Exploring Teacher-Student Fit

in Manitoba Classrooms

by

Tania Giannuzzi

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Abstract

Each year, teachers apply and interview for posted positions. Yet little is known about what draws certain teachers to given positions or populations of students.

This study aimed to determine the extent to which Manitoba teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings, the characteristics of teacher-student fit as perceived by teachers and students, and ultimately if there is a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration.

Using case study methodology, teachers and students were interviewed. Results from this study indicate that fit with students is not a primary factor in guiding application decisions. Both personal and professional characteristics arose as significant qualities and traits that teachers should possess to provide the most encompassing education to students. Three levels of fit emerged in this study: Characteristics required for student engagement, for relationship development, and for the implementation of culturally relevant teaching.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

> "I was also proud of living up to NASA's belief that I was capable of commanding the world's spaceship. On my first day at JSC (Johnson Space Centre), I hadn't been an obvious candidate. I was a pilot. I didn't have much leadership experience to speak of at all. Worse, I was a Canadian pilot without much leadership experience. Square astronaut, round hole. But somehow, I'd managed to push myself through it, and here was the truly amazing part: along the way, I'd become a good fit."
>
> ~ Chris Hadfield (2013, p. 239) on becoming commander of the International Space Station and a good fit as an astronaut

Research Problem

The idea of fitting within a profession, among colleagues, with clientele, and alongside the goals and values of organizations has been explored in many areas of employment, from space exploration as stated above (Hadfield, 2013) to management personnel (Kristof, 1996). Unfortunately, the idea of fit has been less than thoroughly explored in one area that holds sizeable impact in relation to the success of future generations: Education. Each year, several teachers apply and interview for posted positions and many new teachers are hired into the educational profession. Many questions arise in regard to the hiring of teachers. For example, Tobin (2012) asks:

> "Are there appropriate ways to assess the quality of teaching and make choices about which teachers are optimal for particular schools and classes?... Who should make the decision about which teachers to hire and which teachers to assign to particular classes?...These are just a few of the many questions that warrant our attention;

questions that produce answers with implications that may not have been considered from the different theoretical standpoints that have been traditionally adopted." (p. 16)

In the past decade, a handful of studies have addressed principal's hiring decisions (Cranston, 2012; Engel, 2013; Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, & Thompson, 2010; Ingle, Rutledge, & Bishop, 2011; Kersten, 2008; Mason & Schroeder, 2010; Papa & Baxter, 2008; Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008). Research that does exist in this area has generally been approached within the framework of an organizational model of personnel fit inside a work environment (Kristof, 1996). This model is composed of categories of fit, which are then used to predict one's success in a given position. Although using this model has shed some light on the characteristics principals look for when hiring teachers for their schools, it says little about what draws certain people to given positions. Moreover, this model was not originally designed to be used in a teaching setting and seems to leave out the most salient fit of all – that of the teacher with his/her students.

Although information on the interview stage of hiring is valuable, the process begins many steps before when teachers seek out posted positions and may subsequently apply. However, little attention has been given to how teachers distinguish positions to which they may apply from those that they exclude. Few studies seek to address what teachers consider prior to applying for positions (Cannata, 2010; Johnson & Birkland, 2003; Liu & Johnson, 2006). Even less research has attempted to follow up on such decisions to determine if applying and hiring outcomes resulted in teachers that were a good fit for their students and schools (Young & Delli, 2002).

The construct of teacher-student fit has yet to be defined in educational literature. What has been defined in previous literature (e.g. Harris et al., 2010; Mason & Schroeder, 2010), is the difference between a teacher's personal and professional characteristics which are both sought by principals in the candidate selection process. These are significant as they play a major role in the ability of a teacher to fit well with students. Personal characteristics are those related to life experience and personality factors, while professional characteristics are drawn from the areas of pedagogical and content knowledge.

However, there is much debate surrounding which set of characteristics is predictive of successful classroom teaching. Principals in the majority of the available studies stated using a mix of personal and professional attributes when hiring candidates (Cranston, 2012; Harris et al., 2010; Kersten, 2008; Rutledge et al., 2008). Each of these studies listed personal attributes required in teachers as including patience, caring, empathy, enjoying challenges, having effective communication skills, having a passion for working with youth, and being cooperative. The professional characteristics sought in teachers included pedagogical and content knowledge, college or university grade point average (GPA), level of education, the written application, letters of reference, and practicum reports. Each of these factors may also play a significant role in the development of teacher-student fit within a classroom. The findings of Papa and Baxter (2008) suggest that professional qualities far outweigh personal characteristics in hiring teachers. Meanwhile, Ingle et al. (2011) found that principals of schools in low socio-economic areas specifically looked for candidates that cited personal characteristics such as working with diverse populations and enjoying challenging situations. This finding may be especially relevant given the increasing cultural diversity of today's schools. Cultural diversity envelops race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic

background, and religion under the premise of social justice. A social justice orientation is aimed at promoting an equitable society through valuing cultural diversity and challenging societal structures, preconceived notions of groups of people, and the allocation of opportunities and benefits among members of society. Despite an awareness of cultural diversity, children in traditional school settings must often contend with values and social conventions that conflict with that of their home culture (Naested, Potvin, & Waldron, 2004). Teachers who possess the characteristics suited to working in diverse classrooms may be able to eliminate such conflicting principles and allow students' academic abilities to shine through. Finally, Engel (2013) found that principals' hiring preferences varied systematically across low achieving and high achieving schools. Principals in low achieving schools focused more on the personal characteristics of applicants such as caring and willingness to do extra and administrators from high achieving schools focused more on professional characteristics such as content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

Therefore, in developing a definition of teacher-student fit, it cannot be stated which set of attributes is actually more important in developing this relationship. However, the findings of both Engel (2013) and Ingle et al. (2011) support the idea that students in low socioeconomic areas may benefit from having a teacher with specific personal attributes that fit with the overall characteristics of the student population. This is further supported by teachers' reports in a study by Prather-Jones (2011). These teachers reported that it was personal characteristics and not professional attributes that allowed them to continue working with challenging students. In marginalized populations and when working with challenging students, it may be especially important to give attention to teacher-student fit given that such students have already struggled in the education system and face many barriers that may

prevent them from reaching graduation. Such barriers include lack of congruence between home and school cultures and issues related to pervasive poverty. The incongruence between home and school cultures may manifest itself in areas of language spoken and written, the perspectives in the curricula that are taught and emphasized, the organization of school or classroom environment which may not be reflective of home culture, behavioral expectations of children in school, and the manner in which educators teach students and children are expected to learn which is often individually rather than collectively in Canada and the United States. Poverty affects learning in many ways including school attendance which may be impacted by having to work or care for other family members, as well as by the availability of appropriate clothing to attend school especially in winter months, the ability to focus which depends on adequate nutrition, and the ability to complete homework which depends on space, quiet time, parental availability for support and help, and the availability of supplies at home. Having a teacher that is a good fit may mitigate some of these socioeconomic disadvantages and provide such students with a positive, mentoring relationship and a comfortable learning environment.

The idea that good teachers make a difference in the lives and academic success of their students is not new (Bolshakova, Johnson, & Czerniak, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Meece, Herman, & McCombs, 2003). Quality teachers develop rapport with students, act as their role models, and have the ability to instill a love for learning in their students. Having a teacher with such abilities may be especially significant for students who have been traditionally marginalized by educational systems. For students of minority cultures, low socioeconomic backgrounds, and those enrolled in specialized programs, the right teacher allows higher level learning to occur (Bolshakova et al., 2001).

Although such findings may seem obvious, what has been neglected as a component of such studies is how such teachers know or come to know that they are the right fit for their students. A number of studies involving school districts in the United States repeatedly found that students with the most barriers to success in education are paired with the most unqualified teachers in terms of pedagogical and content knowledge (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Cannata, 2010; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). As heartbreaking as this discovery is, the more prominent issue is that strong candidates may be excluding themselves from working with students in low income areas, students that struggle the most with education, and students that are socioculturally different from themselves. Cannata (2010) found that teachers who grew up in the suburbs tend to apply to teach in the suburbs, either very close to where they grew up or in similar neigbourhoods to where they grew up. Very few teachers who grew up in the suburbs applied to teach in neighbourhoods that were socioeconomically disadvantaged or in culturally diverse inner city districts. This finding warrants additional research to determine if such conclusions hold true in countries other than the United States where standardized test scores and salary differentials across districts may influence teachers' job application behaviors. If teacher sorting seems to be occurring only in the USA, with teachers applying to school districts with higher average standardized test scores or affluent districts, then merit pay and salary may be the motivating factors in such application decisions. If however, teacher sorting is occurring in countries where merit pay and salary differentials across school divisions do not exist, then there is cause for concern. There is a need to know if teachers base application decisions on neighbourhood socioeconomics and the diversity of schools and if marginalized students are being given

equal access to teachers that may possess the qualities and characteristics that make them a strong fit to meet students' learning needs.

Situating Myself in the Study

My position within this study is explained in the following rationale. The first reason I feel that it is necessary to investigate the idea of teacher-student fit is related to my teaching career which has consisted mainly of teaching students in low-socioeconomic areas that have been marginalized from traditional classroom settings in some form. I currently am working in a credit-recovery program at a Winnipeg high school in a low socioeconomic neighbourhood. Credit-recovery programs are typically set up so that students in multiple grade levels and of different ages can work to recover credits that were missed due to gaps in their education or repeated failures in regular program classes. Such students often have lived through many of the factors listed above as barriers to learning including factors related to poverty and lack of congruence between school and home culture. Students in such programs may enter recovery classrooms after time spent in youth justice facilities, after moving from northern reserves where education did not match home values and often resulted in absences from school, or after entering the neighbourhood due to a home placement through Child and Family Services. Students may also be placed when school attendance has been typically poor or sporadic, often due to the need to deal with or help with multiple concerns at home. Although I feel that I do my job well, I often wonder how well I connect with the majority of students and I try regularly to be a better teacher in this regard. Perhaps research in the area of teacher-student fit might uncover previously unearthed personal and professional characteristics that can be related to student attendance, participation in the classroom, and

engagement in multiple learning environments. I feel that if all teachers, but especially those in credit-recovery and alternative classrooms, could help students to attain these three things that we would be providing numerous children with the keys to success in education and subsequently a better chance to excel in their future endeavors.

The second reason that I feel it is essential to study teacher-student fit and the factors that influence such fit is that I realize that I am very fortunate to have enjoyed learning during my high school years. I really feel that because I liked going to school, I escaped many of the external influences that could have led my life down a very different path. I struggle with the fact that family and friends that were close to me were not so lucky and I often wonder if their situation at school had been different, that they too may have had the experiences I have been fortunate enough to have. To learn what attributes make school and learning better for students who struggle, and to know what leads a teacher to a certain group of students, what factors may help strong teachers to work with populations that are initially out of their comfort zone, and when students feel successful in their education with the help of their teachers are worth researching because the answers may prevent other children from becoming negative statistics and instead prepare them for thriving futures.

I am aware that because of the work and life experiences I have had that provide me with a position in this study, I also carry certain biases in how I view education. Such experiences impact how I view the world and the research I do. Because I am conscious of these facts, I am able to address my biases and reflect on them when analyzing data to persistently aim to be as objective as possible. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995b) suggests that when situating oneself in qualitative research, it is important to consider three main questions:

Who am I? What do I believe? How do my experiences impact what and why I research? The following section addresses these questions:

In all but one of the years I have been teaching, I have worked in inner city schools in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Having grown up in a lower income area of the city, there is a familiarity that resonates with me. I understand the feeling that many of my students have expressed: That they must work so much harder to be successful in education than their counterparts that attend school in higher income areas of the city. It is not that they are any less intelligent than students growing up in higher income areas. Rather, I believe that there are numerous social and structural factors that make academic success much more difficult to achieve for students attending schools in lower socioeconomic areas. Having had a mother who returned to high school when I was in middle years and my younger brother was in elementary school, and a father who moved across the country wherever physical labour markets were in demand so that he could find employment, I know what it is like to be responsible at a young age. I empathize with my students who go home to take care of younger siblings, work to maintain a household, and struggle to find the time to devote to studying, inquiry projects, and school related reading. This juggling of roles and management of time becomes even more difficult in senior years for those who wish to attend post-secondary institutions. I can relate to working numerous jobs in high school with the hopes of attending university.

Although I believe that working hard to achieve educational success is the reality for many students with low socioeconomic backgrounds, I also believe that the same outcome, academic success, can be achieved by all students. I also feel that the outcome becomes much easier to attain if the correct supports are put in place throughout a child's education. In my

opinion, possibly the most important factor in promoting academic success is having a teacher to whom one can relate. Then, through educational activities, a child can draw upon his/her current knowledge, with the help of the teacher's scaffolding, to experience the world and make personal meaning of it.

Despite having spent the majority of my years teaching in the inner city, my teaching career did not begin with working with students in low socioeconomic areas. Having been a teacher candidate at a high school in one of the most affluent areas of Winnipeg, followed by a teaching term at a high school in a high socioeconomic area just outside the city, I was appalled by how little these students knew of those living in less fortunate circumstances than themselves. In working with grade 12 students in a Family Studies class regarding their future endeavors, I found that many of those wishing to enter fields aimed at offering assistance to others had very self-serving reasons for doing so. The students I encountered aspired to help others in order to boost their self-worth. They understood little of the larger social and political structures that resulted in generations of poverty or social class stratification. As van Gorder (2007) explains,

> "students are often encouraged to enter social services or be involved in ministry to the poor with the focus entirely on alleviating immediate symptoms with little attention given to the way such ministries and services actually structurally perpetuate social injustice and are rooted in paternalism…first-world education pontificates with paternalistic solutions that free the privileged from seeing their own direct role in oppression." (p. 13)

Sadly, this scenario has likely been the case for much of history. Freire (1970/1990) wrote that education for the privileged rarely promotes awareness that is aimed at revealing social

injustices. There is the need to teach students to examine what they do and why they do it in the context of institutional structures for "action is human only when it is not merely an occupation, but also a preoccupation, that is when it is not dichotomized from reflection" (Freire, p. 53). Reflection of self, knowledge, and relation to the world is not separate from action. Rather, it is required in order for deeper learning to occur. Doll best emphasizes this point when he says that "the twin processes of doing and reflecting-on-doing are important, and through these processes, the curriculum becomes richer with the passage of time" (1993, p. 218).

Already feeling as though I could relate little to the students I encountered in my practicum teaching and first teaching position, other than in terms of addressing subject matter outcomes, and having these experiences early on in my teaching career, I felt an uncertainty about teaching this population of students.

Kanu (2006b) states,

> "Critical thinking about education most certainly needs to be nurtured in teacher preparation because teachers play a pivotal role in educational change. Improved educational practices have to begin with an emphasis on the preparation of teachers as critical inquirers who, through offering themselves as models, will eventually pass the habits of critical inquiry on to their students" (p. 218).

This is something I feel was lacking from my preservice teacher education program. I do not feel that I was taught to critically question educational practices, curriculum topics, pushed to strive for change, or to consider how things might be done differently. Now, after several years of classroom experience, I feel comfortable coaching students to think critically and evaluate thoughts, text, and actions and use such information to advocate for social justice.

Nonetheless, I am aware that my early experiences in the teaching profession, in part, influenced my subsequent choice of where and whom I teach. As such, it is vital to me to understand how teachers' job application decisions are driven. I feel that if I had had the confidence and background knowledge to teach critical awareness and social justice issues that I do now, perhaps I might have felt a better fit with the students I encountered early in my career. Perhaps I could have taught them to see beyond the band-aid solutions we promote on a day to day basis, such as volunteering at a shelter, and instead taught them the skills required to lobby and advocate for change. Should others feel similarly, there are potential impactions for preservice teacher education programs that may be drawn from such research.

I am aware that my background and upbringing not only influence my interest in this study, but also create a bias towards helping students who struggle in the education system. Having taught overly full classes of students with numerous hurdles to overcome that negatively impact their learning and often the learning of others in the classroom, with a different teaching partner each year and witnessing teacher turnover first hand, I feel like the programs that are set-up and promoted to parents, guardians, social workers, and the community as the ones that are in place to create social justice and equity for students needing supports are in fact failing to address the needs of the students themselves. I personally feel that having a teacher matched to a small group of students and allowing that teacher to build relationships with those students over a longer period of time may allow for academic success and decrease drop out rates. Determining the characteristics that create a positive fit between teachers and such students is imparative should we wish to decrease student dropout rates and provide struggling students with a chance for a better future. As a teacher, I am also aware of how it feels to be mentally exhausted from day-in and day-out addressing the numerous needs

of a group of students you have come to know and then go home to worry about those children even more when classes are over. I often wonder how much longer I will be able to teach in the inner city but am hopeful that there are better ways of structuring programs and finding the appropriate teachers meet the needs of a given population of students. A starting point to address some of the concerns I have is to research the idea of teacher-student fit.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is two-fold. Firstly, this research aims to address gaps in previous studies by producing a case study designed to address teachers' perspectives of fit with their students. Previous studies (Cranston, 2012; Engel, 2013; Harris, et al., 2010; Ingle, et al., 2011; Kersten, 2008; Mason & Schroeder, 2010; Papa & Baxter, 2008; Rutledge et al, 2008) approach teacher fit within the framework of an organizational model of personnel fit within a work environment (Kristof, 1996). The person-environment, person-organization, person-group, and person-job fit are considered, but the most significant relationship in teaching, that between teachers and students, has not been addressed in these previous studies. Moreover, these studies focus largely on the hiring preferences of administrators. The voices and experiences of teachers and students have been largely omitted from existing research in the area of teacher hiring decisions. For example, when Liu and Johnson (2006) sought to examine teachers' experiences during the hiring process, they used an 85-item survey while Lankford et al. (2002) and Boyd et al. (2005) analyzed statewide databases of teacher hiring, transfer, and attrition data. Likert-type scales and statewide databases do not provide the rich data that result from interviewing teachers. This gap must be filled by providing teachers with the opportunity to explain why they believe a fit is good or poor, the factors that make it so,

and how they arrived at their current position. This study will attempt to address the process through which teachers have come to know that they are a good fit for their current position and their students and gain insight into what characteristics provide an optimal fit which allows for successful learning to happen in the classroom.

Further problematic is the fact that studies addressing teacher fit within an organizational framework all come from the Unites States with one exception. Cranston (2012) interviewed principals of Catholic schools in Manitoba to gain insight into the role that perceived fit within an organization plays in hiring decisions. However, it too has limited generalizability due to the fact that participants in his study were from private Catholic schools only and may value different teacher characteristics than non-denominational private school or public school administrators. As such, the literature regarding information on the teacher hiring process from a Canadian perspective is virtually void. Research is needed from a Canadian perspective that addresses the issue of teacher-student fit in a number of public schools.

Secondly, this study aims to assess the influence of sociocultural factors on perceptions of teacher-student fit as a method of validating or rejecting the findings of Cannata (2010) who found that new teachers' job choice decisions were guided by their sense of comfort with an area and their culturally informed perceptions of various schools. Cannata's participants reported excluding entire districts from their jobs searches based on lack of familiarity with the neighbourhoods in which schools were located and the related demographics of such areas, and tended to rely heavily on the perceptions of social contacts in the areas, despite the fact that their contacts had little knowledge about what it may be like to work in the education system. The use of social contacts resulted in teacher sorting. This

sorting occurred such that teachers applied to jobs in districts that placed them into familiar social positions. It is imparative to determine if such sorting is also occurring in Manitoba school districts. Given that teachers' voices have largely been ignored in the literature on hiring decisions, it is essential to hear what factors Manitoba teachers weighed in job searches and what characteristics they deem essential to a positive fit in their classroom and with their students.

Research Questions

Research questions that this study seeks to explore are:

1) a) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?

b) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?

2) Teachers choose the positions to which they apply while excluding others. What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions from certain positions or specific school divisions?

3) a) What are the characteristics of teachers that create a positive teacher-student fit?

b) What are the characteristics of teachers that create a poor teacher-student fit?

4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

The following paragraphs elaborate on each research question to provide a clearer picture of the issues this research aims to address.

1) a) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?

b) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?

The only studies that have indirectly assessed fit from the perspective of teacher applicants have been American studies (Cannata, 2010; Liu & Johnson, 2006). Canadian teachers' insights are needed to inform hiring practices and teacher education programs. This information may be especially important when dealing with specialized programs such as credit-recovery and when non-traditional learners are involved as the demands placed on the teacher are often quite different from traditional classroom settings.

In credit-recovery classrooms, there is no time-sensitive deadline for completing a course. A credit-recovery student can carry a course over multiple semesters until all learning outcomes have been achieved. Such classrooms often contain students of various ages, working on a number of subjects at the same time. Most importantly, such classrooms serve to meet the needs of non-traditional learners who have typically been marginalized by our current education system. When family values, teachings, language, and culture along with personal values and identity do not mesh with the present education system, students may not see a place for themselves in the classroom. bell hooks (2010) suggests that despite the efforts of public schools to include all races and classes, the public education system fails to educate many students from poor and working-class backgrounds. Often, these students are also of a cultural minority. Of such students she says, they are "ill-prepared to complete high-school and will probably never seek a higher education" (hooks, p. 96). To preclude such students' educational careers because they do not fit into what we see as a normal education system is not only a disservice to these students, but to our nation as a whole. It is these young people who will strive for change, social justice, and the wellbeing of others, as frequently they are

the ones who have experienced exclusion or discrimination first hand and have been resilient in dealing with the paths their lives have taken. It is our job as educators to provide them with the skills to achieve a higher education so that the ability to initiate such change is possible.

As such, teachers in programs like credit-recovery or in non-traditional classrooms must be culturally aware, provide inclusion on many levels including age and gender which occurs along a continuum. In addition such teachers must effectively work with students with various physical and mental health issues who are often medicated or require special adaptations to the classroom environment such as visual aids and breaks, students who have been recently released from youth justice programs, and students who are several grade levels behind due to large gaps in their education. Such teachers must also be comfortable going beyond curriculum and addressing issues of injustice and morality. A teacher who is unable to meet these various demands may increase student anxiety and fear of education rather than provide these students with a safe place that promotes the value of higher level learning in hopes that they will have a better future. Therefore, it is imperative to learn how aware teachers are of their fit with the students they teach and what such fit means to them in terms of their success in the profession and their students' success in the classroom.

2) Teachers choose the positions to which they apply while excluding others. What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions from certain positions or specific school divisions?

This question attempts to discern if job preferences in the teaching profession are socioculturally influenced as Cannata (2010) argues, or if other factors play a dominant role in where teachers choose to work in Manitoba. If sociocultural factors play a role in self-

exclusion, there may be a need to implement increased social and culturally diverse placements in teacher education programs.

3) a) What are the characteristics of teachers that create a positive teacher-student fit?

b) What are the characteristics of teachers that create a poor teacher-student fit?

The ability to identify characteristics of positive and negative fit would show that teachers are metacognitively aware of what factors make them successful educators for a given population of students and create the potential for improved educational opportunities for students. There is the possibility for such characteristics to be matched with specific positions in the hiring process and for principals to then consider in their hiring decisions.

4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

In essence, acknowledging the role of teacher-student fit in the education system may potentially hold critical implications when assessing the quality of education that is being provided to students. Positive fit may lead teachers to feel more committed to their position, constantly aiming to make learning of better quality, and possibly increasing educational standards for their students.

The Significance of the Study

The information derived from the six questions listed above holds implications for both the teacher hiring processes and teacher education programs. If we are able to improve the hiring process through teacher-student fit, the repercussion may be a higher quality of

education for students. Subsequently, positive teacher-student fit may lead to less attrition, turnover, burnout, and fewer stress leaves by teaching staff. With high teacher attrition rates this becomes imperative. In the United States, 10% of teachers leave the profession within their first year; the number rises to 30% after three years, and to 45% after five years (Graziano, 2005). While teacher attrition has received increased awareness in the past few decades, there is no pan-Canadian study addressing national attrition statistics (Kutsyuruba, Godden, & Tregunna, 2014). Nor are such statistics available for the province of Manitoba. However, a report commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Education over a two-year span from 2006-2008 suggests the attrition rate of Ontario-based teachers hovers under 10% per year (Clark & Antonelli, 2009). It should be noted however, that only 41% of new graduates to the profession in 2006 had found positions by the spring of 2007 and therefore, the attrition data may very well be higher given that those newly certified teachers without positions are not included in the attrition-rate data. After repeated attempts at finding positions, it is likely that some of these new teachers leave the profession having never been hired at all.

Although Canada does not face the drastic attrition rates of the United States (Gambhir, Board, Evans, & Gaskell, 2008), teacher attrition is still an area of concern. There are indirect costs to school divisions, for example time and money invested in the professional development of teachers who then choose to leave the profession. However, the larger cost may be to students' education, especially for those attending disadvantaged schools that tend to be difficult to staff due to numerous social and economic challenges. Teachers make choices both in terms of their first teaching job and the decisions to transfer or leave the profession. Each of these choices can impact equity (Lankford, et al., 2002). High teacher

turnover in these areas provides little stability to students who require consistency and educational role models to increase educational success.

Knowing how and why teachers apply for positions in Manitoba may shed light on how to best recruit teachers to hard-to-staff schools or areas in the province. Such data may be especially beneficial when looking at Manitoba's statistics broken down by demographics. By 2017, it is expected that 30% of students in Manitoba schools will be of Aboriginal descent and southern Manitoba will experience a 42% increase in the Aboriginal population as more families are moving from reserves to urban centres (Manitoba Teachers' Society, 2007). Such changing demographics have impacted the public school system. With 62% of Manitoba's Aboriginal children living below the poverty line compared to 15% of non-indigenous Manitoban children, and 50% of Aboriginal children nationally (MacDonald & Wilson, 2013), there is reason for concern. Aboriginal students are not graduating at the same rate as non-Aboriginal students. This young population is growing at more than twice the rate of the non-Aboriginal population. Statistics show that 8.7% of Aboriginal youth aged 15-29 have less than a grade 9 education, while only 1.6% of the non-Aboriginal population aged 15-29 have not completed grade 9; even more alarming is data showing that only 37.1% of Aboriginal youth have successfully graduated from high school compared to 63.5% of non-Aboriginal youth (Government of Manitoba, 2006). When looking at national graduation data, the gap between Aboriginal learners and non-Aboriginal learners is significant (61% vs. 82%, respectively) with Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the provinces with the highest Aboriginal populations, having the lowest provincial graduation rates (Young, 2013). With curricula integrating Aboriginal perspectives being launched only in the past decade, this group of students has been largely marginalized in Manitoba's public education system. These statistics

are less than encouraging given that these young people are the future of our province. If teacher-student fit can play any role in the success and retention of Aboriginal students in education and improve graduation rates, it is worth exploring. Such an investigation may also provide suggestions as how to tailor teacher education programs to ensure that all students are given access to the best teachers entering the field of education. This seems essential given that there seems to be only moderate congruence between what university faculty members and principals value as employable skills in teacher candidates (Abernathy, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2001).

Operational Definitions

Teacher-student fit.

This study attempts to investigate the perceived fit of teachers with their students and gain insight into the factors that play a role in the development of poor fits and optimal fits. The goal is to inform hiring practices by administrators, the job search process of teachers, and teacher education programs. To do so, the study aims to identify factors and characteristics of teacher-student fit. It is recognized that such factors will be subjectively reported by teachers and there will be variance among the responses. However, it is hoped that general themes for such characteristics and factors will emerge from the data. As such, the specific characteristics and factors which may influence fit have been intentionally left out of the operational definition of teacher-student fit which follows.

Teacher-student fit is the congruence between a teacher's personal and professional characteristics and students' backgrounds, personal values, beliefs, and attitudes towards education. Student factors involved include students' levels of intellectual development, self-

efficacy beliefs and subject-area interest, and sociocultural factors such as socioeconomic status (SES) and cultural diversity. It is thought that together the interaction between teacher characteristics and student factors involved in the idea of teacher-student fit will play a role in determining the effectiveness and quality of education students receive in the classroom.

Based on previous literature (e.g. Harris et al., 2010; Mason & Schroeder, 2010), teacher's personal characteristics are those related to life experience and personality factors, while professional characteristics are drawn from the areas of pedagogical and content knowledge.

Teacher-student fit is not equivalent to teacher student matching. Teacher-student fit is a much more specific and detailed construct than the idea of teacher-student matching that sometimes occurs in elementary school grade levels or with American teachers when those with the highest college GPA scores or highest level of education are paired with students in high achieving schools (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2006).

Again, it should be noted that this is a working definition only and that a complete operational definition can only be derived after the voices of teachers in the study have been included.

Student success rates.

Because the overall hope of providing an optimal teacher-student fit is that the students will receive a high quality education in which they have an improved chance of success, student success rates must be defined in a two-fold manner.

Because both middle years and senior years students have an awareness of what an effective teacher is and is not and how this impacts their learning as shown by Bolshakova et

al. (2001), Kanu (2002, 2006a, 2007), MacIver (2012), and Yerrick, Schiller, and Reisfeld (2010), student success rates must be defined in terms of how students feel their learning has changed due to the influence of their current teacher. Therefore, to begin, student success rates are defined as the extent to which students feel their learning has been impacted, in a positive direction, due to their current teacher-student fit. Such interpretations are multidimensional and include affective aspects such as attention span, participation, interest and motivation to learn. They are also concrete in terms of assessment marks, the quality and the amount of work produced, and term grades.

Teachers are constantly assessing students using both formative and summative assessment. Therefore, student success rates are also defined in terms of the levels of improvement students may experience as observed by their teachers. Again, affective aspects and concrete data are considered valuable. In addition, student success rates will depend on the extent to which teachers carefully plan activities to meet the developmental and social needs of their students as shown by Yerrick et al. (2010) and the ability of the teacher to match appropriate instructional techniques to their students so that students are engaged and interested in the subject matter as shown by Bolshakova et al. (2001). Therefore teachers' perceived success rates of their students will be addressed in relation to how activities are planned and implemented in the classroom and the subsequent reactions of students to such preparation.

Schools in low-socioeconomic areas compared to schools higher socioeconomic areas.

A recruiting requirement in the current study is that teachers have held positions in varied socioeconomic areas. Participants who have held positions in a low-socioeconomic

area as well as a higher socioeconomic area may be able to shed light on the factors playing salient roles in where teachers choose to work in Manitoba and if such factors are socioculturally influenced as Cannata (2010) contends. This requirement allows for purposeful sampling to see if findings regarding the job application process in the United States also holds true for Canadian teachers. Implications for policies and practices can then be drawn from such data to inform teacher educators, teachers, and administrators.

In order to determine if there is socioeconomic disparity between the regions in which a potential teacher participant has worked, the school names they provide will be matched by postal code to indicate their geographic location. The postal codes will then be compared to the average family income of that area as assessed by the National Household Survey (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Schools in low-socioeconomic areas will be defined as those in which the average before tax household income for a family of four falls no more than $5000 above the Low Income Cut-Off determined by 2012 data from Statistics Canada; Low Income Cut-Off data can be used as a measure to indicate the locations of impoverished geographic areas (Statistics Canada, 2013). Those families making only a few thousand dollars more than the Low Income Cut-Off prior to taxes being withdrawn take home only minimally more than those with an income equivalent to the cut-off point and likely struggle to meet the needs of their families or have much money left for savings or non-essential items.

Of the schools indicated by potential teacher participants, at least one must fall into the definition of schools in a low-socioeconomic area as defined above. If the potential participant has also worked in a school that falls higher on average income by postal code region,

signifying the school in a higher socioeconomic area, that teacher will be eligible to participate in the study.

Although Manitoba practices open boundaries, meaning parents can choose to send their children to any school in the province regardless of where they live, it is assumed that the majority of students at a given school also live in the surrounding neighbourhood. As such, the average family income in the neighbourhood is likely reflective of the socioeconomic status of the majority of students in a given school.

Theoretical/Interpretive Frameworks

This study approaches the issue of teacher-student fit from both a social constructivist perspective and in terms of Critical Theory. Two approaches linked to Critical Theory are culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant pedagogy; they are aimed at incorporating experiences and culture into learning. Through Critical Theory, they base their foundations in the idea that change is needed in the education system in order to include the cultural backgrounds of all students in classrooms. Each will be discussed in detail below.

Social constructivism seeks an understanding of the world in which meanings may be multifaceted and varied (Creswell, 2013). Social constructivists view knowledge as constructed as opposed to created. Therefore, knowledge varies among individuals rather than being the same for all because it is generated and transmitted through experience. Such experience depends on social interactions and the influence of culture and artifacts. Interpretation of the experience is further impacted by reflection upon the experience and the assimilation or accommodation of new information with existing schemas or ideas.

Knowledge is constructed through a social process and is influenced by the culture in which one is socialized. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1981) suggests that social interaction plays a fundamental role in learning and "everything that is a culture is social. Culture is the product of social life and human social activity" (p. 164). Knowledge acquisition begins on an interpersonal level involving engagement with others in a joint activity. Then, it proceeds on a cognitive level as one assimilates the knowledge while adding personal value to it. Cultural signs, symbols, artifacts, and tools play a mediating role in the acquisition of knowledge.

Sociocultural and social constructivist paradigms are relevant to the current research in two ways. Firstly, consistent with a social constructivist framework, the current study aims to derive a better understanding of teachers' jobs in Manitoba and gain insight into the multiple variables influencing the complexity of teacher-student fit within classrooms by relying on the views and experiences of teachers and students. The assumption is that such meanings of teacher-student fit have at least in part been socially constructed through culture and social interactions and therefore may vary socioculturally. The teacher and student interview data regarding teacher-student fit will be analyzed based on socioeconomic area. In addition, the teacher interviews will be analyzed for themes related to job application decisions and exclusions in relation to the socioeconomic status of school neighbourhoods. Should the themes related to teacher-student fit or the teachers' job application processes that emerge vary by area, this may hold implications for teacher education programs and hiring practices.

The second reason this framework is relevant to the current study is based on cultural diversity. Manitoba's classrooms are culturally diverse. Despite this, preservice teacher education programs typically accept teacher candidates who are from the majority class and culture (Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2005). This is not the fault of Faculties of

Education. While most university programs currently encourage the applications of individuals of minority cultures, the majority of those applying to teach are white, middle-class, and female. Regardless of teacher background, there is the need to ensure that all cultures are acknowledged and respected in Manitoba classrooms. The goal of this study is to develop a set of characteristics that positively influence teacher-student fit. There is the potential for students to perceive a negative teacher-student fit. This may be due to differences in the ways teachers' and students' knowledge has been socially constructed. Students might perceive the idea of fit to be related their teachers' awareness of cultural diversity and the extent to which teachers are able to include all students in their classrooms. It is possible that variation among the cultural signs, symbols, artifacts, and tools presented by the teacher and the cultural signs, symbols, artifacts, and tools of students' cultures is responsible for lack of knowledge acquisition and may impact the perceived success of students in the classroom. Should such themes emerge, there are implications for instruction in social justice and cultural diversity in preservice teacher education programs.

Education programs are becoming increasingly committed to social justice and equity for all students. Two implications of this commitment are pertinent to the current research: Culturally responsive pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching.

Culturally responsive teaching recognizes that all students learn differently and that such differences may be linked to the student's background, language, social and cultural identity (Gay, 2000). A culturally responsive pedagogy facilitates the achievement of all students in the classroom; classroom teaching and learning are congruent with students' cultural background and students' strengths are nurtured to promote success (National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems, 2006). This requires the support of the

institution in the forms of school organization and policies, as well as the personal and instructional support of teaching staff in the forms of self-reflection, exploring students' histories, acknowledging the experiences of various cultural groups, and involvement in the surrounding community. Such an approach may prevent students from being excluded by the education system.

Examples of the implementation of culturally responsive teaching that have promoted student success in the education system can be found in studies of teachers, students, and the communities of northern Canada. Lewthwaite, Oewn, Doiron, McMillan, and Renaud (2013) interviewed 52 First Nations community members from the Yukon Territory about their experiences in education, teaching, and learning. While some were recent graduates, others were parents or grandparents of children in the education system, or former or current teachers. The stories shared regarding learning at home and in formal schooling, along with the characteristics of teachers that were helpful in the classroom, were complied and analyzed to identify themes associated with culturally relevant teaching for Yukon First Nations students. Teaching and learning priorities discussed in these interviews stressed the need for a consciousness of the education being provided to the children of their community. Feelings of little teacher support and direct teaching styles that did not mesh with the cultural learning practices of the community were at the forefront of these discussions. Community members stressed the need for teachers that incorporated modeling and visualizations, the implemented multiple teaching and learning styles, provided sufficient time for mastery of tasks, provided feedback, promoted positive classroom relationships with respect and caring being central tenants, and held high expectations of students and clearly communicated such expectations. They also placed emphasis on the importance of story telling and narratives connected to

subject matter as necessary to promote engagement and learning. Many of these practices are culturally located. Lewthwaite et al. (2013) indicate that such classrooms are environments where rules and expectations are co-constructed and reflect students' perceptions of positive learning environments rather than being teacher-structured and directed.

After working with community members of the Yukon Territory to establish guidelines for culturally based education, Lewthwaite, Owen, Doiron, Renaud, and McMillan (2014) worked with teachers in the community in an attempt to enact changes related to the community's views for a culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers were challenged to think about the learning priorities of the community and to develop and awareness of their responses and actions toward students. All teachers were able to identify areas in which they could modify their behaviors in relation to communication patters, content taught, and teaching practices. They then worked with the researchers and community to implement the transformations to their teaching and classrooms. This intervention phase lasted four months, after which, teachers were showing more behaviors related to the culturally responsive teaching preferences identified by community members. Increased use of visuals and modelling to match student learning styles, clearer communication patters, the incorporation of student interests, increased creativity, and the use of collaboration were reported by teachers. Students also benefitted from this teacher intervention. Pre- and post-tests of students learning attributes in six categories (effort, contribution, attentiveness, attitude, self-image, and problem-solving skills) showed significantly higher scores after the culturally based teaching intervention and implementation by their teachers. Students' effort in school, self-image, and willingness to contribute in the classroom showed the largest gains. The fact that teachers were able to exhibit more culturally responsive teaching in a four month period

and student gains were seen after only a short time is promising work in the field. Such efforts must continue in order to ensure all classrooms become culturally responsive learning places and that teachers are continually challenged to consider the backgrounds and learning needs of their student population.

In research attempting to better inform teachers of the culturally-based educational requirements for Inuit students in Nunavut, children were clearly able to articulate the teacher-specific and learning environment characteristics that reflected, validated, and promoted their culture and language and fostered their success in education (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Lewthwaite, McMillan, Renaud, Hainnu, & McDonald, 2010). Students reported that effective teachers consider what they define as success. In this case, Inuit students defined success as carrying a task through to completion and required that teachers provided adequate time for them to do so. Effective teachers were also seen as those who able to communicate their caring, were connected to students, and considered what students required for a positive learning environment to be generated. Such teachers allowed students to use their first languages in the classroom, used local contexts and community resources in teaching to engage students, communicated expectations for learning clearly to students, used multiple instructional strategies and modeling, and scaffolded learning. While many of the qualities listed could be considered effective in any classroom, it is essential to note that some are specific to students' culture and community including the use of students' first language, specific communications patterns, and the use of local resources in teaching. It is the ability to implement these student-specific needs that makes teaching more than just effective and makes it culturally responsive (Lewthwaite & McMillan). In addition, Inuit students' definition of success is intrinsic and culturally situated as it involves task completion, often in

collaborative settings (Lewthwaite et al., 2010). This is quite different from Western views of success where attaining high grades, receiving scholarships, and findings positions with large salaries are viewed as the results of successful educations and are in most cases individual accomplishments rather than collectively-based undertakings. Lewthwaite et al. suggest that there is a need to redefine academic success so that it aligns culturally with the learners at hand by understanding what achievements make students proud.

Part of expanding the way we view culturally responsive teaching requires that we "place authority on students' abilities to identify and communicate their understanding of what influences their learning" (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010, p. 143). In the current study, data provided by teachers and therefore, most importantly by students in regard to what constitutes a positive or negative teacher-student fit, will be analyzed to see if themes related to culturally responsive teaching emerge. Should teachers or students report that a positive fit is related to school organization, the ability of teachers to be metacognitively aware of their actions and reflect upon their teaching, the acknowledgement and inclusion of the various cultures of student in their classroom, and expanding learning experiences to the larger community, then it is likely that such teachers are already engaging in culturally responsive pedagogy. A teacher who is able to fit within the overall structure of an organization and possesses the skills and insight to build relationships with students through cultural inquiry, self-reflection, and incorporates members of the community and community-based experiences into teaching may possess certain personal and/or professional qualities that make him/her an optimal fit for a given population of students. Should teachers who report poor fits with their students fail to mention qualities such as reflection and the inclusion of diverse

cultures, such data may be interpreted in terms of the areas in which teachers in the field and teacher education programs may wish to strengthen skills.

This study aims to address what personal and professional characteristics provide the most favorable environment through a good teacher-student fit and allow students to be successful in their education. The ability to identify these characteristics, could potentially increase the occurrence of culturally responsive teaching in Manitoba classrooms and lead to the success of many students that otherwise would not thrive in current educational settings. Such data could also be used to help make teachers aware of their views and perceptions of students. Teachers are key factors in enabling student learning. Rather than viewing students and their culture in deficit manners, they should be related as assets to classroom learning. This positive perspective may help teachers to recognize potential changes to their current practices that will allow all students to be more successful in their classrooms.

Closely related to culturally responsive pedagogy is culturally relevant teaching. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995b) describes culturally relevant teaching as the integration of a student's cultural background knowledge and home and community experience into classroom teaching and the curriculum. According to Billings (1995a), the response she often encounters to her lectures on culturally relevant pedagogy suggests that it is simply good teaching. Yet, she argues, there seems to be too little of it happening in classrooms populated by minority students. Culturally relevant pedagogy is more than good teaching; it involves a collective empowerment in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995a). A culturally relevant pedagogy addresses student achievement while helping students to accept and affirm their cultural identity; it also allows students to develop critical perspectives so that they may challenge institutional inequities.

Using culturally relevant pedagogy has shown that students in low ranking school districts were able to perform at or above grade level on standardized tests as well as show grade level expectations when observed engaging in reading and writing, the ability to solve complex problems, and the ability to engage in critical peer review (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Such data is promising, but in order to increase the use of culturally relevant teaching in Manitoba schools, we must first understand if it is happening and how it is happening in our classrooms. Through her analyses of teacher interviews, classroom observations, and videotaped segments of classroom teaching, Ladson-Billings derived three broad characteristics of teachers who engage in culturally relevant pedagogy. These teachers had a strong conception of self and others, had the ability to structure social relations in the classroom, and perceived knowledge as constructed.

In terms of their conception of self and others, these teachers believed that all students were capable of academic success. Failure was not an option in their classrooms and they constantly pushed students to work to higher standards. Furthermore, they saw themselves as members of the community in which they taught. While some lived in the community, others showed membership by attending activities in the community and supporting local shops by purchasing goods from the area. They encouraged students to give back to the community in which they lived.

The ability to structure social relationships allowed the teachers to connect with all students and develop a community of learners rather than a competitive individual learning environment which is often typical of our current North American school system. Students were encouraged to work collaboratively and help and support each other. Students in Ladson-Billings' observed classrooms often acted as the expert in the room, teaching the

others, while teachers acted as participant learners and sat in desks with the students rather than at the front of the room (1995b). Their roles were reciprocal. Teachers did not promote a hierarchical top-down structure of direct teaching and rule making. Rather rules were socially constructed as a class and each person's classroom contributions were equally valued. As such, the idea that each person can learn from another by sharing their knowledge was a central theme in these classrooms.

All teachers interviewed and observed by Ladson-Billing (1995b) viewed knowledge as socially constructed and felt it should be viewed critically. They strongly believed in Freire's (1970/1990) model of teaching and the idea of developing a critical consciousness. As such, students were taught to evaluate text and information. These teachers were passionate about learning and were able to scaffold student learning experiences.

Culturally relevant pedagogy and the work of Ladson-Billing can be used as a framework in the interpretation of results in the current study. There is the need to see if teachers in Manitoba acknowledge an awareness of students' home culture and community environment and to determine if these aspects are being incorporated into classroom teaching. Because Ladson-Billings (1995b) was able to deduce three main attributes that allowed teachers to successfully implement culturally relevant teaching to increase students' academic achievement, such characteristics can be compared to themes derived in teacher and student interviews in the current study. Will Manitoba teachers have a strong sense of self and their students in order to move students forward toward academic success? Are Manitoba teachers structuring social relations for collaborative rather than individual learning? And is the critical evaluation of knowledge being taught in our classrooms? The answers to these questions may provide us with insight into what characteristics may help students succeed. It is important to

note that the teachers in Ladson-Billings (1995a) study had all chosen to teach in low-income areas. If and how these qualities of culturally responsive teaching arise in interviews and if their presence varies systematically by the socioeconomics of the neighbourhood being discussed may have implications for the role of culturally relevant pedagogy in teacher education programs.

Critical Theory is aimed at changing social context and is often informed by the principles of social justice that go beyond understanding what makes a system the way it is. Critical Theory works to challenge the dominant structures that hold such a system in place (Lichtman, 2013). Research derived from Critical Theory should provide information to empower people to rise above the obstructions placed upon them by social class and race (Creswell, 2013). In line with Critical Theory, the current study takes a social justice perspective and seeks to bring about change in the social context of disparity among school divisions with regard to hiring the best teachers to fit with students' needs. Social justice refers to the values that guide human interaction and the fair distribution of society's opportunities and resources (Government of Manitoba, 2011). Such fairness in the education system is essential to ensure that each student is given the chance to succeed. It is hoped that this study will empower and encourage teachers to transcend social barriers that may prevent them from working with students they see as different from themselves in terms of both socio-economic status and ethnicity. This research may expose the assumptions of teachers regarding groups of students or areas in which they may or may not choose to teach. From such information, the effects of perceived teacher-student fit on student success and teacher success may be examined to see if the disparities that exist among school divisions are rooted in teacher assumptions and unjust hiring practices. Through data gathered and analyzed in this

study, implications for change and improvement may be proposed at the preservice teacher education level and the teacher hiring level so that students traditionally marginalized in education may benefit from a better understanding of teacher-student fit and receive an education that is equal to those who have not been traditionally excluded by the education system.

Summary

There is little documentation as to how current hiring practices in the field of education ensure that teachers are being placed in schools where they positively fit with their students, classroom, staff, and the overall school. What does exist focuses largely on the hiring preferences of administrators (Cranston, 2012; Engel, 2013; Harris, et al., 2010; Ingle, et al., 2011; Kersten, 2008; Mason & Schroeder, 2010; Papa & Baxter, 2008; Rutledge, et al., 2008) and the pre-employment decisions of teacher applicants (Cannata, 2010; Liu & Johnson, 2006). Research into the post-employment outcomes of those initially deemed to be a good fit (Young & Delli, 2002) is virtually non-existent.

Although the selection process is highly important, selection outcomes are what impact the quality of education that children receive. Knowing what characteristics allow teachers to fit with their students so that they stay in the field and are motivated to provide exceptional learning experiences is more valuable for designing hiring policies and procedures than researching factors of perceived fit by administrators.

Before such potential implications may be addressed, it is necessary to determine how teachers in Manitoba distinguish positions to which they may apply from those that they exclude. The teacher application process may be driven by internal factors such as perceived fit, by external sociocultural factors, or possibly some combination of the two. As such, this

study aims to determine the extent to which teachers consider their fit with the student population in the application process and the characteristics of teachers that provide optimal teacher-student fit in classrooms based on the post-employment experiences of teachers in Manitoba classrooms.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter begins with a review of past and current research in the areas of Personnel Psychology along with an overview of research examining personality traits as related to successful classroom teaching. This is followed by an explanation of the need for teacher-student fit to be considered in hiring decisions in addition to personnel-based components. The section concludes by summarizing research into the choices made by teacher applicants and the sociocultural influences that have been found to impact their application decisions.

Despite the fact that there is little available research in the area of teacher hiring, a few studies have attempted to explore the issue using a person-organization model (Cranston, 2012; Engel, 2013; Harris, et al., 2010; Ingle, et al., 2011; Kersten, 2008; Mason & Schroeder, 2010; Papa & Baxter, 2008; Rutledge, et al., 2008). Although few would disagree that it is important to have a good fit between an organization's overall policies and goals and the values of the candidate hired, what has clearly been overlooked in using such a model for educational purposes is the key relationship that develops between a teacher and his/her students. Anyone can stand at the front of a room and lecture and one might call this teaching. However, significantly more learning occurs when a teacher and students work together to discuss, create, organize, research, and synthesize information and when each student is made to feel that their contributions are meaningful. As such, the personnel framework, when applied to an educational context, needs to be expanded to include teacher characteristics, both personal and professional, that promote optimal learning experiences. Secondly, the focus in previous research has mainly been on the perspective of the administrator tasked with hiring candidates and leaves out the voices of teacher applicants. In order to fully address

what characteristics make a teacher the best fit for a job, the thoughts and insight of teachers must be heard. Unfortunately, the research addressing teacher perspectives has been survey-based or has used state-wide databases to aggregate statistics (e.g. Boyd et al., 2005; Lankford et al. (2002); Liu and Johnson, 2006). Although sample sizes may be larger with such formats, the depth of responses is not as rich as that obtained via qualitative interviews, especially where probing the reasons why one feels one is or is not a good fit, or how application decisions were made.

Lack of acknowledgement of the vital relationships between a teacher and students and the fact that teachers' voices have been overlooked in previous research leads to the need for teacher-student fit to be considered in hiring practices. Positive relationships between teachers and students, and being in the classrooms of teachers with strong self-efficacy beliefs have been linked to improved student performance, despite adversity in students' lives (Bolshakova et al., 2001; Kanu, 2006a). Other research suggests that caring and meeting student needs are required before higher-level learning can occur in alternative classroom settings (Yerrick et al., 2010). Because each school and each neighbourhood possesses distinct characteristics and a unique student-body, the importance of teacher fit with students must be given consideration prior to application and hiring decisions being made.

Findings from studies conducted from a socio-cultural perspective suggest that inner-city schools tend to be difficult to staff and that teachers tend to apply to work in regions that are close to where they grew up and attended school (Boyd et al., 2005; Cannata, 2010). Comfort, including distance to home and familiarity with a community, is the sociocultural factor that seemed to determine how teachers applied to positions in one study that addressed teacher application decisions in the USA (Cannata). The study included only preservice

teachers. To know if such findings also hold true in Canada, and if the basis of perceived fit changes as one gains teaching experience (that is, if comfort becomes less of an issue as one gains more classroom skills) is something this research aims to address.

What follows is a review of the literature briefly described above.

Addressing the Idea of "Fit" Through a Personnel Psychology Framework

Of the small number of studies addressing the hiring of teachers by administrators (Cranston, 2012; Engel, 2013; Harris, et al., 2010; Ingle, et al., 2011; Kersten, 2008; Mason & Schroeder, 2010; Papa & Baxter, 2008; Rutledge, et al., 2008), the majority are framed within a person-organization fit model. This model contains three major components that have been applied to educational research. These categories fall under the larger umbrella of a person-environment and person-vocation fit. Person-organization fit (P-O) is a generalized measure of the compatibility between the values of the employee and the organization; Person-group fit (P-G) focuses on the relationship and interactions among the employee and fellow staff members; Person-job fit (P-J) refers to the match between the knowledge and skills of the employee and the job requirements (Kristof, 1996). This model was intended for use as an organizational paradigm in Personnel Psychology. The limitation of this model is that although it can be used to predict the perceived fit of an employee within a working environment, it does not give any valid information as to the actual level of fit or performance of an individual in a given position. Even though it has been applied to research in the area of education in some cases, it seems that to be fully beneficial in understanding teacher-job selection, an additional component of teacher-student fit should be added given that this relationship may be the most important determinant of teachers' job satisfaction and students'

success. Nonetheless, what follows is an examination of that which has been researched so far in current literature.

In terms of education, all three levels of fit are required as teachers' values must fit with the overall school culture (P-O), teachers must collaborate with other staff members (P-G), and teachers require certain skills and knowledge to educate students (P-J). In a case study of Florida elementary to high school principals and district officials involved in hiring, Rutledge et al. (2008) found that hiring personnel sought to determine how an applicant fits within the job (P-J) and amongst current staff (P-G) by assessing professional characteristics such as education transcripts and prior experience working with children. Principals also reported that personal characteristics played an important role when screening for the person-organization fit by emphasizing qualities such as motivation and enthusiasm for teaching children.

In a follow up to Rutledge et al.'s (2008) study, Ingle et al. (2011) conducted a case study to provide insight into how principals make sense of teacher quality. They first interviewed principals about their hiring preferences and the specific needs and challenges within their schools. One year later, they asked principals to rate teachers in their school based on a list of preferences developed from the first set of interviews. They found that while all principals acknowledged the importance of all three levels of person-environment fit, 90% aimed to ensure a person-job fit in their hiring practices over any of the other categories until they split principals into two groups: Those of Title 1 and those of Non-Title1 schools. Title 1 schools are those in which students are enrolled in the federal-free and reduced price meal programs; they tend to be schools that reflect the marginalized populations of a geographic

region. Principals of Title 1 schools were split almost equally in looking for person-organization (44.4%) and person-job (55.6%) fits. Title 1 principals that emphasized the person-organization fit framed hiring decisions and on-the-job ratings in terms of the type of school and the population they served. These principals valued applicants and current teachers that were capable of working with demanding school populations and settings, stating diverse multiculturalism and poverty levels as examples of some of the challenges teachers faced. Their interview comments stated that they favored those who wanted to work with a certain population of students and those who enjoyed challenges. They also reported excluding applicants who did not state these values in their application process. Ingle et al. conclude that school context and student population impact how principals make sense of hiring and on-the-job performance and for Title 1 schools an important teacher characteristic is the ability to work with challenging populations. This further suggests that teacher-student fit may be a major component of providing optimal educational experiences to student populations.

All studies addressing teacher fit within an organizational framework come from the Unites States with one notable exception. Cranston (2012) interviewed principals of Catholic schools in Manitoba to gain insight into the role that perceived fit within an organization plays in hiring decisions. He found that administrators relied heavily on applicants' cover letters and resumes when looking for determinants of person-job fit, what Young and Delli (2002) refer to as a screening decision, while the interview was used as a tool to assess the match between applicant values and that of the school for person-organization fit. In all cases, perception of fit mattered to these administrators who believed certain dispositions and attitudes such as willingness to engage in extracurricular programs and strong work ethic were critical for effective teaching in their schools.

Although Manitoba shares characteristics of the hiring process in the USA in terms of generally using decentralized hiring practices, the principal being the main decision-maker, and significant weight placed on the interview phase of hiring, we cannot generalize the findings of American studies to Manitoba. Despite the fact Cranston's (2012) study occurred in Manitoba, it also has limited generalizability due to the fact that participants in his study were from private Catholic schools only and may value different teacher characteristics than non-denominational private school or public school administrators. In essence, the organizational culture in private Catholic schools is likely distinct from non-Catholic schools. At best, the findings of Rutledge et al. (2008), Ingle et al. (2012), and Cranston all suggest the person-job and person-organization fit tend to be considered by those making hiring decisions. Further research is needed to address the idea of teacher-student fit being a major component in the hiring of teachers.

In terms of initial fit decisions, multiple findings suggest that there is large emphasis placed by principals on the interview phase of hiring (Cranston, 2012; Mason & Schroeder, 2010; Rutledge et al., 2008). In their study of hiring practices in New York State, Papa and Baxter (2008) found that the average length of time for an interview for a suburban or rural school placement was 40 minutes and only 30 minutes for those in taking place in urban schools. This begs the question, is 30 minutes enough time to judge person-organization fit, person-group, person-job fit, and most importantly teacher-student fit? Furthermore, many administrators rely upon commercially available interview protocols such as the TPI (Teacher Perceiver Interview, Gallup Organization, 1997) to screen for an applicants' level of social skills (Rutledge et al.). It is important to note that the TPI and other commercially available instruments solely identify traits and values that teachers possess. They do not measure actual

teacher performance in any way. A study comparing interview responses of preservice teachers on the TPI to post-employment performance as rated by principals and teacher attendance behaviors found that only 6.2% of the variance associated with principal ratings was accounted for by answers to the TPI questions while only 5.8 % was associated with work attendance (Young & Delli, 2002). Although this suggests that hiring decisions hold little predictive validity of job performance, the findings can be called into question given that work attendance, while possibly related to the level of satisfaction with one's position, does not mean that high quality teaching is occurring the classroom. Additionally, the second variable used to judge post-employment success was principal ratings, which the authors confirm is a subjective measure. Finally, the authors do recognize that there was attrition between their pre- and post- measures indication that some teachers had left their positions. Although Young and Delli suggest that the number is too few to cause any statistically significant findings, these teachers could possibly have provided rich data into the teacher selection process and why they felt a poor fit occurred. In essence, despite attempting to address the fact that research has not connected pre-employment perceptions of fit to actual success in the classroom, this study provides few reliable or valid conclusions to inform policy and practice.

Harris et al. (2010) suggest that conventional wisdom says we focus too much on personal characteristics of teacher applicants at the expense of professional qualities that predict effective teaching behaviors. To support this claim however, they cite studies from the 1980s and 1990s. Teachers' roles have changed significantly in 30 years with a move away from traditional teaching to inclusive and alternative forms of education that promote engagement for all. In addition, increased value has been placed on extracurricular activities

and learning outside of the classroom setting. Furthermore, social and cultural demographics of the world in which we live have shifted. Education is more multicultural than ever and there has been an acknowledgement that socioeconomic factors play a role in students' participation and success in education. In fact, when Harris et al. performed their analysis, they found that both professional and personal characteristics were considered by principals in hiring decisions. Of the top four ideal characteristics sought in teachers, two were personal and two were professional. Caring (personal) was ranked highest for being mentioned most often, followed closely by strong teaching skills and content knowledge (both professional attributes). The fourth was enthusiasm, a personal characteristic. This suggests that principals consider a mix of personal and professional characteristics when hiring teachers.

Indeed it is quite possible that changes in education and society have actually resulted in a shift among the preference for personal versus professional characteristics in teachers. With Canadian and American students lagging behind many countries in terms of Science and Mathematics scores (Organisation for Economic and Corporate Development, 2012), teachers' content knowledge has become a contentious media issue. There has been a tendency for principals to weigh professional attributes (e.g. education, grade point average, references from cooperating teachers, prior work experience) higher than personal attributes (e.g. verbal communication skills, enthusiasm, work ethic, passion for working with children, cooperative attitude, willingness to learn) in the application process. For example, Kersten (2008) found that principals most frequently valued pedagogical and content knowledge in teacher applicants suggesting that the best candidates have a strong grasp on best practices in instructional methodology and the subject matter of their respective field of study. This was followed by classroom management skills. Although reported as being important in hiring

decisions, personal characteristics such as strong work ethic, motivation, enthusiasm, caring, empathy, and willingness to engage in extracurricular duties were cited less frequently than the professional characteristics listed above.

In a factor analysis of attributes sought in teachers by district personnel, Papa and Baxter (2008) found that measures of teacher attributes loaded onto four constructs: performance as a college student (e.g. GPA), performance inside the classroom (e.g. references from practicum experiences), performance as a teacher outside the classroom (e.g. written application, portfolio), and level of training (e.g. advanced degrees, certification). These attributes were subsequently used by administrators to generate initial interview lists. All of these are professional and not personal attributes. This further supports the idea that principals may be placing increased emphasis on professional characteristics of teacher applicants. This could possibly occur due to the fact that professional attributes are more objectively assessed than personal characteristics. In addition, professional attributes give administrators defensible grounds upon which to accept or reject candidates (Mason & Schroeder, 2010). This raises the question of which set of attributes is actually more important in teacher-student fit. In working with struggling students especially, communication skills, devotion to providing scaffolded educational experiences, empathy, and passion for teaching seem essential in order to provide a good fit between the teacher and students. In fact, when exploring factors that experienced teachers of students with emotional and behavioral disorders give for remaining in their positions, they almost exclusively cite the importance of personal characteristics that allow them to fit with the demands of their jobs (Prather-Jones, 2011). They reported personal attributes such as intrinsic motivation in positions that often prove difficult and have few tangible rewards, not internalizing student behavioral outbursts,

being flexible and patient, caring for student needs, and enjoying the challenge of working with difficult students. In fact, the teachers in Prather-Jones' study rarely referred to their professional qualifications or correlated them to their career decisions in any direct way. Having a good fit in this case resulted in teachers reporting being committed to their students, feeling the need to make a difference, and a love for what they were doing.

Despite such findings, it is important to note that the interview results of Harris et al. (2010) suggest that several principals are still wary of giving too much weight to professional attributes and recognize the value of personal attributes in the teaching profession. Principals reported having hired candidates with high GPAs who subsequently lacked communication skills and the ability to engage students and a doctoral candidate who appeared to be a great teacher on paper but had no enthusiasm for teaching children. This lack of ability to motivate and inspire students to learn can have severe consequences for the futures of our children. Although the majority of principals in Harris et al.'s study reported using a mix of professional and personal attributes in making their decisions, with the bulk of their responses being coded as personal qualities, findings suggest that not all principals are aware of the potential teacher-student fit personal characteristics may provide. Sadly, Mason and Schroeder (2010) did find that principals reported weighing personal attributes more heavily than professional attributes, but only in the interview stage. As such, many potentially qualified candidates are likely excluded based on professional attributes in the screening stage as principals attempt to reduce the number of candidates. This is problematic given that a teacher may have professional qualities such as pedagogical skills and content knowledge but may lack the disposition to act in a manner that models professionalism or may fail to engage in behaviors that promote student success such as regarding the needs of individual students

or using fair grading procedures (Nixon, Dam, & Packard, 2010). This further suggests that teacher-student fit is often not accurately assessed in the application process and that a positive fit between teachers and students entails much more than professional attributes.

What is additionally concerning is that such personal fit may be evident even before prospective applicants are even certified to teach. In a study addressing motivations for becoming a teacher, Kilinc, Watt, and Richardson (2012) administered the Factors Influencing Teacher Choice instrument to 1577 preservice teachers in Turkey. Despite comparable professional qualifications to other subject-area-majors, Science-related teacher candidates scored much higher on "fallback career" and had significantly lower scores on all other ratings of motivation such as "Satisfaction with choice of teaching as a career" (p. 215). In fact, most Science-education-majors in this study had chosen teaching as a field of study only after poor test results excluded their admittance into other more prestigiously ranked university Science-related programs such as Medicine. Such results should be seen as alarming. As Kilinc et al. (2012) state:

> "Promises of a technological revolution and rapid economic development will seem hollow if children and adolescents are dissuaded from scientific/Mathematical career fields by teachers who chose teaching as a fallback career when they were not able to get into their preferred degree program. Filling the available teaching positions each year is only one part of the equation, maintaining an effective, committed, enthusiastic and interested workforce of STEM (Science, technology, engineering and Mathematics) teachers is equally challenging… Teacher enthusiasm and interest in the

Sciences may be critical…to effectively educate a new generation of scientifically literate and competitive young people." (p. 218)

With many teacher-candidates feeling little intrinsic motivation to teach prior to even entering the profession, the idea of teacher-student fit seems imperative, especially for vulnerable students who may also lack the motivational factors required to succeed in education. Research must address whether or not teachers are aware of their fit with their students in an effort to provide the most beneficial education possible to all. The implications of such research may allow administrators to make more valid decisions when hiring teachers based on fit and possibly allow teacher education programs to screen for and address the issue of teacher-student fit early on in the program so that preservice teachers can make better judgments of how and where they might best serve children in the school system.

The bulk of studies presented above involved interviewing and/or surveying principals for their perceptions of teacher fit within the job, amongst staff, and within the school setting. As these studies suggest, hiring based on principal decisions can be rushed, subjective and varied as to whether personal qualities or professional qualities are emphasized by the administrators. Because of methodological inconsistencies, a variety of school settings, and the use of various survey instruments, research thus far provides a wide variety of responses as to what constitutes a desirable teacher fit at any level of the person-environment model and how such fit can be successfully discerned in the hiring process. With little standardization or solid ideas of what characteristics actually result in a good teacher-student fit for a given group of students, there is much room for future research to improve the hiring process and potentially increase the quality of education and student performance. This will involve

moving beyond a Personnel Psychology framework to address the personal attributes and the sociocultural influences involved in teacher-student fit and the subsequent quality of education provided to students.

Assessing "Fit" Through Trait Theories of Personality

A few studies have attempted to address the idea of fit in a roundabout manner. Although the idea of "fit" is not specifically addressed, social scientists have attempted to link personality traits to teaching (e.g. Jugovic, Marusic, Ivanec, & Vidovic, 2012; Westerman, Nowicki, & Plante, 2002). While administrators and teachers acknowledge the importance of personal characteristics in the teaching profession, studies that relate personality dimensions to aspects required for successful teaching, such as motivation, are lacking (Jugovic et al., 2012).

Five broad traits have been identified in Personality Psychology and suggested as possible predictors of an individual's vocational interests (McCrae & Costa, 1996). They are: Neuroticism (vulnerability to anxiety and stress), extraversion (sociability and assertiveness), openness to experience (based on a person's mental and experiential life), agreeableness (having an altruistic orientation to others including trust and modesty), and conscientiousness (a sense of competency that involves impulse control, organization, and rule following). Jugovic et al. (2012) attempted to discern the relationship between the five dimensions of personality and choosing teaching as a profession using the Factors Influencing Teacher Choice instrument. This instrument collects data on intrinsic motivation for choosing to teach, perceived teaching ability, personal utility values, and social utility values (Kilinc, et al., 2012). The personal utility values scale measures constructs such as job security and time for

family, while the social utility values scale measures constructs involved in enhancing social equity and making a social contribution by working with children and adolescents.

Jugovic et al. (2012) found that agreeableness was the personality trait most strongly correlated with social utility values. Because teaching required that an individual make a social contribution it would be expected that agreeable characteristics such as being altruistic would be related to social utility. Extraversion was the personality trait found to be most positively correlated with both intrinsic career values and perceived ability to teach. This also intuitively makes sense given that teaching is a profession that required dialogue and sociability with students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and community members. Conscientiousness was positively correlated with social utility values, intrinsic motivation, and perceived ability suggesting that teachers with conscientious skills such as organization, reliability, and competence may be better suited to the profession. In fact, preservice teachers in the study who scored lower on conscientiousness and agreeableness were more likely to have chosen teaching as a "fallback career". It should be noted that neuroticism was negatively correlated with intrinsic motivation, perceived ability, and social utility values suggesting that anxiety and stress will not result in productive teaching in the classroom. Finally, personal utility values, which are extrinsically motivated, were not related to personality dimensions as were the intrinsically related measure of the Factors Influencing Teacher Choice instrument (Jugovic et al.).

Several studies have attempted to discern the personality traits of effective teachers. Research in Personality Psychology has found teacher traits, not related to educational training, can be used to predict student outcomes (Eryilmaz, 2014; Feldman, 1996; Murray, Rushton, & Paunonen, 1990; Renaud & Murray, 1996; Ripski, LoCasale-Crouch, & Decker,

2011; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, & Staiger, 2011). Yet there is concern as to the degree to which these characteristics are observable and assessable in teacher job interviews. Because of this Rockoff et al. (2011, p. 43) ask, "Can you recognize a effective teacher when you recruit one?". In their study, teachers completed surveys asking them to rate themselves on various predictors of teacher effectiveness. Their responses were analyzed in relation to the report card grades of their current students. Predictive traits were then included in a factor analysis which found that variables loaded onto two main factors. The first factor was composed qualities related to cognitive skills: Degrees, SAT scores, IQ scores, and subject matter background. These are much like the professional qualities of teachers sought by administrators. The second factor contained variables related to personality traits: Extraversion, conscientiousness, and self-efficacy. These are personal qualities of teachers and suggest that personality plays a significant role in the ability to teach effectively.

While self-rating is acceptable, peer rating of teacher personality traits show greater internal consistency and because the data can be averaged across several peer raters generally high inter-rater reliability is found (Murray et al., 1990; Renaud & Murray, 1996). Murray et al. asked the colleagues of professors in the Department of Psychology at Western University in Ontario to rate their peers on 29 measures of personality. There ratings were then compared to teacher effectiveness assessed via archived student ratings from course evaluations. The courses taught ranged from first year undergraduate classes to graduate research seminars. They found significant correlations several personality traits and teacher effectiveness ratings. However, the pattern of relationship between personality and teaching effectiveness differed based on the type of course taught. For example, teacher effectiveness in introductory undergraduate courses was significantly and positively correlated with being sociable,

attention-seeking, being fun loving, the ability to adapt to change, liberalism, and extroversion. The same traits were not significantly correlated to teacher effectiveness scores in graduate studies courses. In fact, each of the listed traits was negatively correlated to teacher effectiveness in graduate classes. Rather, teacher effectiveness in graduate courses was positively and significantly correlated to being ambitious, enduring, orderly, showing leadership, and being objective. Although the authors do not go into substantial detail as to why such differences arose, it is very possible that perceived teacher effectiveness and its related qualities depend on the priorities of the students at hand. While being extroverted, flexible, social, fun loving, and attention-seeking all seem to be essential if attempting to engage undergraduate students in introductory subject matter so that they may pursue further studies in the field, such fun loving and attention-seeking behavior may seem self-indulgent to graduate students. Graduate students seek advice and guidance in an attempt to further their careers. This requires leadership, ambition, and organization on the part of professors and advisors. The effective qualities are quite different based on student needs. One might wonder if the qualities of teacher effectiveness might also vary from university to grade school suggesting that teacher qualities may in fact be related to fit with the student body and the ability to meet student needs.

Renaud and Murray (1996) also investigated the personality traits associated with effective teaching using faculty ratings of professors' personality traits and undergraduate students' course evaluations. The pattern of most highly correlated traits differed slightly from the findings of Murray et al. (1990). Renaud and Murray found that being orderly and approval-seeking were most highly correlated with teacher effectiveness, followed by independence and showing leadership. They also found that personality variables account for

a large proportion of between teacher variance in student ratings of professors. A multiple regression analysis of the factors associated with teaching effectiveness showed that extraversion, organization, and accomplishment accounted for approximately 58% of the variance in teacher effectiveness ratings. However, they also found that the age of the instructor played a mediating role in effective teaching. A statistically significant negative correlation was found with older professors generally receiving lower effectiveness ratings than younger professors. Certain personality traits highly correlated with effective teaching decreased with instructor age. For example, being sociable was positively correlated with teacher effectiveness, but when age was considered as a variable, the correlation became negative. Five traits showed this pattern when age of the instructors was considered. The variables showing an inverse relationship among age and teacher effectiveness were being social, approval-seeking, seeking help and/or advice, liberalism, and extraversion. The authors suggest two possible reasons for this. Firstly, there may be declining motivation to teach as age increases especially given that teaching is a profession with few external rewards. Secondly, with age, professor interests may diverge from student interests providing less common ground for professors to relate with students. Motivation to teach and the ability to relate to students are likely necessary components to engaging marginalized students in the classroom. Such data further stresses the need to explore teachers' fit with student populations.

In a review of literature available, Feldman (1996) conducted a meta-analysis of studies correlating teacher personality traits to student academic achievement and found that overall, teachers' organization and clarity were the two traits most highly and positively correlated to student achievement in university courses. Again, the studies included in the

meta-analysis were based on students attending colleges and universities. This leaves one to wonder if organization and clarity on the part of teachers would be as highly correlated with student achievement in grade school. The perceptions of grade school students are required in order to find out.

One such study conducted by Eryilmaz (2014), involved the perceptions of grade 9 and 10 students. Students were asked to qualitatively describe the personality traits of teachers the liked and disliked and how such teachers made them feel during lessons. Students also completed surveys to quantitatively rate teachers on personality traits. Teachers liked by students were rated highly on measures of extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness. Disliked teachers were rated highly on introversion, antagonism towards others, emotional instability, and carelessness. Qualitatively, students voiced that liked teachers used some mains strategies to keep them interested in learning. These strategies included showing affection, implementing appropriate instructional methods for the topics at hand, being entertaining during lessons, showing happiness and having a positive demeanor, guiding students with advice, and supporting student learning while managing classroom behaviors. On the other hand, disliked teachers were perceived as unable to connect topics to previous leaning, seen as being suspicious of student behaviors, lacking appropriate teaching methods and causing confusion in explanations, favoring some students over others, communicating negatively including making fun of students' mistakes, and lacking classroom management skills. Many of the qualitatively voiced traits of liked teachers including showing affection, having a positive demeanor, and using humor and enthusiasm in lesson presentation can also be seen as personality traits – conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion, respectively. High school students' qualitative ratings of teacher

effectiveness may fall in line with college students' ratings of effectiveness. Students in this study stated that liked teachers were able to choose appropriate instructional methods while disliked teachers tended to confuse students in explanations. Such data may be similar to what Feldman (1996) labelled as clarity and organization in his meta-analysis of effective teaching traits. Still, more research ascertaining the perceptions of high school students is needed to determine effective teaching traits.

Although there is some overlap, each of these studies seems to have slightly differing results as to what personality qualities are predictive of effective teachings. Part of the problem in determining the qualities of an effective teacher lie in the definition of teaching as a profession. In a review of past literature, Harris and Rutledge (2010) found that four different definitions of teaching arose: Teaching as labor, teachings as a profession, teaching as a craft, and teaching as an art. While they suggest that models of teaching effectiveness can be developed and tested for each definition of teaching, the nature of the work being analyzed varies by view. The teacher as a laborer and teacher as a professional definitions both centre on technical knowledge, task orientation, organization and school structures. The teacher as a professional view is derived from Organizational Psychology and is defined in part by the relationship among colleagues. On the other hand, teaching as a craft and teaching as an art are developed from relationship-oriented standpoints and focus on the classroom, the students, and the interactions that occur.

Regardless of which view is used, there is some evidence pointing to the fact that the personality traits associated with effective teaching are evident prior to entering teacher education program. Ripski et al. (2011) sought to determine whether the personality traits of preservice teachers were different from same-age normative samples. They collected

personality trait data based on the five broad traits used in Personality Psychology (McCrae & Costa, 1996) from 67 preservice teachers at a university in the United States at three times in their teaching program: Upon entering, during a practicum placement, and in the spring of their final year of study. They then compared their data to normative reference data published in Psychology literature. Preservice teachers in their study differed from the normative group on four of five personality traits at all three data collection times. Their openness score at intake was not significantly different than the normative group. It was, however, significantly higher than the normative group upon exiting the Faculty of Education program. At all three data collection points, preservice teachers had significantly lower neuroticism scores, and significantly higher extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness scores than the normative group. Teaching requires social interaction with students, staff, and parents. It lends itself to those who are extraverted. Teaching required flexibility and collaboration which are associated with being agreeable and open to ideas and experiences. It also requires the ability to respond to the needs of others, often with sensitivity and this requires conscientiousness. Low levels of neuroticism can be related to decreased anxiety and feelings of anger. A calm disposition and the ability to manage difficult situations are needed in the classroom. Preservice teachers in Ripski et al.'s study showed personality trait levels more suitable to education than normative reference samples. Because such traits were evident upon entering the Faculty of Education and the importance placed on personality traits by studies cited above, the need to assess applicants to Education programs as well as teachers during interview situations on personality measures may be equally, if not more, important than GPA and prior work experience.

Can you recognize an effective teacher? Ripski et al.'s (2011) study and others described above suggest that by asking interview questions related to certain personality traits, namely extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, organization, and clarity, and if possible, attempting to observe such traits in a classroom setting, the answer may very well be yes.

If people who are more extroverted, agreeable, and conscientious are better suited for the teaching profession, then this could provide valuable information to selection committees in Faculties of Education or administrators making hiring decisions. Although these findings suggest that personality factors may in fact be predictive of the person-job fit in education mainly in university courses and through correlational studies, less research has looked more specifically at how personality may influence a fit between teacher and students. That which does provides some concern regarding the ability to differentiate between personality traits and teaching/learning style congruence. For example, Westerman et al. (2002) sought to determine if personality congruence among students and professors resulted in higher student achievement in the classroom. They had university students and their professors in Faculties of Management in the western United States fill out Likert-type surveys to determine personality based on the five-factor model (McCrae & Costa, 1996). They also obtained final student percentages in the courses. Using hierarchical regression analysis, they found that personality congruence between a student and a professor was predictive of a student's performance in the course. Although Westerman et al. acknowledge that such findings may be used to maximize student learning in the classroom, they also caution that other variables may be at play and have caused the results obtained including the presence of a "similar-to-me" bias on the part of faculty when marking papers and exams and the possibility that it is

actually learning-style/teaching-style congruence that caused the results and not personality factors.

If in fact personality congruence has more to do with learning styles than personality itself, then administrators, educators, and students alike have cause for alarm and the need to address teacher-student fit and the characteristics that contribute to successful learning become imparative to understanding the nature of this relationship. For example, in a study of third year undergraduates at Lethbridge University, Mather & Champagne (2008) found that while students reported wanting to see a more sensing/feeling and affective teaching approach in which they learned by doing, an analysis of professors' course outlines suggested that professors de-emphasize this type of learning in favor of visual and thinking approaches to learning. While there are significant differences between university education and grade school education such as professors without an education background teaching courses, larger class sizes, and a de-emphasis on relationship building in the classroom, one must wonder if the affective domain is also being removed from grade school classrooms or if teaching-styles are not in line with students' preferred methods of learning. Lack of such awareness and the inability to thus change it may make a negative and lasting impact of the lives of many grade school students.

A study attempting to address such concerns at the high school level (Stitt-Ghodes, 2001) found that students preferred a learning environment in which the relationship between the students and the teacher was warm and personal and also included non-class related conversations. Students also reported preferring direct experience through hands-on activities over reading and lectures. Unfortunately, there was only moderate congruence between what students reported as their ideal teacher and learning style and how the educators from eight

different schools reported teaching. Such findings suggest inappropriate fits between classroom teachers and their students may be leaving a number of students unengaged in the education system. However, due to sparse research in these areas, little can be drawn in terms of valid or generalizable conclusions. Additional research is clearly required to determine the characteristics that lead to a positive teacher-student fit and successful learning in the classroom.

Although the possible confusion of personality congruence with teaching/learning style congruence is likely the major issue in relying solely upon personality traits to determine teacher-student fit, it is also important to note some of the other issues that arise in using personality traits to denote what may be considered successful teaching. Trait theories in Personality Psychology assume that traits are stable and generalizable qualities that a person expresses in many contexts (Mischel, 1999). That is, personality traits are stable across situations and over time. Each trait is composed of a clustering of descriptive characteristics. For example, a person who is conscientious has characteristics such as being careful, self-reliant, scrupulous, and knowledgeable. A person who is extraverted has characteristics such as being talkative, friendly, spontaneous, and bold. However, practical wisdom suggests that each of these characteristics may be situation dependent or may occur along a continuum. To group teacher characteristics that influence fit within a classroom and with students into personality factor may leave out the finer details required to determine what actually contributes to such fit. In essence, it is characteristics that must be examined and not simply larger personality traits.

Related to this idea, Mischel (1999) cautions that researchers must be careful not to confuse traits with states. While both refer to people's perceived attributes, traits are enduring

and internally caused while states are brief in duration and externally caused. For example, a teacher may not have an anxious temperament (trait). He/she may be very calm on a regular basis in the classroom. That same teacher may experience anxiety each time he/she is asked to try a new teaching strategy that falls out of his/her comfort zone (state). This teacher would not be classified as neurotic. However, the characteristic of inability to adapt teaching approaches that is manifested as temporary anxiety may limit the number of students this teacher is able to reach in terms of successful learning. Thus, by examining the characteristics of teachers that have led to positive or negative teacher-student fits, both traits and states may be explored to determine potential contributions to teacher-student fit.

Further problematic in classifying traits as personality factors that contribute to effective teaching is that many of these so-called traits are simply learned behaviors. Almost a century later, the experiment of Watson and Rayner (1920), in which the researchers induced fear white rats in a young child by pairing the appearance of a white rat with a frightening noise, is still being used as a prime example of this fact. Anxiety in this case was a learned behavior. Similarly, the teacher who lectures and expects students to write notes may have learned that the class becomes quiet and appears focused during such periods and therefore is more likely to repeat the behavior. The majority of experienced educators, however, would likely argue that the ability to lecture is far from a precursor to higher level learning occurring in the classroom. Despite the fact that this teacher may appear to have strong classroom management skills, a professional characteristic sought by administrators, student voices may possibly indicate that this teaching style is associated with other feelings such as boredom and lack of motivation rather than promoted interest in learning. The main point here is that experience and learned behaviors cannot be discounted. They play a huge role in the

development of characteristics that effect teaching. Consider empathy which develops as a result of learning through life's experiences. A teacher lacking in this characteristic may have difficulty relating to marginalized students. Such rationale may account for the findings of Cannata (2010) who concluded that comfort based on sociocultural factors guided the application behaviors of teachers. Empathy training and exposure to certain situations may increase comfort levels with multiple student groups for teachers. If such behaviors are learned, then they can be taught to preservice teachers, an implication that although may involve a restructuring of teacher education programs, has potentially huge benefits for the wellbeing of students in the classroom. As such, teacher-student fit characteristics have been operationally defined to include both personality factors and personal experiences.

With several issues regarding the use of personality traits as determinants of successful teaching, including the possible confusion of states and traits, the potential for learned behaviors to appear as stable personality traits, and the fact that personality traits related to successful teaching may be explained through teaching/learning style congruence, personality traits will be considered under the umbrella of personal characteristics involved in teacher-student fit. Such an orientation allows for multidimensional factors contributing to positive teacher-student fits to be explored. This study acknowledges that teaching styles, learned behaviors, states, and traits may all influence the dynamic between a teacher and students.

The Need for Teacher-Student Fit

With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to

schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit contributes to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention (Liu & Johnson, 2006).

Ingle et al. (2011) found that principals of schools in low socio-economic areas aimed to hire candidates that specifically cited personal characteristics such as working with diverse populations and enjoying challenging situations. In fact, one of the most prominent educational issues of today is the disparity in the academic achievement of students from minority groups and how such disparity is influenced by the preparation of preservice teachers and the proficiency of classroom teachers (Gay, 2005). Schools are becoming more and more culturally diverse. Such cultural diversity includes many ways of life, values, attitudes, and beliefs that influence behaviors in the classroom (Naested, et al., 2004).

Initial definitions of cultural diversity were based on race and ethnicity. Today, cultural diversity encompasses race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and religion under the premise of social justice. Sadly, children in traditional schools settings must often contend with values and social conventions that conflict with those of their home culture (Naested, et al., 2004). Traditional methods of instruction focus on teaching in a similar manner each day to the entire class of students. Controversially, one ways schools have attempted to address the issue of diverse learners is to stream students into English as an Additional Language classrooms or lower-track classroom settings (Naested, et al.,). Such grouping is a common response to approaching classroom diversity. However, diversity implies the acknowledgment of individual identities (Jacobsen, Eggen, & Kauchak, 2006) and such groupings may not only discredit the recognition of diverse identities, but may also work to create two groups of students: Regular program students and the others. The

fundamental nature of streaming based on diversity may be amplifying injustices rather than promoting social justice and therefore further marginalizing students in the education system.

Classrooms in which students have not been streamed are just as contentious. According to Gainer and Larrotta (2010), school has historically involved subtractive assimilation for students of minority cultures. This is due largely to two main factors: Firstly due to the practices of traditional education systems and to the dominant culture, middle-class teachers who comprise the majority of educators in our schools, and secondly due to teachers' tendencies to treat all students equally.

The majority of teacher candidates are of White, middle-class, mono-lingual English speaking backgrounds (Gainer & Larrotta; Ladson-Billings, 2005). It is concerning that this is evident at the preservice level. Steamed or not, it is likely that students of a minority culture are being taught by teachers of the majority culture during their time in the public school system. It is possible that the structure of teacher education programs lacks the coursework, experiences, and social justice teachings required to give preservice teachers the skills to work with diverse student populations. If this is the case, attaining teacher-student fit with diverse populations is unlikely to occur for many new graduates. Preservice teachers may not have had the exposure to other cultures and languages and must be provided with experiences and learning opportunities to examine their belief system about teaching (Gainer & Larrotta; Grant & Gillette, 2006). In order for this to happen, schools, communities, and university teacher education programs must be willing to work together. More than collaborative efforts are likely needed, however. An examination of teacher education programs and how they are structured must be undertaken (Gay, 2005). Teacher education programs may need to increase instruction in morals, critical analyses, activism, and advocacy to fully address issues of social

justice and cultural diversity. Meanwhile, systemic changes to institutional policies, program requirements, school personnel, and pedagogy are also expected to be necessary. Unfortunately, issues of equity and social justice are attended to often through words but tackled much less often through action (Grant & Gillette).

Although it is likely that for many preservice teachers cultural competency may be learned, a major problem that arises in current admissions to Faculties of Education is the fact that candidates are accepted based on measures of competence such as GPAs that tell us little about potential success in the profession (Grant & Gillette, 2006). Principals interviewed by Harris et al. (2010) also reported having hired candidates with high GPAs who were unable to engage or communicate with students. Despite such failings in the admission process to teacher education programs, there seems to be an awareness of what qualities and abilities effective teachers in culturally diverse classrooms must have. Grant & Gillette state:

> "Effective teachers understand that a student's cultural identity is based on many factors, including ethnic group, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation. They work hard at finding a balance between a student's group affiliation(s) and his or her individual characteristics" (p. 295)

Striking such a balance requires that a teacher know his/her students well and has built rapport with them. Therefore, it is possible that teachers who are able to effectively build strong bonds with their students may be better fits in culturally diverse classrooms.

A second issue arises in classrooms where students have not been streamed. The idea of treating all students as equal may be fundamentally flawed. Gérin-Lajoie (2012) states that

ethnic groups may need to be treated differently and not equally in schools in order to attain social justice. In a pan-Canadian study of teachers and principals in the public education system, participants rated school diversity in the top four issues affecting their work. Yet, Gérin-Lajoie found that participants reported seeing and treating their students as if they were all the same. This logic results in educators who ignore the existence of power imbalances and fail to acknowledge that certain groups of students are favored in terms of curriculum, teaching strategies, and educational resources. Assigning a research project as homework provides little justice for a child whose family is unable to afford a computer or books in the home. Teachers who recognize this and are able to adapt materials without singling out disadvantaged students and without compromising expectations for learning may be better suited to working with students in diverse classrooms. The ability to do this requires affective qualities such as empathy and awareness of students' situations and the professional ability to adapt methods of learning to meet a range of student needs.

Because the research cited above suggests that preservice teacher education programs may not be adequately preparing teacher candidates to work with diverse populations, there is a need to attain teachers' perceptions of teacher-student fit within diverse classroom in Manitoba to determine how and why teachers feel such fit is or is not being attained. In addition, it is relevant to know if teachers in our province also treat all students equally or if they are aware of systemic policies and structures that place certain groups of students at an educational disadvantage. To know if this is acknowledged and addressed holds implications for the teaching of social justice and cultural diversity in preservice teacher education programs and in Manitoba schools.

The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by the education system. Students streamed into lower-track classrooms, with special learning requirements, and those that are economically disadvantaged may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies. Bolshakova et al. (2001) observed the Science classrooms of grades 6, 7, and 8 students, each grade with a different Science teacher, in an urban middle school in which numerous students were working well below grade level. They also interviewed students and the teachers at the beginning and end of the school year regarding the effectiveness of Science teaching. They found that students' Science self-efficacy and performance on end of the year tests was influenced by their relationship with their Science teacher and by the Science teacher's sense of self-efficacy. Students who faired best academically and showed increased interest in Science topics and professions, those in the grade 7 classroom, reported a strong relationship with their Science teacher and believed that he cared about and understood them. This Science teacher reported emphasizing a safe classroom environment where students were respected and made to feel comfortable asking questions, saw his role as both a Science educator (content knowledge) and also a builder of rapport with his students to increase their social skills. This teacher was observed employing multiple methods of Science instruction using guidance and modeling to actively engage students. He was observed taking interest in each of his students and was willing to spend extra time after school to help those that were struggling. One student who had failed Science in grade 6 at the same school had obtained a score in the 70-100% range on the end-of-level exam for the seventh grade.

In sharp contrast, the grade 6 and 8 Science teachers showed little interest in using available Science equipment with students and engaged in traditional teaching methods with few teacher-student interactions. The grade 8 teacher reported that he reverted to traditional teaching methods due to feeling burnt out by his challenging students. At the beginning of the year, students showed enthusiasm toward Science, but by the end of the year, students reported the best part of Science class was having free time at the end of class. In these classes students reported little connection of subject matter to the real world. Results of this study show that it is possible to overcome adversity through education and to raise students' sense of self-efficacy through classroom opportunities delivered via an effective teacher with whom a positive teacher-student relationship has been developed. The grade 7 teacher in this study used both professional attributes such as his pedagogical knowledge of varied instructional methods, and personal characteristics such as relationship-building strategies, patience, guidance, and social skills in raising his students interests, knowledge, and self-efficacy (Bolshakova, et al., 2011). Such findings suggest that when the right teacher-student fit occurs, barriers to learning due to socioeconomic circumstances can be transcended.

Such themes are also embedded in a study by Yerrick, et al. (2010) in which they suggest effective educators are able to mold their classrooms so that Science education fits their student learners. In an autoethnographic study of a lower-track Earth Science classroom in an urban high school, students reported that teacher attributes that affectively contributed to learning included modeling inclusive discourse and having the ability to satisfy basic student needs in the form of caring (Yerrick et al.). Once students felt that these were satisfied by their teacher, higher-level learning began to occur with students taking risks in the classroom, teaching each other, and contributing to classroom discussions. These students indicated that

teachers in their school who used traditional teaching methods and focused on content knowledge were not effective teachers and for them and learning did not take place in such classrooms (Yerrick et al.). Findings suggest that effective teaching in such diverse and disadvantaged classrooms requires the ability to read students' needs and build rapport with them before they will participate in higher-level learning. More than content-based knowledge is needed for this. Affective attributes are responsible for such relationship building again suggesting a teacher's characteristics must fit with the needs of his/her students for both teacher and student success in the classroom.

Consistent with this idea, Harris et al. (2010) found that principals believe that all candidates who meet the criteria for certification possess a minimum threshold of intelligence and intelligence as a quality is not overly assessed in the application process because some intelligent teachers have severe difficulty connecting with students. Because each school has unique characteristics and serves a distinctive community, no teaching positions will be exactly alike. For example, an inner-city school in a low socioeconomic area has a student body with different needs than a suburban school in an affluent area. Teaching middle-years Mathematics in one school may be very different from teaching middle-years Mathematics in the other and may require distinctive skills to develop rapport and create engagement in the classroom. As such, teachers require more than general qualifications. They also need to have a fit between a particular skill set, attitudes, and knowledge for the particular position for which they are considered (Liu & Johnson, 2006). The most important part of the fit with that particular position, is the fit with the student learners.

In line with the conclusions of Harris et al. (2010) and Liu & Johnson (2006), Engel (2013) found that the four most commonly reported qualities sought by principals in hiring

teachers were a mix of personal and professional qualities. However, what is interesting about Engel's findings is that principals' hiring preferences varied systematically across low achieving and high achieving schools (as ranked by the Chicago Public Schools District database). Principals in low achieving schools focused more on the personal characteristics of applicants such as caring and willingness to do extra. Classroom management, a professional attribute, was also mentioned often by principals of low achieving schools as it was seen as a precursor to effective learning occurring in the classroom. Reasons provided in interview data suggest that principals believed teachers need to perceive the challenges that their students face and have empathy in order to be effective teachers of these students. Administrators from high achieving schools focused more on professional characteristics such as content knowledge and pedagogical skills, although caring was also included by the majority (reported by 71% of principals of low achieving schools and 53% of principals of high achieving schools). Principals from both ends of the spectrum acknowledged that teachers who do not care about or seek to understand children would have trouble reaching students in a positive manner, albeit it seems that principals of low achieving schools put more emphasis on caring as a necessary teacher quality given the multiple roles teachers play in disadvantaged schools. As one principal of a low achieving school explained:

> "We ask a variety of questions such as behavior. How do you establish a connection with your students? And that's always tough for people when they interview, because they don't know what you are talking about. So we have to explain, you are the teacher: you're a counsellor, you're a friend, you're a mom, you're a dad, you're a social worker, and then you're an educator." (Engel, p. 68)

Despite principals attempting to act in the best interests of their schools by systematically varying their preferences, Engel (2013) raises an important question: Are the trade-offs that principals are making in their students' best interest, especially for those in disadvantaged schools? We know little about teacher value-added and the performance of students in relationship to the characteristics that principals value most. Studying the resulting teacher-student fit may be one way to shed light on this concern.

Although the research discussed above seems to provide evidence that teacher-student fit is important and that some principals recognize the unique characteristics of their student population and aim to find teachers who fit amongst their learners, many teachers are hired for positions which turn out to be poor fits. With one-third of the teachers in their study being hired after the school year had already started and an over reliance on the interview phase of hiring by principals, Liu and Johnson (2006) refer to the overall hiring process as "information-poor" (p. 338). Many candidates were hired on the spot after only a brief interview, which provided the teachers with little information regarding the school or the specific job. Fewer than half of the teachers reported having anyone other than the principal in the interview suggesting that it would be difficult for applicants to judge the person-group fit with potential future staff members given that they are often not included in this phase of the hiring process. Neither the school representatives nor the teachers had sufficient opportunities to exchange information about one another. Because of this, most matches between newly hired graduates and their schools were moderate-to-good at best when based on teachers' educational philosophies, interests, and values. The moderate-to-good fit results of Liu and Johnson's study may well be inflated given that 10% of the teachers in their study completed

practicum placements at the school in which they were subsequently hired and 19.4% of their participants were initially paraprofessionals at the school in which they were subsequently hired. This suggests that almost 30% of the participants in this study were already aware of the levels of fit within their current placements.

It may also be pertinent to consider that most new teachers are eager to please and often happy to have found a position. Research shows that job satisfaction tends to decrease and nearly half of all new teachers leave the profession within five years (Graziano, 2005). Often teachers new to the profession and lacking such previous practicum teaching and paraprofessional connections end up teaching a subject or grade level outside their area of expertise or end up in schools where their teaching style does not match the overall pedagogical framework of the organization. This situation causes even more concern when addressing the consequences of centralized hiring practices in which teacher candidates are pre-hired. Such situations are incredibly information-poor given that they do not take into account the needs of the local context – the student population served and the individual school culture (Liu & Johnson 2006). In essence, neither administrators nor new teachers know if they will be a good fit for the school or for the students they will be assigned to teach. Research by Johnson and Birkland (2003) found that new teachers who were given appropriate assignments in which they were teaching at the grade levels matching their teacher training and within content areas that matched their major/minor were more likely to stay in their first schools and in the teaching profession in general than those who were in schools that lacked such structural organization. The movement of teachers to new schools reflected a poor fit between teachers and their first jobs.

With initial fit between a teacher and a school being moderate and statistics on teacher attrition, it seems imperative that future research explores factors which allow for positive fits among teachers, their school, their specific teaching assignments, and most importantly, their students.

The Need for Teacher-Student Fit: A Canadian Perspective

When speaking of cultural diversity and institutional structures that disadvantage some groups in Manitoba schools, it is critical to examine the plight of Aboriginal students and how teacher-student fit characteristics may influence their education.

It has already been established that Aboriginal students face many barriers to academic success and have been traditionally marginalized from the Canadian education system (Government of Manitoba, 2006; MacDonald & Wilson, 2013; Young, 2013). Because Manitoba has a unique student body due to the increasing presence of Aboriginal learners (Manitoba Teachers' Society, 2007), it is important to address the idea of teacher-student fit with students of Aboriginal ancestry.

Much of the Canadian research into Aboriginal Education deals with linking the home and school culture of First Nations students. This has involved the inclusion of Aboriginal culture into the school curriculum an attempt to provide more equitable education and close the achievement gap with non-Aboriginal students (e.g. Aikenhead, 2002; Lewthwaite et al., 2010; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Lewthwaite et al., 2013; Lewthwaite et al., 2014; Mason, 2006; Sterenberg & Hogue, 2011). After a two year pilot study, Aikenhead, working with teachers from across Northern Saskatchewan and Elders from the communities, developed cross-cultural Science and technology units in an attempt to harmonize Western

Science with Aboriginal Science perspectives. According to Aikenhead, a central tenet to a cross-cultural approach to teaching is that "aboriginal children are *advantaged* by their own cultural identity and language, not disadvantaged" (p. 226). In such cases of cross-cultural teaching, there is no dichotomy of Western vs. Aboriginal perspectives. The successful teaching strategies that emerged from Aikenhead's work with teachers and Elders included teaching outdoors in order to relate Science to nature, and allowing students to gain knowledge from the local community members. Such strategies provided an educational context in which Aboriginal students were able to link Science to their culture while the related aspects of Western Science logically fit into the larger framework. For example, students studying the habitat of wild rice (Aboriginal Science) used pH meters to determine the acidity of water in the ecosystem (Western Science); students studying the use of snowshoes (Aboriginal Science) performed activities linked to measuring the physics of the pressure exerted on the snow (Western Science). Likewise, Mason, working with Math teachers in Nunavut, Canada's newest Territory, argues for the reconstruction of a Mathematics curriculum that is not only culturally relevant, but also involves tactile and visual experiences that align with the day-to-day teachings of First Nations children with parents and Elders.

As described within the theoretical frameworks for this study and in regard to culturally relevant teaching, Lewthwaite et al. (2010) engaged in a multiphase, five-year pilot project in Science education with three Inuit communities in Nunavut. The goal of the project was to attempt to understand how traditional Inuit knowledge and Western views of Science could be aligned with pan-Canadian Science curricula and how such initiative could be successfully implemented. The researchers sought information and input from educational

stakeholders, the community members, teachers, students, and government documents. While some themes arising from participants could be immediately addressed, for example, training teachers in clear and effective communication and the use of multiple learning styles, others such as the need to redefine academic success and the incorporation of community learning in the curriculum required the collaboration of numerous educational stakeholders. The authors concluded that in order to achieve fully culturally-based education, schools and communities, school divisions, and governing bodies must all work together. This is not an easily attainable feat.

However, such intervention early in the K-12 system is critical given that Aboriginal post-secondary enrollment and completion rates lag significantly below non-Aboriginal students especially in Science and Math related fields of study (Sterenberg & Hogue, 2011). Canadian government initiatives are beginning even earlier than kindergarten with the development of an Aboriginal Headstart program aimed at providing intervention strategies that increase Aboriginal children's sense of self and desire to learn; over the past fourteen years, there has been an increase in federal funding to the program and an increase in number of spaces open to First Nation's children (Nguyen, 2011).

Culturally relevant curriculum is a necessity. However, more studies in Aboriginal Education are needed to determine what teacher-related characteristics may promote academic success, especially for those First Nations students living in urban cities, often removed not only from their reserves, but also from their families and friends. For such students, integration into formal schooling along with the loss of daily interaction with Elders and parents practicing cultural traditions may increase the chances of academic failure.

Little research is available to address the idea of teacher-student fit with all students in a classroom. Similarly, few studies have been conducted to identify fit related factors that may create positive educational experiences for Aboriginal students. In an ethnographic study, Kanu (2002) had Aboriginal students from an inner city school in Winnipeg, Manitoba identify some of the cultural mediators that contributed to academic success in the classroom. The first main theme arising from student interviews was the use of culturally relevant teaching methods. Students reported increased academic success when learning occurred through the use of stories, through observation and imitation, and through scaffolding including guidance from the teacher and explanations with examples. Kanu suggests that such support mirrors childrearing practices among many First Nations people; children learn to accomplish tasks with the guidance, scaffolding, and feedback of parents or Elders. Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) found Inuit students in Nunavut also voiced the need for support and scaffolding by teachers as essential to their learning along with observational modeling of tasks so that students could subsequently imitate the modeled behaviors. Moreover, such findings support the idea that teachers' awareness of learning style congruence (as suggested by Westerman et al., 2002) is imparative in connecting with students in the classroom. Aboriginal students in Kanu's study preferred observational learning and stated that a linguistic approach based on lecturing and long explanations actually impeded their learning. These students also preferred collective learning opportunities such as collaboration and group work. This may also be related to Aboriginal cultural values that link the self to community and surrounding environment. The reports of these students are in line with the reports of marginalized students from the USA streamed into a lower-track classroom in Yerrick et al.'s (2010) study who indicated that teachers in their school who used

traditional teaching methods such as note taking and lecturing were not effective teachers for them and learning was less likely to occur in such settings. Such findings suggest there is a need for teachers to be aware of their students' cultural backgrounds and to have an understanding of how to regularly include them into classroom teaching. In addition, teachers may need a refined awareness of the preferred learning styles of their students in order to attain a positive fit with their classes.

As a second emerging theme, Kanu (2002) found students connected their academic success to the teachers' interpersonal style. Students reported positive learning experiences when teachers were warm and respectful. Respect and warmth were the primary interpersonal styles reported as making a difference and these included having the teacher be free of stereotypes and refraining from criticizing students in front of the class for incorrect answers, as well as valuing each student as an individual. The theme of a respectful classroom environment where students were made to feel comfortable asking questions also arose in Bolshakova et al.'s (2001) interviews with urban youth working several years below grade level. Because there are some similarities in the qualities students identified in teachers as conducive to their learning in the studies of Bolshakova et al., Kanu, and Yerrick et al. (2010), it is likely that there are characteristics of teachers that are deemed ideal by marginalized youth in general.

Aboriginal students further reported preferring a teacher who acted as an authority figure and was intolerant of nonsense in the classroom. As well, they emphasized that the personal warmth of their teacher contributed to their success in the course (Kanu, 2002). This factor included contact such as a pat on the back, closeness when explaining a question, giving attention to individual students, providing one-on-one help, and conversing with

students. Similarly, Stitt-Ghodes (2001) found that students preferred a learning environment in which the relationship between the students and the teacher was warm, personal, and also included non-class related conversations. However, Stitt-Ghodes found only moderate congruence between the learning and interpersonal styles students wished their teachers to have and how teachers behaved in the classroom setting. This suggests that although Aboriginal students, and students in general, may be able to clearly define how teachers can contribute to their academic success, teachers may not be aware of many of these factors. A clearer understanding of teacher-student fit from the perspectives of teachers may be able to shed light on how it may be possible to address this issue.

Teachers are however, aware of at least some of the qualities they have and employ in the classroom that contribute to student success or lack of it. Whitley (2014) sought to identify influential factors related to the success of Aboriginal students from an urban northwestern Ontario middle years school based on the perspectives of both students and teachers. Students stated that a poor fit between the curriculum and their interests was a barrier to their success. Teachers recognized this also. While teachers described their Aboriginal students as thoughtful and kinesthetic learners, they were also aware that the school did not provide courses to draw on these strengths. One might wonder if a teacher with a strong awareness of fit could take this information and incorporate movement and pensive activities into the curriculum where it is lacking. As discussed previously, Aikenhead (2002) created a Science curriculum that contained several outdoor and kinesthetic activities to engage students in both Western and Aboriginal Science. Corresponding to the findings of others (Kanu, 2002; MacIver, 2012), Whitley found that Aboriginal students emphasized the importance of having a teacher with whom they shared a positive relationship. Teaching staff was also aware of the

need for this citing that they strived to make school welcoming, build relationships with students, provide culturally relevant teachings, and made special efforts to celebrate successes, encourage students to see themselves as capable, and boost students' self-esteem. Furthermore, teachers were clearly aware that building caring environments and occasionally taking on the role of counsellor were necessities when working with such marginalized students.

However, teachers repeatedly raised the concern that their lifestyle as part of the middle-class was far different from the lives of their Aboriginal students and that they had trouble relating to and understanding their students' backgrounds (Whitley, 2014). This is not the only study to report such a finding. Deer (2013), in interviewing preservice teachers from a western Canadian university, found that while some reported a great deal of comfort including Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum, a significant number of preservice teachers felt uneasy regarding the teaching Aboriginal perspectives. For example, preservice teachers in Deer's study reported that their knowledge and experiences with Aboriginal cultures were often based on an artifact or aspect of content that was not representative of the larger community or culture and such teaching was simply tokenistic. It should be noted that all preservice teachers in this study had completed a course in Aboriginal Education as part of their teacher education program. Findings, however, suggest that one course may not be sufficient in addressing the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum and the ability to relate to students' cultural backgrounds. Preservice teachers are not the only ones who struggle with such feelings. Kanu (2005) found that the primary challenge in the inclusion of Aboriginal perfectives identified by teachers in three inner city Winnipeg high schools was their lack of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and understanding. Such

apprehensive feelings regarding the inability to relate to students must be addressed in order to better understand the situation, and implement changes so that teachers are comfortable working with their student body. In essence, we need a better understanding of how to improve teacher-student fit, especially with Aboriginal students in Canada.

In a study of Canadian Aboriginal students identified as at risk of dropping out before graduation, MacIver (2012) explored the influences student felt promoted the likelihood that they would complete their high school education. The participants in her study had all previously left the education system at some point in their schooling but had re-entered school at the time of the study. In addition to previous gaps in learning due to dropout or expulsion, student in MacIver's study had several other barriers to education including behavioral and social challenges, drug and alcohol addiction, and mental health conditions. Students identified two teacher specific characteristic that increased their school engagement. Teachers who were able to make school and learning an enjoyable experience and teachers who were able to build rapport with students motivated students to stay in school. Like Kanu (2002), findings suggest that there is a need for the teachers of Aboriginal students to build ongoing relationships with students and create a safe and caring classroom environment. In addition, teacher characteristics such as being fun loving, using humor, having the ability to listen and respond appropriately, and having strong communication skills (MacIver) may all contribute to a more positive teacher-student fit with Aboriginal students in the classroom. Given that in a study of female Aboriginal students in Saskatchewan, participants identified the teacher as the most important factor contributing to their achievement in the education system (Bazylak, 2002), it is necessary to determine precisely what factors contribute to teacher-student fit with Aboriginal students.

It should be noted that the ethnicity of the teacher does not seem to be a significant determinant of the academic success of Aboriginal students. First Nations students need not be taught by First Nations teachers in order to achieve success in the education system. Rather, learning style congruence along with the ability to model cultural inclusion and teach in a culturally affirming environment seem to be better predictors of school engagement and academic success of Aboriginal children (Kleinfeld, 1995; MacIver, 2012).

In recent years, colleges and universities have witnessed a rise in enrollments among minority groups, female students, and students from low income backgrounds; unfortunately, Aboriginal students are still encountering complications transitioning from high school to post secondary institutions (Kanu, 2006a). The Aboriginal population is growing (Manitoba Teachers' Society, 2007), yet this group has the lowest post-secondary enrollment and completion rates in Canada (Sterenberg & Hogue, 2011). There may, however, be characteristics of high school teachers that facilitate the transition of Aboriginal students to higher level education. Kanu (2006a/2007) compared two grade 9 Social Studies classrooms from inner city high schools in Western Canada. In one classroom, which she termed the enriched classroom, the teacher consistently integrated Aboriginal perspectives, viewing them as a central underpinning of the course. In the other classroom, the teacher integrated of Aboriginal perspectives only on occasion. She found that the Aboriginal students in the enriched classroom outperformed the Aboriginal students in the regular classroom on assignments, tests, and exams. They also showed higher level thinking skills and increased self-confidence over the course of the year (2006a). Similar to her 2002 study, Aboriginal students in the enriched class attributed their success to one-on-one interaction with their teacher, scaffolding, the use of demonstrations and illustrations, the inclusion of Aboriginal

perspectives, the use of pedagogical strategies consistent with Aboriginal culture such as stories, sharing circles, Aboriginal guest speakers, and small group collaboration. The students also cited that the teacher's content knowledge, ability to provide clear explanations, faith in their abilities to succeed, and respect and warmth for students all increased their motivation to do well in the course (2007). These findings suggest that Aboriginal students, much like principals (Cranston, 2012; Harris et al., 2010; Kersten, 2008; Rutledge et al., 2008), look for a combination of personal and professional qualities in their teachers. It is imparative to know if Manitoba teachers are aware of the characteristics that facilitate school success for Aboriginal students and if such characteristics were sought by principals during the hiring process.

School attendance is a major issue in the plight of the academic success of Aboriginal students. Teachers in Whitley's (2014) study felt that improving attendance was the key to increased engagement and school success for Aboriginal students. Kanu (2007) found that regularly attending Aboriginal students in the enriched class all gave reasons related to their teacher's personal and professional characteristics as motivation for continuing to attend class. They listed the teacher's content knowledge, the fact that they were able to express their views and ideas openly in a nurturing classroom environment, and that group work was used as rationale for attending. Conversely, those with consistent attendance in the regular Social Studies class gave reasons related to being required to be there only and did not relate their attendance to the qualities of their teacher. This is promising data which suggests that teacher-student fit may play a role in students' classroom attendance. Regrettably, sporadic attendees gave reasons such as taking care of younger siblings, living in poverty and having to work, family issues, youth justice issues, and returning to their reserves as reasons for non-

attendance implying that there are many barriers yet to be addressed in the academic futures of Aboriginal students.

A comparison of the teachers in the enriched and regular Social studies classrooms, through observation and interviews, found that the teacher of the enriched class showed higher self-efficacy beliefs (Kanu, 2006a). This teacher took the time to work on integrating cultural perspectives on a daily basis by adapting materials, attending seminars, and talking and working with people of Aboriginal descent to gain insight into their cultural perspectives. It is possible that the teacher's sense of self-efficacy is linked to student achievement. Similar results were reported by Bolshakova et al. (2001), who found that students' Science self-efficacy and performance on end of the year tests was influenced by their relationship with their Science teacher and by the Science teacher's sense of self-efficacy. Examining teacher-student fit may allow for a deeper understanding of the effects of teacher self-efficacy on student achievement.

Clearly there is much to be learned from Aboriginal Education and continued goals to include it in Canadian curricula and increase graduation rates for First Nation students. Mason (2006) urges educators to think beyond our current levels of integration of Aboriginal culture into the curriculum and see a curriculum designed with the central philosophical values of First Nations people at the core:

> "Imagine a curriculum where content was secondary, because 'people came first'. Activities for the classroom would be designed or selected because of their inviting, inclusive nature… Imagine a feedback system that reports to students what they are

> doing well without comparative descriptions that foster competition, because 'co-operation will be the operating standard at every level'." (p. 144)

Imagine indeed. And imagine how such a curriculum might function to lift the academic comprehension, motivation, and critical thinking of Aboriginal students when they also have a teacher who appreciates not only content knowledge related to their culture but also their interpersonal needs for caring, nurturing, and respect, and their academic needs such as scaffolding and learning through observation. Teacher-student fit encompasses each of these and the time to derive a better understanding of such fit in the Canadian education system is now.

Decisions Made by Applicants, Socioeconomic and Sociocultural Influences

Of the studies available on hiring practices in the field of education, the only study that includes the perspectives of the teacher applicants is that of Liu and Johnson (2006). Their sample was comprised of first and second year teachers working in kindergarten to grade 12 in four states. However, the teachers' experiences were captured using an 85-item survey they had devised in a prior study. Although the survey contained measures of teachers' perceived fit with their job (P-J) and with their schools (P-O) and the instrument showed high reliability, using a Likert-type scale does not provide the rich data that results from interviewing teachers. Nor does it provide a chance to explain why one believes a fit is good or poor. That is, the characteristics that teachers feel may cause goodness of fit are still unknown.

While Liu and Johnson (2006) approach the topic of teacher fit from a personnel management perspective, others have used a sociocultural orientation to the teacher job search

process (Boyd et al., 2005; Cannata, 2010; Lankford, et al., 2002). Sociocultural factors include one's beliefs, practices, and behaviors that have been influenced by the interaction between one's culture and society. Socioeconomic status refers to one's position within a hierarchical society and depends upon several variable including one's wealth, occupation, income, education, and place of residence. The studies described in this section suggest that holding certain sociocultural beliefs about how one was raised and stereotypical beliefs about demographics and cultures in certain socioeconomic areas may possibly be influencing teachers' application decisions. A resonating theme within theses studies was that schools in lower socioeconomic areas are harder to staff and experience more frequent teacher turnover than schools in higher socioeconomic areas. Such data seems to be supported not only by district data and teacher reports, but also by hiring personnel. For example, Rutledge et al.'s (2008) case study of Florida elementary to high school principals and district officials involved in hiring, described previously, revealed issues of concern in the teacher hiring process. In Florida, Title 1 schools are given a ten-day preferential hiring window during a job fair held the week after the school year ends. Title 1 schools typically serve marginalized populations of a geographic region and are designated as such by the large number of students enrolled in the federal-free and reduced price meal programs. Non-Title 1 schools are typically located in more affluent socioeconomic neighbourhoods and do not qualify for federal lunch program funding. The preferential hiring window was implemented in order to give Title 1 schools a chance to recruit from a larger pool of applicants in hopes of hiring the most qualified candidate to serve their population of students. Non-Title 1 schools are prohibited from hiring during this time frame. Principals from Non-Title 1 schools reported, however, that they found ways to avoid compliance with this district rule (Rutledge et al.).

They reported promising individuals jobs after the qualifying period and making appeals to the district administrator to waive the policy in order to hire a strong candidate. So although districts acknowledge the plight of Title 1 schools in hiring qualified teachers and have attempted to set boundaries for equality, such rules are circumvented by both principals and by district officials.

Similarly, Papa & Baxter (2008) found that 49% of urban schools in their study were hiring teachers after July 31st compared to only 9% of suburban schools and 5% of rural schools. Urban schools were more likely to have candidates reject their offers (50% vs. only 16% for suburban schools). They suggest that urban schools are at a disadvantage with respect to their ability to hire highly qualified teachers based on the socioeconomic status of their student population.

Despite a large body of research citing descriptive statistics that schools in lower socioeconomic areas are difficult to staff, there is little research that seeks to address in depth why this is the case. Perhaps the least addressed area of research pertaining to the current study is that of sociocultural and socioeconomic influences on the job search process for teachers. Documentation in this area is scarce. We know little about the extent to which teacher sorting occurs and what factors correlate with its occurrence.

Lankford et al. (2002) sought to determine how the distribution of teachers across New York State influenced attrition and transfer rates as well as the job matches between first year teachers and their new schools. They found that urban schools have less qualified teachers than schools non-urban areas. They hypothesize this may occur for four reasons: Some schools seek out a certain type of applicant to fit their school. Secondly, districts with aggressive recruiting practices tend to hirer the best teachers. Third, community, parental

influence, and political factors may play a role in the type of teacher that would be wanted in a particular area. Finally, teacher preferences about where they would like to work may be the most highly influential cause of teacher sorting among districts. They found that teacher sorting occurs not only across districts but also, although to a slightly lesser extent, within districts suggesting that the characteristics of individual schools may be playing an important role in teachers' choices of where to work. However, caution must be taken in interpreting this suggestion given that large districts will contain areas diverse areas of high and low socioeconomic status within them. As such, there may be other factors at play that are not discussed by Lankford et al.

This study also found that those teachers beginning their careers in urban schools had higher rates of turnover and attrition than those beginning their careers in suburban or rural schools. In general, they found that teachers who transferred to new schools went to schools in areas where poverty among student was reduced by at least 75% and their class sizes were smaller (Lankford et al., 2002). They conclude that this provides support for the hypothesis that more qualified teacher seize opportunities to leave difficult work environments in favor of more appealing environments in more affluent areas. However, the question arises, what causes teachers to transfer to schools in more affluent areas? Is it the quality of the teacher-student fit or sociocultural and socioeconomic factors that drive this change in position or are they interrelated? Although Lankford et al. describe the sorting of teachers across schools, they do not test hypotheses as to why this may occur and this piece is significantly sparse in current literature.

Lankford et al. (2002) analyze state-wide databases of teacher hiring, transfer, and attrition data. Although they benefit by having a large sample size and the ability to track data

over time, they miss hearing teachers' reasons for transferring and can only speculate as to why teacher migration and sorting occurs. Descriptive statistics provide patterns in data from which we may draw potential hypotheses, but the stories of teachers would provide details about the factors that precipitate the occurrence of such patterns. To date, Johnson and Birkland (2003) provide the only study which interviews first and second year teachers regarding their reasons for staying at a school, transferring to a different position, or leaving the profession at the beginning of their career. It should be noted that of their initial sample of 50 teachers in the first or second year of their careers, 11 had left the teaching profession after one year. In the follow-up interviews, teachers reported that the central reason for leaving teaching, moving to a new school, or staying at their current school was whether they believed they were achieving success with their students. Such a finding provides support for the importance of achieving teacher-student fit. Other factors such as their teaching assignment, workload, available resources, and the support of fellow staff members and administration were also mentioned as impacting their success as a teacher. However, these findings further support the idea that the teacher-student fit may supersede other levels such as the person-job or person-organization fit often sought by principals during hiring.

In Johnson and Birkland's (2003) study, many of the teachers who transferred positions cited a poor teacher-school fit and blamed their effectiveness in the classroom on external factors related to the school organization as their reason for changing positions. However, in support of the findings of Lankford et al. (2002), the authors state that one of the most striking features of their data set is that all teachers who changed positions within the first two years of their career moved to schools that served wealthier populations than the schools in which they originally began their careers. Johnson and Birkland suggest that these

teachers were seeking schools organized for success and not simply looking to work with wealthier students but this negates the many social and economic factors that support schools and students in affluent areas such as parents that can afford food for breakfast and lunch, purchase school supplies, books and technology, and enroll their children in extracurricular programs. Moreover, higher taxable income levels within the neighborhood's residents and the support of community businesses often provide schools in such areas with money and equipment that is lacking in less affluent areas. Many schools in less affluent areas may be organized for success but struggle to meet their organizational goals given the social and economic factors that place them at a disadvantage. In any cases, both this finding and the lack or explanation surrounding the differences in school communities lend to the idea that teacher-student fit must be examined in relation to sociocultural factors in order to obtain a clearer perspective of what constitutes a positive teacher-student fit and to what extent social and economic factors drive teachers to seek out particular schools.

It is important to note that four of the thirteen teachers that chose to stay in their initial schools worked in schools in low socioeconomic areas. They stated the same reasons for satisfaction as those teachers staying at wealthier schools: Supportive administration and colleagues and clear expectations for students (Johnson & Birkland, 2003). Although the overall school environment definitely plays a role in job satisfaction, teacher-student fit may account for many of the reasons classified as environmental. For example, if a teacher is a positive fit with his/her students, there are generally few classroom management issues resulting in a sense of perceived support from administration and clear expectations for students. Data as to how teachers fit with their students, their philosophies of education, or

their sociocultural backgrounds were not addressed in this study and it is clear that these factor need to be examined to disentangle possibly interrelated variables.

Information on why teachers choose to stay or leave schools is certainly valuable, but it is also beneficial to know how they came to work in those schools. Only two studies were found that focused upon how preservice teachers came to work in particular schools (Boyd et al., 2005; Cannata, 2010) suggesting that research in this area is very limited.

Boyd et al. (2005) analyzed the job search behavior of new teachers entering the profession. They found that teachers' job searches were restricted to relatively small geographic regions that were very close to where applicants grew up, either their hometown or where they attended post-secondary studies. Moreover, the characteristics of these regions mirrored the characteristics of their hometowns. Those who grew up in the suburbs, were most likely to get their first job in the suburb where they grew up or in an adjacent suburb. Similarly, 80% of those that grew up in urban areas were hired for their first teaching position in an urban school district. Such finding support the idea that urban school districts at a disadvantage when finding teachers to fill positions given that urban districts usually have more positions to fill than new graduates from the area. The authors suggest that distance is only part of the equation and the culture of schools and communities may play some role in the sorting of teachers in the labour market. Again, a state-wide database was used in the analysis and as such the reasons for the sorting of teachers into urban versus suburban areas can only be hypothesized. This raises numerous questions: How much of a role does distance play? Is it distance at all or a familiarity with community and population served that drives teacher application decisions? Does socioeconomic status play a role in where teachers are

most comfortable teaching? Do teachers fit better with students when they are familiar with the community and demographics of an area?

The second study (Cannata, 2010) used surveys and interviews to discern the process by which new teachers find a job and how they come to work in particular schools. Previous studies have addressed teachers' job preferences while this study focused on the process by which positions are sought and acquired. In addition, this study took into account teachers' sociocultural backgrounds, something which has been vastly overlooked in research to date. She found that new teachers' job choice decisions were guided by their sense of where they belonged and their culturally informed perceptions of various schools.

Particularly disturbing, however, is the finding that espoused preferences were so different from what preservice teachers practiced in their job searches. Teachers in the study initially provided their espoused preferences for their first teaching jobs most frequently reporting that supportive colleagues and administration and a collegial staff were ideal. In addition to this, they frequently reported they wished to have jobs in schools with many resources available so that they could enhance the effectiveness of their teaching. When asked to describe how positions were sought and applied for, espoused preferences were rarely mentioned and teachers reported that like the findings of Boyd et al. (2005), they preferred to work close to home both for family reasons and because they valued the familiarity and characteristics of the area in which they lived. In fact, familiarity with the area was the most frequently practiced job application process in use by these participants (Cannata, 2010). Participants reported excluding entire districts from their jobs searches based on lack of familiarity and location. They also relied heavily on the perceptions of social contacts in the areas, despite the fact that their contacts were not involved in the education system and knew

little of what it would actually be like to teach at a given school versus a school outside their area. The use of social contacts resulted in teacher sorting into jobs in districts that placed teachers in familiar social positions. Job searches were situated within social and cultural contexts. Comfort with sociocultural factors outweighed the need to help students succeed in their education. Comfort became the practiced preference in use for finding a teaching position. It was not an espoused preference.

Education should transcend social barriers. For many it is the key to a better future. If graduates of education programs like those in Cannata's (2010) study are unable to transcend these barriers, then what message are we sending our students? If preservice teacher educations continue as they are currently structured, they will only serve to widen the gap between teachers and children in schools (Sleeter, 2001). In fact, Baldwin, Buchanan, & Rudisill (2007) found that teacher candidates from two universities studied typically held the assumptions that disadvantaged areas were plagued by crime and that teaching in such areas would render them with children who caused discipline problems and were unmotivated to succeed in education. They also reported being concerned for their own safety. Such preconceived notions may prevent preservice teachers from applying to inner city school districts. After participating in a service learning course that involved volunteering in an underserved area of the city as part of their teacher education program, several teacher candidates were able to reflect on their experiences, shift their perspectives, and discuss the characteristics that helped them work successfully with the children in this neighbourhood. They mentioned flexibility and patience, both personal qualities that were also mentioned by teachers in Prather-Jones's (2001) study as factors that provided them a good fit with their students. Such findings suggest that there are ways to make teachers aware of characteristics

that make them a good fit for their students and that there are also ways to address potential sociocultural factors that may be the cause of teacher sorting among districts. To do so, ways in which to enhance the understanding of diversity in teacher education programs must be explored (Klug, Luckey, Wilkins, & Whitfied, 2006). Before this can be attempted, however, the factors influencing teacher-student fit and the extent to which sociocultural factors play a role in such determinations of fit must be explored.

Understanding how racial and social class stratification is perpetuated from one generation to the next is an on going area of research in education (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004). However, it is almost always framed in terms of the plight of students or overall institutionalized barriers. The time has come to address this issue with respect to teachers and their choices of where to work. To date, no study has been undertaken to address both the idea of teacher-student fit and the influence of sociocultural factors using the voices of teachers. While understanding how racial and social class stratification might responsible for teacher sorting into familiar socioeconomic areas is beyond the scope of this thesis project, this study may be seen as an initial step to identify the extent to which sociocultural factors play a role in where teachers are choosing to work in Manitoba. Subsequent future studies will be needed to address how and why such factors play a role and what can be done to address teacher sorting if in fact it is occurring here.

Cannata's (2010) study suggests that new teachers may vocalize certain job preferences but choose positions based on sociocultural factors that have little to do with educating students. It may be entirely possible that preservice teachers and teachers new to the profession have little awareness of their fit with students and so base their perceived fit on their own backgrounds and life experiences because this familiarity creates feelings of

comfort. However, the idea that teachers' perceived fit with students is based on socioeconomic status and cultural influences becomes problematic in that it simply maintains social class barriers. It would be interesting to see if such perceived fit changes as one gains work experience. Perhaps after exposure to teaching positions in different socioeconomic areas such perceptions of fit change. To deny that sociocultural factors have some role in shaping fit is naive. However, soicocultural factors should not precipitate self-exclusion from positions in which a teacher may make the world of difference to students. As such, this study aims to address the perceived fit of teachers who have had more than one position and have transferred from a school in a low socioeconomic area to a school in a more affluent socioeconomic area, or vice versa, so that the role of sociocultural factors in perceived teacher-student fit can be determined. Teachers' voices lend to what characteristics have made them a positive or poor fit with students of a given area and allow an in depth exploration of the reasons that precipitated transfers to a different area. Such data may inform policy makers on the nature of hiring decisions and how to best support new teachers once those decisions have been made.

It is not enough to simply know how schools can best recruit teachers (Johnson & Birkland, 2003). We need to understand the role that teacher-student fit plays in retention and transfer of teachers and to what extent this is influenced by sociocultural factors. Ultimately the success of our student depends on these issues.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for teaching positions and to use the voices of teachers and students to identify the characteristics that create a positive teacher-student fit in the classroom. In attempting to speak to these two issues, the factors that precipitate teachers' self-exclusions from particular job postings and the extent to which sociocultural factors play a role in the job application process were also addressed. The extent to which positive teacher-student fit facilitates the development of relationships with students and creates a pedagogically beneficial environment was explored through student success rates, as expressed by students and teachers, given that a guiding question in this study spoke to the role that teacher-student fit may play in the quality of education provided to students.

The following specific research questions were explored:

1) a) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?

b) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?

2) Teachers choose the positions to which they apply while excluding others. What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions from certain positions or specific school divisions?

3) a) What are the characteristics of teachers that create a positive teacher-student fit?

b) What are the characteristics of teachers that create a poor teacher-student fit?

4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

To explore these questions, a case study methodology was used.

A Word on Case Study Research

The following is a description of why case study research was chosen as the primary method of investigation.

A case study must meet three general criteria (Yin, 2009). Firstly, the research questions posed must be exploratory in nature. My research questions sought to explore the extent to which teachers consider their fit with students when applying for positions and to explain what fitting with students means from teachers' perspectives. The factors precipitating self-exclusion from positions were also investigated through teacher interviews. The main goal of the study was to explore the factors that teachers and students would identify in the creation of a positive teacher-student fit in the classroom and to describe any potential relation between teacher-student fit and perceived academic success of students.

The second criterion of a case study states that the investigator has little or no control over the actual behavioral events (Yin, 2009). The relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated. In this study, the real-life processes of teacher job searches, the development of teacher-student fit, and the educational impact on students' successes were the behaviors and events explored. The researcher had no control over the unfolding of these behaviors and events. Research that involves explaining the presumed causal links in real-life situations is far too complex for survey or experimental strategies. Presumed causality describes the belief that one event or behavior is responsible for a second event or behavior. It can also refer to a set of factors that are believed to be responsible for the occurrence of a phenomenon. In examining teacher characteristics and student success, certain characteristics cannot simply be linked to

student success or failure via a quantitative measure. For example, it is unacceptable to say that being a strict teacher (presumed causal behavior) is responsible for students' school failure (resulting event). Many factors may be playing a role in this scenario and to link them quantitatively without any explanation provides little usable data in initiating change. The rich, thick data obtained through case study research is far more suited to addressing such concerns than quantitative data in the form of survey data, Likert-scale questionnaires, or correlation coefficients. Research in such multifaceted settings cannot be reduced to a single cause and effect relationship (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). As such, the multiple characteristics perceived by teachers and students as impacting teacher-student fit have been discussed in the interpretation of the results, discussion, and conclusion of this study.

The third criterion is that a case study examines a contemporary social phenomenon in depth (Yin, 2009). Such research allows investigators to retain the meaningful characteristics of real life events. In this study, that social phenomenon is the idea of teacher-student fit. The full dimensions of the phenomenon being researched emerge throughout the course of the study (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). In this study, the complete definition of teacher-student fit was not possible until the voices of teachers and students were heard. The case, or unit of analysis, is related to the way the research questions have been defined. It must be distinguished from cases outside it for the context of the study (Yin). Research questions are designed to specifically explore a phenomenon, individual, or group. The case, therefore, is a bounded unit that allows the researcher to "fence in" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27) what he/she is about to study. Here, the "case" refers to the small group of Manitoba teachers who have transferred from a school in a low socioeconomic area to a school in a higher socioeconomic area or vice versa. Teachers not meeting this criterion, that is, those outside the context of the

case, were not eligible to participate in this study. Bounding the case enables researchers to put forward predictions that are appropriate in scope and make tentative generalizations. Such results should be seen as translatable (VanWynsberghe & Khan). This will be discussed further under Limitations of the Study.

Within a single case, subunits of analysis may be incorporated, increasing opportunities for extensive analysis and insights (Yin, 2009). In an attempt to validate teachers' perceptions of fit as related to student success and the qualities that make such success easier to attain, student interviews were included in this study. This allowed for themes related to positive and negative teacher-student fits as seen by students to be compared to teachers' views based on the areas in which teachers preferred to work.

According to Swanborn (2010), it is the job of the researcher conducting a case study to focus on process-training, that is, describing the process that unfolds between participants and their values, expectations, opinions, perceptions, and decisions. This study aimed to describe teachers' job application process and how well the resulting fit with their students met their expectations of the position and school based on the hiring process. Moreover, the teachers' decisions to transfer from one school to another have been examined and depicted to illustrate the processes of application decisions and exclusions. Most importantly, teachers' and students' opinions and values as to what characteristics create a positive or negative teacher-student fit have been described based on themes that arose in interviews and related to the perceived success of the students as their stories unfolded.

The strengths of case study methodology as applied to this study have allowed for an in depth exploration of the idea of teacher-student fit. Employing case study methodology has allowed for a glimpse into the complex interactions among teachers, students, and classroom

subject matter that results in positive teacher-student fits. Without the open dialogue created and the richness of participants' responses within this case study design, insights into choice of teaching as a career, fit with the profession, factors that precipitate transfers and self-exclusion from positions, and instructional methods that best meet students needs could not have been analyzed for themes related to culturally responsive pedagogy and most importantly, for the teacher characteristics that promote students success. In addition, case study methodology allowed the role of sociocultural factors in job application decisions to be addressed. Finding participants that had taught in more than one socioeconomic area of the province was anticipated to be a small sample and as such, the best way to understand how such individuals were making application decisions required seeking out participants within the given case. The detail collected in this study would not have been possible using quantitative measures. These together, have provided some awareness as to the characteristics that allow teachers to best work with their students and how application decisions are being made in Manitoba.

One of the main interpretive frameworks used in this study was Critical Theory. This paradigm commits to the critical analysis of patterns that underlie inequalities in society and aims to transform them for a more just world. As a final comment on the decision to conduct a case study, VanWynsberghe & Khan (2007) suggest that because case studies provide detailed accounts of complex settings and often focus on reconstructing history in order to better understand the principles and actions that have led to a current state of affairs, case study research is aligned with the use of Critical Theory. Because non-traditional learners have been typically marginalized in the public education system, critical analysis of why and how this has happened and what can be done to alleviate this fact is required. This research examined

characteristics of teacher-student fit that may best allow learners in all socioeconomic areas to be successful. The findings may be a small step in initiating changes in teachers' actions and classroom pedagogy and may be particularly relevant for those working with students facing multiple barriers to learning.

Strong case study research includes the use of multiple methods and several sources of data to triangulate findings (Creswell, 2013; Lichtman, 2013). Such triangulation is required to validate any resulting patterns or trends, and even to address the validity of individual responses by comparing additional methods such as classroom observations or artifact analysis. This study utilized only teacher and student interviews to derive data. It is therefore acknowledged that the current research can and should be used only as a preliminary step in planning for further research studies into the areas of fit and in regard to sociocultural factors that drive teacher employment decisions. This will be expanded upon in the final chapter under "Limitations of the Study" and will include suggestions as to how triangulation might be approached in future research stemming from this initial study.

Participants & Recruitment

Teachers.

Participants in this study included teachers from the province of Manitoba who had transferred from a school in a low socioeconomic area to a school in a higher socioeconomic area or vice versa, so that the role of sociocultural factors in perceived teacher-student fit could be addressed. In order to find teacher participants, recruitment letters were sent via email to 34 public school divisions across Manitoba explaining the study and the requirement of having had more than one position in varied socioeconomic areas of the province. Letters

were not sent to private schools or the Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine. Private schools were excluded because regardless of their neighbourhood location, the majority of students attending such schools likely have parents or guardians with high socioeconomic status who were able to pay tuition requirements. That is, although the average income of a family in some private schools' neighbourhoods may be low, the majority of students attending such schools are likely living in surrounding neighbourhoods with much higher average family incomes. This factor would have been an extraneous variable and therefore private schools were not included in the recruitment process. The Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine is a group of 23 schools across Manitoba in which curriculum instruction is provided only in French. While many teachers in this division are likely bilingual, the student body is comprised mainly of students using French as their primary language and there was the potential for a language barrier between the researcher, who does not speak French, and teachers or students who may have wished to participate in the study. As such, Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine was excluded from recruitment.

For those teachers that responded to recruitment letters, written consent was obtained. The study was explained to each participant orally and in the form of a written letter before he/she agreed to participate. The information letter and informed consent form have been attached in the appendix. The majority of interviews were conducted in Winnipeg with the researcher attending the schools of the teacher participants. For the teacher currently working in rural Manitoba, consent forms were signed and returned by mail and the interview was conducted over the telephone.

Teachers – descriptive statistics and background information.

The ten teacher participants came from four schools in Winnipeg and one school in rural Manitoba. Two of the schools in Winnipeg were in low socioeconomic areas of the city. One of these schools was mainly populated by immigrant students with only 24% of the students attending being born in Canada. Of the students born in Canada, 14% were of Aboriginal heritage. The remaining school population was 52% Filipino, 13% African with Somalia, Sudan, and Eritrea being the main countries of student origin, 2% Chinese and 2% Portuguese. Other countries of origin made up the remaining student cultural demographics. In total, there were 40 different countries of birth for students in the school. The other school in a low socioeconomic area of Winnipeg had a population in which 17% of students were of Aboriginal heritage, 15% of students were recent landed immigrants or refugees, and 16% of the students were English as an additional language learners. This school did not have country of origin data available for research purposes. The other two schools in Winnipeg were in affluent areas of the city, however, for one of these schools, an adjacent neighbourhood was of much lower socioeconomic status and contained a number of government funded Manitoba Housing complexes. While the schools in affluent areas were unable to release percentage data on student populations to graduate students as a divisional regulation, teachers of these schools indicated that they had very few EAL and/or immigrant students and only some Aboriginal students. The teacher of the school located near government funded housing stated that a significant portion of her students were from the low socioeconomic area. The school in rural Manitoba also contained a large immigrant population. It housed predominantly students of German heritage (65%), followed by students from the Netherlands (24%). Of the student body, 23% were born in Canada and of these students 1% were of Aboriginal heritage. Many

students spoke German as well as English. Classes were offered in English and German in this school. The teacher interviewed for the study taught classes in the English stream only.

A total of ten teachers responded to the letters of invitation sent out to Manitoba school divisions. Of the ten participants, two were currently teaching in high socio-economic areas of Winnipeg, seven were teaching in low socioeconomic areas of Winnipeg, and one was teaching in rural Manitoba at a school in a low socio-economic area. Teachers ranged in year of experience from 3 years up to 25 years in the school system. Seven teachers were male and three were female. During the interviews, two teachers indicated that they had immigrated to Canada, one from Portugal and one from the Philippines. Both had attended university in Manitoba. Two teachers had grown up in rural towns. One was from rural Manitoba. The other had grown up in rural Saskatchewan.

Five teachers taught core subject area classes: English, Mathematics, Science, and History. Two taught in Industrial Arts and Home Economics: Graphics and Family Studies/Foods and Nutrition. Three taught mainly Physical Education with some classroom teaching involved throughout the course of their careers.

In terms of teacher transfers in regards to where schools were situated, one participant transferred from a low socioeconomic area to a high socio-economic area. Eight participants transferred from an area of high socio-economic status to an area with lower socio-economic status, with two of these teachers switching from private schools in Manitoba, one a Catholic private school, the other being non-denominational, into the public school system. Three of these teachers had initiated a subsequent move to another school in a low income area and openly discussed their reasons for the additional moves. The final participant, having taught at several schools within his respected division, began teaching at a school in a high

socioeconomic neighbourhood, followed by a teaching position at the lowest socio-economic neighborhood within his division, and later moved to a school in the highest socioeconomic area of the division.

While teachers from most subject areas were represented in this sample, only two had experience working in rural schools and none had worked in northern Manitoba. The two teachers that had worked in rural schools did not grow up in rural towns. While it is likely that fewer individuals choose to teach in rural and northern areas than choose to work with in city limits, this sample is not completely representative of the teaching population of Manitoba as it lacks the voice of teachers that are current working or have worked with students in the northern part of the province.

Students.

To address student success rates based on the teacher-student fit within a classroom, senior years students were interviewed regarding changes in their learning as influenced by their current teacher. It was assumed that middle and senior years students would be able to articulate any impact on their success in school resulting from a positive or poor teacher-student fit given the findings of Bolshakova et al. (2001) and Yerrick et al. (2010). Grades 6, 7, and 8 students, in Bolshakova et al.'s study were able to relate pedagogical strategies and characteristics of their Science teachers to their interest in Science class. Meanwhile, in an autoethnographic study by Yerrick et al., students in a lower-track, high school Science class were able to discuss their learning needs and academic success in relation to the actions and understanding of their current teacher and other teachers in the school.

Recruitment began with a letter sent via email to the superintendents of each school division in Manitoba requesting permission to recruit students for the study. One division responded and gave permission for student interviews to occur at a school of their choosing. The school was in a low socioeconomic area of Winnipeg and held classes for students in grades 7 through 12. The principal of this designated school then identified classes of students for potential participation. Invitations to participate were sent to parents/guardians of students in the selected classes. Middle years students were also invited to participate, however, the principal at the school identified by the superintendent chose to forward the letter of invitation to the parents of senior years students in the classes of a teacher of his choice. For those parents/guardians and students who chose to participate, written consent was obtained from both parties. The study was explained to each participant orally and in the form of a written letter before he/she agreed to participate. The information letter and informed consent form have been attached in the appendix.

Students – descriptive statistics and background information.

In total, six grade 12 students were interviewed regarding their perceptions of fit with a teacher in the school. Two students were female, four were male, and the student sample, albeit small, was representative of the larger school population which had a number of students of Aboriginal descent (17% self-declaring Aboriginal heritage, although the percentage of Aboriginal students is likely higher), students who were recent landed immigrants or refugees (15% of the student population), and a significant proportion of the student body speaking English as an additional language (16%). In this study, two of the six students were Aboriginal, two were landed immigrants and both also indicated that they began to learn the English language after arriving in Canada six years ago, and two were born in

Canada with one student's family being from Cambodia and the other student's family from Western Europe.

Student participants came from the classes of a teacher who had been teaching in the school for a total of 16 years. This teacher had spent her entire teaching career working in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods and had also grown up in a low socioeconomic neighbourhood. She taught one required core subject area – grade 10 Geography, and several option classes including Psychology, Marketing and Promotions, and a Canadian Tourism course. She had taught all six student participants their grade 10 Geography courses and was currently teaching them in one of her option courses. Three of the students had taken or were currently taking more than one of her option courses. As such, these students were instructed that they could relate their answers to their questions to one or all of their classes with this teacher.

Data Collection

This sought seeks to address the following questions:

1) a) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?

b) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?

In individual semi-structured interviews, the teachers were asked to explain what fitting with their students meant to them. They were also asked about what factors were considered when applying for past positions and what factors were considered in applying for their current positions. The objective was to investigate if teacher-student fit was reflected upon in such decisions and to what extent it may have been contemplated.

Teacher interview questions attempting to address these issues were numbers 2, 3, 4, 9, 13, 15, 16 and 17. Interview questions have been listed in Appendix 1.

2) Teachers choose the positions to which they apply while excluding others. What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions from certain positions or specific school divisions?

This question attempted to discern if job preferences in the teaching profession are socioculturally influenced, or if other factors play a dominant role in where teachers choose to work in Manitoba. Such data were derived as an extension of the interview questions listed previously, plus one additional question which explored the factors that influenced the transfer to a new school.

Teacher interview questions attempting to address these issues were numbers 3, 4, 14, and 15 (see Appendix 1).

3) a) What are the characteristics of teachers that create a positive teacher-student fit?

b) What are the characteristics of teachers that create a poor teacher-student fit?

Teachers were asked to identify reasons for transferring to their current position. Within this line of questioning, they were asked about their relationships with students in schools in low socioeconomic areas and with students in schools in higher socioeconomic areas. They were asked what they felt they brought to teaching that allowed them to work well with students and how learning is facilitated/occurs in their classroom settings.

Teacher interview questions attempting to address these issues were numbers 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 13 (see Appendix 1).

4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

The goal of the study was to determine the role of teacher-student fit in the quality of education provided to students. This question was addressed by interviewing students about their successes in learning over the course of the year with their current teacher. A semi-structured interview process was employed. Interview questions were designed to address concrete measures of success such as grades, and the quality and quantity of work produced (Student interview questions 10, 11, 12, and 13) and affective measures of success such as motivation to learn, participation, and interest levels (Student interview questions 9, 14, 15, and 16) and the degree to which students believe teacher-student fit has played a role in such measures of achievement (Student interview questions 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, and 20). Student interview questions can also be found in Appendix 1.

The quality of education provided to students was also addressed in the teacher interviews, in the event that teachers related the impact of teacher-student fit to their levels of devotion to their teaching position or career and to improving their students learning by matching activities occurring in the classroom to students' interest, developmental levels, and social needs.

Teacher interview questions attempting to address these issues were numbers 12 and 13 (see Appendix 1).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the following process: Teacher interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. Teachers were provided with a copy of their interview transcript so that member-checking could be employed. Transcripts were then coded for emerging themes related to the major questions this study sought to address including characteristics and factors creating a positive teacher-student fit and a poor teacher-student fit,

the factors considered in applying for positions, and factors that preclude applying for positions.

Student interviews were also audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. Students were then provided with copies of their interview transcripts to verify that their statements had been accurately recorded and so that they could make editions or revisions as required. The transcripts were then coded for themes related to student success rates and teacher-student fit.

Individual questions on both the teacher and student interviews were previously matched to the larger research question they were to address (see Data Collection above). Interview questions pertaining to larger research questions were sectioned off and then the detailed descriptions provided in each case were coded. Where possible and appropriate within each individual teacher case, codes were collapsed into more inclusive ideas. Then, individual teacher case studies were cross-analyzed to look for emerging themes within the parameters of the larger research questions. When codes in the aggregate data formed common threads, themes were designated. The same procedure was followed for student interviews. Finally, overlapping questions among the teacher and student interviews were compared in an attempt to determine the extent to which a positive teacher-student fit promotes student success in the classroom.

Theoretical Frameworks and the Analysis of Data

Three theoretical frameworks informed this research. Each played a role in the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from participants.

The underlying premise of social constructivism holds that knowledge is constructed through social processes and surrounding culture and that such knowledge will be multifaceted and varied based on the experiences of each individual (Creswell, 2013). Social

constructivism played a role in analyzing data regarding teachers' and students' perceptions of the characteristics that allow for positive teacher-student fit to occur in the classroom. The meanings of teacher-student fit will vary among individuals based on their sociocultural experiences. The teacher interview data analyzed in this study is based on participants' interpretations of the characteristics allowing them to best fit with students. Some of the personal and professional variables mentioned by teachers in relation to fit are characteristics that can be learned or refined over time. As such, the awareness of coming to know the characteristics that improve fit is a process of social construction, as is working to improve and implement such qualities within the classroom for the benefit of a certain group of students. These involve learning through life experiences, school cultures, and community involvement, all of which are socioculturally based factors. Since teacher qualities can be influenced and learned through sociocultural experience, then it is possible that skills to improve teacher-student fit can be taught and possibly continually honed to best meet the needs of Manitoba's students.

Interconnected pedagogical standpoints also informed the analysis of data in this study. They are culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally relevant teaching, and Critical Theory. Culturally responsive teaching recognizes that all students learn differently and uses students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, background, and language to make learning relevant to them (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive teaching requires that teachers recognize and affirm students' cultural knowledge and experience through the context of our current education system. This requires a shift in thinking in regards to pedagogical approaches; such need for change is informed by Critical Theory and involves the principles of social justice that challenge dominant structures holding a system in place (Lichtman, 2013). Participant

responses regarding teacher-student fit have been analyzed in relation to the occurrence of culturally responsive teaching as stated in their interviews including the acknowledgement and inclusion of student cultures in the classroom, expanding learning outside school walls and into the surrounding community, and critical reflection of self as a teacher and to empower students. Because students report success when culturally relevant teaching is employed (Kanu, 2006a/2007; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Lewthwaite et al., 2010), it is necessary to comment on the apparent use of such teaching in Manitoba classrooms.

Teacher interview questions regarding job application and exclusion decisions have been interpreted through a critical lens looking for themes related to decisions based on the diversity of student populations and socioeconomic neighbourhoods related to schools' locations. Responses regarding teachers' perceptions of the student body and the surrounding community in relation to culture, values, symbols, tools, or artifacts used in learning have been looked at in terms of social justice and cultural diversity. It is imparative to know if teachers in Manitoba are moving away from certain groups of students or experiencing frequent teacher turnover. Such findings require that we explore ways in which education may be made more equitable for all learners so that this does not occur in the future. In addition to addressing such disparities, Critical Theory was used to analyze any teacher assumptions put forth by participants that suggest reform is needed regarding the views of certain groups of student learners.

Ethical Considerations

There was no deception used in this study. Participants were fully informed of the purposes of the research. There was the potential for dual relationships involved had teachers from the principal researcher's current staff respond to the invitation letter. However, the

principal researcher was not in a position of power over the potential teacher participants and had no influence in the status of their employment. The principal researcher worked in a large high school with highly segregated departments. Because the principal researcher worked in a very specialized streamed program within this school, teachers from the principal researcher's current department were not considered as participants in the study. This did not become an issue that required addressing as no teachers from the principal researchers current department responded to the letter of invitation.

There was no power relationship between the principal researcher and potential student participants given that they were not current or past students of the principal researcher.

Strict measures to maintain anonymity and confidentiality were employed. Audio-recorded data and transcribed interviews have been kept on a password-protected laptop in the locked office of the principal researcher's faculty advisor. Signed informed consent forms have been kept in the faculty advisor's locked filing cabinet. Only the principal researcher and faculty advisor have had access to this data and information. No personal identifiers were recorded in any oral or written reports and pseudonyms were used so that it is not possible to trace data back to a particular participant. Hard copy data will be destroyed via confidential shredding and electronic data will be permanently deleted from the laptop within 2 years of the study. The use of the study's results in terms of potential publication or dissemination via presentation was indicated in consent forms and explained by the researcher to participants in oral conversation before any consent forms were signed.

Dissemination of the Results

A summary of the results of this study has been sent to all participants, as well as to the principal of the school from which student participants were recruited, and to the superintendents of all divisions that participated in the study.

Summary

The current research was a case study aimed at developing an enhanced understanding of teacher-student fit, the degree to which such fit is considered by teachers in the job application process, and the role it plays in the success of students. Because this study looked at both the degree to which such fit is considered by teachers and the impact of such fit on the education of students, the voices of teachers and students were sought in generating rich data from which insights could be drawn. Teacher and student participants were recruited within the province of Manitoba. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and coded for salient themes.

Because previous research suggests that sociocultural factors may play a role in where teachers feel most comfortable working (Cannata, 2010), teacher participants in the study have transferred from a school in a low-socioeconomic area to a school in a higher socioeconomic area, or vice-versa so that the role of sociocultural influences could be addressed. A goal of the study was to inform hiring practices by administrators, the job search process of teachers, and teacher education programs so that all students in Manitoba are afforded the best possible education our teachers could provide.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

This chapter describes the themes generated from the compiled interview data broken down by research question. The beginning section deals with teachers' consideration of their fit within the educational profession and with their students. It also describes teachers' perspectives on the meaning of teacher-student fit and what factors drew them to their current positions and groups of students. The second section discusses the reasons teachers provided for excluding positions from their job searches and explains the role of social contacts in application procedure. The third and fourth sections comprise the bulk of the study and the main research questions. They cover the personal and professional characteristics that are involved in teacher-student fit from the perspectives of teachers and students in the study and their relation to the perceived success of students in the classroom. The final section in this chapter concludes by commenting on some of the findings in this study that unearthed possible issues in the teacher hiring process in Manitoba.

This chapter contains a description of overall trends, themes, and significant findings. Participants direct quotations associated with these findings have been placed in tables that can be found in Appendix 7. Exemplar quotes have been placed within the discussion found in Chapter 5 where they will be expanded upon in relation to the research questions and corresponding literature.

Results by Guiding Question

Guiding question 1: The consideration of fit.

The first set of questions explored in this study was: *To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings? From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?*

In an attempt to thoroughly understand the application process from the perspectives of teachers, participants were asked how and why teaching was chosen as a career and what influenced this decision, why they chose to transfer from one school to another, and what factors influenced their decision to apply to or exclude themselves from job postings. These questions were meant to ascertain the degree to which teachers consider their fit with students when initially entering the profession and when applying to postings. Teachers were then explicitly asked what it means to fit with their students and asked to describe what they bring to teaching that allows them to fit with their students. To better understand teachers' responses to what they bring to teaching that allows them to fit with students, teachers were asked to describe what would be seen in their classroom when a positive fit between themselves and their students has been achieved.

When discussing their initial entry into the field of education, five of the ten teachers stated that teaching was a fallback career. They had entered university hoping to engage in other professions, including Medicine, Engineering, Anthropology, Criminology and Graphic Arts. When these hopes became unrealistic or failed to materialize, three of five teachers indicated that they could teach the subject or area they were passionate about and this was their primary reason for subsequently transferring to Faculties of Education. The teachers initially wishing to enter Medicine, Engineering, and Criminology became Science/Physical Education, Mathematics, and Mathematics/Science teachers, respectively. The participant wishing to be an Anthropologist became a History/English teacher, and the individual wishing

to be a Graphic Artist taught Graphics/Industrial Arts classes. Having more time with family, having more breaks to travel the world, and the chance to mentor young adults were also mentioned as reasons for switching to Faculties of Education.

Half the teachers interviewed in this study had gone back to university after working in a profession for several years. For these teachers, education was their second career. Of this group, three teachers had families with young children at the time they returned to university and cited that Education provided a profession with stability, and hours and holidays that allowed them to spend increased time with their families. The other half of the teachers entered university immediately after completing high school. Of the five participants entering university from high school and in search of their first career, three stated that they knew they wanted to become educators. One based his decision on career assessments he had completed in his grade 12 year of high school which indicated he possessed qualities that would be a positive fit with the teaching profession and having had teachers whom he felt were role models in his life. Two stated that they had grown up coaching children in sports and enjoyed the work which led them to careers in Physical Education. These two were the only teachers to mention wanting to make a difference in the lives of children as the primary reason for entering teaching as a profession.

All teachers in this study had transferred positions at least once. When analyzing discussions regarding the factors that precipitated the need to switch schools, only one teacher mentioned fit with students. This individual felt that he spent much of his time managing student behavior and sought a school with higher academic standards and less behavioral issues. Teacher-student fit did not arise as a significant theme when analyzing reasons for transferring positions. Instead themes that arose included becoming tired of dealing with

unsupportive administrators, attempting to find a permanent position rather than signing repeated term contracts, higher pay when moving from private school to public school, and wanting a position closer to home. Although some teachers did cite incidences of student behavior that caused them to feel unsatisfied at times, it was the manner in which administrators dealt with student behavior that determined teachers' overall satisfaction with their position.

Similarly, teacher-student fit did not arise as a theme when addressing what teachers were looking for in their new positions. The primary factor sought by teachers in search of a new school was finding a position in which they could teach their content knowledge areas. All but two teachers mentioned a job that involved their teachable subject area as being the most imparative in applying for a position. Other themes that arose involved finding a position with a more manageable workload or less demands than the previous position, wishing to work with the age group that matched their training in their Education degree, and finding a position that was a short distance from their homes.

However, when asked explicitly what constitutes a good fit with students, all teachers interviewed were able to relate a positive fit to the engagement and participation of students in the classroom. When discussing the factors teachers felt they brought to teaching that allowed them to fit with their students, a difference arose based on where teachers were currently teaching. All teachers currently teaching at schools in low socio-economic neighbourhoods exclusively focused on personal characteristics including the ability to relate to children in that area, having the ability to form relationships and connections with students inside and outside the classroom, having a calm demeanor and not overreacting to situations that arise, being friendly, approachable, and accountable to students, having patience, empathy, and

understanding for the plight of their students. These teachers did not mention any professional characteristics when discussing what allows them to fit well with their students. Meanwhile, professional characteristics such as ability to work well with a certain grade level and academic skills related to subject matter were mentioned only by one person currently working in a school in a very high socio-economic area. There were only two teachers in this study currently working at schools in high socio-economic neighbourhoods. The other teacher working at a school in a high income area was teaching an at-risk group of students with multiple needs. She also focused solely on personal characteristics when answering this question.

To validate that teachers practiced what they preached when discussing how they fit with their students, teachers were asked to describe the instructional methods that have worked well for students. Again teachers working at schools in low socio-economic neighbourhoods seemed to have an overwhelming knowledge that instructional methods should be based on the needs of their current learners. All but one teacher spoke of constantly assessing to ascertain their students' levels of understanding, relating topics covered to real life situations and uses, using hands-on, interactive, and student-centred learning techniques. Of these participants, some were part of a multi-year divisional professional development initiative aimed to increase assessment for learning (AFL) strategies in the classroom. This may, in part, account for some of their awareness regarding the need for student feedback prior to planning instruction. The remaining teacher said she chose the instructional method based on how she was most comfortable presenting the topic. That teacher was working at a school in a high income area of the city and had the fewest years of experience in the teaching profession of those interviewed for this study.

Finally to address the extent to which teachers consider fit with students, and with the school organization, and subject matter, participants were asked if they had ever signed a teaching contract or agreed to teach any subject regardless of whether they felt qualified to do so, simply because they needed a job (see Table 1). Eight of ten teachers replied that they had. The consequences and ramifications of this will be explored in the next chapter.

Guiding question 2: Factors influencing self-exclusion from job postings.

Within the determination of what draws teachers to certain positions also lies the potential to uncover factors that preclude teachers from being drawn to other positions. As such, the second guiding question asked: *Teachers choose the positions to which they apply while excluding others. What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions from certain positions or specific school divisions?*

When asked about what factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions from applying to positions or divisions, only one premise arose as a feature for exclusion. While the major theme that emerged when addressing why teachers applied for their current position was subject matter congruence with their teachable areas, the number one factor that teachers used to exclude positions was distance from home. Eight of ten teachers reported that they did not apply to postings or divisions that required driving upwards of approximately 60 minutes a day.

When asked what appealed to them about the posting for their current job, the teachers cited teaching in their area of expertise, working with the age group of students with whom they were most comfortable, and finding a stable and supportive work environment. Four

teachers stated that they relied on social contacts when making their decision to apply to or exclude a given position. One teacher stated that his father knew the principal at his first school and his brother in-law worked at his current school prior to his application there. Another teacher stated that she had applied for and been offered two positions within the same division. Although both positions were in high socioecomonic neighbourhoods, one position involved working with at-risk students. She chose what she considered to be the more difficult position, working with the at-risk youth, because of her social contacts. Firstly, she knew the teacher leaving the school whose offer she declined and had heard this individual's concerns regarding lack of support from administration. Secondly, the vice-principal at the school whose offer she accepted had been her high school teacher and she knew that this person had always been and would be supportive of her and her work. These two scenarios suggest not only did social contacts have a large influence on where teachers chose to apply, but also that nepotism may play a larger role in how teachers are hired in Manitoba than we are willing to admit. The third teacher indicated that his friend worked at his current school prior to his application and had encouraged him to apply. The fourth teacher indicated that the use of social contacts in seeking and accepting multiple positions had resulted in two very different experiences. One experience was very negative and did not match the feedback given by her social contacts that were teaching staff in the division. The second experience, using her friend and colleague as a social contact, was quite positive. Her first decision to transfer from a school in a high socioeconomic neighbourhood to a school in a low socioeconomic neighbourhood was guided by the positive feedback of individuals in the division. Upon arriving at this school, it became quickly clear to her that her values did not match those of the administration. She decided to initiate a second transfer, this time also relying on a colleague

and friend who had done a term at the school to which she subsequently transferred. She placed so much emphasis on the affirmative experience of her friend, that this teacher spent several years in contact with the principal of the school before a position opened up that fit her teachable subject areas.

Three teachers who had transferred from schools in high socio-economic neighbourhoods to schools in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods initiated second transfers. One of these teachers indicated his decision to initiate a second transfer involved moving to rural Manitoba which allowed him to be closer to his family. However, when discussing their previous schools, the other two teachers linked their students' academic failure to the home environments. The implications and issues with correlating such factors will be addressed in the Discussion. While both applying to and finding their next positions in low income areas, the two teachers wishing to leave their first low income schools stated the need for a stable learning environment and supportive administration in such learning environments. Both these teachers also indicated that students at their second low income area schools were populated by many recent immigrants to Canada and stated that these students had cultural and family values similar to their own.

Guiding question 3: The characteristics of positive teacher-student fit.

Because existing literature on hiring the right candidate for a given teaching position tends to focus on the perception of administrators involved in the hiring process, this study sought to ascertain teachers' perspectives regarding the characteristics that allow positive fits amongst them and their students. Specifically the research questions asked: *What are the characteristics of teachers that facilitate the development of relationships and pedagogically*

appropriate activities for students? That is, what factors create a positive teacher-student fit? What are the characteristics of teachers that create conditions in which the development of relationships and educationally appropriate learning are difficult for students? That is, what factors create a poor teacher-student fit?

Prior to asking any interview questions that required teachers to address factors of fit, teachers were asked if they were happy at their current schools and if they would like to stay at their current position or return to a previous position. Most teachers answered that they were happy at their current position, although two stated that they were only sometimes happy at their current position. When asked for reasons for feeling this way, each individual mentioned that it was strained relationships with other staff members that prevented them from feeling fully satisfied with their position; neither individual mentioned the students as a reason for being unhappy at work. The remainder of the teachers indicated they were happy with their positions at their current school, with five of eight mentioning their students as the primary reason for their satisfaction. Students' respect for teachers and each other, kindness, and positive behaviors were mentioned as well as the fact that these teachers felt they were having a positive impact on the students with whom they worked. For those reporting satisfaction with their current position, positive staff relationships, supportive administration, working in an orderly and structured school environment, and teaching subject matter they enjoyed were also themes that arose in playing a role in their level of contentment. Two teachers also reported wishing they could return to previous teaching position, but again cited that it was the supportive and collaborative staff relationships that made them feel this way. Because students were mentioned only in positive circumstances with respect to teachers'

current positions, results were analyzed with the underlying assumption that the teachers in this study had generally positive teacher-student fits in their current teaching roles.

Teachers were, however, clearly able to articulate that they felt more comfortable with one group of students over another. Five teachers preferring to work with students attending schools in low income neighbourhoods indicated that their experiences with students at schools in higher income neighbourhoods left them with impressions of children that felt elite or entitled, often feeling that parents' actions were similar. For example, when students had been sent to the office, rather than hearing the teacher's point of view, parents immediately defended their child. These teachers also reported that parental involvement was often so high that it was the parents who completed homework and projects rather than allowing student to take charge of their learning. The same teachers recognized, however, that the flip side of the coin is that students in lower socioeconomic areas often do not have parental supports in place and this created challenges when attempting to motivate students to value education.

The five teachers who preferred to work with students attending schools in higher income areas cited that when working in lower income areas, students often came with attachment issues, didn't value education and would refuse to work or do homework, that student behavior was often disrespectful to staff and other students, and that there was generational gang activity which promoted a culture of violence in schools.

All but one teacher reported that working with students in low income areas was more challenging than working with students in higher income areas due to the increased needs of the students including not having adequate nutrition and sleep, lacking help with homework, and being deficient in the appropriate supplies to complete school work. Many teachers acknowledged this was not the fault of parents and the intent was not to place the blame on

family, but rather to indicate the pervasiveness of poverty in the community. The one teacher that reported students in a higher income area as more challenging was working with an at risk group of students. From her descriptions, her clientele was similar in many social and economic respects to those children attending schools in low income neighbourhoods despite their attendance at a school in an affluent area. Many students lived in a government funded Manitoba Housing Complex on the outskirts of an affluent Winnipeg neighbourhood. Many lived with single parents who struggled economically to make ends meet, and many students were several grade levels behind in their education.

While some teachers currently teaching in low income areas reported rising to the challenge of motivating students to succeed and saw poverty issues as a means to build positive relationships with students, others seemed to lower their standards of education and requirements in the classroom and saw poverty and its correlated factors as barriers to learning that could not be overcome through teaching alone (see Figure 1, Appendix 7). Two teachers working in low income neighbourhoods stated that they would likely leave in the next few years if a position in their teachable areas arose either closer to their homes or in a school that provided them more opportunities to expand their teaching skills. Five teachers reported lowering their expectations while working with students in low income neighbourhoods or giving up on teaching significant content. These teachers increased the amount of individual booklet work students were given, stopped assigning homework, and increased the amount of summative testing done. Four teachers reported changing their teaching in positive manners including making their delivery more engaging, increasing hands-on activities to learn new topics, increasing the amount of differentiation used in their

classroom to meet a range of students' needs, and increasing personal patience and investing the time needed to thoroughly learn topics.

As discussed previously, all teachers working in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods, along with a teacher in working in a high income area in a classroom of at-risk, high-needs students, stressed the importance of being able to develop relationships with children. Analysis of responses in this section went a step further to look at the reasons teachers felt they were able to build such positive relationships. The characteristics provided in teachers' explanations were coded into broad themes. Again, it was personal characteristics that were provided by nine of ten teachers as making them suited to work with their students. The primary factor referred to most often by participants was the ability to understand the needs and the plights of their students. This was followed by the ability to engage children to participate in educational activities both inside and outside the classroom, and the use of humor as a tool to build rapport with students. The final personal characteristic that could be coded into a broad theme was patience. Teachers described many difficult situations and knowingly acknowledged that having patience, calmly assessing situations rather than overreacting, and responding to students' behavior without judgment allowed them to work well with their current students. The one teacher that did not stress the importance of building relationships felt he was suited to work with students based on his continual improvement in content area expertise through professional development opportunities and reading current literature in the field of Education.

Although some responses were repeated frequently and could be used to generate overall themes, it was found that many of the characteristics mentioned were unique to the individual teacher being interviewed and reflected that teacher's personal life circumstances,

education, background, and strengths. These have been summarized in Table 2 and will be further discussed in the following chapter.

When a positive fit was achieved in the classroom, all teachers acknowledged that students were more likely to participate. They cited the use of group work and hands on activities most often because activities gave them a chance to work with a small number of students, especially those that may be struggling, at a time to better deliver content knowledge and address any student concerns. Although a few teachers said that they used direct teaching, they also acknowledged that they tried to minimize it. In general, teachers described student-centred activities that allowed their children to best show their learning, for example inquiry projects. Half the teachers stressed the importance of relating content matter to real life situations or using the subject matter to teach life lessons.

Guiding question 4: Student success rates as related to fit.

Ultimately, the role of teacher-student fit in the education system becomes important when assessing the quality of education that is being provided to students. The final guiding question in this study asked: *Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?*

Student interviews comprised of three main sections. One group of questions aimed to assess the extent to which students were achieving concrete measures of success such as current and past grades and the quality and quantity of work being produced. The second group of questions aimed to assess the extent to which students were achieving affective measures of success such as interest levels in the subject matter and in education in general,

classroom participation, and motivation to learn. The final group of questions sought to discern the extent to which students believed that teacher-student fit had played a role in such measures of achievement. The quality of education provided to students was also addressed in teacher interviews. The results of each are described below.

Concrete measures of student success. All students participating in this study were generally high achievers. Their expected grades in their current classes ranged from 85% to 97%. Most students reported their grades tended not to fluctuate much whether they were in the subject area(s) being discussed for this study or other subject areas. Four students indicated their average grades in school fell between 70% and 90%. Two participants reported high grades in all subject areas except English Language Arts (ELA) and Precalculus classes. Both indicated they struggled with the complex and multi-step processes in Mathematics. One student indicated he was a recent immigrant to Canada and as such struggled in ELA due to the language barrier. The other student reported that he felt an incongruent fit between his writing style and that of his ELA teacher and this mismatch had resulted in poor grades in that subject area.

It is likely that the nature of a student who responds to extracurricular projects, such as being interviewed for a university project, is high functioning in terms of organization and willingness to learn, thereby resulting in a generally successful student. Because there was little range in student grades, students were not asked to respond to question #11 of the student interview questions (see Appendix 1). This question asked students to indicate if their current teacher had played a role in their grades changing. Because minimal to no change was

reported across subject areas, this question was excluded. In addition, no change was reported in the quantity of work students were handing in prior to and after having this teacher.

On the other hand, when asked about the quality of their work and if they felt it had changed over the course of the year with their current teacher, all but one student indicated that there had been a change with the quality of their work improving. The one student that felt the quality of his work had decreased did not feel this was related to his teacher in any way, but rather a result of the additional activities, roles, and responsibilities of becoming a young adult. He discussed recently passing his driver's test and being out of the home much more, therefore spending less time on homework. Although he did recognize that the quality of his work could be better, he still reported expecting a high mark in the course. Therefore, it is likely that being a high achieving student, he was aware that he could allow the quality of his work to deteriorate slightly and still do quite well in school. Despite feeling that the quality of his work had decreased over the years and the course of the semester, this student did indicate that the teacher explicitly taught students about their learning styles and this had helped him to understand how he best learned material in school. He indicated applying this knowledge to all subject areas.

The remaining students who reported improvement in the quality of their work each attributed the improved quality to strategies their teacher implemented. Four students generated a similar theme when interviews were coded. They indicated that the manner in which their teacher provided help was the number one reason their work had improved. They citied that she helped them by explicitly stating the requirements for work that was to be handed in. There was no hidden agenda; the teacher was clear about what needed to be completed for marking and frequently reminded students about such expectations. In addition,

she motivated and encouraged students regularly, and gave consistent feedback on their progress. In terms of helping students, she also discussed her life as a student and attempted to help her students learn from her mistakes. Two of these students, like the student who felt his work quality had dwindled, also reported that their teacher recognized and supported individual learning styles by allowing them to present material in the way they best learn.

The final student indicated that the teacher had improved the quality of her work by teaching her to be a more independent student. She reported that the teacher placed her trust in students to accomplish a given task and taught students how to manage their time efficiently in order to complete projects. This student said that she felt comfortable going to the teacher for help at any time, but knew that in future university studies, she would be able to attribute her success to the time management skills and independence her teacher had given her. Because students' words spoke volumes on how their teacher impacted the quality of their work, the results have been summarized in Table 3.

Affective Measures of Student Success. Because student success means far more than just improving grades, students were asked to describe some affective measures related to successful classroom behaviors. These included motivation to learn, participation in the classroom, and interest in subject matter and education. In order to understand how this teacher may impact students on affective measures of success, students were first asked about things done in their class that helped them to learn best and if they felt such activities and lessons were fun and interesting. Three students stated that group and classroom discussions were the best way for them to learn during the teacher's classes. Two students felt that the inquiry projects they engaged in during this teacher's class were the most beneficial parts of

their classroom learning. One student felt that the hands on activities students completed and the fieldtrips which gave real life examples of the material being learned were the best ways for him to retain information. All six students reported that these activities and lessons were fun and interesting.

To expand upon this, students were asked if their current teacher presented them with activities that made them feel motivated to learn and make the subject at hand fun to learn. Students were asked to provide an example of what a lesson might look like. Again all students felt that this teacher gave them activities that made them feel motivated to learn and by doing so created a classroom atmosphere where learning became enjoyable. The lessons and activities described ranged from playing Jeopardy for prizes, geocaching, making humorous acronyms as a class to minimize the stress of memorizing topics for tests and exams, the telling of stories, watching inspirational videos of students engaged in work or research related to the topic being learned, and various field trips including tours of many Winnipeg landmarks, museums, festivals, and camping trips. In every case, students described being motivated by doing, whether it be engaging in a hands on activity, participating in a field trip, contributing to group discussions and story telling, and watching and discussing motivational videos. Students were actively engaged in the subject matter in each setting. Moreover, students repeatedly stated that the activities and lessons were fun. Some students spoke of their teacher using humor to put them at ease while learning, while others spoke about classroom discussions in which the entire class erupted in laughter. It was also mentioned that this teacher engaged in rewarding the entire class when all students completed a task well. For example a student described a situation where the teacher had taken the entire class to dinner for a job well done on a project. Based on student responses, it seems likely

that this teacher was well aware of the need to use humor to relate to children and create a comforting rather than stressful and strict learning environment. As well, she appeared to recognize the importance of actively involving students in the material though multiple learning styles – videos for visual learners, hands-on activities for kinesthetic learners, and classroom or group discussions for auditory learners. She also seemed to value learning experience both inside and outside the classroom, realizing that learning is much more than what happens within the four walls of a classroom. These factors played a role in the motivational levels of students in this study.

The second affective measure investigated was student participation in the classroom. Students were asked if they felt comfortable in the teacher's class and if they participated often. They were then asked if their level of participation changed over the years or over the course of the current year and if their current teacher played a role in any reported change in comfort or participation levels. All students reported feeling as though they contributed often in the given class and all stated that they felt their participation in this teacher's classes had increased. Most reported being more comfortable and open with this teacher than other teachers in the school. The coded reasons for increased participation levels in this teacher's classroom could be grouped into two main categories including the fact that she creates a comfortable learning environment, often through the use of humor, and that she values all student's opinions. One student explained that he felt that because this teacher built in an extracurricular component to her courses requiring students to complete a number of volunteer hours, he became more social in general due to his interactions with the people he met and worked with during such volunteer situations. Student comments regarding increased

participation levels have been summarized in Table 4 and will be explored further in the Discussion section.

Based on students' feelings for both concrete and affective measures of success, a positive teacher-student fit can impact students' perceptions of success in education. Here students reported a general improvement in the quality of their work when discussing concrete measures of success. The teacher characteristics that impacted such improvement were reported as that manner in which help was provided including being given clear explanations, being motivated and encouraged to continue trying, provided with consistent feedback, listening to the teacher's life lessons, and being taught to recognize preferential learning styles and being provided with activities that support multiple learning styles. The teacher was also reported as being trusting of her students and as recognizing the importance of teaching students about time management. In addition, students related increased affective measures such as motivation and participation to teacher qualities. Students reported increased motivation to learn and participation in class when the teacher created an atmosphere where learning was made enjoyable. This was accomplished by the teacher through focusing on activities that involved "doing" (discussing, watching videos, participating in field trips, etc.) as well as using humor in the classroom, valuing student opinions and thoughts, and providing rewards for student accomplishments. The characteristics listed by students as impacting success rates are a mix of the teacher's personal and professional characteristics.

Students' Perceptions of Fit in Relation to Success Rates. Students were asked questions to assess the degree to which students believe teacher-student fit has played a role in both concrete and affective measures of achievement.

One indicator of teacher-student fit involves exploring the extent to which students feel their teacher is aware of their learning styles and the degree to which he or she manipulates the classroom environment and his/her teaching to best suit student needs. When describing what a typical class in the teacher's room looks like, students indicated that this teacher's class was a relaxed environment where lessons were fun, informative, and activity or discussion based. The teacher set up the class by using various tools to grab students' attention including personal stories, stories from current literature and news articles, and video clips. She then set up the activity with an explanation, and gave students time to complete the task while helping them as needed. Students indicated that this teacher has weekly schedules and would outline the goals for the week so that students knew the intended direction of the subject matter and had clear expectation for work completion at all times.

When describing how they learned best students described their preferred learning styles as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic and all indicated that their teacher set up her classroom to tap into these preferred learning styles by using a mix of visuals – photos, videos, and Smartboard lessons, auditory – telling stories, reading to students, describing situations, having classroom discussions, and allowing students to engage in group discussions, and kinesthetic – having students create tangible materials for Marketing, volunteering in the community for classes, and by creating outdoor activities related to subject matter. A single student indicated that he had loved sitting in his Biology class where his teacher lectured. The student likened this teacher's style to that of a stereotypical university

professor who might, often by necessity, lecture to a large several hundred student introductory class by standing at the front of the room and talking about recent developments in the field while students listened and took notes on what was presented to them. This student said that he felt this rarely ever occurred in his Tourism, Psychology, or Marketing classes as it was simply not his teacher's teaching style. He was the only student to indicate enjoying listening to a teacher lecture. Two students explicitly indicated that they detested teachers that taught in such a manner and the remainder did not include any comment on lecture style direct teaching.

Another indicator of teacher-student fit involves exploring the extent to which students feel their teacher has helped them to learn better, to become a more successful learner, and to feel confident about what they walk away from a course knowing. When asked how much they felt they had learned in this teacher's class, four of six students felt they had learned a substantial amount. The remaining two felt they had learned an average amount of subject matter content, but both of these students indicated that they had learned how to apply for university scholarships in this teacher's class and that this life skill would serve them well in their future. They also indicated that other teachers in their school did not engage in preparing them for their future studies the way that their current teacher did on a regular basis. In fact, four of six students commented on how they felt this teacher not only prepared them for success in their course, but also for success in real life through the topics discussed, the application of material and skills learned, the encouragement to participate in extracurricular volunteer experiences, and the fact that this teacher acted as a mentor to students. This provides some indication that students may wish to have a teacher who is willing to go beyond curriculum learning outcomes and teach students about the world outside their high

school. It seems the interactions gained through volunteering and the university preparation this teacher engaged in with her students led them to believe she was a good fit for them in terms of what they really needed to know to be successful in life.

All students in the study agreed that the teacher had helped them to learn better. When explanations were coded, two themes arose. To begin, students repeatedly discussed the level of real world material covered by this teacher ranging from how to handle interactions with people, to the importance of finding a career which is of personal interest and value, to how to apply for and pay for university and college. Secondly, students felt that this teacher motivated and encourage them to experience many things in their education. Because she made the classroom a comfortable and open place to share and students were not criticized for thoughts or mistakes, students were actively encouraged to participate and share with one another. Because this teacher made education fun and enjoyable, was enthusiastic about her work, and shared her personal stories and interests, students were motivated to engage in the activities and materials presented. And finally, because this teacher encouraged students to give back through their community by volunteering and becoming involved, students were encouraged to become active citizens in their community, neighbourhood, and across various areas of Winnipeg.

Lastly, to discern the characteristics of a positive and negative teacher-student fit, students were explicitly asked if they felt the teacher was a good fit for them, if they felt they had a positive relationship with her, why they felt this was so, and how the teacher shows interest in their lives and shows that she cares about their success in school. Because all students reported a positive fit with this teacher and felt they had good relationships with her, all results are interpreted in terms of teacher characteristics that foster a positive teacher-

student fit in the classroom. It is likely that inability to show or not possessing such qualities is indicative of the factors that would result in a negative teacher-student fit in the classroom and make building relationships with students, planning successful activities, and fostering student learning difficult.

The reasons students felt they had a good fit with their current teacher fell into the following categories: The teacher was open and honest with students. Comments in this category suggested that the teacher was willing to share stories of her life. Students felt as though they were talking to a friend or family member because she let them into her life. Next this teacher was thought of as a counsellor. Students described a teacher who was willing to listen to students and their concerns, and act as a mentor and a confidant when needed. Her calm demeanor allowed her to work with students who felt stressed and upset to successfully help them feel less anxious. In essence, students felt very comfortable going to her for advice and when they needed help. This teacher was described as being humorous. Students felt they fit well with her because they could joke with her and have fun with her while learning. Students spoke of this teacher being relaxed in the classroom and not overly strict. Students reported respecting their teacher and the rules, but also realized that unlike their other teachers, this teacher would not yell at them or become angry with them, especially concerning things they deemed as minor infractions to the rules such as walking into class a few minutes late and handing in an assignment a few days after it was due. This is also related to the next theme that was derived from student explanations. Students felt that this teacher had a firm understanding of their needs. Student descriptions were individual but in each case, the teacher showed awareness for some of the issues dealt with by students growing up in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods. One student cited not having eaten and while one of his other

teachers asked him to leave the room for bringing food into class, his Marketing teacher had no issue with the fact that he needed to eat while she taught. Another student described having to leave school for a few weeks to return to his home town for a family matter. He described this teacher as being accepting of his late assignments and that she put him at ease by telling him not to worry about his grade and the time he missed while away. While handing in work late would normally not be considered holding students to high standards, in this case, the teacher realized the student needed to return home to help his family and that the student, being over seas, was not submitting work late by choice. Student quotes related to their perceptions of positive teacher-student fit have been summarized in Table 5. Here all teacher fit characteristics reported by students were personal rather than professional attributes of the teacher.

This study has argued that part of developing a positive teacher-student fit relies heavily upon building relationships with students, especially with those students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, students were asked about what their teacher does to show that she is interested in their lives and their success in school. According to students, the characteristics of this teacher that allowed her to build positive relationships with students could be grouped into two main themes. These included her ability to act like a parental figure. Students often spoke of going to her like they might go to a parent for advice, guidance, support, and empathy. Such behavior was also reported by one of the teachers interviewed for this study. He reported feeling much like a father because for many of his students he was the only stable male in their lives for that year. Students also felt that their Tourism, Marketing, and Psychology teacher showed she cared by regularly checking in with them about their lives, their other classes, and her class and addressing and attending to any

problems students may report to her. In essence, she made it a priority to understand what is happening in the lives of her students. Again, both are personal characteristic of the teacher that impacted her fit with her students.

Finally, students were asked if they have had any other teachers in their education with whom they felt a positive fit. They were then asked to describe the characteristics of this person that make it so. A list of positive teacher-student fit characteristics as generated from this question has been generated in Table 6. The relationship to the coded themes for the current teacher in the study has also been shown.

Teachers' perceptions of fit in relation to success rates. The quality of education provided to students was also addressed in the teacher interviews. It was thought that teachers may relate the impact of teacher-student fit to their levels of commitment to their teaching position or career and to improving their students learning by matching activities occurring in the classroom to students' interest, developmental levels, and social needs. Although all but one teacher in this study was able to show awareness that student activities should be based on the developmental and current academic abilities of their students and then scaffolded from there, few reported spending more time planning for students in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods to meet their needs. Of the eight teachers currently working in low income neighbourhoods, two indicated that their planning and preparation had remained the same regardless of the school in which they taught. Meanwhile, four stated that they spent less time planning for students now than when they were working in higher socioeconomic neighbourhoods. Only two teachers currently working in low income neighbourhoods reported spending more time planning now than before and only one of these two teachers

attributed her increased planning to meeting student needs. She stated that due to falling literacy rates within the community, there was a need to increase student reading and writing skills across all subject areas and this required significantly more preparation time. The other teacher related his increased planning to the subject matter he was teaching at his new school, Precalculus Mathematics, and stated that the curriculum was so content dense that he needed to prepare more material to meet the specific learning outcomes for the course.

In terms of teachers currently working in high socioeconomic neighbourhoods, the teacher working with the at-risk group of students indicated she spent more time planning now than she had in her previous position. However, like the Precalculus teacher above, she also related her increased time investment to the subject matter being taught explaining that although she had a Science minor, she had never actually taught a Science class, not even during her teacher-candidate practicum placements, and that she was also teaching English, which was not one of her teachable subject areas. This discomfort with the material led her to spend more time preparing, and became clear from her justification during the interview, that she was preparing herself to appear confident and proficient in the subject matter in front of the students rather than planning activities to best meet the students' needs. The second teacher currently working in a high income area indicated he had spent more time planning when working with students in a lower income area of the division. He stated being in charge of the breakfast program at that school, and had worked with the Aboriginal Consultant for the division to generate a lunch program with a games room so that students had a place to stay that kept them away from trouble during the school day. Although this teacher showed much initiative to meet the needs of his students before school and at lunch, he did not mention increased planning as related to classroom activities. He was also the one teacher that

did not speak of building relationships with the students. Even when speaking of the game room, he indicated that it gave students a place to socialize with each other. As seen from the reports of students in the current study, students seem to need a teacher that they feel comfortable approaching and speaking with about problems; they want to socialize and joke with their teachers, and need someone who tries to understand their lives. Although it is likely that in running the breakfast program and developing the lunch program, the teacher realized that teacher-student relationships are important. The extent to which he engaged in building such relationships, however, is unclear.

The results of the current study suggest that for most teachers, it is the subject matter being taught that determines the amount of planning for classroom activities rather than the student needs or perceived fit with students. As disheartening as this may be, there was one teacher who related her commitment to increasing literacy rates to the needs of her students and so ways in which we might make teachers aware of the developmental and social needs of their students and related these to appropriate planning and improving teacher-student fit will be discussed in the next chapter.

To conclude this section, it is important to note that there was only moderate congruence between the characteristics students perceived allowed for a positive fit with their teacher and those actually described by the teachers in the study. The converging characteristics included possessing a calm demeanor (teachers' response)/relaxed in classroom (students' response), acting as a positive role model/parental figure, being nonjudgmental/valuing opinions, the ability to use humor in the classroom, relating learning to real life situations, and understanding student needs. All other characteristics diverged. Teachers emphasized having patience for student behavior, trying to find common ground by

relating to student interests, growing up with similar values, socioeconomic status, and cultural values to students, having empathy for the plight of students, and being motivated to learn new teaching strategies. Students on the other hand, felt the characteristics that made teachers fit with them included being open and honest, acting as a counsellor, understanding what is happening in their lives through regular teacher-student check-ins, providing help through clear expectations, encouragement, and feedback, addressing multiple learning styles, and valuing learning both inside the classroom and in the community. Because there is only some overlap, there may be a need to increase teacher awareness of student feelings regarding teacher-student fit. This will be addressed in suggestions for future research.

The Hiring Process

Although originally grouped with interview questions that aimed to discern teachers' understanding and awareness of their fit with students, the following questions were separated upon analysis of the results because themes that arose speak to not only the consideration of teacher-student fit among job candidates, but also possible systemic issues in the teacher hiring process that must be addressed in order to provide students with teachers who are in fact the best suited to meet their needs. The interview questions analyzed for this section are: *What sorts of things were discussed in your interview(s)? How did this influence your choosing to work in a given school? Did you have an accurate sense of what your students might be like before accepting the position based on your interview conversation? Have you ever signed a teaching contract or agreed to teach any subject because you needed a job? If so, can you tell me about this experience?*

Interviews.

Teachers reported that interviews tended to focus on eight main areas. They included: Extracurriculars they could run for students outside of school hours; What they could bring to the school during school hours to increase student participation; Teaching strategies and assessment strategies; Behavior scenarios that asked how teachers would react to verbal or behavioral actions of students, (e.g. "What would you do if a student did/said _____?"); Content knowledge questions related to teachable subject areas; What teachers knew about the school; The ability to adapt, modify, and differentiate instruction; Philosophy of Education.

Unprepared for students.

Only one teacher reported that the interview gave his an accurate sense of what the students might be like. That teacher was given an explicit scenario question to start his interview. He felt that because this set the tone early on in the interview process, he was able to understand some of the challenges faced by teaching staff at the school. The remaining nine teachers each indicated that they did not have an accurate sense of what their students might be like based on the interview and the resulting sentiment ranged from disappointment with the lack of academic ability of the students, to giving up on teaching certain concepts, to feeling a culture of violence at their workplace. These results are summarized in Table 7.

More than problematic interviews.

Of the ten teachers interviewed, eight admitted they had signed a contract and/or agreed to teach subjects they were unqualified to teach simply because they wanted a teaching

position. Some said they had done this multiple times. Thus, there is the need to discuss and explore the interview and hiring processes currently implemented in Manitoba.

Summary

Teacher-student fit did not arise as a significant theme when analyzing the reasons that teachers gave for transferring from one socioeconomic area to another. Rather, it seems that seeking a supportive administration, attempting to find a permanent position, higher pay by public school divisions, and wanting a position closer to home are the main reasons that teachers provided in regard to their relocations.

When searching for new positions, teachers excluded themselves from applying to positions in which the distance from home required driving upwards of approximately 60 minutes a day. In addition, several teachers indicated that they relied on the perceptions of social contacts in the school system when making their application decisions.

Collaborative staff relationships seem to play an important role in the overall happiness of teaching staff. For those that reported being presently happy with their position, students played a primary role in such satisfaction through respect, kindness, and showing improvement in some aspect of school or social life in which the teacher may have had an impact.

Among teachers working with marginalized groups of students, the importance of being able to develop relationships with children was stressed. The characteristics that teachers felt allowed them to build positive relationships were all personal in nature and included the ability to understand the needs and the plights of their students, the ability to

engage children in the classroom, the use of humor as a tool to build rapport with students, and having patience.

Students reported that both the quality of their work and their participation in the classroom improved when a positive teacher-student fit was achieved. However, there was only little overlap between teachers' and students' comments as to what constitutes a positive teacher-student fit. Possessing a calm demeanor, acting as a positive role model, valuing opinions, using humor in the classroom, relating learning to real life situations, and understanding student needs were themes generated by both groups. Students felt that being open and honest, acting as a counsellor, providing regular check-ins, providing help through clear expectations, encouragement, and feedback, addressing multiple learning styles, and valuing learning both inside the classroom and in the community were factors that allowed their teacher to achieve a positive fit with them. These factors did not arise as themes in the teacher interviews.

Several problematic findings arose in this study. Firstly, teachers in general did not report increasing their planning for struggling students and seemed to decrease their expectations of students in low income areas. Most teachers indicated that they would sign a contract regardless of where or what subjects they were expected to teach. Finally, findings suggest that the interview process in Manitoba may be incredibly "information-poor" (Liu & Johnson, 2006, p. 338), that teachers have little idea of what their students will be like, and that principals are gaining little knowledge as to whether a teacher is the best fit for their students and the school. These will all be discussed further in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study attempted to discern teacher characteristics that led to a positive teacher-student fit in the classroom. Within this larger goal, the job application process for teachers was discussed and the role of sociocultural factors in application decisions was addressed. In an attempt to speak to these issues, much information was derived about possible systemic problems in the teacher hiring process in Manitoba. Because all but one study on teacher hiring (Cranston, 2012) was from the USA, Canadian teachers' insights were sought to inform hiring practices and teacher education programs. Students' voices provided information of their perceptions of what makes teachers the best fit in their classrooms. What follows is an interpretation of the findings of this study. The implications for policy and practice, areas of future study that stem from these research findings, and the limitations of this study will follow in the subsequent chapter.

The Consideration of Fit for Teaching as a Career

The results of this study seem to suggest that there is little consideration of a person's individual fit with the teaching profession prior to entering Faculties of Education (see Table 1). Five teachers in this study stated that Education was a fallback career. Although this study included a small sample of teachers, there is reason to believe that such fallback career options maybe subject area related as almost half the teachers in this study indicated their original career of choice was in the hard Sciences, including Medicine, Engineering, Anthropology, and Criminology. This is in line with the findings of Kilinc et al. (2012). In their study most Science-education-majors had chosen teaching as a field of study only after poor test results

excluded their admittance into other more prestigiously ranked university Science-related programs such as Medicine. Kilinc et al. found that Science-related teacher candidates scored much higher on "fallback career" and had significantly lower scores on all other ratings of motivation such as "Satisfaction with choice of teaching as a career" (p. 215).

Two teachers in this study who were initially seeking scientific fields of research and who indicated that teaching was a fallback career did state that they were only sometimes satisfied with their positions. They cited strained relationships with staff members as the primary reason for this. While the inability or unwillingness to collaborate with fellow staff members does not necessarily mean that a teacher will have difficulty building relationships with students or have any trouble presenting content in pedagogically appropriate ways, studies have found that collaboration among staff members benefits both staff member wellbeing in terms of happiness with positions and self-efficacy beliefs, and aids in supporting students common to those collaborating staff members (Cobb, 2015; Guo, Justice, Sawyear, and Thomkins, 2011). It stands to reason that teachers able to strike a balance between working individually and collaborating as a team may feel more positive about the education and support they are providing for their students. Such feelings in turn may increase satisfaction with positions and teacher retention. Collaboration also allows staff members to support each other. All teachers in the current study recognized that working in low SES neighbourhoods presented far more challenges to teaching than working in more affluent neighbourhoods. As such, collaboration may be one way in which teachers can discuss these challenges and provide each other with the collegiality needed to mitigate feelings of stress related to upholding all student and classroom related issues.

Because teacher turnover disproportionately affects students in low income areas (Graziano, 2005; Johnson & Birkland, 2003; Lankford, et al., 2002), collaboration skill development may be an area administrators and teachers may wish to strengthen within their schools. Research suggests that collaboration is a skill that must be learned among preservice teachers and is far from innate; in most preservice teacher education programs such explicit modeling of collaboration is not happening to the fullest extent required (Gardiner & Robinson, 2011; Moran, 2014; Santagata & Guarion, 2012). In working with preservice teachers on a new professional program known as School Innovation Rounds, preservice teachers were asked to select from a list the features of the program that they believed enhanced their understanding of teaching as a profession. The item selected the least by preservice teachers was the importance of staff collaboration (Moran). It is possible that such findings are due to the nature in which teacher education programs, practicum placements, and many schools are structured by placing a single teacher in a room with students and then placing a heavy workload upon that teacher. This structure allows for little time to converse, meet with, or attempt to collaborate with peers. Gardiner and Robinson found that preservice teachers in their study reported viewing teaching as an autonomous profession and had a "sink or swim" philosophy to entering the profession while Santagata and Guarino found that preservice teachers' conceptions and experiences with collaboration, including dividing up work and uneven distribution of effort, do not match the type of collaboration expected of teachers in the profession. However, peer placing two teacher candidates with one cooperating teacher and having them plan and implement culturally responsive lessons together resulted in preservice teachers gaining an understanding of the intense collaboration and time commitments required to best meet the needs of common students. They reported learning to

collaborate better through compromise and adjusting to their partner's communication styles and preferred work habits (Gardiner & Robinson). As well, guided collaboration taught by professors in teacher education programs can help preservice teachers to better analyze student artifacts and consider the best possible instructional improvements (Santagata & Guarion). Both these studies suggest that collaboration skills can be better developed and if teacher education programs include more of such activities in the classroom component of the program while adding some peer placements to practicum components, it is possible that teacher satisfaction for some may improve given that they are better equipped to navigate what they might see as overwhelming requests from colleagues without such intervention. The ability to collaborate effectively may not only impact teachers' feelings job satisfaction, but also other important factors as well. Guo et al. (2011) found a significant interaction among teachers' self-efficacy, the level of collaboration among staff, and the engagement of students in the classroom with a higher level of student engagement being linked to teachers reporting higher feelings of self-efficacy and working in schools with large amounts of staff collaboration.

Although teachers in this study did not indicate that they were unhappy with their choice of teaching as a career, their reasons for entering Faculties of Education had little to do with intrinsic motivation to help children. Rather, the results of this study suggest that those who choose teaching as a fallback career see it as a manner in which they may still work within the subject area they prefer to study. For example, a teacher struggling with the length and cost of her potential graduate studies program stated, "Faced with possibly not getting a job, and then faced with living off fellowships and grants, I thought let's go into Education and then I can teach what I love instead of doing what I love." In addition, teaching provided

participants with increased time to spend with their family members and travel due to the winter and summer breaks in the teaching year. Mentoring was mentioned by one teacher who stated teaching was his fallback career. He had worked with young adults in a previous career and enjoyed that aspect of the job. Mentoring, however, was his final reason for choosing Education as time with family and time for travel were his primary reasons for switching faculties.

Furthermore, four of the teachers in this study had returned to university after working in fields unrelated to teaching including being employed in retail, as a policy analyst, a mechanic, and an entrepreneur. Only one teacher returning to university later in life had worked in a related profession, having spent almost a decade as an Educational Assistant before deciding to enter the Faculty of Education. Again, the number one reason given for switching to teaching from another profession was the hours and schedule that allowed for increased time with family. The reasons for becoming a teacher as a secondary career varied amongst individuals from wanting a career that allowed more time with family, having the time to travel, staying within their initial areas of training and learning more within those fields, and being unhappy with their first career choice. Each of these teachers provided a very matter-of-fact rationale for becoming a teacher that was less related to students and more related to their own personal circumstances. For example, one participant with a Master's degree and a young family said:

> "I had two very young children and I wanted a career that allowed me a little more balance in my life and allowed me to spend a little more time with my children… There was a very practical aspect as to why I chose teaching. I'm not going to lie

> about that. I didn't choose it because I wanted to change the world. I chose it because I loved my area of study and felt that it was the best way in which I could further evolve in that area of study."

With such reasons at the forefront for entering teaching, one must question the extent to which fit with children is being initially considered.

There are both possible advantages and disadvantages to choosing education as a secondary career. Those entering a secondary career may bring with them qualities that are very beneficial to teaching. They may have worked in professions that required collaboration, patience, attention to detail, mentoring as stated by one teacher in this study, and depending on their first career may have a solid grasp of curriculum content in their area of study. Although a secondary career is likely a positive life step for many, making such a change without considering the needs of future clientele, in this case students, is also an issue of concern. Only two teachers in this study stated that they grew up coaching sports and enjoyed working with children and this was their primary reason for entering Education. With so few teachers initially indicating the desire to help children, five choosing teaching as a fallback career, and wanting to change professions mainly for family and time reasons, it seems likely that few thoroughly consider their initial fit with the profession, let alone the student populations with whom they may work. It is concerning that such deficiency in the consideration of personal fit seems evident before prospective applicants are even certified to teach and intrinsic motivation to work with and help children may be lacking prior to entering the profession.

The Consideration of Fit in Application Decisions

Teacher-student fit did not emerge as a significant theme when analyzing reasons for transferring from one school to another. In fact, a better fit with students was mentioned by only one teacher in regards to why he chose to leave his school. This individual felt that he spent much of his time managing student behavior and sought a school with higher academic standards and less behavioral issues. Instead, it seems that teachers felt the factors that most impacted their decisions to leave included having had unsupportive administrators, attempting to find a permanent position rather than signing repeated term contracts, higher pay when moving from private school to public school, and wanting a position closer to home. While these are all reasonable factors to consider in making decisions to transfer from one school to another, it is also reasonable to suggest that student populations within schools should be considered before applying, transferring, or accepting positions. This is not to say that teachers should base employment decisions solely on student populations. Multiple factors that affect job satisfaction come into play in each workplace and one can never completely know their exact fit with students as school demographics and classroom dynamics change somewhat each school year. However, given that teachers spend the majority of their working day with students, some consideration should be given to the fit among teachers, their current learners, and their potential future learners before employment decisions are made.

In this study, lack of support by administration seemed to be the number one factor in determining teacher satisfaction with a position. Although student behavior caused issues in most teachers' classrooms, if dealt with negatively by administration, teachers reported feeling not only unsupported, but also frustrated, alone, and left to rely on their fellow

teachers to deal with some of the issues arising in their classrooms. The following describes one teacher's difficulties with the administration at her school:

> "The reason I left and came here is because of administration's lack of dealing with the overarching issues of the school, mainly behavior and academic standards being so low. The building was chaotic. Administration never followed through. So for instance, if a kid was wearing a hat, and there was a hat policy, and you tried to enforce that, you just became frustrated and tired of trying to enforce it in your classroom. Your classroom is not a little island on its own in a building. A building has a set culture and it needs to be established across the board. I had a completely different view of the way in which a high school should be like than my administration, specifically my principal. The kids were definitely challenging, but um, that wasn't the reason, but it was the way the building was run."
>
> Probe (Interviewer): "So you might have stayed had the administration been different?"
>
> Teacher: "Right. That principal never had my back, I was always on my own. So what happens is you begin to rely on your colleagues more and that actually builds a lot of strength among colleagues, but you need leadership. Like any structure, you need leadership."

Although most teachers indicated being happy at their current positions and that their students played an important role in this satisfaction, reasons for leaving previous positions were typically related to administration and not student behaviors. Most adults likely understand that students are children and no matter how challenging, almost all children have redeeming qualities. Children are resilient, adaptable, willing to try new things, open to new ideas and experiencing change. As a teacher, one can focus on their classroom and group of student to bring about change and support the growth of positive qualities. Dealing with adults who are often set in their ways after many years of practice, likely presents a larger challenge when a mismatch occurs than most student behavior or academic weakness. Supportive administration was also found to be a factor in staff retention in Johnson and Birkland's study (2003) where teachers who chose to change schools after only one year in the teaching profession cited that their principals were unsupportive or inaccessible. Johnson, Kraft, and Papay (2012) found that work conditions, including the overall school culture, the principal's leadership, relationships with their colleagues, accounted for a significantly greater proportion of the variance in teachers' satisfaction with their current schools than student demographics. The tone of the school culture is often set by administration as is the level of support and collaboration among colleagues in a school. It is possible that there is an interaction among these variables and the role of the school leader may be significantly impacting teacher retention in a multifaceted manner. In a meta-analysis of the work of principals in Special Education programs, Cobb (2015) found that aggregate data reinforce the idea that a principal's vision for the school and specific programs within it was essential not only for staff retention but also job satisfaction, positive attitudes towards students, and collaboration among staff members. It is likely that the views and attitudes of administration impact these

areas regardless of the program being assessed. Such findings, in addition to the teachers' reports in the current study, suggest that there is a strong need for teachers to seek out schools in which their views fall in line with that of the school's administrators.

Again, teacher-student fit did not arise as a theme when addressing what teachers were looking for in their new positions. Instead, teachers focused on finding posted positions that matched their areas of content knowledge. This was stated along with a manageable workload, and wishing to work with the age group that matched their training in their Education degree. Such findings likely hold some predictive validity. Johnson and Birkland (2003) found that new teachers who were given appropriate assignments in which they were teaching at the grade levels matching their teacher training and within content areas that matched their major/minor were more likely to stay in their first schools and in the teaching profession in general than those who were in schools that lacked such structural organization. It is, however, likely that there is an extraneous variable at play here and that is comfort level. If one is comfortable with the material and the grade level being taught, then time, energy, and mental resources are freed to address other classroom issues such as the management of student behaviors and how to provide students with the best learning experience given the content at hand. This line of reasoning is supported by the descriptions provided by teachers in this study. A teacher trained in senior years who was interviewed in the current study discussed how much of his time was spent learning how to present material to students in elementary school grades. He said "I was a high school stream teacher and I did elementary but I was never taught the methodology for elementary and so the learning curve was steep.". Likewise, another teacher interviewed was teaching outside her content area major and she expressed that she was inundated with teaching herself the material before presenting it to

students. This led to her using her comfort with certain teaching methods to present material to students rather than using learning styles that students preferred since appearing knowledgeable and an expert in the field lends credibility to teachers. Of her experience she said:

> "This is going to sound bad, but since this is one of my first years teaching core courses, I find that I pick what teaching strategy I am more comfortable with, which is maybe not the best way to go about things, but until I feel more comfortable with the material and find better ways to deliver it to the kids, I want to make sure that I deliver it in ways that they are getting what they need – that I explain it the best way that I can and then if they don't get it, I go back and look and see what other ways I can explain it, or what other method or something else we can do so that they can get it. But this year, for my core courses, I do what I am more comfortable with so that the message comes across clear, until I am more comfortable."

This teacher recognized this is likely not providing the best learning environment for students and so there is some merit to seeking out positions which match training in grade level and content area in order to best meet students' learning needs. However, such findings must be taken with a grain of salt. Although there is nothing wrong with searching for a teaching position in which one is able to teach the age group and subjects they have been trained to teach and also do so within a manageable workload to decrease any additional stress, these are far from the only factors that should guide the application procedure. Teacher applicants must also take into account their future students. As mentioned previously, one teacher cited the

need to work in an environment where students had fewer behavioral issues. He felt he was not suited to daily classroom management issues that arose in his low socioeconomic area school. He subsequently transferred to another low income area school, however, his second school had an incredibly high percentage of recent immigrant student. He reported that their families placed high value on education and respect for the teacher and so there were very few behavior issues that required his attention. In addition, teacher applicants must consider their fit with administration. As seen previously, this was a major factor reported by participants in this study for leaving a position, yet not one of these teachers mentioned the new administration in seeking out their subsequent positions. Because administration ultimately sets the tone for the manner in which the building is managed and the overall school culture, teachers must be sure they are willing to work within the framework established in order to prevent poor person-organization fits.

The final factor mentioned when searching for a new position was distance from home. Teachers who mentioned this stated they applied for positions that were near their current home or within approximately 45 minutes of driving distance from their homes. Comments and interpretations of this will be discussed further in "The Role of Socioeconomics, Social Contacts, and Sociocultural Factors in the Application Process" given that distance was a factor addressed by Cannata (2010) who found that unfamiliar neighborhoods were excluded from teachers' job searches and most teachers applied to work in familiar neighbourhoods that were similar demographically and socioeconomically to where participants grew up.

The Meaning of Teacher-Student Fit from Teachers' Perspectives

Despite the fact that teacher-student fit seems to play little, if any role, in how most individuals choose teaching as a profession or how the majority of application decisions are made, all teachers in this study were quite aware of their fit with their students when explicitly asked about it. All teachers in this study were able to relate a positive fit to the engagement and participation of students in their classrooms. In terms of the characteristics that allowed teachers to fit well with their current students, a dichotomy arose not based on the socioeconomic neighbourhood in which the school was situated, but rather based on the population of student learners. All teachers working in schools in low socioeconomic areas, along with the teacher working in a high socioeconomic area with an at-risk group of students cited only personal characteristics as contributing to teacher-student fit. The only other teacher in this study was working in one of the most affluent areas of the city. He was the only one to mention professional characteristics related to content knowledge and training in a certain stream or grade level as contributing to teacher-student fit. It should be noted that all teachers, regardless of the area in which they worked cited personal characteristics in their answers to this question. Perhaps however, teachers who deal with many of the challenges presented by students with many needs either are initially, or come to be more aware of the personal characteristics that allow them to work well with students. Some teachers stated that they grew up in similar socioeconomic circumstances to the students they were currently teaching. It is likely that they have a sense of the personal characteristics required to fit with such students. Others indicated that they had learned over time with these students to be more patient and less reactive. These findings can be interpreted within a social constructivist framework. Teachers stated multiple variables influencing their fit with students and because

personal variables were emphasized by those working with marginalized students and for some, learned over time, meanings of teacher-student fit have at least in part been socially constructed through social interactions with their students. As one teacher who moved from the most affluent area in his division to an area in his division where the average income was marginally higher than the low income cut-off describes, even getting to know students was a challenge he learned to address:

> "With these kids, you have to take the time to get to know the student and their needs before you can teach here. Likewise, these kids won't open up until they get to know you and they won't learn until they get to know you. So if you are that stranger, their defense mechanisms are already up. So I think you have to be able to break down those barriers."

Because working with marginalized students presents barriers to learning that require teachers to build trust with students prior to successful classroom education, it is possible that relationship building trumps all other factors in the eyes of teachers working with such students that professional characteristics are not even considered in relation to fit. It is possible that teachers working with marginalized groups assume that most teachers implement similar pedagogical skills and have similar levels of content knowledge having all been through the same university education process and become primarily focused on meeting the needs of their students through building relationships. If this study were to be repeated, separating the question that ask teachers what qualities they possess that allow them to fit with students into two parts, one asking about professional and one about personal qualities, may

tell us if certain professional qualities do play a larger role in teacher-student fit with marginalized student populations than indicated in this study. Such data would also allow for a comparison of the professional characteristics valued by students and the professional characteristics valued by teachers in teacher-student fit to see if similar characteristics are valued as contributing to success in the classroom.

It should also be noted that more teachers in this study were currently working at schools in low income areas and so if more participants were recruited from schools in high income areas the findings may differ. Nonetheless, it is likely that the personal characteristics teachers described as important in fitting with students apply in most schools where students have been marginalized by the education system. Similar results were reported by Prather-Jones (2011) who found that teachers working with students with challenges reported personal attributes including being flexible and patient, and caring for student needs as reasons for staying in their positions. It is likely that not only teachers recognize this but principals as well given that Engel (2013) reported that principals in low achieving schools focused more on the personal characteristics of the teacher applicants than professional characteristics. It is also positive to report that in terms of a social constructivist framework, skills to build such relationships can be taught and learned through experience working with marginalized students. The inclusion of more diverse practicum placements in teacher education programs, increased professional development on the part of schools to work with staff as to how to better serve the needs of all students, and larger awareness and willingness to participate in such action on the part of preservice teachers and current teaching staff are needed and will be discussed throughout this section and the following chapter.

Despite the building of relationships through social interactions being an optimistic finding, concerning difference did arise when addressing how instructional methods were chosen. All teachers working in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods realized the importance of matching instructional methods and activities in the classroom to the needs and developmental levels of their students. This sentiment was clear and explicit across the board regardless of the subject area being taught. A Graphics teacher describing his current students stated:

> "I gauge that all the time. So let's say it is a drawing lesson, I break them up because in the past I used to teach them all at once and it won't work. I almost have individual lessons. If it is something on the computer, I have to really pay attention. I may have to break them up into fours, it depends. If they are super keen listeners, then I can teach them as a class. But usually not, so I'm always teaching mini-lessons or to small pockets. That's what I found works here. It is easier for me to manage small groups and I think that it is easier for them to understand me. If they have questions, they don't have to wait. They can ask their questions right away. It is more work on my end, but that is what works."

Similarly, an English and History teacher relayed that instructional methods always depend on the group of current students at hand:

> "It's the kids. I started doing a lot more pre-assessment so that on the first day, reading assessments, writing assessments with English and History, just to find out how much

pre-reading I have to teach them. The assessments tell me what kinds of kids I have in my room and where I need to go from there. I'd like to think this is helping them."

Such findings are overwhelmingly positive and suggest that teachers understand that even within areas of the province where students typically lag grade levels behind their counterparts in more affluent areas, there is variability in the needs of learners from one year, or one semester to the next. The fact that teachers are initially assessing and reflectively gauging what is working in their classrooms suggests that student needs in the classroom are being appropriately addressed in terms of where to begin teaching and how to present content.

Regarding instructional methods, the teacher working in an affluent area, but with an at-risk group of students said she chose the instructional method based on how she was most comfortable presenting the topic. She was working with a vulnerable group of students at-risk of school failure and dropout, yet she chose instructional methods to best suit her needs rather than the needs of her at-risk clientele. This was indicated previously directly quoting her explanation (see the quote on page 160). While she indicated that she typically used notes to explain concepts or read to the students followed by worksheets, textbook reading and questions, or activities, these procedures were not holding students' attention. This may be because the majority of the strategies with which she was comfortable required that students to sit in their desks, pay attention, and focus on auditory or written content for long periods of time. This is difficult for most students to accomplish, let alone for students who have typically struggled in the education system. The inability to sit still for such long periods may have manifested itself in what was perceived ad poor student behaviors. For example, she referred to her classroom as "a zoo" suggesting that although she openly said that she loved

working with her students, she was clearly not only struggling with learning the content at hand, but also with her classroom management. This is concerning because her students were a lower-track group and it is imperative that we as educators make sure such students are given access to the instructional methods that best allow them to comprehend topics, engage in the subject matter, and show their learning in the most positive light. Fuller (1969) proposed a developmental model in which preservice teachers proceed through a number of stages prior to developing a more stable teaching identity. Many parts of the stages can also be applied to teachers new to the profession on their paths to becoming expert teachers (Fuller & Case, 1969). In the beginning stages, the concerns of the teacher centre on their own survival in the classroom. As such, the focus of teaching becomes classroom management and mastery of content so that classrooms appear controlled and teachers appear as experts in relation to curriculum knowledge. With only three years of teaching experience, it is very likely that the teacher in this study who resorted to comfortable instructional methods was in the beginning stages of teacher development as outlined by Fuller. Concerns about instructional methods and materials do not arise until the third developmental stage of Fuller's model. Preferential learning styles, and the social and emotional needs of students do not become central to teaching until the final stage of the developmental model. At this point, teachers become more aware of larger issues, for example poverty, that may impact students' learning in the classroom. Experienced teachers are better able to understand their effect on students' learning how they might change to facilitate student growth (Fuller & Case). With time, it is possible that the teacher in this study will move away from comfortable instructional methods to methods that best serve the needs of her students.

Despite the fact that the teacher may have been doing the best she could given her stage in the development of her teaching identity, several issues are concerning here. This teacher had the fewest years of experience of those interviewed for the study. She accepted a position teaching English and Science and this was her first year in this new job. However, ELA was not her major or minor area and she had no experience in the area and little idea of how to teach it. She reported that her colleagues in the department were of little help to her. Moreover, while Science was her minor teachable area, this teacher had never been placed in a Science classroom during her practicum blocks and had only ever worked in the gym. Finally, her training was in senior years and she had accepted a position at a middle years school. Faced with classroom-based teaching, a subject that she had never taught in her practicum blocks, a subject with which she was unfamiliar, and an age group that was challenging to work alongside and with whom she had no prior teaching experience, this teacher resorted to comfort with delivering lessons as a survival technique.

Out-of-field teaching occurs when teachers are instructing courses for which they are not technically qualified. This may come in the form of teaching subjects that do not fall within one's major/minor area, teaching at a grade level that differs from university training, or within an area, Special Education for example, in which one does not have adequate background knowledge, preparation, or qualifications. In each case, concerns revolve around a potential lack of pedagogical and content knowledge. Such practices are increasingly common in today's schools. Hobbs (2013) interviewed teachers from both rural and urban settings that had taught either Math or Science at some point in their teaching career and found that all participants had or were currently teaching subjects they were not qualified to teach. Because rural schools tended to be more difficult to staff, there was an increase in out-of-field teaching

in such areas. Hobbs cautions that this becomes a further issue due to the fact that there are fewer subject area specialists in rural areas for new out-of-field teachers to call on for support. This may also hold true in rural and remote parts of Manitoba, in inner city districts, or with job postings aimed at programming for at-risk youth that likely experience more difficulty in recruiting teachers than suburban divisions or regular stream positions.

Having a major/minor in Science is obviously not the only criterion for being an effective Science teacher and training in senior years does not mean that a teacher will only be successful with high school students. The teacher in this study working with at-risk students found herself struggling with content acquisition and the confidence to teach it in a manner that allowed students to possibly question her expertise on the subject area. However, Hobbs (2013) found that even those teachers working within a major/minor area struggled with confidence in teaching when there was a content gap in their university training. For example, a teacher cited being a Chemistry major, but had specialized in a particular area of chemistry and lacked content knowledge in other areas. This teacher reported having to re-teach herself the content before teaching her high school students. Because there are numerous other factors that impact teacher effectiveness and the ability to form relationships with students, teaching out-of-field does not necessarily mean that a teacher will be a poor fit with students. However, there are concerns that arise from such placement decisions. Research into the lived experiences of out-of-field teachers finds that there are costs to placing teachers in out-of-field courses (DuPlessis, Carroll, & Gilles, 2015; Hobbs, 2013; Ingersoll, 2001/2004).

A longitudinal study of Math students, beginning in ninth grade, found that students most in need of a subject area Mathematics specialist teacher were the least likely to have one (Hill & Dalton, 2013). Ninth grade was chosen as a starting point because of the vast

expansion of foundational Algebra taught in this grade level which determines the stream of Math in which students continue in subsequent school years. Low-achieving students in the study were more than twice as likely as high-achieving Math students to have an out-of-field teacher. The teacher in the current study was not teaching Math, however the same argument could be made for ELA. The at-risk students she was teaching were likely in need of a strong English teacher that could build literacy skills among the group, literacy skills that impact success in all other subject areas.

While correlations between lower-streamed students and out-of-field teachers do not imply causation for failure and there are likely many out-of-field teachers that are successful fits for their students, teacher voices and classroom observational data suggest there are trade-offs to both students' and teachers' success when out-of-field placements are made. For example, a recent study reported that out-of field teachers experienced confidence issues in the classroom, expressed poor self-esteem as related to fit with the teaching profession, and feeling of disconnectedness from students, peers, and administration, which among novice teachers resulted in decreased risk taking in the classroom for fear that students will expose the teachers' lack of knowledge, tension among them and their fellow department members, feeling of exhaustion and burnout due to the need to learn content and best practices for implementation, and medical and stress-related leaves of absence (DuPlessis et al., 2015). Some novice teachers reported poor relationships with students and that they spent much of their time dealing with discipline and issues related to lack of respect aimed at them. Classroom observations in DuPlessis et al.'s study showed that one teacher dealt with this by being overly strict with her primary students which may account for damaged relationships between the teacher and her students. In half the cases, administrators and fellow staff

members were not seen as supportive of the concerns of these out-of-field teachers and intervened only when the situations became dire. The authors concluded that school leaders, including principals and department heads, often do not understand the teachers' lived experiences in relation to out-of-field teaching. A similar study found that out-of-field teachers report relying on textbooks to teach subject matter at the expense of seeking more pedagogically appropriate activities and relying heavily on the support of colleagues (Hobbs, 2013). The out-of-field teacher in the current study also reported some of these issues including dealing with poor student behavior, resorting to the use of the textbook, decreased risk-taking in the classroom and resorting to comfortable teaching methods, and tension among her and her department members when she asked for assistance. While she did not report a poor teacher-student fit with her class, one can see how stress related to the issues cited above could very well damage the fit between teachers and students and result in very negative classroom interactions.

Knowing that such out-of-field placements exist in abundance is not enough. We must strive to understand why they are happening and what can be done to support teachers and students in situations where out-of-field teaching is preventing the best student learning opportunities from being implemented. Some studies suggest that principal hiring and timetabling decisions are the primary cause of out-of-field teaching. Often this is done to fill timetabling gaps, for example when a course does not fit in to anyone else's timetable without mass rearrangements required, when a staff member is on a leave of absence and courses are shuffled to others in the building, or when a teacher requests a change in his/her timetable for the following school term (e.g. Hobbs, 2103). Others report disproportionately high numbers of beginning teachers in out-of-field positions in high needs schools and lower-track

classrooms (Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001). Opposing theories are presented for why this is occurring. Berry et al. (2010) suggest that budget cuts to education have resulted in reduced teaching staff over the years and as such, teachers have been required to take on additional subject areas or grade level courses to cover the gaps. Meanwhile, Ingersoll (2001/2004) argues that principal decisions to place teachers in areas that do not fit their training are to blame given that we are currently not experiencing teacher shortages in Canada or the United States. In fact, he states that subject area such as English and the humanities are actually experiencing teacher surpluses. He cites what can be seen as poor principal hiring decisions in the form of filling sudden leaves with substitutes who are regularly in the school rather than conducting a formal search and interview process, and hiring candidates primarily for coaching abilities as problematic. The out-of-field teacher in the current study did indicate that much of her job interview circled around the development of a stronger girls basketball program at the school. Ingersoll (2001) suggests that such managerial choices often result in teachers that are misassigned and while it may save time and possible money to taxpayers, there are potentially large costs to the students. While such teachers might fit well with students in their ability to develop relationships and promote their psychosocial development, we must question how much content students are learning in the classroom if many out-of-field teachers are reporting struggling with the content themselves.

The findings of previous studies (DuPlessis et al., 2015; Hobbs, 2103) suggest that novice out-of-field teachers require extra support, mentoring, and development opportunities to become confident teachers able to connect content to student success. Those teachers in Hobbs' study provided with support such as a learning coach or access to a subject area specialist were able to develop professionally, showed adaptation and the ability to cope with

their out-of-field teaching assignments, and were more committed to finding new ways to engage students in learning the subject matter. Since the allocation of teaching assignments is almost always the responsibility of school administrators, it is also imperative for administrators to be aware of the need for support and development among such teachers and should such hiring decisions be made, they must also be willing to implement the needed supports for such teachers to prevent increased teacher burnout or turnover and successful educations for their students.

Although part of the problem lies in the fact that this individual was teaching ELA, which was out of her major/minor area and working with a grade level that did not match her university training, equally problematic is the fact that she was never given a practicum placement opportunity to teach in her minor content area, Science. When hired to teach her minor, she had little idea how to take what she had learned in Faculty of Education classrooms and put it into practice with actual students. Because this young teacher was the only one to report such a discrepancy, it is unclear if other teachers in this study also struggled with this fact earlier in their careers. However, it is likely that better decisions regarding practicum placements could be made and need to be addressed by Faculties of Education, faculty advisors, administrators, or teacher candidates themselves in order to give new teachers to the profession the best possible chance to meet the needs of their students.

The situation above requires the consideration of multiple factors, for example, the structure and limitations of placement coordinators including the sharing of placements across Faculties of Education in the province of Manitoba, the willingness of school administrators to take pre-service teachers into their schools, and the agreeableness of cooperating teachers to work with pre-service teachers to develop their skills and challenge their assumptions. Pre-

service teachers can help by being willing to experience multiple classroom experiences, varied practicum placements, and be sure that they are adequately prepared to teach in their major and minor areas of study. Pre-service teachers placed in less than ideal situations must seek other classrooms within their current placement to observe and help students and teachers, select elective classes at university that best prepare them for a multitude of learners, and indicate their willingness to attempt inner city and northern practicum placements on their school intentions forms in future years.

The out-of-field teacher in this study described a diverse group of students, culturally and socioeconomically, that had all been marginalized in the education system somehow. Yet she did not speak of any behaviors or actions that might be related to culturally responsive teaching in her classroom. Culturally responsive teaching recognizes that all students learn differently and that such differences may be linked to the student's background, language, social and cultural identity (Gay, 2000) and in order for preservice teachers to engage in such teaching, they must have practice with a wide range of student learners and be taught to engage in critical self-reflection, explore students' backgrounds, acknowledge the experiences of the various cultural groups they have in the classroom, and become involved in the surrounding community. While many professors and collaborating teachers are aware of these realities and work hard to enhance the knowledge and understanding of preservice teachers in this area, others do not expand upon culturally relevant teaching within their subject areas. There is the need for every professor in Faculties of Education to provide instruction in a culturally responsive manner regardless of the subject area being explored. Culturally appropriate learning occurs through supportive mentorship on the part of faculty teachers, as well as faculty advisors and collaborating teachers. Faculty advisors and collaborating

teachers play essential roles in the mentorship of preservice teachers. They are responsible for motivating preservice teachers to engage in the critical analysis of their practices. Such critical reflection must include addressing preconceived notions about various groups of students. Through diverse and active classroom placements and with faculty advisors and collaborating teachers that engage in critical analysis and reflective practices, presevice teachers will be supported in implementing culturally responsive pedagogy in their schools and classrooms. All faculty members and all cooperating teachers must model and include culturally relevant pedagogy in their teaching, regardless of the content area being explored, in order to provide preservice teachers with the best possible experiences at the beginning of their careers and provide them with a foundation to best meet the needs of their future learners.

In addition, practicing teachers should be encouraged in professional development days, by administration, by parents in the community, by fellow colleagues, and by Manitoba Education to think about their current teaching practices, the manner in which their classrooms are set up and their schools operate, and the needs of their current students in relation to culture and community. Self-reflection on these topics and discussions with students that allow them to voice their specific learning requirements, preferences, and values are the best ways to begin to address the lack of culturally responsive teaching occurring in classrooms. Afterall, "effective teachers recognize that they can and must change their teaching to help students learn. They do not believe that students must learn the teacher's way" (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010, p. 169).

The Role of Socioeconomics, Social Contacts, and Sociocultural Factors in the Application Process

This study attempted to shed light on the claim that job preferences in the teaching profession are socioculturally influenced as Cannata (2010) argues, or if other factors play a dominant role in where teachers choose to work in Manitoba. Research from the USA suggests that inner-city schools tend to be difficult to staff and that teachers tend to apply to work in regions that are close to home and similar socioeconomically and demographically to where one grew up (Boyd et al., 2005; Cannata). Similarly, only one factor for the exclusion of schools or divisions from their job search criteria was mentioned by the majority of teachers in this study; that factor was driving distance. Positions that required approximately 45 minutes or more of commute time were excluded from the job search criteria, however, unlike Cannata's study in which familiarity with an area and comfort within a neighbourhood seemed to be the main interpretations for teacher's unwillingness to drive longer distances, in this study, teachers reported it was the time spent driving that was the reason for exclusion. Each felt that the time spent commuting could be better spent with family, on their own extracurricular activities, or even spent at school planning or marking rather than on the road during peak driving hours.

In order to lend some further interpretation to the current results, it is possible that Manitoba weather, which increases commuting times and makes road and highway conditions incredibly unsafe at times, is in part to blame for such feeling. With icy driving conditions, snow, and blizzards occurring for up to eight months a year, the choice to minimize driving time is not surprising. One teacher, in looking back on his previous position which was in a

high income area outside Winnipeg, sums up the thoughts of most teachers is this study regarding driving distance:

> "I could still see myself being there right now if the distance wasn't so far. I felt like the time I was driving, I was missing out on other things. I felt like I could be doing other things. Either at the school or at home, I could be doing other things. Also safety. I got into an accident one time because I was really tired from the drive. My eyes closed and I crashed into someone. I was on the perimeter."

Given that eight of the ten teachers interviewed for this study had moved from schools in fairly affluent neighbourhoods to the inner city, it does not seem that familiarity with an area and comfort with the neighbourhood are at play here. Nor is it as simple as distance alone. Rather, some evidence derived from teachers' interviews suggest that it may be similar cultural values to the student population that play a role in where teachers choose to work and less about the community in which that school is situated. Boyd et al. (2005) also suggest that distance is only part of the equation and the culture of schools and communities may play some role in the sorting of teachers in the labour market. However, their study analyzed only a state-wide database and so actual reasons for teacher sorting are unavailable. It is important to note that most teachers in this study, even those living on the outskirts of the city, did put a limit on how far outside the city they would drive without relocating their homes and only a few said they were willing to relocate to a smaller town in Manitoba. For example, in describing how he searched for his initial position, a teacher stated:

> "When I first graduated it seemed like there were no jobs and I was a single parent. Unless you went to like Frontier (the most northern school division in Manitoba) and I applied to a few rural places but not too far outside the city, because I didn't want to go far with a young child."

One teacher in this study did move to a school in a rural division. This accounts for one of the subsequent transfers to a second low income area by a teacher in this study. However, this teacher was moving closer to his family stating that his brother-in-law was teaching at the rural school prior to his applying there and his family lived only a short distance from the school. Overall, however, such findings suggest that rural and northern schools in Manitoba probably experience difficulty in recruiting the most qualified candidates given that the number of people willing to uproot their lives or their families seems small. With only one participant from a rural school and none from northern schools responding to recruitment requests, it is difficult to draw any broad conclusions on the hiring process in such areas. As such, this is a topic for further exploration in future studies. Because teachers in this study reported that they would not apply to positions that required driving upwards of 45 minutes and only one teacher was willing to move his location of residence, it seems as though distance might play a role in self-exclusion from non-urban areas, either rural or northern, and it is quite possible that there may be a need to implement increased social and culturally diverse placements in teacher education programs to provide all school divisions with equitable access to qualified teachers.

Almost half the teachers in the current study reported using information from social contacts when making job application decisions. Teachers in Cannata's (2010) study also

reported using social contacts in the areas in which schools were located for information and such information was heavily weighted in their application decisions despite the fact that their contacts were not involved in the education system and knew little of what it would actually be like to teach at a given school versus a school outside their area. She concluded that the use of social contacts resulted in teacher sorting into jobs in districts that placed teachers in familiar social positions.

Unlike Cannata (2010), this study found that the majority of social contacts used were teachers or school personnel in the education system that were already familiar with the schools in question. Knowing the principal at a given school, or having a family member know the principal, and having a relative, friend, or former colleague currently working at a school or having had a teaching term at a school were all situations described by teachers in this study. These individuals were people whose opinions were sought in the application process. In fact, when faced with job offers from two schools in affluent areas of Winnipeg, one teacher chose to work with a group of at-risk students, by far the more challenging teaching position, based on the perceptions of her social contacts. This was done for two reasons: Through coaching, she knew the teacher leaving the school whose offer she eventually declined and was aware that he felt that there was a lack of support from administration in his attempt to develop a more comprehensive Physical Education program and the vice-principal at the school whose offer she accepted had been her high school teacher, had kept in touch with her over the years, and was seen as someone who would be supportive and understanding when help was needed in the classroom and when it came to securing a permanent position at that school. A second teacher reported using social contacts each time she had switched positions and having very different experiences. Her first decision

to transfer from a school in a high socioeconomic neighbourhood to a school in a low socioeconomic neighbourhood, although guided by the positive feedback of individuals in the division, resulted in a mismatch between her philosophy of education and that of the administration. Her subsequent transfer was guided by the advice of a former colleague and friend who had completed a term at the school being sought. These two scenarios suggest not only did social contacts have a large influence on where teachers chose to apply, but also that nepotism may play a larger role in how teachers are hired in Manitoba than we are willing to admit. This is a fundamental flaw in the teacher hiring process given that we know little of the trade-offs made when hiring someone because of their relationship with others in the school system. As seen above, one teacher had a very negative experience by basing her decision to apply on the feedback of social contacts and repeated moves by teachers often leave the most vulnerable students with few adults to connect with in the school. Frequent teacher turnover is not only unhealthy for students, but also fellow staff who must rebuild department connections and reform committees. Repeated turnover can decrease staff morale which in turn can impact the quality of teaching provided to students due to lack of collaboration amongst school staff. When it comes to the use of social contacts in the teaching field and the resulting nepotism that seems to occur, it must be asked: Are such individuals the best possible fit for the school and for the students? Such questions must be addressed in the future.

As previously stated, factors other than distance seem to be playing a role in teacher application decisions. This study did not find that teachers tended to exclude schools in low income neighbourhoods from their application decisions. However, the findings from two teachers that had transferred from schools in high socio-economic neighbourhoods to schools

in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods and subsequently initiated second transfers are most telling. These two teachers both found their next positions in low income areas, suggesting that they were not fleeing from students of low socioeconomic status or that they disliked working in low income areas of the city. The reasons they gave for wishing to leave their first low income schools had three main overlapping parts. The first was the need for a stable learning environment. Here teachers cited classrooms being riddled with behavioral management issues that involved defiant rule breaking, for example, wearing hats in class and repeated swearing. They felt that such interruptions to the learning environment made it difficult for them to teach. Secondly, it became clear that when working with students with multiple barriers to learning and many needs, supportive administration was a requirement. When these teachers felt administration was unsupportive of how they addressed the defiant rule breaking behaviors teachers felt conflicted and angered by the lack of congruency between the rules they were attempting to enforce and the principal's disregard for the rules in place. Finally it seems that a major sociocultural factor is at play here and that is cultural similarity to the student body. Both these teachers indicated that students at their second low income area schools were populated by many recent immigrants to Canada and stated that these students had cultural and family values similar to their own. One teacher stated of her current students, "They bring with them a set of moral and ethical values that are similar to mine from their culture from their families." The other, in similar fashion, said, "Part of it can relate to the newcomer-immigrant experience. Although different races, there are some cultural norms between the students and how I grew up.". The first teacher grew up in Canada but had parents of Western and Eastern European descent. She stated that her students from the Philippines and from Africa had family values similar to hers including hard work ethic,

respect, and the consideration of collective values before personal gain. The other teacher had emigrated from Portugal in his elementary school years. He moved to a school with a significant portion of EAL students. He indicated that he could relate to the experiences of emigration and immigration, learning a new language, and cited that tight nit family values seen in his students were also important in his family. Such cultural similarities are likely playing a role in where teachers choose to work in Manitoba and having similar cultural values is likely to produce feelings of comfort in the classroom for teachers and students.

Again from a social constructivist paradigm, meanings of teacher-student fit have in part been socially constructed through cultural similarities. Although few would argue that a cultural fit between teachers and students is a bad thing, we must remember that there is significantly large proportion of Aboriginal learners in Manitoba classrooms. According to a handful of studies, teachers must work hard to effectively address the need to integrate Aboriginal cultural perspectives into the classroom (Aikenhead, 2002; Lewthwaite et al., 2014; Mason, 2006; Sterenberg & Hogue, 2011). One need not be Aboriginal to have a similar cultural upbringing as his/her students. It has already been stated that Aboriginal students to do not require Aboriginal teachers in the classroom to achieve academic success (Kleinfeld, 1995; MacIver, 2012) but such success is more attainable when there is learning style congruence with the teacher and a culturally affirming environment is created in the classroom. There are two problems with this that arise from the findings of this study. The first is that two teachers who initiated subsequent transfers to a second low income area school both moved away from schools with high Aboriginal student populations and to schools with high immigrant populations. More research is needed to determine if teachers initiating subsequent transfers among similar socioeconomic areas are moving away from

certain groups of students. The second problem lies in the fact that few teachers seem to have a solid understanding of Aboriginal cultures and values; cultural diversity was discussed little among teacher interviews in this study. Some studies have indicated what teachers can do to increase congruence between traditional education and Aboriginal Education. However, it seems most of what is done is tokenistic in nature and minority students are left with feelings of lack of congruence with the values of their generally while, middle-class teachers (Gainer & Larrotta, 2010).

What is even more heartbreaking is that the two teachers that initiated these subsequent transfers blamed much of the lack of academic success of their students in the first low income area school on the parents. One teacher stated, "I didn't know this about the area, but I quickly learned that home environment has a correlation to academic success.". He felt that parents were generally uninvolved in the lives of the students and that this manifested itself in behavioral issues in the classroom which in turn impeded academic success. Although correlation does not imply causation, even if such a statement held some validity, this individual seemed to not recognize that some of these parents may have appeared as uninvolved through no fault of their own. In a low income working class neighbourhood, many parents work at more than one job and such jobs often require shift work and evening work. When such factors are considered, it becomes easier to understand why such parents do not attend parent-teacher interviews or regularly watch their children's basketball games. The second teacher stated of her students: "They would come in whenever they wanted, do whatever they wanted, language, swearing that kind of thing. I didn't like it. It was hard. The familial issues that they brought with them.". Again, this individual also correlated behavioral issues to family issues to the home lives of students. There are many variables at play here

including the school culture, the age of students, gang activity in neighbourhood, or the fact that they are simply adolescents pushing teacher boundaries. Many children are faced with multiple issues in their home lives. Not all children with difficult childhoods manifest their challenges as outward insubordinate school behaviors. Such comments show a lack of understanding of cycles of poverty, are prejudicial in nature, and ultimately reveal the need for teachers to be trained in culturally responsive teaching should they be working in high needs classrooms or neighbourhoods. This is especially important because such classrooms serve to meet the needs of non-traditional learners, those that have been marginalized by our current education system. When teachings, language, and values presented by teachers are flawed with inaccuracies or incongruent with student values, such students may not see a place for themselves in the classroom. Lack of awareness regarding students' backgrounds, systemic institutional practices, and overarching political structures may be causing teachers to place blame with the families and culture of low socioeconomic area student rather than the larger societal configurations in place.

This finding also suggests that the disparities that exist among school divisions are rooted in teacher assumptions of students' lives, families and culture in relation to educational success. The implications of this finding in terms of Critical Theory are vast. Clearly change is needed in speaking to such assumptions in practicing teachers and in the preservice teacher education systems to address social injustices and provide young teachers with an understanding of what makes our education system exclusionary for Aboriginal students. Only then will we see change in teacher attitudes towards Aboriginal learners and their families and culture, and only then can we begin to address the social and political institutional structures - including traditional white, middle-class approaches to teaching,

government issued curriculums of exclusions in terms of culture, gender, race, and ethnicity, and tokenistic approaches to inclusion – that allow such prejudicial correlations to be perpetuated among educators and schools. Gloria Ladson-Billing (2006) states that part of the problem with preservice teacher education programs is that the word "culture" is applied as an explanation for everything from school failure to behavioral issues in the classroom and while culture in relation to student issues tends to be spoken of in relation to schools in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods, it is not the culture of poverty that should be used to explain lack of success in education. Rather, it is a poverty in most teachers' understanding of culture that fails to provide equitable chances for academic success for all students in classrooms (Ladson-Billings). One mandatory course in Aboriginal Education is not sufficient to produce such change. Preservice teachers in Deer's (2013) study reported that their knowledge and experiences with Aboriginal cultures were not representative of the larger community or culture and such teaching was simply tokenistic. They reported feeling uneasy and unprepared to implement Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum. These reports were obtained after the preservice teachers completed a course in Aboriginal Education as part of their teacher education program. In fact, a single Aboriginal Education course requirement is tokenistic on the part of government and university policy makers who must realize that skimming over such an immense topic in a three month course, sometimes with no related practicum experience, cannot prepare preservice teachers to be fully culturally informed and able to implement Aboriginal perspectives in their daily teaching. A single course requirement places culture in the classroom in a celebratory nature or in a manner in which it is included within some lessons only. Rather, themes of social justice must span all courses in Faculties of Education. Whether it be a course on how to teach Science, Mathematics, History, or Art,

social justice perspectives and cultural diversity can be implemented across curriculum topics. While many preservice teachers may feel it is easier to address social justice issues and present culturally inclusive material in classes that lend themselves to such topics, for example History and Art, it can also be accomplished in all other subject areas with dedication, willingness to learn, and understanding (see Aikenhead, 2002; Lewthwaite et al., 2010; and Lewthwaite et al., 2014 for Science and Mason, 2006, for Mathematics).

The Characteristics of Positive Teacher-Student Fit from Teachers' Perspectives

All teachers in this study were able to identify characteristics of positive fit with their students suggesting that teachers are aware of what factors make them successful educators for a given population of students. Findings from this study suggest that the extent to which these teachers then used such awareness of fit to create improved educational opportunities for students is questionable. It was hoped that such characteristics could be used by principals during the hiring process and matched with specific positions. However, these findings imply that having an awareness of teacher-student fit does not result in teachers becoming more committed to their positions and constantly aiming to improve learning opportunities for their students. For clarity, the results regarding teachers' perceptions of teacher-student fit and their implications will be addressed in sections beginning with factors that allow teachers to be happy within their work environment, the awareness of fit with students of varied socioeconomic backgrounds, the characteristics of teacher-student fit as defined by teaching staff, and how teachers chose to respond to their awareness of fit with students.

Happy now?

One indictor of perceived fit is simply how happy someone feels in their current teaching position. All but two individuals in this study indicated being happy in their current job. Two indicated that they were only sometimes happy and that stressful relationships with their co-workers in the school were to blame for such feelings. This is not surprising. Many factors play a role in a teacher's job satisfaction, not simply the fit with students. In Johnson and Birkland's (2003) study, teaching assignment, workload, available resources, and the support of fellow staff members and administration were all mentioned by teachers as having had an impact on their decision to leave a school.

All teachers spoke about their current students in positive lights and the majority spoke of their students being the primary reason for their happiness at work. They mentioned characteristics of their students such as kindness and respectfulness. Some spoke of the positive impact they felt they were having on their students in terms of improved academic success and behavior over the course of the year, and felt that such changes contributed to their feelings of satisfaction with their positions. In addition, positive staff relationships, supportive administration, working in an orderly and structured school environment, and teaching subject matter they enjoyed also contributed to teachers wanting to stay in their current positions. The few teachers in Johnson and Birkland's (2003) study who chose to stay at their schools stated reasons similar to those in the current study including having a supportive administration with clear expectations for students and collaborative colleagues. Such overlapping findings suggest that teacher-student fit is one contributor to teacher satisfaction, but other elements of Kristof's (1996) Personnel Psychology model must also be met for global satisfaction with a position. Participants' need for a structured school

environment suggests the need for a Person-organization fit (P-O), while supportive colleagues comprise the necessity of having a Person-group fit (P-G), and teaching within one's areas of expertise allows teachers to be knowledgeable within their positions supporting a Person-job fit (P-J). It is highly probable that when all three factors from Kristof's model, P-O, P-G, and P-J, plus a positive teacher-student fit come together, teachers are optimally satisfied with their working conditions. As such, all four levels of fit should be addressed in teacher interviews during the hiring process. This will be explored further when discussing problems with the teacher hiring process in Manitoba.

Comfort with students in relation to socioeconomic situation of the school.

When it came to discussing students in low socioeconomic neighbourhood schools compared to students in high socioeconomic area school, teachers in this study were transparent about the group of students they preferred to teach or felt more comfortable teaching. Those preferring to work with students living in lower income neighbourhoods provided a double-edged sword argument for their partiality. They stated having felt parents in higher income areas to be overly concerned with student grades to the point where parents were completing homework instead of students. Meanwhile, they also mentioned that one of their biggest challenges with students living in low income areas was the lack of parental involvement in education. A teacher preferring to work with his inner city students described his current students' lives in comparison to his previous students' lives in an affluent area of the city:

> "In this demographic, we've got to meet their needs first and we are trying to with all the programs we have here…. Because there are kids that never do their homework outside of class because they are not at home, because they don't have a home, because they don't have school supplies at home, whatever the reason is, it became that education was what happened between the hours of 9 o'clock and 3:30 for these students and there was little support or extensions. Whereas at my last school there was so much that you could phone up a parent and say "Congratulations **YOU** (emphasis) got a B+ on the Science fair project!" because they were so involved."

While some teachers indicated that they had some knowledge of poverty issues in Manitoba and they expected such differences, there were also teachers that indicated they were shocked when coming to work in a low income neighbourhood. Five teachers reported not even being aware of where the school was located when they first sent their applications or having to look up the location of the school prior to attending the interview. Such indications suggest there is a need for teachers to clearly research areas to which they apply; they also support the need for Faculties of Education to implement diverse practicum placements for preservice teachers. In these cases, teachers may have entered positions with the general sense that inner city schools face such challenges. High immigrant populations mean that parents are less likely to be able to help with homework due to the language barrier, often many parents have not been through formal themselves as a result of having to work to support family or the availability of schooling in their home countries, or have had poor experiences in traditional education systems. Numerous parents in low income neighbourhoods work several jobs to make ends meet and in poverty stricken areas there is likely to be a lack of homework completing tools

such as books, technology, and supplies in the home as money is spent on necessities. Given that many teachers in this study indicated they signed their teaching contracts simply because they needed a job, it is highly unlikely that research into neighbourhood and student demographics was done. Although some principals explicitly asked these teachers what they knew about the school or the area during the interview, not all teachers reported having been asked this question. Teacher research into the school and neighbourhood plus the use of interview questions linked to the student population will be discussed further under "Issues with the Hiring Process in Manitoba".

The teachers that stated they preferred to work with students attending schools in higher income areas felt that students in lower income areas came to school with many unmet needs that were not seen when working with their students in higher income neighbourhoods. Teachers preferring to work with students in higher income areas also discussed attachment issues of students in low income areas and felt that these students often crossed boundaries by looking for a friend instead of a teacher. They also felt students in low income neighbourhoods were less likely to place education as a priority in their lives and felt that student behavior was often difficult to manage. While all teachers working with students in lower income areas recognized the importance of building relationships with students it is likely that some individuals are better at initiating the conversations with students that find common ground, being calm in the face of poor student behavior, and earning students' respect as opposed to being the authoritarian adult. For example, a teacher who enjoyed working with his current inner city students explained:

> "I've gotta put a little more into it, before I get anything out of it. I feel that I can't just expect them to follow and learn. I've got to earn that, which I don't think you have to do everywhere. I think you have to work harder at it here than other places."

Meanwhile, a teacher who had difficulty working with low income area students stated, "I think kids need to know who is the teacher. It is the exact same philosophy as parenting. Kids need structure, rules, and order.". There is a clear and significant difference in approaches here and such variation in beliefs regarding how a teacher should act and relate to students may be responsible for teachers' levels of comfort working with youth in low income neighbourhoods as well as how students respond to the teachers. It is possible that students in the second teacher's classroom acted out to rebel against the rules and perhaps felt the classroom and assignments were too rigorous to address their learning needs.

In addition, some teachers who had worked in significantly low income neighbourhoods cited students perpetuating generational gang activity that promoted a culture of violence in schools. One teacher discussed how her feelings regarding the culture of violence in the school and administration's unwillingness to deal with it led her to search out a new position. She stated:

> "Certainly the generational gang activity that was present in the surrounding area was brought into the classroom and that made me feel very uncomfortable. Then compound that with an administration that wanted to avoid it and pretend that it didn't exist."

Many schools in low income neighbourhoods in Canada are incredibly safe places. Even this teacher agreed that it was the school administration that did not address gang activity within the school that was the main problem. No one should feel unsafe at work, but again it seems the overarching issue here is the need to determine how a teacher's values, beliefs, and philosophy of education fit with that of administrators during the hiring process so that any mismatch is glaringly apparent prior to any job offers being made. This is especially true since all teachers in the study recognized that students in low income neighbourhoods, students who have been marginalized by the education system, and students that are at risk of failure are more challenging to work with than students that do not fit these demographics. Although teachers stated that students in such situations often came with basic needs unmet – lacking proper nutrition, adequate sleep, appropriate clothing in the cold Manitoba weather, etc.- , most teachers also recognized that this was not always the fault of parents and related such issues to the enveloping poverty in the neighbourhood. Such findings are promising from a Critical Theory perspective. They suggest that many teachers are aware of the need for change within their schools and within the traditional education system and, unlike the teachers that initiated subsequent transfers, they did not place blame on parents for poor student behavior or difficulty with academic task completion.

There seemed to be a clear dichotomy in how teachers working in low socioeconomic area schools chose to respond to their awareness of student poverty (see Figure 1). Four teachers responded in a positive manner, using issues of poverty as a means to build relationships with their students and promote their academic success. These teachers, plus the teacher whose classes were used to recruit student participants, showed empathy, an understanding of student needs and what was happening in each of their lives, acted as

counsellors or parents, valued students' opinions, and used humor in the classroom and told stories to put students at ease and attempt to engage them in learning. Such findings suggest that these teachers recognized the importance of promoting students psychosocial development through participation, discussion, and interactions with themselves and the other students in the room. These teachers also recognized the importance of promoting students' cognitive development. Two of these teachers significantly increased their planning time to create or modify activities and adapt lessons to meet their students' academic levels. One was teaching History and English and was passionate about literacy. She created a course that was placed on a shared computer drive for all teachers to access should they wish to increase literacy in their classrooms as well. She indicated that she had created materials that ranged from grade 2 to grade 9 in order to meet the literacy levels of all students in her class. The second teacher that spent large amounts of time planning was the Tourism, Marketing, and Psychology teacher whose students took part in the study. She, having grown up in the community was passionate about incorporating community learning experiences into all her classes. The remaining teachers that responded positively to issues related to poverty were teaching Mathematics/Science, Science/Physical Education, and Physical Education. They did not increase their planning time stating that they had been teaching for a number of years and felt that they now required less time to plan lessons because they already had materials developed; they did not discuss the need to adapt or modify these materials based on their learners. However, these teachers felt that they were essential to students' lives by modeling academic success, the Mathematics/Science teacher for the many students in his current classes that did not have father figures at home and the Physical Education teachers primarily for the football players they coached. All four teachers interviewed indicated that they

differentiated instruction and supported multiple learning styles to meet the preferred ways to learn for all of their students, increased the use of hands on activities, attempted to motivate students to learn and engage them in the classroom, and recognized that learning takes place outside the classroom as well through field trips and extracurricular activities. The same strategies were reported by students in relation to the Marketing/Psychology/Tourisms teacher in this study. Most importantly, these teachers seemed to have high expectations of their students, holding them to high learning and achievement standards. This falls in line with the values of community members in the Yukon Territory who cited the need for culturally responsive teaching in which teachers held high expectations for students' classroom behavior and performance (Lewthwaite et al., 2013). In examining the qualities of teachers required to successfully implement a culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (1995b) found that teachers able to do so shared three main characteristics. These characteristics overlap with those of the teachers who responded positively to the needs of their students in the current study. The first characteristic was having a strong sense of self and promoting that sense in students so that failure in the classroom was not an option (Ladson-Billings). The teachers in the current study responding positively to issues of poverty cited that they had grown up in similar socioeconomic circumstances to the students they taught and had overcome barriers to learning and success. They had the same expectations of their students, were willing to help them in many motivating ways, and held their expectations of students high. The second characteristic teachers in Ladson-Billings' study possessed was the ability to structure social relations for collaborative and community learning. Again the teachers in this study with positive responses to student needs used group work, large class discussions, volunteer experiences in the community, and classroom field trips to build social skills and relationships

with and among students. Similarly, Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) found that teachers with a personal understanding that they have the ability to bring about change and are responsible for bringing about that change through classroom interactions tend to have more success in creating positive learning environments. Finally, teachers in Ladson-Billings study taught students to critically evaluate knowledge. Although not explicitly mentioned by teachers, this factor was mentioned by some students interviewed for the study in regards to their current classroom teacher. Therefore, it is likely that the teachers in this study who responded positively to the comorbid factors of neighbourhood poverty also set up their classrooms in manners conducive to implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy for their students. Such awareness of fit and the workings of teachers within this fit to meet the needs of their students show promising results. When the right person is in a position, they are willing to invest the time to get to know students, understand their personal and learning needs, and do their best to teach in a manner that best meets the needs of all of their students.

However, five of the teachers in this study did the exact opposite and rather than increase their expectations, they responded negatively to the barriers that prevented their students from learning. These teachers indicated they spent significantly less time planning for students in low income area schools, gave up on trying to find new ways to increase skills at home when homework was not done, omitted content or taught less curriculum when students showed difficulties understanding a topic, and increased their use of direct teaching and individual booklet seat work. A few teachers currently working in low income area schools indicated they would likely leave in the next few years if they were able to find positions closer to home that allowed them opportunities to increase their teaching repertoire. One teacher indicated that he felt his teaching remained the same regardless of the students he was

teaching. Such findings are discouraging and suggest that culturally responsive teaching is not being implemented in these classrooms.

An awareness of poverty and barriers to learning should encourage teachers to strive to help disadvantaged children achieve more. What seems to be happening in most cases is that teachers are lowering standards not only for students, but also for themselves. Teachers related their choice to lower their standards to frustrations that arose in the following situations: Teachers described omitting content that students were not understanding after only a few days or a few classes rather than adapting, giving up on assigning homework because it was not being done rather than finding ways to ensure homework was completed such as providing library books and supplies or providing homework that was thought related rather than written or production-based, and resorting to booklet work as a way to manage student behaviors, tardiness, and multiple absences in the classroom. Although these teachers likely had positive fits with many of their students, having that fit seems not to be a predictor of the quality of education being provided to students. As such, a positive teacher-student fit is not enough to guarantee that students are being provided with the best possible education. What is additionally concerning is that teachers explicitly voiced the need for hands-on learning and student-centred activities when asked what a positive fit would look like in their classroom. It seems from these latter statements that such activities are ideal, but unlikely to be occurring on a regular basis in these teachers' classrooms. A suggestion for future study is to attempt to triangulate what is said by teachers with classroom observations to see the types of learning activities actually implemented over the course of some time in the classroom, along with analysis of student work to determine if the work being produced for assessment purposes is also based on kinesthetic/hands-on activities and student-centred philosophies of

teaching and learning. Such triangulation could also be used to discern the degree to which teachers implement a culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms.

Several studies have found that teachers lower their expectations for students streamed into lower-track courses, students who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or students of minority culture, especially when such students are male (Agirdag, Van Avermaet, & Van Houtte, 2013; Auwarter & Arguete, 2008; 2011; Khalifa, 2011; Kelly & Carbonaro, 2012; Wood, Kaplan, & McLoyd, 2007; Van Houtte, Demanet, & Stevens, 2013). Van Houtte et al. (2013) asked classroom teachers to evaluate students with respect to cognitive capacity, effort, and homework completion and found that teachers views of students who opted to take lower-track classes were more negative than students enrolled in higher track classes. They also viewed such students as more disruptive and less interested in school than higher track students. They then adapted their pedagogy and curriculum expectations in line with these perspectives. Whereas some studies report that such low expectations develop over the time spent working in lower-track classrooms with student in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods or minority groups due to the anti-school behaviors or cultural differences students may exhibit (Agirdag et al., 2103; Khalifa, 2011; Van Houtte et al.), others suggest that these expectations are preconceived notions. For example, Auwarter and Arguete (2008) had teachers read scenarios about students with behavioral and academic challenges. They varied the gender and socioeconomic status of the students in these scenarios and found that teachers rated high SES male students more favorably and thought they had more promising futures than low SES males. It is possible that such expectancies may in turn affect teachers' motivations, planning, and sense of responsibility to students. Auwarter and Arguete suggest that teachers who believe that socioeconomic status is a predetermining factor in student

achievement will not be effective working with students in low SES neighbourhoods schools. Further evidence that teacher expectations may be largely related to preconceived views comes from a study by Kelly and Carbonaro (2012) who found that teachers evaluated the same student differently based on the track in which the student was placed. For example, if a student was placed in a regular track English class, but then opted for an Essentials Math class, there was a tendency for regular track teachers to report higher expectations, including expectations for college attendance, of the student, while the essentials stream teachers tended to report lower academic and future expectations for the same student.

While participants in this study were not directly asked about reasons for lowering their standards, there is evidence to suggest that they were not acting upon preconceived notions of low SES areas. Rather, it seems from interview discussions that the teachers in this study started out assigning homework and attempting to teach all content, and then became frustrated by the inability of students to complete homework or fully understand topics and that booklets and direct teaching were used as classroom management tools that allowed the teachers to be in control and watching all occurring behavior. Comments made by teacher participants regarding omitting content and no longer assigning homework are concerning because they suggest that rather than attempting to meet the needs of their students, they may possibly be giving up on attempting to teach concepts to students. There is a significant difference between fully omitting content and simplifying that content so that students are being taught the basics upon which they can build cognitive capacity. For example, the teacher that described omitting measurement, rather than beginning with protractors, might have started with a ruler and teaching the relationships between millimeters and centimeters. Homework might have helped to reinforce and build measurement concepts for those students

wishing to practice their skills at home. Because one theory advocates that teachers lower their expectations after spending time in lower-track classrooms or with at-risk students, it is imperative to understand why such lowering of expectations occurs and how it might be addressed. Templeton (2013) argues that misinterpretation of student behavior on the part of the teacher can result in lower expectations; such misunderstandings occur because teachers and students are often drawing from different funds of knowledge. While the majority of teacher candidates are of White, middle-class, mono-lingual English speaking backgrounds (Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2005), many of their students are not, especially for those teaching in northern and inner city schools. In the current study, inner city teachers recognized that there were differences among themselves and their students but either did not know how to or did not want to address the gaps in their funds of knowledge. Teachers must be taught to recognize and understand the differences in order to develop effective strategies for helping students to navigate classrooms and schools that may be very different from their home lives. Templeton cites the example of a student who never completes homework but instead is working after school to help the family pay bills and buy food and is caring for younger siblings. While the teacher's fund of knowledge says homework is important in academic success, the child's says family wellbeing takes precedence to paling homework. This example is being used because one of the main comments regarding students from low income areas in this study was in regard to homework not being completed.

Templeton (2013) indicates that simulations and teacher brainstorming groups have been successfully used to educate teachers about how different experiences affect students and to generate potential solutions. For the previous example regarding homework completion, teachers in Templeton's paper generated solutions such as providing assistance to such

students before and after school, building a homework help period into students' timetables, and providing students with school technology that they could take home for the evening that may make the completion of homework more manageable. Templeton states, "It is counterproductive to allow a student who lives in poverty to not complete the tasks expected of all the students in the class. A teacher needs to be creative to help the pupil find ways that work for him or her" (p. 74). To allow a student a pass on homework completion does nothing to help further the education of the student and as shown previously, such lowering of expectations is problematic.

Although homework should never result in students teaching themselves new material, it should allow students a chance to practice and master content covered in class. The practice of engaging in homework further teaches students about personal responsibility for learning and may strengthen their ability to persevere with challenging tasks. Bempechat, Li, Neier, Gillis, and Holloway (2011) found that among grade 9 students in low SES neighbourhood schools, few homework assignments were given and that there were no consequences for incomplete homework which they equated with lowered teacher expectations of students. While teachers in the current study cited the neighbourhood and family characteristics as preventing homework from being completed, Bempechat et al. (2011) vehemently argue that poverty does not equal academic disengagement and the avoidance of school tasks. In fact they found that among students in their study, 75% of high achieving, low income students completed their assigned homework, reported enjoying the challenge, and that homework helped to reinforce the concepts they were learning in school. Among low achieving students in their study, only 20% of students completed assigned homework regularly; the students that did not complete homework often cited requiring the teacher's help and not having the

necessary tools at home to complete the required tasks. The lack of support at home and lack of material to engage in learning did result in further detachment and disengagement of school tasks. Providing students with manageable tasks and the appropriate materials to complete homework, and providing students with a time during the school day where help is available may relieve many of the apparent differences in SES areas regarding homework completion.

Some might argue that low expectations by a few teachers will not have a significant impact on the future of a child, but research suggests otherwise. A primary theme apparent in conversations with community members in the Yukon Territory regarding the need for culturally-based learning in schools indicated that participants often perceived they were viewed as less capable than non-Aboriginal learners by their teachers. These feelings impacted teacher-student interactions and perpetuated cultural views as a deficit rather than an asset in learning, and they were cited several years after some participants had left the education system (Lewthwaite et al., 2013). In a longitudinal study, Sorhagen (2013) found that the underestimation of students' Math and language skills by their first grade teachers was correlated to lower tests scores of cognitive abilities at age 15 even after taking into account prior measures of ability, gender, ethnicity, and family SES. When teachers overestimated the grade 1 children's' abilities, their scores on tests of cognitive abilities were in general higher than the children who received underestimated ability by their first grade teachers. Inaccurate expectations by teachers predicted students' standardized test scores 10 years later. This impact was stronger for students from low income areas. Students from affluent homes showed less correlation between teachers' expectations and test scores a decade later. While many factors may play a role in accounting for the existence of such correlations, self-fulfilling prophecies are a reality and teachers' expectations may play a more

of a role in student achievement than one might think. Such findings are even more disturbing knowing that it has been reported that positive teacher expectations protect at-risk children from the damaging impact of low parental expectations (Wood et al., 2007). In this research, when teachers held high expectations for at-risk youth, low parental expectations appeared to have no influence on youth's perceptions of themselves.

In a two year ethnographic study, Khalifa (2011) also examined reasons for lowered expectations of students by teachers in an alternative high school for at-risk students in the USA. The student population was primarily African American while the teaching staff was split between African American and Caucasian teachers. He found that Caucasian teachers were far more likely to engage in deal-making with students than African American teachers. When students complained that some social factor was preventing them from classroom engagement, Caucasian teachers allowed students to leave the room to go sit in another teacher's class, had students sit in the hallways, and allowed students to academically and socially disengage by being excused from participating in class or completing the assigned work. Such mental disengagement is troubling because it is often a precursor to physical disengagement from school including decreased attendance and subsequent drop out. African America teachers on the other hand demanded that students stay in class and attempt to complete their work and were far more likely to seek intervention from a counsellor or social worker when students indicated upheaval in their lives. When asked about deal-making in relation to lowered expectations, Caucasian teachers reported feeling intimidated by students' behavior, did not want to deal with student confrontation or disrupt the classroom harmony, and did not want to be resented by students for pushing for work to be done. In the current study, generational gang activity and a culture of violence were mentioned in participant

responses. Not wanting to deal with student behavior, pushing for work, and disrupting the classroom harmony were not mentioned but may account for lowered expectations of students. Dealing with behavioral issues in a classroom of students with multiple needs can be draining and logically teachers may be acting to minimize classroom management issues. Unfortunately this may be coming at the expense of higher level learning. It is possible that teachers, especially those of different cultural backgrounds than students, are less likely to chance behavioral issues arising in an attempt to gain more work output.

Khalifa (2011) reports that the major player in changing teachers' actions over the course of his two year study was the school's principal. This administrator challenged teachers on racial discrimination, unfairness, issues of social injustice, exclusionary behaviors, and low expectations. He recognized that teacher expectations as related to deal-making were "about a thorough understanding of culturally-based student disengagement, and an understanding that deal-making is detrimental to students' academic progress" (p. 719). For example, when a teacher would not admit late students to class in the morning, the principal intervened and told her she must accept the students, understand that sometimes there are issues in their home lives, and that she would not be permitted to deny students an education. Khalifa suggests that it is the social justice leadership of the school's principal that challenged teachers long held educational practices. While the principal's actions sometimes resulted in conflicts with staff, teachers over the course of the study did report changes in their behavior. Such leadership would be beneficial in all school settings and requires that administrators be aware of the actions of all staff and the principles of equity, social justice, and culturally-based pedagogy that best serve the student population.

While all teachers in this study recognized the importance of building relationships with students in order to improve their psychosocial development, it seems only a few teachers chose to also use such awareness of fit to promote students' cognitive development. Psychosocial growth is important in the development of emotional intelligence, temperament, personality characteristics, self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and interpersonal relationships (Berger, 1998). It is understandable that teachers in this study felt strongly about nurturing students and relationship building as each of the above factors impacts one's ability to be successful in both schooling and life. No one would argue the fact that emotional development through relationship building is essential for students who have been marginalized by the education system, but we do them a huge disserve when this is the only aspect of education we aim to improve. Students must also be given the chance and the appropriate means, through adaptations, differentiated instruction, and learning style congruence, to build their knowledge of the curriculum. The mental processes used to think, learn, memorize, evaluate data and make decisions, communicate effectively, and use imagination and creativity are all part of the cognitive domain. Both cognitive and psychosocial domains are important at every age along with biological growth. Together, they make up human development (Berger). Teachers working solely on psychosocial development must also attend to students' cognitive development if we are to have students who are fully able to be autonomous in the world. Teachers working with marginalized students must be taught to recognize that an equal education is far from an equitable education. An equal education requires providing all students with the same means, resources, and guidance in schooling. It is known that not all students in a classroom begin at the same place academically or socially at the beginning of a school year. It is also known that some groups of students face and have faced multiple

challenges in traditional education. Equitable education is concerned with fairness and social justice principles. It recognizes that some groups must be treated differently in order for success in education to occur. Students of teachers in this study working in the lower income schools may have received passing grades in their courses, however teachers reported omitting content. If that content is required as base knowledge for success in subsequent grade level courses, then that teacher has failed the student regardless of the grade. In fact, such grade inflation in low income areas is cause for concern. While teachers may feel that this is what is required to get students through the pipeline and on to college or university, an 80% that lacks content knowledge, that did not develop study and research skills through homework assignments, and was based on the ability to complete booklets rather than collaborate, inquire, and problem-solve with peers is not the same as an 80% in which students were expected to master content, taught to refine study skills, and expected to question, interpret, and work with peers. This could be likened to giving two children front row tickets to an NHL game, however, one child stands five feet tall while the other is only 3 feet tall. Despite providing equal seats, only one child will be able to see over the boards and watch the game. Having equal grades does not mean a child has been given an equitable education. Findings of this study seem to suggest that teachers working with marginalized youth tend to equate relationship building with learning and that such relationship building allowed students enough learning to make it through high school. This line of reasoning is fundamentally flawed. Skimming through high school with a grade point average hovering slightly above 50% should not be the achievement standard to which students are held because they come from a given neighbourhood, grew up in poverty, struggled with the English language, or come from a minority culture. If such were the case, we would have no

David Susuki to speak of global environmental and health issues and bring together multiple cultural groups to teach generations to value the land, oceans, and air. There would be no Oprah Winfrey or Adam Beach as our celebrity role models. There would have been no Tom Thompson for aspiring artistic youth to model and no Ray Charles for the musically inclined. Relationship building so that students simply get some education and graduate does not equal a quality education. Holding students to high standards, teaching areas of the curriculum and beyond, relating material to real life, motivating students to find their passion and pursue it so that they too can encourage, help, and teach future generations is a better definition of what education should look like for marginalized students. It is a more equitable education and it requires teachers to respond positively to the understanding of teacher-student fit and the understanding of the barriers preventing students from success.

Positive teacher-student fit as perceived by educators.

When asked about fit with students almost all teachers stressed the importance of building relationships with children in order to increase their participation in the classroom. All teachers working with students in low socioeconomic neighborhoods or with at-risk student stated only personal characteristics as important in working with such students and all characteristics aided in relationship building. Such characteristics include the ability to form connections inside and outside the classroom (e.g. chats in the halls, through extracurricular activities). Here teachers spoke of being friendly and approachable, and using humor to build rapport. In addition, teachers felt that being patient had allowed them to successfully fit and build relationships with students. They felt that because they remained calm and did not overreact to negative behaviors, label, or judge students in a negative light, they were better

suited to fitting with students having multiple classroom needs. Finally as stated most often, understanding student needs was the number one factor teachers working with marginalized children felt they were able to fit with their students. Here they spoke of understanding Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) with several teachers explicitly referring to Maslow's pyramid and their training in this area, having empathy, and relating to students due to growing up in a similar area. Having the ability to satisfy basic student needs in the form of caring, food, and a safe environment were reported as precursors to learning by students in Yerrick et al.'s (2010) autoethnographic study of lower-track steamed students. Only once students felt these needs had been satisfied by their teacher were they willing and able to take risks in the classroom and participate in classroom discussions. Students in this study also identified the ability to meet student needs as a teacher characteristic contributing to teacher-student fit. This will be explored later, however, the fact that teachers and students recognize the importance of satisfying basic needs as a precursor to learning, especially for students who struggle to meet these needs in other areas of their life, suggests that educators are doing their best to provide for students so that they can engage in classroom learning rather than being passive bystanders in an education system where they have been often overlooked.

In terms of the reasons for their awareness of student needs, teachers here spoke of many individual characteristics based on their life circumstances and backgrounds, their personal strengths, and their educational experiences (see Table 2). Because of the individuality and uniqueness in these findings, the characteristics could not be coded into overarching themes of teacher students fit. Meanings of teacher-student fit in relation to understanding student needs have been socially and culturally constructed based the experiences of each individual teacher. Such characteristics included understanding what it is

like to be raised in a similar culture, recognizing student needs due to growing up in similar social and economical circumstances, the development of empathy based on a previous position working with students in vulnerable circumstances, the ability to act as a mentor, role-model, or stable figure in a child's life, the need to continually be challenged and motivated to learn, and the comprehension of development needs through educational background knowledge. It is possible that had more teachers been interviewed, that such characteristics would have in fact been seen as themes, however, this cannot be generalized given the small number of participants in this study.

One teacher working in an affluent area of the city did not stress the importance of building relationships or other personal factors when asked about fit with his current students. Rather, he spoke of continually improving content knowledge and pedagogical approaches to presenting such knowledge through professional development learning opportunities and staying atop current literature in Education. Although this individual focused solely on professional characteristics when asked about his fit with his students, it seems as though he was knowledgeable regarding the need to also build relationships. For example, he spoke of a position he held working with high needs children prior to entering Education and how this helped him to work with certain students in the future. Of this job he said, "What it did set me up for was funded kids and disadvantaged kids. I had an empathy for them because I had the experience there.". However, he did not see this as a factor influencing his fit with his current students. It may be possible that students attending schools in more affluent areas have parents with jobs that allow them more time with their children, evenings and weekends off for example, thus giving children in such circumstances more time to bond with parents and work on and receive help at home for school related projects. This could account for the decreased

emphasis on personal characteristics in fit and the emphasis on professional characteristics when working with students in higher socioeconomic neighbourhoods. For example, when asked about the type of learning activities that helped students be successful, the teacher working in an affluent area of the city discussed a Mathematics project in which students were to determine the volume of objects at home. Of the project he said:

> "I told them to do it over the weekend and when we came back I asked how many figured it out, and hands went up and then I asked how many had their parents help and the hands went up – I love it when they involve their parents. It is great dinner conversation."

Although a potentially interesting project for younger students, it is also highly probable that the dinner conversations he mentions his students having are not occurring with all students, especially those students whose parents must work evenings and weekends to provide for their families. Again, interpretations here must be taken with a grain of salt. The perceptions of many more participants teaching in high income areas would be required before any generalizable conclusions could be made.

There has been much debate surrounding which set of characteristics is predictive of successful classroom teaching, personal or professional. Current literature suggests that most principals are assessing a mix of teachers' personal and professional characteristics in the hiring process (Cranston, 2012; Harris et al., 2010; Kersten, 2008; Rutledge et al., 2008). In terms of personal characteristics, this study, in addition to previous studies, suggests that patience, caring, and empathy are qualities that are key contributors to teachers' ability to

successfully work with students. The results of this study fall in line with those of Engel (2013) and Ingle et al. (2011) who support the idea that students in low socioeconomic areas may benefit from having a teacher with specific personal attributes and Prather-Jones (2011) who found that teachers reported personal characteristics and not professional attributes as allowing them to continue working with challenging students.

Teachers in this study for the most part ignored or downplayed the importance of professional characteristics in successfully working with students, with the one exception discussed above. Unlike past studies (Kersten, 2008; Papa and Baxter, 2008), professional characteristics such as university grade point average (GPA), level of education, resumes, portfolios, and letters of reference did not seem to be important to teachers' actual levels of success on the job or fit with their students. Is it possible then that principals who focus mainly or even partially on profession characteristics of teacher applicants are determining little of predicted job performance of the teachers they hire? This study suggests that it is quite possible. However, given that the only teacher to stress professional characteristics was also the only teacher not working with marginalized students, more research in this area is needed to determine if professional characteristics are more important when working with certain groups of students.

In fact, like Engel's (2013) findings, this study showed that the weighting of personal and professional characteristics varied across low and high socioeconomic area schools with those in low income neighbourhoods with marginalized students stressing the importance of personal characteristics. On this topic, Engel raises an important question: Are the trade-offs that principals are making in their students' best interest, especially for those in disadvantaged schools? As discussed previously, although personal characteristics that allow for the

development of positive relationships with students and potentially increase engagement are vastly important, this study shows that they are not the only factors influencing how teachers respond to the barriers preventing students from having successful education. Other factors such as having high expectations for students, constantly motivating students, and repeatedly checking in with students on all aspects of their lives, as well as differentiating instruction seem to be key in providing marginalized students with more equitable education (again, see Figure 1). There is the need to investigate how such factors interact in order to ascertain the most positive outcome for students. This will be discussed in more detail when examining students' perceptions of teacher-student fit.

I fit. Now what?

All teachers understood that when a positive teacher-student fit occurred, students were more likely to engage in classroom activities. Teachers in the study spoke of using hands-on activities and grouping students in order to achieve a classroom in which students were participating, helping each other, and they could rotate to assist struggling students. These activities were often related to current topics in the media or real life scenarios. Most activities described by teachers when asked to relate their classroom to their fit with students were student-centred and teachers noted that they attempted to keep the amount of direct teaching including note taking and lecturing to a minimum, recognizing that such activities generally resulted in less engagement by students. The extent to which these behaviors were actually employed by teachers in their classrooms is unknown given that no classroom observations were preformed for this study and such results must be called into question given that several teachers working in low income areas reported lowering their standards when

students showed difficulty with content, failed to complete homework, or showed problematic behaviors in the classroom. These findings should be viewed as inconclusive and future studies must employ methods of observation to determine the frequency of student-centred activities in the classroom.

The fact that teachers vocalized such positive understanding of what their classrooms would look like when a positive fit with students was achieved would lead us to believe that students were being provided with the best possible set of activities to acquire knowledge and the best possible forms of assessment, inquiry projects for example, to show their understanding of the newly obtained content. An additional problem with this line of thinking is glaringly obvious when examining the teachers' responses to their planning and preparation for students. The majority of teachers in this study worked in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods. All teachers in the study indicated that students in lower income neighbourhoods were more challenging to work with than their counterparts in more affluent areas given that they were often grade levels behind due to the many barriers that had prevented them from achievement in the education system. One might think that this would lead teachers to plan and prepare, invest the time to adapt and modify, and set up activities that differentiate instruction for these challenging groups of students. This was not the case. One teacher indicated increasing her planning and preparation in order to meet student needs and this was because she was incredibly concerned with the literacy rates of her students. She indicated spending large amounts of time on preparing reading centre activities, pre-teaching missing vocabulary, and using group activities in an attempt to help students get to grade level literacy scores. The teacher whose students participated in the study also indicated that her planning increased to meet the needs of her students as much of her course based work was

linked to community volunteer experiences and community contact and fieldtrip set up required significant amounts of preparation. The majority of teachers indicated their planning had either decreased or had not changed when working with more challenging students. Other than the teacher concerned with literacy rates, those that indicated they planned more for their more challenging group of students tended to relate this to the subject matter they were teaching and not the group of learners. The more content dense the curriculum or the more unfamiliar they were with topics, the more they planned. Strong content knowledge is incredibly beneficial in that it allows teachers to thoroughly answer student questions and provide more than one way to address a problem. Strong content knowledge also allows teachers to find better ways of transmitting that knowledge to students and when this occurs it can free up teacher time to deal with other classroom issues. However, these were not the reasons given for attempting to gain more content knowledge by teachers in this study. For example, the out-of-field teacher spent more time planning because she was unfamiliar with the content in both Science and ELA. She indicated that she first taught herself the material and then tried to find ways to present the content so that it made sense and so that she appeared knowledgeable. A teacher that had recently changed schools was teaching grade 12 Precalculus for the first time. Planning any subject for the first time requires much preparation. Although he was a Mathematics major, he stated that there were so many topics in the curriculum that needed to be addressed that he spent much of his planning time trying to find ideal examples to show students step-by-step techniques to address each type of problem. If he did not do this, he said he would be inundated with student questions each time a problem changed slightly and helping struggling students would take time away from moving on to the next topic. Such planning is self-serving. Covering more content cannot be equated

with more learning and appearing as an expert in a field of study may leave a teacher feeling knowledgeable, but does not mean that students are also acquiring that knowledge to any extent. This may be especially true in this study since one teacher that indicated she was unfamiliar with the content she was teaching also reported choosing instructional methods based on her comfort level. The fall out of this could be detrimental for students who already struggle with learning academic content and the retention of it. Such a finding seems to support studies from the United States (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Cannata, 2010; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002) which found that students with the most barriers to success in education are often paired with the most unqualified teachers in terms of pedagogical and content knowledge. Again this speaks to larger issues with the hiring process and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

It seems clear that teachers, when explicitly asked to relate their fit to classroom activities, understand what they should be doing (e.g. - student centred activities, helping small groups of students, and using inquiry projects). Problematically however, half said they increased direct teaching and booklet work when teaching students in low socioeconomic areas (see Figure 1). Others admitted omitting content when students just were not able to understand it the way they were presenting it. Still others reported they taught less curriculum and stopped giving any homework because they felt students would not do it. In part this was related to students not having technology or supplies at home. However, these teachers also seemed to lack insight into finding ways to provide students with resources. For example, an afternoon trip with students to a community public library would solve the problem of not having books to do a research project or allowing students to sign out markers might allow them to complete a poster project at home. While this vastly oversimplifies the need to

address barriers to classroom learning that are affected by pervasive poverty, there is the need to begin somewhere. Addressing systemic poverty issues through social programming, government initiatives, community awareness, and equity in education and job opportunities may require substantial wait times before any results are seen. Education is one way in which students can pull themselves from poverty and as shown by Bempechat et al. (2011), high achieving students in low income area schools that were given homework and the means to complete it, were more than willing and able to do so. As simplistic as this temporary solutions is, it can still be implemented while teachings students to be critically aware and while attempting to initiate change in the larger system.

In addition to the issues described above, a few teachers in low income area schools indicated they would be looking for new positions within the next few years. There is a major disjunction between what is said and what is done in the classroom. Are such revelations empty promises like those of politicians recruiting voters? Has Education become a jaded profession in which many teachers are cynical of the achievement possibilities of students from low socioeconomic areas who typically lag years behind their counterparts in affluent areas? And finally, when it comes to knowing what an engaging classroom with teacher-student fit occurring should look like, if such realizations can be vocalized when directly asked, is an interview process really the best way to assess candidates at all?

As stated previously, it is becoming clearer that simply fitting with students is not enough to provide them with an education that will allow them to be critical of the world in which we live and understand social justice issues to their full extent. However, it seems that there are likely other teachers out there that will increase planning time to meet the needs of their students and such teachers may be better suited to working with struggling students.

The Impact of Positive Teacher-Student Fit on Success Rates

Students in this study came from the classes of a teacher in a school in a low socioeconomic neighbourhood. This teacher taught Marketing and Promotions, Psychology, and a Tourism course for grade 12 students.

Two concrete measures of success, grades and quality of work, were addressed in this study. Almost all students reported that the quality of their work improved over the course of the year with their teacher. In terms of grades, all students that responded to this study as participants were typically high achieving students in the final year of their high school career. All indicated that they were interested in attending university or college in the following school year. This study therefore, cannot draw any insights or implications regarding the role of teacher-student fit on student grades, however, there is the possibility that for students who struggle academically, the right fit can increase students' individual subject area grades or GPAs. Future research in this area is required.

In terms of affective measures of success, students reported increased motivation to learn, interest in the subject matter, and increased participation in the classroom when working with their current teacher.

Because all students indicated that this teacher was a good fit for them and were clearly able to articulate why they felt this was so and subsequently relate the characteristics of teacher-student fit to their achievement in terms of both concrete and affective measures of success, there is strong evidence to support the idea that teacher-student fit plays a role in student success rates. The characteristics of teachers that allowed for such success to occur as perceived by students will be explored in the next section.

Teacher-Student Fit – Are Students the Better Judges?

It was thought that acknowledging the role of teacher-student fit in the education system from the perspective of students themselves might provide insight into the quality of education that is being provided to children. What also seemed to emerge when coding students' interview responses, is that students seemed to have broader perceptions of what it means to fit with a teacher and more inclusive characteristics that fall within both personal and professional characteristics. Caution must be applied when interpreting these results. All students in this study attended a high school in a low socioeconomic neighbourhood of Winnipeg. It is possible that students attending schools in higher income areas may weigh characteristics of their teachers that allow for success in the classroom very differently. As such, more research is needed in this area. These students are also basing their perceptions of teacher-student fit on their interactions with a single classroom teacher. The perceived fit with this teacher was very positive and she was currently teaching students elective courses only. To ascertain a better understanding of teacher-student fit, the perceptions of students in relation to a number of teachers working in a number of different subject areas is needed.

Previous literature (e.g. Harris et al., 2010; Mason & Schroeder, 2010) has drawn a clear distinction between teacher's personal and professional characteristics, which are both sought by principals in the candidate selection process. Personal characteristics are those related to life experience and personality factors, while professional characteristics are drawn from the areas of pedagogical and content knowledge. It seems students also make such distinctions when addressing factors that allow them to fit well with their classroom teacher.

In terms of concrete measures of success, specifically improvement in the quality of work being handed in, students spoke of three personal characteristics of their teacher and four professional characteristics (see Table 3). The main theme arising when students discussed their teacher's impact on their success was the manner in which she provided help. This contained elements of both professional pedagogical knowledge and personal characteristics. From a professional standpoint, students stated that the expectations of them and for assignments were clear and explicit, the teacher gave consistent feedback, and she taught them about preferential learning styles and incorporated the use of those learning styles into classroom assignments and projects by allowing students to present their learning in the manner of their choosing. In terms of personal characteristics, students relayed two important qualities of their teacher regarding the manner in which she helped them in the classroom: She told stories of her life to attempt to help students learn from the mistakes she had made and she consistently motivated and encouraged them while helping them with their work. Although not coded as themes because mentioned by a single student, trusting students, a personal characteristic, and teaching skills for independence such as time management, a professional characteristic, were given as teacher characteristics that improved the quality of a student's work.

Such findings correspond well with previous studies reporting students' perceived success in relation to teacher characteristics. For example, Aboriginal students from an inner city school in Winnipeg also stated that clear instructions and expectations were critical to their success in the classroom (Kanu, 2007) and a study of high school learning environments found that students preferred classrooms in which the teacher included non-subject matter related conversations (Stitt-Ghodes, 2001).

The fact that this teacher took the time to explore multiple learning styles with students and then implement a variety in the classroom to meet the needs of her learners, suggests students successes may in part be based on learning style congruence as Westerman et al. (2002) advocate, but what is fascinating to learn is that this teacher took the time in each class to educate students about their preferred learning styles and then fit her classroom activities, incorporating a number of styles, to meet the needs of her learner. While Stitt-Ghodes (2001) and Mather & Champagne (2008) found only some congruence between the learning styles students preferred and the teaching styles used by educators in their studies, this study suggests that there are teachers that are very aware of the need for learning style congruence. This may be part of a larger personal quality, simply being aware of student needs, but it also suggests that teachers can be taught to address learning styles within their classrooms and perhaps more work in this area is needed at the preservice teacher level to prepare future teachers for the vast range of students they will encounter and the differentiation that will be required in their classroom instruction. This should be tied in with the teaching of social justice and cultural diversity in preservice teacher education programs. Teacher education programs in Manitoba currently emphasize multiple learning styles and require that students take a course in Aboriginal Education. All universities could benefit from such a model. In addition, it is important to ensure that such perspectives are not limited to one class. Multiple learning styles and their relation to culturally-based learning should be emphasized in all classes Faculties of Education offer to preservice teachers and graduate students.

Teaching students according to preferred learning styles places larger demands on the teacher in terms of planning and preparation required. While it is likely impossible to teach all

students using their preferred learning styles in every period, teachers can vary their presentation and lesson formats regularly to meet student needs. It is important to note that some learning styles are task specific. A science lab for example is a hands-on activity. However, in such cases, the manner in which one presents their findings can be varied. A science lab need not be presented as a formal lab write up to gauge student learning. Students could instead present findings in the form of a presentation, a poster, diagrams, and even through poetry or song. Even though teachers may recognize that all students learn differently, such knowledge is not always put into practice. Gérin-Lajoie (2012) found that teachers reported seeing and treating their students as if they were all the same. Multiple learning styles and differentiated instruction are needed because each learner is unique and comes to the classroom with varied requirements for learning. Certain ethnic groups and cultural groups may have preferential learning styles. The importance of learning style congruence in the success of Aboriginal students has already been identified (Kleinfeld, 1995; MacIver, 2012). Aboriginal students reported increased academic success when learning presented with visual tasks, reading and telling stories, through scaffolding with the teacher, and in collaborative learning groups (Kanu, 2002) all of which were reported by students as strategies used by the teacher in this study as well. These preferential learning styles mirror Aboriginal cultural values such as task collaboration, group childrearing practices, connection with the community, respect for the environment, and feedback from Elders. Therefore, classroom teachers must give students the chance to learn and engage in the classroom in the manner that best fits their cultural norms. This is needed in order to attain social justice.

Moreover, when looking at each of the teacher's personal and professional characteristics as explained by students, it became clear that all these qualities seemed to

converge on one larger piece that might just be the additional link to the idea of teacher-student fit needed to increase success rates for all students. This link seemed to be missing from the reports of many teachers interviewed for this study. That link is holding students to high standards (see Figure 1). This seemed to be related to how much time the teacher was willing to spend planning activities for both inside the classroom and as extracurricular and volunteer activities, as well as her willingness to continually motivate and encourage students. Time spent planning, in turn, was related to differentiating instruction, adapting materials, and teaching about and providing a classroom where multiple learning styles were nurtured. When assessing teacher interviews from those working at schools in low socioeconomic areas, only one teacher spoke about having increased her planning time to meet student needs as opposed to learning the content of a course and rather than lowering her expectations, held the bar for student achievement high. Students in this study, however, were able to explicitly relay this feeling. As one student explained of her Tourism teacher:

> "For grade 12 Tourism, she is very "this is what you need to do, you are in grade 12, it is your responsibility"… I feel like she holds us up to a higher standard... She does expect a lot from us, but it's not like darts in the back of your head or eyes watching you."

The idea of holding students to higher standards will be discussed throughout this section. Similar to students' reports of their teacher in this study, Ladson-Billings (1995b) found that teachers using culturally responsive teaching believed that all students were capable of academic success; failure was not an option in their classrooms, and they constantly pushed

students to work to higher standards. It seems that holding students to high expectations with respect to concrete aspects of student achievement allows the teacher to find ways to help students that motivate them to continue learning and encourage them not to give up on their efforts to succeed.

When addressing affective measures of success, students again focused on a mix of personal characteristics and professional of their teacher (see Table 4). This teacher was able to create a classroom where learning was enjoyable. She accomplished this by having students learn by doing activities, by actively discussing topics, and by debating current topics while still valuing all students' opinions rather than thinking of her students as empty vessels that need to be filled with facts. All too often, teachers accommodate and justify the use of the banking model of education. The banking model of education sees students as vacant minds that need to be filled with knowledge. Such knowledge is transmitted by teachers to students as if it were being deposited into them; it occurs through very direct teaching, the receiving of information, the need to memorize, and then repeat or regurgitate what has been offered as knowledge by the teacher. Problematically, there is little critical thinking on the part of the student (Freire, 1970/1990). The teachers interviewed for this study stated that they increased the use of individual booklet work and direct teaching when faced with students they deemed to be behavioral challenges. The teacher being in control may provide students with knowledge, but in a manner that is problematic because "by giving the student formulas to receive and store, we have not offered him the means for authentic thought" (Freire, 1974, p. 34). Education is much more than disciplinary knowledge. It is also about citizenship, critical thinking skills, and social awareness and students realized their teacher was helping them to accomplish these things through critical discussion and volunteer work in the community.

Teachers using culturally responsive pedagogy also encouraged students to give back to the community in which they lived through volunteer work and taught students that knowledge is socially constructed and should be viewed critically (Ladson-Billings, 1995b). In talking about the discussion and participation that occurred in her teacher's classroom, one student explained that she felt such methods of teaching had provided her with a better education than other subject areas she was currently studying:

> "She has helped me to learn better because that level of real world she brings, introducing you to things you are actually going to be encountering, unlike with Bio and you are wondering "where am I going to see an octopus mating?". Her stuff is very real life and even just with the personal talks she prepares you for real life, not just the things you might see."

Relating topics to life and moving beyond the curriculum to teach life lessons and skill such as applying for university or college were mentioned by all students in this study things this teacher did that they felt were beneficial to their education. They also indicated that such conversations were not happening in the classrooms of their other teachers. Authenticity in teaching is valued by students and connecting material that is learned to real life situations is necessary to provide students with the skills required to function once they leave the school's four walls. The recognition that students will require life skills beyond what is explicit in the curriculum is something this teacher clearly recognized and was willing to take the time to address. Although one might ask if trading curriculum time for teaching skills such as applying to university is in the best interests of the students, it is likely that this teacher made

such decisions based on the needs of her current learners. Parents that do not speak English as a first language or have not been to post secondary institutions may not be able to provide students with the advice and expertise required to successfully apply for scholarship money and to specific programs.

Furthermore, students felt that this teacher motivated them to learn by having them engage in kinesthetic, visual, and linguistic activities; again, the idea of supporting multiple learning styles was a common theme among student responses. Much of this engagement with learning material occurred in groups and like the findings of Ladson-Billings (1995b), this teacher also structured social relationships in the classroom to create a community of learners and a collaborative work environment. As one student explains through a lesson that involves group work, discussion, surveying the student body, and creating visual representations of data, this is what made the teacher's class interesting:

> "An hour in her class – it's probably the most interesting hour. It is not like one of those classes where you are like "Oh my God, when will this be over?". She tries to make it like the most fun and information based. She will come out with little activities so that we are having fun but also so that we are learning what we need to know from the lesson. So for example, the Geo topic was statistics and in groups we had to come up with our own questions and go around asking people and then we made our data into charts after so that we understood how to do it ourselves."

Teachers and Aboriginal students in a study by Whitley (2014) indicated that the curriculum was a poor fit for Aboriginal students because of the lack of kinesthetic learning incorporated

into the topics presented. Earlier in the literature review for this research project, it was stated that, "One might wonder if a teacher with a strong awareness of fit could take this information and incorporate movement and pensive activities into the curriculum where it is lacking." According to students in this study, the answer is yes. The student example given above was only one of many topics that this teacher took from curriculum guides and turned into activities that involved movement, discussion, and group collaboration. Like Aikenhead (2002) who created a Science curriculum that contained several outdoor and kinesthetic activities to engage students in both Western and Aboriginal Science, this teacher created Marketing activities that involved going to shopping malls to critically analyze promotion schemes and creating mocktails to sell to the student body in a campaign against drinking and driving to support M.A.D.D. (Mothers Against Drinking and Driving). She came up with numerous activities to support students in her Tourism class become better aware of the province in which they live from camping trips, to attending museums, the opera, the ballet, and the symphony, as well as taking historical tours of various districts of Winnipeg, and attending various cultural festivals such as Festival du Voyageur. For Psychology, students designed and carried out small investigations in attempts to replicate the findings of studies on memory/recall and behavior (e.g. classical and operant conditioning) that they had studied, and for Geography students spent many days outdoors geocaching, discussing weather patterns, and analyzing rock and soil. Although one might argue that the subjects this teacher taught lend themselves to such activities, it should be noted that these activities are not stated in the curriculum guides. Rather, this teacher took the time to plan kinesthetic, visual, and auditory activities to meet the learning styles of her students. Aikenhead was able to accomplish this task for Science and it is likely that with some professional development

training in the area of multiple learning styles as related to cultural background, and some teacher-based planning initiatives, it is possible to achieve kinesthetic learning activities in all subject areas for the majority of topics being learned in classrooms.

Although the idea of engaging students through doing is pedagogically based and would likely be thought of as a professional characteristics, the manner in which this teacher accomplished this feat was very personal in nature. In addition to many of her lessons incorporating games and outdoor activities, she also incorporated the viewing of inspirational video clips related to content and sharing both personal stories and stories from literature relevant to the lives of students. For example a student spoke of a book of life lessons this teacher read to them from on a weekly basis and the topics within it focused upon being kind to one another, becoming an aware consumer, and helping those in need which led this student to feel motivated to engage in such practices:

> "She reads us a book about 10 life lessons and she relates some of her life to those stories. There's one chapter about sharing and she was talking about how her and her brother always fought about food and then one time she just was being kind and made him some and he didn't know how to react. So she just relates stuff to life so you can reference and say, "Maybe I should do that too."."

Further personal characteristics of the teacher motivating students to learn included the use of humor and rewarding the entire class.

Creating a comfortable learning environment through the use of humor was also discussed as a factor that increased students' participation in the teacher's class. In addition,

students spoke of this teacher valuing all students' opinions. The use of humor to put students at ease and the fact that she valued all students' opinions allowed students to openly participate in this teacher's classroom more frequently than they did in other classes. Such findings converge with a few areas of this research project. Firstly, this teacher's nature was very open and agreeable as shown through telling stories from her own life and valuing the opinions of all. In a previous study (Jugovic et al., 2012), such agreeableness was the personality trait most strongly correlated with social utility values, a strong indicator of fit with the teaching profession due to the social contributions required. This lends support to the idea that teacher education programs and those making hiring decisions might wish to assess the personality of applicants to see where they fall in terms of agreeableness scores. In the current study, such agreeableness on behalf of the teacher seems to be linked to students' increased participation in the classroom. Secondly, based on student reports this teacher likely has an interpersonal style that fits well with many of her students. Kanu (2002) found that Aboriginal students connected their academic success to the teachers' interpersonal style and reported positive learning experiences when teachers were respectful with respect being the primary interpersonal style reported as impacting classroom success. When looking at how respect was understood from a student perspective, it included three parts: Having the teacher be free of stereotypes, refraining from criticizing students in front of the class for being incorrect, and valuing each student as an individual. Students in the current study mentioned two of the three factors – refraining from being critical of students and valuing all students' contributions. It is quite likely that respect is also a factor in teacher-student fit from the perspective of students. For example, the last thing students working several grade levels behind their peers need is a teacher who will be critical of their answers. This would only

result in these students further shutting down and withdrawing from educational activities. Respect in terms of being free of stereotypes was not mentioned by students in the current study. It is possible that because the students in Kanu's (2002) study were of Aboriginal descent, and Aboriginal people have been significantly marginalized in Manitoba's education system, the students had likely experienced a teacher who had stereotyped them in the past. Only two students in this study were of Aboriginal descent. Because the theme of a respectful classroom environment where students were made to feel comfortable asking questions also arose in Bolshakova et al.'s (2001) interviews with urban youth working several years below grade level, it is likely that all marginalized and struggling students in the education system fit better with a teacher who is respectful and creates a comfortable learning environment in which they may participate no matter what their literacy level, grade level functioning, or ability to contribute. The ability to openly express views in a comfortable classroom environment was also shown to motivate Aboriginal students to continue attending classes (Kanu, 2007). Although attendance was not specifically addressed in this study, all students did report that they looked forward to this teacher's class and enjoyed being present.

When explicitly asked about the characteristic of their teacher that made her a good fit, all characteristics reported by students were personal rather than professional attributes of the teacher (see Table 5). This is similar to the responses of teachers in this study who worked with students in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods. It seems that when explicitly asked about fit, there tends to be a focus on personal characteristic rather than professional. However, when asked to relate characteristics of their teacher to their success in the course, students clearly understood the significance of both personal and professional characteristics of their teacher. Unlike previous studies (e.g., Kersten, 2008; Papa and Baxter, 2008)

however, the professional characteristics valued by students included the manner in which help was provided, supporting multiple learning styles, and providing learning experiences inside and outside the classroom whereas principals looked at GPA and content knowledge in making their hiring decisions. Such a difference suggests that there is a need to reassess the professional characteristics principals discuss in interview situations.

When explicitly asked about teacher-student fit, students indicated that this teacher was open and honest with students and spoke to them often about her life (see Table 5). There was no barrier preventing students from getting to know her as a person and students seemed to appreciate this in terms of building a trusting relationship with her. Students spoke of her as someone they felt comfortable going to for guidance. Much like a counsellor, she listened to concerns, gave mentoring advice, and worked with students to calm their anxiety. Again students discussed their teacher's use of humor, feeling that they could have fun while learning. Having a relaxed, calm demeanor in the classroom what viewed positively by students. Unlike other teachers, they felt this teacher would not react negatively, rudely, or explosively if some minor infraction of the rules occurred. They sensed that she had a strong understanding of their needs and was more likely to address their abnormal behavior by questioning if they were alright than to become angry. Similarly, they felt that in terms of building relationships, this teacher acted much like a parental figure and went out of her way to understand what was going on in students' lives by checking in with them on a regular basis.

Aboriginal students in MacIver's (2012) study identified two teacher specific characteristic that increased their school engagement: The ability to make school and learning an enjoyable experience and the ability to build rapport with students. Both characteristics

were also true of the teacher in this study according to student reports and such factors seem to be contributing to a more positive teacher-student fit with students in the classroom.

Teacher-Student Fit – Previously Unearthed Characteristics

It was thought that this research might uncover previously unearthed personal and professional characteristics that could be related to student attendance and participation in the classroom and that perhaps these new characteristics could be used to inform teachers, especially those in credit-recovery and alternative classrooms, of additional ways in which they might help students to attain success in the education system.

Teachers' responses regarding relationship building, using humor in the classroom, having patience, caring, and empathy in terms of personal characteristics and continual professional development in terms of professional characteristics all matched responses provided by previous research studies (e.g., Cranston, 2012; Engel, 2013; Harris et al., 2010; Kersten, 2008; MacIver, 2012; Prather-Jones , 2011; Rutledge et al., 2008; Yerrick et al., 2010). Students' perceptions of positive teacher characteristics also tended to overlap with previous studies. The ability to create an open classroom environment where opinions could be shared was discussed by students in the current study; it was also given as a rational for attending class in a previous study (Kanu, 2007). Likewise the ability of teachers to provide clear explanations was provided as rationale for students' success both here, in Lewthwaite and McMillan's work (2010), and in Kanu's study.

While most teacher and student responses in the current study were not new in terms of what has been previously published regarding valuable personal and professional teacher characteristics, two previously uncovered teacher characteristics were discussed by students.

The first new valued characteristic students provided was having a teacher who checks in regularly to understand what is happening in students' lives. In discussion this appeared as a significantly different category than understanding the plight of students. Students seemed to value these regular check-ins so much that they attributed them to success in other courses not just the class the teacher checking-in was teaching. They reported that during such check-ins, the teacher would ask about all classes and provided help/intervention if things were not going well. She went so far as to have one student moved from an English class in which she felt he was not being challenged to his fullest potential. This student reported being grateful for her efforts and he felt if he had initiated the change, hard feelings between him and his first English teacher would have resulted. As well, he felt that his new English class would better prepare him for writing in university. He insisted the change would not have occurred were it not for regular check-ins with his Tourism teacher. In addition, students felt that regular check-ins with a teacher they trusted mitigated some of the stresses that arose in their grade 12 year. They were able to discuss university applications, scholarships, pressure from parents, fear of going to a new school, and managing their time between school and part-time work to pay for university with their teacher. They were also able to discuss their personal life and talk about relationships, family, their interests, and their goals. Students reported that such check-ins occurred for short intervals during their spares or the teacher's prep time. Sometimes they occurred after school or at lunch, and sometimes they even occurred in class time during a work period.

Because the structure and times when such check-ins occur can be varied, check-ins could be one way to alleviate some student anxiety in a multitude of areas. Students reported that just having an adult to talk to made them feel better. Likely there is a sense of safety, trust

involved, and knowing that there is an adult available to provide help or insight when such check-ins are provided by teachers seems to be reassuring to students. Because students are free to say as much or as little as they choose, students can relay information to the teacher with whom they are most comfortable. Should this characteristic arise in future studies, it may be an area of implementation schools may wish to explore.

The second previously unexposed teacher characteristic provided by students in this study was the ability to teach students about multiple learning styles. While previous research stresses a need for learning style congruence among teachers and students (Stitt-Ghodes, 2001; Mather & Champagne, 2008) and the need for teachers to vary instructional strategies (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Lewthwaite et al., 2010) previous studies do not discuss the need to provide students with opportunities to understand how they best learn. Students in this study reported finding this particularly helpful when looking to areas and classes in which they were struggling with their education and also found it essential when preparing projects given that they could now showcase their work using the learning style in which they were best able to show their academic gains. They also reported considering learning styles when searching for their future career paths. For example, a student indicated enjoying creative writing but not structured essay format writing and this would impact his choice of university English classes.

Because both teaching about multiple learning styles and providing regular check-ins were mentioned by students in the study only, it is quite possible that teachers may be overlooking two key pieces to increasing the success of students in the classroom. Teachers may also be missing out on ways in which they can learn more about their students and use that information to provide them with better education to meet their current needs.

Teacher-Student Fit – Refined

The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics of teacher-student fit which allow for the development of pedagogically appropriate materials and for higher level learning to occur in the classroom. As stated previously, simply fitting well with students does not seem to fulfill the need to develop pedagogically appropriate materials as many teachers reported lowering their academic standards for students in low socioeconomic areas despite feeling they fit well with their students. Holding students to higher standards seems to be related to increased planning, acting as a positive role model and counsellor, understanding student needs, valuing student opinions, and engagement techniques such as the use of storytelling and humor in the classroom. Holding high expectations of students may be the key to increased preparation or use of pedagogically appropriate material on the part of teachers. It also lends itself to the incorporation of culturally responsive teaching. Thus holding students to high standards may promote their cognitive and psychosocial development. Main examples of holding student to high standards from this study include expecting literacy rates to rise with differentiated instructional reading tasks, teaching about and incorporating preferential learning styles, including volunteer work in the community to promote citizenship in addition to classroom academic material, counselling students, acting as an academic role model, and promoting the application to college and university programs to students in grade 12 courses. Teachers that fit with students and hold them to high standards will likely achieve positive classroom relationships, be more committed to planning for the needs of their learners, and achieve higher levels of success with their students when

they see a positive future for them based on the work they do with them and for them during the school day.

The base characteristics of fit for teaching as a profession.

There was only moderate congruence between the characteristics teachers felt allowed them to fit well with students (see Table 2) and those that the students in the study provided (see Table 6). Both groups recognized the need for the creation of a comfortable and non-judgmental classroom environment, the ability to act as a positive role model, valuing all student contributions, the use of humor in the classroom, relating learning to the real world, and understanding student needs. Other than relating subject matter to the real world, all other teacher qualities mentioned by both teachers and students were personal qualities rather than professional. It is likely that these qualities set a baseline level of teacher-student fit. Teachers who are unable to recognize student needs, create an open classroom environment, advise students much like a parental figure, build rapport through humor, and connect what is being learned to a larger purpose are unlikely to gain the respect and engagement of students.

Teacher-student fit characteristics for relationship development.

While all teachers except one focused on personal characteristics including empathy, patience, relating to student interests, and understanding the plight of students due to having grown up in similar social, cultural, or economic circumstances, students focused on a mix of personal and professional characteristics of teachers that allowed them to fit well. Students reported personal characteristics of the teacher that impacted positive fit as being open and honest, acting as a counsellor, and regularly checking-in with students to understand their

lives. It is likely that this set characteristics is responsible for the building of strong relationships between teachers and students indicated in this study.

Teacher-student fit for culturally responsive pedagogy.

Relationships are a precursor to higher level learning (Yerrick et al., 2010), however, more is needed in order for students to achieve the highest levels of success possible in their education. That is where the final set of teacher characteristics comes into play. These teacher qualities were mentioned only by students and are professional pedagogical characteristics including providing help through clear expectations, encouragement, and feedback, teaching and addressing multiple learning styles, and valuing learning both inside the classroom and in the community. These characteristics were also mentioned as relevant in culturally based learning among community members in the Yukon Territory (Lewthwaite et al., 2013). It is possible that not enough time is being spent in Faculties of Education informing and instructing preservice teachers about the needs of various cultural groups when it comes to providing help in the classroom and addressing multiple learning styles. Although readily incorporated by professors teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences, when dealing with subject areas such as Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics, the needs of cultural groups and related multiple learning styles has been overlooked until recent pushes for inclusion by Aikenhead (2002), Lewthwaite et al. (2014), and Mason (2006) for example. Yet students are able to voice these needs both here and in previous studies (e.g. Kanu, 2002;2007, Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Lewthwaite et al., 2010). It is the job of all educators to include cultural proficiency in their teaching regardless of the subject matter being taught. In addition, the focus of preservice teacher education programs tends to be classroom education, not

community-based learning and the implementation of such programs that are integrated into Education courses, rather than placed separately as "Outdoor Education" for example, may allow teachers to better connect education in the classroom to the world outside, teach about global citizenship, and teach in a culturally responsive manner. Aikenhead (2002) was able to achieve this feat and it is likely that if more preservice teachers were exposed to such programs, they would be better able to implement such community learning experiences into the flow of their regular teaching schedule. While universities in Manitoba have in recent years made changes to Education programs that attempt to address such issues, more work is needed in this area and lobbying Manitoba Education for further change is required.

Issues with the Hiring Process in Manitoba

Liu and Johnson (2006) refer to the overall hiring process as "information-poor" (p. 338) and according to the results of this study they were absolutely correct in addressing teacher hiring in this regard. Teachers in this study reported that interview topics covered eight main areas: After school extracurriculars; What they could bring to the school during school hours to increase student participation in the classroom; Teaching and assessment strategies; Behavior scenarios that asked how teachers would react to verbal or behavioral actions of students; Content knowledge questions related to teachable subject areas; What teachers knew about the school; The ability to adapt, modify, and differentiate instruction; and their Philosophy of Education. While there is no dispute that these could all positively impact the success of students in a school, there seems to be an overall neglect in discussing the student population during the interview process. Knowing that students have struggled with education in the past allows teachers to prepare pedagogically appropriate material to begin

the year. Understanding that several students have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) indicates to a teacher that there will be much work needed in adapting for their students. Being aware of the percentage of EAL learners in a school affects how a teacher goes about choosing reading materials and implementing vocabulary activities. One teacher specifically pointed to this issue by saying, "They never said you will have so many funded students or EAL students...If that had happened, it would have been beneficial for me." An awareness of potential behavioral issues in the school allows teachers to prepare to deal with any issues that arise in a calm manner rather than being caught off guard when a problematic event occurs. Most importantly, all these factors allow teachers to make an informed decision about where they are working. If a teacher is not willing to implement planning for numerous students, varied IEPs or EAL learners, or is a person who becomes easily frustrated by behavioral issues, then knowing such information prior to being offered a job allows one to make better decisions about where he/she feels best suited to work. This is likely to increase teacher satisfaction and retention. Only one teacher in this study reported having an accurate sense of what his students might be like based on the interview process (see Table 7) and the first question that teacher was asked by the principal conducting the interview was “What do you do when you're walking down the hallway and a kid tells you to fuck off?”. Although this question set the tone for the interview and this teacher understood that students at this school could present with behaviors that were difficult to manage at times, all other teachers reported that their interviews were not so revealing. Some reported not discussing the students at all. While there are confidentiality issues that may be associated with discussing individual students during an interview, privacy is not being violated when discussing groups of students in a classroom or the overall student population. The same individuals that indicated never discussing student

demographics during their interviews also stated that they were aware they were being recruited for their ability to coach a particular sport rather than for any classroom-based skills they might possess. As one teacher indicated about the interview for her position, “It was an hour long conversation about basketball."

Young and Delli (2002) stated that administrators in their study believed certain dispositions and attitudes such as willingness to engage in extracurricular programs were critical for effective teaching in their schools. Based on the results of this study, it seems unlikely that this is the case. The same teachers who reported very strong emphasis on extracurricular activities in their interviews also reported struggling in other areas of teaching including understanding and relaying subject matter outside the gym, effectively working with colleagues, and dealing with student behavioral issues. Although extracurriculars are important, the tradeoffs being made to hire individuals to coach student teams may be coming at the expense of teacher quality in the classroom and teacher willingness to collaborate with peers to achieve stronger team teaching for common students.

Aside from extracurriculars, the lack of transparency in the interview process is a huge issue when looking at teacher retention and teacher turnover. Three teachers out of ten in this study initiated subsequent transfers from low income areas of the city. While one teacher moved to rural Manitoba to be closer to his family, the other two teachers initiating subsequent transfers left due to lack of perceived support by administration in dealing with student behavioral problems and because they found student behavior difficult to manage. Such marginalized students require teacher stability in order to build positive relationships, find someone they trust in the education system, and have as a teacher in sequential high school years to build familiarity with work expectations. This allows students to continue to

refine their skills with a teacher who is familiar with their pattern of academic growth. Although it was the administrations' lackadaisical attitude to student misbehavior that teachers reported as the issue and not the students themselves, a better understanding of the student population and administration's philosophy of education in the interview process would have alleviated such person-organization mismatches from occurring in the first place.

Eight of the nine teachers stating that the interview process did not give them an accurate sense of what their students might be like tended to be disappointed with the lack of academic ability of the students. Several admitted to giving up on teaching certain concepts when students did not understand or when they felt the topic was too difficult to even attempt with students, and some even stated feeling a culture of violence at their workplace. Such resulting sentiments are unacceptable. Students that struggle in the education system cannot be placed with teachers who omit content because they are unwilling to adapt the material to the level of their students. Lowering the bar for students is far from all right. As seen in this study, students in low socioeconomic areas attribute achievement to teachers that hold them to higher standards and thrive on the constant planning of varied lessons and topics covered both inside and outside the classroom. Moreover, no one should feel so uncomfortable in their workplace that they sense a looming violence within it. Again, administration sets the tone for a school and what student behavior is acceptable and so the findings of this study suggest that if administrators are not transparent in the interview process, teachers must be asking questions regarding the student population, the culture of the school, and the views of administration during the interview. Teachers must do their research on the school, the neighbourhood, and the current principal and vice-principals prior to interviewing at a

location. Teachers need to empower themselves with information to be addressed in the interview process if those conducting the interview do not explicitly provide it.

Sadly eight of ten teachers reported signing a contract regardless of the fit with the students or subject matter they were expected to teach simply because they needed a job. Four of these eight teachers also indicated that nepotism played a role in their application and possibly the decision to be hired. This suggests that although fit is recognized by teachers, finding the right group of students to work with in the education system is less important to teachers than knowing they have a position, even if it is not the right position. In this study, many teachers lowered the bar and omitted content and topics they deemed overly difficult for students and too much work on their part to adapt. In addition, teachers reported being uncomfortable with content outside their subject area major and minor. One teacher reported that she chose teaching methods based on her comfort level with the material and not that of her students. If in fact the majority of teachers are signing contracts simply because they need positions and administrators are offering jobs based on who they know and not who is the best candidate, there is a need to address the hiring process in Manitoba. If poor hiring and placement decisions are being made, the results could be devastating to the futures of students in Manitoba, especially for those already struggling in the education system.

Previous research has found that the majority of teacher candidates are of White, middle-class, mono-lingual English speaking backgrounds (Gainer & Larrotta, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2005) and therefore, the current structure of teacher education programs does not provide sufficient coursework, experiences, and social justice teachings required to give preservice teachers the skills to work with diverse student populations. Since the results of this study suggest that fit is not considered in the application process and it is possible that most

teachers have not experienced enough practicum time in diverse placements, many students may be left with teachers that cannot meet their needs, academically and otherwise, or build relationships with them as precursors to higher level learning.

The immediate solution that comes to mind is to simply increase the number and diversity of practicum placements and have teachers work in varied socioeconomic areas of the province including an inner city placement, a sub-urban placement, a rural placement, and a northern placement. However, two problems arise in this regard. One is that remote and rural placements require costs and expenditures on behalf of the teacher candidate. Travel by car or by plane may be needed and accommodations are required once the teacher candidate has arrived. Another area of concern is that some students in Faculties of Education are training for a second career, have children, work full or part-time while attending university, and do not have the means to leave home, family, and jobs for several weeks at a time to complete a practicum placement that is not within reasonable daily driving distance. Moran (2014) presents a plausible solution to these issues that allows preservice teachers to develop an understanding of the challenges teachers face in various socioeconomic areas while examining their beliefs about schools and students in each area. This approach, called School Innovation Rounds (SIRs), is built to mirror the observational rounds of medical students and requires not only observation, but the gathering of evidence prior to drawing conclusions.

While placement offices in Manitoba universities attempt to vary the neighbourhood in which preservice teachers work in each year of their program, the limited number of schools willing to take students and the sharing of these places among three Faculties of Education in the province means that varied placements do not always occur. One way to ensure that all preservice teachers have at least some exposure to varied socioeconomic neighbourhood

schools is to implement a daily-practicum model such as SIRs. SIRs require teacher candidates to travel to an area outside their own socioeconomic neighbourhood; the placements begin late in the morning so that there is no conflict with candidates getting their own children off to school (Moran, 2014). Visits involve the observation of several classes in a school and discussions with the principal about the school's culture, the approaches taken by teachers, and time for the principal to answer any questions the teacher candidates wish to ask. A faculty advisor from the university also attends these group observation sessions and provides time with teacher candidates for reflection, questions, and the opportunities to link theory to practice. The goal of SIRs is to broaden teacher candidates' understandings of "sound pedagogy and how it can be designed to meet the needs of children in specific contexts" (Moran, p. 72). This sound pedagogy, focused on active student engagement and culturally relevant teaching, seemed to be absent from the reports of five teachers in this study who responded to children in low income areas by increasing direct teaching, the use of booklets, and individual seatwork. Direct teaching, booklet work, and individual seatwork support the banking model of education. These methods do not allow students and teachers to engage in discussion and activities that allow for critical analysis of knowledge, collaboration among peers, and the ability to socially construct meaning of the curriculum. Preservice teachers in Moran's study completed three SIRs over the course of three weeks and reported that seeing new ways of teaching were beneficial to them and that they felt they had a better understanding of the role of a teacher and the decisions made in pedagogical approaches. Because a SIR takes one day to complete, there is the possibility for Faculties of Education to work in a number of them to ensure teacher candidates are exposed to as many varied socioeconomic or culturally diverse areas as possible and perhaps increasing the number of

observations may also increase the positive feedback and amount learned by teacher candidates. Although a promising start, such an undertaking by Faculties of Education would have to ensure that the teachers being observed were using sound pedagogy to meet the needs of their learners and that the faculty advisor was truly interested in helping teacher candidates learn from the observational experience. That way, even if preservice teachers were to encounter a poor pedagogical approach by a teacher, the faculty advisor could spend time critically reflecting with students and addressing concerns. The set up would take time, and finding advisors truly devoted to exploring cultural and socioeconomic diversity with preservice teachers might be a challenge, but once in place, such a program would at the very least give preservice teachers some sense of what a school and learners might be like when applying to various areas of the province. At most, it may provide them with motivation to improve their pedagogical approaches and hold students in all areas to high achievement standards.

While several factors can contribute to the realization of culturally responsive educational programming, several factors impede the process. Realistically universities are dealing with limited amounts of funds, unless they are to raise tuitions, faculty advisors and professors have numerous roles to fill within their day and are already working under strict timelines, schools willing to participate in programs like SIRs may be limited and even if found would have to be shared among Faculties of Education in the province, and such a program would require approval from a governing body, in this case Manitoba Education. Therefore, while a model similar to SIRs may seem ideal, the implementation of such a program might take years to successfully come to fruition. In the meantime, teachers working in classrooms across the province must be willing to change their practices for more culturally

relevant methods. Teachers should access students' perceptions as to their cultural and community needs in the learning process. In essence, teachers must be willing to learn from their students and even the surrounding community. Teachers, administration, and staff members must work collaboratively to ensure that teaching practices and the order and organization of the school reflect the cultural values of the student population and the local community. If each school in the province began to make small steps towards this goal, it is likely that in a short time, many schools would be well on their way to a culturally relevant pedagogy.

In fact, administration may play a key role in challenging teachers to realize their ability to provide better, more relevant, and culturally affirming educations to their students. Lewthwaite (2007) documents the experiences of a principal in Aklavik, Northwest Territories whose school population is 97% Aboriginal. Upon her arrival as principal, the building and teaching did not seem to be culturally affirming. By reaching out and establishing connections with parents and the community, this principal was able to help parents and locals to promote school as a priority. This served to mitigate some of the socioeconomic difficulties students experienced at home. In addition, the principal transformed the organization of the schools' interior and the curriculum being addressed so that they validated the cultural identity of the community. She recognized that what is shown on the walls and what is said in the classroom must be reflective of the values of students and their families, and must be culturally affirming in order to be a welcoming place for parents and community members, especially those who held negative views of the education system due to their experiences in residential schools. Elders helped her to establish priorities to inform school operations based on cultural values such as caring, humility, respect, and

honesty. Although this transformation took time, Lewthwaite concludes that due to the actions of the principal, the school changed from simply a school in the community to "a community-based school" (p. 14). Administrators should be encouraged to promote culturally relevant teaching and culturally-based education amongst their staff and model such awareness themselves. Such small steps can snowball into larger initiatives as seen in the case of Aklavik, Northwest Territories.

Summary of Findings

This study suggests that a positive teacher-student fit requires a fit in three main areas: Baseline characteristics that allow for teacher-job fit, the characteristics that allow for relationships to develop between teachers and students, and characteristics that allow for higher level learning to occur in the classroom. According to the teachers and students in this study, there is a baseline set of characteristics that allow teachers to work with students in the classroom. These include the ability to create a comfortable and non-judgmental classroom environment, the ability to act as a positive role model, valuing all student contributions, using humor in the classroom, relating learning to the real world, and understanding student needs. If teachers cannot meet these basic characteristics of fit, it is unlikely they will be able to relate to students in classrooms similar to those of the teachers and students in this study. Such inability to relate to students likely results in a poor fit with teaching as a profession. The second level of characteristics allows teachers to build relationships with students. These involve empathy, patience, relating to student interests, and understanding the plight of students as well as being open and honest, acting as a counsellor, and regularly checking-in with students to understand their lives. The final set of characteristics allow for pedagogically

appropriate activities and higher level learning to occur in the classroom. Such teacher qualities are professional pedagogical characteristics including providing help through clear expectations, encouragement, and feedback, teaching and addressing multiple learning styles, and valuing learning both inside the classroom and in the community.

Findings suggest that having a teacher that is a good fit as well as a teacher who has high expectations of students may mitigate some socioeconomic disadvantages and provide students with a positive, mentoring relationship and a comfortable learning environment. The results of this study suggest that having a positive teacher-student fit is not enough to increase the success rates of students in marginalized situations. A culturally responsive pedagogy is needed so that we are holding students to a higher standard and addressing their learning styles and needs.

In terms of sociocultural factors that guide teachers toward certain positions and to the exclusion of other positions, this study does not support the findings of Cannata (2010) that strong candidates may be excluding themselves from working with students in low income areas, students who struggle the most with education, and are socioculturally different from themselves. Rather this study found that students were not typically considered in application decisions and it was distance to home and subject matter congruence with teachable major/minor areas that guided teachers' job searches in Manitoba. Unlike Cannata's findings which suggested that comfort with a neighbourhood was guiding teachers' job searches, teachers in this study reported wanting positions closer to home in order to have more time with family or for personal activities and not because they felt a sense of comfort in the area in which they lived or a sense of discomfort or fear in other neighbourhoods. Moreover, safety may be playing some role in teachers' perceptions of the required driving distance to work as

Manitoba experiences extreme winter weather conditions that often make streets and highways slippery and dangerous for travel. Like the Cannata's study, this research also suggests that teachers weigh the perceptions of social contacts highly in making job application decisions. However, teachers in this study tended to seek such advice from colleagues in the school system rather than social contacts that lived in the neighbourhoods as Cannata suggests. It is likely that using those familiar with the teaching profession provides a better sense of what a position and students might be like than attempting to assess such information from someone living near a school. It must be noted that the use of social contacts in this study did not always result in a positive teacher-school match and so one should tread cautiously when using social contacts inside or outside the education system. Teachers' reports in this study suggest that a supportive administration, collaborative staff and positive staff relations, and the opportunity to teach the subject one is most comfortable teaching may be better predictors of teachers' job satisfaction and devotion to their profession and their students. Teachers must ask questions about administration's philosophy during the job interview and attempt to meet the staff and see what is being done in surrounding classrooms prior to accepting job offers.

Findings of this study seem to suggest that positive fit alone does not lead teachers to feel more committed to their position, or to aim to make learning of better quality for their students. However, for those who have a positive fit with students and respond positively to the barriers to education that students bring to the classroom, such commitment to teaching seems to be present. Such teachers hold students to high standards and discuss their futures with them including college and university as options. These teachers continually aim to motivate students and encourage participation. They incorporate learning experiences outside

the classroom to engage with the community. Such teachers also support multiple learning styles in the classroom, adapt, modify, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of their students, and actively build relationships with students, which in turn increases student engagement in the classroom. Although additional research is needed in order to address the many questions and concerns that arose throughout this study, such findings can be seen as a positive beginning given that all of these factors can be incorporated into teacher education programs. If teacher candidates can learn to respond positively to the issues faced by many marginalized students via diverse practicum placements or SIRs and training in culturally responsive pedagogy, learn that students in such situations must be held to high standards as opposed to lowering expectations, be trained to effectively differentiate instruction, and be taught the factors that allow for relationships to occur in the classroom including understanding Maslow's Hierarchy (1943), empathy training, counseling skills, the ability to openly value others perspectives, to repeatedly and often check-in with students, and to use humor and be open about their own lives, then it is likely that marginalized students will be given a chance to have a teacher who is able to meet their needs and a renewed chance at success in the education system. This is not a small feat for Faculties of Education, administrators, collaborating teachers, preservice teachers, and policy makers at Manitoba Education, but as learned from this study, expectations should not be lowered and they too must be held to high standards. The future of all students depends upon it.

This chapter explored the major findings of the current study in relation to published literature. The implications of these findings, areas in which this study might be expanded or

bettered for future research, and the limitations of the current research study are explored in the following commentary.

Chapter 6: Implications for Policy and Practice

This concluding chapter contains implications for policy and practice derived from the current research. Such suggestions are made in regard to teacher hiring, teacher education programs, and the professional development of teachers in the profession. This section also comments on much needed collaboration among Faculties of Education, practicing administrators and teachers, and Manitoba Education. Areas of future study that may stem from these research findings, and the limitations of this study are also included.

Implications

The following is a synopsis of the main findings of this study in relationship to implications for hiring decisions and the interview process for teachers, as well as entrance requirements and course structures in Faculties of Education in Manitoba, the professional development required of current teachers, and collaboration among educational stakeholders in Manitoba.

Prospective teacher screening methods.

To begin, this study found that for a number of teachers, teaching was a fallback career or secondary career. Given that it is likely that a number of candidates in Faculties of Education are there because teaching was a contingency career or because they were unsatisfied with a previous career choice, teacher education programs must find a way to accurately screen motivation to teach amongst prospective applicants so that students, especially marginalized students, are given access to teachers intrinsically devoted to helping them learn content and life skills. Interview components to Faculty applications, if conducted properly and with reliable and valid questioning techniques, may address issues of motivation

to teach. Candidate's previous work with children should be explored. In addition to such interviews, tools that have already been assessed for reliability such as the Factors Influencing Teacher Choice instrument used by Kilinc et al. (2012) are available and may lend supportive information to teacher candidate application packages that allow those in Faculties of Education to assess with better certainty one's true motivation for entering the teaching profession. When working with students in general, and especially for vulnerable or at-risk students, it is imperative to determine that the teacher is there for the students and not for extrinsically motivating factors. It is likely that university screening methods do not currently address the idea of teacher-student fit and motivation to teach in a way that can accurately gauge one's true reasons for entering the profession. Prospective candidates are unlikely to say in a faculty application interview or essay that they want the summer holidays in order to spend time with their families as the primary reason for applying to the faculty. Adding a measure such as the Factors Influencing Teacher Choice instrument used by Kilinc et al., may give Faculties of Education more accurate data on applicants' reasons for wanting to teach. Implementing such a procedure might allow teacher education programs to screen for and address the issue of teacher-student fit and motivation to teach early on in the program so that applicants to teacher education programs can make better judgments of how and where they might best serve children in the school system or if they should begin to consider alternate career options in lieu of teaching.

Ensuring views align with administration.

Previous findings (Cobb, 2015; Johnson & Birkland, 2003; Johnson, Kraft, and Papay, 2012) in addition to the teachers' reports in the current study, suggest that there is a strong

need for teachers to seek out schools in which teacher views fall in line with that of the school's administrators. Due to teachers' emphasis on lack of administrative support as a major factor in leaving their positions, it seems necessary to address congruence in values between applicants and administrators during the interview phase of the hiring process. This could likely be accomplished quite simply by having teachers research the schools to which they apply and having a comparison of views, philosophies, and behavioral scenarios built into the interview portion of the job application process and then answered by both sides. If administrators do not explicitly offer their philosophy of education and discuss school culture, teachers must be aware these are topics they should bring up in the interview and perhaps even discuss with current staff prior to accepting job offers. Another manner in which teacher-administration congruence can be addressed is to build in interview questions that require both sides to explain how they might deal with behavioral scenarios that may arise. Congruence in philosophies of education, behavioral management strategies, and overall expected school culture should be topics covered by administrators in interview if teacher retention is a concern to them. Again, it is necessary not only for teachers to answer such questions but also for administrators to explicitly state their positions on these issues in order to determine if there is a person-organization fit between potential teachers and administration.

If views are not in line during the interview process, this should be a red flag to applicants that administrative support may not be there when needed and they should carefully consider accepting such a position given that unsupportive administration can impact the entire culture of a school and their happiness each day of the school year.

Ask relevant questions before, during, and after the interview.

Teachers make choices both in terms of their first teaching job and the decisions to transfer to a new school. Each of these choices can impact equity (Lankford, et al., 2002). High teacher turnover, especially for students living and attending schools in impoverished areas, provides little stability to students who require consistency and educational role models to increase educational success. One way to increase teacher retention is to be sure the interview process is information rich so that teachers are making informed decisions about job offers in relation to their needs and skills. The interview process must address the three levels of Kristof's (1996) model, P-O in terms of fit with school culture and administration's views, P-G in terms of the ability and willingness to collaborate with staff members, and P-J in terms of reasons for wanting to teach at a given school and subject matter congruence, plus a positive teacher-student fit in terms of both relationship building and the implementation of pedagogically appropriate learning tools in order to ensure the best candidate is being hired for the position. Addressing all areas increases the chances that the teacher is likely to be satisfied on many or all levels of fit, thereby increasing teacher retention rates. Teachers must do research about the areas and schools to which they apply to avoid feeling unprepared to meet student needs upon arrival. They must also ask questions about the school culture, staff collaboration, and the students during the interview process if such information is not presented by the administrator who is conducting the interview. As stated previously, teachers must also be sure that their philosophy of education and views of classroom and behavioral management fit with that of the school's administration. Such research and information may decrease teacher turnover due to poor fit with students or the organization. In addition, principals should ask about teachers' awareness of an area and the students they would teach

if offered the position. There needs to be open discussion surrounding the student body and neighbourhood demographics in the interview process to ensure more informed hiring decisions are being made and that teachers truly fit within their new school, position, and with students.

Improving administrator's role in the hiring process.

Principals involved in hiring decisions must also do their part to ensure a positive fit and increase teacher satisfaction and retention. Teachers in this study reported that interview topics focused little on the actual students and more on what a teacher could bring to the schools that was unique or valuable in terms of extracurricular activities. It is likely that many principals know little about how a teacher might perform in the classroom when making a job offer. In addition to revising interview questions to address congruence in philosophies of education and school culture, principals should consider observing an applicant teach a lesson to a small group of students, or bring a new teacher in as a substitute several times in May and June after certification and sit through a few classes to see if that teacher responds well to students in the building and their daily needs. Moreover, rather than focusing on professional qualifications such as GPA, principals should ask questions about and attempt to observe the manner in which a teacher provides help and feedback to students, scaffolds learning activities, and encourages student participation in class. Should a principal decide to make a hiring decision based on willingness to engage in extracurricular activities for the school, then that administrator should also do his/her best to ensure that the teacher is placed into teachable areas. If the teacher is placed in an out-of-field class, the administrator should be responsible for finding appropriate supports for that teacher, whether it be an in school mentor, an expert

member in the department or in the school division, or multiple professional development opportunities.

School divisions should consider doing away with centralized hiring practices and pre-hire contracts given that when teachers hired through such processes arrive at their new schools, they, like participants in this study, may be shocked by students' lack of academic ability and may also lower the bar for student expectations. Teachers need to be aware of who their learners will be and centralized hiring and pre-hire contracts do not allow for an awareness of fit with the philosophies of administration or for an awareness of fit with students.

Improving practicum placements.

Improvement is required in the area of teacher-candidate practicum placements to ensure that these individuals experience teaching in classrooms in their major and minor content areas as well as experience working with students that may be out of their comfort zones. With limited school placements and school restrictions as to the number of teachers willing to accept teacher-candidates in to their classrooms, some preservice teachers may not be assigned to both major and minor content areas in their placements. Faculties of Education and practicum placement coordinators along with faculty advisors must do their best to ensure that teacher candidates are being placed in classrooms that meet their content area backgrounds, as well as classrooms where they will be pushed to move beyond their comfort zones and encouraged to try new activities and instructional methods to meet student needs. Likely these classrooms are not the Physics 40S classrooms we so often see teacher-candidates placed within because they match teachable major or minor subject areas and the

students will be well behaved. Rather, they are the credit-recovery Science classrooms where students struggle, sometimes act out, and come with numerous barriers that impact classroom learning that such candidates are often fearful of joining. Preservice teachers once in practicum schools must also seek classrooms in which they expand their knowledge, can help teachers work with diverse populations of students, observe others teach, and gain experience in their content areas.

As previously stated, there are factors that prevent school placements from being ideal. While it is recognized that school placements are difficult and that the best placement is often illusive due to the restrictions placed on placement offices, one possible solution may be to implement a requirement that asks teacher candidates to work in two varied areas of the province. To have teacher candidates experience a northern placement, a rural placement, an inner city school setting, and a suburban setting is likely not practical given the length of the program and constraints experienced when sharing placements among faculties within the province. However, asking students to either complete a northern or inner city placement in one year of the program, and either a suburban or rural placement in a different year of the program might be one way to ensure that pre-service teachers are provided with two dissimilar placement opportunities. There are arguably many differences between Aboriginal students in an inner city setting and those in a northern setting. Issues of urban poverty, residential schooling, and living off a reserve all impact the population at hand. Meanwhile, the suburbs have student populations that differ from those in rural settings. That being said, the potential to have each teacher candidate experience two diverse situations is far better than having candidates repeat placements in areas with similar cultural and socioeconomic demographics. While school placement offices at the University of Manitoba and the

University of Winnipeg do their best to ensure that students are placed in schools that are demographically and socioeconomically varied from one year to the next, more universities must adopt such trends to best serve the needs of future teachers and their students.

Because eight of ten teachers in this study indicated that driving distance was the primary factor for self-exclusion from some posted teaching positions and these teachers put a limit on how far out of the city they were willing to work, there may be the need to mandate rural and northern practicum placements into Manitoba's Faculties of Education to allow all divisions increased access to qualified teachers and to provide teacher-candidates with experiences that may draw them to such populations. It is difficult to draw any large conclusions in regards to rural and northern schools in Manitoba as only one teacher in the current study was working in a rural school and he, having moved his family to a small town, was much happier with his position and home life, indicating he had moved closer to his extended family members. No teachers from northern Manitoba were interviewed for this study. Future research in this area is needed to determine if rural and northern teachers are satisfied with their positions, if they feel they fit well with their students, and to discern the factors that drew them to their particular positions. However, the fact that distance was a factor for self-exclusions from certain positions in this study suggests that schools more than an hour outside city limits are likely to be drawing from a smaller pool of teacher applicants than those within or just on the outskirts of city limits. A smaller applicant pool may result in such schools not having access to the best possible teachers for their students. Exposure to schools in different areas through practicum placements is one way to increase familiarity with new neighbourhoods and possibly a new demographic of students. This may allow

preservice teachers to make more informed choices about where they might like to work in their future careers.

Training in equity and cultural responsiveness.

Some teachers in this study left their previous schools with the perception that unfavorable student behaviors were the result of poor parenting at home. Teacher training in culturally responsive teaching is required to minimize prejudicial comments linking poor student behavior to family situations in low income neighbourhoods. Such comments perpetuate negative stereotypes, can result in the labeling of students as behavioral issues in the classroom, and then become self-fulfilling prophecies for such students. Moreover, the students to whom theses comments are directed already struggle in a marginalizing education system. By pairing such students with teachers who hold such stereotypical beliefs, students are further marginalized and chances for graduation are decreased. As seen in this study, students living in low income areas reported that having a teacher who held them to higher standards increased their perceptions of academic success, motivation, and classroom participation. Given that the teachers who made such prejudicial comments had been in the teaching profession for several years, the teaching of culturally responsive pedagogy should not only be increased in preservice teacher education programs, but also in school divisions across Manitoba through professional development seminars, conferences, workshops, and volunteer work in disadvantaged communities. Teachers themselves can work to improve their practices. Lewthwaite et al. (2014) saw that those teachers dedicated to improving their teaching so that it became more culturally-based were able to see both social and academic student improvements in the classroom within just four months. Moreover, previous studies

have found that coursework and volunteer exposure to students in underprivileged areas can shift perceptions of students from very negative preconceived notions to positive views of students and an awareness of the characteristics required to engage students in learning, including flexibility and patience (e.g. Baldwin et al., 2007).

The findings of this study suggest that teachers working with marginalized youth focus on relationship building to promote learning through increased self-efficacy beliefs and motivation, and that such relationship building allowed students enough learning to graduate from high school. While development of the psychosocial domain of human development is essential to growth, equally important is the development of the cognitive domain. Few teachers in this study spoke of teaching students to evaluate knowledge, to make judgements, to think critically, to communicate effectively through discussion, and to use their creativity to present what was learned. This is less than acceptable and suggests immediate intervention is needed at both the preservice teacher education level and across divisions for those already working with marginalized students. Teachers and preservice teachers must first be taught to understand the numerous barriers that prevent such students from being successful in the current education system and then, with high, not unattainable, expectations of their students, be able to make adaptations, differentiate instruction, and implement learning style congruence, in order to help students achieve success. A course addressing equitable education could be set up in preservice teacher education programs. What is learned could be implemented through a practicum component attached specifically to the course requiring teacher candidates to all spend some time working with marginalized youth. Again, professional development seminars for teachers already in the profession might help to redefine what is an equitable education in the minds of practicing teachers and to reshape

current thinking in regards to the lowered standards some place on students due to their social circumstances.

The findings of this study showed lower teacher expectations of those working with low income or marginalized students. Khalifa (2011) found that the role administration plays in addressing teaching staff can change such behaviors and attitudes. Administrators must maintain a presence in the school and the community to connect the value of school to culture and community based learning and experiences. Racism must be a part of staff discussions and professional development to address lowered teacher expectations of students. Administrators must expect teachers to address student disengagement in the classroom in a positive manner. School administrators must advocate for the learning of all students in the building, regardless of streamed track, prior success in the school system, gender, culture, and SES. Sometimes this will require addressing negative views and inequitable practices among teaching staff, however, it is likely that for teachers who rise to the challenge, poor behaviors such as lowering expectations, omitting content, not providing homework opportunities, and resorting to booklet work may be eliminated with time.

Teachers, administrators, and divisional personnel must work collaboratively with Faculties of Education and Manitoba Education if this is to be achieved. Earlier, it was asked if Education has become a jaded profession in which many teachers are cynical of the achievement possibilities of students from low socioeconomic areas who typically lag years behind their counterparts in affluent areas. The answer may very well be yes and will continue to be yes unless such collaboration begins soon. Preservice teachers must be exposed to schools and classroom teachers that believe in equitable education so that they begin their careers with high expectations of marginalized students; collaborating teachers must be

carefully chosen by school administrators so that this becomes a reality. Faculties of Education might consider Post-Baccalaureate courses in equity for teachers in the profession who work with at risk youth. In order for such changes to occur, Manitoba Education must mandate the inclusion of equitable education as a topic of study during preservice teacher education programs and may want to consider devoting a province-wide professional development day devoted to the topic on a yearly basis to initiate discussion and learning. While one professional development day per year is far from enough to ensure equitable practices are occurring in our schools, it is a starting point. From there, individual schools must continue the professional development and collaboration on a regular basis in order to ensure that schools are aiming to become equitable learning places for students. If professionals in the field, Faculties of Education, and Manitoba Education are able to work together to implement such goals, it is likely that both the psychosocial and cognitive development of students in all areas of the province will be better nurtured and the education of all students stands to benefit.

Teach and model collaboration and multiple learning styles.

In terms of teacher-student fit and job satisfaction, findings suggest there are a few areas that need to be addressed specifically as implications for policy and practice. The first, related to job satisfaction, is collaboration skills. Such skills are required as a teacher and lacking the ability to cooperate and effectively contribute to the work of colleagues or teacher teams might be responsible for feelings of lowered job satisfaction. However, such skills can be developed. While many universities and many professors use collaborative assignments and activities in their classroom, much of what is done in university is still individually rather

than collectively based. If more teacher education programs regularly include assignments and activities requiring collaboration in the classroom component of the program while adding some peer placements, in which more than one teacher candidate is paired with one cooperating teacher, to practicum components, it is possible that preservice teachers will develop the skills to collaborate with colleagues in their future positions and subsequently have more positive feelings of job satisfaction. The result could be less teacher turnover and withdrawal from the profession. Again, because Manitoba Education sets regulations for preservice teacher classroom-based time requirements, some lobbying for the restructuring of practicum components to include ideas such as peer placements may be in order to strive for such change in the future.

The second area, related to teacher-student fit, is the ability to teach about, teach for, and implement activities that involve multiple learning styles. This was highly valued by students in this study. Their teacher's understanding of varied learning styles, her willingness to teach them about preferential learning styles to increase their awareness of how they learn, and her ability to implement numerous learning styles in her teaching were all reported as contributing to students' success in her classroom. Although multiple learning styles are surely addressed in Education courses, it seems quite possible that we are glossing over a very central issue in regard to students success and that more time should be devoted in preservice teacher education programs to teaching about and implementing multiple learning styles. Specifically, linking the significance of multiple learning styles to culturally based practices may not be sufficiently addressed in preservice teacher education programs and so the connection between student culture and preferential learning styles is not made. While such connection are easily linked in courses such as "Multicultural Education" or "Aboriginal

Education", there is the need to link multiple learning styles and cultural proficiency in all subject areas and all offered courses. Professional development opportunities to train teachers on multiple learning styles and how such style preferences are related to cultural backgrounds should be implemented regularly to ensure that teachers are continually attempting to improve their ability to meet the needs of all student learners. Post-Baccalaureate diploma programs may benefit from offering more targeted courses that expand upon culturally relevant practices. In such courses, teachers might gain insight into the preferential learning styles of their current students and work collaboratively with others in their subject areas or grade levels to create culturally appropriate and inclusive lessons, assignments, and inquiry projects.

Listen to students' need and adjust the interview process accordingly.

A third area of interest that arose in relation to teacher-student fit is the disconnect between what students reported as contributing to fit and their classroom success in comparison to what principals seem to value in the hiring process based on previous studies. The professional characteristics of the teacher valued by students in this study included the manner in which help was provided, supporting multiple learning styles, and providing learning experiences inside and outside the classroom, whereas principals in previous studies looked at GPA and content knowledge in making their hiring decisions (Kersten, 2008; Papa & Baxter, 2008). Such a difference suggests that there is a need to reassess the professional characteristics principals discuss in interview situations. Looking at the pedagogical strategies a teacher implements to help students become successful learners, including how feedback is presented, how students are motivated and encouraged, the clarity of expectations, and the incorporation of multiple learning styles in students' choice of how to present their work will

likely provide principals with a more informed sense of what that teacher will be like in a classroom with students than addressing his/her GPA in an interview situation. There is evidence showing that the educational priorities of the community members and current students must be addressed (e.g. Lewthwaite et al., 2013) and teachers willing and able to match these educational needs should be sought by administrators, especially in small communities with cultural values that have been largely ignored in curricula. Interview question addressing such pedagogical strategies must be implemented by administrators. In addition, administrators might include an observational component to the interview to see how a teacher might teach a lesson to a few students pulled from a class, or have that teacher sub in the building for several days near the end of the school year and observe the manner in which he/she encourages students during class and provides students with feedback on the activity being implemented. Such an observational component also serves to identify any discrepancies that may arise between what a candidate describes as an engaging classroom with teacher-student fit occurring and what actually happens with students in the room. As seen from this study, such realizations can be vocalized when directly asked, but may not be implemented in practice to any great extent, calling into question the interview process and if it is really the only way to assess candidates.

Create consciousness and connections to life and to the community.

Finally, students in this study also reported that their teacher increased their success rates by consistently connecting what was taught in class to the real world through stories, life lessons, field trips, volunteer experiences, outdoor learning, and working within the immediate community. While many teachers already employ such connections in their

classes, the more this is done, the better we prepare students to make sense of the curriculum knowledge presented to them. Connecting preservice teacher education courses to the world and to the community is essential for a culturally responsive pedagogy. Research in this area is increasing and showing positive results (Aikenhead, 2002; Lewthwaite et al., 2014; Mason, 2006; Sterenberg & Hogue, 2011). Because Manitoba has a large population of Aboriginal learners in classrooms, there is a need to connect culture, community, and the environment to curriculum teaching in order to provide inclusive pedagogy that will not further marginalize this group of students from the education system.

It is hoped that the implications for policy and practice derived from this study may help fuel future research into how to improve the hiring process in Manitoba, as well as how to best prepare preservice teachers and better engage current teachers in classrooms with the ultimate goal of subsequently matching teachers to schools and programs that best serve the needs of their students.

Areas of Future Study

A multitude of questions arose from the findings of this study that provide several potential areas of future study. The following are some of the prominent concerns that are suggested as areas of future study. They have been embedded in the discussion above, but have been summarized separately here as well.

Teachers from northern Manitoba were not interviewed for this study. One participant taught in rural Manitoba. Future studies must address what guides the application process for those teachers who choose to work in northern and rural Manitoba, and if such decisions are

socioculturally informed. This may provide a sense of how to better recruit teachers to hard to staff schools in the province, especially those that are far from urban centres.

This study identified students' perceptions of teacher-student fit through interviews with a diverse group of students attending a school in a low socioeconomic area of the province. There is still the need to assess student perceptions of teacher fit characteristics in affluent districts of the province to see if such perceptions of personal or professional qualities derived from the data differ by socioeconomic neighbourhood and possibly by student demographics. In addition, all students who responded to recruitment for this study were generally high achievers. The perceptions of students that have struggled for many years in the education system may be different and should be explored in future studies.

The perspectives of the students interviewed for this study were based on their experiences with a single teacher who taught each participant one core course in their grade 10 year and was currently teaching these students only in elective courses. One might argue that such courses afford her the opportunity to employ what the students saw as successful pedagogical approaches because she is less bound to curriculum topic completion than, for example, a grade 11 Physics teacher might be in preparing students for their grade 12 Physics course. Although studies such as that of Aikenhead (2002) have shown that core courses such as Science may also be taught implementing various successful community-based approaches not often seen in typical Science classes, there is the need to ascertain students' perspectives that are based on their experiences with a variety of teachers in a number of courses and at various grade levels. Such data would provide insights into whether students' perceptions of teacher-student fit characteristics are subject area specific, related to educational stream, and if specific teacher characteristics valued by students vary by teacher gender.

There was only moderate congruence between what teachers and students reported as teacher characteristics related to a positive teacher-student fit in the classroom. Students felt that such teacher characteristics included being open and honest, acting as a counsellor, understanding what is happening in their lives by providing regular teacher-student check-ins, providing help through clear expectations, encouragement, and feedback, addressing multiple learning styles, and valuing learning both inside the classroom and in the community. Teachers in this study, however, did not state any of these factors when considering their fit with students. As such, there may be a need to increase teacher awareness of student feelings regarding teacher-student fit. Future studies of teachers' perceptions of fit characteristics should include more in depth questions to better assess personal and professional characteristics as related to students. In addition, larger population sizes are required. If in fact teachers in future studies differ from students regarding perceived characteristics of positive teacher-student fit, then there is a need to inform teachers of students' perceptions. How this is to be best accomplished requires additional research as well.

There is the need to address the interview process by school divisions in Manitoba. With some division still offering pre-hire contracts and placing teachers at certain schools, one must question how such decisions are being made and if this results in teacher satisfaction, teacher turnover, stress leaves, or lowering expectations of students. As explored in the Implications for Policy and Practice section, there is clearly a need to revamp the interview process and the topics explored within it. More research is needed in this area to define the best possible manner in which to proceed with teacher hiring interviews.

Lastly, in this study, the only teacher to stress professional characteristics over personal characteristics in fitting with students was also the only teacher not working with

marginalized students. He was working in one of the most affluent neighbourhoods in the city. Therefore, more research is needed to determine if professional characteristics are more important or more highly valued by teachers and/or students than personal characteristics when working with certain groups of students in the education system, namely students attending schools located in high socioeconomic areas.

Limitations of the Study

The strengths and limitations of case study research should be openly acknowledged (Yin, 2009). Case study research is not largely generalizable. Because of the small number of participants in this study, all from a single province, the larger applicability of such findings is questionable. The goal of this study was not to generalize findings to large populations across Canada, but rather to address the idea of teacher-student fit in Manitoba.

Because each school has unique characteristics and serves a distinctive community, no teaching positions will be exactly alike. An inner-city school in a low socioeconomic area has a student body with different needs than a suburban school in an affluent area and therefore this study aimed to address the perceptions of teachers who had worked in both high and low socioeconomic neighbourhoods. The perceptions of students living in both neighbourhoods was also sought, however, only one division responded to the request for student participants and that division subsequently chose a low income area school to participate in the research. This study lacks the perceptions of students attending schools in affluent neighbourhoods of Manitoba. Initially it was hoped that students from schools in both high and low income areas of the province could be interviewed so that their comments regarding teacher-student fit could be compared to address any variance by socioeconomic area. Because students in the study all came from a single low income neighbourhood, results of this study are skewed

towards presenting characteristics of teacher-student fit only within that socioeconomic demographic.

Furthermore, it must be noted that although students from the participating school lived in a low socioeconomic area of the city, those students who took part in the study may not be representative of all marginalized student groups or students who struggle most in the education system. There may be characteristics that particular groups of students (e.g. First Nations students who have moved from a reserve to an urban centre, or students in a credit-recovery program) would identify as salient in teacher-student fit that may be overlooked by the students in this study and by the larger body of students in mainstream school classrooms. As such, these findings may be viewed as a starting point for further research into teacher-student fit characteristics, future research into the characteristics sought by administrators in the hiring process, and how such characteristics benefit the education of students.

Now that initial factors related to teacher-student fit have been identified through teacher and student interviews, it is also acknowledged that future research into the area of teacher-student fit requires methods of triangulation in order to validate the findings in the present study. Further teacher and student interviews, possibly broken down by demographics are needed along with classroom observation to determine if the qualities being vocalized as imparative to teacher-student fit are occurring in the classroom and the frequency with which such behaviors and actions are recognizable. Additional forms of measuring student success rates such as artifacts of student work and report card grades compared over a semester or over several years would also lend credibility to the results. In addition, the sole coder of interview data in this study was the principal researcher. As such, this study lacks inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability would have lent credibility to the findings and it is

acknowledged that lack of a second individual to code interview transcripts further limits the generalizability of the findings and any implications for policy and practice that are made. Much additional research is needed to substantiate any claims.

The goal of qualitative research is not to produce vast generalizations, but rather to gain insight and understanding into a social phenomenon, in this case, the idea of teacher-student fit. As such, the findings cannot be quantitatively or statistically generalized to a larger population or situation. However, due to the data obtained, it is possible that findings may be transferable to similar contexts.

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Research Instruments

Interview questions for teachers.

1. Tell me about your career as a teacher (background, positions, years of experience, years working in each setting, etc).
2. How/why did you choose teaching as a career? What influenced your decision? Was it your first career choice? Did you consider or try other options?
3. You have had more than one position. Can you tell me about when and why you began to think about switching schools? If you have had more than two positions, please feel free to discuss each situation.
4. What were you looking for in your new position or your new school? What factors might detour your application to a school?
5. Are you happy at your current school? What plays a role in your level of contentment here?
6. What reasons do you have for staying in your current position? If you were happier at your last position, what are some of the reasons you would like to be back there? What caused you to consider leaving?
7. What do you like/dislike about teaching your current students? How does this compare to your last position?
8. What do you feel makes you suited to work with your current students? <u>or</u> What do you feel made you suited to work with your past students? <u>depending on how the previous question is answered.</u>

9. For you, what constitutes a good fit with your students? What do you bring to teaching that allows you to fit well with a particular group of students?
10. Tell me about some of the learning activities that go on, or what someone might see in your classroom when there is a positive fit between you and your students.
11. If a group of learners from one school was more challenging to work with than learners from the other school, can you explain why you felt this way and what made it more difficult to work with one group or learners over another? Did your teaching change? If so, how?
12. Do you spend more or less time planning activities now or in your previous position? Why do you feel this is the case?
13. How do you decide what instructional methods or activities you will use to teach your students? Why do these methods work well for you? Do you think these instructional methods and activities help your students to be more successful in their education? Why or how so?
14. Tell me more about your decision to change schools. What factors influenced your decision to move? (<u>If a specific school or school division is mentioned, add</u>: What about this school/division appealed to you? Why did you choose it specifically? Did you exclude any school divisions? Why?)
15. Why did you choose to apply to your current school/position? Did you consider applying or actually apply to other positions as well? What factors influenced your decision to apply or not apply to certain positions?
16. What sorts of things were discussed in your interview(s)? How did this influence your choosing to work in a given school? Did you have an accurate sense of what

your students might be like before accepting the position based on your interview conversation?

17. Have you ever signed a teaching contract or agreed to teach any subject because you needed a job? If so, can you tell me about this experience? (Although I do not believe most new teachers have the confidence in their abilities that would lead them to sign a contract that may land them in an inner-city school teaching outside their comfort zone, I acknowledge that this is a possibility and so have included it as an interview question. I think in and of itself, if teachers report via this question that they are willing to sign any contract with little thought given to teacher-student fit, then that data suggests that we have a huge problem in the way that our hiring system is set up. Such lack of awareness can be devastating to the career of a first year teacher who ends up in over his/her head. More importantly, lack of consideration of fit can lead to disengagement from learning on behalf of the students, which is exactly what we are attempting to prevent as educators. The consequences of this could be long lasting and impact students' futures.)
18. Is there anything you would like to tell me that you feel would be important for me to know for this study?

Interview questions for students.

Questions 1-5 of the student interview are questions to build rapport with students. They are not being used in data analysis for this study.

1. Tell me a bit about yourself. What grade are you in? Are you involved in any extracurricular activities or things you do for fun? Do you like reading, playing video games, drawing/painting, etc.?
2. How long have you been attending this school?
3. What is your favorite subject? Why?
4. Do you enjoy going to school? What about it do you like/dislike?
5. What do you see yourself doing in the future? What interests you?
6. Describe what an hour is like in your SUBJECT AREA class. What would I see happening if I was there? What would you and your classmates be doing? What would your teacher be doing?
7. How much do you feel you have learned in SUBJECT AREA this year?
8. When you are learning about a new topic in SUBJECT AREA, what is the best way for you to learn the information so that you understand it? Does your teacher set up the class to help you accomplish this?
9. What are some of the things that you do in SUBJECT AREA class that help you learn best? Would you say that these activities and lessons are fun or interesting?
10. What grade do you think you will receive in this class? What have your grades looked like in previous years or even earlier in the year in SUBJECT AREA?

11. If change is reported in the previous question ask: Would you say that CURRENT TEACHER'S NAME has played a role in your grade changing? Can you tell me how?
12. Has the quality of your work changed in this class over the course of the year? Has the amount of work you hand in changed?
13. If change is reported in the previous question ask: Would you say that CURRENT TEACHER'S NAME has played a role in the quality and quantity of your work changing? Can you tell me how?
14. Does CURRENT TEACHER'S NAME do activities that make you feel motivated to learn and make SUBJECT AREA fun? Can you give me an example of what a lesson might look like?
15. Do you feel comfortable in SUBJECT AREA class? Do you participate often? Compare your comfort level and participation to previous years or earlier in the year. Have these things changed?
16. If change is reported in the previous question ask: Would you say that CURRENT TEACHER'S NAME has played a role in your comfort level changing? Can you tell me how? Has he/she played a role in your interest in the subject changing? Can you tell me how?
17. Do you feel as though CURRENT TEACHER'S NAME is a teacher that has helped you to learn better? Why do you feel this way? If so, how did he/she do it?
18. Do you feel like CURRENT TEACHER'S NAME is a good fit for you? Why?
19. Do you feel like you have a good relationship with CURRENT TEACHER'S NAME? What does he/she do to show you that he/she is interested in you life and your success in school?

20. Have you had a teacher, in your current school or in the past, that has really helped you to learn and/or really cared about you? Can you tell me about that person and some of the things he/she did that made you feel cared about and able to learn best?
21. Is there anything you would like to tell me that you feel would be important for me to know for this study?

Appendix 2: Letters of Invitation, Letters of Consent, and Consent Forms

For Superintendents

Letter Requesting Permission for Teacher-Student Fit Study – Superintendent Version

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

NAME
Superintendent
_____ School Division
Address Line 1
City/Town, MB POSTAL CODE

DD/MM/YYYY

Dear NAME,

My name is Tania Giannuzzi. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a research study for my Master Thesis. For this study, I wish to interview teachers who have held more than one teaching position in varied socioeconomic areas of the province about their perceived fit with students in each of these areas. As well, I would like to ascertain the insights of middle and/or senior years student about their success rates in a given class and to what extent students feel that their fit with their teacher plays a role in their educational success. I am requesting your help in recruiting student participants from your schools.

The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by the education system. Students streamed into credit-recovery classrooms, with special learning requirements, and those that are economically disadvantaged may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their

needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies.

The study is guided by the following questions:

1) a) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?
b) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?
2) What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions in the form of not applying to certain positions or specific school divisions?
3) a) What teacher-student fit characteristics facilitate the development of relationships and pedagogically appropriate activities for students?
b) What teacher-student fit characteristics create conditions in which the development of relationships and educationally appropriate learning are difficult?
4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

Participants will be invited to share their experiences and perceptions. This research will collect data from participants in the form a 1-hour interview that will take place at a time and location convenient to them. Participants will be asked to member-check their transcribed interviews in order to clarify or edit any information they deem appropriate. This will take approximately one-hour.

Because this study is two-fold, I am first requesting your permission to forward a letter of invitation containing via email to teachers in your school division. The invitation letter contains an overview of the study along with my contact information. Teachers who meet the criteria of having held positions in two schools that differ socioeconomically by community location and that interested in participating can contact me for further information.

Secondly, I am asking for your help in identifying a middle or senior years school in your division in which the principal may be willing to allow this study to proceed. The principal would subsequently be asked to identify a classroom in which he/she feel students may be willing to provide data on their success rates as related to their current teacher. You may also choose to identify classes with whom you are familiar and feel would be willing to participate in this study. Should you be willing to do this, a subsequent letter of invitation describing the study and consent forms will be sent to parents/guardians and the students of this classroom.

If you agree to let this study proceed, please read through and sign the attached consent forms. Thank you for your consideration. You may contact me at [redacted] or [redacted] with any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Tania Giannuzzi

Letter of Consent and Consent Form for Teacher Interviews – Superintendent Version

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

DD/MM/YYYY

Research Project Title: Understanding the Role of Teacher-Student Fit in Manitoba Classrooms
Principal Investigator: Tania Giannuzzi
Contact Information: [redacted]
Research Supervisor: Dr. Richard Hechter, Associate Professor, University of Manitoba
Contact Information: Room 310 Education Building, Richard.Hechter@umanitoba.ca, ph: 474-9013
Sponsor: N/A

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.

With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by traditional education. Such students may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. It is hoped that such data may be used to inform hiring practices by administrators, the job search process of teachers, and teacher education programs.

I agree to allow the principal investigator to conduct the Teacher-Student Fit study with my classroom teachers. I understand that the project will involve:

- One-hour audio-taped interviews about perceptions of fit with both current students and students from past teaching positions, reasons for transferring from one school to another, and the perceived success rates of current students.

- Approximately one-hour spent member-checking the transcript which involves reviewing the interview transcript to clarify or edit any information that has been provided.

I understand that the appropriate ethical procedures will be followed involving anonymity, member-checking, and confidentiality.

I understand that a summary of the findings of the study will sent to me via email or hard copy, as I prefer. I understand that results of the study will be presented as a Master's Thesis in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and subsequently presented at a national conference and that this will not jeopardize participants' confidentiality in any way.

There are risks involved in this study. Student participants are being asked to provide perceptions of their past and current teachers, while teacher participants are being asked to describe the student population or position in which they feel most comfortable and compare it to another position they have had. There is the possibility that such questions may cause participants to feel emotionally stressed. There is the possibility that they may feel uncomfortable disclosing such information. Participants will be informed that they may pass or not answer any questions which make them feel uncomfortable or stressed.

I understand that participants may pass and need not answer any questions in this study with which they are uncomfortable or choose not to disclose information.

There are also many potential benefits that may be derived from the current study. They are as follows:

<u>This study may help to inform teacher hiring practices in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- Teacher characteristics may be matched with specific positions in the hiring process
  - e.g. specialized programs such as credit-recovery
- May provide insight into ways to decrease attrition, turnover, burnout, and fewer stress leaves by teaching staff by taking the idea of teacher-student fit into account
- May provide information on how to best recruit teachers to hard-to-staff schools/areas in MB
- Might provide ideas for designing more appropriate hiring policies and procedures, and inform policy makers on the nature of hiring decisions and how to best support new teachers once those decisions have been made

<u>This study may help to inform teacher education programs in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- May provide ideas on how to tailor programs to ensure that all students are given access to the best teachers

- May help to determine if sociocultural factors play a role in self-exclusion, and inform on the implementation of increased socially and culturally diverse practicum placements for teacher candidates
- May provide information on how to increase culturally responsive teaching in MB classrooms

A short debriefing meeting will occur immediately following the interview. At that time, participants will be reminded of the purposes of the study, and given time for the researcher to address any questions, concerns, or comments that they may have at that time. Participants will be reminded that feedback/the results of the study will be mailed or emailed to them once the study has been completed and that they may contact the principal researcher following the study if any additional questions or concerns arise.

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. 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.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by ENREB. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Superintendent's Signature _____ Date_____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date_____

____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via email: address _____
____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via hard copy: address _____

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal researcher, Tania Giannuzzi, at [redacted].

Letter of Consent and Consent Form for Student Interviews – Superintendent Version

Should you be willing to identifying a middle or senior years classroom in which you feel students may be agreeable to providing data on their success rates as related to their current teacher, please read through and sign the following consent form:

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

DD/MM/YYYY

Research Project Title: Understanding the Role of Teacher-Student Fit in Manitoba Classrooms
Principal Investigator: Tania Giannuzzi
Contact Information: [redacted]
Research Supervisor: Dr. Richard Hechter, Associate Professor, University of Manitoba
Contact Information: Room 310 Education Building, Richard.Hechter@umanitoba.ca, ph: 474-9013
Sponsor: N/A

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.

With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by traditional education. Such students may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-

student fit in the classroom. It is hoped that such data may be used to inform hiring practices by administrators, the job search process of teachers, and teacher education programs.

I agree to allow the principal investigator to conduct the Teacher-Student Fit study with students in a school/classroom(s) of my choosing. I understand that the project will involve:

- One-hour audio-taped interviews about perceptions of fit with a current teacher and the role such fit has played in the success of the students in this course.

- Approximately one-hour spent member-checking the transcript which involves reviewing the interview transcript to clarify or edit any information that has been provided.

I understand that the appropriate ethical procedures will be followed involving anonymity, member-checking, and confidentiality.

I understand that a summary of the findings of the study will sent to me via email or hard copy, as I prefer. I understand that results of the study will be presented as a Master's Thesis in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and subsequently presented at a national conference and that this will not jeopardize participants' confidentiality in any way.

There are risks involved in this study. Student participants are being asked to provide perceptions of their past and current teachers and teacher participants are being asked to describe the student population or position in which they feel most comfortable and compare it to another position they have had. There is the possibility that such questions may cause participants to feel emotionally stressed. There is the possibility that they may feel uncomfortable disclosing such information. Participants will be informed that they may pass or not answer any questions which make them feel uncomfortable or stressed.

I understand that participants may pass and need not answer any questions in this study with which they are uncomfortable or choose not to disclose information.

There are also many potential benefits that may be derived from the current study. They are as follows:

<u>This study may help to inform teacher hiring practices in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- Teacher characteristics may be matched with specific positions in the hiring process
  - e.g. specialized programs such as credit-recovery
- May provide insight into ways to decrease attrition, turnover, burnout, and fewer stress leaves by teaching staff by taking the idea of teacher-student fit into account
- May provide information on how to best recruit teachers to hard-to-staff schools/areas in MB

- Might provide ideas for designing more appropriate hiring policies and procedures, and inform policy makers on the nature of hiring decisions and how to best support new teachers once those decisions have been made

  This study may help to inform teacher education programs in Manitoba in the following ways:
- May provide ideas on how to tailor programs to ensure that all students are given access to the best teachers
- May help to determine if sociocultural factors play a role in self-exclusion, and inform on the implementation of increased socially and culturally diverse practicum placements for teacher candidates
- May provide information on how to increase culturally responsive teaching in MB classrooms

A short debriefing meeting will occur immediately following the interview. At that time, participants will be reminded of the purposes of the study, and given time for the researcher to address any questions, concerns, or comments that they may have at that time. Participants will be reminded that a summary of the results of the study will be mailed or emailed to them once the study has been completed and that they may contact the principal researcher following the study if any additional questions or concerns arise.

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. 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.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by ENREB. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Superintendent's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date_____

____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via email: address _____
____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via hard copy: address _____

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal researcher, Tania Giannuzzi, at [redacted].

Appendix 3: Letters of Invitation, Letters of Consent, and Consent Forms

For Principals

Letter Requesting Permission for Teacher-Student Fit Study – Principal Version

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

NAME
Principal
SCHOOL NAME
Address Line 1
City/Town, MB POSTAL CODE

DD/MM/YYYY

Dear NAME,

My name is Tania Giannuzzi. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a research study for my Master Thesis. For this study, I wish to interview teachers who have held more than one teaching position in varied socioeconomic areas of the province about their perceived fit with students in each of these areas. As well, I would like to ascertain the insights of middle and/or senior years student about their success rates in a given class and to what extent students feel that their fit with their teacher plays a role in their educational success. I am requesting your help in recruiting student participants from your school.

The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by the education system. Students streamed into credit-recovery classrooms, with special learning requirements, and those that are economically disadvantaged may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies.

The study is guided by the following questions:

1) a) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?
b) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?
2) What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions in the form of not applying to certain positions or specific school divisions?
3) a) What teacher-student fit characteristics facilitate the development of relationships and pedagogically appropriate activities for students?
b) What teacher-student fit characteristics create conditions in which the development of relationships and educationally appropriate learning are difficult?
4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

I am requesting your permission to interview students to specifically address questions 3 and 4 as listed above. I am asking for your permission to speak with students in a classroom in which students may be willing to provide data on their success rates as related to their current teacher. Student interviews will take approximately one-hour to complete. Students will be asked to read over their transcribed interview to edit or add information as they see fit. Such member-checking should take about one-hour. Should you be willing to agree to this, a subsequent letter of invitation describing the study and consent forms will be sent to the parents/guardians and the students of the chosen classroom.

In addition, I am asking that you forward a recruitment letter via email to teaching staff in your school on my behalf. The recruitment letter describes the study and provides teachers with my contact information should they wish to participate in the teacher interview portion of the study. Teacher interviews will take approximately one-hour to complete and address questions 1-4 listed above. Teachers will also be asked to read over their transcribed interview to edit or add information as they see fit. Such member-checking should take about one-hour. Should you be willing to agree to this, the teacher recruitment letter will be sent to you via email for you to forward to teaching staff.

If you agree to let this study proceed, please read through and sign the attached consent forms. Thank you for your consideration. You may contact me at [redacted] with any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Tania Giannuzzi

Letter of Consent and Consent Form for Student and Teacher Interviews – Principals

Should you be willing to:

a) allow student interviews with a middle or senior years classroom from your school in which students may be agreeable to providing data on their success rates as related to their current teacher,

and

b) forward a recruitment letter describing the study to teaching staff in your school, please read through and sign the following consent form:

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

DD/MM/YYYY

Research Project Title: Understanding the Role of Teacher-Student Fit in Manitoba Classrooms
Principal Investigator: Tania Giannuzzi
Contact Information: [redacted]
Research Supervisor: Dr. Richard Hechter, Associate Professor, University of Manitoba
Contact Information: Room 310 Education Building, Richard.Hechter@umanitoba.ca, ph: 474-9013
Sponsor: N/A

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.

With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by traditional education. Such students may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-

student fit in the classroom. It is hoped that such data may be used to inform hiring practices by administrators, the job search process of teachers, and teacher education programs.

I agree to allow the principal investigator to conduct the Teacher-Student Fit study with students in a classroom(s) of (INSERT SCHOOL NAME). I may choose to identify classrooms in which I feel students may be agreeable to providing data on their success rates as related to their current teacher. I understand that the project will involve:

- One-hour audio-taped interviews about perceptions of fit with a current teacher and the role such fit has played in the success of the students in this course.

- Approximately one-hour spent member-checking the transcript which involves reviewing the interview transcript to clarify or edit any information that has been provided.

I agree to allow the principal investigator to conduct the Teacher-Student Fit study with teachers of (INSERT SCHOOL NAME) and agree to forward a recruitment letter describing the study to my teaching staff. I understand that the project will involve:

- A one-hour audio-taped interview about perceptions of fit with both current students and students from past teaching positions, reasons for transferring from one school to another, and the perceived success rates of current students.

- Approximately one-hour spent member-checking the transcript which involves reviewing the interview transcript to clarify or edit any information that has been provided.

I understand that the appropriate ethical procedures will be followed involving anonymity, member-checking, and confidentiality.

I understand that a summary of the findings of the study will sent to me via email or hard copy, as I prefer. I understand that results of the study will be presented as a Master's Thesis in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and subsequently presented at a national conference and that this will not jeopardize participants' confidentiality in any way.

There are risks involved in this study. Student participants are being asked to provide perceptions of their past and current teachers and teacher participants are being asked to describe the student population or position in which they feel most comfortable and compare it to another position they have had. There is the possibility that such questions may cause participants to feel emotionally stressed. There is the possibility that they may feel uncomfortable disclosing such information. Participants will be informed that they may pass or not answer any questions which make them feel uncomfortable or stressed.

I understand that participants may pass and need not answer any questions in this study with which they are uncomfortable or choose not to disclose information.

There are also many potential benefits that may be derived from the current study. They are as follows:

<u>This study may help to inform teacher hiring practices in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- Teacher characteristics may be matched with specific positions in the hiring process
  - e.g. specialized programs such as credit-recovery
- May provide insight into ways to decrease attrition, turnover, burnout, and fewer stress leaves by teaching staff by taking the idea of teacher-student fit into account
- May provide information on how to best recruit teachers to hard-to-staff schools/areas in MB
- Might provide ideas for designing more appropriate hiring policies and procedures, and inform policy makers on the nature of hiring decisions and how to best support new teachers once those decisions have been made

<u>This study may help to inform teacher education programs in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- May provide ideas on how to tailor programs to ensure that all students are given access to the best teachers
- May help to determine if sociocultural factors play a role in self-exclusion, and inform on the implementation of increased socially and culturally diverse practicum placements for teacher candidates
- May provide information on how to increase culturally responsive teaching in MB classrooms

A short debriefing meeting will occur immediately following the interview. At that time, participants will be reminded of the purposes of the study, and given time for the researcher to address any questions, concerns, or comments that they may have at that time. Participants will be reminded that a summary of the results of the study will be mailed or emailed to them once the study has been completed and that they may contact the principal researcher following the study if any additional questions or concerns arise.

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. 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.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by ENREB. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Principal's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date_____

____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via email: address _____
____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via hard copy: address _____

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal researcher, Tania Giannuzzi, at [redacted].

Appendix 4: Letters of Invitation, Letters of Consent, and Consent Forms

For Teacher Participants

Letter of Invitation – Teacher Version

The following is a recruitment letter for a study examining the role of teacher-student fit in Manitoba classrooms.

It is being sent to you, by your principal, on behalf of the principal researcher, Tania Giannuzzi, of the University of Manitoba.

DD/MM/YYYY

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Tania Giannuzzi. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a research study for my Master Thesis. For this study, I wish to interview teachers who have held more than one teaching position in varied socioeconomic areas of the province about their perceived fit with students in each of these areas.

The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by the education system. Students streamed into credit-recovery classrooms, with special learning requirements, and those that are economically disadvantaged may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies.

The study is guided by the following questions:

1) a) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?
b) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?
2) What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions in the form of not applying to certain positions or specific school divisions?
3) a) What teacher-student fit characteristics facilitate the development of relationships and pedagogically appropriate activities for students?
b) What teacher-student fit characteristics create conditions in which the development of relationships and educationally appropriate learning are difficult?
4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

This research will collect data from participants in the form an interview. Teachers' perceptions of fit with both current students and students from past teaching positions, reasons for transferring from one school to another, and the perceived success rates of current students will be the topics covered in the interview. Please be reminded that in order to address these questions fully, participants must have held a teaching position in both a low-socioeconomic area and a higher socioeconomic area. The order in which these positions were held is not significant to participate in the study.

You will be provided with a copy of your transcribed interview and asked to read and revise it for any clarification of information or to edit any information that may be sensitive or serve to identify you. This will take approximately one-hour.

You are being invited to share your perceptions and experiences at a time and location that is convenient for you. You are under no obligation to agree to participate in this research. If you choose to participate, please feel free to bring questions or concerns to my attention at any time. Please know that you may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time. To withdraw from the study, please contact the principal researcher at [redacted]. Any information collected from you at the point you request withdrawal from the study will be destroyed. Audio recordings of interviews will be permanently deleted from the password protected computer used in the study. Any hard copies containing consent and interview transcripts you have provided will be shredded and then disposed of through confidential recycling. This material will be permanently deleted/disposed of within 3 days of your withdrawal from the study.

If you decide to participate in this study, please contact me at [redacted]. I can address any concerns you may have and will review and explain the attached letter and consent form. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tania Giannuzzi

Letter of Consent and Consent Form – Teacher Version

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

DD/MM/YYYY

Research Project Title: Understanding the Role of Teacher-Student Fit in Manitoba Classrooms
Principal Investigator: Tania Giannuzzi
Contact Information: [redacted]
Research Supervisor: Dr. Richard Hechter, Associate Professor, University of Manitoba
Contact Information: Room 310 Education Building, Richard.Hechter@umanitoba.ca, ph: 474-9013
Sponsor: N/A

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.

With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by traditional education. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. It is hoped that such data may be used to inform hiring practices by administrators, the job search process of teachers, and teacher education programs.

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study on Teacher-Student Fit. I understand that my participation will involve:

- A one-hour audio-taped interview about perceptions of fit with both current students and students from past teaching positions, reasons for transferring from one school to another, and the perceived success rates of current students.

- Approximately one-hour spent member-checking the transcript which involves reviewing the interview transcript to clarify or edit any information that has been provided.

I understand that I will be asked to read and revise my transcribed interview in order to edit any information I feel is too sensitive or would serve to identify me. I understand that my name will not be used in any report or presentation related to this study and that my specific answers will be kept confidential. I understand that only the principal investigator and her faculty advisor will have access to the information collected during the study and that data for this study will be kept by the principal researcher within a password protected computer. This data will be destroyed within 2 years of completion of the research. I understand that the findings of this study will be presented as a Master's Thesis and at a national conference and that direct quotes from the data I provide may be used.

There are risks involved in this study. You are being asked to describe the student population or position in which you feel most comfortable and compare it to another position you have had. There is the possibility that you may feel emotionally stressed when describing a position that resulted in a poor fit. There is the possibility that you may feel uncomfortable disclosing such information. You may pass or not answer any questions which make you feel uncomfortable or stressed.

I understand that I may pass and need not answer any questions in this study with which I am uncomfortable or choose not to disclose information.

There are also many potential benefits that may be derived from the current study. They are as follows:

<u>This study may help to inform teacher hiring practices in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- Teacher characteristics may be matched with specific positions in the hiring process
  - e.g. specialized programs such as credit-recovery
- May provide insight into ways to decrease attrition, turnover, burnout, and fewer stress leaves by teaching staff by taking the idea of teacher-student fit into account
- May provide information on how to best recruit teachers to hard-to-staff schools/areas in MB
- Might provide ideas for designing more appropriate hiring policies and procedures, and inform policy makers on the nature of hiring decisions and how to best support new teachers once those decisions have been made

<u>This study may help to inform teacher education programs in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- May provide ideas on how to tailor programs to ensure that all students are given access to the best teachers
- May help to determine if sociocultural factors play a role in self-exclusion, and inform on the implementation of increased socially and culturally diverse practicum placements for teacher candidates
- May provide information on how to increase culturally responsive teaching in MB classrooms

A short debriefing meeting will occur immediately following the interview. At that time, you will be reminded of the purposes of the study, and given time for the researcher to address any questions, concerns, or comments you may have at that time. You will be reminded that a summary of the results of the study will be mailed or emailed to you once the study has been completed and that you may contact the principal researcher following the study if any additional questions or concerns arise.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I understand that my interview transcript as well as a summary of the findings of the study will sent to me via email or hard copy. I understand that results of the study will be presented as a Master's Thesis in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and subsequently presented at a national conference and that this will not jeopardize my confidentiality in any way.

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.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by ENREB. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date_____

____ I prefer to receive my interview via email: address _____
____ I prefer to receive my interview via hard copy: address _____

____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via email: address _____
____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via hard copy: address _____
If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal researcher, [redacted].

Appendix 5: Letters of Invitation, Letters of Consent, and Consent Forms

For Parents/Guardians

Letter of Invitation – Parent/Guardian Version

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

DD/MM/YYYY

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Tania Giannuzzi. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a research study for my Master Thesis. For this study, I wish to interview students regarding their perceived fit with a subject area teacher in their school and how this perceived fit has impacted their learning.

The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by the education system. Students streamed into credit-recovery classrooms, with special learning requirements, and those that are economically disadvantaged may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies.

The study is guided by the following questions:

1) a) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?
b) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?
2) What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions in the form of not applying to certain positions or specific school divisions?
3) a) What teacher-student fit characteristics facilitate the development of relationships and pedagogically appropriate activities for students?

b) What teacher-student fit characteristics create conditions in which the development of relationships and educationally appropriate learning are difficult?
4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

Should your child choose to participate with your permission, the content addressed with your child in this study will be based on questions #3 and #4 listed above. Questions #1 and #2 will be addressed with your child's teachers. This research will collect data from student participants in the form an interview. The interview will take approximately one-hour to complete. Students' perceptions of fit with their teachers will be discussed along with the characteristics of their teachers that they feel have either positively or negatively influenced their learning in a course.

Your child will be provided with a copy of his/her transcribed interview and asked to read and revise it for any clarification of information or to edit any information that may be sensitive or serve to identify him/her. This will take approximately one-hour.

Your child is being invited to share his/her perceptions and experiences. You are under no obligation to agree to have your child participate in this research. If you choose to have your child participate, please feel free to bring questions or concerns to my attention at any time. Please know that you may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time. To withdraw from the study, please contact the principal researcher at [redacted]. Any information collected from your child at the point you request withdrawal from the study will be destroyed. Audio recordings of interviews will be permanently deleted from the password protected computer used in the study. Any hard copies containing consent and interview transcripts you have provided will be shredded and then disposed of through confidential recycling. This material will be permanently deleted/disposed of within 3 days of your withdrawal from the study.

If you decide to participate in this study, please contact me at [redacted]. I can address any concerns you may have and will review and explain the attached letter and consent form. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tania Giannuzzi

Letter of Consent and Consent Form – Parent/Guardian Version

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

DD/MM/YYYY

Research Project Title: Understanding the Role of Teacher-Student Fit in Manitoba Classrooms
Principal Investigator: Tania Giannuzzi
Contact Information: [redacted]
Research Supervisor: Dr. Richard Hechter, Associate Professor, University of Manitoba
Contact Information: Room 310 Education Building, Richard.Hechter@umanitoba.ca, ph: 474-9013
Sponsor: N/A

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.

With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of our students. The idea of teacher-student fit may be especially critical in classrooms where students have been typically marginalized by traditional education. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. It is hoped that such data may be used to inform hiring practices by administrators, the job search process of teachers, and teacher education programs.

I, _____, agree to allow my child _____ to participate in a research study on Teacher-Student Fit. I understand that my child's participation will involve:

- A one-hour audio-taped interview about perceptions of fit with his/her teacher and the characteristics of the teacher that my child feels have either positively or negatively influenced his/her learning in the course.

- Approximately one-hour spent member-checking the transcript which involves reviewing the interview transcript to clarify or edit any information that has been provided.

I understand that my child will be asked to read and revise his/her transcribed interview in order to edit any information he/she feels is too sensitive or would serve to identify him/her. I understand that my child's name will not be used in any report or presentation related to this study and that my child's specific answers will be kept confidential. I understand that only the principal investigator and her faculty advisor will have access to the information collected during the study and that data for this study will be kept by the principal researcher within a password protected computer. This data will be destroyed within 2 years of completion of the research. I understand that the findings of this study will be presented as a Master's Thesis and a national conference and that direct quotes from the data my child provides may be used.

There are risks involved in this study. Your child is being asked to give his/her perceptions of the classroom effectiveness of current and past teachers. There is the possibility that your child may feel uncomfortable disclosing such information. Your child may pass or not answer any questions which make him/her feel uncomfortable or stressed.

I understand that my child may pass and need not answer any questions in this study with which he/she is uncomfortable or chooses not to disclose information.

There are also many potential benefits that may be derived from the current study. They are as follows:

<u>This study may help to inform teacher hiring practices in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- Teacher characteristics may be matched with specific positions in the hiring process
  - e.g. specialized programs such as credit-recovery
- May provide insight into ways to decrease attrition, turnover, burnout, and fewer stress leaves by teaching staff by taking the idea of teacher-student fit into account
- May provide information on how to best recruit teachers to hard-to-staff schools/areas in MB
- Might provide ideas for designing more appropriate hiring policies and procedures, and inform policy makers on the nature of hiring decisions and how to best support new teachers once those decisions have been made

<u>This study may help to inform teacher education programs in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- May provide ideas on how to tailor programs to ensure that all students are given access to the best teachers
- May help to determine if sociocultural factors play a role in self-exclusion, and inform on the implementation of increased socially and culturally diverse practicum placements for teacher candidates

- May provide information on how to increase culturally responsive teaching in MB classrooms

A short debriefing meeting will occur immediately following the interview. At that time, your child will be reminded of the purposes of the study, and given time for the researcher to address any questions, concerns, or comments your child may have at that time. Your child will be reminded that a summary of the results of the study will be mailed or emailed to him/her and to you as the guardian once the study has been completed and that you may contact the principal researcher following the study if any additional questions or concerns arise.

I understand that my child may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I understand that my child's interview transcript will be sent to my child via email or hard copy and that a summary of the findings of the study will be sent to me and my child via email or hard copy. I understand that results of the study will be presented as a Master's Thesis in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and subsequently presented at a national conference and that this will not jeopardize my child's confidentiality in any way.

I understand that there is one case in which my child's identity must be disclosed by the principal researcher and that is if abuse is reported by my child and/or suspected by the principal researcher. In this case, the appropriate authorities (e.g. Child and Family Services) must be contacted and the child's name will be provided to them.

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.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by ENREB. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date_____

____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via email: address _____
____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via hard copy: address _____

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal researcher, Tania Giannuzzi, at [redacted].

Appendix 6: Letters of Invitation, Letters of Consent, and Consent Forms

For Student Participants

Letter of Invitation – Student Version

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

DD/MM/YYYY

Dear Student,

My name is Tania Giannuzzi. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a research study for my Master Thesis. For this study, I wish to interview students regarding their perceived fit with a subject area teacher in their school and how this perceived fit has impacted their learning.

The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, as a student, a positive teacher-student fit may significantly impact your success in a course. Students may benefit greatly from having a teacher who understands their needs, can build relationships with them, and can provide optimal learning experiences that create engagement, inquiry, and an interest in future studies.

The study is guided by the following questions:

1) a) To what extent do teachers consider their fit with the student population when applying for postings?
b) From the perspective of teachers, what does it mean to fit with students?
2) What factors precipitate teachers' self-exclusions in the form of not applying to certain positions or specific school divisions?
3) a) What teacher-student fit characteristics facilitate the development of relationships and pedagogically appropriate activities for students?
b) What teacher-student fit characteristics create conditions in which the development of relationships and educationally appropriate learning are difficult?
4) Is there a difference in student success rates when teacher-student fit is taken into consideration and a positive fit is perceived by the teacher and students?

Should you choose to participate, the content addressed with you in this study will be based on questions #3 and #4 listed above. Questions #1 and #2 will be addressed with your

teachers. This research will collect data from student participants in the form an interview. The interview will take approximately one-hour to complete. Students' perceptions of fit with their teachers will be discussed along with the characteristics of their teachers that they feel have either positively or negatively influenced their learning in a course.

You will be provided with a copy of your transcribed interview and asked to read and revise it for any clarification of information or to edit any information that may be sensitive or serve to identify you. This will take approximately one-hour.

You are being invited to share your perceptions and experiences. You are under no obligation to participate in this research. If you choose to participate, please feel free to bring questions or concerns to my attention at any time. Please know that you may withdraw from the study without penalty at any time. To withdraw from the study, please contact the principal researcher at [redacted]. Any information collected from you at the point you request withdrawal from the study will be destroyed. Audio recordings of interviews will be permanently deleted from the password protected computer used in the study. Any hard copies containing consent and interview transcripts you have provided will be shredded and then disposed of through confidential recycling. This material will be permanently deleted/disposed of within 3 days of your withdrawal from the study.

If you decide to participate in this study, please contact me at [redacted]. I can address any concerns you may have and will review and explain the attached letter and consent form. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tania Giannuzzi

Letter of Consent and Consent Form – Student Version

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Education

DD/MM/YYYY

Research Project Title: Understanding the Role of Teacher-Student Fit in Manitoba Classrooms
Principal Investigator: Tania Giannuzzi
Contact Information: [redacted]
Research Supervisor: Dr. Richard Hechter, Associate Professor, University of Manitoba
Contact Information: Room 310 Education Building, Richard.Hechter@umanitoba.ca, ph: 474-9013
Sponsor: N/A

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.

With increased research into how hiring decisions made at the administrative level, it is also important to consider whether these practices are effectively matching teachers to schools, to classroom positions, and most importantly to students. Goodness of fit with students may contribute to teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and teacher retention. Above all, it may significantly impact the success of students. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of characteristics and factors that influence teacher-student fit and to what extent students' education can benefit from an optimal teacher-student fit in the classroom. It is hoped that such data may be used to inform hiring practices by administrators, the job search process of teachers, and teacher education programs.

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study on Teacher-Student Fit. I understand that my participation will involve:

- A one-hour audiotaped interview about my perceptions of fit with a specific teacher and the characteristics of the teacher that I feel have influenced my learning in the course.

- Approximately one-hour spent member-checking the transcript which involves reviewing the interview transcript to clarify or edit any information that has been provided.

I understand that I will be asked to read and revise my transcribed interview in order to edit any information I feel is too sensitive or would serve to identify me. I understand that my name will not be used in any report or presentation related to this study and that my specific answers will be kept confidential. I understand that only the principal investigator and her faculty advisor will have access to the information collected during the study and that data for this study will be kept by the principal researcher within a password protected computer. This data will be destroyed within 2 years of completion of the research. I understand that the findings of this study will be presented as a Master's Thesis and that direct quotes from the data I provide may be used.

There are risks involved in this study. You are being asked to give your perceptions of the classroom effectiveness of their current and past teachers. There is the possibility that you may feel uncomfortable disclosing such information. You may pass or not answer any questions which make you feel uncomfortable or stressed.

I understand that I may pass and need not answer any questions in this study with which I am uncomfortable or choose not to disclose information.

There are also many potential benefits that may be derived from the current study. They are as follows:

<u>This study may help to inform teacher hiring practices in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- Teacher characteristics may be matched with specific positions in the hiring process
  - e.g. specialized programs such as credit-recovery
- May provide insight into ways to decrease attrition, turnover, burnout, and fewer stress leaves by teaching staff by taking the idea of teacher-student fit into account
- May provide information on how to best recruit teachers to hard-to-staff schools/areas in MB
- Might provide ideas for designing more appropriate hiring policies and procedures, and inform policy makers on the nature of hiring decisions and how to best support new teachers once those decisions have been made

<u>This study may help to inform teacher education programs in Manitoba in the following ways:</u>

- May provide ideas on how to tailor programs to ensure that all students are given access to the best teachers
- May help to determine if sociocultural factors play a role in self-exclusion, and inform on the implementation of increased socially and culturally diverse practicum placements for teacher candidates
- May provide information on how to increase culturally responsive teaching in MB classrooms

A short debriefing meeting will occur immediately following the interview. At that time, you will be reminded of the purposes of the study, and given time for the researcher to address any questions, concerns, or comments you may have at that time. You will be reminded that a summary of the results of the study will be mailed or emailed to you once the study has been completed and that you may contact the principal researcher following the study if any additional questions or concerns arise.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I understand that my interview transcript will be sent to me via email or hard copy and that a summary of the findings of the study will be sent to me via email or hard copy. I understand that results of the study will be presented as a Master's Thesis in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba and subsequently presented at a national conference and that this will not jeopardize my confidentiality in any way.

I understand that there is one case in which my identity must be disclosed by the principal researcher and that is if I report any type of abuse and/or abuse is suspected by the principal researcher. In this case, the appropriate authorities (e.g. Child and Family Services) must be contacted and my name will be provided to them.

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.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by ENREB. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date_____

____ I prefer to receive my interview via email: address _____
____ I prefer to receive my interview via hard copy: address _____

____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via email: address _____
____ I prefer to receive a summary of the findings via hard copy: address _____

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal researcher, Tania Giannuzzi, at [redacted].

Appendix 7: Tables and Figures

Table 1

The Initial Consideration of Teacher-Student Fit

Teacher	Neighbourhood Where Currently Working	Fall Back Career	Second Career	Signed Contract Because Job Needed
Mr. Dylan	Low SES	Y	N	N
Ms. Kim	Low SES	N	Y	N
Mr. Thompson	Low SES	Y	N	Y
Mr. Kent	Low SES	Y	Y	Y
Ms. Lyle	Low SES	Y	Y	Y
Mr. Sims	Low SES	Y	Y	Y
Mr. McKeen	Low SES	N	N	Y
Mr. Nolan	Low SES	N	N	Y
Ms. Craft	High SES	N	N	Y
Mr. Robinson	High SES	N	Y	Y

Table 2

Teacher Characteristics Influencing Positive Teacher-Student Fit

Teacher	Neighbourhood Where Currently Working	Fit with Students Based Upon	Teacher Characteristics that Allow Fit to Occur	Example from Interview Transcript
Mr. Dylan	Low SES	Building Relationships	Patience; Relating to Student Interests	"I think that they are immature and I'm kind of immature so we match that way. For example, if they tell me they'd rather be playing sports or watching sports, or be reading comic books, I get it. Anything kind of nerdy or athletics – that how I get to know kids and relate to them. That's most of the kids that are here in graphics."
Ms. Kim	Low SES	Building Relationships	Similar Cultural Background/ Values; Understanding Needs	"They bring with them a set of moral and ethical values that are similar to mine from their culture from their families."
Mr. Thompson	Low SES	Building Relationships	Relating to Student Interests	"I would say that the most important thing, for me, that constitutes a good fit is taking time to build relationships with the students. Talking with them, finding similar ground - things we have in common or share interest in."

Mr. Kent	Low SES	Building Relationships	Ability to Act as a Positive Role Model; Patience; Non-judgmental; Use of Humor	"If they don't have a stable male… some of the kids the way they talk to you, for that one year, they see you as someone stable….I have a sense of humor. I don't take myself too seriously. Making mistakes is not an issue. I'm not stogy. I'm animated in class. I can tease kids, but I don't hurt their feelings. "
Ms. Lyle	Low SES	Building Relationships	Similar Social/Economic Status in Childhood; Empathy; Understanding Needs	"I would say life experience. Kind of an understanding of where they come from. I grew up in a low economic area too, with a single parent, and an alcoholic father and so when you come from that kind of a background you do have a bit of an understanding, but at the same time getting past it and having that stability now helps."
Mr. Sims	Low SES	Building Relationships	Understanding Needs	"In this position, I've had to look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and understand that for some of these kids, their needs are not being met and that is the biggest difficulty. You can't teach them until their safety needs are being met. Their needs for housing, their needs for food. These are the challenges and until those needs are actually met you can't get education."

Mr. McKeen	Low SES	Building Relationships	Similar Cultural Background/ Values; Use of Humor	"Part of it can relate to the newcomer-immigrant experience. Although different races, there are some cultural norms between the students and how I grew up. I also have a sense of humor which gives students a sense of ease and maybe makes me approachable to some students."
Mr. Nolan	Low SES	Building Relationships	Patience; Calm Demeanor; Non-judgmental; Use of Humor	"Patience and my demeanor. I think that the kids trust me and find that I'm easy to build rapport with. I am not short tempered or judge them. I don't expect things out of them until I've proven myself. I work with them for awhile to build that relationship and then we can move forward."
Ms. Craft	High SES	Building Relationships	Ability to Act as a Positive Role Model; Patience; Calm Demeanor	"A mentoring role...I feel like the kids are able to relate to me a little more and I feel that I am able to engage students that haven't really been engaged before, especially in the Phys Ed role. Kids that haven't changed or ever done Phys Ed at all, I am getting them to be active. That's why I feel I am better suited to working with these kids."
Mr. Robinson	High SES	Subject Matter Proficiency	Continually Motivated to Learn New Strategies	"I'm always trying to be a good learner. I don't think you can be a good teacher without wanting to learn. I've got a stack of books at home in my to-do pile. I'm always looking at professional development and I take them quite seriously. And then I come back with ideas and share them."

Table 3

Concrete Measures of Student Success: Student Perceptions of Teacher's Influence on the Quality of their Work

Student	Has the quality of your work changed in this class over the course of the year? How so?	Perceived Role Teacher Played in Change	Example from Interview Transcript
Brianna	Y - Improved	She teaches skills for independence.	"It is not like “Here’s the rubric and here’s what you have to get done, and when you have to have it done”. It is more “Ok, I am trusting you to do this. Take it upon yourself to do it as you please, but make sure that you are being responsible enough to get it done.”. She helps with time management and works with your schedule to fit it around your school work."
Olivia	Y - Improved	Manner in which she provided help; Recognizes individual learning styles.	"I think it has been better. She actually pushed me to do my work the way I like to do work and makes sure that everything is done correctly and to my best ability. She will remind you, making sure that you have all the requirements that you need for each task or project, and making sure that we are on the right track and that everything is done before the due date."

Steven	Y - Improved	Manner in which she provided help; Recognizes individual learning styles.	"I really like the way she teaches... She just makes it more fun. I find it more interesting. I always do her work first because I want the good comment, the good feedback she gives when you hand stuff in...I would say she taught me a new way of learning. Before I had her, I was given a task and I had to do it and hand it in, and that was just that. But when I had Ms Tyler, everything was fun and I enjoyed it "
Caley	Y - Deteriorated	Not related to teacher in any way. **Did indicate teacher recognizes individual learning styles.	"I still try to get it done, but not like I did in grade 9. In grade 9, I was at the top of the honour roll. In my mind, I know I should be doing that but I have my drivers license and I go out and I'm just kind of lazier now." "We learned about Gregory Learning styles and there's this thing called Myers-Briggs and it gives you your personality type and learning type. So she helped us to figure out what ours were so then – mine was concrete which means I have to see things to help me learn best – so she helped me see that I'm that kind of learner."
Riley	Y - Improved	Manner in which she provided help.	"She is really into teaching and she wants you to do good and do your best on her work. If you have any problem with it, she will help you, so it kind of encourages you to do your work, even if you're not good at it and might get them wrong, you know she will help you. There's no excuse for not doing it for fear of getting them wrong or not knowing how to do it."
Klye	Y - Improved	Manner in which she provided help.	"She will tell you things about her life and her experiences in university and high school and she will try to help you learn from her mistakes."

Table 4

Affective Measure of Student Success: Student Perceptions of Teacher's Influence on Comfort and Participation

Student	Compare your comfort level and participation to previous years or earlier in the year. Have these things changed?	Perceived Role Teacher Played in Change	Example from Interview Transcript
Brianna	Y - Increased	Creates an open and comfortable learning environment.	"She has always made it a comfortable place to be."
Olivia	Y - Increased	Creates an open and comfortable learning environment (uses humor); Values all student opinions.	"I feel like she is a very open teacher and I feel like you could ask anything and she won't judge you. She will offer her time. I'm not scared to ask her any "stupid questions" as you might say." "I think I participate more in her classes than with other teachers in this school just because of how she teaches. You want to get involved and joke around and make sure you are understanding it."

Steven	Y - Increased	Builds in extracurricular expectations.	"We have to do a lot of extra curricular things, so I am more involved in her classes than the other ones."
Caley	Y - Increased	Creates an open and comfortable learning environment (uses humor).	"I am comfortable around her and she laughs a lot so it kind of makes it easier if you say something."
Riley	Y - Increased	Creates an open and comfortable learning environment; Values all student opinions.	"You don't have to put your hand up, it is more casual that way. It is open and less restrictive. Everyone can have their own opinion. She's really friendly. She acts like a student sometimes – you feel like she is more of a friend than a teacher sometimes. She is really open and always happy so you can always talk to her."
Kyle	Y - Increased	Values all student opinions.	"I give my opinion here more than other classes. She lets you speak your mind. She kind of opened up this new door for me – how teachers actually are – so I can be a little more open with teachers."

Table 5

Student Perceptions of Positive Teacher-Student Fit

Student	What makes your teacher a good fit?	Example from Interview Transcript
Brianna	Acts as a counsellor	"I tend to be a very high stress person. I tend to over think things and stress myself out and Ms. Tyler, she can get high stress but even when she is she doesn't show it. She has that calming effect on people. She is very lighthearted, funny, she jokes about it. She has the ability to calm anyone down and bring them from like a 12 to a 2."
Olivia	Acts as a counsellor; Open & honest	"I can tell her almost anything. I've never actually met a teacher that talks about her life and relates her stories and is that energetic. Compared to most teachers, most are interesting but she's… I had Geo every Monday morning and she was so energetic and I was like "It's Monday morning, how are you so happy?" . So just being in her class at 9 just brightened up my day."
Steven	Open & honest; Humorous; Understands student needs	"Her ways of teachings are the coolest I've ever had in my life. She's always having fun with the kids, like right now, she is hanging with kids, so kids are not afraid to tell her anything they want and she is always there to help them. A month ago, I had to fly back home… I was really worried about my volunteer hours. She came and talked to me so I didn't have to worry. She understands what's going on in people's lives and she adapts around it and helps you out."

Caley	Humorous; Relaxed	"She's not too serious. She jokes around, she can take a joke. With other teachers you can't joke around so much, but with Ms. Tyler, you can. She wants us to be here."
Riley	Acts as a counsellor	"She is a great fit for a teacher, a guidance counsellor, a friend. She is a good person."
Kyle	Open & honest; Relaxed; Understands student needs	"She lets you inside of her wall, not like other teachers. Let's see, who's a strict teacher – Ms. Callum, she, even if you bring food into her class, she will say take it out, but if you bring food into Ms. Tyler's class, she will let you eat it."

Table 6

Student Reported Fit Characteristics for Current Teacher & Past/Other Teachers

Characteristics of Current Teacher that Allow for Positive Teacher-Student Fit (Coded Themes)	Characteristics of Other Teachers that Allow for Positive Teacher-Student Fit (Characteristics as Listed by Students)
Acts as a counsellor	Is available if students need to talk; Gives students advice; Talks about the future
Acts as a parental figure	**Not mentioned for other teachers
Humorous	Is able to use humor;
Open & honest	Open to answering questions
Relaxed in classroom/Not overly strict	Does not yell; Is calm; Is kind; Is not strict
Understands student needs	**Not mentioned for other teachers
Understands what is happening in students' lives	Asks about students lives regularly; Promotes academic success in all subject areas
Values learning inside and outside the classroom	Recruits students for extracurricular activities e.g. student council, Europe trip

Provides help through clear expectations, motivation and encouragement, and feedback	Motivates and encourages students; Has faith in student abilities
Teaches about and support multiple learning styles	**Not mentioned for other teachers
Creates a comfortable/an enjoyable learning environment through activities that involve "doing" and the use of humor	**Not mentioned for other teachers
Values student opinions	**Not mentioned for other teachers
*Not mentioned for current teacher	Spends time after class to reinforce material

Table 7

Teacher Interview Topics and Teacher Perceptions of Student Population

Teacher	Neighbourhood Where Currently Working	Topics Discussed During Interview	Accurate Sense of What Students Would be Like?	Example from Interview Transcript
Mr. Dylan	Low SES	Extracurriculars; Bring to the School	N	"Nope, no idea. None, zero. The school did not prepare me for it at all. Not even close. I tried to teach a measuring lesson in metric – how to draw something out in millimeters. And I had two classes that couldn't do it. Anyway, I tried for two weeks and I gave up. I was like "let's do something else"."
Ms. Kim	Low SES	Extracurriculars; Teaching/ Assessment Strategies; Content Knowledge	N	"I had heard good things, but I really had no clue. I really truly believe I made a mistake and I knew that about week 4. I knew after a month I should not have made that move. The building just seemed wild to me."

Mr. Thompson	Low SES	Teaching/ Assessment Strategies; Philosophy of Education	N	"As for getting an accurate sense of the students – it gave me an idea of where the students were coming from, but having been here a few months now, I realize that I really had no idea what to expect. In this area, there seems to be a lack of regard for pushing higher education."
Mr. Kent	Low SES	Behavior Scenarios; Know About the School	N	"I would say no. They're words can only reflect so much – they can't come out and say "this is a horrible place"."
Ms. Lyle	Low SES	Teaching/ Assessment Strategies; Behavior Scenarios	N	"The first year I worked here was a crazy year so by Christmas we'd had two lockdowns and two lock outs and I though "oh my God where the hell am I working right now?" So I had no clue how scary it was at the beginning."
Mr. Sims	Low SES	Extracurriculars; Bring to the School; Content Knowledge	N	"There wasn't much discussion on their end about what the kids were like or what their needs were. It actually was a huge eye opener, when you go from kids who cry at night because they can't do their homework to kids that never do their homework. I had to learn not to assign homework and then you had to explain to parents why you can't assign homework. It is like you are going towards the lowest common denominator rather than raising these kids up."

Mr. McKeen	Low SES	Extracurriculars; Bring to the School; Philosophy of Education; Know About the School	N	"I was blown away! I was shocked at the academic ability of the students. I didn't think at all that there would be that many students not meeting standards."
Mr. Nolan	Low SES	Extracurriculars; Bring to the School; Teaching/ Assessment Strategies; Behavior Scenarios; Content Knowledge	Y	"Ya, based on the first question I had an idea. The first question the principal asked me was "What do you do when you're walking down the hallway and a kid tells you to fuck off?" ."
Ms. Craft	High SES	Extracurriculars; Teaching/ Assessment Strategies; Differentiate Instruction	N	"It was very basketball oriented. It was an hour long conversation about basketball."
Mr. Robinson	High SES	Differentiate Instruction	N	"They never said you will have so many funded students or EAL students...If that had have happened, it would have been beneficial for me."

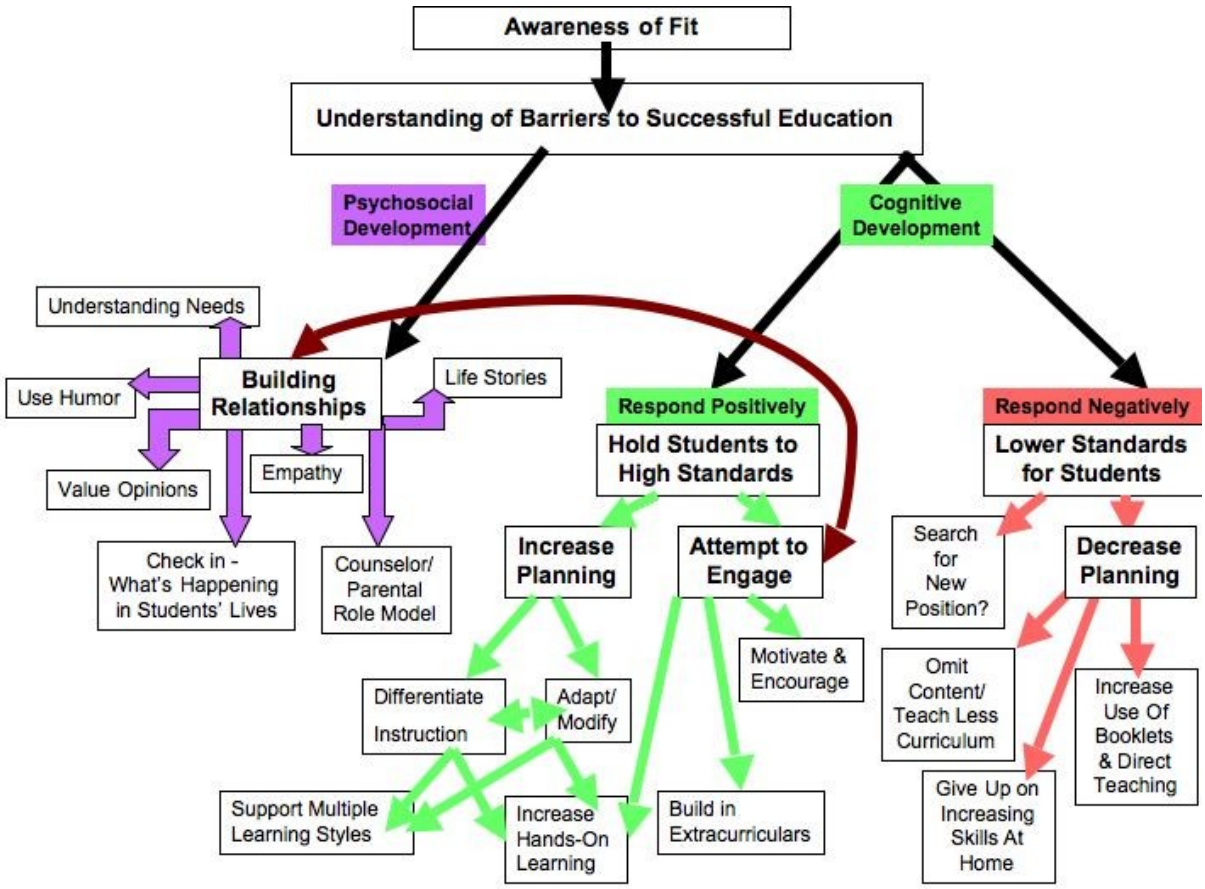

Figure 1. Possible teacher responses to fit with students and the barriers to education with which students present.

Appendix 8: TCPS 2 Certificate

PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS
Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE

Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Tania Giannuzzi

has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)

Date of Issue: **7 February, 2013**

References

Abernathy, T. V., Forsyth, A., Mitchell, J. (2001). The bridge from student to teacher: What principals, teacher education faculty, and students value in a teaching applicant. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 28,* 109-119.

Agirdag, O., Van Avermaet, P., & Van Houtte, M. (2013). School segregation and Math achievement: A mixed-methods study on the role of self-fulfilling prophecies. *Teachers College Record, 115,* 1-50.

Aikenhead, G. S. (2002). Cross-cultural Science teaching: Rekindling traditions for Aboriginal students. In Y. Kanu (Ed.). *Curriculum as Cultural Practice: Postcolonial Imaginations.* (223-248). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Auwater, A. E., & Arugete, M. S. (2008). Effects of student gender and socioeconomic status on teacher perceptions. *Journal of Educational Research, 101,* 242-246.

Baldwin, S. C., Buchanan, A. M., & Rudisill, M. E. (2007). What teacher candidates learned about diversity, social justice, and themselves from service-learning experiences. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58,* 315-327.

Bazylak, D. (2002). Perceptions of five female aboriginal high school graduates. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 26,* 134-151.

Bempechat, J. L., Li, J., Neier, S. M., Gillis, C. A., & Holloway, S. D. (2011). The homework experience: Perceptions of low-income youth. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 22,* 250-278.

Berger, K. S. (1998). *The Developing Person Through the Lifespan* (4th ed). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Berry, B., Daughtrey, A., & Wieder, A. (2010). Teacher effectiveness: The conditions that matter most and a look to the future. *Center for Teaching Quality.* Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?q=Teacher+effectiveness%3a+The+conditions+that+matter+most+and+a+look+to+the+future&id=ED509720

Bolshakova, V. L. J., Johnson, C. C., & Czerniak, C. M. (2011). "It depends which Science teacher you got": Urban Science self-efficacy from teacher and student voices. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 6,* 961-997.

Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2005). The draw of home: How teacehrs' preferences for proximity disadvantage urban schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 24,* 113-132.

Cannata, M. (2010). Understanding the teacher job search process: Espoused preferences and preferences in use. *Teachers College Record, 112,* 2889-2934.

Clark, R., & Antonelli, F. (2009). Why teachers leave: Results of an Ontario survey 2006-08. *Ontario Ministry of Education*. Retrieved from http://www.otffeo.on.ca/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/10/why_teachers_leave1.pdf

Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. I. (2006). Teacher-student matching and the assessment of teacher effectiveness. *Journal of Human Resources, 41,* 778-820.

Cobb, C. (2015). Principals play many parts: A review of the research on school principals as special education leaders. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 19,* 213-234.

Cranston, J. (2012). Exploring school principals' hiring decisions: Fitting in and getting hired. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 135,* 1-35.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches (3rd edition).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Constructing 21st-century teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education and Policy Analysis Archives, 57*, 300-314.

Deer, F. (2013). Integrating Aboriginal perspectives in education: Perceptions of pre-service teachers. *Canadian Journal of Education, 36,* 175-211.

Diamond, J. B., Randolph, A., & Spillane, J. P. (2004). Teachers' expectations and sense of responsibility for student learning: The importance of race, class, and organizational habitus. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 35,* 75-98.

Doll. W. E. (1993). The four R's: An alternative to the Tyler rationale. In D. Flinders & S. Thorton. (Eds.). *The curriculum studies reader* (4th ed). (215-222). New York, NY: Routledge.

DuPlessis, A., Carroll, A., & Gillies, R. M. (2015). Understanding the lived experiences of novice out-of-field teachers in relation to school leadership practices. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 43,* 4-21.

Engel, M. (2013). Problematic preferences? A mixed methods examination of principals' preferences for teacher characteristics in Chicago. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 49,* 52-91.

Eryilmaz, A. (2014). Perceived personality traits and types of teachers and the relationship to the subjective well-being and academic achievements of adolescents. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 14,* 2049-2062.

Feldman, K. A. (1996). Identifying exemplary teaching: Using data from course and teacher evaluations. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 65,* 41-50.

Freire, P. (1970/1990). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company.

Freire, P. (1974). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company.

Fuller, F. F. (1969). Concerns of teachers: A developmental conceptualization. *American Education Research Journal, 6,* 207-226.

Fuller, F. F., & Case, C. (1969). Concerns of teachers: A manual for teacher educators: Increasing teacher satisfaction with professional preparation by considering teachers' concerns when planning preservice and inservice education. *U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare*. Retrieved from: http://eric.ed.gov/?q=author%3afuller+pubyear%3a1969&id=ED040143

Gainer, J. S., & Larrotta, C. (2010). Reproducing and interrupting subtractive schooling in teacher education. *Multicultural Education, 17,* 41-47.

Gallup Organization. (1997). The teacher perceiver: Overview, background, and research. Lincoln, NE: Author.

Gambhir, M., Board, K., Evans, M., & Gaskell, J. (2008). Characterizing initial teacher education in Canada: Themes and issues. *International Alliance of Leading Educational Institutes.* Retrieved from http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/ite/UserFiles/File/CharacterizingITE.pdf

Gardiner, W., & Robinson, K. S. (2011). Peer field placements with preservice teachers: Negotiating the challenges of professional collaboration. *The Professional Educator, 35.*Retrived from http://www.theprofessionaleducator.org/articles/combined%20fall_11.pdf

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory and Practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2005). Politics of multicultural teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 56,* 221-228.

Gérin-Lajoie, D. (2012). Racial and ethnic diversity in schools: The case of English Canada. *Prospects, 42,* 205-220.

Government of Manitoba. (2006). Aboriginal people in Manitoba 2006. Retrieved from http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/pdf/apm2006.pdf

Government of Manitoba. (2011). Global Issues: Area of inquiry – social justice and human rights. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/global_issues/social_justice.pdf

Grant, C. A., & Gillette, M. (2006). A candid talk to teacher educators about effectively preparing teachers who can teach everyone's children. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57,* 292-299.

Graziano, C. (2005). School's out. *Edutopia1 (February-March)*, 38-44. Retrieved from www.edutopia.org/schools-out

Guo, Y., Justice, L. M., Sawyer, B., & Tompkins, V. (2011). Exploring factors related to preschool teachers' self-efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An international Journal of Research and Studies, 27,* 961-968.

Hadfield, C. (2013). *An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth.* Toronto, ON: Random House Canada.

Harris, D. N., & Rutledge, S. A. (2010). Models and predictors of teacher effectiveness: A comparison of research about teaching and other occupations. *Teachers College Record, 11*2, 914-960.

Harris, D. N., Rutledge, S. A., Ingle, W. K, & Thompson, C. C. (2010). Mix and match: What principals really look for when hiring teachers. *Education, Finance and policy, 5,* 228-246.

Hill, J., & Dalton, B. (2013). Student Math achievement and out-of-field teaching. *Educational Researcher, 42,* 403-405.

Hobbs, L. (2013). Teaching "out-of-field" as a boundary-crossing event: Factors shaping teacher identity. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education, 11,* 271-297.

hooks, b. (2010). *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). The realities of out-of-field teaching. *Educational Research, 58,* 42-45.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2004). Why some schools have more underqualified teachers than others. *Brookings Papers on Educational Policy, 7,* 45-88.

Ingle, W. K., Rutledge, S. A., & Bishop, J. (2011). Context matters: Principals' sensemaking of teacher hiring and on-the-job performance. *Journal of Educational Administration, 49,* 579-610.

Jacobsen, D. A., Eggen, P., & Kauchak, D. (2006). *Methods for Teaching: Promoting Student Learning in K-12 Classrooms* (7th ed.). Uppersaddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Johnson, S. M. & Birkland, S. E. (2003). Pursuing a "sense of success": New teachers explain their career decisions. *American Educational Research Journal, 40,* 581-617.

Johnson, S. M., Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2012). How context matters in high-nee schools: The effects of teachers' working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students' achievement. *Teachers College Record, 114,* 1-39.

Jugovic, I., Marusic, I., Ivanec, T. P., & Vidovic, V. V. (2012). Motivation and personality of preservice teachers in Croatia. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 40,* 271-287.

Kanu, Y. (2002). In their own voices: First Nations student identify some cultural mediators of their learning in the formal school system. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 48,* 98-121.

Kanu, Y. (2005). Teachers' perceptions of the integration of Aboriginal culture into the high school curriculum. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 51,* 50-68.

Kanu, Y. (2006a). Getting them through the college pipeline: Critical elements of instruction influencing school success among Native Canadian high school students. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 18,* 116-145.

Kanu, Y. (2006b). Reappropriating traditions in the postcolonial curricular imagination. In Y. Kanu (Ed.). *Curriculum as Cultural Practice: Postcolonial Imaginations.* (203-222). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Kanu, Y. (2007). Increasing school success among Aboriginal students: Culturally responsive curriculum or macrostructural variables affecting schooling? *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education, 1,* 21-41.

Kelly, S., & Carbonaro, W. (2012). Curriculum tracking and teacher expectations: Evidence from discrepant course taking models. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal, 15,* 271-294.

Kersten, T. (2008). Teacher hiring practices: Illinois principals' perspectives. *Educational Forum, 72,* 355-368.

Khalifa, M. A. (2011). Teacher expectations and principal behavior: Responding to teacher acquiescence. *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education, 43,* 702-727.

Kilinc, A., Watt, H. M. G., Richardson, P. W. (2012). Factors affecting teaching choice in Turkey. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 40,* 199-226.

Kleinfeild, J. (1995). Effective teachers of Eskimo and Indian students. In L. Roberts & R. A. Clifton (Eds.). *Cross-currents: Contemporary Canadian Education Issue.* (68-96). Toronto, ON: Nelson Canada.

Klug, B. J., Luckey, A. S., Wilkins, S., & Whitfied, P. T. (2006). Stepping out of our own skins: Overcoming resistance of isolated preservice teacher populations to embracing diversity in educational settings. *Multicultural Perspectives, 8,* 30-37.

Kristof, A. L. (1996). Person-organization fit: An integrative review of its conceptualizations, measurement, and implications. *Personnel Psychology, 49,* 1-49.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (1995a). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice, 34,* 159-165.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (1995b).Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32,* 465-491.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (2005). Is the team alright? Diversity and teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 56,* 229-234.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (2006). It's not the culture of poverty, it's the poverty of culture: The problem with teacher education. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 37,* 104-109.

Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2002). Sorting and the plight of urban schools: A descriptive analysis. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24,* 37-62.

Lewthwaite, B., (2007). From school in community to a community-based school: The influence of an Aboriginal principal on culture-based school development. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy,64,* 1-18.

Lewthwaite, B., & McMillan, B. (2010). "She can bother me, and that's because she cares": What Inuit students say about teaching and their learning. *Canadian Journal of Education, 33,* 140-175.

Lewthwaite, B., Owen, T., Dorion, A., McMillan, B., & Renaud, R. (2013). Our stories about teaching and learning: A pedagogy of consequence for Yukon First Nation settings. *Interchange, 44,* 105-128.

Lewthwaite, B., McMillan, B., Renaud, R., Hainnu, R., & McDonald, C. (2010). Combining the views of "both worlds": Science education in Nunavut piqusiit tamainik katisugit. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 98,* 1-71.

Lewthwaite, B., Owen, T., Dorion, A., Renaud, R., & McMillan, B., (2014). Culturally responsive teaching in Yukon First Nation settings: What does it look like and what is its influence? *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy,155,* 1-34.

Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide (3rd edition).* Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage.

Liu, E., & Johnson, S. M. (2006). New teachers' experiences of hiring: Late, rushed, and information-poor. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 42,* 324-360.

MacDonald, D., & Wison, D. (2013). Poverty or prosperity: Indigenous children in Canada. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*. Retrieved from http://savethechildren.ca/document.doc?id=361

MacIver, M. (2012). Aboriginal students' perspectives on the factors influencing high school completion. *Multicultural Perspectives, 14,* 156-162.

Manitoba Teachers' Society. (2007). Aboriginal education. Retrieved from http://www.mbteach.org/teacher-online/oct-nov07/AE-mainstory.html

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370-396.

Mason, R. T. (2006). A kinder Mathematics for Nunavut. In Y. Kanu (Ed.). *Curriculum as Cultural Practice: Postcolonial Imaginations.* (131-148). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Mason, R. W. & Schroeder, M. P. (2010). Principal hiring practices: Towards a reduction of uncertainty. *Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues, and Ideas, 83,* 186-193.

Mather, J. A., & Champagne, A. (2008). Student learning styles/strategies and professors' expectations: Do they match? *College Quarterly, 11*, 1-8.

McCrae, R. R. & Costa, P. T. (1996). Toward a new generation of personality theories: Theoretical contexts for the five-factor model. In J. S. Wiggins (Ed.), *The five-factor model of personality.* (51-87). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Meece, J. L., Herman, P., & McCombs, B. L. (2003). Relations of learner-centered teaching practices to adolescents'achievement goals. *International Journal of Educational Research, 39,* 457-475.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education.* San Fransico, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Mischel., W. (1999). *Introduction to Personality* (6th ed). Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.

Moran, W. (2014). Enhancing understanding of teaching and the profession through school innovation rounds. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39,* 68-85.

Murray, H. G., Rushton, J. P., Paunonen, S. V. (1990). Teacher personality traits and student instructional ratings in six types of university courses. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82,* 250-261.

Naested, I., Potvin, B., & Waldron, P. (2004). *Understanding the Landscape of Teaching*. Toronto, ON: Pearson.

National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems. (2006). Addressing diversity in schools: Culturally responsive pedagogy. Retrieved from http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/Diversity_Brief.pdf

Nguyen, M. (2011). Closing the education gap: A case for Aboriginal early childhood education in Canada, a look at the Aboriginal Headstart Program. *Canadian Journal of Education, 34,* 229-248.

Nixon, A., Dam, M., & Packard, A. (2010). Teacher dispositions and contract non-renewals. *Planning and Changing, 41,* 210-219.

Organisation for Economic and Corporate Development. (2012). Programme for International Student Assessment key findings. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results.htm

Papa, F. Jr., & Baxter, I. (2008). Hiring teachers in New York's public schools: Can the principal make a difference? *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 7,* 87-117.

Prather-Jones, B. (2011). "Some people aren't cut out for it": The role of personality factors in the careers of teachers of students with EBD. *Remedial and Special Education, 32,* 179-191.

Renaud, R. D., & Murray, H. G. (1996). Aging, personality, and teaching effectiveness in academic psychologists. *Research in Higher Education, 37,* 323-340.

Ripski, M. B., LoCasale-Crouch, J., & Decker, L. (2011). Pre-service teachers: Dispositional trains, emotional states, and quality of teacher-student interactions. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 2,* 77-96.

Rockoff, J. E., Jacob, B. A., Kane, T. J., & Staiger, D. O. (2011). Can you recognize and effective teacher when you recruit one? *Education Finance and Policy, 6,* 43-74.

Rutledge, S. A., Harris, D. N., Thompson, C. T., & Ingle, W. K. (2008). Certify, blink, hire: An examination of the process and tools of teacher screening and selection. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 7,* 237-263.

Santagata, R., & Guarion, J. (2012). Preparing future teachers to collaborate. *Issues in Teacher Education, 21,* 59-69.

Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52,* 94-106.

Sorhagen, N. S. (2013). Early teacher expectations disproportionately affect poor children's high school performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 105,* 465-477.

Statistics Canada. (2011). National household survey [Data file]. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E

Statistics Canada. (2013). Low income cut-offs before tax [Data file]. Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2013002/tbl/tbl02-eng.htm

Sterenberg, G., & Hogue, M. (2011). Reconsidering approaches to Aboriginal Science and Mathematics education. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 57,*1-15.

Stitt-Gohdes, W. L. (2001). Business education students' preferred learning styles and their teachers' preferred instructional styles: Do they match? *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal, 43,* 137-151.

Swanborn, P. (2010). *Case Study Research: What, Why, and How?*. London, EN: SAGE.

Templeton, B. (2013). "Why is that child so rude?". *Educational Leadership, 70,* 72-74.

Tobin, K. (2012). Sociocultural perspectives on Science education. In B. J. Fraser, K. Tobin, & J. Campbell. (Eds.), *Second International Handbook of Science Education* (3-17). New York: NY: Springer International.

van Gorder, A. C. (2007). Pedagogy for the children of the oppressors: A liberal education for social justice among the world's privileged. *Journal of Transformative Education, 5,* 8-32.

Van Houtte, M., Demanet, J., Stevens, P. A. J. (2013). Curriculum tracking and teacher evaluations of individual students: Selection, adjustment or labeling? *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal, 16,* 329-352.

VanWynsberghe, R., & Khan, S. (2007). Redefining case study. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 6.* Retrieved from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/6_2/vanwynsberghe.pdf

Vygotsky, L. S. (1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology* (144-188). Armonk, NY: Sharpe.

Watson, J. B., & Rayner, R. (1920). Conditioned emotional reactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 3,* 1-14.

Westerman, J. W., Nowicki, M. D., & Plante, D. (2002). Fit in the classroom: Predictors of student performance and satisfaction in management education. *Journal of Management Education, 26,* 5-18.

Whitley, J. (2014). Supporting educational success for Aboriginal students: identifying key influences. *McGill Journal of Education, 49,* 155-182.

Wood, D., Kaplan, R., McLoyd, V. C. (2007). Gender differences in the educational expectations of urban, low-income African American youth: The role of parents and the school. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 36,* 417-427.

Yerrick, R., Schiller, J., & Reisfeld, J. (2010). "Who you callin' expert?": Using student narratives to redefine expertise and advocacy lower track Science. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 48,* 13-36.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Young, I. P., & Delli, D. A. (2002). The validity of the teacher perceiver interview for predicting performance of classroom teachers. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 38,* 586-612.

Young, W. (2013). High school completion rates in Western Canada. *Western Policy Analyst, 5*. Retrieved from http://www.schoolofpublicpolicy.sk.ca/research/wpa/browse/pdf/WPA_Dec2013web.pdf