questionnaires and discovered the following: “a) multiculturalism is an add-on to curriculum planning and practice; b) diverse/multicultural material is controversial in teaching practices and in schools; and c) concern for social issues, social justice and equality can be turned off and on” (p. 155). Many individuals have conducted research on the problems associated with multicultural education in teacher education programs and this section has broken the issues into the following main categories: structure, faculty, teacher candidates’ background, teacher candidates’ apprehensiveness, teacher candidates’ experiences, practicum setup, curriculum, and other issues.

#### **Structure**

Different teacher education programs integrate multicultural education in different ways for a variety of reasons. Many programs tend to address the issue of multicultural education through an additive approach to existing structures. More specifically, these



courses usually are not mandatory for teacher candidates and, unfortunately, many graduates of these programs often chose not to enrol in the optional multicultural education courses (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Nicholas, 1999). In addition, Gill and Chalmers (2007) argued that teacher educators often address diversity in straightforward ways rather than “genuinely addressing and decolonizing the mainly Eurocentric and modernist school curriculum” (p. 552). By integrating multicultural education through optional courses, teacher education programs indirectly suggest that multicultural education is not essential to everyday teaching. As well, this model of course delivery does not address the structural inequities within universities and, therefore, meaningful change in teacher education is hampered (Assaf et al., 2010; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Jenks et al., 2001; Lund, 1998; Young & Graham, 2000).

The optional course method leaves consideration of multicultural issues primarily with teacher candidates who have a passion for multicultural education and social equity, most of whom are culturally, ethnically, or racially diverse (Nicholas, 1999). Therefore, the implementation of an optional multicultural education course does little to effect change amongst many of the White, middle-class teacher candidates that represent the majority in these programs (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004). Some researchers (e.g., Lien, 1999; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004) believe that multicultural teacher education programs need to delve into the beliefs, values, and attitudes of their teacher candidates. Without challenging teacher candidates’ “binary epistemological world” (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004, p. 1), multicultural education becomes less relevant, allowing teacher candidates to take their undeveloped perceptions of multicultural education into the learning environments that contain culturally diverse students (Lien,

1999). In addition, Ghosh (1996) believes that unless teacher candidates are exposed to instruction about multicultural education, they will reinforce the political and dominant structures, rather than provide opportunities for equity and justice.

One other aspect of structure that creates issues for multicultural education is the difficulty to make changes within the teacher education program. When change begins to occur, teacher education programs often adopt minute changes, are typically slow to respond, and have to seek approval from many levels before changes take place (Dunn et al., 2009; Fullan, 2000; Ghosh, 1996). Consequently, teacher preparation is often criticized for being “overly theoretical, having little connection to practice, offering fragmented and incoherent courses, and lacking in a clear shared conception of teaching among faculty” (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007, p. 119). In addition, Gill and Chalmers (2007) found it “difficult to accommodate diversity within the theory of practice of a traditional university institution in which the Teacher Education Office questions important decisions” (p. 552). Therefore, teacher education programs have many hurdles to overcome to improve multicultural education instruction, each of which will take time and effort to overcome. Moreover, the need for these programs to have a specific number of graduates has created a program that relies more heavily on the business economics of the program instead of the more important aspect of pedagogy (Jefferson, 2009).

### **Faculty**

Inherent to the issues regarding the structure of teacher education programs is the faculty within these programs. If the faculty cannot grasp the fundamental aspects of multicultural education, it is unlikely that they can provide teacher candidates with the

necessary knowledge to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. The biggest issues with faculty are their limited diversity, lack of cohesion, and lack of understanding.

In the opinion of some individuals, multicultural education is an essential component of teacher education programs because of the limited diversity amongst teacher candidates. Likewise, when researching teacher candidates' perspectives on multicultural education, Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004) found that students believed the "largely homogenous faculty" (p. 344) was part of the issue in addressing diversity and promoting equity. They also found that teacher candidates believed this uniformity acted as a "barrier that continues to prohibit the entry of minorities into the teaching profession" (p. 344). Similar to the problems associated with White, middle class teacher candidates, a homogenous faculty might not value multicultural education and, therefore, they might be unaware of the significance of addressing the inequities within their programs (Lund, 1998). As well, teacher educators usually have a variety of experiences in education and many tend to have strong held beliefs about teaching practices (Lund, 1998). Therefore, their ability to critically teach issues surrounding multicultural education might be obstructed.

Teacher candidates have the opportunity to learn from numerous teacher educators during their program. Many of these teacher educators specialize in certain content areas, and this focused expertise allows them to teach from their experiences and beliefs. As a result, the teacher candidates in Mujawamariya and Mahrouse's (2004) research found their understanding of multicultural education issues and strategies depended on the course instructor. As described by Mujawamariya and Mahrouse, "some

instructors ascribe an emphasis to similarities that minimize attention to ethnoracial difference, whereas other more critical approaches encourage students to question their privilege and complicity in systems of oppression” (p. 343). In addition, some research has discovered that some faculty resist discussions about multicultural issues (Tan & Lefebvre, 2010; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008). The differing viewpoints among faculty provides different understandings for students, which can be attributed to many different factors. Some of these factors are outlined in Darling-Hammond’s (2006b) research of teacher education programs. For example, she stated that

creating cohesion has been difficult in teacher education because of departmental divides, individualistic norms, and the hiring of part-time adjunct instructors in some institutions that have used teacher education as a ‘cash cow’ rather than an investment in our nation’s future. (p. 306)

The suggestion here is that teacher educators within a faculty need to be on the same wavelength in order to provide sufficient tools and strategies for teacher candidates to address multicultural education in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms. This suggestion is endorsed by researchers, such as Lund (1998) and Kosnik and Beck (2008), who believe that faculty members need to collaborate with each other to provide a coherent and logical method to instruct teacher candidates.

In addition to the lack of coherence among faculty, some teacher educators lack the requisite knowledge to teach multicultural education to teacher candidates. This is emphasized by Nicholas (1999) who outlined that sometimes faculty’s perceived lack of knowledge and experience and their perception that multicultural education only deals with negative experiences of minorities makes it difficult to promote cultural pluralism.

In addition, Schuerholz-Lehr (2007) suggested that faculties often express a willingness and openness towards diversity, but that they struggle to incorporate these attitudes into their teaching. Therefore, the importance of cohesion and knowledge is very important within faculties if multicultural education is to move forward.

### **Teacher Candidates' Background**

Teacher candidates seek a career in teaching for many different reasons. Some may have had enjoyable experiences with their teachers growing up and want to foster that desire to learn in students. Others may want to effect change on the education system by bringing a new philosophy to the classrooms. Whatever their reasons, these teacher candidates have a desire to be involved in education. Unfortunately, in regards to diversity, many of these teacher candidates seem to have similar backgrounds and experiences. Many teacher candidates come into teacher education programs with limited experiences about diversity, due in part to a lack of multicultural school setting or as a result of living in all-White neighbourhoods. This limited experience can lead to anxiety and a sense of unpreparedness when it comes time to working in classrooms with cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity (Dunn et al., 2009; Finney & Orr, 1995; Forlin, Loreman, Sharma, & Earle, 2009; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Johnston et al., 2009; Mujawamariya, 2001; Pappamihiel, 2007; Solomon et al., 2005). The attraction to the teaching profession for many is their positive experience with education, which may create an issue because teachers tend to emulate the inequities that existed when they attended school and are susceptible to continue to disseminate the values of the dominant culture on their future students (Lund, 1998; Schick, 2000).

Upon entering teacher education programs, teacher candidates have a variety of expectations in regards to the knowledge they plan to acquire during their training. As a result, these expectations might not align with the goals of multicultural education. Teacher educators need to recognize that teacher candidates do not come into the program as blank slates (Lowenstein, 2009). In addition, some teacher candidates recognize the reasoning behind multicultural education, but most do not actively seek opportunities to be involved within it (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009). This is outlined in research by Nicholas (1999), who found that many White teacher candidates do not appreciate the need for multicultural education because of their background and their desire to teach in all-White neighbourhoods. Hagan and McGlynn (2004), when researching their initial teacher education program, found similar results and expressed them as follows:

Diversity, although regarded as important by students, appears to be a 'soft' issue, not viewed as integral to personal development and removed from the instrumentalism of day-to-day classroom practice...students do not view intercultural education and learning for diversity as pressing, given that the majority of them will probably work in schools which are relatively monocultural in nature and largely reflective of their own particular perspective. (p. 248)

This approach to their training allows teacher candidates to place their focus on other concepts, enabling them to disengage from the process of multicultural and antiracist education. Moreover, Schick (2000) concluded that some teacher candidates choose not to recognize Whiteness because they could "lose control over privilege, history, job opportunities, a good name, positive teacher image, and the power of self-definition" (p.

96). By permitting teacher candidates to avoid critical engagement in multicultural education, teacher educators miss important opportunities to help their students understand the issues related to racism and cultural hegemony. Finally, Hagan and McGlynn found that the teacher candidates in their program “feel the process of teacher education was conservative in nature and demanded that they conform to certain norms of behaviours or practice” (p. 247). By extension, therefore, if teacher candidates come into the program with limited experiences and the training does nothing to question their long-held beliefs, then little improvements may be made to help advance social equity.

### **Teacher Candidates’ Apprehensiveness**

Being aware of the effective practices related to teaching multicultural education to teacher candidates is one thing, but some teacher educators have noted a resistance from their students to teaching multicultural principles. Teacher educators struggle to break down the barriers of Whiteness that teacher candidates personalize and resist in their training.

Upon entering the program, teacher candidates are generally ignorant of inequities because their educational experiences have not afforded them any problems. As a result, White teacher candidates often express blindness and invisibility towards diversity because they are unable to acknowledge the existence of inequities (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004). Teacher candidates do this because they tend to be unaware of their cultural existence in a multicultural society.

One researcher, Levine-Rasky (2000), noted that

it is rare to find among teacher candidates any reflection about white racialization and personal identity. The claim that whites are generally unaware of themselves

as racialized is so prevalent in the literature that it has become something of an axiom. (p. 267)

The issue behind this misunderstanding is that teacher candidates are often apprehensive about discussing multicultural education issues, even at the conclusion of the teacher education program, which may result in their inability to understand racial awareness and promote social equity.

Teacher educators note difficulty in creating discussion regarding racial issues in education because many White teacher candidates become defensive (Levine-Rasky, 2000; Lien, 1999). Teacher candidates' tendency to make race issues personal compels them to ignore the more prevalent "societal and systemic manifestations" (p. 264) that generates inequities (Levine-Rasky, 2000). This thought is supported by Schick and St. Denis (2003) who stated that "students would prefer to see racism as a minor problem, a result of attitudes and individual prejudices instead of institutional practice and ideological assumptions that support ongoing construction of whiteness as racially dominant as well as invisible identification" (p. 6). Multicultural teacher education programs have found teacher candidates' apprehensiveness as a roadblock to promoting multicultural education in classrooms, but teacher educators must continue to be persistent when dealing with these issues in order to promote a more pluralistic society. A plural society is beneficial because, as Carr and Lund (2009) found, "many white people do not see themselves as white, while simultaneously seeing non-whites as people of 'colour' and further perceiving themselves as being 'good' is problematic" (p. 52).



## **Teacher Candidates' Experiences**

Eight-month teacher education programs continue to be the standard for the training of new teachers before they can teach in Ontario. Unfortunately, teacher candidates believe their training is mostly insufficient for preparing them to teach in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms. In regards to multicultural education, this belief is even more prevalent. In their studies on teacher candidates' perspectives, both Mujawamariya (2001) and Hagan and McGlynn (2004) found a high percentage of teacher candidates who felt unprepared for teaching to the diversity found in the classroom. Teacher candidates believe that their programs do not address the issues of diversity and are impractical to their daily practice.

Multicultural education should provide teacher candidates with experiences and knowledge that could help them succeed in teaching culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse students. If teachers are not receiving adequate training with multicultural education, the suggestion of having culturally responsive teaching in our public schools might be in danger. In a study conducted by Hagan and McGlynn (2004), only 39% of teacher candidates found their courses beneficial for teaching in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms. According to Finney and Orr (1995), teacher candidates rarely have the opportunity to address the "political or social contextualization" (p. 327) that is necessary to "change these prejudices and misunderstandings into more informed and realistic perspectives" (p. 327). If teacher education programs fail to excel in their delivery of multicultural education, teachers might not be capable of creating the social change that was desired with the creation of the Multiculturalism Act in 1971. Some teacher candidates go as far as to declare that "curricular initiatives developed by

Canadian faculties of education to engage and instruct them in equitable and inclusive strategies as lacking, and much ambivalence shapes their understandings of, commitments to, and preparedness for multicultural approaches to education” (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004, p. 337). In a simpler sense, many teacher candidates leave their program believing that multicultural education is not important because it is addressed in limited detail or superficially by the faculty (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Tan & Lefebvre, 2010; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008).

Many teacher education programs continue to address multicultural education in simple ways that “[promote] educational practices that sustain and reproduce inequity” (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004, p. 349). It is argued by Solomon et al. (2005) that “the ongoing construction of white racial identities has socialized whites to conceptualize their world in ways that favour their positions within it. Educators construct discourses that are often academically and emotionally debilitating to the ‘racial other’” (p. 147). Therefore, according to Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, teacher education programs have been unable to respond appropriately to the development of multicultural education because most graduates of these programs continue to hold to their understanding of multicultural education that was generated from their experience in school. This understanding is troublesome in the context that many of these graduates in Ontario come from White, middle-class backgrounds.

Teacher education programs also tend to provide insufficient guidance towards multicultural practices. Some teacher candidates believe “they were left to figure out the ‘how’ of multicultural education on their own” (p. 347), which causes a disservice to their future teaching because they lack the teaching strategies that promote multicultural

education (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004). By not providing students with adequate teaching strategies, these programs may be forcing teacher candidates to ignore the intricacies of diverse classrooms, which can cause teachers to focus on content delivery rather than the needs of every student (Dunn et al., 2009).

### **Practicum Setup**

The practicum setup of teacher education provides an opportunity for teacher candidates to put their knowledge and theoretical understandings to practice. The teaching practicum is known to be one of the more important aspects of the training experiences for prospective teachers because teachers can implement and practice successful teaching strategies. This is especially important with regards to multicultural education because students need the opportunity to develop strategies that are useful in ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse classrooms (Dunn et al., 2009; Johnston et al., 2009; Skerrett, 2007). This can be achieved through additional practical opportunities to transfer theory to practice (Assaf et al., 2010; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Jenks et al., 2001; Liu & Milman, 2010; Tan & Lefebvre, 2010; Taylor, 2010; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008). In her review of literature, Skerrett found “coursework, for instance, should address the academic and socio-cultural benefits of multicultural antiracist teaching and provide teachers with useful strategies in this regard. These courses should be accompanied by practicums in diverse schools and their surrounding communities” (p. 1824). However, these rich learning experiences are hard to find for teacher candidates and many fail to experience and implement multicultural education strategies to the fullest degree. In areas of limited diversity, Hammett and Bainbridge (2009) found that multicultural education is not embraced or emphasized in schools. In other areas, school

communities tend to have a lack of knowledge and awareness of multicultural education because of additional issues or areas of concern, such as math and literacy scores (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Lund, 1998). In addition, the practicum experience can be hindered by associate teachers who show resistance to moving away from the curriculum (Assaf et al., 2010; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009). In some of her other work, Darling-Hammond (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007) mentions the importance of expert teachers as associates to show teacher candidates effective practices and analyze “how, when and why they work” (p. 118). In addition to these practicum placement-related issues, Mule (2006) states that “the typical one semester practicum may not provide enough time. Equally important is that interns are provided with necessary scaffolding by university and school-based teacher educators as they plan and carry out their inquiry” (p. 215). In conclusion, many changes should be implemented in the practicum portion of teacher education programs to enhance the quality of training for teacher candidates in regards to multicultural education.

### **Curriculum**

Curriculum is at the core of many educational programs; it acts as a guideline for teachers to understand what their students need to understand upon graduation. In the faculty of education, the multicultural education curriculum is one aspect of the teacher education program. Unfortunately, many teacher education institutions have been unable to address the concept of multiculturalism effectively in their programs. Lund (1998) found that teacher education programs have been indifferent when it comes to the needs of diverse students and he noted that few accomplishments have been made to help rectify the situation. Thus, according to Lund, by not valuing multiculturalism within the

curriculum, teacher candidates may recognize multicultural education as unimportant. Providing teacher candidates with opportunities to explore and engage with multiculturalism might be a benefit to their overall growth and development. However, teacher education programs are in a difficult position as Solomon et al. (2005) noted “the standardization of student curriculum and pedagogy has removed the reflective thought and critical interrogation of the curriculum in faculties of education, focusing instead on the technological and skills-oriented approach to teacher preparation” (p. 149). Therefore, shifting teacher educators’ focus towards the accumulation of skills for specific subject areas implies that there is less time for teacher candidates to engage in a multicultural curriculum. The lack of engagement is reinforced by Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2007) who stated that “candidates cannot become competent and skilful by reflecting in the abstract – they need a solid body of knowledge to provide a foundation for the judgement and analytic ability they are developing” (p. 130). Providing teacher candidates with more thorough experiences and discussing these issues amongst their peers should help to prepare these graduates for employment in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms.

### **Other Issues**

Amongst the variety of issues that exist with the structure and faculty of teacher education programs, there are many other important factors that impede the successful implementation of multicultural education in teacher education programs. Thus far, the discussion has looked primarily on factors that are central to the institutions themselves rather than considering factors that exist outside of the program, such as the impact of government. Teacher education programs need the support of government to assist in

making changes that develop multicultural education. Unfortunately, the lack of cooperation with government officials is viewed as one of the main problems with multicultural education as evidenced in the research of two authors: Nicholas (1999), who stated that “the biggest problems pertaining to multicultural education were reported as a lack of finances, a lack of interest, and a lack of understanding of the need for multicultural education” (p. 44), and Chan (2007), who argued that the “implementation of existing policies remain problematic due to lack of resources, priorities within schools, and the need for staff development and awareness of racial and ethnic issues” (p. 141). When the government fails to provide support for multicultural policies, in regards to funding and direction, multicultural education has a tendency of being placed on the back burner. In addition, when the government places importance on standardization and test results, teacher education programs usually respond with teaching strategies that help to rectify these publicly identified problems. This is reinforced by Forlin et al. (2009), who stated that “one of the biggest challenges in the new millennium for teacher education institutions has been the rapid increase in the breadth of curricula that has to be covered” (p. 195).

As this section substantiates, multicultural teacher education can improve in a variety of aspects. The following section will outline some of the improvements that could be considered to better prepare graduates of these programs for teaching in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms.

### **Future of Multicultural Education**

Multicultural teacher education is slowly becoming a more fundamental aspect in the preparation of teachers. This importance is evidenced by the magnitude of research

published on the topic and referenced in this literature review. As we look towards the future, there are many improvements that are required to create stronger multicultural education programs in teacher education. This section will highlight the important aspects of teacher education that exist and what should be expected in the future.

Based on the relative success of some teacher education programs in regards to multicultural education, initial training should continue to progress with the principles that these programs have initiated. More specifically, the awareness and implementation of critical discourse should continue to develop in order to promote a pedagogy that empowers future teachers to become positive agents of change (Hagan & McGlynn, 2004; Portelli et al., 2007; Smith, 2009; Solomon et al., 2005). In addition, Johnston et al. (2009) argue that this consideration needs to be matched with “a genuine reflective engagement with discrimination, personalized habits and biases, learning about others deeply and changing one’s own ways” (p. 14). As a result, teacher education programs should be able to produce teacher candidates who are respectful of diversity within Canada (Michael-Luna & Marri, 2011). Consequently, due to the depth and breadth of teacher education programs, teacher educators will likely need to repeatedly nurture the prospective teachers through this critical discourse. This argument is supported by Dunn et al. (2009) who stated,

Considering the requisite shifts in personal perspectives and ways of being in the world, along with the acquisition of subject content knowledge and pedagogical practice in each field, student teachers need time and a broad range of experience to construct new understandings of their role in the classroom and their relationships with their students. (p. 552)

The onus appears to be on teacher educators who are responsible for providing rich learning experiences to their teacher candidates. Therefore, the instructional approaches and values of these teacher educators must continue to evolve by including multicultural education strategies with the purpose of addressing societal inequities (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Skerrett, 2007). This future growth is accentuated in Darling-Hammond (2006b) who stated,

Schools of education must design programs that help prospective teachers to understand deeply a wide array of things about learning, social and cultural contexts, and teaching and be able to enact these understandings in complex classrooms serving increasingly diverse students. (p. 302)

To achieve this goal, teacher education will need to reflect and endure continuous change for many years. Smith (2009) argued that “more fundamental reform at the preservice teacher education level will be required if the result is to be an educational system that no longer continues to discriminate by institutionalizing ‘dominant’ Western cultural structures, values and practices” (p. 47). The following paragraph will emphasize some of the more pertinent demands for change that could surface in the near future.

In regards to multicultural education, many authors outline the importance of collaboration within teacher education programs. The necessity to create cohesive and collaborative partnerships among universities, faculty, teacher candidates, schools, and the community is essential to promoting cross-cultural understanding among student teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Gill & Chalmers, 2007; Johnston et al., 2009; Lowenstein, 2009; Lund, 1998; Mule, 2006; Muschell & Roberts, 2011). Having strong relationships allows each component to trust the others as they



proceed to work towards social equity together. An advantage to these relationships is that it should provide teacher candidates with opportunities to work in diverse classrooms to learn about other cultures and to practice their trade during practicum experiences. These programs traditionally have these interactions near the end of the teacher education program, but, in contrast, Dunn et al. (2009) believe that teacher education programs would benefit with these experiences at the beginning of the program to bring “students long-held beliefs” (p. 536) into question and to lay the foundation for multicultural education. Providing rich learning experiences early in the program that connect to practices being taught in courses has an effect on a “teacher’s practices, confidence, effectiveness and long-term commitment to teaching” (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007, p. 124). The confidence of teacher candidates is important because future teachers need to feel self-assured in their ability to teach diverse students; otherwise, the inherent questioning of their ability might permeate through their teaching practices and cause students to be misinformed. This is supported by Forlin et al. (2009) who stated

The aim of pre-service teacher education in preparation for inclusion should undeniably focus on improving the self-efficacy of pre-service teachers, developing more positive attitudes and reducing their concerns by increasing their understanding and confidence in meeting the needs of diverse learners. (p. 205)

In order for change to galvanize these ideas, a considerable amount of reform needs to take place at the structural level of teacher education programs. This may occur through a variety of methods which focus on the retraining of faculty and the revamping of teacher education curriculum to include multicultural strategies (Lund, 1998; Solomon

et al., 2005). By infusing these initiatives into the foundation of teacher education, there is a possibility that multicultural education will excel, which should eventually lead to a society that values and practices social equity. Finally, changes will likely continue to subsist as long as the demographics of Ontario's population continue the trend of expanding diversely.

### **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

Throughout this study, the teacher candidates' perceptions of the effectiveness of multicultural education in preparing them to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms were examined using the experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of graduates from two teacher education programs in Ontario. The design was based on the study conducted by Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004), who examined the effectiveness of multicultural education in the teacher education program at a university in Ontario. In modifying the original study, certain aspects of Mujawamariya and Mahrouse's teacher candidate questionnaire were changed to provide question clarity and a greater focus on community and local experts. With regards to multicultural education, the incorporation of community in a child's education is viewed as a desirable initiative to help make connections between students' home and school environments. Studies (e.g., Johnston et al., 2009; Lund, 1998; Schick, 2000) have demonstrated the benefits of involving the community in schools, especially those residing in areas of cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity. Providing awareness in teacher education programs affords teacher candidates an additional source of knowledge that can help inform and enhance their understanding of diversity and multicultural education. Ultimately, the importance of this study is best illustrated when one considers the various ways in which demographics in Ontario continue to change. New teachers need to be prepared and qualified to teach in areas that reflect cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity. Appropriately, an examination of the methodology and design, selection of sites and participants, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, methodological assumptions, limitations, credibility, and ethical

considerations are described in order to provide one with an in-depth understanding of both the study and its process.

### **Research Methodology and Design**

Teacher candidates' experiences with multicultural education were analyzed in order to determine their perception of the effectiveness of multicultural education in preparing them for teaching in ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse classrooms throughout Ontario. A mixed methods research design focused on teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education. There are many important reasons for using mixed methods research that are discussed in this section.

Mixed methods research is described by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (p. 17). From a philosophical perspective, mixed methods research is situated between the traditional methods of both quantitative and qualitative research. Adopting a mixed methods approach, therefore, incorporates the strengths of both research processes and provides the study with a more balanced investigation. This combination of approaches has been referenced by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, who believe that the mixture of two traditional approaches provides researchers with the best opportunities for providing complete answers to research questions. As a result, a mixed methods research design was implemented for this study to offer opportunities for thorough answers to the research questions.

This study utilized multiple instruments (e.g., questionnaires and interviews) to collect data. This type of combination is supported by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004)

who declared that “adding qualitative interviews to experiments as a manipulation check and perhaps as a way to discuss directly the issues under investigation and tap into participants’ perspectives and meanings will help avoid some potential problems with the [quantitative questionnaire] method” (p. 18).

In this study, a questionnaire was used to gather the opinions and perspectives of teacher candidates from two universities within Ontario. This component surveyed a purposeful sample of the population of interest at two teacher education programs in the province. This information was quantified and was used to create generalizations of the provinces’ teacher training institutions. In addition, an interview component complemented the questionnaire data by seeking elaboration, enhancement, and clarification of the results from the questionnaire (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Therefore, the interview was included in this study and, as a result, a more thorough understanding of the teacher candidates’ experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education were analyzed in order to discover answers to the research questions.

Mixing and combining strategies provided more opportunities for gathering data than what could be accomplished by using mono-method studies. As well, an interpretive perspective was utilized in the analysis of the research findings using the PASW/SPSS (version 18) software. This approach was the most effective and constructive manner of conducting research for this study because it was useful for studying a large number of teacher candidates, while simultaneously providing opportunities to discuss beneficial aspects of each program that can be used to promote change at other teacher education programs within Ontario.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In this study, teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multiculturalism in their teacher education program were investigated. Specifically, three questions shaped the focus of this investigation. How do teacher education programs in Ontario address multicultural education? How do teacher candidates perceive multicultural education curriculum? And finally, how well are dominant culture teacher candidates prepared to teach in diverse Ontario school classrooms?

Currently, there is a strong belief that teacher candidates are ill-prepared to teach in classrooms wherein exists cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity. This hypothesis was based on studies that have shown multicultural education curricula to be lacking and, as a result, many teacher education programs throughout Canada have been ineffective in preparing teacher candidates for teaching in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse communities (Dunn et al., 2009; Johnston et al., 2009; Lund, 1998; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Pappamihiel, 2007). In addition, my personal experience supports the results from past studies, thereby providing justification for the previously identified hypothesis.

### **Selection of Site and Participants**

The selection of the site and participants was a crucial element of the research process. In order to simplify the results for the whole province, there was a need for sites that span across Ontario. In addition, these university communities also provided teacher candidates with opportunities for practica in both rural and urban settings.

## **Recruitment**

Prior to recruitment, clearance of the proposed research was sought from the research ethics boards within both universities. Recruitment started with the location of suitable sites that allowed for purposeful sampling. This study focused on the teacher education programs at two universities in Ontario, Canada, which have been named Southwest University and East University in order not to identify them. These universities were chosen because these universities are spread across a wide area of Ontario, which provided their teacher candidates with practicum placements in rural and urban settings. Seeking participants at these universities allowed the researcher the ability to draw fair conclusions regarding the satisfaction with multicultural education in teacher education programs in the province.

The second step of the recruitment process was to obtain ethics clearance from both universities. After ethics clearance, participants were sought through email communication from faculties of education at these universities. Once each faculty of education agreed to participate in the research, a letter of invitation was emailed to teacher candidates within its program. This letter outlined the purpose of the study, described the process, listed the benefits of their participation, and asked for their consent. The email contained a link for teacher candidates to access if they were interested in the study and decided to participate. Teacher candidates were asked to acknowledge their consent by clicking the link at the bottom of the email. Upon clicking, the teacher candidates were directed to the online questionnaire.

## **Participants**

The teacher candidates ranged in age from 22 to 43 years. The participants were mostly White females, with 1 participant identifying their culture as Akan. There were 31 participants (5 males and 26 females) in this study. Some of these participants had exposure to diversity before, during, and after their respective programs of study, but very few highlighted extensive experiences. Participation in the research was voluntary, which allowed for a variety of thoughts and opinions. A few participants at each university were asked to partake in a short interview to gather additional information on the multicultural education curricula at each institution (see Table 1).

## **Instrumentation**

This study was designed to address the issue of whether multicultural education in teacher education programs effectively prepares teacher candidates for employment in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse Ontario classrooms. To answer this question, an adapted questionnaire from Mujawamariya and Mahrouse's (2004) study was used to collect initial data. As well, specific questions were put forward in an interview of various participants in order to support (or refute) initial findings while also providing a more thorough understanding of their experiences. In this section, a detailed description of each instrument and its development is outlined.

### **Teacher Candidate Questionnaire**

The teacher candidate questionnaire was utilized to discover the participants' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education at their university. The questionnaire was divided into several components, each of which focused on various aspects of the teacher education program (e.g., curricula, practicum). As a result



Table 1

*Participants with their Demographics by Group*

## Interview Participants Demographics for Five Main Categories

Participant	Sex	Program Stream	Grad Year	High School Graduation Location	Certification Division
East1	Female	Consecutive	2011	Rural	Primary/Junior
East3	Female	Consecutive	2011	Suburban	Intermediate/Senior
East8	Female	Consecutive	2011	Suburban	Primary/Junior
Southwest1	Female	Concurrent	2011	Rural	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest3	Male	Concurrent	2009	Rural	Intermediate/Senior
Southwest8	Female	Concurrent	2009	Rural	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest10	Female	Concurrent	2009	Suburban	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest18	Female	Concurrent	2009	Suburban	Junior/Intermediate

## Quoted Questionnaire Participants Demographics for Five Main Categories

Participant	Sex	Program Stream	Grad Year	High School Graduation Location	Certification Division
Southwest7	Female	Consecutive	2009	Urban	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest12	Female	Concurrent	2009	Suburban	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest13	Female	Concurrent	2010	Suburban	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest14	Female	Consecutive	2009	Rural	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest16	Female	Concurrent	2009	Rural	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest17	Male	Concurrent	2009	Suburban	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest19	Female	Consecutive	2009	Rural	Primary/Junior
Southwest20	Female	Consecutive	2009	Rural	Junior/Intermediate
Southwest23	Female	Concurrent	2009	Suburban	Junior/Intermediate

of its use in Mujawamariya and Mahrouse's (2004) study, the adapted instrument outlined in this section was considered to be valid and reliable. The questionnaire had nine parts (see Appendix A).

The initial section of the questionnaire was used to retrieve background information about the participant. This information was used to provide the demographics of the teacher candidates and their education programs at each site. The researcher used these data to determine areas that could be analyzed for statistical comparisons. Some areas of interest included location of university, program stream, graduation year, certified teaching division, and area of high school graduation.

The next four sections of the teacher candidate questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale to help determine their perception of the programs' effectiveness. More specifically, the sections were: program, curriculum, courses, and practicum. These sections were created to focus on the foundational aspects of the teacher candidates' training. Participants indicated their perceptions of the effectiveness of the program as excellent, good, acceptable, poor, or very poor.

The participants were also asked to define multicultural education from their own personal perspective as a means by which to both enhance and inform their own understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and knowledge. In addition, this definition provided the researcher with a better understanding of the emphasis placed on multicultural education at each institution. If a participant was unable to clearly articulate a good understanding, it was assumed that the multicultural education curricula had a limited impact on teacher candidates' learning.

The following two sections used a 3-point Likert scale (e.g., yes, no, unsure) that was designed to extract the perceptions of the participants and helped to determine their preparedness to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse Ontario classrooms, as well as their opinions and experiences of multicultural education. These perceptions were analyzed to help determine their perception of the effectiveness of multicultural curricula.

Finally, the last section, titled “Suggestions,” provided the participants with an opportunity to discuss ways to make improvements to their programs. This information was used to help determine areas of weakness within multicultural education curricula and offer ways of remedying the problem(s).

### **Post-Questionnaire Interview**

The interview was used to obtain a more thorough understanding of teacher candidates’ experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education in their teacher education programs. Following the questionnaire, participants were asked for their voluntary involvement in the interview in order to gather additional information about the teacher education program at their university and how it had addressed multicultural education. Once expressing interest in an interview, participants were contacted via email to organize a time and place to conduct the interview.

### **Data Collection and Recording**

Two different instruments were used in this research to collect and record data. The teacher candidate questionnaire and the postquestionnaire interview were utilized to solicit data. Each instrument provided a thorough understanding of teacher candidates’ experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education.

The teacher candidate questionnaire was adapted, with permission, from a previously used questionnaire in Mujawamariya and Mahrouse's (2004) study. This instrument was used to acquire diagnostic information regarding the experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of teacher candidates. Once the survey was completed by the participants, the data were collected by the researcher and input into PASW/SPSS (Version 18) software for organization and analysis. These data were compared across the two universities to determine if the results were consistent throughout teacher education programs in Ontario.

The postquestionnaire interview at the end of the study contained questions about different aspects of multicultural education curricula and teacher candidates' experiences with respect to their program. The interview questions (see Appendix B) were formulated to specifically address the research questions and to provide a more thorough understanding of the teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of their multicultural teacher education. The questions were specifically related to their experiences with multicultural education and their preparedness to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. More specifically, this portion of the research focused on how teacher education programs implemented multicultural education into the training of prospective teachers. The interviews took place at each campus and the participants had the option of choosing an individual or group setting. Each interview was audiotaped using a digital recorder in order to ensure reliability and credibility. Each digital audio file was coded and then transcribed to transform the data into written transcripts. These transcripts were sent to the participants to ensure accuracy and sent back to the researcher with any corrections.

## **Data Processing and Analysis**

Two methods of data processing and analysis were used in this research. It was necessary to quantify the data across a large participant base to gain an understanding of teacher education provincially. Another goal was to understand both positive and negative experiences of the program. For this purpose, the qualitative method of interview questions was used to elicit a more thorough understanding of the teacher candidates' training. The data processing and analysis of each instrument is described in this section.

### **Scoring the Teacher Candidate Questionnaire**

A teacher candidate questionnaire was used to gather the participants' personal information such as age, gender, race, linguistic background, and program of study. The information was categorized and organized using PASW/SPSS (Version 18) software. Using descriptive and inferential statistics, analysis of this information was used to determine the demographics of each program.

The questionnaire was used to measure candidates' experiences of multicultural education within the program (e.g., curriculum, courses, and practicum). Using this instrument, participants rated their agreement towards 24 statements using a 5-point Likert scale. The options for each statement were: 5 excellent, 4 good, 3 acceptable, 2 poor, and 1 very poor. The data were analyzed using inferential and descriptive statistics. More specifically, the ratings of each participant were averaged to determine the participants perception of the effectiveness of the program in regards to each statement. The results of this categorization helped to provide an understanding of the effectiveness, based on the participants' experiences, of the teacher education program in each area.

In addition, the questionnaire was used to measure candidates' attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and experiences toward multicultural education and diversity. Participants were asked to include their definition of multicultural education to show their understanding of the concept. Furthermore, this instrument had participants rate their agreement towards four statements using a 3-point Likert scale. Each of these statements was organized using PASW/SPSS (Version 18) software to illustrate the participants' readiness to teach multicultural education. Each statement was rated with a -1 for Yes, +1 for No, and 0 for Unsure. This culminated in a possible score of -4. The results were used to gauge the participants' readiness to teach and the satisfaction of their training in regards to multicultural education. A score of -3 or lower represented the participants' readiness as high. A score between negative 2 and positive 2 represented the participants' readiness as satisfactory, while a score of +3 or higher represented the participants' readiness as low. The data were analyzed using inferential statistics to average the ratings among participants in order to determine the readiness of graduates to teach in multiethnic classrooms at each university.

Moreover, Part 6 of the teacher candidate questionnaire was used to determine the opinions and experiences of teacher candidates in regards to multicultural education. This was also quantified using a 3-point Likert scale. To score this questionnaire, a negative point was allocated for a response of yes, a positive point was registered for a response of no, while no point was given for a response of unsure for statements 1-7 and 11 in this section. In contrast, for statements 8-10, the values for responses of yes and no were reversed. Based on the score, each teacher candidate was deemed to have a positive/important or a negative/unimportant view of multicultural education. This

resulted in a possible score of -11. A score of negative 5 or lower represented a positive and important view. A score between -4 and 4 represented a more negative, unimportant viewpoint and a score above 5 represented a negative and unimportant view of multicultural education. Yet again, the data were analyzed using inferential statistics to average the ratings among participants to determine teacher candidates' opinions and experiences of multicultural education.

The last section of the questionnaire was coded and analyzed qualitatively by the researcher. The data were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of what teacher education programs can incorporate and utilize, according to teacher candidates, in order to improve multicultural education and to better prepare future teacher candidates for teaching in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. This information was analyzed from a within-case perspective using an inductive approach to help find solutions that are particular to each university. The data were then analyzed using a cross-case perspective to generalize for teacher education programs across Ontario.

Finally, the data were analyzed using PASW/SPSS (version 18) software to determine if there was any statistically significant difference between the responses of participants based on the following groups: location of the university (Southwest and East), program stream (concurrent and consecutive), graduation year (June 2009 and June 2011), certified teaching division (Primary-Junior, Junior-Intermediate, and Intermediate-Senior), and area of high school graduation (Rural, Suburban, and Urban).

### **Analyzing the Postquestionnaire Interview**

The written transcripts for the interviews were read with the objective of identifying common themes that were related to the study's research questions. Each

transcript's segments was then coded into exclusive categories based on the research question that was being addressed. These segments were then pasted into a separate document which used the research question as a title. This information was then analyzed using the same approach used in the questionnaire. First, a within-case perspective and inductive approach was employed to provide program specific information, which was then followed by a cross-case analysis to allow for generalizations across the two different programs. Each analysis was drawn on to attain a more thorough understanding of the effectiveness of multicultural education in Ontario and helped to thoroughly answer the research questions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study had limitations that restricted the ability to generalize the findings to all teacher candidates at each institution. The participants in this research were purposefully selected through the mass distribution of invitation emails by faculty of education offices. Consequently, the participants who engaged in the research were likely to be interested in the topic or had specific relevance to their experiences. As a result, these participants could have had a significantly positive or strongly negative viewpoint of multicultural education. This observation was taken into consideration when analyzing the data. Teacher candidates who do not value or engage in multicultural education might not have participated in the research due to a lack of interest in the results.

As well, it was important to remember that each teacher candidate brought his/her own experiences and perspectives into the teacher education program. As a result, they experienced multicultural education curricula differently from their peers. Also, with the



inclusion of speciality courses at universities, some teacher candidates may or may not be able to access the multicultural curricula, which, if they had participated in the study, may have elicited a variety of different viewpoints.

Also, there are limitations that can be found with self-report data. This is emphasized by Darling-Hammond (2006a) who conceded that a “candidates feelings of preparedness may not reflect their actual practices or success with students” (p. 124). This was considered during the analysis of data and in the discussion of the results.

Finally, an additional limitation was the inability to completely generalize the data provincially, because the study used the experiences of teacher candidates at only two of the provinces 13 main teacher education programs. However, having participants at two different postsecondary institutions allowed the researcher to make some generalizations; yet, circumstances at other teacher education programs within the province could be different.

### **Establishing Credibility**

In this study, several methods were used to establish credibility. The researcher tested instrumentation prior to beginning the study, collected data using multiple instruments, collected data at two sites, and validated the interviews by following up with participants after transcription.

Although the Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004) study provided some of the instrumentation, the content and design of the measurement tools were modified for the purpose of this analysis. The teacher candidate questionnaire and the postquestionnaire interview were not field tested for this study because of the similarity in the instrument

tools. No concerns were raised by participants in regards to the wording of statements and questions.

Another way this study established credibility was through the use of multiple instruments. First, participants were asked to fill out a comprehensive questionnaire that provided information on many different aspects of their teacher education program. Secondly, participants were asked to participate in an interview to further explain their experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education. This allowed the researcher to obtain a more thorough understanding of their perceptions of the effectiveness of multicultural education in teacher education programs.

In addition, the study established credibility by collecting data at two sites. This provided an opportunity to ensure the findings were consistent throughout teacher education programs in Ontario. This is important because teacher education programs are monitored by the Ontario College of Teachers. Thus, having research that is relevant to all teacher education programs would be beneficial to making improvements to the training of the province's prospective teachers.

Moreover, credibility was established through correspondence with interviewees after transcription to ensure accuracy of the data. The interview participants reviewed the transcribed data and, if necessary, modified the content to ensure it accurately reflected their perceptions and experiences of multicultural education.

### **Methodological Assumptions**

The methodological assumptions in this research project were that participants could adequately use a computer and internet to access and complete the online questionnaire in a timely manner. In addition, it was assumed that the participants could

adequately remember all aspects of the teacher education program that related to their understanding of multicultural education.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Careful attention was given to protecting the rights of participants. The research ethics boards at both universities reviewed the proposed research and granted clearance before the commencement of the research (see Appendix C). In this study, ethical consideration was given to the issue of informed consent, participation withdrawal, confidentiality, and anonymity.

### **Informed Consent**

Consent is the participant's agreement that he or she wishes to partake in the research. In relation to this study, consent was obtained from the teacher candidates at two universities. Upon receiving a letter of invitation that informed the participant about the study through email and outlined the informed consent, teacher candidates who agreed to the terms were asked to click the link at the bottom of the email, which directed them to the online questionnaire. By agreeing to the terms, each participant acknowledged his or her understanding of the research, recognized his or her role in the study, and granted the researcher permission to contact him or her for a postquestionnaire interview at the conclusion of the questionnaire.

The informed consent form outlined details about the study and researcher contact information. Participants who were willing to participate in the postquestionnaire interview were asked to input their contact information, which included their phone number and/or email, in order to arrange an interview at the convenience of both parties. Participants were asked to print or record this information for future use.

### **Participant Withdrawal**

Participants for this research were notified in the letter of invitation that their participation was voluntary and unrelated to the assessment and evaluation of grades in their teacher education program. The participants were also notified in the consent form of the right of withdrawal from the research study. If a participant chose to withdraw from the research, all data that were not combined and analyzed with other participants would be destroyed. Following analysis, the data could no longer be identified to specific participants; therefore, that information could not be destroyed.

### **Confidentiality**

The issue of confidentiality is an important aspect of ethical research. Precautionary measures were enacted to protect the privacy and rights of the participants. These included safe storage of data and coding of instruments.

In this study, any confidential information revealed by the participants was only shared with my thesis advisor. To keep this information confidential, several precautionary measures were taken. For example, all audio files and questionnaires were stored on an external hard drive in my home. To protect these data, I alone had access to this location.

To maintain confidentiality, all interviews were conducted in private locations. To keep the interview data private, I was responsible for transcribing the interviews. The information was kept secure and stored on my external hard drive.

The information that was gathered from the questionnaire had the distinctive character or recognition factor removed. To maintain confidentiality, teacher candidate participants were assigned a code, with the information placed on a master list. This list

was stored in a secure location. Names of the participants did not appear in the written and oral dissemination of the research. In the reporting of the study, participants were described collectively and in general terms (e.g., number of males and females, location of school, program of study).

Unfortunately, anonymity could not be guaranteed due to the exchange of contact information through electronic communication and the carrying out of face-to-face interviews. However, all personal information remained confidential.

### **Restatement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to compare teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education at two Ontario universities to determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of teacher education programs in the province with respect to multicultural education. As well, this analysis aimed to understand the most effective practices in these programs that contributed to the preparation of teacher candidates for employment in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms in Ontario.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

The growth of multicultural education has been a long and arduous journey, and yet, there is still much further to travel if we wish to support the learning of all students in our multicultural classrooms. Teacher education programs have reacted slowly to this need for greater sensitivity and transparency and have often understated the importance of multicultural education to their teacher candidates (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009). The reluctance to address this issue is troublesome because teachers who are unprepared to teach may create an unfair learning environment for students of diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions. The purpose of this study was to compare teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education at two Ontario universities in order to determine their perceptions of the effectiveness of these programs. It was also the purpose of this study to understand the most effective practices in these programs that contribute to the preparation of teacher candidates for teaching in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms in Ontario.

Specifically, the research question that was investigated was: "Are dominant culture teacher candidates prepared to teach in diverse Ontario school classrooms?" In addition, the following questions were also investigated: "How do teacher education programs in the two Ontario universities participating in this study address multicultural education?" and "How do teacher candidates within these programs perceive the quality of the multicultural education curriculum that is offered as part of their training?"

The design of the study was based on the research conducted by Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004), who examined the satisfaction of teacher candidates at a university in Ontario, with regards to their training in multicultural education, using the perspectives

of teacher candidates in that program. By modifying that study, this research also investigated the use of community and local experts, while new interview questions were integrated to specifically address the research questions.

Participants in this study were voluntary teacher education program graduates from two universities in Ontario, Canada, which have been named Southwest University and East University. Every participant completed an online questionnaire, while some additionally agreed to complete an interview about their experiences in the program. Their experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education were measured using a questionnaire that incorporated quantitative and qualitative features. This included a four-part section that researched general areas such as program, curriculum, courses, and practicum. Following that were two sections that investigated the teacher candidates' readiness to teach in diverse classrooms, satisfaction with their training, as well as their opinions and experiences with multicultural education and/or diversity. The quantitative data were analyzed using PASW/SPSS (version 18) software, while the qualitative features afforded teacher candidates an opportunity to demonstrate their definition of multicultural education, discuss the courses they found useful for their understanding of multicultural education, and provide suggestions for the improvement of multicultural education in teacher education programs. As well, different aspects of the program were discussed in the interview to determine the teacher candidates' perceptions of the effectiveness of multicultural education in their training. These qualitative data were coded to delineate common themes.

The research findings are reported in this chapter. The results have been organized under three headings that help to answer each of the research questions

respectively. These include (a) teacher candidates' perceptions about their preparation for teaching in multicultural contexts, (b) teacher candidates' satisfaction with their program and their perceived readiness to teach in diverse classrooms, (c) and teacher candidates' opinions and experiences of multicultural education.

### **Teacher Candidates' Perceptions about Their Preparation for Teaching in Multicultural Contexts**

The teacher candidate questionnaire was utilized to gather the participants' perceptions of multicultural education in their teacher education program. This section outlines teacher candidates' views on the first four sections of the questionnaire, which include program, curriculum, courses, and practicum. These sections were chosen because the researcher considered them to be the most important aspects of the program and essential to the training of teacher candidates.

#### **Program**

The responses in this section related to general aspects of the program and how the teacher candidates perceived the quality of their training. This section of the questionnaire had statements that fall under an umbrella of topics related to the program. Findings revealed that some teacher candidates, 42.2%, thought multicultural education was taught acceptably in regards to the 11 statements in this section. However, on average only 27.9% of respondents believed the program was good or excellent at addressing multicultural education, while 29.9% considered the program was poor or very poor for this purpose.

The perception about how well the participants' teacher education program prepared them to teach in schools with diverse ethnic populations was also highlighted in



the interview portion of the research. Many of the responses were mixed with positive and negative connotations. In six of the eight interviews, the participant would usually respond with something positive about the program, but would end with a negative statement similar to “it could have been better” or “more time needed to be spent on [multicultural education].” This was emphasized in one teacher candidate’s, *Southwest8*, response when she outlined beneficial and detrimental aspects of the program as follows:

the English class addressed it by making us aware of different projects that you could use, but overall I found that it was lacking. Simply because they didn’t address exactly what you would need when you have different cultures in your classroom.

Not all respondents were in agreement though, as another teacher candidate, *Southwest3*, stated “the program addressed the issue of multicultural education. It helped to make teachers realize that it would be an ongoing issue that would need to be examined.” These conflicting opinions are useful to exhibit the disparity in the responses of the participants.

The use of participants from two research sites in Ontario provided an interesting dynamic to the research. In Part 1 of the teacher candidate questionnaire, the responses from teacher candidates at each university appeared to be different. A Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that Southwest University participants scored a lower rating, on the average, than East University teacher candidates in their evaluation of the program. The results of the test were in the expected direction and significant,  $z = -2.331$ ,  $p = 0.020$ . Southwest teacher candidates had an average rank of 13.76, while East participants had an average rank of 22.44. More specifically, the

biggest difference in their responses occurred for the following statements: “Preparing student teachers to adapt lesson plans to address multicultural issues” ( $z = -2.430, p = 0.015$ ), (Southwest [SW] mean rank = 13.83, East[E] mean rank = 22.25); “Preparing student teachers to be aware of the diversity of students’ cultural traditions” ( $z = -2.207, p = 0.027$ ), (SW mean rank = 14.09, E mean rank = 21.50); and “Preparing student teachers to work effectively with students whose first language is not English” ( $z = -2.747, p = 0.006$ ), (SW mean rank = 13.48, E mean rank = 23.25).

The dissimilarities at the 2 universities were also evident in the teacher candidates’ interviews. Only two teacher candidates provided strictly positive comments or strictly negative comments. The positive comments came from a teacher candidate at East University, while the strictly negative comment came from a participant at Southwest University. The other 6 participants discussed varying degrees of positivity based on what they experienced in their training. Some teacher candidates discussed the additional opportunities for conversation about multicultural education with which they were provided. *East1* mentioned that her “practicum class was put together with the Aboriginal study group, so we heard some perspectives from teacher candidates who were doing placements in highly diverse schools.” Another participant, *East8*, stated “in each class we were encouraged to include examples and materials that represent the cultures of the students in our classes or schools.” In contrast, teacher candidates from the other site provided a critique of their program when they stated that “[The program’s] detriment is that it did not teach about different cultures” (*Southwest3*) and “I can’t remember anything specific, but it was very general” (*Southwest18*). These responses clearly highlight the disparity between the responses at the two universities.

In addition, the data were analyzed for this section to determine if there was a difference between the responses of teacher candidates in relation to their program stream or graduation year. Findings demonstrated that with regard to program stream ( $z = -1.706, p = 0.088$ ) and graduation year ( $z = -1.893, p = 0.058$ ), there was no statistically significant difference. However, the differences in the responses of concurrent students and consecutive students regarding the statement “preparing student teachers to address racism issues in the classroom” were found to be statistically significant ( $z = -2.005, p = .045$ ). Concurrent students had an average rank of 13.64, while consecutive students had an average rank of 19.27 for this statement. In addition, analysis of the responses of each statement based on graduation year showed that there was statistical significance difference among the following three statements: “Preparing student teachers to be aware of the diversity of students’ cultural traditions” ( $z = -2.003, p = 0.045$ ), (2009 mean rank = 13.91, 2011 mean rank = 20.71); “Preparing student teachers to be aware of inappropriate language (use of labels and stereotypes) that may offend students of diverse ethnoracial backgrounds” ( $z = -2.860, p = 0.004$ ), (2009 mean rank = 13.07, 2011 mean rank = 23.50); and “Preparing student teachers to work effectively with students whose first language is not English” ( $z = -1.959, p = 0.05$ ), (2009 mean rank = 13.85, 2011 mean rank = 20.93).

None of the teacher candidates’ interview responses highlighted the specific differences found in regards to the statements above. However, the more recent graduates tended to respond more positively than graduates from 2009, which confirms the higher mean ranks found in the tests. For example, a 2011 graduate, *Southwest1*, stated “they stressed acceptance and acknowledgement of all the differences in the

classroom, not just with culture,” while, a 2009 graduate, *Southwest18*, disagreed stating “it was never a main focus of any lessons.” This supports the analysis found in the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test. As well, one concurrent education student, *Southwest10*, mentioned that she thought her program “didn’t have too many diversity courses.” Most, 4 of 5, of the concurrent students agreed with that statement. The disparity between concurrent and consecutive students’ interview responses can be explained by the inconsistency that was presented previously with the responses of teacher candidates from each university. This is because all interviewees at East University were consecutive students, while all Southwest interview participants were in the concurrent program.

Finally, the responses for Part 1 were also analyzed to discover a difference between the responses of teacher candidates with regards to where they graduated high school or their certification division. As a result of having three divisions for each of these two independent variables, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used in an effort to determine if the teacher candidates’ placement in these groups influenced their responses. Findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference amongst the responses of teacher candidates based on their area of high school graduation ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 0.572, p = 0.751$ ) and certification division ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 3.750, p = 0.153$ ).

During the interviews, many teacher candidates outlined the existence of multicultural education in their training, but they tended not to highlight the extent to which it was included. This can be observed in the responses of the following 2 teacher candidates who teach in different divisions. A participant from the junior/intermediate division, *Southwest8*, discussed the inclusion of diversity “but most of the time we talked

about how you can use literature to address multiculturalism in the classroom.” As well, a participant in the primary/junior division, *East8*, mentioned that “encouraging the use of materials that represent cultures that students have yet to encounter...allows them to open their minds to differences and grow into accepting adults.”

### **Curriculum**

To help determine the effectiveness of the teacher education program, the questionnaire highlighted specific areas that are important to the training of teacher candidates who will work in multicultural contexts. This includes the curriculum that is entrenched in teacher education programs and its ability to address multicultural education issues. Findings in this section revealed that teacher candidates were much more critical of how multicultural education was integrated into the curriculum. It was discovered that some teacher candidates, 35.0%, generally thought the multicultural education curriculum was acceptable. Conversely, only 16.6% of respondents believed the multicultural education curriculum was good or excellent, while almost half (48.4%) considered the curriculum to be poor or very poor.

In comparison to the program, the curriculum portion of teacher education was subjected to more scrutiny by the research participants. In Part 2 of the questionnaire, the disparity in the teacher candidates’ responses with respect to university location were evident. A Mann-Whitney *U* test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that Southwest University participants scored a lower rating, on the average, than East University teacher candidates in their evaluation of the curriculum. The disparity in the responses was determined to be statistically significant,  $z = -2.458$ ,  $p = 0.014$ , by determining that Southwest University teacher candidates had an average rank of 13.65,

while East University teacher candidates had a rank of 22.75. This was evidenced in the interview responses of teacher candidates to the question “Did the university address multicultural education in core curriculum courses?” There were 4 participants who responded negatively to this question, all of whom were from Southwest University. For example, *Southwest18* mentioned that she “didn’t see this being addressed in normal university classes,” while *Southwest3* simply answered “No.” There were two positive responses towards the curriculum, each of which came from participants from East University. One of these participants, *East8*, stated “to a degree. In each course we would usually be directed to a series of resources and stories which included different cultural perspectives and tied in to the curriculum.” In addition, the biggest differences in the responses from each university were witnessed for the following four statements: “The curriculum used in the teacher education program reflects the experiences and views of Ethnocultural Minorities and Aboriginal peoples” ( $z = -2.409, p = 0.016$ ), (SW mean rank = 13.91, E mean rank = 22.00); “The curriculum used in the teacher education program takes into account cultures of individual students” ( $z = -2.441, p = 0.015$ ), (SW mean rank = 14.00, E mean rank = 21.75); “The curriculum used in the teacher education program is well adapted for students from Ethnocultural Minorities and Aboriginal backgrounds” ( $z = -2.603, p = 0.009$ ), (SW mean rank = 13.72, E mean rank = 22.56); and “The curriculum used in the teacher education program offers courses that prepare teacher candidates to work with students from diverse ethnoracial backgrounds” ( $z = -2.280, p = 0.023$ ), (SW mean rank = 13.96, E mean rank = 21.88).

In addition, the responses of teacher candidates for this section were analyzed in relation to their placement in the groups regarding program stream or graduation year.

Findings revealed that with regard to program stream ( $z = -0.949, p = 0.343$ ) and graduation year ( $z = -1.682, p = 0.093$ ), there was no statistically significant difference. However, in response to the statement “The curriculum used in the teacher education program takes into account cultures of individual students,” concurrent and consecutive students responses were found to have a statistically significant difference ( $z = -2.188, p = 0.029$ ). Concurrent students had an average rank of 13.42, while consecutive students had an average rank of 19.59 for this particular statement. By contrast, with respect to this statement, there was no statistically significant difference among the responses of teacher candidates, based on their year of graduation.

In relation to the findings of the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test, many teacher candidates recalled small aspects of multicultural education in the curriculum. However, many of these teacher candidates noted that multicultural issues were scarcely examined. One participant, *Southwest8*, stated “the social studies class in teachers’ college addressed it slightly. We might have had one class,” while another candidate, *Southwest10*, mentioned “the only course that might have addressed diversity was the language course because the teacher could bring in different books...that addressed different cultures.” This was also emphasized by another participant, *Southwest8*, who mentioned “I wouldn’t say that the math or science courses addressed diversity. They pretty much just taught you how to teach that specific subject.” All of these responses from participants who graduated in 2009 provide a slightly negative response to the interview questions regarding how the curriculum addressed multicultural issues. In contrast to the results from the questionnaire, the interviews with graduates from 2011 tended to be more positive in their discussion.

Finally, the responses for Part 2 were also analyzed to determine if there was a difference between the responses of teacher candidates in regards to where they graduated from high school or their certification division. A Kruskal-Wallis test was used in an effort to determine if the teacher candidates' position in these groups had an effect on their responses. Findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference amongst high school graduation area ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 0.265, p = 0.876$ ). Consequently, the test was significant based on the teacher candidates certification division ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 8.447, p = 0.015$ ). The proportion of variability in the ranked dependent variable accounted for by the teacher certification variable was 0.27, indicating a fairly strong relationship between teacher certification division and the satisfaction with the curriculum. Tests of the three a priori hypotheses were conducted using Bonferroni adjusted alpha levels of .0167 per test (.05/3). The results of these tests indicated a significant statistical difference between the junior-intermediate participants and both the primary-junior and intermediate-senior teacher candidates. The typical overall score for the curriculum was greater for the primary-junior and intermediate-senior groups than for the junior-intermediate group. More specifically, the differences were most recognizable in the following two statements: "The curriculum used in the teacher education program reflects the experiences and views of Ethnocultural Minorities and Aboriginal peoples" ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 7.091, p = 0.029$ ) and "The curriculum used in the teacher education program offers courses that prepare teacher candidates to work with students from diverse ethnoracial backgrounds" ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 8.111, p = 0.017$ ). Tests of the three a priori hypotheses were conducted using Bonferroni adjusted alpha levels of .0167 per test (.05/3). The results of these tests indicated a significant difference between



the junior-intermediate participants and the primary-junior participants. Primary-junior teacher candidates scored both of these statements higher than the junior-intermediate teacher candidates.

The statistically significant difference in the responses of participants based on their certification divisions was also evident in the interviews. The 2 primary-junior participants were the only ones to have a positive response to curriculum, while the 2 intermediate-senior teacher candidates had one mixed response and a negative response. In addition, 3 of the 4 junior-intermediate candidates responded negatively, which supports the differences established in the questionnaire. More specifically, the views of the following 2 participants from different certification divisions emphasized this disparity. In response to multicultural education being a part of core curriculum courses, a primary/junior teacher candidate, *East1*, responded with “Some. In math we were taught multicultural games to play with the students,” while an intermediate/senior teacher, *East3*, stated “not that I recall.”

### **Courses**

The courses that are offered in the teacher education program are also an important factor to consider when determining the ability of the program to prepare graduates to teach in multicultural contexts. Similarly to the curriculum section, teacher candidates’ responses seemed to be very critical of the effectiveness of the courses. Findings in this section revealed that some teacher candidates, 33.8%, generally thought the courses were acceptable in regards to multicultural education. In contrast, only 11.3% of respondents believed the courses were good or excellent, while slightly more

than half (54.9%) considered the courses to be poor or very poor in regards to multicultural education.

As evidenced in the interview responses from the previous section about curriculum, the courses that were offered as part of the teacher candidates training were considered to be insufficient. As a result, the responses from the interviews that were outlined in the curriculum section also relate to this section.

In contrast to the previous sections, Part 3 showed a similarity in the responses of teacher candidates. Using the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test, it was discovered that there was no statistically significant difference between responses of teacher candidates based on their university location ( $z = -1.273, p = 0.203$ ), program stream ( $z = -1.546, p = 0.122$ ), or graduation year ( $z = -0.639, p = 0.523$ ). In addition, there was no statistically significant difference among specific statements for each of these groups. This was dissimilar to the interview results where a more negative response from Southwest participants was discovered. These differences were already highlighted in the section on curriculum. In addition, the questionnaire provided teacher candidates with an opportunity to list courses that addressed or helped them understand multicultural issues. Findings illustrated that most of these courses were optional or were provided as part of an undergraduate degree and not in the 8-month training period. The latter is described by *Southwest1*, who explained that “one class in a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year undergraduate course was based on diversity in the classroom.” None of the teacher candidates from either university described mandatory courses that were offered in their training; however, students from Southwest highlighted social studies, language, special education, and/or the mandatory diversity symposium as areas where they learned about or engaged in multicultural issues. However, these

courses were found to be insufficient in providing culturally responsive strategies for the classroom. In addition, 1 teacher candidate, *Southwest1*, noted “there was an optional course on global education, but I did not take it because of the additional classes. It should be a mandatory addition to the classroom.”

Also, when comparing the responses of teacher candidates, based on area of high school graduation and certification division, it was revealed that similarities existed. A Kruskal-Wallis test was used in an effort to determine if the teacher candidates’ position in these groups influenced their responses. Findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference amongst high school graduation area ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 0.196, p = 0.907$ ) or certification division ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 1.972, p = 0.373$ ). In this section, there was also no statistically significant difference with regards to specific statements. The similarity in the responses for this section reinforced that many were disappointed with this aspect of the program. In regards to certification division, the interview responses of primary-junior and intermediate-senior participants were more positive than the junior-intermediate participants. However, both groups were quick to note a lack of direction in the courses, which eventually delegated lesson planning for multicultural issues to the teacher candidates. One primary-junior teacher candidate, *East8*, noted “it is really up to prospective teachers to find and create materials and lessons that truly bring diverse cultures into the classroom.” In addition, a junior-intermediate participant, *Southwest10*, stated that instructors in the program “would leave you to differentiate the material to address students’ individual needs.”

## Practicum

Another important aspect of the teacher education program is the practical component which helps to show teacher candidates how to teach. The responses in this section highlight how successful the practicum was in preparing teacher candidates to teach in multicultural contexts. The responses of teacher candidates in this section were a little more positive than previous sections because an even distribution of responses over the Likert scale was evident. Findings in this section revealed that some teacher candidates, 39.8%, generally thought the practicum was acceptable in regards to their preparation for employment in multicultural contexts. In addition, 38.2% of respondents believed the practicum was good or excellent, while 42.0% considered the practicum to be poor or very poor in regards to their preparation for employment in multicultural contexts. This even distribution across the three options of the Likert scale was also evident in the interviews. Their responses about their practicum experiences were categorized as positive, negative, both, or neither. There were responses from a couple of participants in each category. The differentiation is evident in the following two responses. One teacher candidate, *East1*, noted a positive experience with a fellow teacher when she noted “there was an exceptional ESL teacher that made it her job to [highlight] religious celebrations for the various cultures... it is important for people to know that we as educators care enough to acknowledge their holidays and special events.” By contrast, another teacher candidate, *Southwest1*, commented “I have observed very little diversity in the classroom, and of what diversity there was, the classroom teacher was not very informed on their background.”

Using the Mann-Whitney  $U$  test, it was discovered that there was no statistically significant difference between responses of teacher candidates based on their university location ( $z = -0.591, p = 0.555$ ), program stream ( $z = -0.342, p = 0.732$ ), or graduation year ( $z = -0.420, p = 0.675$ ). Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference among specific statements for any of these groups. Teacher candidates from Southwest University had varying opinions on their practicum experience that reinforced the even distribution found in the questionnaire. This was also evident based on the participants' placement in groups based on their program stream and graduation year. However, some similarities were observed in the responses of 2 teacher candidates from different universities and program streams. For example, a concurrent participant, *Southwest18*, stated "there was not a lot of multicultural education being demonstrated in my practicum placements. They were from White, middle class families," while a consecutive participant, *East3*, mentioned "the school where I completed my practicum was not very diverse. I can't really think of an instance that involves multiculturalism." The results from this section showed similarities with respect to the different groups, as well as dissimilarities in the responses within groups which correlates to the even distribution over the Likert scale. This supports the finding that there was no statistically significant difference in the questionnaire.

Also, when comparing the responses of teacher candidates, based on where they graduated from high school or their certification division, it was discovered that similarities were prevalent. Once again, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used in an effort to determine if the teacher candidates' position in these groups influenced their responses. Findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in relation to high

school graduation area ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 1.195, p = 0.550$ ) or certification division ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 0.233, p = 0.890$ ). In this section there was also no statistically significant difference with regards to specific statements. These similarities were also evident throughout the interviews. An even distribution in the categories of positive responses, negative responses, positive-negative responses, and neither was highlighted in these group placements. One junior-intermediate teacher candidate, *Southwest18*, had difficulty remembering experiences with multicultural education. She stated that there was “a greater focus on differentiated learning than anything. However, I did teach a few lessons that looked at various cultures.” A primary-junior teacher candidate, *East8*, mentioned “in both my practicums there was a unit focused on northern Canada and the experiences of children there.” However, some participants still noted the lack of multiculturalism in their practicum. The responses of teacher candidates from different high school graduation locations demonstrated the even distribution of responses related to the Likert scale. One rural graduate, *Southwest8*, stated “no diversity at all. I was in rich, White schools when doing practicum so I didn’t experience any multiculturalism,” while a suburban graduate, *Southwest10*, proclaimed “the biggest thing I noticed between my two practicum placements was the difference in socioeconomic status. Cultural diversity was still limited.”

### **Teacher Candidates’ Satisfaction with Program and Readiness to Teach in Diverse Classrooms**

In order to determine if the teacher candidates were prepared to teach in multicultural contexts, it is important to examine how satisfied they were with their training and if they considered themselves ready to address multicultural issues in the

classroom. As a result, the four statements in this section of the questionnaire were broken into two parts. The first two statements were related to the teacher candidates' satisfaction with the program, while the remaining two statements were related to their readiness to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. The findings for this section revealed that almost half, 48.4%, of the teacher candidates were not satisfied with how multicultural or antiracist education was addressed in the program. In addition, another 27.4% were unsure of their satisfaction. Finally, an average of 24.2% stated that they were satisfied with how these issues were discussed or taught in their program. Despite their dissatisfaction with the teacher education program, an average of 67.8% felt that they were ready to adapt instruction to address the needs of all students. As well, 29.0% were unsure if they were ready, while only 3.2% said they were not.

Information that was gathered from the interviews displayed some variety in the responses of teacher candidates. Looking at the responses of 2 participants, it is clear that their levels of preparedness are different. When questioned about whether or not their program prepared them sufficiently enough to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse Ontario classrooms, 1 teacher candidate, *East1*, stated “my program has done an amazing job at preparing me to provide a nonjudgmental, nonprejudicial education to students,” while another candidate, *East8*, explained,

My training? Not at all. There is a lot of talk about what needs to be done, but no actual method for how to do it. Much of the time students will be told something like ‘you need to represent your students’ cultures in your teaching’ but no discussion of how.

However, *East1* retreated from the positive comment when she admitted that she “will be accepting, but not very informed.” The differing levels of preparedness that participants felt were evidenced throughout the interviews. The interview findings suggested that 2 participants did not feel very prepared, while 3 believed they were ready to teach in multicultural contexts. The remaining 3 were unsure of their readiness, expressing conflicting viewpoints. For example, *East3* stated “I don’t think it has prepared me effectively” and continued with “I think I would be able to teach in a class with a high level of diversity.”

Based on the findings above, it would be expected that there could be some disparity in the responses of teacher candidates. However, using the Mann-Whitney *U* test it was discovered that there was no statistically significant difference between the responses of teacher candidates based on their university location ( $z = -0.968, p = 0.333$ ), program stream ( $z = -1.185, p = 0.236$ ), or graduation year ( $z = -0.526, p = 0.599$ ) for this section. Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference among specific statements for the groups based on university location and graduation year. However, in regards to program stream, there was a statistically significant difference in regards to the first statement; “I am satisfied with how multicultural issues were taught to teacher candidates” ( $z = -2.188, p = 0.029$ ), (Concurrent mean rank = 18.83, Consecutive mean rank = 12.08). This difference between concurrent and consecutive students, however, was not recognized in the responses from the interviews. Approximately two thirds of the consecutive and concurrent students expressed their dissatisfaction with how multicultural issues were taught, while the other third accepted how it was taught, but emphasized that improvements were necessary.



The interview portion displayed differentiation and uncertainty in the responses of the participants. One teacher candidate in particular, *Southwest8*, emphasized this clearly when she stated,

I think the amount of time we spent talking about things rather than actually practicing them has effectively and ineffectively prepared me. Whereas I can theoretically picture myself in a multicultural classroom and I have ideas on how I would conduct myself there. A lot of these ideas have come from sources outside of our education that we had at [*Southwest*], such as films or my own experiences. However, considering I had no practical experience I feel very inexperienced and unprepared.

This is also witnessed in another candidate's, *East3*, response, who was in a different subgroup for university location, program stream, and graduation year, when she stated,

I don't think it has prepared me effectively. There wasn't enough practical knowledge and strategies provided to me. I would also like to know about more resources that I could use in my teaching... I think [being ready] depends a lot on your own past experiences. If you grew up in a diverse area you would probably feel more at ease teaching in a diverse area than someone who grew up in a primarily [monocultural] area.

Finally, *Southwest10* emphasized the practical component of teaching to be the most important aspect to learning about these topics; "however, the most I learned was from my practical experience as a [teacher], because you don't understand what you learn in teachers' college until you practice it." Many teacher candidates outlined the need for

teacher education to provide more practical opportunities to help prepare them for teaching in multicultural contexts.

Also, when comparing the responses of teacher candidates based on where they graduated from high school or their division of certification, it was determined that similarities were also common. This was confirmed using a Kruskal-Wallis test to determine if the teacher candidates' position in these groups had an effect on their responses. Findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference amongst their high school graduation area ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 2.168, p = 0.338$ ) or certification division ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 2.057, p = 0.358$ ). However, there was a statistically significant difference for one statement; "I can identify subtle forms of racism, including unintended bias, that might influence my own teaching" in relation to their certification division ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 6.471, p = 0.039$ ). Tests of the three a priori hypotheses were conducted using Bonferroni adjusted alpha levels of .0167 per test (.05/3). The results of these tests indicated a significant difference between the primary-junior participants and the intermediate-senior participants. Primary-junior participants scored this statement lower than the intermediate-senior group. Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference with regards to specific statements based on the groups sorted by area of high school graduation. The interview questions did not question the teacher candidates' ability to identify forms of racism, so this difference could not be confirmed.

Many teacher candidates seemed positive that they are ready, or could be ready, with additional practice to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. A junior-intermediate candidate, *Southwest1*, noted "I feel like I am not prepared to teach

in a classroom that is very diverse because of my lack of practical experience.” Another junior-intermediate candidate, *Southwest10*, opined,

I think I'd be very nervous to teach in a classroom of high diversity. It is always daunting to have to make those accommodations for a variety of different students, but I think I would be willing to try it and take it on to make sure that everyone understands the material and learning what they need to learn.

Investigating an additional candidate's response from the primary-junior division, *East1* conversely stated “I am ready because I have lived in the city which is multicultural all my adult life.” This emphasized the disparity in the responses of teacher candidates in relation to their readiness to teach in multiethnic classrooms. In addition, while discussing their fellow teacher candidates' preparedness, 1 teacher candidate, *Southwest8*, stated “I think some of them would, while others wouldn't. I think you can get [through] the education program very easy without addressing some of these [multicultural] concerns. I don't think they filter [teacher candidates] out.” When questioned about their colleagues' preparedness to teach in multicultural contexts, 3 participants were very critical. For example, *East1*, stated “I would love to be optimistic and say that other teacher candidates are ready, but I know that prejudice is not dead, unfortunately.” None of the interview participants confidently expressed that their colleagues would be prepared, mostly attributing their colleagues' preparedness to each individual's past experiences.

### **Teacher Candidates' Opinions and Experiences of Multicultural Education**

The opinions and experiences of teacher candidates regarding multicultural education were similar in both the quantitative and qualitative data. Throughout the

interviews, many participants displayed a positive/important view of multicultural education. This was evidenced across all eight interviews. For example, *Southwest3* stated “I value multicultural education because it helps students understand each other. It is much harder to hate someone when you understand them.” As well, *East8* believed “it is important for two reasons: to make the material relevant and meaningful to the students whom you are teaching and to educate students about other world cultures and beliefs to help them become respectful, accepting individuals.” This is supported by another participant, *East3*, who explained “I think we are preparing students for life after school, so we should be teaching them about the great diversity they will find in the world. Teaching students about differences in cultures will help them later in life.”

The findings in this section of the questionnaire showed that teacher candidates’ responses were quite similar. The data were analyzed once again using a Mann-Whitney *U* test, where it was discovered that there was no statistically significant difference between the answers of teacher candidates based on their university location ( $z = -0.069$ ,  $p = 0.945$ ), program stream ( $z = -1.123$ ,  $p = 0.261$ ), or graduation year ( $z = -0.475$ ,  $p = 0.635$ ). Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference among specific statements for the groups based on program stream. However, in regards to university location ( $z = -2.673$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ) and graduation year ( $z = -2.257$ ,  $p = 0.024$ ), there was a statistically significant difference with respect to the tenth statement; “I have limited cross-cultural experiences.” Southwest participants had an average rank of 13.74, while East candidates had an average rank of 22.50. In addition, 2009 participants’ average rank was 13.74, while 2011 graduates’ average rank was 21.29.

Differences in the amount of cultural experience were witnessed in the interviews as well. All three interviewees at East University outlined different experiences that they have had with different cultures. The participants at Southwest University were not able to describe many experiences in which they were immersed in multicultural contexts. The differences among the experiences are observed in the responses of 2011 graduates from different universities. For example, *Southwest1* said, “I feel like I have had no experience with multicultural education because I grew up in a school setting that was not culturally diverse,” while *East1* argued “working in the school, I have had a lot of exposure to different cultures.” By comparison, the differences between the graduation year is observed when a 2009 graduate, *Southwest8*, responded “while in Morocco, I was able to teach English to a class there which was a good cultural experience in a small tribal village... That was an interesting multicultural experience because I got to see how they teach there.” This was contrary to the findings in the questionnaire, but many of the responses of 2009 graduates highlighted an experience that occurred after graduation. In addition, there were many responses that described small distinct instances of multiculturalism, but few were ever immersed in multicultural settings for a long period of time.

Also, when comparing the responses of teacher candidates based on where they graduated from high school or their certification division, it was determined that similarities were also common. This was confirmed using a Kruskal-Wallis test to determine if the teacher candidates’ position in these groups had an influence on their responses. Findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference amongst graduation area ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 5.879, p = 0.053$ ) or certification division ( $\chi^2(2,$

$N = 31) = 1.900, p = 0.387$ ). However, there was a statistically significant difference in the responses of teacher candidates in regards to certification division for one statement; “I have limited cross-cultural experiences” ( $\chi^2(2, N = 31) = 6.276, p = 0.043$ ). Tests of the three a priori hypotheses were conducted using Bonferroni adjusted alpha levels of .0167 per test ( $.05/3$ ). The results of these tests indicated a significant difference between the junior-intermediate participants and the intermediate-senior participants.

Intermediate-senior participants scored this statement higher than the junior-intermediate group. This difference can be attributed to the responses of the 2011 candidates. As well, there was no statistically significant difference with regards to specific statements based on the high school graduation area groups. This was contrary to the interview data, which found that teacher candidates, who graduated from suburban areas, generally had more experiences with multicultural education and cultural diversity. One suburban participant, *East3*, stated “I have travelled quite a bit, which has helped me learn a lot about other cultures.”

With respect to the teacher candidates’ experiences with multicultural education, many highlighted the inadequacy of their teacher education program in addressing issues related to teaching in classrooms with diversity. For example, *East8* explained,

the teacher education program is great for policy, theory, and general ideas, but to truly be a great teacher and meet your students’ needs you have to be willing to seek other types of learning and experiences...In cities like Xxxxx, Yyyyy, and Zzzzz, most practicum placements will give teachers an opportunity to develop culturally responsive teaching methods. However, not all associate/mentor teachers will help to develop this so it is still largely up to the teacher candidates.

Another participant, *East1*, added “I understand that it is hard to fit everything into [an 8-month] program. I believe they tried to provide us with a basic understanding of the issues...which we can now build upon with our own experiences and learning.” Finally, *Southwest18* added that “some of the lessons I developed and my placements helped me to focus on diversity and various cultures, but there definitely could have been more time dedicated to preparing us for multicultural classrooms and what lessons we could develop.” These three responses emulate the thoughts of all the teacher candidates in the interviews.

To finish, a Spearman rank order correlation test was run to determine if there was a relationship between the teacher candidates score in the last two sections, readiness and opinions, and their score for the first four sections. There was a negative correlation between these scores, which was found not to be statistically significant ( $r_s(8) = -0.306$   $P = .094$ ). This is supported in the interviews where participants valued multicultural education, yet they still considered the program to be acceptable. In addition, teacher candidates emphasized that improvements were still necessary.

In summary, the findings revealed that multicultural education in the teacher education program was not sufficient in regards to the curriculum, courses, and practicum, from the data accumulated within the portions of the questionnaire. Many of the respondents were not satisfied with how the issues were addressed, but they still felt prepared to handle some multicultural issues in their classroom. In addition, the responses of teacher candidates at Southwest and East universities were found to have a statistically significant difference in both multiple sections of the questionnaire. Also, there was a statistically significant difference observed between the teacher certification

divisions for the curriculum section. These findings were usually supported throughout the interviews. These findings have implications for some changes that could occur to help improve these programs. The suggestions of teacher candidates will also be discussed in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The growth of multicultural education has been a long and arduous journey, and yet, there is still much further to travel if we wish to support the learning of all students in our multicultural classrooms. Teacher education programs have reacted slowly to this need for greater sensitivity and transparency and have often understated the importance of multicultural education to their teacher candidates (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009). The reluctance to address this issue is troublesome because teachers who are unprepared to teach may create an unfair learning environment for students of diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions. In addition, the changing demographics of Ontario's population are also of concern. Begaye (2007) found that 28% of the population in the United States consists of visible minorities; a number he predicts will rise to 47% by 2050. Canada's proximal relation with the United States means that these projections may also be applied to populations across Ontario. The expected increase of cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity in Ontario's classrooms provides a strong justification for increasing the use of multicultural education strategies in Ontario schools. This rationale is reinforced by Hammett and Bainbridge who stated that "the biggest challenge is responding to local changes in population demographics and economics as increasing globalization transforms schools and makes new demands on the education system" (p. 152).

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education at two Ontario universities as a means by which to determine their perception of the effectiveness of their teacher education programs to prepare them to teach in multicultural classrooms. The research also strived to highlight the practices used in these programs that contributed to the preparation of teacher candidates for teaching in culturally, racially, and ethnically

diverse classrooms in Ontario. Specifically, the research question investigated aimed to determine the extent to which teacher candidates are prepared to teach in diverse Ontario school classrooms. An analysis of quantitative and qualitative data was used to understand the teacher candidates' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the programs and to determine possible areas of improvement. To gain an understanding of the research that was conducted, a summary of the study, discussion of the findings, and an examination of the implications of the results are presented in this chapter.

### **Summary of the Study**

In this study, a questionnaire was used to collect data of teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of multicultural education. The aim was to determine the extent to which two Ontario teacher education programs were effective in preparing new teachers to teach in diverse classrooms according to teacher candidates. In addition, interviews were conducted with selected teacher candidates in order to provide a greater understanding of their experiences. The design of the study was based on the research conducted by Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004), who examined the effectiveness of multicultural education in teacher training at the University of Ottawa using the perspectives of teacher candidates from a class in that program. By modifying the Mujawamariya and Mahrouse study, I was able to place a greater emphasis on the use of community and local experts in teacher training, while new interview questions were created to specifically address each of the research questions. As well, the challenges faced by graduates of these programs were examined to reveal some areas for improvement in teacher training instruction with regards to multicultural education. In this section, the results of the study are presented.

Overall, the findings reveal that multicultural education needs to be enhanced in teacher education programs to better prepare teacher candidates for teaching in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. The data collected indicated that teacher candidates were generally content with how their program addressed the issues related to teaching in diverse classrooms; however, many respondents did maintain that there are areas where improvements could be made. The data also revealed that teacher candidates were most critical of the courses and the delivery of the curriculum in relation to multicultural education in their training. Specifically, teacher candidates noted a lack of multicultural education in their practicum placements as one of the biggest problems. This observation was most evident during the interview period, in which participants reflected on their personal experiences. However, responses were more favourable when candidates reflected on general components of the program.

The findings from the questionnaire indicated that many teacher candidates believed they would be able to adapt to the needs of students of diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. And yet, the results obtained from the interviews were contrary. The interviews indicated that teacher candidates were hesitant, and perhaps even less likely, to state that they were prepared for these teaching environments. The findings revealed that many teacher candidates believed their peers were not prepared to address multicultural issues in the classroom. However, the participants were found to have a positive view of the importance of multicultural education. It was determined that a positive outlook did not correlate with a positive assessment of the program. Therefore, it is important for all teacher candidates to be exposed to multicultural education issues in their training. This need becomes more apparent when acknowledging the number of

participants who, despite sharing positive views, provided a negative assessment of the program with respect to multicultural education.

In addition, the research findings also revealed several areas where educators can make improvements to the teacher education program. Some examples from respondents include specific instruction across all classes, more diverse practicum experiences, guest speakers, case studies, and the creation of new courses that would specifically address multicultural education. At the same time, however, many of the participants recognized the limited amount of time teacher educators have to engage in these activities.

### **Discussion**

In this section, the results are examined to understand the satisfaction with multicultural education in teacher education programs, as well as the implications that these findings may have upon teacher educators in these programs. To start this examination, the teacher candidates' perceptions of their preparation for teaching in multicultural contexts were explored. This step was especially necessary because it provides valuable insight into the general experiences of the participants, while also helping determine various strengths and weaknesses of the teacher education programs. After an examination of the perceptions, the teacher candidates' readiness to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms was explored. The analysis of the perceptions provides an understanding of the effectiveness of the program in preparing confident and knowledgeable teachers who are qualified to teach in Ontario's schools. As the study continued to unfold, the opinions of participants with regards to multicultural education issues were analyzed. This process allowed the opportunity to compare and contrast the research findings with other observations that have been found

in the literature. Finally, the participants' suggestions for improving their teacher education program were reviewed. This investigation reveals valuable tips for teacher educators when discussing multicultural education issues in their teacher training program.

### **Teacher Candidates' Perceptions towards the Program**

Understanding the manner in which participants viewed the program is important because it provides insight into their understanding of teacher education experiences, by using their responses to the 11 statements in one section of the questionnaire.

Quantifying the participants' responses for this section brings to the forefront the need to make improvements to multicultural education within the teacher education program. In essence, these responses established the foundation needed to understand the research question, "How do teacher candidates within these programs perceive the quality of the multicultural education curriculum that is offered as part of their program?"

The research findings reveal a noticeable disparity among the responses of some participants. The statements in this section of the questionnaire referred to the program's ability to address and adapt instruction to the needs of ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse students. The findings revealed contrasting views based on the teacher candidates' university location. The responses from participants at Southwest University tended to be more negative. The disparity in the responses for this section of the questionnaire may also be attributed to the different approaches that were incorporated by the two teacher education programs to address multicultural education. The findings draw attention to some of these approaches. Some teacher candidates from East University noted that their courses integrated numerous books on different types of

cultures in order to help inform their understanding about diversity. Other participants from Southwest University indicated that their courses simply did not address these issues clearly, and when attempts were made, the results usually proved unsatisfactory in preparing them to teach in multiethnic classrooms. By merely recognizing different cultures, teacher educators were not able to break down barriers of White supremacy. This is highlighted in the literature because many researchers believe that the incorporation of the colour-blind philosophy or a celebration of cultures program does little to alleviate the root causes of racism (de Freitas & McAuley, 2008; Gill & Chalmers, 2007; Jenks et al., 2001; Smith, 2009; Young & Graham, 2000). Consequently, in order for teacher education programs to help teacher candidates understand these issues more clearly, teacher educators need to be more proactive in helping the teacher candidates remove the blinders built of stereotypes and ignorance that many are unaware they possess (Smith, 2009).

In addition, the disparity in the responses of teacher candidates within each university may be attributed to the numerous sections of the course that were taught by different faculty members. It is a normal occurrence for multiple educators to teach each subject area, thereby resulting in teacher candidates being exposed to course content differently. This disparity was also discovered by Tan and Lefebvre (2010) who noted “almost 40% of full-time faculty side-stepped race, racism, or ethnicity in their instruction” (p. 381). Although they cited data from the early 1990s, it is still relevant in demonstrating the lack of transparency that might exist amongst faculty members in these institutions. Researchers often argue that teacher candidates need to be sent a clear and consistent message from all faculty members and clearly this is not happening in many

programs (Lund, 1998). Teacher candidates are not receiving a clear and consistent message because personal goals and philosophies are often incorporated into the teacher educators' planning of their individual courses. To address this concern, multicultural education could include promoting a sense of awareness to racism, using reflective practice, or by challenging worldviews. The findings in this study have suggested that the program does this sufficiently.

As well, many researchers request that teacher educators go beyond the recognition of different cultures in order to promote more culturally responsive teacher candidates who can better address the needs of ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse students (Ghosh, 1996; Lien, 1999; Liu & Milman, 2010). Nurturing culturally responsive teacher candidates is difficult for educators because "in many cases, candidates did not learn, nor practice as the faculty intended, and these instances created contexts for the tensions that frustrated both the faculty and the candidates" (Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008, p. 186). The inability of teacher educators to promote strong and coherent messages in their courses, especially with regards to multicultural education, will ultimately lead each teacher candidate to understand multicultural issues differently and, consequently, develop contrasting viewpoints about the effectiveness of the program, as illustrated in the findings of this study. As well, the teacher candidates' previous experiences with diversity help them understand these issues more clearly. As a result, teacher education needs to bring cohesiveness to its courses and faculty in order to provide all teacher candidates with the tools and strategies necessary to succeed. This collaboration is important because new teachers need training that is structured to provide them with multiple strategies to help empower all students in schools (Darling-Hammond

& Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Taylor, 2010). Although the responses in this study did not emphasize any cohesiveness, many participants nevertheless believed addressing these concerns is an important step moving forward.

Another aspect of the program that was examined was its ability to use the community and local experts to provide assistance to teacher candidates by discussing challenging multicultural issues, such as racism. In the questionnaire, this statement was rated the poorest of all statements for this section. This is important to examine because many researchers lobby for teacher education programs to promote collaboration by building a community of learners that includes postsecondary institutions, practicing teachers, community members, school districts, organizations, and government to support and encourage the issues of multiculturalism (Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Johnston et al., 2009; Lund, 1998; Muschell & Roberts, 2011; Taylor, 2010). In addition, the cultural and racial homogeneity that exists with teacher candidates and educators is another important reason to include external expert knowledge. Such inclusion will help to address the needs of all students in Ontario classrooms. Sleeter (2008) stated that by accessing expert knowledge and learning about the backgrounds of students, a teacher can provide culturally relevant teaching to the classroom. This may be applied to the university classroom as well as elementary and high school classes. Therefore, teacher candidates would likely perceive their program to be more effective if they were provided with opportunities to learn from experts outside of the university.

Finally, the teacher candidates in this study believed that their program provided them with adequate exposure to the need for understanding the nature of multicultural education, research still suggests that there is not enough being done. Mujawamariya and



Mahrouse's (2004) study of teacher candidates' perceptions discovered that many teacher candidates are leaving the program with only a basic understanding of the issues related to multicultural education. Although Mujawamariya and Mahrouse's study found positive responses in regards to the program, it did not aim to discover the level of understanding that each participant had of multicultural education.

### **Teacher Candidates' Perceptions towards the Curriculum**

How participants perceive and understand the curriculum is important because it highlights how the program performed in regards to the statements in this section. Quantifying the participants' responses for this section helps accentuate areas of improvement for multicultural education within the teacher education program. In essence, these responses established the foundation needed to understand the research question, "How do teacher education programs in two Ontario universities address multicultural education?"

The research discovered a diverse set of opinions about the curriculum. In general, teacher candidates were much more critical of how their program infused multicultural ideology into the curriculum and how the curriculum addressed multicultural issues. Participants in this study had a difficult time remembering specific instances in which they learned about multicultural concerns. In addition to the poor ratings evident in the questionnaire of present study, many teacher candidates provided short, incomplete answers when asked to elaborate on the curriculum during the interviews. These findings echo similar results found in previous studies. A study by Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004) found that teacher candidates perceived the curricular initiatives regarding equitable and inclusive strategies as deficient. The

findings also suggest that teacher education programs put a greater emphasis on content-specific initiatives for subjects, rather than culturally responsive strategies that help address the needs of culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse students. Providing an explanation for this greater emphasis, Lien (1999) argued that it was much easier to teach and excel in “math, science, reading and writing than to face the hard questions of who we are” (p. 26). While many teacher education programs benefit from having teacher educators who are “experts” in specific subject areas, the same educators often lack the specific knowledge necessary to inform and shape candidates’ awareness of the needs of various cultures, races, and ethnicities. The limited cultural knowledge of some teacher educators might help to explain why many teacher candidates could not remember specific strategies that should be useful when teaching in their future classrooms. Consequently, when teacher candidates did remember specific strategies, they usually mentioned that one lesson was devoted to helping them address these issues. The scarcity of addressing multicultural issues is highlighted in the literature, which finds that many teacher education programs incorporate multicultural education superficially, despite prevalent and continued requests for multiculturalism to be discussed as an important aspect of teacher education (Nicholas, 1999).

The research findings also showed that teacher candidates were not completely satisfied with the curriculum’s ability to provide opportunities to work with other cultures. This observation is especially alarming when one considers that the majority of teacher candidates are White, middle class females; some of whom were raised in monocultural communities. Thus, it is important to provide more culturally diverse opportunities for teacher candidates because some have limited experiences with other

cultures. This could be accomplished through the use of a guest speaker from the community or an expert in the field of teaching. Some participants in this study were quick to share that some of their teacher educators addressed multicultural education through the incorporation of additional resources and books that introduced different cultural traditions. This was utilized most often in the language arts programs at both campuses. The reasoning for the inclusion of additional books was to provide a variety of language resources to use in the future that will aid teacher candidates in addressing multicultural issues. Similar studies have found success with the add-on approach, but they cite the necessity of discussing the differences and experiences of different cultures instead of just providing resources (Assaf et al., 2010; Muschell & Roberts, 2011).

Unfortunately, the interview component of the research did not highlight that these types of discussions occurred. Conversely, they revealed that the teacher candidates were often left to comprehend and incorporate the additional resources on their own. Simply adding material allows teacher education programs to briefly acknowledge multicultural perspectives, but a more comprehensive discussion, with the assistance of community experts, would be beneficial for the preparation of teacher candidates to teach in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms (Assaf et al., 2010).

The research findings also discovered no statistically significant difference in the responses of teacher candidates based on their program stream or graduation year. The similarity is surprising because teacher candidates who completed a 40-month concurrent education degree had comparably negative responses to the consecutive students who only completed an 8-month program. Teacher education programs must, therefore, re-evaluate the structure of their training when considering the ways in which the length of

the program did not appear to affect candidates' opinions of how the curriculum addressed multicultural education. As well, the responses of teacher candidates who graduated from their teacher education program 2 years earlier were similar to recent graduates. This may be explained by recognizing that teacher education programs often adopt only small changes, are typically slow to respond, and generally have to seek approval from many levels for structural reform (Dunn et al., 2009; Fullan, 2000; Ghosh, 1996). Another reason for the similarity in the responses based on graduation year is the rapid increase in the breadth of curricula for schools. This increase in content provides another hurdle for teacher education institutions that have not increased the length of their program, despite having to provide more instruction to teacher candidates (Forlin et al., 2009). Simply, teacher education programs have not improved their instruction of multicultural education significantly over the past 2 years to notice a difference between the responses from the 2 graduation years.

### **Teacher Candidates' Perceptions towards the Courses**

The perception of participants towards the courses offered in teacher education programs provides valuable insight into how the program performed in regards to the two statements in this section of the questionnaire. By quantifying the participants' responses for this section, the weaknesses of multicultural education are highlighted within the teacher education program. In essence, these responses generated the basis needed to understand the research question, "How do teacher education programs in two Ontario universities address multicultural education?"

Findings related to this section of the questionnaire were similar across all teacher candidates' responses. Over half of the responses from the quantitative data confirmed

that teacher candidates found their courses to be poor or very poor in addressing multicultural issues. The findings from the qualitative data illustrated that the biggest hurdle to learning about multiculturalism was course availability. Many participants alluded to the availability of optional courses that addressed multicultural issues, yet most chose not to enroll in them because of scheduling conflicts, lack of interest, or lack of time. The literature (e.g., Mujawamariya, 2001; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Nicholas, 1999) also found that teacher education programs tend to only emphasize multicultural education through the use of nonmandatory courses. Unfortunately, these researchers also found that many graduates often chose not to register in these optional courses. In addition, Lund (1998) discovered that these isolated course offerings usually do not provide enough exposure to address the complexity of multicultural issues. This may help to explain why most teacher candidates in this study had similar responses regarding course availability.

Although the occasional participant referred to mandatory courses that addressed multicultural education, many were not aware of these occurrences. None of the participants referred to any in-depth discussion concerning multicultural issues that transpired in their core courses. Conversely, instructors often provided only additional resources or one lesson about diversity. This add-on approach is contrary to what proponents of multicultural education requesting from teacher education programs. Research suggests that for multicultural education to be successful it needs to be “infused” throughout the course, and not in straightforward ways, such as tasting different “cultural” foods or speaking different languages (Assaf et al., 2010; Furman, 2008; Jenks et al., 2001). In addition, researchers have found that although multicultural

education can be a stated goal for a course, it does not necessarily ensure an emphasis on that topic will be evident in the course instruction (Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008).

Participants suggested that teacher educators have a difficult time addressing multicultural education in every lesson. Consequently, one must remember that each instructor has a personal teaching philosophy that often values some teaching approaches over others. Therefore, teacher candidate preparation is often dependent on the instructor responsible for teaching the courses. This dependence is supported in the literature (i.e., Kosnik & Beck, 2008; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004) where participants stated the effectiveness of the courses generally depended on the instructor teaching the course and that there needs to be more collaboration among faculty members in the program.

Finally, the effectiveness of one standalone multicultural education course to prepare teacher candidates for teaching in multiethnic classrooms is debated in literature. Gainer and Larrotta (2010) argue that having standalone courses sends a message that multicultural education is of lesser importance to core curriculum courses, which serves to reinforce the limited action to rectify the inequities within society. In contrast, other researchers believe that one course is capable of providing essential opportunities to reflect and learn about multicultural issues which is beneficial in preparing teachers for culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms (Forlin et al., 2009; Jenks et al., 2001).

The findings also suggested that teacher educators would occasionally inform teacher candidates about the importance of multicultural education, yet due to limited instruction time, instructors would often leave the information for candidates to understand and implement on their own. This lack of guidance from instructors was

identified as a major reason for the insufficient understanding of multicultural education in other studies (Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004). This will be an important factor for teacher education programs to reflect on when considering new ways to improve the effectiveness of their programs in preparing teacher candidates to teach in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms.

### **Teacher Candidates' Perceptions towards the Practicum**

Evaluating the extent to which participants valued their practicum as a meaningful experience can help illustrate how the program performed with regards to the four statements in this section of the questionnaire. Quantifying the participants' responses for this section highlights weaknesses concerning multicultural education in the teacher education program. In essence, these responses generated the basis needed to understand the research questions, "How do teacher education programs in two Ontario universities address multicultural education?" and "How do teacher candidates within these programs perceive the quality of the multicultural education curriculum that is offered as part of their program?"

Participants in this study were not satisfied with their practicum experiences in the program. Many noted that their experiences in schools were in classrooms of limited diversity, especially in regards to culture, ethnicity, and race. The lack of diversity in practicum classrooms is reinforced by Thomas and Vanderhaar (2008) who found similar results in their teacher education program in Louisville, when the participants noted a lack of diversity in field placements. This is troublesome because many teacher candidates do not have the knowledge or experience required to engage in "critical (race) pedagogy" (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009, p. 158). Therefore, the inclusion of culturally,

ethnically, and racially diverse practicum placements is important in helping teacher candidates develop their understanding of this type of pedagogy. Teacher candidates were disappointed with the programs' inability to provide school placements with cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity. Many participants believed that if provided with the opportunity to practice teaching in schools with culturally diverse classrooms, they would have felt better prepared to teach in diverse classrooms in the future. Literature supports that practicing in these environments does help teacher candidates feel more prepared to teach in multicultural classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Dunn et al., 2009; Finney & Orr, 1995; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Jenks et al., 2001; Smith, 2009). However, it can be difficult for teacher education programs to locate these schools in communities with limited diversity.

The findings also illustrated that teacher education programs tend to incorporate a "celebration of cultures" approach to address multiculturalism in schools with ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity. There are many different problems with this celebration approach because it does not critically engage teacher candidates in understanding cultural barriers or White supremacy. This philosophy is viewed negatively in the literature because it is ignorant of the root causes of racism (de Freitas & McAuley, 2008; Gill & Chalmers, 2007; Jenks et al., 2001; Smith, 2009; Young & Graham, 2000). In addition, Thomas and Vanderhaar (2008) found that multicultural education at their university in Louisville was inconsistent and that teacher education there was unable to address the candidate's resistance to diversity issues. Therefore, although many of the practicum placements address multicultural issues inadequately, the schools that did engage in multicultural education were often integrating content superficially.



Teacher candidates were also dissatisfied with the support they received from their associate teachers. These mentors are supposed to be experts in their field who can assist teacher candidates in developing their own pedagogy and an understanding of what it means to be an effective and informed educator. One participant noted that the associate teacher was not very helpful, despite the presence of a diverse student body in the classroom, because he lacked sufficient background knowledge of the students and did not provide any assistance to help those students succeed. Other researchers (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Taylor, 2010) have found that experience alone does not prepare teacher candidates to teach in these classrooms. Instead, teacher candidates should have the opportunity to observe culturally responsive practices from their associate teacher to assist in their skill development. Therefore, if associate teachers are unaware of strategies to help culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse students, then teacher candidates will likely feel unprepared and be unsuccessful in meeting the needs of these students. In addition, literature has blamed the standardization and expansion of the curriculum as reasons for associate teachers to not value multicultural education (Assaf et al., 2010; Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009). Despite the values of some associate teachers, participants in this study were aware of the importance of addressing diversity in the classroom and were unable to access the knowledge of their associate teachers in order to help all students succeed. In addition, Dunn et al. (2009) found that teacher candidates realized “teaching is not just about the curriculum, but also about meeting the needs of children and helping them grow and develop within the context in which they live” (p. 545). Addressing the needs of all students was difficult for teacher candidates in

this study because of the pressure from associate teachers to fulfill their expectations and demands.

Finally, many teacher candidates stressed the importance of needing additional opportunities to practice teaching with ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse classrooms. The results of other research studies also revealed that participants shared a similar desire. This is confirmed by Hagan and McGlynn (2004) who found 85% of the participants believed that increased opportunities in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse settings would be beneficial to their development. Additional opportunities can be achieved through stronger integration of universities and schools to help connect multicultural education theory to practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006b; Jenks et al., 2001; Skerrett, 2007). One participant suggested teacher education programs look beyond mainstream school settings to place teacher candidates into alternative learning environments, such as after-school programs, that might be more representative of diversity. This could provide prospective teachers with an opportunity to understand the community more completely (Lund, 1998). Ultimately, providing additional opportunities is especially important for the predominantly White teacher candidates who need to be prepared for the increasingly ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse classrooms (Gainer & Larrotta, 2010).

### **Teacher Candidates' Satisfaction and Readiness to Teach in Diverse Classrooms**

Considering the participants' satisfaction and readiness to teach in diverse classrooms was a necessary part of this research because it illustrated how effective the program was in preparing teacher candidates for employment in ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse classrooms. Quantifying the participants' responses for this section

helps identify the strengths and weaknesses of multicultural education in the teacher education program. Collectively, these responses generate the basis needed to understand the research question, “Are dominant culture teacher candidates prepared to teach in diverse Ontario school classrooms?”

Teacher candidates were fairly unified in their responses with regards to their readiness to teach in diverse classrooms. The questionnaire found that the majority (67.8%) felt that they were ready to adapt instruction to the needs of all students. This revelation is contrary to other research, which has shown that many teacher candidates do not feel prepared to work in these classrooms (Dunn et al., 2009; Johnston et al., 2009). Approximately 70% of teachers in one study (Pappamihiel, 2007) and 90% in another (Mujawamariya, 2001) felt underprepared to address the needs of culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse students. In addition, Hagan and McGlynn (2004) found that only 36% felt prepared for a diverse student body. The contradiction between the literature and the present study suggests that teacher education programs must be improving the preparation of teacher candidates for work in multiethnic classrooms. Nevertheless, when analyzing the responses from the interviews, it is apparent that many teacher candidates still lack the experience and preparedness to work in these environments. Therefore, it can be argued that the questionnaire was ineffective in producing results similar to other research because it did not specifically question if participants were prepared to teach in these environments. Rather, the research asked if candidates were able to adapt their instruction for students, which, consequently, is an important skill that is developed in many teacher education courses. In addition, the participants were not specifically asked if they could adapt to the needs of ethnically, culturally, and racially

diverse students, but rather to all students in general. Therefore, the responses from the interview better reflect the teacher candidates' preparation for teaching in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms.

Participants were also hesitant to proclaim the readiness of their colleagues. Many believed that their classmates' preparedness to teach in ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse classrooms directly related to past experiences of these candidates. Many participants were concerned because most of their peers were White and some lacked familiarity with people of different cultures, ethnicities, and races. In addition, some participants noted that teacher candidates can proceed through training without addressing issues related to multiculturalism. This troubling fact illustrates the extent to which teacher education programs are not doing enough to nurture culturally responsive teachers. The limited amount of time that teacher educators take to impact candidates in mandatory classes will continue to produce teacher candidates who are not culturally aware (Jenks et al., 2001). Therefore, teacher educators need to consider making changes to their courses to help rectify this issue.

Due to the limited exposure teacher candidates had with diverse practicum experiences, many were apprehensive to the idea of working in diverse teaching environments following convocation. The interviews revealed that some participants were nervous, but, nevertheless, expressed a willingness to try to meet the needs of ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse students. The participants explained that they would be able to adapt their instruction in many ways, but would still need to work with the students to determine what strategies are most effective for each situation. Learning about a variety of different strategies in teacher education programs should provide

teacher candidates with a bank of strategies that they could use to help meet the needs of students in any classroom. Research confirms that teachers need to be aware of the many ways that learning can unfold and the cultural influences that exist in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2006a).

Although teacher candidates believed they were ready to teach in a culturally responsive manner, many were not satisfied with how multicultural education was addressed in their program. The literature confirms that many new graduates tend to be dissatisfied with the multicultural education aspect of their teacher education program (Forlin et al. 2009; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004). The findings demonstrated that the program's inability to teach how to incorporate strategies that meet the needs of ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse students was the teacher candidates' biggest concern. Participants noted that they were left to understand how these strategies could be integrated on their own. This observation shares similarities to the literature, which argue that teacher candidates often struggle transferring theory to practice (Assaf et al., 2010; Dunn et al., 2009; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Smith, 2009). As well, research has found that teacher education programs tend to be overly theoretical, while insufficient time is spent addressing practical teaching strategies that are essential for everyday teaching (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008).

### **Teacher Candidates' Opinions on Multicultural Education**

The participants' opinions and experiences with multicultural education provides valuable insight into the ability of the program to raise awareness of multicultural issues. Quantifying the participants' responses for this section highlights the importance of the

continuation of multicultural education within teacher education programs. In essence, these responses provided the basis needed to understand the research question “How do teacher candidates within these programs perceive the quality of the multicultural education curriculum that is offered as part of their program?”

Many of the participants valued multicultural education and supported its inclusion in their teacher education program. They believed that multicultural education had a place in the training of new educators because of the responsibility of meeting the needs of ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse student bodies. These findings are comparable to other studies, which also found that 96-100% of students considered multicultural education to be important (Hagan & McGlynn, 2004; Mujawamariya, 2001). In contrast, another study found that teacher candidates did not consider equity to be an issue (Jenks et al., 2001). In this case, many teacher candidates believed that most suburban schools had student populations that were essentially White and middle class. Thus, they viewed multicultural education as unnecessary in their training (Jenks et al., 2001). Despite a negative outlook on the importance of multicultural education, teacher candidates can still benefit from learning about multicultural education. This is witnessed in another study where 39% of teacher candidates believed that activities in their program had a positive impact on their understanding of diversity (Hagan & McGlynn, 2004). Consequently, teacher education programs need to continue developing their multicultural education curricula to help prepare teachers for their future.

The biggest disparity that existed in the responses of teacher candidates for this section of the questionnaire was the amount of cultural experiences they had encountered

in their lives. As was mentioned earlier, the more culturally aware teacher candidates generally felt better prepared to teach in ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse classrooms. Several teacher candidates acknowledged that they had limited cultural experiences and this recognition might have had an effect on their ability to teach to a culturally diverse audience. The problem associated with this observation has also been acknowledged by Dunn et al. (2009), who found that many teacher candidates “never attended racially diverse schools or lived in intercultural neighbourhoods” (p. 538). This is, therefore, an alarming issue for teacher education programs because many of the candidates who participated in these studies were raised unaware of issues surrounding racism (Solomon et al., 2005). Therefore, the demographics of teacher candidates in these programs is important and will continue to be an issue for teacher educators to consider when making improvements to their programs.

As a result of having many teacher candidates with limited cultural experiences, many participants believed it was important for teacher education programs to provide awareness of multicultural issues for all teacher candidates. One teacher candidate mentioned that it is easy to fall through the cracks and graduate from the program without becoming critically engaged with multicultural issues. The problem with the current system is that graduates tend to adopt a colour-blind philosophy that trivializes the issues inherent in everyday classrooms (Owen, 2010). Teacher candidates need to graduate with an open, caring, and student-first approach that is free of prejudice, which will help to foster a positive learning environment for all students. To achieve this objective, teacher education programs need to move beyond the optional courses for multicultural

education that are currently offered and provide an understanding of multicultural education in the contexts of all subjects.

Finally, teacher candidates provided definitions of multicultural education to successfully exhibit their understanding of multicultural education goals. Many of the definitions presented were comparable to those found in literature. One definition from Sadker and Sadker (2003) defines multicultural education as “education policies and practices (that) recognize and affirm human differences and similarities associated with gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, and class” (p. G-8). Many teacher candidates used key words such as “equitable practices” and “equity for all” in their definitions. In addition, several also discussed an inclusive curriculum that used culturally relevant material that helps all students succeed. One teacher candidate also mentioned that multicultural education strives to help provide a “common ground and understanding across diverse cultures, by removing stereotypes and increasing sensitivity to the needs of others.” Therefore, most participants in this study were aware of the goals of multicultural education, but were underprepared in how to implement such learning successfully in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms.

### **Teacher Candidates’ Suggestions for Improvement**

Understanding participants’ suggestions to improve multicultural education is crucial because it highlights the weaknesses within the multicultural education component of the teacher education program. The graduates consulted in this study recently completed an 8-month training program that was supposed to prepare them to teach in Ontario, including classrooms with a high population of ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse students. The voices of recent graduates need to be considered when



teacher education programs are considering making changes to the structure of teacher training because these new teachers could provide valuable insight into the ways in which the program can better prepare future candidates to teach in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse classrooms.

The research findings discovered that teacher candidates desired more concrete examples of how to incorporate multicultural education into the classroom. More specifically, many discussed a greater emphasis on how to use specific strategies in the classroom. For example, *East8* asked that teacher educators, “give more concrete examples and strategies instead of general beliefs.” From this observation, it is clear that teacher education programs tend to generalize the information they teach, instead of engaging in culturally responsive pedagogy. Not engaging in this pedagogy might be a result of having few faculty members with the required expertise to teach this concept thoroughly. Teacher educators tend to instruct on the topics they understand well, so if they are required to teach about multicultural issues, they will likely only teach about them in general terms. If teacher educators lack this knowledge, they will have greater difficulty preparing teacher candidates who are able to address the needs of all students (Jenks et al., 2001).

A more intensive multicultural education program is emphasized in another response. *Southwest12* maintained, “I would appreciate more specific examples and fewer generalities about racist attitudes and discrimination.” Finally, *Southwest14* stressed, “I think there should be more real life examples provided to teacher candidates so that they will not feel as though they lack the resources to create an open and accepting classroom.” Teacher candidates could be provided with more strategies that

might help them meet the needs of students in their future classrooms, but teacher candidates must also be aware that multicultural education is not a “cut and dry” approach. Every classroom and student is unique and what works with one group or student might not work for another. Similar suggestions are also evident in the literature. In her research of what the best teacher education programs do to prepare teachers, Darling-Hammond (2006a) found that the “extensive use of case methods, teacher research, performance assessments, and portfolio evaluation that apply learning to real problems of practice” (p. 305) were an asset for teacher candidates. The literature also supports the use of ethnographic methods to help teacher candidates learn about the different cultures of their students in order to build positive relationships that are necessary to successfully teach children (Assaf et al., 2010). Clearly, teacher education programs will need to focus more attention on how to provide teacher candidates with knowledge and strategies that effectively address multicultural issues.

The participants also revealed a desire for teacher education programs to completely reorganize courses to provide a greater focus on multicultural topics across all classes. Many teacher candidates maintained that a greater focus was especially important for peers who had limited cultural experiences. This was accentuated in *East8*'s response:

More of a focus on inclusion in general throughout all classes would make a big difference in helping new teachers who do have limited experience with diverse groups, to be prepared to handle situations that may arise and include various cultures and backgrounds in their teaching.

Although this is a great option for teaching education programs to consider, it is often difficult to enact. Teaching core courses through a multicultural lens might elicit resistance from teacher candidates. In addition, faculty could be criticized by administration for implementing new strategies, especially if teacher candidates do not value these approaches.

Another teacher candidate, *Southwest13*, noted the repetitiveness of courses and that teacher educators would be able to address multicultural education more thoroughly with the removal of recurring themes. Once again, collaboration is emphasized in the research of Darling-Hammond (2006a) in which she discovered that a common, clear vision across subjects and practicum placements, in conjunction with a strong curriculum that has an understanding of social and cultural issues, was necessary to help new graduates be successful.

In addition, some teacher candidates introduced the idea of creating a new course that specifically addresses the issues of multiculturalism in the classroom. Some teacher candidates believed that an optional course could be beneficial for many of their classmates, while others surmised that such changes might not be of benefit if these courses are not mandatory. The ideas of the participants concerning these courses are articulated by *Southwest16*, who stated that the program should “designate a class that focuses solely on [multicultural education], which provides strategies, teaching material, and hands-on experience.” As well, *Southwest18* maintained that “a class specifically devoted to teaching how multicultural and anti-racist education can be incorporated into lessons and the school curriculum as a whole, should be added to the classes required by teacher candidates in the teacher education program,” Finally, *Southwest23* concluded

that, “given the increasing population of English Language Learners in our schools, it would be beneficial to incorporate an ESL course, which also addresses ways to adapt instruction to meet the needs of our diverse cultures.” Although these suggestions seem plausible, sometimes faculty members already spend a significant period of time teaching other courses, and, therefore, it might not be possible to include additional courses at some universities.

A review of the literature does not specifically request the creation of new courses, yet Mujawamariya and Mahrouse (2004) revealed the need for “significant structural change” (p. 351). As well, many of the participants discussed the inclusion of some multicultural education in current courses, thereby demonstrating a small shift away from the typical add-on approaches used by many teacher education programs. Moreover, some researchers suggested that exposing teacher candidates to multicultural classrooms when they enter these programs would help raise awareness of multicultural issues (Dunn et al., 2009). These experiences would ultimately help foster the formation and development of culturally responsive teachers. Utilizing these new multicultural experiences and fostering inquiry about multicultural issues should assist teacher educators in cultivating the teacher candidates’ understanding of these problems (Mule, 2006; Taylor, 2010). Using both the integration of multicultural education in core courses and the creation of new courses should assist teacher education programs in preparing teachers for teaching in multicultural contexts.

Teacher candidates have also suggested the opportunity to have alternative practicum placements that would take place in different communities (e.g., outside of university’s city) or in different settings (e.g., community based programs). Only one

teacher candidate advocated for alternative placements, but teacher education programs should consider this option, especially if the local community around the university provides limited opportunities to work with multiethnic students. It is clear that this candidate would have appreciated an opportunity to work in a more ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse setting. Having opportunities for learning in diverse environments is supported in the research, which revealed that working with urban students afforded teacher candidates an opportunity to learn lessons that cannot be taught in the program (Dunn et al., 2009; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Smith, 2009). However, providing teacher candidates with opportunities to work with ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse populations does not guarantee that teacher candidates will become culturally responsive. Teacher educators will need to continue by helping their students make sense of these new experiences, while also critically analyzing what they observe (Finney & Orr, 1995; Gainer & Larrotta, 2010). Lund (1998) suggested that teacher candidates should also participate in educational research, which presents opportunities for personal and professional growth that could help them in their understanding of multicultural issues.

Teacher candidates also noted their desire to include community experts and guest speakers in their training program in order to share ideas and strategies that are useful in the classroom. The need for experts was highlighted by *Southwest17*, who mentioned “a greater focus on how to bring in community members and how to develop valuable learning opportunities” as an important factor in improving the training of teacher candidates. Other participants discussed bringing in successful teachers, who have tried and tested strategies that they use every day to help address issues related to diversity. Research established that it is important for teacher educators and teacher candidates to

“become integrated into the school community, and to become more aware of, and responsive to, diversity” (Assaf et al., 2010, p. 124). Helping teacher candidates identify the needs of all students in the classroom should help inform teaching pedagogy, and, therefore, enable the entire student body to succeed.

Finally, many participants discussed the importance of addressing one’s personal bias towards multicultural issues. The response from *Southwest8* highlighted that we often separate ourselves from other cultures and that “we need to be criticizing ourselves.” The significance of self-reflection was also recognized by *Southwest14*, who argued that, “we all have different values, beliefs, and traditions and we need to take into account that these often influence the way we interpret information.” Many research studies have been requesting that teacher educators incorporate a critical reflection component to their courses, in reference to diversity, in order to help confront teacher candidates’ long-held beliefs and assumptions (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Liu & Milman, 2010; Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004). Moreover, critical reflections need to be scaffolded using discussions in the classroom to help teacher candidates construct new understandings of their role in the classroom and the impact of not recognizing one’s personal culture (Dunn et al., 2009; Owen, 2010). With these suggestions, teacher education programs have a variety of options on which to reflect when considering improvements to their programs.

### **Implications**

What are the implications of the research findings? In this section, the implications of the research findings on teacher education and further research are

examined. This exploration provides insight in the viability of teaching multicultural education in teacher education, as well as key areas that require further investigation.

### **Implications for Teacher Education**

In this study, the research findings indicate that teacher education programs need to do a better job at preparing teacher candidates for employment in culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse Ontario classrooms. Participants in this study highlighted the need for more concrete examples, fluidity across all courses, alternative practicum experiences, inclusion of experts, and cultural self-reflection as key areas for teacher education departments to examine when making improvements. These initiatives need to be considered because a lack of sufficient training of teacher candidates in this regard has led to high rates of attrition for urban school teachers in the United States (Tan & Lefebvre, 2010). Canada's proximal relation with the United States means that these rates of attrition may also be applied to urban areas across Ontario.

Specifically engaging in a more comprehensive multicultural education program should generate teacher candidates who feel better prepared to teach in urban school environments. The research findings demonstrate that teacher candidates who had more experiences with diversity, ultimately felt more prepared to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. Therefore, providing more opportunities for teacher candidates to practice in these settings and use strategies associated with multicultural education should help in their preparation to teach in these diverse classrooms.

Helping to raise the awareness of teacher candidates' own culture and the stereotypes they have developed of other cultures will also help to create equity for all students. Teacher educators need to provide additional opportunities for critical

reflection in order to help break down the barriers of White supremacy. This is especially important when taking the demographics of teacher candidates in these programs into consideration. An increasingly White, female, middle-class teacher candidate will continue to need additional support to teach in an increasingly diverse Ontario classroom.

The biggest implication for teacher education is the collaboration of theory and practice. The research findings demonstrate that teacher candidates believed too much time was spent on content instruction, rather than providing practical solutions to teaching ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse students. Research supports the proposition that there is a “necessity of providing the teacher candidates with concrete tools and strategies for incorporating equitable practices in their classrooms” (Solomon et al., 2005, p. 165). Teacher educators need to help their students to build a bank of tools and strategies because every student and classroom is different.

Finally, this study also has implications on teacher educators. The findings indicate that if teacher educators are concerned about not having time to teach multicultural education, such criticisms could be eliminated through the reorganization of course syllabi. Teacher candidates noted the repetitiveness of courses in the program, especially for concurrent education students. Through restructuring, the program can easily accommodate multicultural education strategies to better prepare teacher candidates for employment in urban settings.

### **Implications for Further Research**

This study supports the proclamation that multicultural education continues to be underwhelming in teacher education programs. Despite years of research, teacher education programs have yet to address this issue adequately. This failure is illuminated



when considering the criticisms that have been generated by candidates enrolled in teacher education programs. In light of these findings, it is important for teacher education programs to infuse multicultural education across their courses. Continuing research needs to be completed to highlight the successes of teacher education reform. Research has shown the positive aspects of integrating multicultural education throughout the teacher training program. These studies need to continue to be published in order to provide additional ideas for other teacher education programs. Therefore, it is important for researchers to study the types of instruction that can help prepare teacher candidates more successfully for teaching in multicultural contexts. In addition, research needs to be completed on the successes and failures that teacher educators have faced when trying to enact change. Studies that interview teacher educators about their experiences and inform university administrators about the hurdles and hardships that these teacher educators may face should assist administrators in making positive changes to their teacher education programs.

### **Final Words**

The growth of multicultural education has been a long and arduous journey, and yet there is still much further to travel if we wish to support the learning of all students in our multicultural classrooms. In addition, teacher education programs have reacted slowly to this need and have a tendency to understate the importance of multicultural education to their teacher candidates (Hammett & Bainbridge, 2009). The continuing inaction in this domain is troublesome because it creates an inequitable learning environment for students of diverse ethnicities, cultures, and religions. The purpose of this study was to explore teacher candidates' experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of

multicultural education at two Ontario universities in order to determine their perception of the effectiveness of these programs in preparing teacher candidates. Secondly, this study focused on understanding the most effective practices in these programs, which help contribute to the preparation of teacher candidates for employment in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms in Ontario.

The research findings demonstrated that multicultural education in the teacher education programs was not sufficient in regards to the curriculum, courses, and practicum portions of the questionnaire. Many of the respondents were not satisfied with how the issues were addressed, yet still felt prepared to handle some multicultural issues in their future classrooms. Using Banks' (1995) five dimensions of multicultural education, teacher education programs currently appear to be amongst the first three dimensions. Teacher candidates in this research briefly discussed some aspects of content integration, knowledge construction, and social action, but they did not recount that these were fundamental aspects of their training. This research provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of multicultural education, and outlines opportunities teacher education programs have to better prepare teacher candidates for teaching in multicultural contexts. Therefore, educators within teacher education programs should continue to develop the strategies that are used to train teacher candidates, by progressing through Banks' five dimensions and incorporating antiracist pedagogy. As a result, teacher candidates should feel better prepared to teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms.

On a personal level, I undertook this research topic as I was beginning to learn about my own cultural identity. The courses I enrolled in during my Masters of

Education provided me with numerous readings on social context and cultural identity. With my experiences in teacher education, I was curious to see how others felt about their training with regards to multicultural issues. At the beginning of this research project, I knew very little about antiracist education and only had a small understanding of multicultural education and the goals associated with it. I recognized multicultural education as an important aspect for all schools, and, as such, I thought it was essential for beginning teachers to understand multicultural issues in order to successfully teach in culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse classrooms. Progressing through the readings for my literature review, I often came across antiracist education. The more I read and understood antiracist education, the more I realized that this is what teacher candidates need to be learning, especially considering that the majority of these candidates are White, middle class and female. Engaging in antiracist pedagogy should help teacher candidates better understand themselves and their students. This should eventually lead to greater success for all students, while developing an increasingly pluralistic society.

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## Appendix A

### Teacher Candidate Questionnaire

Please complete the following information:

1. Male  Female
2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your mother tongue? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3.1 With what language are you the most comfortable? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3.2 What is the language of instruction in the program in which you are currently enrolled? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How do you identify yourself in terms of your:
  - 4.1 Linguistic background \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4.2 Racial background \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4.3 If relevant, Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, Inuit, Métis)  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Place of birth  
Canada  Other  Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where did you complete high school?  
Country: Canada  Other  Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
Area: Rural  Suburban  Urban
7. At what level are you enrolled?  
Primary/Junior  Junior/Intermediate  Intermediate/Senior
8. Program Stream: Concurrent Student  Consecutive Student

Instructions: Using the following scale, please indicate how the teacher education program currently addresses each of the following areas:

<b>I. PROGRAM</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Preparing teacher candidates to...</b>	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very poor
1. meet the needs of students from diverse ethnoracial backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. address multiculturalism issues in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. adapt lesson plans to address multicultural issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. address racism issues in the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. be aware of the ethnoracial diversity of the students they may encounter in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. be aware of the diversity of students' cultural traditions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. be aware of inappropriate language (use of labels and stereotypes) that may offend students of diverse ethnoracial backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. work effectively with students whose first language is not English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. be sensitive to some of the problems that new Canadians and Aboriginal students encounter in the school system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. use practical and concrete strategies to teach multicultural and/or antiracism issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. use community experts (parents and volunteers) in order to collaborate and use their knowledge to help with multicultural issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>II. CURRICULUM</b>					
<b>The curriculum used in the teacher education program...</b>	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Acceptable	2 Poor	1 Very poor
12. reflects the experiences and views of ethnocultural minorities and Aboriginal peoples.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. takes into account cultures of individual students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. is well adapted for students from ethnocultural minorities and Aboriginal backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. offers courses that prepare teacher candidates to work with students from diverse ethno-racial backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. provides teacher candidates with information and resources to assist with multiculturalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. provides teacher candidates with specific instruction related to multiculturalism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. provides teacher candidates with specific instruction related to anti-racism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### III. COURSES

Please list all the teacher education courses you took that helped you to understand multicultural education issues (please indicate if these were mandatory or optional):

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<b>III. COURSES (continued)</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The mandatory courses in the teacher education program...</b>	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very poor
19. address the range of minority groups likely to be in the Canadian school system (i.e., First Nations, Somalis, Croatians).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. use instructional materials (i.e., textbooks) that address diversity in Canada.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>IV. PRACTICUM</b>					
<b>How effective was the practicum component of your training in...</b>					
21. allowing you to utilize the community to aid instruction in multicultural communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. preparing you to effectively work with students from diverse ethnoracial backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. allowing you to utilize what you learned about multicultural issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. allowing you to utilize what you learned about racism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## V. DEFINITIONS

1. How do you define multicultural education?

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## VI. READINESS & SATISFACTION

Please complete the following information:

	Yes	No	Unsure
1. I am satisfied with how multicultural issues were taught to teacher candidates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am satisfied with how antiracism issues were taught to teacher candidates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am able to adapt instruction to the needs of all my students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I can identify subtle forms of racism, including unintended bias, that might influence my own teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## VII. OPINIONS& EXPERIENCES

Please complete the following information:

	Yes	No	Unsure
1. Education on multicultural issues is important for teacher candidates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Education about racism is important for teacher candidates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. It is important that school practices reflect the cultural and racial diversity of Canada.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. It is important that the teaching profession represent the racial and cultural diversity of Canadian society.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Racism is a major problem for students in Canadian schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. All students have a fair chance to succeed in school regardless of their cultural or racial background.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Biases and stereotypes that I might have for some cultural groups could unintentionally influence my classroom instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Multicultural and antiracist education is only important in racially or culturally mixed schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I would rather teach in monocultural school settings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I have limited cross-cultural experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. My life experiences influence the values and beliefs I hold for making classroom decisions about curriculum and instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Appendix B

### One-on-One Interview Protocol

1. Do you have any experiences with multicultural education and/or cultural diversity that occurred separate of the teacher education program? Explain.
2. In what ways has your teacher education program addressed multicultural education? Were these beneficial/detrimental? How could these be improved?
3. Did the university address multicultural education in core curriculum courses? (e.g., math, science, language arts)? If so, how?
4. Do you value multicultural education? Why do you think it is important/unimportant?
5. In the practicum portion of your program, what observations did you made towards multicultural education or diversity? How has the practicum helped you to bridge the gap between theory and practice?
6. Considering the changing demographics of Ontario's school population, do you believe that your training has sufficiently prepared you for the Ontario classroom? In what ways has your program prepared you effectively? In what ways has your program not prepared you well enough?
7. Are you prepared to teach in classrooms that possess a high level of cultural diversity? Why or why not? Do you believe that most teacher education graduates are prepared to teach in classrooms that possess such diversity?

**Appendix C**

**Research Ethics Board Clearance Letter**