

**An Exploration of the Experiences of Non-Aboriginal Teachers
Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives
into the Manitoba Social Studies Curriculum**

By

Cara Zurzolo

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Education
degree.

Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology,

Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba

November, 2006

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

An Exploration of the Experiences of Non-Aboriginal Teachers
Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives
into the Manitoba Social Studies Curriculum

BY

Cara Zurzolo

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree

Master of Education

Cara Zurzolo © 2007

Permission has been granted to the Library of the University of Manitoba to lend or sell copies of this thesis/practicum, to the National Library of Canada to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and to University Microfilms Inc. to publish an abstract of this thesis/practicum.

This reproduction or copy of this thesis has been made available by authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research, and may only be reproduced and copied as permitted by copyright laws or with express written authorization from the copyright owner.

Abstract

An Exploration of the Experiences of Non-Aboriginal Teachers

Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives Into the Manitoba Social Studies Curriculum

This study explores the experiences of non-Aboriginal teachers who are currently in the process of integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the social studies curriculum in Manitoba schools. This research aims to richly describe and understand the experiences of teachers, and then examines that description of experience through a theoretical lens that respects a commitment to social justice and advocacy for students and teachers. Two theoretical lenses by Banks (2001): namely the four approaches to multicultural curricular reform and the four characteristics of effective multicultural teachers were used to analyze the data.

The research consists of the first-person accounts of teachers reflecting on their experiences (structural, curricular, relational and personal), their identity (personal and professional), and their perceptions and attitudes on such matters as equity, social justice and integrating Aboriginal perspectives during two semi-structured interviews.

The research specifically highlighted teachers' pedagogical resources (structural, curricular, relational and personal) and the challenges that subverted or submerged their attempts to integrate Aboriginal perspectives successfully in their classrooms.

This research attempts to understand the teaching experience and what it is to integrate Aboriginal perspectives and what it means for a non-aboriginal teacher. This information was used to develop a working definition of what it means to integrate Aboriginal perspectives and provided a starting point to interpret this experience.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the participants for sharing their personal and professional stories with me. I am very thankful for the support and wisdom of all my committee members, Jon Young and Sheldon Rosenstock. I am especially indebted to the guidance and support of my advisor Nathalie Piquemal.

From a personal perspective I would like to acknowledge all my friends and family who have supported me over the years, and cheered me on every step of the way. I would like to thank my parents, Anna and Salvatore Zurzolo, without whose support and patience I would not have finished writing this thesis. I would especially like to honor my grandfather Antonio Paletta who encouraged me always to learn, stay curious and explore the world of ideas. Finally, I would like to thank my daughter Olivia, my inspiration and motivation for completing this project, for her patience and understanding of this very isolating process.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction.....5

 Research Question.....8

 Research Context.....10

 Significance of this study.....12

 Researcher’s Background.....14

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

Introduction.....16

The School System.....17

Curriculum.....24

Teachers’ Practice.....31

Chapter 3 : Methodology

Research Framework.....40

Data Collection.....41

 Research Participants.....41

 Participant Recruitment.....41

Data Collection Methods.....43

 Semi-structured Interviews.....43

Data Analysis.....43

Participant Portraits.....44

 Mala.....44

Ritchie.....	49
Matthew.....	53
Diego.....	56
Laura.....	60
Chapter 4: Data and Results	
Introduction.....	64
What are Aboriginal perspectives?.....	65
What does it mean to integrate Aboriginal perspectives?.....	64
What is the significance of being a non-Aboriginal teacher?.....	69
Teachers' Pedagogical Resources.....	68
Structural.....	71
Professional Development.....	71
Willingness and Opportunity.....	72
Release time and allocation of funds.....	77
Curricular.....	79
Curricular Flexibility.....	80
Resources.....	83
Teaching Methodology.....	85
Relational.....	88
Relationships with students.....	89
Relationships with colleagues.....	91
Personal.....	94
Teacher identity.....	94

Co-curricular Involvement.....	97
Transformational Experiences.....	97
Challenges.....	98
Lack of Knowledge.....	98
Student and School Culture.....	100
Administrative Support.....	105
Isolation from Aboriginal communities.....	106
Chapter 5: Interpretation and Discussion	
Introduction.....	107
What are teachers' beliefs on such matters as equity, social justice and anti-racism.....	108
How do teachers define their own identity in relation to their engagement in integrating Aboriginal perspectives.....	119
How are teachers' experiences reflected in their current practice?.....	125
Chapter 6: Recommendations	
Introductions.....	138
Community of Teachers.....	140
Transformational Experiences.....	142
Flexible Curriculum.....	143
References.....	147
Appendix 1: Interview Protocol.....	152
Appendix 2: Participant Consent form.....	155

Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Despite efforts to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into curricula and classroom practices many sources indicate that Canadian students – non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal - still graduate high school with less than adequate levels of information about Aboriginal people in Canada. (Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies [CAAS], 2002; Royal Commission on Aboriginal People [RCAP], 1996; Silver, Mallet, Greene & Simard., 2002). The inadequate level of knowledge was evidenced most dramatically by the CAAS study in 2002 conducted in secondary and post-secondary institutions across Canada. According to the CAAS study, Canadian students lacked even basic knowledge related to Aboriginal history, culture, or nations. One consequence of this is that Aboriginal students experience a sense of alienation from school and a school curriculum that is “refined by and for a White, urban, middle-class culture” (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001, p.107) and a second consequence is that that same curriculum ensures that non-Aboriginal students will likely continue in ignorance and intolerant attitudes, greatly limiting their effective participation in a just society (Freire, 1972; Graveline, 1998; RCAP, 1996; Young, 1993). In this thesis these perspectives on the school system will be examined within a Canadian national culture described by Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell (2005) as striving for “equity, racial diversity and social justice” (p. 148) and a multicultural education movement that according to Banks (1993) should be a “total school reform effort designed to increase educational equity for a range of cultural, ethnic and economic groups” (as cited in Vavrus, 2002, p. 1).

Manitoba Education and Training (2003) describes the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum as one important step in “eliminating the stereotypes that exist in mainstream stream culture” and in correcting “historical and social biases that have developed” in the school system and beyond (Manitoba Education & Training, 2003, p.1). In this document, Aboriginal perspectives are described broadly as a shared world-view having “humans living in a universe made by the creator and needing to live in harmony with nature, with one another and with oneself” (Manitoba Education & Training, 2003, p.1). In the context of the current movement of integration, designed to combat lack of knowledge about Aboriginal peoples and to improve the quality of education in public schools, Aboriginal perspectives have been elaborated upon as including the following: a) treating students with respect and recognizing individual gifts, b) providing student motivation through intrinsic rather than extrinsic means, c) making curriculum relevant to the students who are learning it, d) using experiential learning where possible and appropriate, e) involving members of the family and community in the education of students, f) inviting Elders to share their wisdom and knowledge with students, g) including traditional knowledge, histories, values and cultures of Aboriginal peoples in the classroom (Manitoba Education & Training, 2003, p. 18). It is this interpretation of integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum that provides the initial focus of this thesis.

The success or failure of efforts to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum depend largely upon individual classroom teachers, and in this regard, Kanu (2005) has argued that while there is an “expressed openness among teachers to include Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum, in practice little headway was being

made except for a few unique cases” (Kanu, 2005, p. 57). Non-Aboriginal teachers in her research are reported to employ an “additive and contribution approach” to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, and their limited use of Aboriginal-centered resources and activities appeared to have no effect on how non-Aboriginal students viewed Aboriginal students (Kanu, 2005, p. 57). Teachers in this research perceived a number of issues as challenges to “meaningful integration” namely: a lack of classroom resources, the racist attitudes of non-Aboriginal staff and students, school administrators’ lukewarm support of integration, and incompatibility of school structures and some Aboriginal cultural values. But as Kanu (2005) argues, a teacher’s own lack of knowledge about Aboriginal content and lack of familiarity with Aboriginal approaches to teaching and learning were reported to be a particularly serious impediment to integration and topped teachers’ lists of challenges. As a result, the much of the responsibility for breaking down the barriers of stereotypes and hegemony in schools lies in the hands of often unprepared and reluctant teachers (CAAS, 2003; Kanu, 2005; National Indian Brotherhood, 1972; RCAP, 1996; Sleeter, 1992; Solomon et al, 2005; Taylor, 1995).

Kanu (2005) also reported that “representative groups of non-Aboriginal students ... where these integrations were being carried out revealed that these activities had little or no effect on the student in term of either how they perceived Aboriginal students or of moving them toward interrogation of power structure in society”(p. 56) – a finding that confirms other critiques of multicultural education (Alladin, 1996; Solomon et al., 2005; Sleeter, 1992) that argue that teachers need to move beyond a belief that “rationality leads to sensitivity” (Kanu, 2005, p. 56).

There has been an increase in research related to the inclusion of Aboriginal cultural knowledge in the curriculum (CAAS, 2002; CAAS, 2005; Frideres & Gadacz, 2001; RCAP, 1996; Silver et al., 2002; Urion, 1993) and research has begun to address ways in which teachers can integrate such cultural knowledge into their teaching of the curricula of public schools (CAAS, 2005; Graveline, 1998; Kanu, 2005; Taylor, 1995). To echo Kanu (2005, p. 51) what is needed now are studies that examine teachers' perceptions of the integration of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and perspectives into the school curriculum. Moreover, what remains to be explored are the specific experiences (including innovations, perceived challenges, emotions and relationships) that non-Aboriginal teachers have when integrating Aboriginal content into the social studies curriculum. This thesis attempts to respond to this need.

Research Question

The major question that this study explores is: "What are non-Aboriginal teachers' experiences when integrating Aboriginal cultural knowledge and perspectives into the Social Studies curriculum in Manitoba schools." This study focused on the personal and professional experiences of teachers in order to both highlight their pedagogical resources and explore ways their pedagogical efforts are supported and/or "subverted and submerged" (Carson, 1996, p. 121). In this study, "personal experiences" refer to such matters as: emotions (discomfort, anger, confusion, transformations, satisfaction, pride), and attitudes towards integration (importance, who is it for, reasons for attempting it, positionality of teachers, perceived challenges, perceived lack of preparation). "Professional experiences" refer to such matters as: professional relationships (with students, parents, colleagues, administrators), and curricular choices

(interpretation of mandate to integrate, what is done, how is it done, why it is done).

These categories of experience are a response to and representative of the foci of much of the research related to teaching for equity and social justice in schools which often explores “emotional experience”, “attitudes” and “actual practice” (Alladin, 1996; Anchan & Holychuk, 1996; CAAS, 2002; Graveline, 1998; Kanu, 2005; Sleeter, 1992, Solomon et al. 2005; Taylor, 1995; Young, 1993) and research related to the success of school reform initiatives which according to Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999) and Kanu (2005) are related to teacher perceptions and attitudes about change.

Two sets of subsidiary questions guide the exploration of professional and personal experience. The primary goal of this research was to understand the lived experiences of teachers, but it is also necessary to have a point from which to delimit what the study was actually examining. Initially, the definition of Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives used in this thesis was the Manitoba Education and Training (2003). I found that the operational definitions given by teachers differed from this version. This study does not aim to evaluate how well teachers follow curricular/departmental directives nor does it aim to evaluate the correctness of one version over the other. However, it is the aim of this study to gain insight into the reasons why certain practices are followed and certain beliefs are held. An iteration of the teachers’ definitions allows for a more clear understanding of what teachers perceive as challenges to integrating perspectives, and allows for an examination of how teachers understand the phenomenon, what they actually do and what they perceive as challenging and/or supporting the fulfillment of integrating Aboriginal perspectives.

The following three subsidiary questions provide the basis for understanding a working definition of the phenomenon of Integrating Aboriginal perspectives and provide an important starting point:

- 1) What are “Aboriginal perspectives”?
- 2) What does it mean to “Integrate Aboriginal Perspectives”?
- 3) What is the significance of being a non-Aboriginal teacher integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the social studies curricula?

The next three subsidiary questions are used to interpret and discuss the data and results by highlighting both contextual and theoretical considerations related to this study.

- 4) What are teachers’ beliefs and attitudes on such matters as equity, social justice and antiracism?
- 5) How do teachers define their own identity (both professional and personal) in relation to their engagement in integrating Aboriginal perspectives?
- 6) How are teachers’ experiences (relational, structural, curricular and personal) reflected in their practices?

This study attempts to understand select non-Aboriginal social studies teachers, specifically their lived experience relating to the phenomenon of integrating Aboriginal perspectives and cultural content into the curriculum, by exploring their personal and professional experience.

Research Context

The reasons that this study focuses on non-Aboriginal teachers who teach the social studies curriculum are more contextual than philosophical. First, non-Aboriginal teachers make up the bulk of the teaching population in Manitoba schools; it is these

teachers who will deliver most of the curriculum to most of the students in public schools (Silver et al., 2002).

Second, in studies of curricular reforms and innovations involving change in teachers' practices "attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about the change have been identified as crucial to the success of the innovation" (Calderhead, 1987; Day et al., 1993, as cited in Kanu, 2005, p. 51). Teachers' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions are intimately connected to external behavior, as "teachers play a central role in the fate of virtually every educational reform" (Cochrane-Smyth & Lytle, 1999, p. 32). In this study, integrating Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge into the curriculum is dependent on teacher's perceptions of that phenomenon. Those perceptions are based on both personal and professional experiences, particularly those with students, the curriculum documents, and the implementation of the curriculum, the school culture, colleagues, and administrators. Furthermore research demonstrates that chances for reform and successful implementation can significantly increase when teachers feel that challenges and difficulties that they have identified are addressed (Kanu, 2005).

A further strength of this research lies in the relevance of teacher research being done by a teacher. Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1998) argue that teacher research which centers on the lived experience of teachers, what they call "local knowledge," is useful and relevant to other teachers, researchers, policy makers and the local community. They comment:

local knowledge about the extraordinarily complex domain of teaching, including how teachers theorize and interpret their work, is at once useful and relevant for individual teachers and the local communities of which they

are part as well as for the larger more public educational community of other teachers, researchers and policy makers. In other words, understanding how teachers work and think about their work is important to other teachers as well as to anyone concerned with the larger projects of educational and social change as well as teacher education. (p.31)

And third, while teachers in all subject areas have some opportunity and perhaps even the mandate to integrate Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge, social studies has a special place with respect to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge. It is the place of the Social Studies curriculum to study culture and to inform students (especially in Senior 1 and Senior 3) about who they are as Canadians, of how Canada became the country it is today and who the major players/stakeholders have been throughout its history. Most important however is the role Social Studies teachers play in preparing students for their role as citizens which according to Solomon et al. (2005, p. 148) is linked to students' concepts of democracy, discourses of race and notions of belongingness. Social studies curricular goals and outcomes make it a good starting point to begin a meaningful integration of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and perspectives.

Yatta Kanu's paper, "Teachers perceptions of the integration of Aboriginal culture into the high school curriculum" (Kanau, 2005) was used as a guide and sounding board for this study. However, my study differed in three ways: first by focusing solely on the Social Studies curriculum and teachers, second by focusing on both the personal and professional experiences of teachers and, third by shifting the focus, from the

problematic school environment for Aboriginal students to a school environment that is problematic for all students. So, while the failure of the school system in its attempt to provide adequate education for Aboriginal students is well documented, this study supports the idea that the school environment is problematic for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, thereby reaffirming the idea that an understanding and acceptance of diverse cultures benefits all students in a pluralistic society (Manitoba Education and Training, 2003; Nieto, 2000)

Significance of this study

This study aims to contribute to closing the gap of knowledge about teachers' experiences in relation to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge into the curriculum. As many educators and researchers have pointed out (Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 1998; Kanu, 2005) understanding the role that teacher's play in the integration initiative has led to recommendations for improving the situation and for creating more equity and social justice in schools. Improving teacher practice is a logical step towards improving student knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge.

This study is consistent with the priorities outlined by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, which agrees that integrating Aboriginal material, perspectives and pedagogical practices into existing curricula benefits all students. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996) stated in its final report that, "we have been reminded repeatedly of the limited understanding of Aboriginal issues among non-Aboriginal Canadians and of the obstacles this presents to achieving reconciliation and a new relationship, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike have a common interest in

creating a new relationship based on mutual respect and reconciliation” (p. 92). This position is further supported by the report *Learning about Walking in Beauty* (2002). The document states:

From the viewpoint of educating students of heritages other than Aboriginal or First Nation, publicly-funded schools have unique opportunities to promote better understanding of Aboriginal history, culture and traditions. A generation of school children with more accurate awareness will immediately mitigate against ignorance and stereotyping, which allows racial and cultural biases against Aboriginal peoples to persist in Canadian society. (CAAS, 2002, p. 25)

As well, a better understanding of Aboriginal cultures and contemporary issues facing Aboriginal people is likely to benefit students in making sense of the complex and ever changing nature of their communities and their country (CAAS, 2005; Graveline, 1998; Manitoba Education and Training, 2003; RCAP, 1996))

Researcher's background

Having taught social studies classes for 5 years puts me in a unique position as a researcher, as I fit the criteria of my research participants perfectly. I am a non-aboriginal teacher who has experience integrating Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge into the social studies curriculum. As a teacher I struggled with the task of integration and it led me to embark on a search for “truth” as I talked about it at the time. “Truth” notwithstanding, what I was truly struggling with was most likely the guilt, discomfort and ignorance that I felt when I realized that I knew very little about Aboriginal cultures and perspectives. My experience certainly is not uncommon, Taylor (1995) speaks of the discomfort and difficulty teachers have when faced with teaching native content and

often responded to the discomfort by glossing over the information or omitting it all together (Taylor, 1995).

I cannot describe it as more than a feeling at that time, but I knew that something about the content and the way I was presenting it was not quite right. The feeling I had was enough to propel me back to university to try to find out more about the topic. There was actually very little motivation from my school environment to continue on. Indeed, my administrator actually used the expression the “voice crying out in the wilderness” (a biblical reference to John the Baptist) to describe my new interest and my conviction that our school needed to address the issues of Aboriginal content and perspective integration. I was told point blank that it was not a “big part” of the curriculum and the consensus was that the topic was taught well. However, I did continue, as I suspect many teachers do, without much support all the while, uncertain if I was traveling in the right direction. I can see how administrative support is important and affects the motivation for teachers to improve their practice. In the process of all of this, I decided to pursue a Master’s degree on the topic of the teaching of Aboriginal culture and perspectives in a Social Studies context. While completing my course work, I became interested in the process of “decolonizing” the teaching of history. I also discovered how the education system falls short in providing adequate historical information for and about non-Europeans (Adams 1989; Blaut, 1993; Dickason, 1997; Jennings, 1975; Larocque, 1975). I definitely have my own ideas and biases concerning the teaching of history and its Eurocentric nature, due to my own experiences, gender, culture and positionality. However, I attempted to use my life experience to enrich the study, while always being careful to prioritize the voices of the participants

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review in this study attempts to locate the movement to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum in a number of different spaces. The current literature identifies: (i) teachers and their perceptions/attitudes/emotional experiences as integral to reform in schools, (Alladin, 1996; Cochran-Smith & Lytle; Kanu, 2005; Solomon et al. 2005); (ii) identifies the necessity of listening to and responding to what teachers identify as needed support (Kanu, 2005) and providing a space for reflection and discussion (Nieto, 2000); (iii) identifies a necessary shift from a “token” (Kanu, 2005) and surface approach to a critical analysis (Anchan & Holychuck, 2000) and activism (Alladin, 1996, Graveline, 1998, Rymer & Alladin; Solomon et al. 2005, Vavrus, 2001) to an approach that empowers teachers to act as instrument of school change; (iv) identifies various definitions and critiques of multicultural education, and specifically its failure to examine “how difference serves to disadvantage some and advantage others” (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 17) and its failure to focus on institutions versus a limited focus on the individual (Alladin, 1996, Solomon et al., 2005, Sleeter, 1992); and, (v) identifies a need for multicultural education to focus on social justice, equity and emancipation and the role of antiracism education in addressing this need (Alladin, 1996, Graveline, 1998; Rymer & Alladin, 1996; Solomon et al. 2005). The literature review examines schools, curricular issues, teachers’ practices and teachers’ perceptions and attitudes on such matters as equity, social justice and racism. It also includes a discussion of institutional racism (established laws, customs and practices

that systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities regardless of intention) and the challenges that it poses to the success of the integration movement.

The School System

The school system has exercised much influence over the lives of students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Education has been described as “the great equalizer of the conditions of men -- the balance-wheel of the social machinery” (Mann, 1848). While this would be the ideal, it is hardly the reality. In a Canadian context, the school system has long been a critical force in the process of colonization, evidenced by the tragedy of the residential schools. It was only in 1987 that the last residential school closed its door, so the effects of 100 years of educational colonization are still rippling through our education system. Demographic figures from 1991 illustrate these “ripples”; the level of education attained by Aboriginal people as compared to the total Canadian population is disparate. Only 42.5 % of Aboriginal people attained a high school education, as compared to 61.8 % of the total Canadian population (Frideres & Gadacz, 2001, p.111). The school system, as it is currently functioning in Canada is not the great equalizer of which Mann (1848) speaks (CAAS, 2003; Graveline, 1998; Alladin, 1996; LaRocque, 1974; RCAP, 1996; Silver et al. 2001; Solomon et al., 2005; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

One significant factor in the failure of the school system for Aboriginal students has been the lack of Aboriginal cultural content and perspectives in the school curriculum and among teachers.(Kanu, 2005; RCA P,1996; Silver et al., 2002). The failure of the school system for non-Aboriginal students is also linked to the same lack of Aboriginal cultural content and perspectives. Inasmuch as the particular foci of Aboriginal perspectives are important to all Canadians (these specific histories and

cultural knowledges are part of our collective heritage), it is also symbolic of an important shift from a curriculum of domination to a curriculum of liberation. Because all students need an education that provides them with “a new inclusive understanding of our social world... in particular, the issue of social justice and respect for the fundamental freedoms and rights of all people” (Dei, 1993, p. 37)

Graveline (1998) challenges the existing school system, which she claims is a “western patriarchal capitalist domination” of the school and is opposed to freedom. She concurs with Maracle (1988) who describes schools as “ideological processing plants” (as cited in Graveline, 1998, p. 8) and speaks of the dichotomy facing educators, which places them either on the side of freedom or on the side of repression, colonialism and imperialism (Graveline, 1998, p. 8). Her critique of schools is not limited to the theoretical, but extends her enthusiastic disapproval to the practical. She charges that education puts all its energy on individual skill development and adaptability to the “real” world (Graveline, 1998). School is concerned with equipping students to enter the workforce and participate in the pre-existing system. The system is described as self-reinforcing where “efficiency” and “effectiveness” are common practice and common good (Graveline, 1998, p. 9). She insists that this system is deficient and oppressive and fails to openly educate about some people’s everyday privilege “which is enacted economically, politically and socially through dominant cultural forms and through overt acts of supremacy, the hegemonic power of Eurocentric is validated rather than challenged” (Graveline, 1998, p. 9). The claim are also supported by other critics (Alladin, 1996; CAAS, 2003; Dixson, 2005; Sleeter, 1992, Solomon et al. 2005) who

emphatically support challenges to the current system in the form of confronting white privilege, and challenging liberal ideas such as “color blindness”, and “meritocracy”.

The integration of Aboriginal perspectives into school culture and school curriculum can challenge the current goals of education which according to (Alladin, 1996), fail to promote the multi-ethnic nature of Canadian society and continue to “de-emphasize a pedagogy that emancipates” and “generally serves to reproduce the dominant ideologiesthat sustain and legitimize the status quo”. The status quo being a racist system that positions marginalized minority groups in both an economically and socially disadvantaged status (Alladin, 1996, p. 5).

School has become a virtual battleground between pedagogy that can liberate and pedagogy that aims to dominate. Armstrong (1987) addresses the importance of “Indigenous educational methods not only to ensure our survival as indigenous peoples but for our very existence as humans” (p. 287). Charnley (1990) sums it up by saying that when “history being made up of the voices of all nations, all people instead of just European people, the sand will be taken out of the eyes of Europeans showing them what their own history and worldview has been doing all of these years” (as cited in Graveline, 1998, p. 37). It is suggested that teachers should be historical agents of change and can interrupt “business as usual” by adopting an alternative Aboriginal teaching model and by adopting the role of activists for democratic reforms in the school setting (Alladin, 1996; CAAS, 2003; Graveline, 1998; Manitoba Education and Training, 2003). An inclusion of the goals of integrating Aboriginal perspectives can according to Manitoba Education and Training (2003) improve the quality of education and promote equity for all students.

Despite a sometimes gloomy picture of the current school system, there are spaces where the “pedagogy of liberation” (Freire, 1972) is being enacted. It is interesting to note that in these instances the whole school and often the whole community (school division, school board, parents and neighbors) are involved in addressing challenges. These schools have engaged in creating “communities of diversity” (Carson, 1996)

The Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies (2002) and the Canadian Race Relations published a study in 2002 outlining an analysis of the success of current teaching practice (resources, curriculum and methodology) in the form of a questionnaire distributed to students across Canada that tested their basic knowledge of Aboriginal peoples. The basic question the study answered was, “How much knowledge of Aboriginal History, culture and issues do students possess when they graduate from high schools?” (CAAS, 2002). The CAAS study was conducted in secondary and post-secondary institutions across Canada. The questions focused on basic knowledge of Aboriginal culture, history, nations, and political issues. According to the CAAS study, the results of our best efforts have been dismal. Questions that measured basic historical knowledge were answered poorly, evidenced by 23 % of respondents failing to answer any questions on this topic correctly and only .2% answering all questions correctly. Questions of basic culture and basic First Nation knowledge fared no better, as 74 % could not answer any questions about First Nations correctly. While students cross cultural awareness was more hopeful, still more than half were unable to give valid or correct answers when surveyed in this regard (CAAS, 2003). Student responses to the questions varied, but overall as one University English professor stated, they “ found the experience both enlightening and shocking-the latter because they were somewhat surprised at how

little instruction they had received in high school on such important subjects” (CAAS, 2002, p. 100).

Freire (1972) discusses the role of the oppressor and his/her need to be liberated from the system of oppression that is in place in the schools system. Freire’s main arguments are that a) there is an oppressive system in place in most countries around the world and, that b) oppression takes place between the classes. Later, he also acknowledges “race” and gender (Freire, 1972). Freire believes that people should see the world as fluid. He believes that the current situation is not without exits. He affirms and promotes human agency, and views Education/ Revolution as being able to provide the necessary tools and consciousness to create a new reality, free of oppression.

According to Freire (1972) oppression is the dehumanization of men and women. (It is important to note that in the “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” Freire focused on men, and he later included women in his theory). He describes oppression in a very similar way to Adams (1985) Blaut (1993), and Memmi (1965) who all affirm that true oppression happens when individuals and group are dehumanized. The oppressors dehumanize others with domination, exploitation and repression. In order for true liberation to take place the oppressed must be conscious of their situation. Pedagogy as revolution, which frees both the oppressed and the oppressor occurs in two stages: First, “the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through praxis commit themselves to its transformation” and second, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes “a pedagogy of all men in the process of permanent liberation” (Freire, 1972, p. 40).

This being said, it is useful here to qualify the “oppressor/oppressed” discourse by pointing out some relevant and contextual thoughts about the position of teachers in schools. Nieto (2000) warns that “teachers cannot be singled out as the villains in the failure of students” (p. 5). Teachers are positioned in many ways vis-a-vis the movement to promote equity and social justice and an improved school system for all students. Some teachers might be racist and elitist in their interactions with students, but as many critics point out, they do not do so “consciously” (CAAS, 2002; Kanu, 2005; Nieto, 2000; Solomon et al. 2005). Most teachers are concerned with their student and want to provide them with a good education (Kanu, 2005; Silver et al, 2001, Nieto, 2000) but many are limited by a number of factors such as: a lack of preparation, knowledge and experience with/about diverse cultures, a lack power in the face of developing policies and practices in schools, and are themselves “products of an educational system that has a history of racism, exclusion and debilitating pedagogy” (Nieto, 2000, p. 5).

The priority should be according to CAAS, (2002), Nieto,(2000), Solomon et al.(2005) to provide a place of reflection and discussion where teachers can “take responsibility for their own actions, challenge the actions of the school and society ...and help bring about positive change” (Nieto, 2000, p. 6). Carson (1996) suggests that the focus should be on creating “communities of diversity” (p. 121). A community of diversity is, according to Carson, “one that draws its identity and strength from the many cultures that make up the contemporary classroom” while at the same time not “denying the importance of combating racism” (Carson, 1996, p.121). Carson (1996) cautions that an exclusively anti-racist focus will “position teachers and schools as part of the problem” and he suggests that rather than focusing on deficiencies, “we need to recognize that teachers,

students and parents already have many of the pedagogical resources, but these can become submerged and subverted” (p.121-22). This study aims to be positioned in such a way that it is open to understanding teacher experience with the goal of understanding what it is that “subverts and submerges” meaningful practice for social justice, equity and emancipation in school.

Some critics support the use of Critical Race Theory as a means of not only liberating the oppressed but also the oppressor in the context of the school system. A framework developed by legal scholars can be employed, according to Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995), to examine the role of race and racism in education (as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Critical Race Theory is described as having six unifying themes, according to Matsuda et al. (1993) that define the movement:

- (a) Critical Race Theory recognizes that racism is endemic to American life
- (b) Critical Race Theory expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness and meritocracy.
- (c) Critical Race Theory challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/ historical analysis...and adopts a stance that presumes that racism has contributed to all contemporary manifestations and group advantage and disadvantage.
- (d) Critical Race Theory insists on recognition of experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing law and society
- (e) Critical Race Theory is interdisciplinary
- (f) Critical Race Theory works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression. (p. 9 as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

Critical Race Theory questions the effectiveness of a multicultural movement as a means for obtaining the equity and social justice necessary for minority students. Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) argue that the “multicultural paradigm is mired in liberal ideology that offers no radical change in the current order” (p. 16 as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). A liberal ideology that is according to the same authors, “deeply invested in the current system...and relies on the law and the structure of the system as an instrument of justice” (p. 16 as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). This critique of multiculturalism should not be seen as a dismissal of multicultural education but rather a “call to action”, where the focus shifts from a “celebration of difference through foods and festivals activities “to an “examination of how difference serves to disadvantage some and advantage others”. (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 17). Calmore (1995) states that Critical Race Theory: “finds its finest expression when it... serves as fuel for social transformations. In sense, our efforts must ... extend beyond critique and theory to lend support to the struggle to relieve the extraordinary suffering and racist oppression that is common place in the life experiences of too many people of color” (p. 23 as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). In a review of Critical Race Theory literature in education and law, Dixson & Rousseau (2005) found that few scholars have made recommendations for implementing their findings. Even fewer have indicated that any recommendations to combat oppression have been acted on.

Curriculum

There has been a steady increase of resources and publications concerned with the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into curriculum and methods that can be employed by teachers to improve this integration into regular curricula in urban public schools.

(CAAS, 2005; Manitoba Education and Training, 2005; Manitoba Education and Training, 2003). The Manitoba social studies curriculum is currently under revision and is attempting to address the need for a more inclusive pedagogy that will promote Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge. A visit to the Manitoba Education and Training website (www.edu.gov.mb.ca) verifies that much is being done on the curricular level to push the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum and into schools. The website has documents for every grade level that outline outcomes and curricula. Professional development is also available for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers through school divisions and special area group workshops such as Aboriginal Education Directorate, Aboriginal Educators Circle, and the Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties.

The curriculum provides themes, lesson ideas, uses for the corresponding textbooks, maps, theoretical information and a suggested duration for each unit of study. The curriculum document, "Social Studies overview Kindergarten to Grade 12," has already been evaluated and found in need of revision. This is evidenced by the creation of new curriculum documents, the new and available curriculum guides for K-8 and the forthcoming Senior 1, Senior 2, Senior 3, and Senior 4 documents. The pool of resources is ever changing to meet the needs of the modern classroom. Manitoba has the largest and best list of Aboriginal resources (texts and videos) available in Canada (CAAS, 2003, Manitoba Education and Training, 2004). While improved resources are published, still there seems to be a break down in the system somewhere. For while curricula abound, improved student knowledge does not (CAAS, 2003).

Materials are available to teachers but whether teachers actually use these resources and how they use them can be problematic (CAAS, 2003). Teachers must sort and search for materials that are relevant, truthful and appropriate. Perhaps this part of teachers' experience poses a problem, as many teachers report that they are "unprepared" and "lack knowledge of Aboriginal culture and teaching methods" (CAAS, 2003; Kanu, 2005; National Indian Brotherhood, 1972; Taylor, 1995). Attached to this lack of knowing is a sense of guilt and discomfort in confronting Aboriginal content that encourages teachers to shy away from teaching the topic (Taylor, 1995). Teachers often rely on sanctioned textbooks as a source of knowledge in their classrooms. Textbooks are part of the student's and teacher's experience, because sanctioned texts tend to be the first and sometimes the last places teachers and students gain knowledge.

According to Alladin (1996) textbooks and educational material that "present erroneous information about certain racial groups or omit their contributions are examples of institutional racism" (p. 12). While not all text and educational material can be discussed in this review of the literature, an example of the "hidden curriculum" that challenge teachers is important to locate the integration experience within the curriculum and to reinforce the possibilities created by critically examining textbook and curriculum. Not only to overcome racism and xenophobia but also as a means engaging students and teachers in a critical analysis of what they read and what they believe.

Francis and Riddoch (1995) in their text "Our Canada", support two damaging images of Aboriginal peoples and their history a) the myth of the savage and, b) the myth of Terra Nullius (Dickason, 1995; Jennings, 1975). To the textbooks credit, there is a page that addresses the myths of the Savage. It does an ample job of describing what the

myths are and who believed the myth, but what is missing is a description of why the myths came to be applied to North Americans and what use they had. Francis & Riddoch (1995) state:

When the first Europeans arrived in America, many of them held positive opinions about the indigenous people. They thought that America, with its vast unspoiled wilderness, was like the Garden of Eden, and that the people living there must surely be innocent, peace-loving and virtuous. This image of the so-called Noble Savage has never completely disappeared. As European colonists occupied the land and began to spread in to the First Nations' territory, relations between the two groups deteriorated. The First Nations now stood in the way of white expansion, sometime taking up arms to defend their territories. (Francis & Riddoch, 1995, p.20)

Dickason (1997) and Jennings (1975) have both written about the myth of the savage and the myth of terra nullius as methods used to dehumanize Aboriginal nations in Canada. The Native peoples of Canada were seen as non-humans, ancient, static, and ahistoric, by being described as innocents, as yet existing in the Garden of Eden. The justification of the modernization of North American native peoples is set out in one paragraph. The great gift of progress, as Blaut (1993) states brings civilization to the wilderness and thus requires some form of payment for such a great gift. The payment in a Canadian context was land.

In this version of history, Aboriginal peoples are nothing more than a footnote for the "settlement" of the wilderness. The textbook offers a section called "The settlement of the country by different groups" (Francis & Riddoch, 1975, p. 11). Jennings (1975)

points out, that the only type of settlement that Europeans did was resettlement. The European settlers had neither the technology nor the political structure to settle any pristine wilderness. Wilderness and settlement are euphemisms for the myth of terra nullius and the myth of the savage, respectively. The view of pre-Columbian North America as wilderness promotes the idea that there was nothing on the continent before Europeans brought "civilization." The view that the Europeans settled the wilderness, promotes the idea of Aboriginal people as non-people. Alternate words are needed to describe the actions of the invading Europeans over the past 500 years. Students and teachers must be sensitized to the damage of colonialism to Aboriginal nations, both in the past and the present. The present terminology used in textbooks and conversely in classrooms supports a pedagogy of oppression and misrepresentation of Aboriginal people. With the aforementioned terms in mind, it is easy to see how the information that teachers and students interact with continues to (while most likely undetectable) support the dehumanization of Aboriginal people and the misunderstanding of their stories. While the text does maintain that there were people here (in Canada) before the Europeans arrived and, that the history of Canada does not begin with the arrival of the Europeans, it still oversimplifies, misrepresents facts, omits information and uses dehumanizing terminology, which all support, the Myth of the Savage and the Myth of Terra Nullius.

The population statistics of pre-colonial Canada, presented in the text, support the myth of Terra Nullius. The text states that there were perhaps up to "500 000 indigenous people living in Canada" (Francis & Riddoch, 1995, p. 17). Dickason (1992) puts the population of Canada at more than 18 million at the time that Europeans arrived (p.26) and explains that every stream, town, mountain and lake was named prior to European

arrival. It existed like any other continent, in fact much like Europe in some respects (see Maya and Aztec civilizations), with many nations living alongside each other, sometimes at peace and at other points engaged in war (Dickson, 1997). This perspective and information is missing in the description of pre-Colombian life in North America in the Francis and Riddoch (1995) text.

While there is mention of the uses of “resources” by Aboriginal people, there is a focus on “hunting and gathering” and “nomadic” lifestyles (Francis & Riddoch, 1995, p. 17). That Aboriginal people practiced agriculture is mentioned, however, there is little elaboration on the methods and great trading alliances built around providing agricultural goods to other nations. Explorers noted that the Canadians traded and were very engaged in this way of life (Dickson, 1997, p. 236). The tools of Aboriginal people are described as simple, namely “by modern standards, their tools and weapons may seem simple” (Francis and Riddoch, 1995, p. 17). However, there is no mention of the tools and weapons of the explorers seeming simple by modern standards. Why are the Aboriginal tools being judged by modern standards? For instance; Inuit clothing is far warmer than any other type of “modern” cold weather clothing. A study done by Oakes (personal communication, September 2002) proved that one’s core temperature stays higher when wearing Inuit skin clothing, than when wearing Gortex or any other modern textile. Comparisons of this sort would be useful.

Larocque (1988) points out that whatever the “Indian” did was always measured up against the meter stick of “civilization”, however, if the measure was met, the bar was soon raised. The Native peoples were judged with what LaRocque calls the “double double standard” (Brown and Brightmen, 1988, p. 200). LaRocque (1988) explains that “

the same traits or behaviors (good or bad) or organizational systems may be evident equally in white and Indian peoples and cultures, but whites, no matter how bad or good, are always civilized and Indians are always savage” (Brown and Brightmen, p. 200). Jennings (1975) also attacks this idea held by “conquerors” of past and present. She discusses both agriculture and war practices and even where similarities are striking between Natives and Non-Native cultures, some nuance made the native society not “civilized” enough. In essence, it was who was doing it rather than what was being done that classified someone as savage or civilized.

The myth of Terra Nullius is supported in the text as well. While, the authors attempt to negate the myth of Terra Nullius on the surface, the “hidden curriculum” nonetheless supports misrepresentation. The text explains that when the Europeans arrived they called the land Terra Nullius, which is correct and a good addition to the discussion in the text. However, what leaves me mystified, in light of the great wealth of knowledge about Aboriginal societies (see Dickason, 1992, Dickson, 1997; Jennings, 1975) is the next statement in the text; “they knew Aboriginal people lived there, but because these people roamed across the land and were not settled in cities they were not thought to inhabit the land in the European sense” (Francis & Riddoch, 1995, p. 25). While this statement reflects some truth, it also supports the myth of terra nullius and the myth of the savage. The double/double standard, previously mentioned is at work here. Aboriginal peoples did not roam, they commuted from settlement to settlement (the word roam, means to wander aimlessly, with out purpose). The aforementioned passage ignores the highly intelligent and systematic movement of Aboriginal groups.

While a text by itself does not shape and influence how someone develops attitudes and beliefs as according to Apple (1985), “the view that [the textbooks] reflect an ideology of dominant groups in society may be too mechanistic and simplistic, since the text, as well as other cultural products, is a result of complex interactions mediated by economics and social structure” (as cited in Anchan & Holychuk, 1996, p. 95). This being said, what is being taught and how it is being taught are important considerations for any educator. As Castnell & Pinar (1993) note, “knowledge is rarely politically neutral or disinterested. School knowledge communicates - not always explicitly, of course - assumptions regarding many features.... It communicates that which we choose to remember about our past and what we choose to believe about the present” (as cited in Anchan and Holychuk, 1996, p. 96). Anchan & Holychuk (1996) suggest that a “curriculum is only effective if it allows the teacher the flexibility and opportunity to provide a language of possibility. An effective teacher is aware of the so-called hidden agenda in a hidden curriculum and circumvents weak elements contained in (it)” (p. 97). This critical examination of text allows a shift in focus, away from multicultural curriculum alone and towards a multidimensional curriculum that includes antiracist education, which would address important issues such as: social stratification and equality of opportunity, issues that a multicultural curriculum often ignores. (Anchan and Holychuk, 1996, p. 97)

While textbooks have always changed over time, the “evolution” of textbooks and curriculum are still in progress. Teachers who are aware of the limitations and critically examine available resources, can “move past a literal understanding of the curriculum to a stance of meaning making where learning is the result of the dynamic connections

developed between the curriculum and student life” (Anchan and Holychuk, 1996, p. 98). There is a language of possibility that can emerge from the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the social studies curriculum. The possibilities are illuminated by the exploration of flexible curriculum in this study.

Teachers' practices

At least some of the success of the movement to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum in Winnipeg schools rests in the hands of non-aboriginal teachers. The Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies (2003) stated that the impetus to work on integration involves a “transformation experience” (p. 54). Transformational experiences are described as “those by which the individual operates, evaluates and makes decisions” (CAAS, 2003, p. 21). Kanu (2005) believes that all teachers can make this move towards improving their teaching (p. 54).

Kanu (2005) found that teachers in Winnipeg schools believed that the current integration initiative was “crucial” for the following reasons: a) a rich body of Aboriginal cultural knowledge, values and contributions needed to be learned, b) the integration of Aboriginal perspectives would greatly improve how Aboriginal students felt about themselves and their background, c) integration may lead to school success among Aboriginal students, d) integration may lead to school success and school retention among Aboriginal students, e) Canada is a multi-cultural democracy where everyone should be fully included and represented, f) a good number of students, including a high proportion of Aboriginal students, do not have adequate knowledge of issues affecting Aboriginal lives (p. 54).

Kanu's (2005) findings, suggest teachers understand and approach integration in different ways. Teachers' mostly employed an additive and contribution approach to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. This limited their use of Aboriginal-centered resources and activities and reasons for not integrating Aboriginal perspectives more consistently "are all indicators of a token commitment to integration" (Kanu, 2005, p. 57). Critical Race Theory would position teachers as using an "incremental change position" approach to integration, where "gains for marginalized groups come at a slow pace palatable for those in power (Kanu, 2005, p. 52). This approach makes the success of the integration process limited and as Kanu (2005) notes has little effect on non-Aboriginal students' attitudes and knowledge supporting the claims of CAAS (2003) and RCAP (1996).

Sleeter (1992) challenges the concept of multicultural education being a task that "helps individuals "unlearn" negative attitudes about race, and develop positive attitudes and a knowledge base of about race, various racial groups, and classroom applications" (p. 41). Sleeter argues that the task is considerably more complex and argues that teachers "integrate information about race provided in multicultural teacher education programs into the knowledge they already have, much more than they reconstruct that knowledge" (1992, p. 41). This position supports the notion that a "transformational" experience must happen in order to inspire teachers to improve their teaching practice in this regard; problematizing the "additive and contribution" approach sometimes supported by multicultural curricula (Alladin, 1996).

Sleeter (1992) uses a sociopolitical framework to analyze the reactions/practice of teachers when faced with making changes in relation to curriculum and pedagogy. Sleeter

(1992) argues that teachers' most commonly focus on individual differences rather than on differences on how institutions treat individuals, and suggests inequality is the result of group conflicts rather than individual differences.

Carnoy (1989) states:

The struggle of dominated groups to change the conditions that oppress them and the attempts of dominant groups to reproduce the conditions of their dominance are the key to understanding changes in the economy, in social relations, and in the culture. These changes, in turn, are reflected in state policies and in public schooling, both prime targets of conflict. (As cited in Sleeter, 1992, p. 42)

Inequality cannot be addressed solely in terms of changing individuals but rather need to be addressed by challenging institutions (Sleeter, 1992, Solomon et al. 2005, Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Education is a critical learning site, a place where "young people can learn to examine social relations and learn to act collectively to create a more just social system" (Sleeter, 1992, p. 42). This claim is supported by Alladin, (1996); CAAS (2003); Graveline (1998); RCAP (1996) Solomon et al. (2005). The current literature examining the success of reforms and innovations of education cite teachers as having a major role to play (Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 1998; Kanu, 2005).

Furthermore, teachers need to be encouraged to switch from a "token" (Kanu, 2005) approach that focuses on the differences between individuals and their ability to be successful in the current institutions and shift to a focus that aims to change the institutions that impose inequality. With this in mind, understanding teachers' experiences, in relation to the current movement of integration Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge, is paramount to understanding the reasons why this integration is

currently failing to make a difference in the level of knowledge attained by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Teachers are the agents of educational change and it seems that until they are compelled to enact change and interrupt business as usual in schools current reforms may be impeded (Alladin, 1996; Graveline, 1998; Solomon et al., 2005). The suggestion from some educational researchers is that reform must go beyond the limits of multicultural education (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Sleeter, 1992; Solomon et al., 2005).

Banks (2001) describes that in order for teachers to employ effective methods of multicultural curricular reform they must develop four characteristics: knowledge of the social sciences and pedagogical knowledge, a clarified cultural identification, positive inter-group and racial attitudes, and pedagogical skills that lend themselves to facilitating the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic and social-class groups. Banks (2001) further identifies four approaches to multicultural curricular reform, namely: a contributions approach, an ethnic additive approach, a transformation approach and a decision-making and social action approach. The contributions approach is characterized by the addition of ethnic heroes using criteria similar to those used to select mainstream heroes for inclusion into the curriculum, where the mainstream curriculum remains unchanged in terms of its basic structure, goals and salient characteristics. The ethnic additive approach is characterized by the addition of content, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its basic structure, purpose and characteristics. The transformation approach is characterized by changes to the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes and problems from several ethnic perspectives. The decision-making and social action

approach includes elements of the transformation approach but adds components that require students to make decisions and to take actions related to the concepts, issues or problems they have studied.

Solomon et al. (2005) study of white teacher candidates explores their attitudes, beliefs and ideologies as they prepare to “reproduce and transmit the racial order to the next generation of Canadians” (p. 148). They also seek to interrogate the concept of whiteness and by doing so seek to have “teachers and teacher candidates examine their overall understanding of racial identity; the ideologies with which they enter the classroom; explore the impact of those ideologies on their teaching practices and their interactions with students” (p. 148). The researchers submit that there is currently a move towards a standardized curriculum and pedagogy (Solomon et al., 2005) and a move away from a flexible curriculum that can provide opportunities for critical examination and student centred learning (Alladin,1996). This version of school can only serve to restrict the possibilities for diversity and equity principles in schools and “removes the necessity of reflective thought and critical interrogation... focusing instead on the technological and skills oriented approaches to teacher preparation” (Solomon et al, 2005, p.149) at the university but also in schools. According to the authors, the continued resistance among teachers and teacher candidates to address issues of “race” and racism will limit their ability to interrogate notions of privilege and “deprivileging of minoritized social groups” (p.149).

The findings of (Solomon et al., 2005) suggest that white teacher candidates in their study responded to notions of race and white privilege in three ways: with ideological incongruence, with liberalist notions of individualism and meritocracy, and

by negating white capital. Ideological incongruence refers to the dilemma experienced by individuals when their beliefs regarding a particular set of ideas may differ from experiences related to that belief. This typically leads to great discomfort for the person who must grapple with this incongruence.

Negating white capital is the denial of the existence of white privilege and material benefits. Many responders reacted with anger and/or a great sense of guilt in connection to this. The main underpinning of this response is that the rewards that have been afforded to individuals are due to individual efforts rather than white privilege, and that in fact minorities are the ones who have been privileged at the expense of whites. The main point here is that individuals remove themselves from the role they play in interactions of power and privilege. Teachers use this to locate the problem of racism in the realm of ignorance and lack of knowledge culture and remove the need to analyze more complex issues such as power and historical colonization. It further serves to reduce the histories of minoritized groups to the exotic and strange.

Liberalist notions of individualism and meritocracy focus primarily on the view that if people work hard enough they will overcome obstacles and reach success. There is a continued belief that all have the same access to opportunities. This response stems from a person positioning themselves within a liberalist notion of social movement and individualistic interpretations of social forces and social relations (Solomon et al., 2005).

While this thesis is not particularly focused on the study of whiteness, (non-Aboriginal does not necessarily mean “white” in this study), it is concerned with teachers’ concepts of diversity, equity and social justice and the concept of “whiteness” may be a consideration. What is of importance to this study are the highlighted responses

of teacher candidates, especially those that relate to lack of preparation and knowledge and feelings of guilt and anger as responses to “race” and racism. According to Solomon et al. (2005) part of the response is the “strategic invocation of historical amnesia when there is an examination of historical events. The treatment of Aboriginal groups and the existence of slavery in Canada have been effectively and conveniently excised out of the historical landscape ... white Canadians have developed an effective form of resistance” (p. 161). In this regard, indigenous scholars have discussed the importance of including indigenous (and in the Canadian context Aboriginal) knowledges as important and necessary information for challenging imperialism, oppression and domination in education (Smith, 1999). The integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum could be one of the “exits” from a system of oppression (Freire, 1972) and a site of possibility (Alladin, 1996) and perhaps part of the body of knowledge that can inform students and challenge racism in schools. However, according to Solomon et al., (2005) “with the introduction of this new information, the way in which the information is heard, understood and interpreted differs for many groups” (p. 155). For dominant groups this information can sometimes challenge their reality which results in uncertainty, guilt and at times anger. A shift in focus from the individual to a focus on the system, society and institutions that replicate racism is imperative to free up space and energy to address the needs of other groups who are suffering in oppression and inequity everyday. (Solomon et al., 2005). hooks (1994) submits that “such work not only draws us closer to the suffering, it makes us suffer” and this makes the process of change all the more difficult (p. 164). .

Chapter 3: Methodology

The Research Framework

This study asks the question “What are non-Aboriginal teacher’s experiences when integrating Aboriginal cultural knowledge and perspectives into the Social Studies curriculum in Manitoba schools?” To address this question, a qualitative methodology composed of semi-structured interviews, and journals entries by both participants and the researcher was used. The research is informed by phenomenology, a science that is focused on description rather than explanation (Osborne, 1990). Husserl, considered to be “the father of phenomenology” reasoned that if consciousness is “our primordial window on the world, then an understanding of human knowledge would be best based upon an understanding of consciousness” (Osborne, 1990, p. 80). This research is concerned then with understanding the experiences of select classroom social studies teachers. According to Clandinin & Connelly (1994) “when one asks what it means to study education, the answer is to study experience” (p. 415). Rather than focusing only on the, who, what, where questions of empirical research this study explores the qualities, values, impressions and perceptions of the experience. In keeping with a phenomenological framework, this study seeks to provide an understanding of the lived experiences of teachers as they make sense of the phenomenon of integrating Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge into the social studies curriculum, and more specifically into classroom practices.

The research consists of the first-person accounts of teachers reflecting on their experiences (structural, curricular, relational and personal), their identity (personal and professional), and their perceptions and attitudes on such matters as equity, social justice

and antiracism. Within these conversations the teachers and the researcher began to explore how the social and cultural conditions related to their teaching in the way that they do. By approaching the research from this perspective, I hope to learn about the teaching experience and what it means to “integrate Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge” and, specifically, what it means for a non-aboriginal person. In focusing on my position as a teacher researcher, I choose to, instead of concentrating on inadequate descriptors of logical reasoning such as “objective” and “subjective”, to be “perspectival” (Osborne, 1990, p. 81).

More than simply locate my perspective however, I see my intertwined position as strength in the context of this study. I have an “intimate local knowledge” given the topic of this research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1998 p. 26). The participants and I share common experience and this allowed me to have a deeper understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon to be studied. My position allowed me to experience a shared practice and common meanings with the research participants and in fact made all involved in the study “co-researchers” (Osborne, 1990, p.83). Keeping this in mind, this study strives not only to “be research about teachers but also research for teachers” (Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 29). So, I approach my work from two worlds, both as teacher and as researcher. I believe that while this may be problematic to my “objectivity” as a researcher it also deepens and enriches my understanding of the research, while also creating a body of knowledge that might resonate with other teachers and researchers alike.

Data Collection

Research participants. The research participant consisted of 5 non-aboriginal social studies teachers from different public schools in Winnipeg. Teachers shared the following characteristics: a) they are social studies teachers at either the junior or senior high level. b) they have public school teaching experience in Winnipeg, c) they identify as non-Aboriginal (although in this study it does not necessarily mean “white” or “dominant culture”).

participant recruitment.

The majority of the participants in this study are “known” to the researcher either through working together on human rights education projects, antiracism workshops, or by their professional reputations. Five participants have been intentionally selected as I believe they represent a variety of different types of engagement in the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. Therefore each teacher is engaged on some level in the phenomenon in question. Participants address different types of experiences, locations, positionality, challenges, and commitment that are present in relation to teachers vis a vis the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum. The initial “snapshots” of these teachers are as follows: Mala: female, non-Aboriginal, minority group memberships, less than 5 years of experience, involved in anti-racist education, suburban school, Laura: female, non-Aboriginal, more than 20 years teaching experience, deeply involved in Aboriginal education, suburban school, Ritchie: male, non-Aboriginal, more than 5 years of teaching experience, involved in human rights education, suburban school, Matthew: male, non-Aboriginal, more than 20 years of experience, urban school, and Diego: male, non-Aboriginal, more than 5 years of experience, urban school. More

complete portraits of these participants created using qualitative methods (informed by phenomenology) that are “particularistic, descriptive and heuristic (leads to discovering new meaning)” follow in the proceeding chapter (Merriam, 1998 as cited in Nieto, 2000 p. 11-12). The participants do not necessarily represent a sample but rather examples of the diverse groups of teachers that work in schools. The participants share common elements but are also intentionally selected because of their representation of particular differences. Each teacher was contacted by email and phone and asked to review and sign an informed consent form. The teachers were asked questions about their experiences integrating Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge into the curriculum and into their classrooms. These questions: a) locate the teacher in the school, b) explore the positionality of each teacher with respect to the school and integration movement, c) explore attitudes, perspectives and actual practice in relation to the integration movement. The interviews were conducted in person at a mutually accepted time and place. It is important to note that teachers remain anonymous and their privacy respected. Notes, journals and interview tapes were kept confidential. Each teacher was given a pseudonym known only to the researcher. These pseudonyms are used in the final version of this study.

The nature of the conversations with the participants was very personal, however as Piquemal (2005) reminds us “raising these questions shows that it is important to balance our perceived claim to advocacy with our duty as researchers to understand the contextual factors that shape a teacher’s stance” (p. 129).

Data collection methods

The research methods used here are semi-structured interviews and journal entries by both participants and the researcher. Each participant was interviewed twice, with the initial interview setting up the protocol for the second interview.

semi-structured interviews.

Initial and second interviews were conducted in January and February. The interview sessions were held in neutral locations (cafes, coffee shops) with one teacher as an exception and requesting interviews in her home due to health related limitations. The school building was avoided for the sake of anonymity and comfort level. The interview protocol probed the participants' experience with the integration of Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge into curriculum and classroom. However, the interview took the form of a conversation and the interview protocol (see appendix) was used only as a guide. With the participant's permission interviews (initial and second) were recorded and later transcribed verbatim (Spradley, 1979, p. 73). Transcribed interviews were reviewed against the initial recording for accuracy. The data collected in the first interview was analyzed prior to the second interview. The themes and questions highlighted were used to focus the second interview. The second interviews took place in late March and April.

Data analysis

The data analysis consisted of reading through the interview tapes and identifies emerging themes. These themes were then analyzed for common meanings and common practices among the teachers. The themes were then used to address the common threads of experience, practice and perceptions and attitudes among teachers. Themes were also

identified that addressed important differences between the teachers that defined their practices and level of engagement in integrating Aboriginal perspectives. In the end, one of the goals of this research is to provide teachers with meaningful and useful information for their own practice. Hopefully, this document that can be used by teachers to support current attempts and engagement in the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. It might also serve to encourage teachers where they find resonance with particular teachers and can see their own emerging practice within the portraits and themes. This document might also serve to provide recommendations to create inclusive teaching practice that promote social justice and equity for all students.

Participant Portraits

Mala. Mala is a young female teacher. She has over 5 years of teaching experience. She is a graduate of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. She teaches English Language Arts and Social Studies at a suburban school in Winnipeg. Mala identified as non-Aboriginal, but also identified as being a member of a visible minority. Mala said that she watched her own parent's involvement in the community and in multicultural organizations and acknowledged that this has had an effect on her. She said, when describing her fathers activism in multicultural organizations that it just "seemed natural" for her to be involved in the same efforts. She has strong connections to her cultural community and in the past has been involved in numerous community events. This involvement has diminished in the past few years as her energy is spent participating in her school community. Mala describes herself as very active in her school community. She explained that she initiates and participates in many student, school and division wide events. Jokingly, she refers to her efforts as the "Mala Show". Mala

mentioned that students see her as an obvious choice when they were looking for teacher involvement in one of their initiatives, a reputation she both enjoys and finds exhausting. Mala wants her school to be known as a human rights school. She is very involved in human rights education and anti-racism activism in and outside of her school building. Mala describes her major strength as a teacher as being a strong commitment to human rights and to presenting an inclusive version of history in her classrooms. Mala explains that her own school experience and other experiences with racism shaped this commitment. She says:

So, we kind of take a look at that, and maybe it is because of my own experience, where growing up, as a visible minority in a school that was predominantly Caucasian.

I don't know all the time that I got the whole story, In English class, for example did

we spend too much time focusing on literature that connected with the bible, I thought, 'the bible again. Are you kidding'?

Mala didn't describe a specific philosophy of teaching. In my estimation her philosophy could be classified as activism informed by anti-racism and human rights education/values Her philosophy is evidenced by a high level of activity and activism (her school involvement, her NGO involvement, curricular initiatives, and student interactions). Mala describes her relationships with students, colleagues and administrators as positive. That being said, she did relate some incidents of inappropriate comments from colleagues. I have included them here as Mala did not describe these as challenges to her teaching practice. Mala and another teaching colleague are both women

of color. Some of her other “white” colleagues continually mistake them for each other, and it is important to note that Mala has been working in the same school for 5 years. She and her colleague are referred to as “the twins” or conversely “chocolate 1” and “chocolate 2”. Mala said that while she isn’t offended by the nicknames, she does get offended when she is mistaken for her other colleague. She says, “I’m not okay when people get our names confused because we are not the same person, but when people call us the twins, I’m okay with it.” She points out that “people call me Christy, and call her Mala” and continued; “Like, I don’t get the two of you confused just because you’re white and have brown hair and are short. You know, people think it’s funny, and it is to some extent, but not really.”

My reasons for selecting Mala to participate in this study centre on her involvement in human rights education, and anti-racism activism. I first met her during a co-curricular human rights education program in which we were both participants. Her students were participating in that program and I was an educator. I was struck by what a dedicated and motivated teacher she appeared to be. My next interaction with Mala was during a division wide event that she was instrumental in planning. I was invited to present a workshop entitled “Hate, What have I got to do with it”. From the moment I met Mala I could sense a serious commitment to anti-racism. I knew through reputation that she was a very good classroom teacher and was aware from casual conversation that she taught in social studies and history. In regards to the phenomenon being studied, I assumed that because of her involvement with human rights and anti-racism that she would be engaged in integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum on some level.

My impression of Mala was that she is very enthusiastic, passionate and keenly intelligent. Mala was by far the easiest participant to gain reflective and personal information from; she was also the most concerned about the confidentiality aspect of the interview process. She asked me about confidentiality initially, at the interview and throughout the interview process. One might consider the reasons for this concern and the questions it raises as far as teachers feeling/needing a safe space to discuss this issue, power dynamics, perhaps even the risk/political nature involved in discussing the issue of integrating Aboriginal perspectives

Mala seemed well prepared for the interview and was the only teacher who also provided me with journal entries that I had asked for as part of the interview commitment. Mala and I met at the same café twice. Mala came into the first interview and commented that she was particularly busy and feeling really good as she was on a “Human Rights High” in a way. The interview felt very comfortable and I believe that both interviews went very well. Mala was very willing to share her perspective, and personal feelings about the phenomenon of integrating Aboriginal perspectives. She was very honest and after each interview remarked that she had enjoyed the experience as it gave her a space to examine and reflect on her teaching practice. This was something that in the life of a busy teacher was hard to make time to do. I did face some challenges in the interview process; Mala was difficult to connect with prior to the interview and after considerable tries to set a date, we finally did meet. Mala appeared to be a very high achieving teacher, and the shortage of free time to interview with me did not surprise me. I imagine that she squeezed the interview.

Mala teaches in a suburban school. Mala described her school as a “good size”, under 1000 students and appreciated the fact that she was able to recognize most students even if she didn’t teach them. She described her school as suburban, middle class and Caucasian and not particularly multicultural she said “There is a very small Aboriginal population; we’ve got mostly Asian, Southeast Asians, East Indian, a few west Indian, Filipino, that’s about it.” Mala described the focus of her school as being sports and academics achievement and in recent years the school has focused on creating more “School Spirit” among the students. Mala joked that she wanted to make her school a “Human Rights School” but all joking aside described her school as being quite successful in efforts to raise money for relief efforts and human rights/children’s agencies and organizations. (Save the Children, Tsunami Relief etc.). It is important to note that these “human rights” efforts are mostly organized and executed by Mala and a few other colleagues, but with most of the effort coming from Mala herself, hence the reference to the “Mala Show”.

Mala described many of her students, and the school population generally, as apathetic. It seemed to her that same 25 kids were involved in all the social justice/human rights organizations and activities. So while there was perceived student involvement, it was not school wide involvement. Mala describes the teaching staff at the school as young, under 40. Mala felt that this was positive. She described her relationship and the support that she received from her administration (specifically her principal) as very positive and encouraging. Her principal provided Mala with the flexibility, time and funds to pursue human rights activities and curricular initiatives for students and for professional development. She said that if she exhibits passion and commitment in a

certain area or for a certain activity then her principal provides her with the support to pursue it.

Ritchie. Ritchie is a young, male teacher with over 5 years of teaching experience. He teaches in a suburban school in Winnipeg. Ritchie is fairly new to his current school and previously taught at the junior high level. He is a graduate of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. He expressed dissatisfaction with his experience at the university. He explained that he did not make many connections during his time there nor did he learn very much in the area of Aboriginal history and culture. He described himself as knowledgeable about the topic, due to course work he pursued before his education degree. Ritchie acknowledged that even with his ample level of knowledge, he still had more to learn about particular issues: treaties, treaty status and land claims. His search for authentic and suitable information was another source of frustration; specifically on the topics of treaty rights and what Aboriginal peoples receive as part of having “Indian Status” and a treaty card.

Ritchie’s commitment to integrating Aboriginal perspectives is evidenced by a pursuit for information and the level of reflection about these particular issues. Ritchie reflected on his efforts and classroom practice. He mentioned that he believed he could be doing more though it was obvious that he spent a considerable amount of unpaid time researching and finding resources. Ritchie also reflects on the reasons that non-Aboriginal people were racist towards Aboriginal people. He mentioned factors that he felt influenced these beliefs but said:

I think, because the whole notion of racism is so preposterous to me... I don’t understand it, I think that is another thing that frustrates me, and I don’t

understand how that perception could even exist. I never understood why.... I really have trouble wrapping my head around it's hard for me to approach it.

Ritchie expressed frustration with his school, with students, staff and administration; the idea of a culture of disrespect was a theme elaborated on through our discussion. Ritchie was very candid about the attitudes that students and teachers in his school held towards Aboriginal people. Ritchie said he could not relate to students or people in general who are racist and distanced himself from those beliefs. These attitudes, he explained, were not part of his way of thinking or understanding of the world. He described his family life and upbringing as one that did not include exposure to racist language or attitudes. He describes this experience as causing him great difficulty when confronting others who are racist. He lacked an understanding of how people could hold, in his mind illogical beliefs about other people. He believes that family/parental influence is an important factor in people developing racist attitudes. Ritchie believes that personal experience is another important factor in the development of attitudes and openness. Ritchie has spent much of his free time in the summer traveling around Canada, in particular highlighted by interactions and exposure to Aboriginal communities.

Ritchie's perception of integrating Aboriginal perspectives is a mix of historical, cultural and issues-based information. He believes in an intrinsic difference between Aboriginal culture/cultural perspective and the European/dominant cultural perspective. As part of integrating Aboriginal perspectives he tries to present racist beliefs as illogical and ridiculous. He believes that before an individual can focus on multiculturalism or

diversity, racism must be addressed. His approach might best be described as focusing on awareness and information which can lead to rationality in attitudes and beliefs.

Ritchie was very relaxed about both interviews, and the conversations were casual and low key with lots of joking and laughing. However, there were points where it seemed to me that was feeling pushed, and jokingly admitted as much. Ritchie was very honest about his school, students and his own views about the integration experience. He was willing to share personal information and was very candid about students, staff, resources and his school culture.

It is interesting to note that Ritchie also mentioned that in each interview when I was asking him questions he would answer thinking of a particular student when he answered. It was a different student for each of the interviews. It was as if he was reflecting on the particular student to answer the questions. Ritchie spent much of the first interview discussing students and school culture. It was only in the second interview that he was able to reflect more deeply on himself, his teaching practice and his own emotions and beliefs.

I asked Ritchie to participate in the research because he has an excellent rapport with students and an excellent professional reputation. He is engaged in co-curricular education programs (Human Rights Education) and other organizations. I thought that he would be an excellent example of the particular position/location of a social studies teacher engaged in the integration of Aboriginal Perspectives. I assumed that because of his work with human rights and anti-racism that he would be engaged in the phenomenon.

Ritchie described his school as affluent. He said:

New money East St. Paul and it is getting richer and richer every year, very white. The Junior High I used to work at was a feeder school, it was very white and this school also very white... I think there are 65 Aboriginal students - 19 identified themselves. 19 come out and said yes, take part in the programs, which says a lot right there.

Ritchie described many of his students as fantastic and very open and valued their contributions to classroom discussion. However, he describes the overall student culture as apathetic and disrespectful. The student's behavior varied: from disrupting classes to breaking glass bottles in the cafeteria and being verbally abusive towards each other and teachers. Ritchie described the education system as failing to provide limits for students, failing to provide appropriate consequences and giving students too much power. Ritchie pointed out a very specific discrimination and prejudice towards Aboriginal people, and said it was part of the school culture. He says in response to my question was that his students seem to have "zero tolerance" for Aboriginal people.

In terms of staff/teacher culture in the school Ritchie described his staff as older, with few younger teachers. Most of the teachers had spent most or all of their careers teaching in that particular school. The staff is described as resistant to change. He described school wide efforts to promote Aboriginal cultural awareness as token and minimal. One of his remarks was very telling "The stuff that we do is hoop dancers and Aboriginal awareness day. The kids are aware, and their aware that they exist. They don't need a day, a day of dancing. to convince them."

Matthew. Matthew is a graduate of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. He also holds a master's degree in Public Administration. Matthew has been a teacher for over 20 years. He has been teaching in the inner city for most of his teaching career. He teaches English, Social Studies and History. Matthew describes himself as Italian having immigrated to Canada when he was very young.

Matthew describes his teaching himself as a teacher who is not interested in a hierarchical relationships with his students and is interested in getting to know them as individuals.. While he describes his personable and egalitarian attitude towards his students as one of his strengths, he also notes that it can make it difficult to stay objective.

Matthew describes himself as not interested in being punitive and from his description he has very few classroom management issues. He has rarely had to 'bark' at anyone for their behavior. He says that students are compliant and co-operative; he jokingly says that he could likely 'lead them over a burning bridge and they would follow him.'

In terms as his philosophy of teaching history, Matthew describes himself as interested in the History course content, absorbing and understanding the past, and not methods of how to enter the past. He also describes that he does not want to politicize history and wants to remain objective about the course content. He strives to maintain a balance when teaching about history and specifically about Aboriginal/European history. He strives to maintain a balance between in his words a "J'accuse" attitude and "not letting Europeans off the hook".

Matthew and I have known each other for over 20 years. Matthew was chosen because of his professional reputation and professional experience. He has taught for over 20 years, and has taught English language arts, social studies and history. Matthew is a creative person, who has published in the area of multiculturalism, multicultural education and poetry focused on immigration and immigrant identity. Matthew described himself as integrating Aboriginal perspectives into his classes and curriculum. He is certainly, in my experience, a very open minded individual, engaged in many diversity and multicultural activities. He was one of the first teachers that I approached about being interviewed on the topic of Integrating Aboriginal perspectives, his reaction was that this was an issue that has been dealt with and perhaps was not entirely relevant any longer, because it is already happening. In the end, however he agreed to be interviewed. This initial reluctance however raised many questions, and in light of literature that examines teacher and pre-service teacher reactions to interrogating their own practices, attitudes and beliefs it is relevant to mention this. Matthew later commented that many teachers were reluctant to discuss this issue because they saw it as a potentially political issue. He mentioned that teachers feared that others (teachers, students, parents) might accuse them of taking up too much class time on this topic.

Matthew was very relaxed about the interviews. Prior to the interviews Matthew had seemed reluctant to participate in the project, and wasn't sure that integrating Aboriginal perspectives was particularly timely and perhaps had been "done to death" already. But in the end he agreed to speak with me. Truthfully, his reluctance was part of the reason that I pursued talking to him. I arrived to the interview before Matthew. One interview was conducted in a café and the second in a quiet restaurant. The second

interview was more personal and deeper in terms of discussion about Matthew's beliefs and perspectives. In fact, Matthew noted that he reflected on some issues that he hadn't even thought about before because of the interview. It was clear that Matthew is a confident and experienced teacher from his knowledge and the level of ease he feels in his school environment.

Matthew described his school as very multicultural "predominantly Asian... close to 70% Asian. A lot of Asian kids from the Philippines, from Vietnam.... We have kids that are mixed, sort of Pilipino/Chinese, Pilipino/Thailand. That kinda thing. Also a lot of kids from India, definitely an Asian community." The school is located in the inner city in a neighborhood that is predominantly working class. He described the students as having a strong sense of community and strong connection to the inner city. He says, "I think a lot of kids, certainly the kids that I teach, are committed to the community. So in the sense, that they know they're from the north end, they like the north end, how involved they are in the community I don't know." Matthew states that school's reputation has changed, from a "rough" school to a school with a good academic reputation. He sensed that some people might still perceive the school as rough though given its location. He described the students as polite, friendly, tolerant of each other and very respectful of the teachers. He did say however those students tend to "ghettoize themselves" and have friendship ethnic/cultural friendship circles. Again, he noted that students were friendly and polite to each other in school, but kept to themselves out of school and in friendship choices.

He described the staff as a "mixed bag" more women than men. He also noted that as of late there were a lot of single mothers being hired and some teachers who prior

to teaching at the school had lived in a northern community. He also mentioned that staff was older with many teachers being over 40 years old.

Given the multicultural nature of the school, I asked Matthew how the school approaches multiculturalism and diversity of students and the community. He responded by saying:

I don't think we make a big deal about it. The ones who really focus on it are the ESL teachers, they're interested in kid's background and where they came from and how they are moving out of that cultural background, and how their culture impedes or helps them. We don't, we don't in terms of our self perception I don't think we make a big deal about it. We sort of say, this is our building and this is what we do. And... and then I don't see people going around saying "we are multicultural" all though I think we very much reflect what Canada is as a whole.

Diego. Diego is a new teacher. He is a recent graduate of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. He has taught for less than 2 years... He has currently teaches history and world issues classes. He teaches in an inner city school with a strong representation of Aboriginal students. Diego describes himself as one of the teachers with the greatest rapport with students. He mentions that his colleagues and his administrator would confirm this description. He supports this rapport by trying to relate to his students and connecting aspects of his own experience, culture and spiritual beliefs with the experiences of minority students. Due to his good rapport his is able to "get away with things" that other teachers might not be able to get away with saying. He described a number of issues where he has confronted students and wanted them to know that he was

not “backing down”. From what he describes he needed to establish a clear understanding with his students that he had power and authority, and certainly it seems from our conversation this was not in place by virtue of just being a teacher. He needed to establish a personal presence and reputation for not backing down and “having the guts to follow through”. He also made reference to Aboriginal students as having diverse and specific needs, he believes that Aboriginal students need a “sage on the stage” and for him to be a respected adult. He indicated that many of his Aboriginal students were also experiencing low academic achievement. He believes that not having an identity or being knowledgeable about your culture is one reason for the social problems, teen suicide and crime among his Aboriginal students. He is motivated to integrate Aboriginal perspectives in order to give his Aboriginal students some keys to their identity.

He describes his teaching philosophy as changing as he teaches. The most important points according to Diego are that he is able to lead students to think and learn “outside the box”. He has also learned to focus less on a lesson plan and more on the needs and interests of his students. He describes himself as trying to connect students to what they are learning and attempt many high activity lessons.

Diego describes his greatest weakness as being too forgiving to his students, and also he is concerned that by meeting the needs of weaker students he does not challenge his higher achieving students. Diego described his teaching methods as mostly lecturing and teacher centered. He believed that this is what works with his students. Diego described himself as very knowledgeable about history and current events. He also added that he was well informed and educated about world religions and spirituality. He described his approach to integrating Aboriginal perspectives and to meeting the needs of

diverse students as hinging on his willingness to discuss religion and spirituality with his students. Diego only explained this in his second interview, and perhaps as this is a potentially risky topic to discuss, needed to feel safe. Diego, much like Mala, Ritchie, Laura and Matthew found the interview itself meaningful, and mentioned that he did not have much time to reflect on his teaching practice and more controversial topics that come up in daily practice. One might consider the reasons for this and the questions it raises as far as teachers feeling/needing a safe space to discuss this issue, power dynamics, perhaps even the risk/political nature involved in discussing the issue of integrating Aboriginal perspectives.

Diego was chosen because of his professional reputation. He is classified as a good teacher. I was told in advance that he was engaged in adding Aboriginal content to his classes, by a colleague that we have in common. Diego is the teacher with the least amount of experience and in this study. I believed he would reflect the current level of preparation that teachers receive in the Bachelor of Education program. Diego teaches in an inner city school with much diversity and a high representation of Aboriginal students. This is important in this study because it will describe a school environment that is rapidly becoming the norm for many teachers teaching in the inner city.

After some shuffling and rescheduling in terms of the interview date, I was finally able to meet with Diego. My impression of Diego changed after interviewing him; initially I thought that I might have trouble getting to the essence of his viewpoint and experience. He was very congratulatory about his school, colleagues and administration. He initially disclosed that he would ask his principal for permission to participate in my study. When I assured him that this study wasn't so much about his school as it was about

him as a teacher, he didn't mention it again. I do not know if he in fact sought permission from his principal to participate. I did wonder though as he seemed a bit nervous to be critical and here my own critical perspective and perhaps expectations were highlighted. I expected all of these teachers to be critical of their schools and their practice. But, by the second interview Diego seemed more relaxed and he was very willing to share his personal views on the phenomenon, was very candid about students and about spirituality and religion; two very risky and controversial topics I was surprised he wanted to discuss. I would not however describe Diego as having a critical perspective, but certainly he was describing the phenomenon earnestly.

It is important to note that he was the only teacher who acknowledged that he had negative attitudes towards Aboriginal people and students prior to working at his school. This leads me to consider what factors made Diego able to interrogate his own attitudes and to connect himself to some the issues of prejudice and racism. He described his teaching experience and his relationships with Aboriginal students as providing him with a transformational experience. Although, he did not use the term transformational experience he specifically described a change or turning point in his teaching career. He also mentioned that in fact those Aboriginal students and witnessing a positive reaction and engagement in his courses have reinforced his own engagement in integrating Aboriginal perspectives and cultural content.

Diego described his school as being perceived as rough. He described the catchments area as representing a mixture of class, but that it was definitely an area where a lower socioeconomic class and poverty was represented. He describes the school as small compared to other high schools, and as "lower end" and quite diverse. The

school has a wide range of students with varying levels of success in school. The school has changed over the last few years due to new administration. Diego described it as not having as many troubles as other inner schools and being a better environment. Students are aware all too aware of the perceived economic status of their neighborhood and school. According to Diego, they regularly refer to the school as “ghetto” likely making reference to the school’s limited resources, their own poverty or perceived poverty. It is clear that students are aware of their position and the conditions of their daily lives. Diego says “If they’re sharing a textbook or something it’s [because]the school’s ‘ghetto’ (laughter) and they’ll make jokes about that.”

Diego described the student body as diverse but with many social problems. One aspect of the social problems as he describes them have to do with parental involvement; some students do not live parents and end up living with various relatives at different points of the school year. In our second interview Diego discussed some of this extended family involvement as positive especially in the context of support for Aboriginal students living away from their family homes on their reserve. Given that issues arise at schools that need parental involvement, he explains that it is frustrating to have no one person who takes responsibility for a particular student. Diego describes most of the students as not considering university. He says that while many students are very bright and some do achieve academically; often life gets in the way. The school tries to meet them where they are at and provide them with what they need.

Laura. Laura has more than 20 years of teaching experience and is very engaged in History and Aboriginal education. Laura is a graduate of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and has a M.A. in History also from the University of

Manitoba. She teaches in a suburban school in Winnipeg. She teaches History and World Issues at the senior high level. Laura mentioned that she preferred and requests to teach G level classes versus S level classes. She feels that strong students learn with even the worst teachers, but those students who are weaker need stronger, empathetic and more knowledgeable teachers. She describes herself as empathetic to her students, and says she doesn't want to stress them out. Her teaching philosophy is focused on teaching students to critically analyze the knowledge rather than simply absorbing facts and dates...Laura describes herself as having abundant historical knowledge. She considers her historical knowledge as one of her strengths. She also describes herself as an avid reader and continues to educate herself on historical topics.

Laura is the adopted daughter of a Chief from British Columbia, and she feels a very close connection to this community. She told me many stories of her trip to BC and of her many encounters with the Aboriginal communities there. Specifically meaningful to me was her description of the funeral of her adopted father; where she was given his hat. One of the chief's natural nephews attempted to take the hat from Laura, but with the permission of the chief's female relative she was allowed to keep and take the hat to her home in Winnipeg.

Laura's large collection of Eagle feathers was significant evidence of her connection with Aboriginal communities. She explained that she had taken and been given the feathers with permission from the community members. She had also told me that non-Aboriginal people were not really allowed to have Eagle feathers as they are considered sacred, but as she is an adopted daughter, she has permission. This connects

with Laura's belief that being connected to the Aboriginal community is what makes her efforts to integrate Aboriginal perspectives successful.

I first heard Laura speak at an Aboriginal education conference in Winnipeg. In fact I was surprised to find out that Laura was non-Aboriginal as to my knowledge all the rest of the presenters at the conference were part of the Aboriginal community. She seemed to have very close ties with the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg and with Aboriginal communities in British Columbia. She spoke with confidence and was obviously very knowledgeable in regards to Aboriginal history and Canadian History. She spoke about her own teaching, classroom and curricular initiatives. From what Laura described as having done in her classroom and the suggestions she had for other classroom teachers made it clear that she was integrating Aboriginal perspectives into her classroom. I wanted to find out more about her and what motivated her to be so engaged in this aspect of teaching History.

My two interviews with Laura took place in her home. Laura was very warm and inviting. We spent the first half hour just getting acquainted. Spending time in Laura's home was significant in this study as it gave me an extra source of information about her, I spent the first part of our interview asking her the different items she had on the wall and on her shelves. She has a large collection of Eagle feathers, art and found objects. Many of which were acquired in BC, where she travels almost each year to spend time in a particular Aboriginal community.

During the interview Laura spent some time discussing her own experiences with her school administration both related and unrelated to the phenomenon. She also spent

some time describing her poor health. She attributed some of her ill health to the stressful situation that she experienced at her school.

Laura has serious health issues which cause her constant pain. I was very concerned that the interview might be too taxing for her. I asked her intermittently during both interviews about how she was feeling. She always seemed fine and she and I actually spent the most time together. She told me later that she felt good during the interviews and felt that they were a good experience for her. She even offered to do extra interviewing and said I could phone her for any reason if I need to clarify.

Laura's school is a large and suburban. According to Laura, the main focus of the school is on academic achievement. The student population is moderately diverse. She has few Aboriginal students.

Chapter 4: Data and Results

This section begins by providing operational definitions of the notion of the “integration Aboriginal perspectives” into the curriculum, specifically as it is understood by the teachers who participated in this research. The definitions consist of statements from the teachers that summarize their understanding of the phenomenon of integrating Aboriginal perspectives, gathered from their reflections and responses to questions on the matter. The primary goal of this research was to understand this phenomenon by examining the lived experiences of teachers, and also to have a point from which to delimit what this phenomenon is actually examining. Initially, the definition of integrating Aboriginal perspectives used in this thesis was the provincial Department of Education’s version of the concept (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2003), but I discovered that the operational definitions given by teachers differed from this version. This study does not aim to evaluate how well teachers follow curricular/departmental directives however it is worth mentioning the ways in which teachers perceptions differ from department perceptions. This study does not aim to evaluate the correctness of one version over the other, instead it is the aim of this study to gain insight into the reasons why or why not certain practices are followed and certain beliefs are held. It also allows for a more clear understanding of what teachers perceive as challenges to integrating perspectives, as a direct comparison can be made between how teachers understand the phenomenon, what they actually do, and what they perceive as challenging and/or supporting the fulfillment of integrating Aboriginal perspectives. These following questions provide the basis for exploring how teachers operationally define the phenomenon:

- 1) What are “Aboriginal perspectives”?
- 2) What does it mean to “integrate Aboriginal perspectives”?
- 3) What is the significance of being a non-Aboriginal teacher integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the social studies curricula?

What are Aboriginal perspectives?

Teachers’ found the phrase integrating Aboriginal perspectives problematic, and it was clear from interviewing the five participants that this term is not well defined in teacher’s minds or in school/professional development settings. It was a source of frustration for one teacher in particular who said:

Because I think when you look at incorporating Aboriginal perspectives and I’m not, I know that’s the terminology that is floats around. I’m not comfortable with that. How I can I introduce Aboriginal perspective? I’m not an Aboriginal person, so I can have Canadian perspective, I guess, I can teach them about historical events, but I don’t know if I have the perspective, because I’m not really comfortable with that term. And I know they attach that to everything.

Specifically they called into question the existence of an actual “Aboriginal perspective”. Teachers understood Aboriginal as referring to many nations, and believed that a Cree perspective would differ from a West Coast perspective, and an Inuit perspective. Despite this ambiguity, teachers had a working definition of “Aboriginal perspective” which was used to meet the requirements of integrating. Teachers’ explained it as: a presentation of issues, culture, and spirituality by Aboriginal people about Aboriginal people. They identified a shared point of view and perhaps a shared

experience not nation specific but as a disadvantaged group of people experiencing marginalization, assimilation, racism and oppression.

I think books are getting a lot better, and I think they're incorporating a lot of articles, and I think there are articles solely written from the Aboriginal perspective...

Well, there are more Aboriginal authors and historians....And I think that's, that's partial definition of the aboriginal perspective, it's finally that these people are, putting it on paper, they're getting published and they're, being seen as equals in terms of historical documents, like, this is an event that occurred, rather than, you know, look at how things went in terms of, you know, we're going to get historical in terms of the, ...the policies of, of the government, let's look at the policies of, of the aboriginal people that were here and how they were, they were affected by this, what, where did they go, why did they decide to go there and what was their choice?...And a lot of that's not even really dealt with....It's like this happened, so they left and they went here, and they were pushed here and pushed here....

What does it mean to Integrate Aboriginal Perspectives?

The teachers' in this study conceived of integrating Aboriginal perspectives as an inclusion of Aboriginal content (history, myths, current events) in curricula (topics of study/resources/assignments/exam questions) and also a commitment to providing the story from the viewpoint of Aboriginal people. Many of them attempted to find resources that would provide an Aboriginal voice and a version of history not from the European perspective. As Mala explains here:

There is a real desire within the English department and History department - we are a small school and we are close - to incorporate a valid Aboriginal perspective and not outdated ones. You know, *April Raintree* is a great book, but it was a push a couple of years ago, to find other novels, like why is *April Raintree* the only Aboriginal novel we have. Surely there's got to be something else.

The teachers all believed that better resources were needed and many had sought out resources to supplement the textbooks they were using. Three teachers in particular had a critical perspective of resources they used and addressed these shortcomings to varying degrees. Laura said:

If I can provide students with the ability to ask questions about the knowledge they are seeing. The reason I say see is because in Canadian history I teach with the video series. *Canada: A People's History*... students are pointing things out to me that I don't see the first time around. They're right back there and today we did George Simpson and they spent- now I time all these things and I don't tell them ahead of time....then they spend this much time on the Métis women. You know three sentences. They will now stop it [and ask] why.? Why is that there? But I say to them, 'once again it's your perception'.

Actually practiced integration, which according to the teachers meant including Aboriginal voice and content, varied. While there was overlap in many areas, namely choices of topics such as Residential Schools, Treaties, Land Claims, Myths and the Urban Experience, there were differences in the way they approached the topics, namely

length of times spent on the topics, and the teaching methodology used to cover the topics (fact based vs. discussion/analysis methods). All of the teachers voiced that they believed Canadian history was built on three pillars or founding nations (English, French and Aboriginal). What Mala says here echoes what the other teachers believed about the foundation of Canadian history and says, "It's not just about French and English; it's about Aboriginal and other cultures. I spend more time on the three founding nations."

Ritchie's comments concur with Mala's summation:

That's a common thread throughout the whole course, yeah, and that's very different than what other people do. They, they will take it as a unit, but I'll try to incorporate it into every, every section I'll try to do something. (Inaudible) it's like you incorporate that, it's like you take that seriously. Like I've raised the pillar, the 3 pillars, I operate it, you need to intertwine.

Laura said:

I go back to my ignoring people, how can you ignore, close to 3,000 years of history. And how can you ignore How can you ignore? Like, what's Canada now, 150 some years old and the aboriginals are just old and, and Montreal celebrated its 350th birthday, and we're teaching the last 180 years?

Two of the five teachers (Matthew and Diego) taught the Aboriginal history and content in a separate unit of study. So it is possible here to estimate that while teachers identify themselves as "integrating" Aboriginal perspectives, teachers don't necessarily "integrate" rather they "add" Aboriginal perspectives without changing the structure of the curriculum. It is interesting to note that the inclusion of Aboriginal voices was

identified by as a key part of teachers understanding of integrating Aboriginal perspectives, however actually consulting Aboriginal voices/organizations was not something that teachers did very often.

What is the significance of being a non-Aboriginal teacher integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the social studies curricula?

This leads one to wonder why, in light of teachers beliefs that: a) they could not provide an Aboriginal perspective and b) that many of them were uncomfortable discussing/accessing information about complex/risky topics like spirituality, land claims and treaty rights.

As one teacher says:

Definitely, going into it you're scared, because you don't think you're going to do it justice. Because, I'm not Aboriginal. So, obviously, I'm not going to be able to give them that perspective... That would be great. So you always have that fear about not doing it justice because I am not Aboriginal.

Another teacher echoes this by reflecting on her concerns when the child of the Aboriginal Liaison Worker was her student. While teachers identified that there was a discomfort in getting something wrong, they also were adamant that they were comfortable teaching about Aboriginal topics/content, due to reasons that varied from a level of professional development opportunities, to the results of their own self directed study. Teachers delimited the characteristics of their practice - while no-one said they could present the "Aboriginal perspective" given their non-Aboriginal identity, they did believe that they could confidently pursue and incorporate Aboriginal history, issues and

antiracism focused on the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationship in the Canadian context in their classrooms. However, many were doing so without much input from Aboriginal voices.

Making a space for Aboriginal voices in their classrooms, pedagogy and schools was a complex issue for teachers in this study. It was complex because while teachers admit that they are unable to give an “Aboriginal perspective” that reflects the true beliefs and experiences of Aboriginal people and communities, and believed that Aboriginal people should speak for themselves, many did not make this space available or were highly critical of the voices that did speak. And while some teachers did not give an actual reason for not including speakers into their practice but perceived limits to their ability to invite in speakers as one teachers says, “it would be really nice to have an Aboriginal person come in, I would love for the resources to be available that I could call someone and say, ‘you know what, I’m doing this and this and this, could you come in to my school and give them the perspective of an Aboriginal person’”. One teacher reported that he did not know where to access Aboriginal speakers, others said that they were dissatisfied with the quality of the presentations, and with the Aboriginal Liaison staff, others had good experiences (specifically with Residential school survivors) , and yet others seemed not to see the value in having speakers in and felt comfortable presenting the topics themselves.

To summarize from the participants answers, integrating Aboriginal perspectives in practice involves including more Aboriginal content and the point of view of Aboriginal people were possible, resources that include or are written by Aboriginal authors. The teachers in this study conceived of integrating Aboriginal perspectives as an

inclusion of Aboriginal content (history, myths, current events) in curricula (topics of study/resources/assignments/exam questions), a commitment to providing the story from the viewpoint of Aboriginal people, and an inclusion of Aboriginal voices in their classrooms. So it is with this understanding of integrating Aboriginal perspectives that the pedagogical resources of teacher's will be examined to understand what supports and what subverts/submerges their efforts. This definition is a starting point in understanding the phenomenon.

Teacher's Pedagogical Resources

In this study, pedagogical resources refers to the internal and external resources that teachers have available to them. Teachers demonstrate their pedagogical resources by describing what they are doing in classrooms, current knowledge about Aboriginal perspectives and cultural content, motivation and energy, commitment level. The external resources are demonstrated by what teacher's identify as available to them - there is no attempt here to correct teachers or judge their knowledge of resources, but simply to understand how much they know about and what they take utilize. How the teacher's themselves evaluate and judge the available resources is important and will be discussed later in under the headings of what supports and what submerges teacher's pedagogical resources. The data is organized into four categories where pedagogical resources can be identified: Structural, Curricular, Relational, and Personal.

Structural The operation definition of pedagogical resources as intended refers to changes, effects or initiatives taken at the structural level, specifically any changes to class schedule, bending the rules, missed class time, consultants or liaisons consulted, professional development, money allocated to Aboriginal education/integration

movement, this might also include school culture, staff culture, clubs or organizations, school initiatives, established laws, customs and practices in place in schools

The five participants (teachers) in this study have identified the following categories as pedagogical resources; which represent resources used by teachers or resources that the teachers know are available to them. It is important to note that while there are some overlaps between the resources available to each teacher; some resources are school/teacher specific and are indicators of the different positions that teacher's find themselves in the school context. The categories are listed and supported by the data below.

Professional development . All of the teachers mentioned that professional development was available to them, and/or that they have been in-serviced with regards to integrating Aboriginal perspectives or on Aboriginal issues, students, and culture. Four out of the five teachers have attended professional development days in the past two years with Matthew as an exception the only teacher who mentioned that he had not attended related professional development in over five years. Laura was the only teacher who initiated and presented professional development for teachers on several occasions due to her membership in an Aboriginal education organization. Ritchie said " we had pd meetings on integrating aboriginal issues into the curriculum...how can we deal with this topic. I don't know... you know, but the friends that I have, that are my colleagues, the problem that needs to be addressed, and they would address it in a similar fashion. He continues by saying:

The tipi on Higgins and Main....We went there, it was awesome, A professional development that we did (at) the Aboriginal Centre, old train station, we spent

half the day there and then the other half, we got to do a sweat... Very neat...
The professional development committee at the school.. We have an aboriginal coordinator, or facilitator I guess ... I'm not sure what the title is, He is available. He spoke to us too."

Mala:

I went to that MTS conference last year *Walking in Both Worlds*.. I went to that, It started out as being great, I don't who the keynote speaker was but he was phenomenal... he was fantastic, some of the sessions were okay, but again I noticed that a lot of - it was myself and an English teacher - and we kind of just went like, we're doing that, we're doing that, because they talked about introducing Aboriginal content and incorporating that and we were like we're doing that.

Diego said:

the school system is structured in a way that does not think about Aboriginal perspective. I attended a lecture by Dr. Broken Leg, I believe he's a clinical psychologist, but he's a native, and he did a seminar. Some of his ideas were great. I love them. But I can't do anything about them, because what he's suggesting cannot not fit within the structure of education right?

Willingness/ Opportunity. Three out of five teachers have at one point in time employed speakers to assist them in teaching about Aboriginal perspectives. The speakers came from the school division as Aboriginal Liaisons/consultants, from the Aboriginal Education Directorate, Manitoba Metis Federation, and Residential School Survivors. Overall, the most meaningful and positive experiences were with residential school

survivors came to speak to students at Mala's school. Here Mala discusses the positive experiences with Aboriginal guest speakers:

Last year I had a guest speaker in, and she actually lived in the residential school system, and she suffered terrible abuse. And when she came in, it was great, because they heard it from somebody real.... I don't know if that was the nature of that class. They were a lot more empathetic. And they were a lot more sensitive I think.... yeah was different... I don't know if that was part of it or hearing from somebody, a real person.

She continued:

There are three of them that are Aboriginal consultants, and all three of them would come. One of them and all are from different nations, one is Cree, one of them, I'm not to sure and they all have very different personalities. One of them is very quiet, and the other one is "I'll tell you how it is" she doesn't sugar coat anything. Like she apparently said to the other class; She said; 'now you've got an Indian in front ask me whatever you want'. In that school, because they have a different clientele. There is more of an Aboriginal group. I' don't know if that would have affected it. My co-worker said they responded very well to her. She was very straightforward and blunt. Ask me whatever and I'm not going to get mad I'm surprised she used the word Indian.

Ritchie employed Aboriginal speakers as resources, but had a lukewarm response to the information, presentation style, and effectiveness of these speakers and organizations from which he sought information. Here Ritchie describes his experience with Aboriginal organizations and/or guest speakers:

I've talked to Indian Affairs...I just, all I said was I want a list; I want the list to help me. (They responded) No, here, call this number... So, and I've left messages that have not been returned. Manitoba Métis Federation, same thing, still, but what they did offer was if there, if there are questions about those things, then we would be more than happy to speak....I need to talk to that speaker first, like, that speaker needs to basically [take] my place and I need to gear my kids up for that, like I want no hold barred. Like I don't want them to hold back on asking the questions because I'm not the one standing at the front of the room...I want the same discussion to occur when that person is there and I want that person to be able to answer those questions, and they're tough questions....and be ready 'cause I told them to be... and I have been critical ... I'm not happy with what I've heard so far.

The frequency of inviting Aboriginal speakers in to the classroom to speak, and/or seeking information from Aboriginal organizations/liasons was low for all teachers. Even those who were actively seeking the aboriginal voice to guide them and provide information with respect to issues/topics were they lacked authority or knowledge.

Many teachers did not identify Aboriginal speakers as a resource. For instance, Laura did not mention that she used Aboriginal speakers in her class, but did discuss her strong connections and frequent conversations with Aboriginal community members. She said that she believed she could provide the information that students needed, with the exception of the topic of spirituality where she did not feel she had the authority to elaborate. Conversely, Diego described himself as knowledgeable in spirituality and religion and therefore did not feel uncomfortable presenting information about Aboriginal

spirituality/religion. He did not identify any particular Aboriginal organizations or persons that he consulted to assist him in presenting an appropriate version of spirituality. He stated that he relied on his university course in religion and his own personal knowledge and interest in religion to guide him.

Teachers had some knowledge of Aboriginal organizations, most often the organizations that they would access for information were: the Manitoba Metis Federation and Northern and Indian Affairs (Federal Government) and then the Aboriginal Liaison staff in their school divisions. Three of the teachers did not access Aboriginal organizations at all and chose to rely on the school division. Ritchie actively consulted the aforementioned organizations. Laura was an exception to this general trend amongst the teachers, she had strong connections with at least two Aboriginal education organizations, and connections within the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg and further in British Columbia. Laura did not mention that she invited many guest speakers to come to her class to assist her with teaching this particular topic, although she did mention lack of authority to speak about certain issues namely spirituality and spiritual practices. The rest of the teachers mentioned that they did feel some discomfort teaching about certain issues related to integrating Aboriginal perspectives, but surprisingly few of them called on “Aboriginal Voices” to come and speak on the topics that they were not sure about. Many of the teachers did not elaborate on why they did not make an effort to gain access to guest speakers and community members. Ritchie and Mala used Aboriginal Education consultants, the same two had guest speakers from the Aboriginal community come in and speak to their classes. The only specific criticism came from Ritchie who was very

frustrated by the speakers being unable to answer the specific questions that he had asked them prior to their presentations.

Laura was the only teacher who initiated a workshop specifically about Aboriginal issues/ awareness. She described this as a week-long workshop to educate students and staff about Aboriginal culture and issues. Laura also appeared as a presenter at an Aboriginal Education Conference in Winnipeg. She did not elaborate on the Aboriginal conference in terms of who spoke and/or what they spoke about. She focused on different aspects of the experience, more about her colleagues and administration reacted to her efforts, and their later criticisms of her efforts and involvement with Aboriginal issues in and outside of her classroom.

Oh I don't know but, there's no support in our building whatsoever. Now [previously] when I did the Aboriginal conference for a week I got a bottle of wine from my boss, I got a thank you note from the superintendent. It was fantastic! We put our school on the map. Now basically, go back to your classroom, sit down and shut up.

Release time and allocation of funds. All the teachers in this study mentioned that they had professional development opportunities made available to them by their divisions or schools. But again this varied from school to school. The availability of time to pursue workshops, professional development, and special events was dependent on administrative support. Comparing and contrasting the experiences of Mala and Laura, as both are highly engaged in integrating Aboriginal perspectives, multicultural perspectives and anti-racism. Mala praised her administration and specifically her principal's support of her professional development, student activities, and school wide initiatives. She

reported having no difficulty acquiring funds for new resources, guest speakers and other initiatives. She says of her access to funds and the flexibility she has to spend departmental budgets.

Yeah, well we've been buying books with mostly Aboriginal content, not that (it is specifically) what the money is geared for, we just find it is very difficult to find good resources, that address Aboriginal issues, good clear resources, We did last year, where our administration gave us release time, for two of us; we are really the two that teach history. For two of us to go create curriculum of our own for grade 11. That's correct - our administration was really supportive and gave us release time.

In response Mala is the most active, and I would describe her as having a social activist style of teaching. While it is worth thinking about whether this is tied to her own values or whether it is a combination of having the interest, values and beliefs about teaching that she has and the condition of possibility to pursue initiatives. For instance to reflect on Matthew, who also describes his administration as very supportive but has made no efforts to pursue a social activist style of teaching or pursue much professional development, student activities or guest speakers. Laura is on the other end of the spectrum, having a strong commitment to integrating Aboriginal perspectives but lacks support from her administration. She says:

We have a commitment from our (inaudible) and each of us is supposed to have \$500 available to us for professional skills. Our history department has in writing support from our principal that we are to have at least one professional development team assigned from the (inaudible). But when we go and ask, they're

told no ...Not just me, but many people... And, when (inaudible) asked me last year to do a paper for their big conference, I wasn't asked for permission, I was told (inaudible) and, and I got told, of course, you're going to pay for this coverage...It's not supported in any way.

Laura has not been involved in as many initiatives as Mala, but her efforts are more specifically focused on Aboriginal perspectives and issues. Like Mala, she did organize an Aboriginal awareness week for her whole school, and did receive commendations for this effort. Unlike Mala however Laura has been told that her participation in Aboriginal education was excessive and was discouraged by her administration. Funds and release time with coverage to participate in these events were denied to her on more than one occasion.

Curricular

This section refers to lessons ideas, textbooks, written resources, videos, curriculum guides, changes made to any of these resources, shift in focus, topics, may also include evaluation, assessment and other accommodations made to include this topic. This category of pedagogical resources describes where teachers focused most of their efforts. This was the space where teachers perceived the actual integration of Aboriginal perspectives to be taking place. I learned through the interviews that the concrete nature of this space allowed teachers to measure integration, and while this research illuminates other spaces where teachers have access to pedagogical resources (external or internal). Insofar as teachers perceive this phenomenon for them it happens primarily in their "teaching" space as opposed to in the other aforementioned spaces. The major sub-categories here are Curricular Flexibility, Resources, and Teaching

Methods/Methodology that engaged a critical analysis as opposed to a fact gathering or “banking” approach (Freire, 1972).

Curricular flexibility. A common thread through this study was teachers’ pedagogical resources being more internal than external. Teacher reacted to, or interacted with, specific components of the pre-existing curriculum (documents, resources (visual), time allotment, and teaching methodology related to the curriculum) to be certain, but it was what they chose to do when faced with documents, videos, common exams and other curricula that really demonstrated their pedagogical resourcefulness. Teachers demonstrated their pedagogical resources in the area of Curricular Flexibility by the addition of topics and the subsequent time allotted in their classrooms to cover these topics.

The addition of Aboriginal topics not included in the curriculum specifically showcased teachers’ commitment to integration and efforts made to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum because it required self directed study or at very least following up on suggestion made to them in professional development they received. The topics most often added to the standard curriculum were: Residential schools, OKA, Treaties, Land Claims, Urban experiences of Aboriginal people, Ecological perspectives, Reservations, Racism, and Spirituality. The addition of these topics required teachers to find resources, reading, finding resources for students to read, finding connections in media, and then final incorporating the topics appropriately in their classroom without the guidance of the standard curriculum documents with which they were provided. Mala, Laura and Ritchie in particular spent time phoning Aboriginal organizations, doing their own research using text books, literature, videos, and doing their own professional

development during the school year and holiday time. Both Ritchie and Laura spend summers doing professional development, not in a formal way but exploring the Canadian landscape and learning and visiting Aboriginal communities to learn more about them. This demonstrates a high level of engagement and commitment in the area of integration of Aboriginal perspectives.

The teachers in this study used the perceived flexibility of the curriculum to their advantage and this “flexible practice” was linked to teachers’ beliefs about making meaningful changes to their classes. Teachers believed the changes made to integrate Aboriginal perspectives were important to Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students with respect to their development as Canadian citizens, their concepts of democracy and social responsibility. Laura describes her focus on students’ beliefs about fostering students’ beliefs about citizenship and democracy, “I am not teaching kids going on to university who needs scholarship funding. I want kids who are going to be everyday voters who are going to be addressing everyday issues. I want them to be aware of issues of Canadian History.” Mala agreed by saying “And again, it wasn’t us sitting down saying we have to include Aboriginal issues, it was us sitting down and saying let’s lay down a course that really works for our kids. As young Canadian citizens what do they need to know?”

Teachers believed that these changes were also important to beneficial changes in Canadian society that would improve equity, social justice and anti-racism. The teachers in this study identified Aboriginal people as the target of much racism and discrimination in Canadian society, and believed the integration of Aboriginal perspectives was one important move towards a more inclusive and equitable Canadian society.

I there are a lot of kids who are racists... in that sense they are racist against Aboriginal people...it's Aboriginal, zero tolerance for Aboriginal... When I say, it's not that these kids are going to be bullied in the halls because they are Aboriginal. Not that kinda thing. They are not going to seek out bashing. In a classroom discussion, their feelings are revealed.

Another teacher describes the importance of this topic for the improvement of Canadian society:

the really horrible stereotypes that people maintain about Aboriginal people and the knowledge that people maintain stereotypes about me and people of my culture. You know what I mean, and so I, And then, taking a look in history where there have been all these nasty political leaders that have used these stereotypes and racist jokes. To create this climate of fear and hatred and destruction, and so whether you look at the Holocaust in WW2, or the genocide in Rwanda, or Idi Amien, in Uganda in the '70's. It's all the same thing, There is that underlying prejudices that exist, and all you need is someone to capitalize on that. If I can get rid of some of the under lying prejudices that kids have there is less of a chance of that happening.

Teachers' significant, self directed changes affected their perceptions of their own success in the teaching profession, and their ability to make meaningful changes in their schools and in society in general. In a sense, making changes to curriculum was empowering. Mala describes this here:

within our department, we mandated, well, not mandated, but me and another girl in our department, we sat down and said this is how we want to design our course. The course is so outdated, it's ridiculous, our students need to learn about a modern Canada. We changed it. This is the first year that I'm teaching Oka, I 'm teaching the Oka crisis, and Land Claims. I trying to teach land claims.... we obviously talk about residential schools, treaties, and reserves; I think that this is a part of our course that was left out and lost almost. In the past couple of years, I think we've been able to finding resources and been more comfortable in addressing it in a clear manner, talking about something like reserves and treaties is complicated, it is hard to teach to a group of grade 11 students, so when you only have three days, lets say. I think we've been doing a pretty good job.

The sense of empowerment teachers experience however is sometimes paired with a sense of frustration and isolation. This paradox highlights the complexity of this phenomenon.

Laura describes her focus on students' developing concepts of citizenship and democracy and says, "I am not teachings kids going on to university who needs scholarship funding. I want kids who are going to be everyday voters who are going to be addressing everyday issues. I want them to be aware of issues of Canadian History."

Resources. This involved a commitment to seeking out new and relevant resources. The curriculum documents (Manitoba social studies curriculum documents) are not restrictive and can provide a very positive flexibility for teachers to explore topics that are specific to their students, location, current events. Teachers often spent considerable time searching for resources that met their needs, and provided an

Aboriginal perspective. Each teacher engaged in this to different intensity. Teachers who were the most engaged in finding resources spent considerable time searching out good resources and/or interacting with resource people, Aboriginal organizations, and Aboriginal liaisons in the school divisions.

Some teachers were not engaged in finding resources that expressed an Aboriginal perspective. One teacher stated that he wasn't too concerned about finding resources that were specifically from an Aboriginal perspective and the Eurocentric perspective was not a particular concern in his choice of documents. Matthew responds to being asked whether finding resources that give the Aboriginal perspective is a concern for him, and he answers:

No, not really...But I, I think, ah, I think what happens, I think early Canadian history, it's hard to get any kind of Aboriginal perspective, a documented one anyway. But I think as you, but as you move into the early 19th century, you get more of that sort of, certainly the, the Métis perspective is, is really well known...And then you can also get it in terms of, um, the, the text, if I remember, provides, you get into this whole land settlement thing and of how the treaties were approached by, by the aboriginals....I think, I think in many ways by the, by the 19th century the (inaudible) also felt defeated...That maybe the Aboriginals felt defeated, so they sort of gave in very easy.

This response may appear to be negative, in light of the great efforts other teachers go to in finding more appropriate materials, however Alladin (2001) suggests that even poor resources can be excellent learning tools, providing critical analysis,

questioning, and discussion are used to highlight their shortcomings. Alladin (2001) describes this as “a condition of possibility”, in the context of this study some teachers used resources that weren’t particularly from an Aboriginal point of view to still teach a valuable lesson and to examine issues namely the of the lack of Aboriginal perspective, racism and eurocentrism. While the aforementioned teacher does not employ a critical perspective with respect to the resources he uses, some of the students do provide that critical perspective and this teacher relates two particularly meaningful stories that highlight the conditions of possibility, which will be discussed in the “Challenges” section.

Laura does use this method of using conventional and potentially poor resources to impact students and uses the shortcomings of the resources to provide an opportunity for critical analysis, discussion and questioning. Here she relates how she uses *Canada: A People’s History* video series to highlight different historical perspectives.

Teaching methodology. This pedagogical resource has two parts: dialogical vs. banking method of teaching (Freire, 1972). Most of teachers in this study believed that a straightforward approach (“not beating around the bush”) was a positive approach to integrating Aboriginal perspectives and to approaching social justice and racism. All of the teachers in this study used discussion and critical analysis as a teaching methodology to varying degrees and with varying success.

One teacher, Laura supports this method by saying, “Yeah, there is involvement in the class. And I also try to teach them where to go for answers. Because they are not going to be in the school. So when you ask questions, where do you go? It,s not the knowledge.”

Ritchie echoes support for this teaching method:

well I think with those sources, those resources, if there are documents that are more from a different approach, from a different angle, something other than the Waspy articles, documents that are still in so many of the textbooks that are in the course. Which is why I try to bring in more current events because they are I think more incorporating Aboriginal perspective and if I can look at a current event that's not in a document, but something that's maybe in the paper if we can explore that and then try to just attack it from all different angles "why would this group want this, why would this group want this...?"

However, judging the efficacy of this method of teaching is complex. Students may or may not benefit from a creation of a "critical" space, and while for some this provides a very high energy, engaging environment where they learn, others may give answers and make comments that are quite racist (purposeful and inadvertent). Teachers also reported that many Aboriginal students are silenced during this kind of discussion and while beyond the scope of this text it is a very important piece of information for teachers negotiating a safe space for students in support of an analytical and dialogical pedagogy.

There is support from both teachers and theorists that these difficult conversations need to happen in safe spaces for student (non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal) and teachers alike to face risky and painful issues related to Aboriginal people and social equity, justice and racism. This method of teaching is taxing and exhausting for many teachers and they have a sense that it is "30 against one" often in a classroom setting.

Ritchie says, "It's like 30 against 1, and I've been in that scenario every year, the Canadian history course, world issues course, every time." Teachers used the added topics that modified the standard curriculum (what is called curricular flexibility) to

inspire conversation and discussion around Aboriginal issues, discrimination, racism and equality. Some teachers also used this as an opportunity to hear from the Aboriginal community members and to integrate Aboriginal voices into their classrooms.

All of the teachers in this study reported that they spent more time than the curriculum guide recommended on Aboriginal content. Many complained that they could be spending more time on Aboriginal issues and content but are constrained the breadth of content to be covered in social studies. This method of teaching will be later discussed in the interpretation and discussion section as it connects with the theoretical shift as much as a practical shift in teacher practice.

All the teachers in this study voiced support of “not beating around the bush” with students. This referred to what was covered as much as the approach to information, discussions and the real world. They employed this straightforward approach in their classrooms and the teachers in this study reported that students (both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal) benefited, responded positively and learned in this setting.

As far as, I think we're the same way, I think there are too many teachers beating around the bush. Again, these kids need to see the harsh realities. That's the way their going to learn in today's society. And I think me also..... How do I explain this? The approach I take to it is, I belittle, or make I try to make certain scenarios or stereotypical scenarios seem really ridiculous by flipping it around. yeah, I always use the example of the “drunken Indian” and put myself in that situation and tell the same story. If this was me, lying on the street, would you make the call or you would make the call... That's the approach that I initially take, to try to make them see how ridiculous those beliefs are.

Diego echoes this approach:

Canada is not Canada without the Aboriginals, and they really have to understand that we didn't just take their land, we bought their identity. What did the residential schools do? It's not good enough to say 'we stole their land'. Then the kids will say, like, 'get over it'. We stole their identity. We robbed them of....

Kids were strangers to their parents because of residential schools. An entire generation of natives, that's something they have to understand, they really have to understand the impact, not just that we took their land. Another way of doing that is getting them to respect the beauty of native traditions. And they do have to have somewhat of an understanding of that, because they have an understanding of Christianity, not a great one, sometimes, but they have a little bit. They have an understanding of Judaism, well, some of them, and they have stereotypes of Islam, too. So they have to get through the outer shell of religions and cultures to understand the deeper meanings of it and that's how to get rid of the stereotypes.

It is clear from this statement that this teacher, and the other teachers in this study were able to confront risky topics, and while they may have some reservations or fears about what might happen or how administration, staff, students and parents might react, they did in fact address the risky topics (religion, spirituality, oppression) in their classrooms.

Relational

This refers to the pedagogical resources provided by relationships which include those between teachers, between administrator and teachers, students and teachers, and community involvement.

Relationships with students. All the teachers in this study described one of their strengths as a teaching professional was their ability to cultivate and maintain good relationships with students. Teachers described this as caring for students as individuals, being interested in their lives, listening to students, and taking time to understand teenage culture. This particular focus on building relationships seemed to humanize the students and teachers, and created a culture of empathy in the classroom. Teachers reported that their students respected them, sought them out after class to discuss issues with them, asked for help, wanted teachers to be involved in their activities and generally kept connected with the teachers in this study.

All of these attributes of the student-teacher relationship were supports for the difficult and potentially risky practice of integrating Aboriginal perspectives. The importance that teachers attached to cultivating good relationships with students was connected to a sense of pride and accomplishment reported by these teachers. It also seems to be related to an overall philosophy of teaching that is student centered, as many teachers disclosed they wanted to integrate Aboriginal perspectives for their students. For non-aboriginal students the motivation was to improve their sense of morality, combat racism and open their eyes to reality; for Aboriginal students teachers reported that integration of Aboriginal perspectives increased students connection to classroom, to curriculum, to the teachers themselves. It also enhanced a sense of pride among Aboriginal students who overtly or covertly began to make cultural connections and increased their esteem and awareness, and caused them to ask questions. Student feedback to teachers, discussion in class and a sense of ownership about the topics were clear indicators of the benefit of inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives.

This is also evidenced by Aboriginal students simply identifying as Aboriginal in the classroom or during a discussion by showing their Treaty Card or Metis Status Card. Many Aboriginal students do not identify themselves in the public school context. As reported by one teacher, according to self identification forms in student files there were 19 Aboriginal students at his school, but on closer examination of the student school records he found that there were actually 64 Aboriginal students attending that school. One explanation is that in elementary and junior high parents are responsible for identification and in high school the students themselves are responsible for self identification. While this example speaks to an issue outside of the boundaries of this thesis; it highlights the power of positive and safe- teacher student relationships being a important pedagogical resource.

Another common pedagogical resource of the teachers in this study was their commitment to meeting students' needs. This highlights a philosophy of teaching that is student centered and relationship based. Here one teacher describes her commitment to students and why she believes it is important to learn about history in an inclusive manner.

I think my strength are that, I am really committed to students' learning about Canadian History in it's entirety, as best as I can, so an inclusive history, not just English upper middle class Canadians, but all Canadians, as best as I can, obviously I can't teach everybody's history. I tell my kids at the beginning of the year, that history is about everybody, rich people, poor people, whether you are Chinese, Japanese, Indian, English, French, Aboriginal, I feel like especially this year, That I've gone through a lot of multicultural content. Which I really like,

because I feel like my kids are getting a glimpse of real Canadian history. So, we talk about the Chinese and the CPR, we talk about the Japanese Internment, and racist immigration policies, whether they be against the Ukrainian Dukhobours, who came here, or the Indians. We talk about racism in terms of Aboriginal people, we talk about the dark side of Canadian history, Canada is a fantastic country, I love this country but we don't have the best record.

Laura emphatically discusses her commitment to meeting the needs of students and says:

No! I don,t care that I am only teaching the G,s. I have kids come up to me because they learn more in my class but I treat them with dignity and I encourage them to start thinking and asking questions.

Relationship with colleagues The practice of collaboration was identified as very important to teachers. Collaboration in the school setting not necessarily limited to teacher/teacher collaboration. Teachers identified that collaboration with students, administrators, colleagues (school, division, city wide) was a very important motivator for continuing to work in the area of integrating Aboriginal perspectives. Most significant here were the benefits to the general level of satisfaction with their professional life. It was very clear that teachers who felt less isolated from their school community members (teachers, students, administrators, parents, librarians etc) were more satisfied and felt less frustration and anger towards the school system. Their actual teaching practice was not necessarily affected by collaboration or the lack of collaboration in their school context. It would seem that if teachers were supported they would be making changes to curriculum, and highly engaged in integrating Aboriginal perspectives and pursuing teacher activism. This is not necessarily so and it seems that teachers practice is

multidimensional and a combination of many factors, structural, curricular, relational and especially personal. The differences between the teachers in this study highlight the complexity of integrating Aboriginal perspectives, as stated earlier teachers perceptions of school change/ curricular initiatives are strongly connected to successful outcomes.

Collaborative support from colleagues, school structure and students does not necessarily equal a more inclusive, equitable and antiracist practice (if we are to rely on what teachers themselves identified as being important about integrating Aboriginal perspectives and their voiced beliefs about what Canadian society should be like).

For example while teachers like Mala, who has a very supportive “East Side” group of English and History teachers, a supportive administrator, are doing many school activities, divisional projects and highly engaged in integrating not only Aboriginal perspectives but all cultures into their teaching practice, she also reported that she was shifting to a more “celebratory” version of activities and getting away from “negativity” and anti-racism. Matthew described his school as supportive, his relationships to colleagues as positive and moderately collaborative, he did not believe he received any pressure or negative feedback from his administration, parents or students (with some exceptions which will be discussed later in the Interpretation/Discussion section). In fact he was very positive about his students, school culture and in fact had little criticism for his school.

Matthew reported to integrate Aboriginal perspectives and content into his curriculum and it was clear that he was doing this an additive and contributionsl level. He demonstrated a different perspective than Mala, he was less critical, did not voice a concern for the Aboriginal point of view in literature/resources, nor did he have a sense

of urgency, and instead was interested in maintaining a politically neutral position while still addressing the issues of injustice and racism. This balancing act did prove problematic in his relationships with students, when on two separate occasions Aboriginal students resisted the curriculum and presented alternative views to the status quo. He responded by not responding; except to tell one student that she could find a speaker from the community or her family to present an alternative view point. He says:

What I mean by that is that [I] don't want to get into a *J'accuse* mode. Really ... I'm not interested in completely condemning the European experience and nor am I. However, I'm not interested in letting the Europeans off the hook easy...sort of dismissing it. I try to create a balanced approach but overall. When all is said and done, I think there was an injustice there. But that injustice has its own reasons and cultural by produce... and some cases people thought they were doing something that makes sense.

It is difficult to compare teachers directly, to make a list of what should or shouldn't be done or what should or shouldn't be available to teachers. Teachers varied in their awareness, perspectives, and had multilayered approaches to integration. The complex negotiation of space, relationships, personal beliefs, career safety, responsibilities and energy were apparent. That being said, all the teachers in this study were very flexible, adaptable and caring individuals. While supportive school culture is a definite pedagogical resource it was not necessarily the transformative piece that propelled teachers into a highly engaged teaching practice. What can be discerned that teachers are unique in their reactions to a similar setting?

Personal

This could include professional development, trips, community involvement, co-curricular involvement, emotions, perceptions, culture, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, political views. The three major themes identified by teachers as pedagogical resources were Teacher Identity, Co-curricular Experiences, and Transformational Experiences.

Teacher identity. There are two specific components to this pedagogical resource (a) specific personal identity (including one's own identification as a minority, (b) specifically a non-Aboriginal identity. Teachers identified their personal identity as being a strong component of their professional identity and practice. Many went as far as to describe the connections with parents, moral upbringing, and their personal disposition as factoring into the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching practices.

Matthew responds to being asked about what guides their motivations/ informs their teaching practice that includes a concern for equity, social justice, and specifically about integrating Aboriginal perspectives. "I think at some point early in my life I disliked authoritarianism...that is sort of how I approach things. ... I'm not interested in being bossy."

Other teachers identified their family and parents as setting up the groundwork for their concern and engagement in teaching practice informed by human rights, social justice and anti-racism and saw integrating Aboriginal perspectives as an important part of this kind of teaching practice. Mala said:

because when you grow up watching someone commit all these hours, he's been involved with the Folk Arts Council forever. I think he was president in '92, '93, around that time, but he's been involved ever since. It just seemed natural... I

think that, I just... for me it is very natural. If I'm going to teach Canadian History this is what it is.

Ritchie echoed this sentiment:

I come from a background, and I don't know what my parents did, but they obviously did something right, I think, because the whole notion of racism is so preposterous to me, that I really have trouble wrapping my head around why it even exists. Uh... I don't understand it, I think that is another thing that frustrates me, and I don't understand how that perception could even exist. I never grew up with anyone, I know it existed, I never understood why.

Other teachers focused on how spirituality, religion, cultural, and ethnicity have affected their teaching practice and professional identity. Teachers are multilayered and multidimensional individuals. Their interest in teaching and for the purposes of this study, their interest in integrating Aboriginal perspectives is guided by a number of experiences and factors that are very personal. Mala shares the following about how ethnicity and identity can affect teacher practice:

she is a young teacher as well, she's been in the profession for 5 years, but I wonder I have a feeling, and it's a feeling that isn't based on much evidence. And this is based on casual conversation, but she's not, she's Caucasian, I feel like I spend more time talking about diversity and more time talking about residential schools, like she'll do it in a canned lesson and I'll take three days. I need to show them a movie, and they need to read personal stories and they need to understand the purpose of it, you can't just read a textbook about residential schools. Totally, so for me it takes that much longer. It's like... well I guess you can. Sometimes I

wonder if she doesn't spend that much time talking about it... she comes from a very British family, she is very intelligent and very wise about global affairs, etc. but I think she... and again and I hope I don't offend you by saying this... I think that if you've never been discriminated against you don't quite get it and I think that a lot of my kids don't get it, because they are white kids in a white neighbourhood.

Non-Aboriginal identity was seen to open relationships and opens up dialogue with non-Aboriginal students. Most of the teachers conceived of their non-Aboriginal identity as a strength to their teaching practice. The belief presented by these teachers was that everyone has something to offer in this process of integrating Aboriginal perspectives, and improving society, and one's non-Aboriginal identity does not preclude them from teaching effectively about Aboriginal people, issues, anti-racism and/or multiculturalism. In fact, for non-Aboriginal students many teachers thought it benefited the conversation to have a non-Aboriginal teacher in the classroom, leading discussion about Aboriginal perspectives.

One teacher explains:

Okay, if I was Aboriginal I think the kids would withhold a lot of the comments. They feel pretty open to in a discussion, they don't hold anything back.... Um... I don't think it is a challenge, (being non-Aboriginal) well... No, I think no It's almost beneficial. That they feel that they can say things that probably wouldn't if they are trying to appease however is teaching them and then at least I know where they are coming from. I guess the biggest challenge is where do you as an

educator, like how do you decipher where the truth ends in this discussion that you are having. Like do you really feel this way or are you backing Billy, over here, or are you trying to be cool. You have to leave that class and determine where your problems are and how realistic these feelings are.

Co-curricular involvement. There was connection in this study between a high level of engagement in education reform and co-curricular involvement. Co-curricular involvement is not necessarily connected to the school; it was usually with Aboriginal organizations, Human Rights organizations and events. Teachers spoke about this involvement as providing them with support, resources, opening them up to new ideas, connecting with minority community members and generally broadening their experience. There was a very strong understanding about the importance of the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, and often teachers reflected on how their involvement in one area enhanced their commitment in another area.

Transformational experiences. This is a very broad theme, and problematic as much of what has been discussed above could be classified as personal experience, sort of a pitfall of a phenomenological approach? Personal experiences connect to any significant and transformational experiences. Transformational experiences can be very subtle experiences, in this study includes everything from childhood experiences to professional experiences. Interestingly, all teachers resisted the idea that they had actually had a particular transformational experience. It took months of reflection on the transcripts to ascertain that each and every teacher actually mentioned some sort of transformational experience. Teachers were in fact reluctant to discuss themselves throughout most of the interviews. They were more comfortable discussing students,

colleagues, and administrators than they were about discussing themselves. This reluctance was especially apparent when reviewing the data, but also in the reactions of teachers to personal questions. This requires closer analysis and will be discussed further in the Interpretation/discussion section.

Challenges

The following themes were identified the teachers in this study as factors that challenged their efforts to integrate Aboriginal perspectives. The teachers in this study are unique in that they are all integrating Aboriginal perspectives and content into their classrooms, and this study in fact seemed to be a study of degree and variations rather than a study about whether they were doing it or not. The challenges perceived by teachers that subvert or submerge their efforts are a) Lack of Knowledge (about specific topics), b) Energy required to make changes, c) Student Responses/Culture, d) Administrative/School Support, e) Isolation from the Aboriginal community.

Lack of knowledge This involves finding resources, speakers, and taking time to learn about content and issues. Teachers reflected on their level of knowledge about Aboriginal topics and issues and typically disclosed that there were many areas where they had little knowledge. What sets the teachers in this study apart perhaps is that they reported actively seeking information to supplement their lack of knowledge. They often attributed their lack of knowledge to poor teacher education program at the University of Manitoba, by having difficulty accessing information, and their own lack of experience with Aboriginal people and communities. This was most apparent when teachers wanted to teach about more complex issues such as treaty rights and Land claims.

Most pertinent in terms of an actual challenge was the considerable amount of energy expended when researching topics for their classes. Each modification required phone calls, trips to the library, a lot of reading. This is problematic for teachers who are already usually at their limit in terms of their responsibilities professional, co-curricular commitments, energy needed to continuously negotiate classrooms and behavior management on a daily basis. All the teachers in this study mentioned that they were very busy. Here one teacher describes the frustration of continuous searching for specific information and not getting the answer he believed he needed to adequately cover the topic in his class.

I've made countless phone calls to organizations, and I've basically told them, the things I've told you, specific perceptions, this is what I'm teaching, this is the perception that the kids have, can somebody come out and just lay it on the line? Can I get a list of the things that Aboriginal and Metis get, can I get that list, and no one can't provide me with the list.

Laura has embarked on a self-directed project using the *Canada: A People's History* video series to critically analyze the standard presentations of Canadian history. She provides her students with notes about specific video segments, question sheets, and teaching strategy that teaches students to identify the French, English and Aboriginal point of view, and to critique how much time is spent on various "minority" topics, and what stories are not told and why. This teacher is still engaged in this project and wants to complete teacher study notes, student video guide and questions for the entire video series. This teacher has decided to expend her energy in using what is available rather than searching for the perfect resources. She reports a high level of success in her classes

using this method. However, it is important to note that this teacher has devoted most of her free time to this topic and to this project

Mala's observation is that the responsibility for these kinds of self directed initiatives typically rest on the shoulders of a few teachers on the staff, or a specific department with other teachers not engaging at all. Here teacher describes her time commitments to students and school initiatives and to the phenomenon of integrating Aboriginal perspectives:

It's the Mala initiative....and it isn't split up evenly...I think that the school runs on the shoulders of three teachers. That is my perspective. Of course, because of the nature of me being an English teacher and history teacher, because of the nature of our work, we run the student council, not me, English teachers, something called student voice, I have the human rights group, we've got a leadership program, and an environmental group, and that is all done by the East side teachers which means the English/ History teachers.

Student/school culture. Teachers' efforts were impacted by student culture The teachers in this study identified that schools have specific student culture, with specific characters and attributes. Most teachers enjoyed good relationships with their students and that was one characteristic that stood out about the teachers in this study; they fostered and maintained good relationships, and were able to relate well to their students. Whether through humor, making culture/pop culture connections, meeting needs, caring, giving of their time etc. these teachers were focused on their relationships with students. The student bodies that were reflected upon in this study were from 5 very different schools, some with very affluent, white students and few minorities and others urban,

working class, mostly minorities. With that in mind the general observation of most of the teachers in this study was that student culture in general was apathetic in regards to issues of social justice, minority rights, anti-racism and Aboriginal issues. In fact, teachers remarked that a particularly strong feeling of discrimination and prejudice was exhibited amongst many of their students. Many students had very well defined attitudes about Aboriginal people, most negative and many focused on resources and capital.

Ritchie describes the problem of the belief in the “Big Bag of Money”.

The perception of the big bag of money, there is this perception that is really prevalent at my school that at the beginning of every month, if you are Aboriginal you get this big bag of money dropped on your door step ... and that promotes hatred, because why am I not getting the big bag of money? And that is just the way they perceive and for me to counter that, its not easy to do, like I've made countless phone calls to organizations, and I've basically told them, the things I've told you, specific perceptions. This is what I'm teaching, this is the perception that the kids have, can somebody come out and just lay it on the line? Can I get a list of the things that Aboriginal and Metis get, can I get that list, no one can't provide me with the list, they say “no, it's ridiculous, we don't get free education, first you have to get accepted into educational facility, there is a lot of things ... that they don't pay any taxes regardless of where they live.

There was one marked difference, now while students were not reported to be much involved in issues of racism, human rights, and whether the reasons were different for particular types of students, from particular types of schools, one might imagine that

students from very multicultural, working class, urban schools might have different reasons for a lack of interest in these issues perhaps related to needs, responsibilities and sense of urgency, but whatever the reasons students keep to themselves. Matthew remarked that while race relations in his school were polite, students typically did not mix with each other, creating an ethnic ghettoization, and while he did not make particular mention of the culture of white students, one might imagine that white students stuck with white students. Ritchie was more explicit about white students sticking with white students and seeing the structure of student culture as very divided and segregated. He notes that white students are unwilling to make connections with international students and exchange students; he describes the experiences of these students in his school as quite dismal and lonely. He also notes that white students have little restraint when making comments or voicing beliefs in classroom discussion that is offensive and disrespectful, specifically towards Aboriginal people, even when an Aboriginal student(s) are present. He describes this dynamic as silencing Aboriginal students, many of whom do not identify them as Aboriginal. This apathy and lack of respect is problematic for teachers committed to working towards social justice.

Mala describes her experiences and struggles with students involving combating both apathy and disrespect. She believes that it is basically the same 25 students participating in multicultural activities and antiracist activities, and while there is some interest from these students, the majority of the student body remains uninterested and uninvolved. She also notes that students can be disrespectful and offensive in classroom discussion which can create a hostile and silencing atmosphere. However she notes that

this happened less in her classes than it did in the classes of her white colleagues. She explains:

I think it's varies, and I wonder if kids don't respond to me as freely as they might respond to another teacher. Because I know from experience, that there were two of us teaching *April Raintree*, and kids the things that kids said in one class, which are fairly racist or stereotypical comments, about Aboriginal people. They were said in his class and not voiced in mine. And I don't know if it is because I don't if it has to do with the climate that I create in my classroom, I don't want to hear racist talk or racial slurs, and because I'm a visible minority to I have a light over my head that says "REALLY NO TOLERANCE". And because he's Caucasian it's different, and their able to voice that and I don't know of the type of atmosphere.

The lack of respect in student culture is not limited to "race" specific or "ethnic" specific comments or beliefs, Ritchie describes a "culture of disrespect" in his very white and affluent school he explains the behavior of students towards support staff, cafeteria staff, teachers and other students that is destructive and disrespectful. While one might argue that these antics are just examples of the behavior of adolescents, this teacher believed that the behavior was worse in this particular school than in other schools where he had taught. In fact, he believed that there was a lack of respect for teachers that was not present in another school that was had more diverse student population in terms of class and culture. In fact, Matthews experience in his school would support Ritchie's claim as he describes his students from a working class and culturally diverse setting as very respectful and respectful of teachers, whereas Ritchie senses disrespect towards teachers

based on their “earning power” and status in comparison to the very affluent parents of students.

These summaries of various types of student cultures present in schools serve to challenge teachers. Students for varying reasons as discussed above are resistant and uninterested in many of the ideas and lessons presented to them by teachers. They are even less willing to make a personal connection to the issues of racism and social injustice/inequity. Teachers often sense that what they are working in vain, and not only that but they often receive daily challenges, criticism and attempts at derailing lessons related to integrating Aboriginal perspectives.

Most of the teachers in this study attributed the discriminatory speech and attitudes to the attitudes of parents. As what the students said did not relate to their actual lived experience, especially in regards to the “big bag of money” and the perceived “wasted resources”, and “special privileges” that are bestowed on Aboriginal people. The concepts of color blindness and the denial of white capital, and the perception of a reverse victimization can be heard in teachers’ reflections on their student’s responses to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. This reaction/response of white students and teachers will be discussed further in the interpretation section.

Needless to say teachers experienced frustration on a daily basis and a feeling of “30 against one” in combating racist and prejudiced attitudes of their students. At least there is some level of engagement when students openly discuss issues, and there are perhaps seeds planted that can be seen at later in students’ lives? The teachers in this study noted that often they are approached by students who fondly remember the discussions in class and have obviously reflected on these discussions, so on some level

there is some consciousness raising happening. However, what is especially troublesome and hard to combat is students' lack of engagement and their disconnection from these societal issues and the knowledge that is provided to them in classrooms by teachers.

Administrative support. The support teachers received from administration (particularly principals) varied. A high level of support from administration did not necessarily equate (in this study at least) to teachers who were more heavily engaged in integrating Aboriginal perspectives. Some teachers reported good relationships with administrators and this definitely supported their efforts, encouraged teachers to take risks and to make changes to the standard curriculum and teaching methods. Some of the teachers reported that their efforts were subverted by administrators. However, the lack of support did not necessarily have the effect that one might predict, because in this study the teacher with the least support was the most engaged in integrating Aboriginal perspectives. Lack of support was connected to a sense of alienation from colleagues, the school, and a high level of frustration. Teachers could be described as unhappy but engaged in the "low level support setting". One interesting side effect of the lack of support was that it provided teachers with a sense of accomplishment and pride about their ability to continue even in a climate of negativity.

Here a teacher (Laura) recounts the criticism she received from her administrator for her continuous efforts to integrate Aboriginal perspectives, she says, " (he said) you're always keeping this topic or whatever, (describing her principals comments)... and somehow it got to Aboriginal, and my principal said to me, tell them to get over it, it happened over 300 years ago, just tell them to get over it."

Isolation from Aboriginal communities. Four of the five teachers in this study believed they were isolated from Aboriginal communities. Teachers often referenced the fact that their experiences with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal communities were superficial and temporary. Laura was an exception as she did have relationships with Aboriginal communities both locally and on the west coast. Teachers offered little explanation here but rather offered it as reflection on their own position. Four of the five teachers described this fact as problematic.

Ritchie, Mala, Matthew and Diego all stated that they had few community connections except for the Aboriginal education consultants in their school divisions and Aboriginal students.

Chapter 5: Interpretation and Discussion

Introduction

Using two theoretical lenses by Banks (2001): namely the four approaches to multicultural curricular reform and the four characteristics of effective multicultural teachers will be used to analyze the practice and identity of teachers in this study. The four approaches to multicultural curricular reform consist of: the contributions approach, the ethnic additive approach, the transformation approach and the decision-making and social action approach. The contributions approach is characterized by the addition of ethnic heroes using criteria similar to those used to select mainstream heroes for inclusion into the curriculum, where the mainstream curriculum remains unchanged in terms of its basic structure, goals and salient characteristics. The Ethnic additive approach is characterized by the addition of content, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its basic structure, purpose and characteristics. The Transformation approach is characterized by changes to the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes and problems from several ethnic perspectives. The Decision-Making and Social Action Approach includes elements of the transformation approach but adds components that require students to make decisions and to take actions related to the concepts, issues or problems they have studied.

The four characteristics of effective multicultural teachers are: knowledge of the social sciences and pedagogical knowledge, a clarified cultural identification, positive inter-group and racial attitudes, and pedagogical skills that lend themselves to facilitating the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic and social-class groups.

Along with the two theoretical lenses provided by Banks (2001) the chapter will focus on three subsidiary questions which are:

- 1) What are teachers' beliefs and attitudes on such matters as equity, social justice and antiracism?
- 2) How do teachers define their own identity (both professional and personal) in relation to their engagement in integrating Aboriginal Perspectives?
- 3) How are teachers' experiences (relational, structural, curricular and personal) reflected in their practices?

These three questions will be used to discuss the findings of this study, to elaborate on the identified pedagogical resources that teachers have and the factors that subvert and submerge these resources.

What are teachers' beliefs on such matters as equity, social justice and anti racism?

The individual teachers interviewed generally displayed positive inter- group and racial attitudes. Banks (2001) identifies this attitude as one of four characteristics of an effective multicultural teacher, meaning a teacher who has a “has a clarified and positive attitude towards different racial, ethnic, cultural and social-class groups” (p. 255).

According to Banks (2001) teachers who have positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, cultural and social-class groups can be more engaged in multicultural reform, specifically the transformative and decision making and social action approaches to multicultural reform. The teachers in this study could be categorized as emerging towards a clarified and positive attitude.

The teachers in this study often demonstrated their positive inter-group attitudes through their engagement in anti- racism, human rights, Aboriginal education or

multicultural activities. Part of their involvement in these activities presupposes some level of engagement in the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum and an interest in issues such as social justice, equity, and antiracism. According to Banks (2001) teachers need to be cognizant of their own beliefs and examine them as they are constantly shifting. The teachers in this study expressed that they believed in democracy, equity, and all but one teacher reported that they believed that an antiracism focus was important. Teachers in this study believed that an anti racist education should include (a) focus on equity, (b) multiculturalism, (c) respecting and learning about other cultures, (d) a focus on preparing students for democratic participation, (e) the importance of imparting ideas about Canadian identity, (f) reducing racial tensions specifically between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal. Most of the teachers participated in extra curricular activities that demonstrated a commitment to democracy and multiculturalism. Four out of five teachers in this study also participated in activities that demonstrated a commitment to human rights and/or antiracism. All the teachers in this study discussed a commitment to equity among all people and a belief that a better understanding between cultures is beneficial to all people. It is important to remember that the teachers in this study are not afraid to address negative aspects of Canadian history, certainly making steps towards recovering from the amnesia that Solomon et al. (2005) says affects many Canadians. Teachers did not explicitly verbalize ideas about relationships between dominant and minority groups being the cause of inequality, power and privilege in the language of educational theorists. They did not identify that institutions (schools) reproduce inequality although they were aware that schools fail to meet the academic and social needs of Aboriginal students.

The focus of teachers' efforts was on improving individual student's racist attitudes. Teachers attempted to provide their students with historical knowledge, opportunities to learn about other cultures, and exposure to some anti racism curricula and activism. Mala was the only teacher engaged in Banks (2001) Social Activist approach. She worked effectively between the transformational and Social Activist approaches, by spearheading many initiatives to engage students in social activism. Mala set up a student opportunity to hear Paul Russibigina speak at the U of M. Laura and Ritchie were engaged in the transformational approach and also using the decision-making approach at times in their classrooms. Matthew and Diego could be best described as emerging into the transformation approach while still engaging in the ethnic additive approach and contributions approach.

Teachers often focused on improving the racist attitudes and actions of individuals by giving students opportunities to plan and participate in human rights/diversity events. However, Mala described her efforts as an attempt to improve individual student attitudes rather than changing institutions and structures. Which is not to say Mala did make some structural changes; rather she did not identify her efforts in that way. The language she and most other teachers used positions individuals as the focus of curricular reforms and individual acts of racism and discrimination. Banks (2001) states it is important for individuals to make decisions about what they might do to make things different. Again, this should not diminish the changes to school structures that are currently ongoing in certain schools. For instance Mala has spearheaded changes in classroom resources and textbooks, student events available to students on a school and division wide level, changes in curriculum for example upholding the three pillar

approach. Other teachers like Laura and Ritchie have pushed to include Aboriginal content on final exams. In particular Laura has come to employ a critical analysis approach using *Canada: A People's History* video series as subject matter and is pursuing the creation of a co-operative environment where teacher and students critically examine what they read and see. All teachers in this study were relationally focused and accommodated their students' needs which led to some very natural and subtle structural changes and flexibility. Moreover what is important here is that while teachers express very positive positions on racial discrimination, equity and multiculturalism. However, teachers' beliefs and attitudes are complex as is the "morality" that these beliefs and attitudes demonstrate.

Teachers in this study were particularly involved in attempts to improve their own inter-group beliefs and racial attitudes. All the teachers but one took professional development opportunities to learn more about Aboriginal culture. All the teachers reported spending time searching for resources and seeking more than the standard textbook information. They showed signs of careful and thoughtful consideration of racial and inter-group attitudes. All the teachers in this study addressed the "double standard" that is applied to Aboriginal people. Matthew succinctly describes that when a minority group has youth with issues (drug use, violence, truancy) often this behavior is attributed to their culture whereas a middle class white student doing the same things are attributed to their age or stage that will be grown out of eventually.

All five teachers reported that they were not afraid to condemn acts and actions that they found morally indefensible. In the teaching of history they quickly identified ways that the government had wronged Aboriginal people evidenced by various laws

and policies. Teachers were also cognizant of societal discrimination and stereotypes held by society against Aboriginal people. Teachers were all too aware of the prejudice and racism that students displayed and believed that parents played a large role in the development of racist attitudes towards Aboriginal people. The teachers in this study reported that they actively discussed prejudice and racism with students and attempted to impress on them the harm that those attitudes can cause. This demonstrates a general commitment to equity, social justice and the integration of Aboriginal perspectives.

This is related in part to the concept of moral responsibility and the beliefs held by teachers related to social injustice and possessing positive inter group and racial attitudes. As Applebaum (2005) says many white students (teacher candidates) are not willing to engage in discussion outlining alternate concepts of racism that focus on their connection to this problem. One significant feature of the teachers in this study was that there were various levels of disconnect from racism and the system of oppression. Teachers identified the issues as based on individual interactions and failed to verbalize or theorize about racism and discrimination vis a vis group dynamics. This should not diminish the strides that teachers in this study have made towards positive inter-group and racial attitudes demonstrated by their willingness to participate in the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, their motivation to increase personal knowledge about Aboriginal issues, and their commitments to antiracist and multicultural practices in their classrooms.

During the discussions about the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, it was clear that teachers were focused on their good antiracist practice rather than on trying to understand how systematic oppression works and on the possibility that they might have

a role in sustaining such a system (Applebaum, 2005). Quite simply if an individual doesn't think they have done anything wrong, then they will be reluctant to change or to examine the problem. Subtle types of covert racism can be maintained even when whites fail to examine their part in the problem as well as their part in the solution. One might describe this mindset as maintaining a "traditional concept of morality which Applebaum (2005) describes as having "many enabling features that ground such values as autonomy, respect for persons and equality, such a conception of moral responsibility also authorizes denials of complicity on the part of my white students"(p. 278).

The traditional concept of moral responsibility takes both "discrete individuals as the primary units of analysis and the definition of moral responsibility are construed entirely from the perpetrators perspective" (Applebaum, 2005, p. 280). This statement is significant in this study and is consistent with the literature that states that teachers' perspectives, beliefs and attitudes about reform will greatly predict its success.

Applebaum (2005) states how we understand moral responsibility will greatly affect not only what we perceive we are morally responsible for but also what we perceive as morally wrong (p. 281). Freeman (1995) explains that "seeing moral responsibility from a perpetrator's perspectives positions racial discrimination not as conditions but as actions or series of action, inflicted on the victim by perpetrators. The focus is more on what particular perpetrators have done or are doing to some victims than on the overall life situation of the victim class" (as cited in Applebaum,2005, p. 280).

The problem with this point of view is that it restricts discussions of discrimination and obscures the collective dynamics of systematic racism. What particular agents have intentionally done or are doing to victims is emphasized and the

victim's perspective is minimized. So Boyd (1996) has argued that the traditional and "subject" focused concept of morality is not only "not helpful" but actively works to hide recognition of own positions within the systematic oppressive relationships between groups that we supposedly find morally problematic. He says specifically "that those with the advantage positions within such relationship it prevents us from seeing, acknowledging and struggling with how to change our embedded ness in, and identification with the interest of, the groups that contribute to the oppression of another group" (p. 281)

This relates to the teachers in this study because as we examine their beliefs, attitudes and perspectives about social justice issues certain aspects of these moral positions can be identified. While teachers in this study remain committed to equity and social justice, there was no clear acceptance of complicity in racism and discrimination. With the exception of one teacher who admitted that his exposure to Aboriginal students greatly improved his attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples in general, other teachers exhibited a subtle refusal to talk about themselves as connected to the problems of discrimination and racism in society. This being said, it was clear that the teachers in this study were certainly in the process of interrogating this concept. Teachers evidenced their reflections and their attempts to understand injustice, inequity and racism through the recognition of certain systematic acts Canadian society: residential schools, immigration policies, reservations, treaties, land claims, and issues in the justice system. While all acknowledged that some components of the "system" do not work for equality; the teachers in this study did not conceive of themselves as a part of the system. Teachers did not reflect on the ways that they contribute and maintain social injustice and inequity by

participating in the school system. Perhaps this is evidence of their commitment to changing the system; however it might be part of a practice of denial that would be consistent with the literature that examines dominant teacher practice in schools (Banks, 2001, Kanu, 2005, Sleeter, 1992).

Questions about specific positions of privilege and skin color elicited discomfort among the teachers. There was certainly an awareness of the relevance of the questions when they were posed during the interview but teachers were unable or unwilling to address the questions. Mala, (a non-Aboriginal teacher who identifies as a member of a minority) was an exception. She addressed the skin color/privilege connection with respect to equal participation in society and teacher practice. (This will be discussed further under question three). Many of the teachers mentioned that the interview process itself deepened their interest and further their reflection on the issues of privilege, racism and equity. The beliefs held about skin color and privileges are complex. Teachers certainly could identify that people of color receive discrimination based on skin color. However, they did not see the converse as being true; that their own white skin put them in a privileged position. As Applebaum (2005) argues with this moral position that is culturally sanctioned; teachers are less likely to be open to challenges to their views. The notion of moral responsibility that they adhere to and the understanding of the subject it is grounded in allow them to continue to ignore their own social location and its relationships to the perpetuation of systems of social injustice, intention notwithstanding.

The teachers in this study demonstrate this argument in part. Teachers in this study exhibit many characteristics of effective multicultural teachers namely: a desire to improve inter group attitudes and beliefs. Many acknowledged that they could be “doing

more” or had “stereotypical views about Aboriginal people” before working with Aboriginal students in their schools. Moreover, the individual is still held responsible for racism against them but with a “reasonable” explanation for “cultural characteristics” that result in lower social economic and academic status. Again using Matthew’s comments about what he considered a double standard in considering some issues seen as “cultural” issues, specifically Aboriginal issues by some people. Wherein he describes how white middle class students display aberrant behaviors and the police, schools and parents see it as a phase that will be grown out of; but when a student from a minority group displays the same behavior it automatically becomes an attribute of his/her community or an “issue” for that community. While all teachers in this study were sympathetic to the Aboriginal peoples in general they still used a Eurocentric epicenter to measure their success and/or failure. This is one specific indicator of adhering to problematic sense of distance from the racism which seemed to stand in the way of their desired improvements.

While teachers do not identify the school (as an institution) as being a place that reproduces the social order (Solomon, 2005). They did identify the structural limits that challenge their teaching practice and to their attempts at curricular reform. All the teachers identified some experience where changes they wanted to make, based on their beliefs about integrating Aboriginal perspectives or antiracism were hampered by structures whether that was workload, expectations of common exams and material to be covered (e.g. Laura, Mala and Ritchie all noted this limitation), teachers professional roles, (Diego mentions that he would like to follow the suggestions of Aboriginal Psychologist/Elder but knows they won’t fit into the current structure of his school),

parental expectations (Matthew admits that he and his colleagues fear that parents will complain about too much Aboriginal content) and unsupportive administration (Laura complains that her principal has told her that Aboriginal people should just “get over it”).

Mala does identify the structural discrimination she has experienced even as a teacher, when she describes staff members mistaking minority teachers for each other, using nicknames “chocolate one” and “chocolate two,” and referring to her experience in the faculty of education, where she noticed the absence of other people of color. One might question also the pressure Mala feels to make her efforts and reforms more palatable to administration. She stated that she is trying to move away from “negative antiracism” focus in her curriculum and social activism. She indicated that she was trying to focus more on community and learning about other cultures. Mala pursues the idea that racism and discrimination exist, both past and present, but does not explicitly identify the ways in which it privileges and deprivileges people.

Mala disclosed that she is working at providing/creating more celebratory social action events such as setting up opportunities to learn about festivals and dancing. It seems that while, Carson (2001) supports a move towards creating a community of diversity as opposed to a focus on antiracism, it is not without problems. Specifically for Mala, who describes her school as particularly apathetic and very white and middle class. Banks (2001) supports that it is necessary to move away from token celebrations of “feast and festivals” in order to mitigate injustice and inequality. As Solomon et al. (2005) have suggested that there is a need to get away from the idea that knowledge of a culture will lead to improved social and racial attitudes and to pursue a more antiracist approach

(meaning a focus on how the society/institutions/ dominant culture privileges some people and deprivileges others).

The lack of theoretical language in use by teachers can also subvert efforts to integrate Aboriginal perspectives. Teachers do critique the structures of schools like science and math being exempt from the responsibility of multiculturalism, anti racism and integration of Aboriginal perspectives. However, they are most often without a language to express what they are experiencing, the challenges proceeds unnamed and as a result unidentifiable. Common sense tells us that if one cannot name or identify a problem, it is hard to address. The current movement of integration Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge, is paramount to understanding the reasons why this integration is currently failing to make a difference in the level of knowledge attained by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students (CAAS, 2003). Teachers can act as agents of educational change, but it seems that until they are compelled to enact change and interrupt business as usual in schools current reforms may be impeded (Alladin, 1996; Graveline, 1998; Solomon et al., 2005). The suggestion from some educational researchers is that reform must go beyond the limits of traditional multicultural education (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Sleeter, 1992; Solomon et al., 2005), and a shift in focus from simply learning and tolerating the wide variety of cultures in Canada to a focus on social justice and equity.

Many teachers in this study also voiced a commitment to principles of anti racism, in that they believed that it has existed in the past and also exist in the present. Many spoke of a belief that while racism affects many people, Canadian Aboriginal people suffers most. Teachers in this study are verbally committed to anti racism, however their

focus on changing attitudes in individuals, and addressing past issues of injustice, and problematic relationships between the government/intuitions and minority groups leave many issues unspoken. Certain moral beliefs subvert an exploration of the position of minority students in school and also subvert experiences for non-minority students that could lead to an understanding of group and systemic dynamics that would allow them to explore their own identity more clearly. Teachers' beliefs are very complex, and only after careful reflection were the threads of some problematic positions held by teachers teased out for closer examination.

How do teachers define their own identity (both professional and personal) in relation to their engagement in integrating Aboriginal perspectives?

Banks (2001) mentions a "Clarified Cultural Identification" as one attribute of an effective multicultural teachers. A teacher who has, "A reflective and clarified understanding of his or her cultural heritage and experience and knowledge of how it relates to and interacts with the experiences of other ethnic and cultural groups".

(Banks, 2001, p. 245).

What is most relevant in this discussion in fact is how the particular beliefs of the minority teacher in this study differ from the "white" teachers in this study. 4 out of the 5 teachers identified some type of cultural affiliation. All five teachers identified themselves as Canadian. However, there were subtle differences with respect to how well defined the cultural identity of each teacher was, and there are connections between their own cultural understanding. In this study, Mala, was furthest along in Bank's approaches to multicultural reform, she was mixing the transformational approach with the social action/ decision making approach. For the other teachers in this study what was

significant was how their identity did not enter into the conversation of their teaching practice per se. While the interjection of their non-Aboriginality was artificial as it originated from questions during the interview, the non-Aboriginal, non-minority teachers did not acknowledge their identity in terms of skin color, culture, and even though they did agree that they were non-Aboriginal, they did not offer a converse description for themselves, or in being a part of another group.

Furthermore, they did not view their identity as having an impact on their teaching practice, except to say that because they were non-Aboriginal they could not give an Aboriginal perspective, but believed that in some cases, (classroom discussions with non-Aboriginal students in particular) their non-Aboriginal status was actually a benefit. A non-Aboriginal teacher, in their estimation made the classroom atmosphere more open for non-Aboriginal students to say what they really believed about other cultures, namely Aboriginal culture. In contrast Mala the non-Aboriginal, minority teacher clearly stated that her color mattered, that she was treated differently by staff, at the university, by students. She referred to her experiences with racism due to her skin color and cultural background as a factor that has made her teaching stronger, and in fact was adamant that white teachers were not as invested in anti racism, multicultural education or the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. In this study a clearly defined cultural identity and an understanding of ones' position in society affected teachers' practice.

Again, Mala identified her own identity as hindering student's inappropriate and racist responses in her classroom. She indicated that dominant culture teacher reported far more instances of inappropriate and racist comments from students than she did. This was

also supported by the experiences of the non-Aboriginal/dominant culture teachers in this study as one of their greatest frustrations was the response of students to Aboriginal issues and their apathetic and negative responses to efforts to increase positive attitudes, and to employ anti racist and multicultural curricula.

Mala's approach can be classified as relying heavily on anti racist pedagogy, although she did make mention of shifting to a more "community" building approach. She described her practice in terms of what she knew and described more conservative pedagogy in her classroom but with abilities to encourage more radical student activities out of the classroom. Mala wondered if her approach and perhaps her identity (she identifies as non-Aboriginal but a visible minority) affected racist attitudes and comments from being voiced in her class. This question connects in part to the claims by Ritchie and Laura that their non-Aboriginal identity is actually beneficial for classroom discussion. This raises the questions of how teacher identity affects teacher practice, namely the way certain experiences associated with identity affect teachers' perceptions and beliefs about social justice, equity and democracy.

Banks (2001) states that teachers must be strongly committed to a racial tolerant school atmosphere before such a setting can be created and maintained (p. 85). However, does a space where more controversial language is spoken, where discriminatory language and slurs can even be heard in the classroom in front of minority students support or submerge a more racial tolerant environment? While open dialogue is necessary and the risky and hard topics are important to discuss, there is still a consideration that needs to be given to the "safety" of these spaces for minority students.

It seems that a teacher's personal identity does matter in creating a classroom climate conducive to exploration of risky themes and topics.

Teachers alluded to certain family or cultural connections. Diego, Matthew and Laura, Mala all made statements about their parent's culture of origin and these cultural connections were a part of their concept of identity. Ritchie did not identify a specific cultural/ethnic community connection and described himself simply as "Canadian." The other teachers also at some point in the interview identified as Canadian and most proudly Canadian. The "dominant culture" teachers all the while seeing inequality, did not identify the power of systematic and subtle, everyday racism. They did not seem aware of the undeserved benefits that some groups accrue at the expense of others nor of the ability to see oneself as an individual and not to see oneself as white (Applebaum, 2005, p. 286). In fact this focus on individual allows teachers to deny the existence of systematic patterns of currently in place, and as Applebaum (2005) says "it allows the privileged to see themselves as innocent bystanders rather than participants in a system that creates, maintains and reproduces social justice." Solomon et al. (2005) study of white teacher candidates explores their attitudes, beliefs and ideologies as they prepare to "reproduce and transmit the racial order to the next generation of Canadians" (p. 148). The study seeks to interrogate the concept of whiteness and by doing so seek to have "teachers and teacher candidates examine their overall understanding of racial identity; the ideologies with which they enter the classroom; explore the impact of those ideologies on their teaching practices and their interactions with students." (p. 148) The researchers submit that there is currently a move towards a standardized curriculum and pedagogy (Solomon et al., 2005) and a move away from a flexible curriculum that can

provide opportunities for critical examination and student centred learning (Alladin, 1996). This version of school can only serve to challenge possibilities for diversity and equity principles in schools and “removes the necessity of reflective thought and critical interrogation... focusing instead on the technological and skills oriented approaches to teacher preparation” (Solomon et al, 2005, p.149) at the university but also in schools. According to the authors, the continued resistance among teachers and teacher candidates to address issues of “race” and racism will limit their ability to interrogate notions of privilege and “depriveleging of minoritized social groups” (p. 149)

The findings support the idea that a negation of “white” identity is problematic and pervasive in dominant culture/white teachers. The findings of this study support the claims of (Solomon et al., 2005) about teacher candidates, but it is easily transferable to in service teachers, where the researchers suggest that white teacher candidates in their study responded to notions of race and white privilege in three ways: with ideological incongruence, with liberalist notions of individualism and meritocracy, and by negating white capital. Ideological incongruence refers to the dilemma experienced by individuals when their beliefs regarding a particular set of ideas may differ from experiences related to that belief. This typically leads to great discomfort for the person who must grapple with this incongruence. This can be seen in many of the perceived challenges and attitudes of the non-Aboriginal and dominant culture teachers. Particularly the insistence from some teachers in this study that they provide a “fair” and “balanced” view of history by presenting just the facts, although some teachers proved to be more critical. Most fell back on the never ending search for the perfect information that would change the minds of students. However this search unfortunately often included discounting the voice of

Aboriginal people: many teachers either did not employ Aboriginal voices or were dissatisfied when their questions were not answered using a pedagogy with which they were familiar.

Negating white capital is the denial of the existence of white privilege and material benefits (Solomon et al. 2005). And while some teachers were attempting to negotiate this idea with their students, they were not able to (from their reports) provide adequate explanations. Furthermore they busied themselves with proving that Aboriginal people did not get the “Big Bag of Money “ as one teacher characterized it, wanting to dispel the idea that Aboriginal peoples did not get undeserved payments and privileges. The main underpinning of this response is that the rewards that have been afforded to individuals are due to individual efforts rather than white privilege, and that in fact minorities are the ones who have been privileged at the expense of whites. The main point here is that individuals remove themselves from the role they play in interactions of power and privilege. Teachers may use this to locate the problem of racism in the realm of ignorance and lack of cultural knowledge, whereby the need to analyze more complex issues such as power and historical colonization are removed. This further serves to reduce the histories of minoritized groups to the exotic and strange tales and myths. Liberalist notions of individualism and meritocracy focus primarily on the view that if people work hard enough they will overcome obstacles and reach success (Solomon et al. 2005). There is a continued belief that all have the same access to opportunities. This response stems from persons positioning themselves within a liberalist notion of social movement and individualistic interpretations of society. All of which are problematic to integrating Aboriginal perspectives effectively into the curriculum.

How teachers' experiences are (relational, structural, curricular and personal) reflected in their current practices?

Banks (2001) states that effective multicultural teacher possesses pedagogical skill and knowledge about the social sciences and pedagogy. "That allows them to make good decisions in their classrooms to meet the needs of diverse students" (p. 245). He also states that the knowledge about the social sciences and pedagogical knowledge play an important role in effective teaching practice (Banks, 2001, p. 245). The teachers' in this study were very concerned with their pedagogical resources, skills and knowledge. This was demonstrated by a clear focus on classroom teaching and professional development.

The teachers in this study were all involved in professional development to some extent. In some cases it was poetry and prose writing in connection with multicultural issues, and for some teachers taking in speakers, attending professional development conferences and other formal education experiences. What was striking about all of the teachers in this study was their level of self direction and level of energy to pursue experiences that would support their careers and their teaching practice. All the teachers in this study were engaged on some level in "intercultural" experiences. For some it involved spending much of their free time traveling around Canada and visiting, living and working in Aboriginal communities. Laura developed significant and long term relationships with member of an Aboriginal community on the west coast. She visits this community every summer and has been adopted into one of their clans. Ritchie traveled and made efforts to see and experience Aboriginal communities, but it was more of a

“tourist” approach. For other teachers their “intercultural” experiences were gained in the school setting as the cultural diversity in their school was an experience in it self (Diego and Matthew shared this experience), Indeed these two teachers were the least involved in pursuing out of school intercultural experiences. Mala differed from the rest of the teachers however and related that she certainly always feels like she is having an “intercultural” experience in her teaching life and in her daily life. This was especially poignant when she related the experience where she brought her students to a cultural event, where her students felt discomfort at being the only “white” people. She exclaimed to them “welcome to my world.”

Teachers’ ability and desire to gain knowledge from experience, and whether grounded in experience in schools, with students or through deliberate experiences (intercultural, professional development, travel, and education) was a common strength of the teachers in this study. These experiences served to support teachers’ knowledge. For at least Ritchie and Mala involvement in a Holocaust and human rights experiences was significant. Laura it was connections and long term relationships with Aboriginal communities was significant in being “transformational. The motivations and reasons for engaging in these activities are beyond the scope of this study, but whatever the motivation, the actual involvement was “transformational. Kanu (2005), Sleeter (1992), Banks (2001), have stated these types of experiences then guide teachers in their practice are important for and as CAAS (2003) states the impetus to work on integration involves a “transformation experience” (p. 54) being “those by which the individual operates, evaluates and makes decisions” (CAAS, 2003, p. 21).

It is obvious that teachers who had the most significant transformational experiences were engaged on a higher level in Banks approaches to multicultural reform. Mala, Laura and Ritchie were all engaged at the Transformational and Decision-Making aspects of the approaches. Mala was the only one engaged in social-action.

Diego's experiences that might be considered "transformational" involved his experience with Aboriginal students in his school. He described this as a very significant motivator and certainly guided how he operated as a teacher. Matthew's intercultural experiences were most often limited to students that he taught. Matthew and Diego did participate in required professional development focused on multiculturalism and integrating Aboriginal perspectives. Both of these teachers were engaged in multicultural reform and the integration of Aboriginal perspectives at the Ethnic additive level, and verging into the transformational approach.

A significant consideration for this study is the nature of experience. Certainly one experience (static) cannot be relied upon to be the hinge of an effective teaching practice. It is clear from the experiences of these teachers that while many of them had "transformation" experiences, the transformations were not necessarily uniform. Each teacher came to the teaching landscape with his/her own identity, and experiences. Experiences that can guide the way a teacher reforms and/or improves his or her practice are important but not monolithic. But, it seems that long term and self directed activities that are above the required professional development and contact time with students were connected to a higher level of multicultural reform and integration of Aboriginal perspectives. Here it is important to consider the importance of general openness,

motivation and ability to access experiences that might compel teachers to examine their own cultural identity and social position.

Regarding the nature of experiences, those that caused teachers to ask questions, to gain empathy and knowledge about other cultures were most effective. The one time workshop or professional development day, no matter how powerful, seemed to lack potency. Conceiving of teaching as a journey, where one constantly responds to different contexts, requires a set of deliberate development experiences and practices.

The teachers in this study seemed to be on this journey. Many could point to one or two instances of experience that affected them and that now guides them. Ritchie's canoe experience helped him theorize some differences between Aboriginal culture and Western culture, certainly but still at an arm's length. Distance makes a transformation experience less powerful. A teacher is changed once they have more information and new perspective from which to operate, however it is not enough to shift a concept of multicultural education being a task that "helps individuals "unlearn" negative attitudes about race, and develop positive attitudes to a concept and knowledge base about race, various racial groups, and classroom applications" (Sleeter, 1992, p. 41) and power. As Sleeter (1992) argues the task is considerably more complex, teachers will continue to "integrate information about race provided in multicultural teacher education programs into the knowledge they already have, much more than they reconstruct that knowledge" (p. 41). If an experience is to be truly transformational, teachers must have frequent and prolonged access to these experiences, to have a teaching practice that is constantly shifting and responding to diversity and social justice issues, and to consistently examine their own position in what is happening in schools.

And while the teachers in this study are more engaged in multicultural reforms related to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, when faced with making changes in relation to curriculum and pedagogy teachers are mired in a focus on individual differences rather than on differences on how institutions treat individuals. Besides while they hinted at the notions of inequality as a result of group conflicts rather than individual differences most often they did not identify any of this directly. So, while using the transformational approach and telling the story of Canada through different points of view is positive. Critically examining the stories, attempting to dispel myths and conceptual shifts to a Canadian culture as a synthesis of many cultures (specifically Aboriginal, English and French) are necessary if teachers are to truly address social justice. The level of frustration that teachers feel and the elusive search for the adequate level of knowledge that will crush all myths and misconceptions may in fact be hiding an internal inability or reluctance to be able to see what the issues of inequality truly are and consequently an inability to take responsibility makes finding solutions and possibilities difficult for teachers.

Even so, as many of the teachers in this study mentioned, one major challenge was the isolation from Aboriginal communities that they experienced. Laura was the exception, but most of the teachers in this study believed they were isolated from Aboriginal people. And while there was no theoretical explanation for this, it was clearly demonstrated by teacher experience and perception. Teachers described a society where people keep to themselves (cultural or class groups); and where there is a lack of knowledge, understanding, and experience between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people. Most teachers are introduced to and have relationships with Aboriginal people

through their relationships with their students. There were few teachers who had lasting relationships with Aboriginal people outside of the school environment.

Some teachers voiced that they were concerned that a group of people positioned so far away from Aboriginal culture, would be the ones passing on the cultural information to both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal students. There was a sense from some teachers that this should change, but still on the one hand remaining adamant that the ability to teach history and integrate Aboriginal perspectives should not be limited by identity. What is problematic here is that as motivated and self directed as the teachers in this study are, they continued to remove themselves from the role they play in interactions of power and privilege. Teachers continued to locate the problem of racism in the realm of ignorance and lack of knowledge culture. This removed the need to analyze more complex issues such as power and historical colonization. While a consciousness of the complex nature of these issues was acknowledged, during the interviews there was no clear identification of the possible causes and rather there was a clear “arms length” position even from those who were employing a Transformative and Decision-Making approach in their classrooms.

As teachers gain access to literature, histories and knowledge that is radical or more authentic, there is need for a strategy to examine and engage with this new information by changing attitudes and the pedagogical skills that they employ. According to bell hooks (1993)

“teachers who do not have difficulties releasing old ideas, embracing new was of thinking, may still be resolutely attached to old ways of practicing teaching as their more

conservative colleagues. Even those of us who are experimenting with progressive pedagogical practice are afraid to change.” (p. 140)

While there is headway being made in changing the texts, resources, and curriculum that are used, the way that curriculum is taught remains quite static. Even Mala, the teacher who is experimenting with decision making/ social action approach still approaches her classroom teaching in a teacher-focused manner. In fact there is more illumination of what teachers didn't mention, changing how they taught, incorporating and seeking non-western pedagogy. Most importantly there was little knowledge or mention of Aboriginal pedagogies, and when asked about it teachers were aware of circle discussions, or the medicine wheel but most were unable or unwilling to employ these methods. Most often the reasons given were related to the structures in place that did not allow this method due to time limits, and limited personal experience with these practices. Teachers could be engaged in teaching from different points of view and perspective but one shortcoming of the practice of teachers in this study was that while “issues” were debated, often there was no place made in the classroom for “personal experience” of students. Nor was there a place made for Aboriginal pedagogy as a component of pedagogical skill and knowledge. In fact, at times when Aboriginal students did speak in personal ways, addressing issues of their cultural identity and hurt by what was said or shown in class, there were often instances when teachers responded in ways that shut down “experiential knowledge” by placing the responsibility of finding resources or resource people to present an alternative or Aboriginal perspective per se. As bell hooks (1993) says

When students complain to the teacher about this lack of inclusion, they are told

to make suggestions for materials to be used. This often places an unfair burden on a student. It also makes it seem that it is only important to address a bias if “there is someone complaining.” (p. 100)

bell hooks (1993) makes the statement that many teachers, accept the shift in the locus of representation but resist shifting ways they think about ideas. This is threatening. That why the critique of multiculturalism seeks to shut the classroom down again - to halt this revolution in how we know what we know. It’s as though many people know that the focus on difference has the potential to revolutionize the classroom and they do not want the revolution to take place (p.150).

The tools of this revolution are experience and voice, and this is intimately tied to students’ experiences and teacher’s experiences and also the spaces made for the voices of Aboriginal people and communities. Hooks (1993) says “coming to voice is not just the act of telling one’s experience. It is using that telling strategically –to come to voice so that you can also speak freely about other subject” (p. 90). The teachers in this study are currently negotiating this tension. The tension between a classroom landscapes structured for domination, where time constraints, curriculum, common exams and other such matter are imposed and are cited by most teachers as reasons for not trying activities such as circles. Even teachers engaged in very critical pedagogy struggle to open up the space for the voices to be heard. Their varied responses speak to a subtle and perhaps invisible ‘tradition’ of teaching that has acculturated teachers to speak of freedom but act in its opposition. In part what we say schools, classrooms and social studies education should do is different than what the actual practice of school can be. The teachers in this

study maintain good relationships with student and it is clear that they are all quite engaged in developing and respecting students. There are snapshots of their teaching practice in which they describe their behavior towards students and the domination that is “allowable” in classroom is glaring. Domination is demonstrated in many ways: from placing undue responsibility on students, to erasing their words, or simply devaluing them in front of peers. Ron Scapp in hooks (1993) offers as a response,

So one of the responsibilities of the teacher is to help create an environment where students learn that, in addition to speaking it is important to listen respectfully to others, ...this doesn't mean we listen uncritically or that classrooms can be open so that anything someone else says is taken as true, but it means it is taking seriously what someone else says (p. 140).

The teachers in this study are engaged in this struggle, and as they are constantly faced with balancing critical thinking, honesty, safety and building knowledge, they are negotiating their response to all of the conversations that surround risky topics/ risky issues. Teachers are constantly faced with the responsibility of directing classrooms in a way that as hooks (1993) says “intervenes to alter the existing pedagogical structure and to teach students how to listen, how to hear one another”(p. 50). The focus on student voice and experience leads to many difficulties and this was experienced by teachers in the study where they struggled to know when it was appropriate to silence and when it was appropriate to draw attention to student's voices. Certainly, this intervention requires as Banks (2001) says a very clear understanding of identity, a clear connection to students, and a strong background of information and knowledge on these topics. Certainly the ability to pursue this type of pedagogy, one where people are linked to

knowledge, and also an ability to facilitate dialogue is imperative to effective practice. All too often it seems it is easier to talk about teaching students to question and be critical but then to fall back on the banking method of teaching (hooks, 1993).

Teachers' pedagogical skills and Inter group and racial attitudes and their importance to effective multicultural teaching practice are evidenced by the relational experiences that most teachers in this study employed. In keeping with the common thread of connection and disconnection in this study, the area of relationships was very important for many reasons. Teachers in this study were very focused on developing, maintaining and improving relationships. Teachers described this as caring for students as individuals, being interested in their lives, listening to students, and taking time to understand teenage culture. This particular focus on building relationships humanized the students and teachers, and created a culture of empathy in the classroom. This shared characteristic of the teachers in this study demonstrates teachers' pedagogical skill and their ability as Banks (2001) says "to make effective instructional decisions and to formulate and devise a range of teaching strategies and activities that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and social-class groups." (p. 255) Keeping in mind the focus of this study it is important to note the benefits to students that are non-Aboriginal and not minorities. Freire (1972) supports the idea that all actors in the context of domination can become active participants in changing the system. Certainly, the urgency to provide a better school environment for minority students is based in very real economic and social justice issues, and these students are disadvantaged. However, if all students' consciousness is not raised and if there is no transformation, but rather simply a transfer of information, all the information

and knowledge will not change the position of “white students”. They will continue to be the actors that promote the domination and advantaging of one group over another. It would seem that “white students” are disadvantaged morally and ethically when their beliefs are unchallenged.

And while schools claim to teach students to express ideals about justice and equality, rarely do we deliberately educate students for social change and help them acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to help close the gap between our democratic ideals and societal realities. The disconnection between students and the structures and moral stances in place are problematic and provide a barrier for “white” students. Moreover, the development of respect between the actors in the school context is imperative, as are liberating practices that acknowledge and foster respect between all participants in the classroom and schools.

In this study, meeting the needs of students complimented the use of curricular flexibility. This tandem of philosophy and approach can be seen as one of the shared successes of the teachers in this study. Teachers differed in how they took advantage and perceived curricular flexibility. But it was intrinsic to connecting with students and providing an active pedagogy that takes into consideration the variety of students and their personal contexts.

As teachers approached students in a “multilayered and multidimensional” relational way, they also perceived the curriculum as a framework rather than a prescription. Some teachers ignored the curriculum almost entirely, and in these classes a budding practice for social change could be seen. Banks (2001) describes the possibilities of curricular flexibility, “social criticism helped to understand the

inconsistency between our ideals and realities, the work that must be done to close this gap and how they can, as individuals and groups become empowered to influence the social and civic life of their societies” (p. 100). Conceiving of the curriculum as flexible encouraged the notion that students’ lives were important. It also encouraged the notion that there is real learning that can happen in classrooms when students’ real lives are linked to what they are learning in an academic setting. hooks (1993) says:

one of the reasons I appreciated people linking the personal and to the academic is that I think that the more students recognize their own uniqueness and particularity, the more they listen. So, one of my teaching strategies is to redirect their attention away from my voice to one another voice. I often find that this happens most quickly when students share experiences in conjunction with academic subject matter, because then people remember each other.... Yet one can be critical and be respectful at the same time (p. 151).

As teachers design to transform and to voice that they want to make efforts to develop the knowledge and skills in their students to critically examine “current political events, the economic structures, myths and ideologies contained in text and the justification of racism and social inequity that those provide,” the inability to interrogate their own identity and the way in which knowledge is constructed however may be problematic in teachers developing a practice of liberation. The way some teachers in this study often were disconnected or disconnected themselves from inequity, leads to concerns about the abilities of these teachers to orchestrate classrooms that liberate. The practice of providing other points of view is commendable and positive but while point of view and perspective is shifted and it may not be enough. Perhaps the lack of connection, the

traditional concepts of morality and the orientation of distance complicate the efforts teachers make to move forward. Applying a critical pedagogy and using a curricular flexibility to meet the needs of students and to successfully integrate Aboriginal perspectives.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

Introduction

Schools are often criticized as being “ideological processing plants” and only socializing students to fit into the existing social order. While this idea may have some acceptance: it is also important to recognize that teachers and students have agency and that they are not completely victims of the social, political and economic structures. Based on the experiences of the teachers in this study one can see that many teachers are working towards becoming effective multicultural educators and this includes the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. While Aboriginal perspectives are not the same as multicultural perspectives there are shared characteristics between the two as similar methods of curricular reform and effective teaching practice. Most teachers are concerned about their students and want to provide them with a good education (Kanu, 2005; Silver et al, 2001, Nieto, 2000) but many are limited by a number of factors: a lack of preparation, knowledge and experience with/about diverse cultures, a lack power in the face of developing policies and practices in schools. Teachers are “products of an educational system that has a history of racism, exclusion and debilitating pedagogy” (Nieto, 2000, p. 5).

Through the exploration and examination of the experiences of teachers engaged in integrating Aboriginal perspectives one comes to understand a complex and intense process involved in this phenomenon. It was clear that while the field of education will benefit from these teachers’ insights and experiences, teachers themselves benefited from having the space and opportunity to take a breath and really think about what they are doing. The intensity and pace of school life typically does not give teachers this much

needed time and space. According to the teachers in this study, questions that they might not have considered became useful to reflect on their teaching practice. By the second interview it was clear that teachers believed this kind of talking benefited them. Banks (2001) puts much emphasis on teachers reflecting on their own beliefs, experiences and attitudes regarding race, social justice and equity. His belief is that one of the most important characteristics of an effective multicultural teacher is a clarified sense of cultural identity. Teachers “examine their currently held ideological positions related to race, ethnicity and culture... which are often deeply held due to years of socialization”, and “...if they feel they need to change their ideological orientations in order to become effective multicultural teachers, they should act on this” (p. 200). While these experiences can be vicarious or actual the suggestion is that teachers need what has been characterized as transformative experiences, and in my mind continuous and long term experiences as opposed to short, temporary experiences such as day long workshops for example.

Teachers in this study were clear that their needs were not being met by short term engagements in this subject matter. Indeed, while the teachers in this study demonstrated by their teaching practice, Indeed, while the teachers in this study were highly motivated and self directed; they struggled to find effective pedagogy, knowledge, and perspectives that enabled them to integrate Aboriginal perspectives. What has become clear to me through my research is that teachers are motivated. What is also clear is that teachers need support and experience on an ongoing basis. The experiences and support need to be “transformational” in order to guide teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about themselves and

others in a positive way. My recommendations are that teachers should be encouraged to be part of and/or create a teaching community, encouraged to engage in ongoing and authentic experiences that would be “transformational”, encouraged to continue to practice within a flexible curriculum

Community of Teachers

Teachers should be provided with a “safe” space to interrogate their own practice, beliefs, attitudes and identity about equity and social justice with a group of like minded professionals. This could take the form of a discussion group or cohort of teachers embarking on the same journey; improving their efforts at integrating Aboriginal perspectives and/or multicultural curricular reform. Such a journey would not be solely focused on the acquisition of certain resources; rather it would involve a shift from a focus on resources to a focus on beliefs, attitudes, with an effort to clarify and examine their own beliefs and to learn the theory and language of the issues that face them in schools.

According to CAAS, (2002), Nieto,(2000), Solomon et al.(2005) it should be a priority to provide a place of reflection and discussion where teachers can learn to take responsibility for their own actions, challenge the actions of school and society and help bring about positive change. Educational researchers support building a teaching community where professionals can come together to research, learn, discuss and receive support. (Carson, 1996 ; hooks, 1993). Giroux and McLaren emphasize that critical thinkers must combine “theory and practice in order to affirm and demonstrate pedagogical practices engaged in creating a new language, rupturing disciplinary boundaries, decent ring authority, and

rewriting the institutional and discursive borderlands in which politics become the condition for reasserting the relationship between agency, power and struggle” (as cited in hooks, 1993,p.129).

Creating a teacher “community” would require teachers to be committed to talking, collaborating, and creating space to try new things and solve problems. Bringing teachers together would be a starting point in connecting between teachers, community members of minoritized groups and other stakeholders in education. This sort of community would require structural and administrative support, as teachers would greatly benefit from release time and professional development funds.

In an educational and political climate where the allocation of funds is minimal and the time pressures put on teachers is intense, it is imperative that a reflective practice is also practical for teachers. The nature of teacher education should engender a reflective practice and give teachers places and spaces to give thought to their practice and to their own identity, beliefs and attitudes related to race, ethnicity and culture. While teacher education is full of examples of students being asked to reflect in the form of journals, these exercises are usually reflected on as tedious and ineffective methods of self understanding. Authentic reflection could be used for real problem solving and used as practical feedback from colleagues and/or mentors.

In an unpublished study by Macpherson et al. (2006) at the University of Manitoba, a virtual space was created where teachers, faculty members and teacher candidates were connected on web/ct and given a space and place to interrogate and discuss issues of intercultural/multicultural teaching. This same design would be beneficial to encourage teachers to integrate Aboriginal perspectives and to encourage

discussions about the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, challenges, questions, successes of this endeavor. The space could include members of the Aboriginal community, university faculty members and perhaps even divisional consultants.

The relative ease, accessibility and initial anonymity of using web dialogue would be very effective in engaging teachers, faculty members, consultants and community members in discussions and dialogues about effective teaching practice without feeling too much pressure. The addition of community members from diverse communities involved in schools could add an additional layer of cross cultural experience. It was also an effective way of creating a sense of community. At the end of the Macpherson (2006) study, the teachers were connected and engaged together in the questions, frustrations and concerns regarding risky topics involved in cross cultural teaching. A sense of community was built from providing a place and time to explore these issues together.

Transformational Experiences

Teachers in this study complained that often professional development did not meet their needs. They also complained about being isolated from the Aboriginal community. These two challenges were indicators to me that teachers were not having the transformational experiences that they desired and that would support an effective teaching practice. Teachers seem to be in need of long term, authentic and relational experiences. Connections and activities that take place at a one day workshop or weekend event are good starts, but overall they fail to provide what teachers need in the long term.

To address the professional and relational deficiencies of professional development in the area of integrating Aboriginal perspectives a variety of relational interventions could be useful. Relational interventions could take different forms,

including: belonging to an Aboriginal education organization, being in contact and collaborating with Aboriginal teachers, developing a relationship with an Aboriginal Elder, Aboriginal education consultant or other mentors, and providing space for Aboriginal voices in the classroom (parents and others).

This recommendation is not meant to suggest that artificial or contrived relationships and connections should be made with people from Aboriginal communities. Rather it is a suggestion for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people alike to foster professional and personal connections and to work together to address the issues facing all teachers in the school system. These issues include lacking traditional knowledge, historical knowledge, a real understanding of the Aboriginal issues, and lack of knowledge of Aboriginal pedagogy and ways of knowing. Together teachers, parents and students can address and work towards a better school system where all perspectives are presented and respected.

Flexible Curriculum

It became obvious in this study that teachers who believed that they had curricular choices were more likely to take risks, and to make changes to the curriculum and to their classroom practices. The recent changes to the provincial social studies curriculum document will hopefully provide a beneficial structure and a direction for teachers, specifically novice teachers, in the area of integrating Aboriginal perspectives. However, real possibilities are also created when teachers can critically examine and analyze with students what is being learned, a breaking away from the curriculum in a sense. The new social studies curriculum seems to provide flexibility based on its open design of skill outcomes. The curriculum focuses on four areas of instructions which are directive but

also provides some flexibility in how a teacher can go about addressing the requirements. Some critics believe that the current move towards a standardized curriculum and pedagogy is problematic (Solomon et al., 2005) and consequently it is a move away from a flexible curriculum that can provide opportunities for critical examination and student centred learning (Alladin, 1996).

In this regard, Indigenous scholars have discussed the importance of including indigenous knowledge as important and necessary information for challenging imperialism, oppression and domination in education (Smith, 1999). Curriculum in the classroom and the responding pedagogy should leave room for these knowledges and voices to be integrated so as to better meet the needs of students in local specific contexts. Just as the teacher student relationship should be understood as multilayered and multidimensional, teachers use and adherence to the curriculum document should be understood as complex. This seems necessary if teachers are to meet the needs of diverse students in their classrooms and to engage in a practice that acknowledges them as individuals. The integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum could be one of the “exits” from a system of oppression (Freire, 1972) and a site of possibility (Alladin, 1996) and perhaps part of the body of knowledge that can inform students and challenge racism in schools. According to Solomon et al., (2005) “with the introduction of this new information, the way in which the information is heard, understood and interpreted differs for many groups.” (p. 155).

This information can sometimes challenge the reality of some teachers and students and this might result in uncertainty, guilt and at times anger. A shift in focus from the individual to a focus on the system, a society and many institutions, which

replicate racism, is imperative to free up space and energy to address the needs of other groups who are suffering of oppression and inequity. (Solomon et al., 2005). It is also necessary for all students to learn about these issues and to examine their place in their community and society, non-Aboriginal or Aboriginal.

Therefore, the teachers in this study are a good example of the positive ways that teachers can use the notion of a “flexible” curriculum to their advantage. Many of the teachers in this study explained that they added, took away from and created their own pieces for curriculum. The acquisition of a strong social science and pedagogical knowledge combined with pedagogical skills that allow teachers to make effective instructional decisions and to formulate and devise a range of teaching strategies and activities that will facilitate the academic achievement (Banks, 2001) will likely lead to consciensization of students from all cultural backgrounds (Freire, 1972).

Administrators should encourage teachers by making funds and release time available to supplement the standard curriculum, resources and to include a variety of “voices” in the classroom. To address the integration of Aboriginal perspectives this would include elders, community members and divisional consultants. School structures should reflect curricular flexibility-giving greater flexibility with respect to class time, collaborative planning, flexible scheduling and the place made for the voices of local community in schools. Teachers should be encouraged by administrators and colleagues to be creative, critical, and analytical in their examination of text. Teachers need to be supported in approaching risky topics and receive authentic feedback on their curricular efforts.

Further studies on this topic should address the education of pre-service teachers and the structural challenges at the faculty of education. One starting point would be to examine and promote a reflective and active curriculum for pre-service teachers that would prepare them for the intercultural environment most will face in modern schools. Such a curriculum would provide opportunities to learn the language to discuss colonization and decolonization, to learn Canadian history from an Aboriginal perspective, to clarify cultural, personal and professional identity and to promote on going and meaningful experiences with the Aboriginal communities and community members. The teachers in this study were unanimous in their agreement that their university education did not prepare them to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum. However, pre-service teachers are often not prepared to embrace this type of curriculum and herein lays one of the biggest challenges in preparing teachers to promote social justice and equity in their classrooms.

References

- Adams, H. (1989). *A prison of grass: Canada from a native point of view*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Fifth House.
- Alladin, M.I. (1996). Racism in schools: Race, ethnicity and schooling in Canada. In M. I. Alladin, (Ed.), *Racism in Canadian Schools* (pp. 4-18). Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Ltd.
- Anchan, J.P. & Holychuk, L.(1996). Dealing with racism and cultural diversity in the curriculum. In M.I.Alladin, (Ed), *Racism in Canadian Schools* (pp.93-102). Toronto: Harcourt Brace &Company, Ltd.
- Apple, M. (1985). *Education and Power*, London: Ark Paperbacks.
- Applebaum, B. (2005). In the Name of Morality: Moral Responsibility, Whiteness and Social Justice Education, *Journal of Moral Education*, 34(3), 277-290.
- Banks, James A (2001). *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum, and Teaching*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Blaut, James M. (1993). *The colonizers model of the world: geographical diffusionism and eurocentric history*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Brown, J.S.H, Brightman, R. (Eds.) (1988). *The orders of the dreamed: George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa religion and myth, 1823*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press.
- Carson, T. (1996). Racism and reality in the international classroom. In Alladin, M. I. (Ed.) (1996) *Racism in Canadian schools*. (pp. 120-127). Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Ltd.
- Clandinin, J. D., & Connelly, M.F. (1994). Personal Experience Methods. In N. Denizen

- and Y. Lincoln (Eds.). : (pp 413-427). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Coalition for the Advancement for Aboriginal Studies, (2002). *Learning about walking in beauty*, Retrieved January 10, 2003, from Canadian Race Relations Web site, <http://www.crr.ca/>.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S.L. (1998). Teacher research: The question that persists. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1(1), 19-36.
- Dei, G. (1996). Black/African-Canadian students' perspectives on school racism. In Alladin, M. I. (Ed.) (1996) *Racism in Canadian schools*. (pp. 120-127). Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, Ltd.
- Dickason, O.P. (1992). *Canada's First Nations: A history of founding nations from earliest times*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Dickason, O.P. (1997). *The Myth of the Savage*. Edmonton Alberta: The University of Alberta Press.
- Dixson, D., & Rousseau, C. (2005). And we are still not saved: critical race theory in education ten years later. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*. 8 (1), 7-27.
- Francis, D. & Riddoch, S. (1995). *Our Canada: A social and political history*. Canada: Pippin Publishing Limited.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.
- Frideres, J. & Gadacz, R. (2001). *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*, Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc.

- Graveline, F.J. (1998). *CircleWorks: Transforming eurocentric consciousness*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: education as a practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Jennings, F. (1975). *The Invasion of America: Indians, colonialism and the cant of conquest*. New York: Norton.
- Kanu, Y. (2005). Teachers' perceptions of the integration of Aboriginal culture into the high school curriculum. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*. 51(1), 50-68.
- LaRocque, E. (1975). *Defeathering the Indian*. Agincourt, Alberta: Book Society of Canada.
- Manitoba Education and Training. (2003). *Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into curricula: A resource for curriculum developers, teachers and administrators*. Retrieved April, 2003, from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth Web site, <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/Manitoba Education and Training>. (2004). *Aboriginal Peoples: Resources pertaining to Aboriginal, Inuit and Metis: 2004 Supplement*. Retrieved September, 5. 2005 from <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/abedu/publications.html>
- Manitoba Education and Training. (2005). *Kindergarten to grade 8 Social Studies: Manitoba curriculum framework of outcomes*. Retrieved August 20, 2005 from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth Web site, <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/index.html>
- Memmi, A. (1965). *The colonizer and the colonized*. New York: The Orion Press.

- Nieto, S. (2000). *Affirming diversity: A sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (3rd edition). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- National Indian Brotherhood. (1972). *Indian control of Indian education: policy Paper*. Ottawa: National Indian Brotherhood.
- Osborne, J.W. (1990). Some basic existential-phenomenological research methodology for counselors. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 24 (2) 79-91
- Piquemal, N. & B. Nickels. (2005). Cultural Congruence in the education of and research with young Aboriginal students: Ethical implications for classroom researchers. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 51(2): 118-134.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, (1996). Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Retrieved August, 2003 from http://www.ainc-.inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/index_e.html
- Silver, J., Mallet, K. Greene, J. F. & Simard, (2002). *Aboriginal Education in Winnipeg inner city schools*, University of Winnipeg, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Retrieved June 20, 2004 from <http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/pdf/aboriginal-education.pdf>
- Sleeter, C. (1992). Resisting Racial Awareness: how teachers understand the social order from their racial, gender, and social class locations. *Educational Foundations*, 6(2), 7-32.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies research and Indigenous peoples*. New York: Palgrave.
- Solomon, R.P., Portelli, J.P., Daniel, B., & Campell, A, (2005). The discourse of denial: how white teacher candidates construct race, racism and “white privilege.”. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*. 8 (2) 147-169.

- Spradley, J.P. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. United States of America: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Taylor, J. Non-Native Teachers Teaching in Native Communities. (1995). In M. Battiste & J.J. Barman (Eds.). *First Nations Education in Canada: the circle unfolds*. Vancouver, B.C.: UBC Press.
- Urion, C. (1993). First Nations schooling in Canada: A review of changing issues. In L.L. Stewin & S. J. McCann (Eds.). *Contemporary Education Issues: the Canadian mosaic*, Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd.
- Vavrus, M.(2002). *Transforming the multicultural education of teachers: Theory, research and practice*. (J. A. Banks Ed.). New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Young J.R. (1993). Prejudice and Discrimination: Can schools make a difference? In L.L. Stewin & S. J. McCann (Eds.). *Contemporary Education Issues: The Canadian mosaic*, Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd.

Appendix 1

Interview Protocol

The interview process began with some questions designed to put the participants at ease. These questions were not directly related to the study but posed in order to establish an ease and rapport with the participants. Then an explanation of the study and the research question was provided. The participants had an opportunity to ask questions for clarification at this time. Then, the researcher explained the journal process. The teachers are asked to keep a journal to reflect on the integration process as it unfolds in their classroom and/or school.

The conversation were steered in the direction of the research question and providing information in regards to their personal and professional experience.

To begin,

Situating the teacher in the school

Can you tell me a little bit about your School?

How would you describe the local area?

What is the focus of the schools efforts?

Can you tell me about your students?

What are the demographics?

Can you tell me about the teaching staff?

What are the demographics?

How important is multiculturalism to your school?

How important is Integrating Aboriginal perspectives?

Positionality of the Teacher

- How would you define your teaching philosophy?
- What are your perceived strengths and weaknesses (maybe)?
- Are you much involved in the community?

Please explain.

How would you define your approach to issues of diversity?

Multicultural, Anti-racism?

Who is it most important for?

Please explain

What are some of your experiences with Aboriginal culture?

Reflections on Professional Experience and Personal Experiences

How do you feel as a non-Aboriginal teacher with regards to integrating Aboriginal culture into your teaching?

Please explain

Has something happened to make you feel that way?

Do other colleagues feel the same?

How do students respond?

How would you describe "Aboriginal perspectives"?

How do you feel as a non-Aboriginal teacher with regards to integrating Aboriginal perspectives into your teaching?

How do students respond to integrating this view into their learning?

- What are the main challenges that you encounter when you integrate Aboriginal perspective and cultural content?

- Have you been able to attend professional development activities?

as they relate to Aboriginal education? Please describe.

Has it had an impact on your teaching practices? Please elaborate.

- Can you describe an instance in which you have made a

significant contribution as far as the integration of Aboriginal culture into your teaching? What did you perceive as a challenge?

- What are the main resources that you use when planning some curriculum integration of Aboriginal culture? People? Books?

The participants were reminded that a second interview would take place. Participants were offered a copy of the transcript of the first interview. Only one participant requested a copy, however the themes that developed were discussed and used to structure the second interview protocol. Only one participant completed a journal and shared this document with the researcher at the second interview and it was submitted as data.

Appendix 2
Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: Exploring the experiences of non-Aboriginal teachers integrating Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge into the social studies curriculum.

Researcher: Cara Zurzolo, B.A., B.ED., University of Manitoba.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose: This research is being pursued to partially fulfill the requirement of a master thesis in Education. The major question that this thesis research will explore is: "What are non-Aboriginal teachers' experiences when integrating Aboriginal cultural knowledge and perspectives into the Social Studies curriculum in Manitoba schools?" This research will attempt to understand teachers, specifically their lived experiences, by studying the phenomenon of integrating Aboriginal perspectives into curriculum and classroom practice. This study aims to be positioned in such a way that it is open to understanding teacher experience, in hopes of understanding what "subverts and submerges" (Carson, 1996) and what supports meaningful practice for social justice, equity and emancipation in school. To answer this question, a qualitative methodology

composed of semi-structured interviews, and journals entries by both participants and the researcher will be used.

Participants will be involved in two interviews (approximately one hour long each) from January to March, 2006. The second interview will be based on themes and questions identified in the initial interview. The teachers will be asked questions about their experiences integrating Aboriginal perspectives and cultural knowledge into the curriculum and into their classrooms. These question will: a) locate the teacher in the school b) explore the positionality of each teacher with respect to the school and integration movement c) explore attitudes, perspectives and actual practice in relation to the integration movement. With the participant's permission interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder and later transcribed verbatim. Transcribed interviews will be reviewed against the initial recording for accuracy and checked by participants.

Participants will be asked to keep a journal starting immediately after the first interview until the second interview, when the journals will be collected with the participants' permission to be used as additional data. Participants will be asked to focus on: although not limited to, a) reflecting on instances when they believe they are integrating Aboriginal perspectives (what is working, challenges, student reaction), b) Emotions related to the integration experience, c) Beliefs (prior or developing) related to multiculturalism, diversity, social justice, equity and emancipation, d) reflecting on relationships with administrators, colleagues, students, parents. Participants can use as many or as few of the focus questions and are free to determine the length and number of entries. The journals will be

a way for the participants to “weave together their accounts of the private and professional, capturing fragments of experience in attempts to sort themselves out” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 421). This will be a useful tool for the participant in terms of reflection and to prepare for the second interview. Due to the complex nature of this study, journals will be used to deepen the accounts of experience where little “scraps of nothing” can make a “definite pattern” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 421).

The tapes, transcripts and journals will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the researcher. Copies will be made of each journal and the original will be returned to the research participants when this study is completed. However, the researcher asks that a copy of the journals be kept for the study records. Names will be changed and pseudonyms will be used in all versions of the thesis writing. The true identities of the participants will only be known to the researcher. Once the research is completed a copy of the thesis will be distributed to each participant.

Hopefully, these interviews, reflections and journals will add to the body of knowledge about teachers engaged in the process of integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum. This study will focus on the personal and professional experiences of teachers in order to a) highlight their pedagogical resources, b) explore ways their pedagogical efforts are supported and/or “subverted and submerged” (Carson, 1996, p. 121). The portraits that will be created of each participant will hopefully provide in-service teachers with meaningful and useful information for their own practice. Secondly, it will serve to

provide recommendations for pre-service teachers' education programs to promote social justice and equity in teaching.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. Please feel free to contact Cara Zurzolo,

or Nathalie Piquemal

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. _____

Participant's Signature Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature Date

Please indicate if you would like a report of the finding of this study ____ yes
____ no