

FROM PRESERVICE TEACHER TO EMERGING  
PROFESSIONAL: CONSTRUCTING CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF  
TEACHING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE SOCIETY

by  
Nellie Susan Wong

B.Sc., University of British Columbia, 1988  
B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 1990

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
(Centre for the Study of Curriculum & Instruction)

We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 1998

©Nellie Susan Wong, 1998

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction  
The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, Canada

Date September 21, 1998.

## **Abstract**

At a time when schools are becoming increasingly diverse in composition, this study explored five student teachers' perspectives on the changing role of teachers in a multicultural society. By using a constructivist framework and qualitative methodologies, interviews were conducted with student teachers in a Canadian elementary teacher education program.

Two data sets consisting of one-on-one interviews were collected. The first set was collected after students had completed a thirteen week practicum. The second set was conducted after the student teachers had completed program requirements and had graduated from university with an education degree.

Students' conceptualizations of the teacher's role in culturally diverse classrooms are described in six categories: bridging gaps in knowledge; being proactive as a role model; nurturing self-esteem and personal pride in heritage; focusing on care, respect, and acceptance; creating a safe and inclusive environment; resisting the lure of assimilation and the status quo. Life experiences which were influential in the formation of the students' conceptualizations are also described and organized by theme.

The results of the study demonstrate that conceptualizations traversed a range of philosophical arguments outlined by theorists, and students' beliefs reflect key elements of conceptions portrayed in the approaches used to meet the needs of culturally diverse classrooms described in the literature. The findings underscore the need for multicultural theory in teacher education and for a pedagogical approach which encourages students to become reflective practitioners who are able to examine and critique personal beliefs in relation to the evolving needs of a multicultural society.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Chapter 1 .....	1
Introduction to the Study .....	1
Overview .....	1
Background to the Problem .....	4
Purpose of the Study and the Research Questions .....	11
Rationale and Significance of the Study .....	11
Procedures .....	14
Organization of the Thesis .....	15
Chapter 2 .....	16
A Review of the Literature.....	16
A Search for the Meaning of Multicultural Education .....	16
Historical Development of and Approaches to Multicultural Education .....	17
Bridging the Chasm - From Policy to Practice.....	24
Teacher Education as Critical Inquiry .....	30
Multicultural Education and the Preparation of Preservice Teachers.....	36
Chapter 3 .....	42
Research Methodology and Procedures of the Study.....	42
Introduction .....	42
The Art of Interpretation - the Search for Understanding .....	46
Creation of Conditions to Explore Student Understanding.....	49
Research Method .....	51
Introduction .....	51
The Participants.....	51
Data Collection .....	52
Interview # 1 .....	53
Interview # 2 .....	54
Transcript Designations and Presentation of Excerpts .....	54
Analysis of Data.....	55
The Role of the Researcher.....	59
Experiential Knowledge and Framework of the Researcher .....	60



Experiencing Interaction and Transaction: The Interviews.....	62
Appraisal of the Study's Credibility .....	65
Assessing the Study's Worth.....	65
Chapter 4 .....	69
Part 1: Conceptualizations of the Teacher's Role in a Culturally Diverse Society.....	69
Introduction .....	69
Bridging Gaps in Knowledge .....	71
Being Proactive as a Role Model .....	80
Nurturing Self-Esteem and Pride in Personal Heritage .....	84
Focusing on Care, Respect, and Acceptance .....	88
Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment.....	94
Resisting the Lure of Assimilation and the Status Quo .....	97
Part 2: Illuminating the Experiences Behind the Conceptualizations.....	104
Introduction .....	104
Injustice in Society - Enduring Personal Pain and Hardship .....	105
Teachers and Professors with Passion.....	111
Ever-widening Gap between Academia and Practice .....	116
Articulation of Beliefs.....	124
Summary and Discussion.....	127
Chapter 5 .....	133
Making the Transition from Student to Teacher: Conclusion and Implications .....	133
Introduction .....	133
I. Substantive Contribution: Students' Conceptualizations .....	133
Conceptualizations of the Teacher's Role in a Culturally Diverse Society.....	134
II. Pedagogical Contributions: Illuminating Beliefs about Diversity.....	137
The Assumption of the Tabula Rasa: Student Teachers as Co-investigators in the	
Construction of Knowledge .....	138
Culturally Relevant Curriculum in Multicultural Teacher Education .....	140
Choosing the Approach to Multicultural Education - the Dilemma and the	
Challenge.....	144
Recommendations - Toward Critical and Liberatory Pedagogy in Teacher Education	149
Recommendation #1: Elicit and examine beliefs.....	150
Recommendation #2: Practica in settings with culturally relevant and responsive	
teaching .....	150
Recommendation #3: A multicultural emphasis in the teacher education program	151

III. A Final Word.....	153
References.....	157
Appendix.....	173
Sample Interview Questions.....	173

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction to the Study

#### Overview

*As Canada prepares to enter the 21st century, it faces many challenges. One of the most profound is to be found in the changed demographic composition of the society. While the impact of this changed racial composition has widespread implications on the institutional structure of the society, one of the most important questions that must be discussed is what role the educational institution is playing, or should play, in the creation of a society based on achievement and equality of opportunity. It is clear that the educational institution is [one of] the main instrument(s) in the transmission of societal values, and as such has a pivotal role to play in the creation of an egalitarian society. (Ramcharan, 1988, p. 23-25)*

In response to the needs of a changing population, multicultural education aims to promote appreciation and respect for cultural diversity, and attain, as one of its major goals, educational equality for students from diverse backgrounds (Banks, 1993b). Thus, the changing demographics of society necessitate the preparation of teachers who will be ready to work in a classroom of diverse learners. Banks (1991b) states:

*...an effective teacher education policy for the 21st century must include as a major focus the education of all teachers in ways that will help them receive the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to work effectively with students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups. (p. 135)*

Although teacher education institutions and school boards have tried to incorporate multicultural education into their programs, this effort at reform has been uneven, remaining at the edge of curricula, and viewed by some to be unsuccessful (Cummins, 1992; Garcia & Pugh, 1992; Moodley, 1995). A major reason contributing to the subject's lack of consideration for mainstream education is the striking discontinuity between teacher and student diversity at all levels of schooling (Greenman & Kimmel,

1995; Hood & Parker, 1994). In contrast with an increasingly diverse student population, teachers in Canada and the United States remain predominantly homogeneous in terms of background and education - namely White, middle-class, and often female (Grant & Secada, 1990; Henley & Young, 1987; Lockhart, 1991; Michael-Bandele, 1993). As a consequence, there has been little demand for courses or training in multicultural education because of its apparent lack of significance or relevancy to the majority entering the teaching profession (Hood & Parker, 1994; Kailin, 1994).

For many educators, the concept of multicultural education continues to focus on superficial aspects of cultural diversity (Moodley, 1995), and to evoke images of problems associated with minority groups (Garcia & Pugh, 1992, p. 217). Conceived in this way, critics assail multicultural education for its failure to address the institutional racism embedded in the structures of our society, and therefore, its inability to effect change with respect to the issues of equity in our schools (McCarthy, 1990; Ramcharan, 1988). These critics often prefer the term 'anti-racist' to refer to an education which holds discrimination and relationships of power as significant issues. However, Kehoe and Mansfield (1993) argue that since the introduction of a multicultural policy in Canada in 1971, "no one could seriously suggest that such a narrow definition (i.e. food, clothing, song, and dance) of multicultural education is accurate" (p. 3). Fleras and Elliot (1992) add that "a truly effective multiculturalism must be concerned not only with culture and heritage, but more importantly with disadvantage, justice, equality, discrimination, and prejudice" (p. 136). This inclusive definition for multicultural education is "arguably the most appropriate for the Canadian context" because it incorporates important concerns of anti-racist education, while also continuing "to pursue goals such as celebrating and sharing heritage, and intergroup understanding, harmony, and equity" (Kehoe & Mansfield, p. 7). Such an expanded focus minimizes the view of multicultural education in

a static manner, and allows it to continue to evolve in relation to the needs of a culturally diverse society (Ghosh & Tarrow, 1993; Kehoe & Mansfield, 1993).

In order for multicultural education to attain one of its major goals, educational equality for all students, it needs to be conceptualized by educators as broad-based school reform which can offer hope for change (Banks, 1993; Nieto, 1992). To effectively meet the challenge of providing high-quality education for all students in a culturally diverse society, teachers must understand how their own biographies, or cumulative social experiences and beliefs, gives direction to their thoughts and actions (Britzman, 1986; Pajares, 1993), and that their pedagogy is influenced by their lack of knowledge of the diversity of their students and information about how this may affect learning (Grant, 1981). Cummins (1986) maintains that reform efforts aimed at reversing the pattern of minority student failure have been unsuccessful because the "relationships between teachers and students and between schools and communities have remained essentially unchanged" (p. 18). Despite distinct cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds, the majority of educators have experienced a Eurocentric education, and few are prepared for the different cultures, languages, lifestyles, and values in their classrooms (Sleeter, 1992). As a result, many teachers tend to treat all students in the same way, reinforcing the assumption that 'equal means the same', and schools remain as sites of social and cultural reproduction in the interests of dominant groups (Apple, 1990). The difference in socialization between student and teacher populations impacts upon the learning environment in ways that will require "personal redefinitions of the way classroom teachers interact with the children and communities they serve" (Cummins, 1986, p. 18).

There are wide-ranging and significant implications for teacher education programs regarding how the salience of prior and subsequent experiences in schools and society impact on the education of prospective teachers so they gain an understanding of the needs of diverse students (Ginsburg, 1988).

## **Background to the Problem**

Since Prime Minister Trudeau's declaration of an official policy of multiculturalism in 1971, a fierce debate has ensued about the quality, and ultimately, the equality of public education for all Canadian children (Cummins, 1988). The impact of cultural pluralism on the ideals of educational equity and excellence in schools poses a formidable challenge within the debate - forcing all educators to rethink the ease [and the dangers] of complacency, and to take up the daunting task of creating and embracing an egalitarian school system that is reflective of "timeless democratic ideals" (Garcia & Pugh, 1992).

For advocates of multicultural education, meaningful educational reform needs to adopt the premise that the mission of education is defined by a coherent vision of the kind of world we want inherited by future generations. Banks (1988) has argued that a major aim should be to help students become reflective decision makers and civic actors who can and will participate in the transformation to a more democratic and just society. To achieve this aim, students must be allowed to view the perspectives and hear the voices of those who have traditionally been part of the "culture of silence" (Freire, 1970).

Accordingly, educators need to embrace a comprehensive view of multiculturalism before they can engage in collective action for social change and understand how the forces of oppression in society affect and engender their students' lived experiences (Hood & Parker, 1994). With the introduction of 'multiculturalism' into educational policies, the public school curriculum has become a contested terrain around the question of whose knowledge is worthy of inclusion. For multicultural education to equalize chances at educational success for all students, it must challenge the inherent inequities created by a monocultural school discourse (O'Connor, 1989) by acknowledging and affirming the claim that children of all cultures are "equally important pieces of a diverse Canadian cultural mosaic" (Moodley, 1983, p. 320).

Since its inception, multicultural education in Canada has promoted and valued cultural pluralism, and its tenets were endorsed by provincial governments across the country. Many educators endeavored to have their students embrace the value of diverse beliefs and customs, and school boards formulated various 'multicultural education' policies to promote cultural understanding among staff and students, and to develop positive race relations in schools and the communities they serve. But, unfortunately, the predominant approach to the integration of multicultural content in many schools continued [and continues] to be short jaunts delving into the artifacts and traditions of 'others' (Banks, 1993a; Werner, Connors, Aoki, & Dahlie, 1974, 1980). Cultural identities became associated with 'neat' objects or practices, and the human stories and experiences of a culture were represented as objects to be studied. Reality is often presented in schools as static and unchangeable, and the underlying tensions, controversies, passions, struggles, and problems faced by people throughout history and today are missing from classroom discussions (Nieto, 1992). The annual multicultural week may be the only reminder to some educators that they might want to teach multicultural values. Many educators' approach to teaching culture remains 'touristy' because they fail to examine and draw connections to the culture's dynamics and its temporal context (Werner, Connors, Aoki, & Dahlie, 1974, 1980). In this view, multicultural education remains largely as an afterthought to curriculum directives that are characterized most often by calls for more rigorous academic standards in the 'real' subjects. To many observers, by the time the policy has filtered down to the students, it "amounts to little more than recognition of holidays/festivals from a few cultures in addition to those observed by Anglo-Celtic Canadians, and the presence of some "visible minority" referents in textbooks and other curriculum materials" (Cummins, 1988, p. 127). Clearly, it is evident that the adoption of multicultural legislation and policies does not ensure implementation into sound practice (Fisher & Echols, 1989; Tator & Henry, 1991). It has been and remains an extremely

arduous and difficult journey to challenge the ingrained practices that continue to dominate the classrooms of today.

"Educational change depends on what teachers do and think - it's as simple and as complex as that" (Fullan, 1982, p. 107). Teacher attitude and beliefs are absolutely critical to the success of any serious change effort. The decisions teachers make, seemingly natural and neutral, impact in unconscious but fundamental ways on the lives and experiences of students. It has been well documented that the hidden curriculum is as powerful, or even more so, than the formal curriculum on issues such as class, race, and gender relations (Ginsburg & Clift, 1990), and the hidden curriculum has been shown to produce a more powerful and lasting impression on children than the formal one (Giroux & Purpel, 1983). Every educational decision made at any level, whether by a teacher or an entire school system, reflects the political ideology and worldview of the decision maker (Nieto, 1992). Educators follow the constructed images of culture presented in books and film, and they learn about the culture through a specific interpretive frame (Said, 1978). Moreover, teachers rarely question the mediated images that are presented to them, and as a result, these limited views are then passed on to their students. If dominant perspectives define what is considered to be worthy of inclusion in the school curriculum, certain conceptions of society are legitimized to the exclusion of others. A monocultural curriculum gives students only one way of seeing the world. Many teachers have steadfastly held to the notion that the acquisition of knowledge of other cultures eliminates ignorance, but unfortunately, this knowledge will often be construed by students to be 'weird' because normal is framed and presented within the confines of a western point of view. How materials depict 'others', and how teachers interpret such materials, are critical in the representation of 'others'. The multiplicity of representation and conceptions of identity of 'other' is cause for examination of how educators see and understand cultural pluralism. By failing to provide a systematic critique of the ideology



of "Westernness" that is ascendant in curriculum and pedagogical practices in education, the history of the 'silenced' groups remains segregated from mainstream culture (McCarthy, 1993).

In the U.S. and Canada, several studies have pointed to the scant attention issues of diversity receive in teacher preparation programs (Garcia & Pugh, 1992; Ghosh & Tarrow, 1993; Hood & Parker, 1994; Mallea & Young, 1984; McCall, 1995; Sirotnik, 1990a; VanBalkom, 1991). Despite official declarations, national standards, and recommendations made by organizations such as the Holmes Group and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the studies cite the need for and commitment of faculty members to diversity as a significant factor in overcoming the minimal instruction student teachers receive about issues related to multiculturalism. In a series of four articles examining the state of multicultural teacher education in Canada, Henley and Young (1987-1989) believe different demands between the university and the school system provide a context in which concerns about multicultural education are not addressed. Many faculty were educated in a time when cultural pluralism was not a prominent topic, and their scholarly interests were focused and remained with other concerns and areas of academic pursuit. In a survey investigating the state of multiculturalism in Canadian teacher education, Bernhard (1992) found many policy proposals about incorporating multicultural content into programs, but very few universities had moved beyond preliminary discussions and the rhetoric designed to appease 'minority' demands for inclusion into curricula (Tator & Henry, 1991). A further review of literature revealed "no specific information" on how these proposals could become "operational" (Bernhard, 1992, p. 10). As a consequence, Henley and Young (1989) remark that "faculties of education (in Canada) can hardly embrace blindly a new state ideology, particularly one as embryonic as multiculturalism, that lacks an adequate body of research" (p. 18) and "theoretical basis on which to build change" (p. 41).

In a comparative study examining multiculturalism and teacher education in Canada and the United States, Ghosh and Tarrow (1993) believe the two countries share historical similarities in how they dealt with the changing nature of their populations. Built by immigrants and characterized as multicultural nations, education systems in both countries were originally designed to impart the values of the Anglo-Saxon culture, and teacher education programs trained student teachers on the "most efficient ways to transmit dominant ideology" (Ghosh & Tarrow, p. 84). However, with the increasing presence and recognition of minority rights, faculties of education have been urged to revamp their teacher education programs in order to be effective in a multicultural society. Although both countries have few exemplars to hold out as models, Canada has lagged far behind the United States in the number of empirical studies which examined and assessed efforts to address the issue of diversity in teacher education programs (Henley & Young, 1989; Orlikow & Young, 1993). As a result, Canadian conceptions and models of implementation for multicultural content in teacher education continue to be infused with and influenced by international perspectives, especially those from the United States.

Ghosh and Tarrow (1993) state that innovations in education cannot be fully realized without change in teacher preparation, and "change in teacher education will not be implemented without efforts focused on those who teach the teacher" (p. 81). Sirotnik's (1990a) survey of educational institutions revealed that the topic of multicultural education was usually discussed in an 'introduction to education course' which typically featured what he coined a 'smorgasbord of crucial issues' which included topics such as women's role in education, unions, the textbook crisis, and problems in getting a job. Out of the twenty-nine programs examined in his study, only a few were cited which challenged students to think critically or engage in the reflective practice that multicultural and reform advocates are calling for today. Frustrated by the answers received in these interviews, Sirotnik (1990a) asks teacher educators:

*We have compulsory public schooling in our constitutional democracy; these schools are ostensibly for the education of all children. Are there not any moral and ethical implications for how schools should be organized for student learning, for what teachers ought and ought not to do in their instructional practices, and, therefore, what ought to be going on in your teacher education program? (p. 711)*

An important companion to the curriculum content of teacher education programs are the beliefs of preservice students: "When beliefs are left unattended, no instruction is likely to have much effect. Students simply incorporate new ideas into old frameworks" (Pajares, 1993, p. 47). Prospective teachers bring to the teacher education program their implicit personal biographies which reflect their experience with compulsory education, and in turn, house their unarticulated assumptions, beliefs, and values about the social context of schooling (Britzman, 1986). From this reference point, student teachers hold certain images and expectations of their future work, school structure, and the function of the curriculum. Liston and Zeichner (1991) believe that this social knowledge, a teachers' knowledge and beliefs about the social, political, and historical context of schools and the communities that surround them, is "inadequately addressed in most accounts of teacher knowledge, is rarely examined in teacher education curricula, and is awkwardly handled in the prominent models for cultivating reflective thinking and action in teachers" (p. 61). A return to a classroom evokes images of student teachers' past experiences, bringing with them a particular understanding of the students they will teach and of the nature of schooling. Most teacher candidates were successful students themselves, and consequently, a "perpetuation of conventional practice and a reaffirmation of the past" (Pajares, 1993, p. 46) can often result. For many, though, the past is inadequate to inform them of how to teach in the present - that is a society which is multi-racial and ethnically diverse. These prospective teachers have a very limited knowledge or understanding of the traditions, attitudes, and customs that shape the behavior of students whose cultural heritages are different from that of the white middle class. Myths and stereotypes about

human diversity often serve as the source of knowledge for preservice students, and at best, they have only a vague understanding about how social inequality is perpetuated through the school system (Ginsburg & Newman, 1985; Grant, 1981). As a consequence, future educators rarely envision themselves as having a role in societal change (Edmundson, 1990), and are more likely to reproduce and sustain dominant ideology than participate in educational reform (Ghosh & Tarrow, 1993; Pajares, 1993). If models of teacher education represent a vision of education for the future, multicultural education must be conceptualized by future teachers as more than a "veneer of change" (Tator & Henry, 1991). As Liston and Zeichner (1991) argue:

*A teacher education program committed to the justification of educational actions would seemingly encourage both an inspection and reflection of teachers' implicit social and cultural beliefs, and an acquaintance with current views and theories of the social context of schooling. (p. 61)*

To engage in a profound restructuring in both thought and approach to the way that values of multicultural education are currently disseminated in schools, prospective teachers must confront the dominant image of "teacher as technician", and replace it with an image of "teacher as moral craftsperson" - one who can recognize and challenge the role schools play in furthering the inequalities and injustices of society (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). If multicultural education is to be an effective reform movement for the future, student teachers must engage in reflective practices; this entails an openness to the questioning of ideas and practices that are usually taken for granted, an examination of the reasons for those actions, and a consideration of how the consequences of their actions, or inaction, will affect both the short and long-term futures of their students and the society they help to re-create (Beyer, 1989).

## **Purpose of the Study and the Research Questions**

The purpose of the study is to explore preservice teachers' conceptualizations of multicultural education and to identify which life experiences, such as their teacher education program, were considered helpful in preparing them to work effectively in a multicultural classroom. The questions which underlie the study are:

*How do preservice teachers conceptualize their role(s) in a culturally diverse society?*

*What life experiences have influenced how preservice teachers conceptualize their role(s) in a culturally diverse society?*

## **Rationale and Significance of the Study**

Proponents of multicultural education hold hope for its potential to realize genuine educational equity for all children. Yet, as conceived by many educators today, its potential is far from being realized. Differential conceptualizations of multicultural education held by teachers result in inconsistencies with implementation. As Banks (cited in Mathison, 1992), notes:

*...many student teachers are born and socialized within the mainstream culture of a society rarely have an opportunity to identify, question, and challenge their cultural assumptions, beliefs, values...often resulting in an inability to function effectively within other cultures....(p. 1)*

Student teachers bring more than their aspirations to teaching - they also bring value and belief systems that should be taken into account to promote meaningful learning about multicultural education. Many believe that these beliefs, encapsulated in various forms of knowledge and revealed in personal predispositions, form the foundation on which the journey of becoming 'teacher' begins (Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Kagan, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Pajares, 1993). "How students understand and approach the implementation of multicultural education will reflect, among other things, their beliefs and understanding of

multiculturalism, the role of teachers, and the connections between them" (Harrington & Hathaway, 1995, p. 276). Only when they are challenged to identify, address, and transform their beliefs about multicultural education will prospective teachers stand a chance of being better informed and prepared to immerse themselves in the settings of their students' lives (McCall, 1995).

This study was conceptualized with a 'critical constructivist' theory of learning which emphasizes the personal participation of the knower in all acts of understanding, and a view of the world as a constructed, dynamic interaction of people organized and shaped by their race, class, and gender (Kincheloe, 1991). In teacher education, Zeichner and Gore (1990) see promise for using 'life histories' methodologies to better understand teacher socialization and its implication for the classroom, and to help teachers understand and explain the reasoning behind their practice. They argue that such "interpretations and critical studies have begun to provide us with rich information about the ways in which teachers' perspectives are rooted in the variety of personal, financial, religious, political, and cultural experience they bring to teaching" (p. 21). Critical constructivists would agree that traditional methods in the sciences have limited our understanding of reality. From their view, a socially constructed and mediated world necessitates the search for a "system of meaning which grants a new angle, a unique insight into the social consequences of different ways of knowing" (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 36). If teacher education is to provide reflective and ethical practitioners who will be able to resist becoming merely technicians, educational institutions must connect teachers' ways-of-knowing to social and educational theory, and make central the broader purposes of schooling and the issues of equity and social justice (Ghosh & Tarrow, 1993; Schon, 1987; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991).

In an American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (1987 & 1990) report, 80% of future teachers grew up in suburban and rural settings, and preferred to teach only

in that kind of environment - one with "nonemotionally disturbed, English speaking children". Indeed, the literature is rich with descriptions of teacher anxiety and apprehension as they enter classrooms with children whose life experiences are vastly different from theirs (Paley, 1989; Parkay, 1983). A recent student teacher of mine also described her fear of working in 'east Vancouver':

*When friends and I went to see where our practicums were going to be, we all hoped for our first choices...When I found out that I was going to be in a school in east Vancouver, I became very nervous because the kids are supposed to be really rough and tough to handle...All my friends thought that....(personal communication, 1996)*

The literature is replete with studies which conclude that students come to any learning situation with previously constructed ideas, knowledge, and with certain capabilities acquired through prior experiences that affect the ways in which they interpret and make use of new information (Pajares, 1993; Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Grant and Sleeter (1986) state that the major barriers to minority students receiving a quality education are teachers' biographies, their lack of understanding of race, class, gender, and disability issues, and their teacher preparation experience. As such, it is believed that this study will have implications for the 'multicultural' preparation of elementary student teachers. A student teacher's 'life history' stands at the core of becoming a teacher (Britzman, 1986; Lortie, 1975), and the apparent persistence of particular forms of pedagogy may very well explain why reform initiatives, such as multicultural education, often fail to realize their goal for social change (Sirotnik, 1983). The powerful and continuing influence of student teachers' prior socialization experience is cause for careful consideration in the exploration of their conceptualizations of multicultural education. The study may provide guidance as to how these conceptualizations will influence and translate into classroom practice (Harrington & Hathaway, 1995; McCall, 1995), and knowledge of student teacher beliefs and

understanding would also inform teacher educators about the adequacy and/or appropriateness of the content and multicultural education experiences offered in teacher education programs.

Unfortunately, few teacher education programs have made multiculturalism a priority, and the needs of a culturally and ethnically diverse student population "loom as a major issue for the preparation needs of teacher education candidates now" and for the future (Hood & Parker, 1994, p. 170). Societies committed to principles of justice would have the premise that "all students [would] have an equal opportunity to succeed in school regardless of their ethnic and socioeconomic background, their gender, living conditions (the contextual aspects of their lives), and English proficiency or dialect" (Grossman, 1995). This remains the hope and the challenge for multicultural education in the 21st century in Canada (Ramcharan, 1988).

### **Procedures**

Data for the study were constructed from a series of semi-structured interviews with five students in the 1996-1997 teacher education programs at the University of British Columbia. Students were volunteers who demonstrated an interest in the project, and those selected as participants were chosen to be representative of both genders and varied backgrounds (e.g. different cultural groups). Two data sets were collected: one in January-February, 1997 (data set #1) and another one in May-June, 1997 (data set #2). The first set of interviews was conducted by myself with five students, and analysis of the data resulted in an initial framing of potential categories in relation to the research questions. I also conducted the second set of interviews, and the purpose of this set was to allow students to reflect on their thoughts, and explore in greater detail their responses to the research questions.



## **Organization of the Thesis**

There are five chapters in the study. The first three represent its theoretical foundations. The second chapter reviews literature pertaining to research about approaches to acknowledging and incorporating cultural diversity and multicultural education in the classroom, and presents an argument to support the claims that underlie the study's rationale. Chapter 3 presents a rationale for qualitative research in multicultural education, elaborates on the study's research method, and presents an overview to the data collection process. Chapter 4 presents answers to the two research questions. The final chapter considers these in relation to the literature and discusses the study's contribution to multicultural teacher education.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **A Review of the Literature**

#### **A Search for the Meaning of Multicultural Education**

The landscape of today's classrooms reflects a society which is becoming increasingly diverse. It is a lived reality that teachers will find themselves in classrooms where a myriad of cultures and languages are represented, and be faced with the challenges of how to enhance positive intergroup attitudes and deal with racism and discrimination.

The beginning of multicultural education can be traced to the United States where it originated within a context of social activism and has always drawn its main energy and inspiration from struggles against oppression (Sleeter, 1991). It developed as a reform movement in the ferment of the 1960s in the United States, and its "ideological and strategic focus shifted from passivity and perseverance in the face of adversity to aggression, self-determination, cultural consciousness, and political power" (Gay, 1983, p. 560). In the public school terrain, this activism called for efforts to examine the "ethnic distortions, stereotypes, omissions, and misinformation" in learning resources, and to act on social science research findings which stated that "the academic failure of minority youths was due more to the conflicting expectations of school and home and to the school's devaluation of minority group cultures" (p. 561). In its original form, the aim of multicultural education was to provide information about the lifestyles and heritages of American ethnic groups in school programs. However, many theorists have argued that the term should also encompass a broader conceptualization that includes race, ethnicity, social class, language, and gender (Banks, 1995; Sleeter & Grant, 1988). The attempt to integrate a form of multicultural content into the existing school curriculum without "critical reexamination and redefinition" often leads to a token effort at reform; "multiculturalism without a transformative political agenda can just be another form of

accommodation to the larger social order" (Estrada & McLaren, 1993, p. 31-32). Various approaches to multicultural education have been informed and shaped by the educators' personal theory of practice - what they believe constitutes the "good life" (Gutmann, 1987) - and the different conceptual views they hold about the relationship between school and society (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). The following discussion traces the roots of multicultural education to where it stands today.

### **Historical Development of and Approaches to Multicultural Education**

In Canada and the United States, waves of immigration in the past century have led to efforts to address issues of diversity through formal policies and directives for the education community. Although both countries have struggled with how to best seek harmony and equality in a pluralistic society, the two countries have diverged in the manner in which they have approached the issue. Where the United States has been characterized by a 'melting pot' theory of assimilation, Canada, in contrast, has taken measures to recognize, validate, and safeguard ethnic minority contributions in pursuit of a national identity (Mallea & Young, 1984). A policy of multiculturalism was introduced and enacted by the federal government in 1971 which called for a "new vision of society: one which refused to sacrifice diversity in the name of unity, and which placed the cultures of Canada's many groups on an equal footing" (Pelletier, 1971, as cited in Mallea & Young, 1984, p. 400). Since then, further government initiatives have ensued to protect this tradition and create the conditions needed to enhance and ensure the successful education of "all students for life in a multicultural society" (Tator & Henry, 1991, p. 37). In 1988, the Multicultural Act was passed in Canada:

*[The multiculturalism policy of Canada] acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage" and to "promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspect of Canadian society." (Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988, section 3)*

Thus, the pluralistic nature of Canadian society was acknowledged through government legislation conferring official status on the state of multiculturalism. The mandate of the federal government was to assist educational institutions, an agent in the transmission of culture, in the development of projects and initiatives aimed to eliminate barriers to equal opportunity and participation of students in Canadian life (Tator & Henry, 1991). Many provincial governments moved quickly to endorse and implement the federal policy on multiculturalism, and this action resulted in a proliferation of task forces, published reports, research findings, and recommendations (Mallea & Young, 1984).

In contemporary times, discussions about multicultural education are fraught with ambiguity because of the wide variety of conceptions and definitions of the term - it often means different things to different people (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, 1988). However, recurring themes can be found among the various conceptions, and Banks (1993b) identifies the major ones by explaining that "multicultural education is an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions" (p. 7). As an idea or a philosophy, multicultural education is a set of beliefs that recognizes and values the importance of cultural diversity in shaping personal identity, social experiences, and educational opportunities of individuals and groups - it is a crucial part of the democratic imperative for schools and society (Garcia, 1982). As a reform movement, multicultural education is seen as a vehicle to address vital questions about the distribution of power and representation in schools, and the status of minorities in curriculum (McCarthy, 1993). For many, multicultural education is viewed as a process which reflects a way of thinking, a decision-making style, and a way of behaving in educational settings that is pervasive and ongoing - a mode of experience and learning to be infused and integrated throughout the curriculum and school programs, and the educational enterprise (Banks, 1993b). Authors in both Canada and the United States have tried to categorize various conceptions of multicultural education into comprehensive

classification schemes to provide an overview of how espoused theories have translated into different approaches and models of practice (Baker, 1977; Banks, 1993b; Gay, 1988, 1995). The first two organizing frames, Gibson (1976) and Sleeter and Grant (1988, 1994), are particularly noteworthy because other models have used them as a prototype, following their "conceptual patterns, developmental directions, and descriptive features" (Gay, 1995, p. 36).

Gibson (1976, as cited in Gay, 1995; Ogbu, 1992) was one of the first to develop a conceptual framework that organized various approaches to multicultural education. In her review of literature, four approaches were identified which prompted her to suggest a fifth one: (a) education of the culturally different, or benevolent multiculturalism, which focuses on the development of skills to help students successfully adjust to living in mainstream society; (b) education about cultural pluralism which includes content about minority cultures to promote cross-cultural understanding; (c) education for cultural pluralism that preserves and strengthens cultural identity and increases the social, political, and economic power and participation of minority groups; (d) bicultural education to support and nurture the minority student's identity and membership in two cultures; (e) education as the normal human experience which teaches students to participate effectively in multiple cultural contexts which is an inherent reality of multicultural nations.

Sleeter and Grant (1988, 1994) build on the conceptual framework offered by Gibson, but they try to address some of the limitations in her model - namely, a relatively exclusive focus on race and cultural diversity, an insufficient examination of theory behind the approach, and too narrow a picture of practice in schools. Their classification scheme, the "most ambitious effort to date" (Gay, 1995, p. 36), proposes a typology that consists of five approaches to multiculturalism that details the assumptions, goals, recommended practices, and the theoretical foundation behind each approach: (a) teaching the exceptional and culturally different is an assimilationist approach based on the cultural

deficiency/deprivation model. Students who are considered 'at-risk' due to their disadvantaged backgrounds are helped to acquire the skills, language, and values to fit into the existing social structures; (b) human relations approach which concentrates on promoting intergroup harmony by drawing mainly on reference group (where an individual's identity is derived from association with others) and cognitive development (which views the mind as an active organizer of experiences) theory. By understanding how individuals develop discriminatory attitudes, teachers can then counteract them by using a variety of teaching strategies to enhance cultural awareness and pride, and student self-esteem. The aim is to reduce prejudice, stereotyping, tension and move towards tolerance, respect, appreciation, and acceptance of all groups and individuals; (c) single group studies attempts to raise awareness and consciousness about a specific group, including its culture, contributions, as well as the story of its historical and current struggles with oppression. Proponents of this model view the school as an agent of social control, and the creation of curricula is seen as a politically determined rather than neutral act that tries to teach someone else's version of the truth (Apple, 1990). The curriculum is seen as a contested terrain around questions of representation and how the relationship between power and education is manifested; (d) multicultural education which uses the theories of cultural transmission (viewing the social environment as a major determinant of the students' values, beliefs, and behavior patterns) and cultural pluralism (where schools should represent cultural pluralism as it truly exists in society) to argue for a culturally responsive and socially just curriculum - one that will integrate diverse perspectives, experiences, and concepts. Instructional and evaluation practices which honor equality, teachers who personify multicultural aims, home-school relationships which build cooperation, and multicultural school climate are considered essential components to reform the school and have it reflect and be responsive to cultural pluralism and equality; (e) education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist uses critical theory as a guide in its commitment to help students understand the sociopolitical circumstances that

gave rise to the stratification of society. Guided by principles of equality, equity, and dignity, it entails the teaching of "action skills" to help students work towards the elimination of oppression in society and challenge all inequities so as to create an egalitarian society.

James Banks (1995), arguably the most prolific writer in the field, has described the evolution of multicultural education in a series of phases, although he states that these phases continue to exist today in varying degrees of popularity in the research literature. The first phase was the ethnic studies movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Various ethnic groups and scholars demanded the incorporation of their culture and history into school and teacher education curricula that was [re]written from the perspective of the 'oppressed' (Freire, 1970). Commonly referred to as the contributions approach, schools using this method devote a few days of the calendar year to ethnic heroes (e.g. Martin Luther King) or holidays. The second phase, labeled multiethnic education, emerged when educators realized that the offering of ethnic content and courses was not sufficient enough to develop and nurture democratic ideals and attitudes in all students. This additive approach allowed the teacher to add ethnic content to a unit, but the curriculum remained intact and 'mainstream-centric'. Later, systemic discrimination was investigated and analyzed in order to bring about organizational change, build equality in the entire school, and provide the impetus for the next phase. The third phase focused on the increased writings of feminists and other groups, such as people with disabilities, who also felt marginalized by society and schools. They believed that a group's prominence in the curriculum indicated its significance or importance, and revealed how the privileged and the powerful have worked to secure forms of domination in societal institutions. The transformation approach, akin to the ethnic studies movement, demanded that the perspectives, experiences, and stories of the oppressed be included in the school curricula and institutional structures. The present phase focuses its energy on the development of

research, theory, and practice that examine the interrelatedness of class, race, and gender. Termed the social action approach, it includes elements of the transformation approach, but it also includes components that require students to make decisions and take action related to a particular issue studied in a curriculum unit. The major goal is to promote a feeling of student empowerment and a sense of personal efficacy.

In Canada, two distinct orientations to multiculturalism have characterized and shaped the formation of approaches to the education of minorities (Moodley, 1995). The first, widely known as the cultural deprivation theory, traced problems to the minority child's living environment, and blamed victims for their predicament (Banks, 1993b). The home was viewed as the source of failure by not providing the necessary modeling, support, and stability to allow for successful experiences in school. Compensatory and supplementary programs were created to "remedy the presumed deficiencies" for effective integration into mainstream society (Moodley, 1995; Sleeter, 1993, p. 160). The second perspective is based on a more egalitarian view of cultures that reaffirms the celebration and richness of diverse cultures living collectively in the Canadian mosaic (Moodley, 1995). In contrast to the 'deficit philosophy', all cultures are valued as equals, and accorded the same respect to "achieve pluralism without hierarchy" (Asante, 1991/92, as cited in Gay, 1995, p. 37). In an attempt to characterize approaches to and analyze the state of multicultural education in Canada, McLeod (1992) developed a typology that consisted of three main categories: (a) an ethnic specific approach focusing on the formation of positive self-esteem and identification to promote cultural retention and perpetuation, and resist external forces of assimilation; (b) a problem oriented approach dealing with the wide-ranging responses to different aspects of multiculturalism, such as the needs of immigrants and issues of racism, through the development of support programs and services; (c) a cultural/intercultural approach, the broadest category, promoting the principles of multiculturalism and ideals of a democratic society as the underlying philosophy in the school. The goal of the latter is



to "remove discrimination and foster education that is equitable in terms of the learning and success of all students" (p. 221). An analysis of the components of multicultural education by Kehoe and Mansfield (1993) suggest that three major goals subsume the different approaches in Canada: (1) equivalency in academic achievement and success through an unbiased curriculum, compatible teaching methods with learners' cultural background, and appropriate teacher expectations, assessment and placement procedures; (2) more positive intergroup attitudes through the development of empathy, critical thinking skills, teaching about cultural similarities and positive attributes, and a focus on internal rather than external qualities of people; (3) developing pride in heritage through the inclusion of cultural celebrations and contributions in the curriculum, and by encouraging retention of heritage language, traditions, and customs. Although other approaches have been proposed that focus, for example, on human rights and cross-cultural communication, the prevailing and guiding themes are often intertwined in their goals and outlooks, revealing an incredible complexity beneath the surface of the mosaic (Fleras & Elliot, 1992; Kehoe, 1984; Young, 1984).

Since its inception, multicultural education has continued to evolve in meaning and interpretation, "becoming more comprehensive, inclusive, integrative, transformative, and scholarly" (Gay, 1995, p. 36). This claim is illustrated by Nieto's (1992) definition, which also frames a personal view and understanding, and reflects my belief in the inclusiveness of the term:

*Multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers represent. Multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and parents, and the very way schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action*

*(praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education furthers the democratic principles of social justice. (p. 208)*

The emergence of critical pedagogy as a guiding tenet has created discomfort in the ranks of educators who hold tenaciously to the status quo and particular notions of objectivity and neutrality in the educational sphere (Ahlquist, 1992). Personal empowerment, knowledge reconstruction, and social transformation are fundamental themes in multicultural education which is viewed as a vehicle for emancipation and social reform (Nieto, 1992; Sleeter, 1991). Despite the fact that multicultural education has undergone tremendous change through the years, it remains rooted in a "consensus paradigm" (Moodley, 1995, p. 809) and an elusive enigma in its quest to be a referent and practice for civic courage, critical citizenship, and democratic struggle (Giroux, 1992). The translation of abstract theory into concrete practice remains a monumental endeavor.

### **Bridging the Chasm - From Policy to Practice**

Since the adoption of an official multiculturalism policy in 1971, questions of race, ethnicity, curriculum development and control, and the relationship between power and education have occupied central stage within the Canadian discourse on schooling and [in]equality. At best, educational responses to the policy have been inconsistent and have had minimal impact in the creation of concrete programs for the pursuit of institutional equity (Moodley, 1995; Tator & Henry, 1991). One of the first studies to support this claim, entitled *Whose Culture? Whose Heritage: Ethnicity within Canadian Social Studies Curricula*, examined ethnic and multicultural content in prescribed elementary and secondary curricula used across Canada in 1974-75 to understand how multiculturalism was understood by curriculum developers across Canada (Werner et al., 1974). Concerned about whose voices were being heard or neglected and how these voices were being portrayed, the authors' findings include the following observations: Minorities tended to be interpreted largely as they related to the expansion and history of the

dominant group; images of minorities were generally from the outsider's point of view; Canadian 'heritage' was presented as exclusively British and French, with 'others' portrayed as marginal actors on the stage of history. Curriculum development occurred within frames of reference by those who had the power to control program development, and as a result, such a perspective had become legitimized as the proper interpretive scheme for Canadian history and knowledge (Werner et al., 1974, 1980).

In British Columbia, policymakers struggle with creating guidelines that reflect the changes that are taking place within the school system and society at large. The challenge to translate a federal policy of multiculturalism within a temporal and dynamic context into practice has resulted in formal decrees that identified the need for schools to "enshrine language rights, to preserve cultural heritages, and to promote social equality and justice through recognition of individual difference" (Sullivan, 1988 as cited in Moodley, 1995, p. 806). Stated in the province's 'visionary' reform document, the Year 2000: A Framework for Learning (1992), are the characteristics of the "educated citizen" that include the development of an "appreciation for the variety of cultural groups that enrich our society", and the recognition and understanding of the unique needs and beliefs of all learners (p. 17-19).

Despite the undeniable need to acknowledge the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds, there is still no multicultural education policy for the province (Moodley, 1995). In 1974, more than a quarter of the student population in Vancouver spoke English as a second language (ESL), but by 1994, this number had increased to more than half of the student population (Vancouver School Board, 1996, p. 5). The changing demographic profile of Vancouver and its school classrooms was the impetus for the creation of the school board's own 'race relations policy' in the early 1980s. The policy was formulated to acknowledge the cultural diversity of the communities it served, to increase cultural understanding in schools, and to actively respond to issues of racism in

teacher training, education policy, curriculum materials, and in educational institutions. Unfortunately, awareness of the policy's existence is low, and its guiding principles are far from being realized (Fisher & Echols, 1989).

The Fisher and Echols (1989) Evaluation Report on the Vancouver School Board's Race Relations Policy surveyed several thousand people, including administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The report stated that the dominant view shared by the respondents was that the Vancouver school system was devoid of racial problems. As a consequence, it was generally perceived that there was little need for strategies to deal with racism and prejudice. Yet, ethnographic observations of several schools and comments received in the open-ended questionnaire indicated a sharp contradiction to that belief. Three examples reveal the kind of discrimination found in schools:

*Native Indians are treated very poorly in general and it is almost acceptable to call native kids names...immigrants are often treated better than native Indian people...they are considered 'special' because of their exotic homelands, but not so with native people. (parent, p. 183)*

*Our school has few ESL children. The majority of children were born in Canada speaking English. I found even when doing Chinese New Year's with grade 4's, they "talked about Chinese taking Canadian jobs". I think the west area schools that don't have ESL populations aren't as tolerant and understanding as we think. (teacher, p. 183)*

*There is racism at 'X', not spoken but you can feel it (in the hallways and in class). (ESL student, p. 100)*

The major theme that emerged from the study was the lack of policy implementation, and an uncertainty regarding the need for such a policy. Although a few exemplars were noted, resistance to implementation was evident at all levels. Unless the trend toward segregation by race/ethnicity and language is reversed, Fisher and Echols (1989) believe that racism and prejudice in Vancouver Schools will remain pervasive and persistent in the future.

With current statistics showing students coming into the Vancouver school system from more than one hundred different countries and speaking more than one hundred first languages, the school board has continued to respond to the diversity with an increasing range of programs and services (Vancouver School Board, 1996). However, a recent study commissioned by the Vancouver School Board to examine and report on the delivery of ESL programs gives further credence to the findings and assertions offered by Fisher and Echols (1989). In a review of ESL services in Vancouver schools, Cumming (1995) found that the designation of the ESL continues to be a form of segregation which results in the expression of feelings of isolation, rejection, stigmatization, and racism. This is witnessed in the following statements:

*There is racism here, but we've tried all kinds of things, and they don't work. They all want white friends, but they don't have them. They keep talking about how to do it, and they can't. It's a language barrier. It's also segregation. The whole third floor is ESL. (teacher, p. 90)*

*I had problems with racism at first. People ignored me and my problems. But that goes away as I speak English and stay here longer. (student, p. 90)*

*There is a first language problem. We encourage English only in the classroom, but first languages in the hallways results in racism. (teacher, p. 89)*

Personal frustration and fatigue of the teachers and the administrators reveal further insight into the difficulties associated with implementation of school board policy:

*The multilevel aspects of the [ESL] district classes, it's just terrible. There's a three-year age span in some cases. Grades spread from four to seven or ages eight to twelve. It is unworkable. I almost went out of my mind last year. (teacher, p. 83)*

*We can't properly evaluate the difficulties that kids may be having. They may be seen as language problems, when they are really learning*

*deficiency problems. Then if we do find this, we don't have the resources to follow up. There just isn't anything there if diagnoses are made. (administrator, p. 84-85)*

*Many of the successful efforts tend to be one or two teachers trying to get things going, then frankly they burn out. (member of ESL consultative committee, p. 83)*

Both studies, Fisher and Echols (1989) and Cumming (1995), reveal wide discrepancies between board policy and practice in the school system, and further reinforced the belief that the "development of policy is not always a prerequisite for action" (Tator & Henry, 1991). Although the reports were published six years apart, it is evident that changes to the student population's cultural diversity continue to present major challenges to the school system. The task of educating children from such incredibly diverse backgrounds is daunting, and clearly one that teachers may still be "ill prepared to cope with" (Mallea & Young, 1984, p. 401).

Although multicultural education has gained recognition and acknowledgment as a legitimate and required area in need of inquiry, the incorporation of these scholars' voices, whose interests lie with the 'oppressed' or the 'marginalized', challenges the status quo and the way things have always been done with respect to curriculum (Grant & Millar, 1992). Teachers who attend in-service workshops seemingly understand and critically discuss hegemony as a cultural construct, but when trying to "unpack and critique" their own beliefs in order to understand how they have constructed their world view, they become stymied as to "why they hold tenaciously to various assumptions about different segments of the student population" (Gordon, 1992, p. 20; McIntosh & Style, 1988). However, efforts to expose teachers to a multicultural perspective continue to be often "done in a token manner of learning about other people's children and are encapsulated in a vague slogan such as 'celebrate diversity!'" (Kailin, 1994, p. 169). As a consequence, the predominant approach to cultural studies, as found and coined by Werner's group, can still

be called the 'museum approach' (Fisher & Echols, 1989). Like a museum display, the interesting cultural curios are arrayed as objects of study, ignoring the conceptual understandings, issues, and cultural meanings which underlie the objects students look at. If the presence of other cultures continues to be solely regarded as the "celebration of difference and the exotic" (Moodley, 1995, p. 810), multiculturalism will serve only to "trivialize, neutralize, and absorb social and economic inequalities" (Moodley, 1983, p. 326).

Barriers to the realization of multicultural education as an instrumental tool for reforming education are many. Sleeter and Grant (1987) acknowledge that much of the literature does not incorporate the elimination of systemic discrimination as an integral part of the vision for the future, and as a result, multiculturalism persists as an 'educational frill' that is no closer to achieving equal opportunity for all students. In Canada, multicultural education "remains contested, fragmented, and in large measure theoretical" (Henley & Young, 1987, p. 18). Public support has waned in the wake of conservative calls for a core curriculum and a common heritage, and Hirsh's (1987) warning of "cultural illiterates" in western societies burdened with and tired of 'political correctness'. Yet, as the multiplicity of voices and faces become an inherent feature of contemporary society, teachers, the integral link between policy and practice, have an obligation to reflect and embrace this diversity in their classroom. Living in the midst of many cultures, the need exists for a multiplicity of voices to be heard. Research about teachers and their education require a paradigm shift into how they examine, interpret, nurture, and encourage those students who remain at the margins looking in (Gordon, 1992; Grant & Millar, 1992).

## **Teacher Education as Critical Inquiry**

Although there are many specialized and alternative programs which may be found among the faculties and institutions of education in North America, Zeichner and Liston (1990) suggest four traditions of practice which dominate teacher education programs:

- 1) an academic tradition that emphasizes the teachers' knowledge of subject matter and their ability to transform that subject matter to promote student understanding;
- 2) a social efficiency tradition that promotes the teachers' abilities to thoughtfully apply a 'knowledge base' about teaching that has been generated through research on teaching;
- 3) a developmentalist tradition that prioritizes teaching instruction that is sensitive to and based on knowledge about their students (e.g. current understandings, preferred learning style, or readiness for new activities);
- 4) a social reconstructionist tradition that emphasizes teacher reflection about the social and political implications of their actions, and assessment of these actions in the social contexts in which they are carried out for their contribution to greater equality, justice, and humane conditions in schooling and society. (p. 4)

Although each of the traditions could have multicultural implications, the social reconstructionist tradition is explicit in its multicultural relevance. Giroux (1981) argues that teacher education programs "represent a significant agency for the reproduction and a legitimation of a society characterized by a high degree of social and economic inequality" (p. 143); they are the purveyors of the knowledge and skills that will enable teachers of future generations to build and renew a society committed to the principles of democracy (Dewey, 1916). Discussions about how schools contribute to the reproduction of social inequality often allude to the significance of teacher socialization - an induction into the culture of teaching that involves the formal education program and an individual's prior and subsequent experiences in school and society (Ginsburg, 1988). Zeichner and Gore's (1990) synthesis of research on socialization revealed three distinct traditions: a functionalist tradition that views the induction of new teachers as a rather smooth process



due to the students' relatively passive stance towards existing social structures; an interpretive tradition which seeks to understand the enculturation process from the personal insights of the students as they gain a sense of the expectations involved in the role of the teacher; a critical tradition which, in its view of the realities of schooling as being socially constructed and maintained, is distinguished from the other traditions because of its underlying desire to challenge the status quo.

Interest in praxis is the hallmark of the critical theorist (Carr & Kemmis, 1986) and is fundamental to an interest in how the deconstruction and demystification of knowledge can be emancipatory. Lather (1986) defines praxis as the dialectical tension, the interactive, reciprocal shaping of theory and practice which is at the center of emancipatory social science. Concerns about authenticity, alienation, hierarchical schooling systems, and issues of oppression are often seen embedded in the rationale and strategies of praxis; such a perspective involves a concerted effort to reexamine the taken-for-granted and institutionalized constraints of schooling (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990). Sultana (1995) argues that critical theory has "articulated with more thoroughness...the two themes of anti-technocratic rationality and of enlightenment, that are so crucial to the development of teacher education" (p. 132). From this vantage point, teacher socialization is seen as a complex web of contradictions (Ginsburg, 1988) and of the beginning teacher's active search for voice and identity amidst normative discourse and cultural myths (Britzman, 1991).

Preservice teachers begin their education programs with many preconceptions about teaching and learning that are often confirmed through their university life (Liston & Zeichner, 1991). Teaching is the "most familiar of professions", and images of teaching, formed through a history of educational experiences as students, account for the "persistency of particular worldviews, orientations, dispositions, and cultural myths...[and] subvert a critical discourse about the lived contradictions of teaching and the actual

struggles of teachers and students" (Britzman, 1991, p. 3-5). Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1996) believe that the story of becoming a teacher is embedded in three conceptions of self-identity: the pre-teaching image they bring with them into teacher education; a "fictive" image that develops as they negotiate the dissonance between their pre-teaching lives and their lives as experienced teachers; and the "lived" image that evolves during the practicum (p. 67). Negotiation of these disparate identities while learning how to teach is unsettling because it involves the unraveling of the "cultural myths" that structure one's "taken-for-granted views of power, authority, knowledge, and identity" (Britzman, 1991, p. 7). Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1996) suggest that the process of forming, and reforming, a professional identity requires "(un)becoming a teacher" - the discarding and simultaneous transformation of the [idealized] image students bring with them to teacher education. The journey to become a teacher is to prepare student teachers to live in the tension between vulnerability and competence, but for many, this space is too discomfoting to venture into (Carson, 1995).

Zeichner and Tabachnick's (1981) study of preservice teachers revealed that they hold progressive or liberal attitudes during their time at university, but they then shift to a traditional role where the custodial functions of teaching dominate their assimilation into the educational milieu. Unfortunately, this situation continues to impede responsive education and instruction that so many students desperately need (Cabello & Burstein, 1995). Many student teachers view current educational practices as given and unproblematic, and different conceptions of education are seen as matters of personal style rather than differences derived from ethical and critical considerations (Hursh, 1995). The beliefs of prospective teachers, formed from personal experiences and backgrounds, significantly influence how they may teach and work towards realizing the goals of educational equity (Kagan, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1992). Current arguments for preparing teachers to work in a diverse society call for an articulation and a challenge of

their "cherished notions and beliefs...and provide a context in which their future development as teachers can take place"; the transformation entailed in learning to teacher begins with the exploration of and reflection on the personal convictions and understandings that constitute a beginning teachers perspective (Liston & Zeichner, 1991, p. 56). Diamond (1991) argues that the highest level of teacher development is the achievement of a "critical consciousness" - a personal discovery of meaning that questions assumptions and belief systems that is the first step towards an emancipatory insight into the structural inequalities within public education. A critical awareness and analysis of the prospective teacher's values, thinking, and practices would empower them to use their "pedagogic imagination" (Diamond, p. 88) to find new ways of teaching and "enact a curriculum relevant to all students" (Harrington & Hathaway, 1995, p. 275). As Salmon (1985, as cited in Diamond, 1991) wrote, it is how we make sense of our learning to teach or the way we reflect and reconstruct our experience that "gives the journey its direction, its sense of progression or development, its turning point, changes and passages, the meaning of its beginning and its end" (p. 45).

Critics of teacher education programs have argued passionately that student teachers must learn a language of critique and demystification if they are to engage in a more critical discourse and set of understandings around the goals and purposes of schooling. Critical discourse on teacher development has taken on a new urgency with the recent backlash against progressive models of education. Calls for 'back to the basics', teacher driven and skills-based instruction in schools, have moved the realm of teaching from moral responsibility to a narrow technical activity of competence (Goodson, 1995). The restructuring of teacher's work has produced a "pragmatic regime...in which moral, aesthetic, educational, and political issues are reduced to technical problems and value based questions of why and what are reduced to technical questions of how" (Sultana, 1995, p. 6).

For many prospective teachers, teaching is a technical problem, and they are anxious for information and techniques about such things as classroom management and how to teach phonics skills. Increasingly, however, the metaphor of teaching as 'technical prowess', is being replaced by a view of teaching as 'reinvention or liberation' (Diamond, 1991) which is designed to "engage the world as it is in order to imagine and bring about a world as it could and should be" (Sultana, 1995, p. 131). Teacher education as critical inquiry engages student teachers in a reflective process which stimulates them to question established practices, probe hidden assumptions, and to think about how one's teaching contributes to either a more humane society or to the reproduction and perpetuation of social inequities (Giroux & McLaren, 1987). Paulo Freire's work, in devoting his life to literacy and improving social conditions for the oppressed, has had an enormous impact on emancipatory endeavors. For educators, the pedagogical implications of his model are a powerful reminder that they should "see society as knowable and malleable, [and be able to] identify societal power relationships of oppression and privilege and believe them transformable through resistant action" (Jennings, 1995, p. 244). By challenging the world view of dominant groups as oppressive and discriminatory, proponents of critical pedagogy attempt to help teachers develop the power to analyze and create meaning by working with students in the [re]construction of knowledge. As Banks (1991c) writes:

*We must engage students in a process of attaining knowledge in which they are required to critically analyze conflicting paradigms and explanations and values and assumptions....Students must also be given opportunities to construct knowledge themselves so that they can develop a sophisticated appreciation of the nature and limitations of knowledge and understand the extent to which knowledge is a social construction that reflects the social, political and cultural context which it is formulated...also enable students to understand how various groups within a society often formulate, shape, and disseminate knowledge that supports their interests and legitimizes their power. (p. 126)*

The work of Beyer (1988) at Knox and Cornell colleges is an example of a restructuring of teacher education programs along the lines of "teacher education as praxis". He has implemented a foundationally oriented approach to teacher education as guided by the principles of democracy, equality, autonomy, and a commitment to a "wisdom of practice". Instead of schools and classroom activities being presented as predefined and given, this approach promotes the view that schools are contextual sites susceptible to critical, reflective analysis, and intervention. Such a foundation critically examines underlying ideas, assumptions, and principles, and the focus of discussion is the nature of education and teacher preparation as political, moral, and ideological practice.

Despite the plethora of prescriptive initiatives which have emerged in the name of reform, the limited attention in university curricula to social issues such as class, gender, and race conveys a message that these issues are unimportant for prospective teachers (Britzman, 1986). Critical theorists assert that the hidden curriculum of teacher education programs have maintained and reinforced the status quo, tacitly saying that multicultural concerns are not real concerns of teaching, and the transmission of such neutral visions of social reality have encouraged a complacency and a stroke of legitimacy in institutions and social relations (Beyer & Zeichner, 1987; Ginsburg & Clift, 1990; Giroux & McLaren, 1987). In North America, preservice teacher education continues to be characterized as service institutions mandated to provide student teachers with the technical expertise to carry out pedagogical functions (Beyer & Zeichner, 1987); what is missing is the image of the teacher as a transformative intellectual who has the "ability to make decisions about teaching and learning which demonstrate an awareness of ethical and political consequences and of the possibilities of alternatives" (Adler, 1991, p. 78). To work towards the ideals embodied in a democratic society, a reconceptualization of teacher education is needed - what is at stake is the future of public education and the ability of educators to revitalize the moral and ethical responsibilities of teaching (Grimmett, 1995).

## **Multicultural Education and the Preparation of Preservice Teachers**

Three years ago, a student approached me with a problem she encountered during her practicum in a primary class. A young girl of Indo-Canadian descent was being told she couldn't sit here or play with certain groups of students. The student teacher found out that the 'other' children in the class didn't like her because "she's got dark skin and is dirty". When the student teacher brought up the situation with the sponsor teacher, the advice was to ignore it because "children will be children, and they will soon forget". The student teacher was left with feelings of great frustration, but she did what her sponsor teacher asked because she was being evaluated by this person, and did not want to make any 'waves'. She also felt that her university course work and life experiences offered little in the way of dealing with such situations, and a dissonance between the lofty goals espoused by preservice programs and the implementation of these goals in the field was readily apparent.

From both my personal and professional experience, discriminatory practices and behaviors remain persistent and pervasive in society and its institutions. If, as Dewey (1916) notes, it is through education that society renews and maintains itself, educators cannot be neutral bystanders where children attain little or no guidance in the development of morality. Gutmann (1987) states:

*All societies of self-reflective beings must admit the moral value of enabling their members to discern the difference between good and bad ways of life. Children are not taught that bigotry is bad, for example, by offering it as one of many among competing conceptions of the good life, and then subjecting it to criticisms on grounds that bigots do not admit that other people's conceptions of the good are "equally" good. (p. 43)*

As such, teacher education in North America should be addressing the issue of multicultural education, but it rarely does. In the U.S., Grant and Secada (1990) reviewed the literature on the attention given multicultural education in teacher education programs. Between 1973 and 1988, sixteen empirical studies were published, with thirteen of them

conducted in the Midwest. The predominant conclusion found among the studies was the fact that the majority of preservice education students were graduating without the basic skills, attitudes, and knowledge required for promoting equal educational opportunity. Grant and Koskela's (1986) survey of University of Wisconsin preservice teachers revealed that the students explored the topic of multiculturalism in their university work only when it was a course requirement, and very little attention was given to its inclusion in the classroom curriculum. Bennett and Contreras (1988, as cited in Grant & Secada, 1990), assessed the effectiveness of a multicultural education course among students at Indiana and Ohio State universities. Bennett noted an initial positive impact on students' attitudes and knowledge, but gains were lost a year later. Contreras' study revealed that most students believed that teachers can make a difference in minority children's lives, but the respondents also felt strongly that not all minority children can do well and appreciate receiving help. He notes:

*Teacher educators continue to assume that teacher education students will pick up the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help them teach a class of socioculturally diverse students without any direct instruction and planned experience. Moreover, teacher educators assume that most of the schools will continue to be monocultural and monosocial, therefore, there is no obligation to commit time and resources to preparing teachers to teach children who are at risk of being miseducated and undereducated. (p. 412)*

Overall, the studies reviewed reported mixed results, and yielded little information on the effectiveness of preservice programs for educational equity. Frustrated by the paucity of empirical research in multicultural teacher education, Grant and Secada (1990) lamented:

*Though we looked for research to answer our basic questions, we found ourselves having to struggle with gaps in the field, with the lack of cumulative findings in programs of inquiry, and with the failure of studies to develop conceptual distinctions that would seem to be critical in the development of such chains of inquiry. (p. 404)*

In Canada, the number of studies examining the multicultural education of preservice teachers is equally sparse. Henley and Young (1987-1989) wrote a series of four articles that examined the impact of changing ethnic relations on institutions of teacher preparation and their conceptualization of 'multicultural teacher education'. Extensive variations among programs existed which they attributed to not only differences in social contexts, but also to distinct "ideological positions on the significance of race/ethnicity/culture to the structure of society and of the functions of public schooling within that society" (1989, p. 25). In general, however, the lack of priority given to multiculturalism is prevalent among all Canadian universities. In the struggle between technical and intellectual pursuits, the authors believe the demand for survival techniques consistently prevails, which, unfortunately, comes at the cost of the elimination of social inequality in children's lives and school experiences (Henley & Young, 1989). In a review by Orlikow and Young (1993), only twelve studies related to multicultural teacher education were found between 1983-1993. Furthermore, Orlikow and Young did not believe that any of these studies contributed to an 'extension of understandings' or new insights in this area for studies conducted in Canada. The only national survey of multicultural teacher education was conducted by Masemann and Mock (1986, as cited in Henley & Young, 1989; Orlikow & Young, 1993), and only two faculties (University of Ottawa and Alberta) included compulsory courses in multicultural education for preservice teachers. This study, combined with an examination of Canadian university calendars, indicated that approaches to equity issues may include university courses which focus on a particular ethnic group or First Nations education, but the predominant response was to include some material in foundation courses and to offer one or two elective courses that relate to issues of cultural diversity, such as teaching ESL. Such an example may be found in the U.B.C. Teacher Education Program Handbook (1996/97). It lists one course (EDST 425) which includes the term of multicultural education in its description, and it is offered as one of five electives available to students enrolled in the elementary, middle



school, and secondary programs. Masemann and Mock's (1986) study highlights the prevalence of elective courses and the dearth of compulsory courses in multiculturalism. They conclude their study by stating:

*It is quite possible for students in several provinces never to encounter the concepts of multiculturalism at all in their teacher training...it is possible for almost all teachers in training in Canada to avoid taking an elective course in multiculturalism...the most significant finding is how little multicultural teacher education really exists in Canada. (p. 77)*

As Sheehan and Fullan (1995, p. 92) remark, Canadian universities "have been slow to come to grips" with social issues such as multiculturalism and mainstreaming. Yet, as student populations become increasingly diverse, it is imperative that faculties of education inform, engage, and prepare prospective teachers with the ability to critically engage and handle the difficult issues associated with the forms of inequity and oppression found in our school system. However, as the studies indicate, this need is not being addressed. According to Grant (1992), a single course, regardless of the quality and quantity of multicultural curriculum and instruction, does not provide enough time, nor does it have enough depth to provide preservice teachers with the knowledge and skills to implement multicultural education or address the "complexity of the culture-society dynamic" (Henley & Young, 1989, p. 27). Transformative themes in multicultural education have tried to address vital questions about the distribution of power and representation in schools, and central to this debate is the role of teachers in the construction of school experiences and conveyor of 'legitimate' knowledge (McCarthy, 1993). Although teachers should be "driven by a clear and careful conception of the educating" democratic societies expect of them, they are far from being prepared to meet such goals and ideals (Goodlad, 1990, as cited in Wasserman, 1995, p. 147). To be meaningful and powerful in the lives of diverse students, multicultural teacher education must confront the limitations and

problems of traditional teacher education and "business as usual" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 755).

Michael Fullan (1993) states that the "role played by teachers is vital to the future of society...the weakest and potentially strongest link in educational reform right now is the initial preparation of educators...no other change is as basic as this one" (p. 134). Given the changing landscape found in today's classrooms and the communities they are situated in, proponents of multicultural education maintain that faculties of education must prepare future teachers to be active, informed critics of their own experiences and situations, and contribute to a more just, humane, and equitable society. The multicultural preparation and education of teachers occupies a critical position between multicultural theory and practice; "as the logical translator of theoretical and conceptual notions about diversity into real-world practice in classrooms, it may well be the determiner of the fate of multicultural education" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 756).

In the U.S., the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education has drafted standards to examine how teacher preparation programs address the multicultural education of its prospective teachers, and Canadian Faculties of Education have acknowledged the tenets of multicultural education in their guiding principles. The mission statement of teacher education at U.B.C. states:

*The faculty is committed to preparing teachers who are knowledgeable, skillful, flexible, and compassionate in their professional practice...and who will be guided by a sense of social and ethical responsibility in relation to their students and the wider society...the Faculty's programs are predicated on commitments to gender equity and cultural diversity and on a recognition of the position of First Nations people....(Handbook, 1996/97, p. ii)*

The literature reviewed indicates a clear and urgent need for studies that examine the efficacy of the 'multicultural' preparation of preservice teachers as espoused in mission statements. The "socialization of beginning teachers sees them quickly adapt to the

traditional school culture", and successful reform begins with teacher education programs taking responsibility for their graduates by understanding the needs of a "changing society and its schools, teachers, and children" (Sheehan & Fullan, 1995, p. 99-100). As prospective teachers move beyond the immediacy of university life and reflect upon their emerging professional life, it is evident that more research needs to be conducted about what preservice teachers know and understand about multiculturalism, and how prepared they feel to recognize and address the needs of a multicultural student population.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Methodology and Procedures of the Study**

#### **Introduction**

Historically, educational research was initially patterned after the well-established methodological approaches in the natural sciences to gain legitimacy and status in academia. The empirical nature that was characteristic of the sciences was adopted by the education community in a bid to be regarded in the same rigorous tradition and standards. At its core, this orientation, widely known as positivism, held the view that the generation of knowledge was the result of an objective and value-free pursuit. Researchers tested hypotheses and carried out controlled experiments (Roman & Apple, 1990). The underlying assumption beneath the positivist perspective is that a reality exists which is governed by natural laws and mechanisms, and that there are externally verifiable factors that determine behavior (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Preissle-Goetz & LeCompte, 1991). Researcher bias is minimized through the maintenance of a "scientific" social distance in relation to the "object(s)" under scrutiny. Gathered evidence is readily captured by the senses and scrutinized for others to behold and replicate because the character of the observed phenomena is not altered by the method of data collection. Behavior is considered to be objective, testable, and capable of reoccurrence in "law-like regularity" (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990).

Although research in multicultural education is a relatively new field, the use of a positivist approach has a long history and has been a dominant method, through the use of rating scales and the like, in this area (Padilla & Lindholm, 1995). Behaviorist approaches flowed from the positivist-empiricist paradigm, and the use of performance based outcome measures have been and continued to be used by investigators to assess, for example, changes in student attitude toward various ethnic groups (Katz, 1976;

Neaman, 1987; Segawa, 1994; Verma & Bagley, 1973). In the behaviorists' frame of mind, the use of an intervention unit or curriculum causes observable changes in behavior (i.e. attitude) along pre-determined objectives (i.e. rating scale); the product being the outcome of the learning (Gowin, 1981). As a consequence, students' cognitive activity and their internal process of learning were seemingly overlooked. From this vantage point, students were considered as waiting receptacles that operated strictly on an input and output basis. Behaviorists emphatically noted that since thinking, emotions, and other "mental" events could not be seen or studied rigorously and scientifically, they were not to be included in an explanation of learning (Woolfolk, 1990).

The looming question overshadowing these studies which used statistical analysis to generate knowledge is the appropriateness or suitability of the instruments used for the intended purpose of the inquiry (Padilla & Lindholm, 1995; Price, 1992). In the case of studies which used the curriculum to aim for modification of students' racial attitudes or views, Banks (1991d) notes that these studies were plagued with problems such as low intercorrelations of racial attitude measures and student knowledge of socially acceptable responses, especially when the scale featured extreme terminology (e.g. First Nations people are lazy-hardworking; clean-dirty, etc.) But perhaps the major criticism leveled at these studies is the theoretical and methodological assumptions upon which the research is based: Can attitudinal change be accurately depicted on a numerical scale, and can simple gain scores justify the claim that as a result of this intervention study, where in some cases the treatment was only a few hours in duration, students were more empathetic and held more positive attitudes towards a certain culture? It would be on tenuous ground to state that the use of an isolated treatment for the purpose of a research study could be recommended as an effective strategy to reduce student prejudice and make a lasting impact on students' racial attitudes. Although the effects of this type of study continue to be researched and replicated with different populations and settings, the results, at best,

are inconsistent and probably much more complex than can be revealed by the instrumentation used (Banks, 1991d; Padilla & Lindholm, 1995). As Casey (1992, as cited in Goodson, 1995) remarks:

*...members of the teaching profession have often been traced statistically, rather than in person....By systematically failing to record the voices of ordinary teachers, the literature on educators' careers actually silences them. Methodologically, this means that even while investigating an issue where decision-making is paramount, researchers speculate on teachers' motivations, or at best, survey them with a set of forced-choice options. Theoretically, what emerges is an instrumental view of teachers, one in which they are reduced to objects [to be] manipulated....Politically, the results are educational policies constructed around institutionally convenient systems of rewards and punishments, rather than in congruence with teachers' desires to create significance in their lives. (p. 60)*

In contemporary educational research, a qualitative stance has emerged that is based on and grounded in description of observation (Preissle-Goetz & LeCompte, 1991). Dissatisfied with the behaviorist notion of learners being portrayed as "blank slates to be inscribed upon", the rise of qualitative methods in research has been in response for a call to describe the "rich interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts of education more fully...to inform...understand...educational institutions and processes through interpretation and narrative description" (Soltis, 1990, p. 249). As Cherryholmes (1991) argues:

*Educational research does not deal with naturally occurring phenomena; physicists deal with natural phenomena when they study things called quarks...but educational researchers study socially constructed phenomena. ... (p. 42)*

At the heart of qualitative research is the search for meaning - the ways different people make sense out of their lives and a focus on the perspective of the participant (Dobbett, 1982). Qualitative inquiry reaches beneath the surface to the "motives and the quality of experience...the meaning events have for those who experience them" (Eisner,

1991, p.35). The detachment of researcher to studied object camouflages the richness, and perhaps the spirit, of the human experience. Advocates for qualitative studies in multicultural education have used the portrayal of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to illustrate their point (Grant & Tate, 1995). Depicted in "sanitized" textbooks as a preacher and dreamer of democratic values, he is detached from the backdrop of the social conditions and inequitable relations of power that motivated him to set out and engage the public in a war of consciousness. But the separation of the act from the cause disengages and restricts the development of human compassion because the act as preacher is absorbed into "acceptable dominant ideology" (Swartz, 1992, p. 35-36). In a Vancouver school where Martin Luther King day is celebrated as an annual event, teachers were asked to find out what intermediate students knew about the man they were honoring. Although a few students described him in relation to his work towards respect and equity for all people, the majority of the students were unsure about who he was except that he was someone who "had some kind of dream and was dead" (Vancouver teacher, personal communication, 1997). Research about multicultural education, the study of and about the struggles and the emotions of diverse people, requires the presence of "voice" if we are to further human understanding. Eisner (1991) notes that "to read about people or place or events that are emotionally powerful and to receive an eviscerated account is to read something of a lie. Why take the heart out of the situations we are trying to help readers understand" (p. 37)?

The debate between quantitative and qualitative approaches in social science research rages on, resulting in claims from either side that tend to "exacerbate tension, increase separation, or deepen antagonism between those whose proclivities lead them in one direction and those who travel in other directions" (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, p. 9). Ultimately, however, research methodologies and associated claims of knowledge are the products of the epistemological "bias" of researchers and the conjectures they make to

capture and present the reality that is of interest (Grant & Tate, 1995). Decisions about research methodology and questions that arise from a behaviorist's view of learning would be markedly different from those who believe that observation and description do not end with observable actions (Eisner, 1991). In the present study, the departure from the positivist perspective is a result in the belief that a qualitative study would do more to enrich the understanding of how students articulate their experience with and attitudes towards cultural diversity rather than a summary statement of how gain scores of students increased in a positive direction on a five point scale. The exploration of how student teachers viewed their role in a culturally diverse society and how they formed these views required a view of learning where students are active, rather than passive learners engaged in making sense of events and organizing and reorganizing these "meanings" into a framework. The ability to form concepts and translate human experiences into meaningful chunks of information are significant factors when examining the acquisition and management of knowledge in human learning (Novak & Gowin, 1984). This study's interest lies with students' personal knowledge at a point in time. To illuminate the inner workings and dynamics of the learning process, unseen, unheard, and invisible to the behaviorist researcher, the road running along interpretivist and constructivist perspectives was taken.

### **The Art of Interpretation - the Search for Understanding**

Conceived with an interest in the subjective understandings of the participants, hermeneutic inquiry has emerged as an alternative to the positivists' desire to predict behavior in law-like regularity. Although the terms of constructivism and interpretivism are often used interchangeably in the literature and share a common heritage and goal to "elucidate the process of meaning construction", they become separated based on the researchers' "epistemological and methodological commitments" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118-



119) to the inquiry. For the present study, an examination of constructivist epistemology is visited.

The constructivist perspective on the acquisition of knowledge is based on the premise that "learners are purposeful sense-makers, constantly engaged in the task of constructing ideas to make sense out of the situation and events they encounter" (MacKinnon & Erickson, 1992, p. 201). Constructivists assert that what is personally regarded as 'objective knowledge and truth' is the result of perspective; "knowledge does not discover a preexisting, independent, real world outside of the mind of the knower", but rather that the process of making meaning "resides in the mind of the individual" (Lincoln & Guba, 1989 as cited in Schwandt, 1994, p. 131). This view of learning stands in stark contrast with behaviorists' interpretation of teaching and learning which promote the view of knowledge as being passively received, and in Thorndike like terms, "the teacher is the active determiner of the learning environment and the student is the passive receptor" (Miller & Seller, 1990, p. 23). Studies which use constructivism as a guiding epistemological framework counter a 'tabula rasa' view of learners and their learning style. The impact of constructivist thinking in the social sciences has had significant consequences on the way student learning is viewed and the way teachers conceive of sound pedagogical practice. For example, a constructivist view of learning, in which learners actively construct meaning in accordance with what they already know, alerts teachers to the necessity of ascertaining the differential needs and abilities of learners in order to select appropriate content material and teaching strategies (Baird, 1992). In the researcher's world, how a learner's prior experiences and knowledge interact in a particular situation bear directly on the inquirer's interpretation of the participant's construction of reality. Piaget's landmark studies of children's learning provided educators with a model of cognitive development that "described how humans go about making sense of their world by gathering and organizing information" (Woolfolk, 1990, p. 42). His work

advanced the view that development results from interaction between a student and a stimulating, intellectual environment. Although some of his ideas have been criticized in recent years, Piaget's influence on education has been to respect the learner as one who actively constructs a coherent worldview by persistently seeking the integration of both formal and informal learning experiences (Woolfolk, 1990).

Following Piaget's steps, Donmoyer (1990) and Eisner (1991) turn to Polanyi's (1958) notions of "personal and tacit knowledge, the part which we ourselves necessarily contribute in shaping knowledge" (cited in Pine, 1992, p. 658) as the starting point for all inquiry. Eisner (1991) uses the metaphor of 'researcher as connoisseur' to describe how inquirers experience perception as a "function of the transactions between the qualities of the environment and what we bring to those qualities" and how they develop the "ability to make fine-grained discriminations among complex and subtle qualities" (p. 63). Connoisseurship is the art and "quiet act of appreciation" (p. 85). The rendering of perception into the public arena is the work of the 'researcher as connoisseur turned critic' where criticism is the "art of disclosure" (p. 86). The task of the inquirer then becomes the reconstruction of perception in a form that "illuminates, interprets, and appraises the qualities that have been experienced" (p. 86). Qualitative studies tell a story about life that was written by a person with emotion and voice, and not an objective instrument presenting detached, lifeless generalizations. Through its use of poetic and eloquent language, such studies personalize the inquiry and paint a picture that allows for and encourages the interpretation and reinterpretation of text by both the inquirer and the reader (Bowman, 1992; Eisner, 1991).

Out of the interpretive tradition has emerged critical theory. Carr and Kemmis (1986) believe that interpretive inquiry reveals understandings, but alone, this type of research is relatively passive without pursuit of emancipatory intent. For this study, how student teachers envision their role in the diverse classrooms of today inevitably leads to further

contemplation of its consequence in a broader social context. "Critical multiculturalism" (Giroux, 1992b; McLaren & Estrada, 1993) emphasizes that not only the learning but the inclusion of students' personal narratives in meaningful dialogue is essential in engaging them to challenge the barriers of cultural exclusion. Students may be involved in the recognition and interpretation of structural inequities in society, but it is crucial that they also analyze their response to life circumstances in order to develop the capacity and skills to work for social change (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). McLaren and Estrada (1993) argue that inquiry must move away from a "spectator theory of knowledge" to a realization that all research is "entangled within larger structures of power and privilege" (p. 33). For the critical theorist, educational research can only truly challenge the inequities in society if traditional research practices, where researchers are viewed as the sole creators of the definitive interpretation of the 'truth', are questioned. A critical approach to qualitative research is the establishment of a "social praxis, a type of radical and participant knowing oriented to transforming the world" (Greene, 1978, as cited in Pine, 1992, p. 661). The understandings produced by interpretive inquiry are the basis for social action, but a critical approach to research moves beyond 'informing' to engaging all participants, including the researcher, in a "dialectical process of reflexivity and, ultimately, transformation" (McLaren & Estrada, 1993, p. 32) that guards against "reality as a given - objectively defined, impervious to change" (Greene, 1978, as cited in Pine, 1992, p. 661). Set against this socially constructed world, a language of possibility and change, from "what is" to "what may be" to "what could be" (Schofield, 1990), is fostered in an approach and commitment to research that is for education (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

### **Creation of Conditions to Explore Student Understanding**

The exploration of understandings usually employs a form of the interview technique because it "permits a much greater depth than other methods of collecting research data" (Borg & Gall, 1979, p. 310). In interviews, the researcher is the primary "instrument".

Critical constructivists maintain that inquirers connect the purpose, the technique, and the "knower with the known" by utilizing the self as the instrument because, unlike many empirical instruments, humans are able to "synthesize information, generate interpretations, and revise and sophisticate those interpretations at the site of the inquiry, and explore the unusual, idiosyncratic situation which may serve as the path to a new level of understanding" (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 29-30). The gathered data will be used to gain insight into student teacher perspectives on teaching in a culturally diverse society, and try to determine the factors which have contributed to their constructions, conceptions, and understanding of their responsibilities as a teacher in these times.

The sensitive nature of multicultural education causes careful consideration of the creation of conditions in which the interviewee is able to respond without fear of evaluation, especially in light of an era of political correctness. Thus, critical is the kind of interaction researchers establish with their interviewees to allow them the freedom to say "what he or she means, means what he or she says, says what he or she thinks, and thinks about what he or she says" (MacDonald & Sanger, 1982, p. 181). Qualitative researchers emphasize the importance of the establishment of rapport, empathy, and understanding between interviewer and interviewee. As Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) remark:

*...the interview depends heavily for its success on the relationship that is developed between the interviewer and the respondent...it is crucial for the interviewer to develop a familiarity with the biographical and contextual feature of the respondent's life history, outlook, customs, and lifestyle in order to be able to relate more fully and in a more appreciative way with those being interviewed. (p. 86)*

For this reason, an informal interview technique was used during the initial discussions and meetings about participation in this study to develop rapport with participants and gain a feeling of comfort with the researcher. This type of interview is akin to conversations of everyday life because it permits interviewers to respond neutrally and

maintain rapport (Patton, 1990). Once this is achieved, it is believed then that "deeper, more meaningful information will be obtained" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989, p. 87). The use of a conversation style is regarded as a model that would "most likely elicit the trust, confidence, and ease among respondents necessary for yielding elaborate, subtle, and valid data" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 179).

## **Research Method**

### **Introduction**

Qualitative research is often described as "not empirical" by researchers who hold preconceptions about 'quantitative' research that leads them away from it; however empirical refers to "whether or not phenomena are capable of being found in the real world and assessed by means of the senses...qualitative and ethnographic research are preeminently concerned with observation and recording of real-world phenomena" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 31). This present study is empirical since the outcomes stem from the interpretation of two sets of data during the collection process. Two sets of interview data were collected with student teachers and the researcher, and the findings were generated as a result of the analyses of these two sets. This section outlines details of the research design, including recruitment of participants, and procedures of data collection, data analysis, and data review. Also addressed will be the role of the researcher and issues surrounding the 'credibility' of the study.

### **The Participants**

The participants for this study were five volunteers from the elementary education program at the University of British Columbia, and were in the final stage of completing the program and attaining a Bachelor of Education degree. Volunteers were recruited through a network sampling plan (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). Initial contact with

potential participants was made through a relationship established between the researcher and preservice teachers on their practicum in an elementary school. The nature and purpose of the study and details about the requirements for participation were explained at informal meetings or phone conversations, and subsequent volunteers were recruited through the explanation of the project to interested peers and friends. Although more than a dozen students expressed an interest in participating in the study, the five chosen as participants represented a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. Students were selected based on varied characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and diverse undergraduate degrees. To ensure confidentiality, the anonymity of participants is maintained through the use of pseudonyms and a coding system on interview transcripts and excerpts.

### **Data Collection**

Two sets of data were collected for this study. Data set #1 in February, 1997 and data set #2 in May-June, 1997. The chronological order of the collection of data in relation to the student teachers' progress through the two year elementary teacher education program is outlined in the following list:

Year One (Sept.-April, 1995-1996): Students enrolled in foundation and methodology courses. The practicum experience is two weeks in length and is mostly observational.

Year Two (Sept.-Dec., 1996): Students are engaged in their extended thirteen week practicum. At the end of the practicum, students are approached by the researcher regarding involvement in the study.

Year Two (Jan.-April, 1997): Students enrolled in courses on school organization, assessment, instructional models, and chosen electives. First interviews are conducted.

Year Two (May-June, 1997): Second interviews take place after students have completed program requirements, received their education degree, and are looking for employment.

Data collection was conducted at the convenience of the participants, and each set is comprised of single interviews with five students which were between forty-five and sixty minutes in length. All interviews were recorded by audio-tape and verbatim transcripts formed the bulk of the data. Other sources of information included a reflective journal by the researcher, participant notes on issues of diversity discussed in classes at the university, and informal meetings and phone conversations between the participants and the researcher. The journal was a way for the researcher to reflect on the conduction of the interviews (e.g. student took a break during question about dealing with parents who did not support the use of classroom time for multiculturalism) and to jot down lingering questions or points that may have needed further elaboration. Participant notes brought to the interviews provided examples of how issues of diversity were being presented in classes at university, and they also served to remind students of points they wanted to discuss (e.g. how they interpreted the meaning of culture). Informal meetings and phone conversations gave students an opportunity to ask questions, to discuss the interview, or to just get together and talk about the art of teaching. The students were invited to phone or meet me anytime they wanted to talk, and these conversations were used to maintain rapport and establish a trusting relationship between the students and the researcher.

### *Interview # 1*

After the completion of their thirteen week practicum in an elementary school, students were approached in January, 1997 and were interviewed the following month. The first interview was intended to explore students' thoughts and ideas on teaching in a culturally diverse society, and engage them in a reflection of how their views were shaped by their life experiences. (See Appendix for sample interview questions). The use of a

semi-structured interview protocol was used in anticipation of different meanings and conceptualizations among respondents. This type of interview is used to allow for individual responses while remaining specific in its intent (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). It permits a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions and reasons behind them, and it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity for the interviewer to probe and expand on the respondent's answers (Borg & Gall, 1979).

### ***Interview # 2***

The second interviews were conducted after students had completed their teacher education program and received the designation of "full-fledged" teacher. The time in between interviews was to allow for a period of reflection where students were encouraged to think about the questions asked, their answers, and related thoughts. The purpose of the second interview was to probe students' beliefs in greater depth in order to more fully describe their views on teaching in the future, and to allow for an open discussion on further insights, concerns, or questions and how their knowledge had changed, if at all, over the duration of the study.

### ***Transcript Designations and Presentation of Excerpts***

Transcripts of interviews obtained in the data sets were designated by data set number and the beginning letter of the student's name with the page number of the transcript excerpt. All students are referred to by pseudonyms, where each pseudonym retains an indication of the student's gender but not of their cultural background. Only one student in the study was given a pseudonym that was reflective of names commonly used in his culture. The other students were known by English names, and were accordingly given other English pseudonyms.

Excerpts are presented verbatim, including colloquialisms (e.g. 'yeh' for yes). The use of three period marks with spaces (i.e. ...) indicates that a section of the original transcript



has been excised in order to maintain the flow of the participant's response. The use of four period marks with spaces (i.e. ....) indicates that complete sentences or paragraphs have been omitted to ensure coherency of the response, and to include excerpts where the participant refers to the same theme, topic, or idea later in the interview. The following is an example of a transcript designation as it appears in Chapter 4:

Jean: As a beginning teacher, I believe that raising awareness in students about the changing multicultural society is of prime importance. (DS#2, J1)

DS#2 = data set number two

J1 = name of the student (Jean), page one of the transcript

### **Analysis of Data**

Data collection and analysis are inextricably linked in qualitative studies since researchers are deeply committed to capturing the participant's perspective, and significant questions or conceptualizations not foreseen could emerge during the course of the investigation (Charles, 1995). Research questions are often redefined and refined as the researcher gains deepened understanding and learns the meanings participants attach to ideas, and thus, an inductive method of data analysis is usually employed (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

Devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further elaborated by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the constant comparative method of data analysis focuses on the simultaneous classification and comparison of social phenomena across discrete categories. This method of analysis is an inductive method aimed at the development or grounding of theory from data. Glaser and Straus (1967) argue that theory should be grounded in the data: "Theory should emerge...it should never just be put together" (p. 41). The flexibility of this method allows for emergent patterns of data to be realized as categories remain fluid, dynamic, and open to the appearance of alternative classification schemes. It is an appropriate method to use when trying to understand unfolding events in the field because

potential categories can be identified, tried out and discarded to achieve a "fit" between theory and data.

The initial comparisons of interview excerpts result in categories and specific themes; as this constructive procedure is repeated with more data, further integration of data occurs, and the "accumulated knowledge pertaining to a property of the category becomes related in many different ways, resulting in a unified whole" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 109). Qualitative researchers, in their attempt to capture a broad picture of human behavior and understandings, routinely find themselves swamped with voluminous quantities of unstructured data (Charles, 1995). The "constant comparison" of data and discovery of underlying uniformities results in the "tightening up" of theory, and in turn, reduces the number of categories and allows for a more selective and focused search for relevant data. The "delimiting features of the constant comparative method begin to curb what could otherwise become an overwhelming task" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 110).

Three major steps were involved in transforming this study's data:

- 1) transcription of audio-taped interviews and production of verbatim transcripts
- 2) development of potential categories of description based on content of selected excerpts and comparison with subsequent "slices" of data
- 3) construction of a framework to depict links among the categories

The first step involved the production of verbatim transcripts of each interview. The transcripts were read to identify responses which needed clarification or elaboration, and margin notes were made to highlight the key areas that required formulation of questions for the next interview.

Transcripts were then reread to identify sections that were relevant to the study's research questions with the purpose of locating, for example, different ways in which the students saw themselves "advancing" the celebration of diversity in their classrooms. During this reading, colour-coded post-it notes with descriptive words and phrases were

attached to the "key utterances" of the interviews. The selected sections of the transcripts (i.e. excerpts) formed the initial categories of potential conceptualizations of how the students envisioned their future role in Canada's multicultural mosaic. For example, students attributed the use of stereotypes by children and adults to ignorance or a lack of knowledge. This was selected as a potential organizing frame (labeled raising awareness) in relation to the main research question. Subsequent sections in the various transcripts which contained pertinent thoughts related to this potential category were labeled through a colour coding scheme in which excerpts could be compared and contrasted with each in relation to the development of a particular category. The process of this decision making, constant comparisons and integration, facilitated the delimitation of text as analysis became more selective (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

To shift the research from the individual sessions and establish the relationships and linkages among "chunks of meaning", the data was pooled into a schemata that gave an overall glimpse into the world of teaching from the perspective of the participant. The resulting matrices helped to organize and summarize the excerpts for the purpose of revealing and reporting patterns (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The presentation of the findings were based on this framework, and excerpts of the interview will be provided to illustrate claims made about student teacher conceptualizations of their role in a diverse society, and gain a sense of the interplay between a participant's intended meanings and the analytical and theoretical perspective of the researcher.

One of the distinct features of the nature of qualitative research is that the researcher "does not often begin with a clearly defined list of questions and collect only those data that directly pertain to the questions" (Charles, 1995, p. 120). So how, then, does one determine which parts of the interview are relevant? Although few would argue with the utilitarian notion of predetermined categorization, it can also close the mind to the exploration of the qualities that constitute the individual's way of knowing; "if perceptual

experience is aborted for the sake of classification, our experience is attenuated...we do not experience all that we can" (Eisner, 1991, p. 17). For some, the lack of defined and rigorous plan of action is unnerving, and it leads one to ask how can a researcher proceed without the comfort of a road map pointing the way? Yet, the evolving nature of qualitative design does not preclude the need for preliminary work on the part of the researcher. The labeling of categories is the result of an interdependent process between the student, attempting to convey a sense of their view of the world, and the analyst-researcher, seeking to "paint the picture" of and visually explore this world (Eisner, 1991). Excerpts selected were chosen through an analytical framework of the researcher mindful of the tentative and significant research questions informed and formulated by a literature review, but recognizing that the outcome of a study remained unknown.

The purpose of the analysis was to identify and describe the qualitatively different views in which students viewed their role of teaching in a culturally diverse society. For this study, the process of dividing the data into manageable parts by way of a classification system was initially guided by the research questions (e.g. What are the goals of education for a society which encompasses learners from diverse backgrounds? - see Appendix), but the emergence of categories of description and the surfacing of new themes and patterns were drawn from the data. The use of a road map and some tentative plans may have begun the journey of the research process, but the direction of the research was guided by student issues, perspectives, and beliefs, rather than the solicitation of their thoughts on preconceived categories imposed on them by the researcher. But "why should we believe you?" is an oft heard criticism of objectivists and those who are incredulous at the thought of a researcher "immersed" in the situation being studied (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). To address this question, a discussion of my role as a researcher and an appraisal of the study's credibility and 'worth' follow.

## The Role of the Researcher

Qualitative research is concerned with "understanding the social phenomenon from the participant's perspectives" (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p. 14). Interview studies fall into the realm of qualitative methodology because they enable "researchers to learn about the social world they are investigating by means of involvement and participation in that world through a focus upon what individual actors say and do" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989, p. 8). The use of the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis is central in interpretive research, and also considered either the weakness or the strength of qualitative inquiry (Wolcott, 1990). For this study, the exploration of a student's conceptualization of their future teaching career in a multicultural country gives priority to the unraveling and careful analysis of language and meaning given by the actors. It is also widely recognized that observations and analyses are framed and filtered through the researcher's assumptions, worldviews, values, and perspectives. As Eisner (1991) writes:

*Researchers must see what is to be seen, given some frame of reference and some set of intentions. The self is the instrument that engages the situation and makes sense of it. This is done most often without the aid of an observation schedule; it is not a matter of checking behaviors, but rather of perceiving their presence and interpreting their significance. (p. 33-34)*

Qualitative researchers are concerned with the effect their own subjectivity may have on the data produced (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993). A researcher's history will necessarily influence the way in which he or she responds and interprets what is said. The data must bear the weight of any interpretation, and the researcher must confront his or her own subjective presence during the process of both data collection and analysis. The notion of "reflexivity" will be essential to a self-reflective process on my own biases, and a caution against relying only on my interpretation of the participants' views in the written account of the study. Reflexivity refers to a researcher's recognition of their "socio-

historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 16). Anderson (1989) describes reflexivity as a two-fold process which involves self-reflection on the researcher's own biases and on "the dialectical relationship between structural/historical forces and human agency" (p. 254). Therefore, clarification of the researcher's interaction with the participants, theoretical orientation, and possible biases are important to establishing a study's validity (Merriam, 1988).

### ***Experiential Knowledge and Framework of the Researcher***

Throughout this research process, an underlying voice of consciousness keeps reminding me of the tenets of qualitative research: gain an "understanding of a concept from participants' perspectives and views of social realities" (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p. 95); grasp a "sense of the meaning that others ascribe to their own lived worlds" (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 147); undertake an "abandonment of all prejudgements and preconceptions of phenomena so that nothing may be take as given" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989, p. 100) in order to "capture the reality of the subjects and not only her or his (researcher's) own reality" (Lancy, 1993, p. 9). How does one accommodate the demand to conduct an objective inquiry if it is carried out by the subjective tendencies of a human instrument? It seems futile to deny the influence of one's own biases, but rather than trying to purge subjectivity from the research, Roman and Apple (1990) suggest that it is to be "acknowledged, understood, and learned from in the process of constructing the relations and representations of cultural selves and others. Its significance lies in the recognition of the joint construction of meaning in all social and scientific inquiry" (p. 38).

In choosing a research project, many people told me that any idea I chose needed my passion and devotion. The topic of multicultural education, and in particular, its future state, surfaced and eventually emerged as "it". Raised in North America, the land of many different immigrant groups, I was witness to acts of oppression and privy to an inside view

of the hierarchical rather than equal status of cultural groups. An individual's understanding of social reality is constructed by historical and larger social forces (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kincheloe, 1991), and my beliefs have certainly been framed by the stories of the "marginalized" and the unequal power relations that continue to plague societal institutions (Grant & Tate, 1995; Roman & Apple, 1990).

As my years of teaching experience have accumulated, I have become increasingly aware that multicultural education remains on the margins of "real education" in many schools and classrooms. This spring, in efforts to cut spending for budgetary purposes, a large urban school district eliminated its department of multicultural education. For me, this action spoke volumes about the state of "celebrating diversity", pondering about what the future might hold for the children, and more determined to get the message out.

Admittedly, my personal view of multicultural education is aligned with critical theory. During one interview, a student spoke of the importance of achieving tolerance in a classroom, and I found myself thinking "that's all?". Fortunately, the student elaborated on this notion and heeding Patton's (1990) that the "investigator enters the research arena with no axe to grind, no theory to prove, and no predetermined results to support" (p. 55), I refrained from interjecting a leading question.

Although this inquiry focused on an understanding of the subjective meaning and intentionality of the actors, interpretive philosophy often "tightropes between investigation and intervention" (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990, p. 16). For this research, labeled interpretive and guided by constructivism, it was necessary for me to remain cognizant of my own reactions and how they would affect the authenticity of the words being spoken by the participants. In an attempt to achieve "disciplined" subjectivity (Erickson, 1973 as quoted in Wolcott, 1990, p. 133), I was mindful on my own balancing act on the "tightrope" to avoid reading an account of my personal convictions rather than those of the students.

## Experiencing Interaction and Transaction: The Interviews

The study's outcome arise out of the interaction and dialogue exchanged between the researcher and the interviewee. Knowledge produced by this type of inquiry should be a "shared understanding" of the phenomena between researcher and participant. As Cherryholmes (1988) notes:

*A discourse about construct validity with emphasis on looking shifts locus of control and power...Subjects' sense-making provides the base for theoretical constructs...the power to enunciate, select categories, choose metaphors, and propose explanations shifts a bit from researchers to subjects, from the research literature to understandings of people in the world...the locus of power that makes "truth" possible shifts from researchers as subjects to respondents as subjects. (p. 109-110)*

Thus, an account of the conduct of the interview process is provided to give evidence of the presence of rapport and trust between interviewer and interviewee, and the creation of conditions that encouraged participants to speak freely. Of course, this account is from my personal perspective, perhaps causing some to be concerned that only one view of the experience is given. But, as noted by Eisner (1991), a "unique signature is not a liability but a way of providing individual insight into a situation" (p. 34), and no further claim is being posited.

As stated earlier, personal relationships with several of the participants had been established through my work as a school advisor. For many years, I have had student teachers come and share my classroom, and have been fortunate to form lasting friendships with them and their peers. In this study, three participants had worked in my school during their extended practicum in the fall of 1996. By the time initial discussions had taken place regarding their possible participation, I considered these student teachers no longer as acquaintances, but rather as friends and colleagues. Since they were familiar with and could attest to my character, a network sampling plan was used to recruit other participants who were friends and fellow student teachers in the education program. This



familiarity was key to gaining the rapport required between interviewer and respondent for a 'good' interview. When the research was being introduced to them, students were informed of my interest in their personal views, and this was made explicit by the outline of the research's intent in the consent form. I also stressed that I had no influence on their standing in the teacher education program, and explained ethical issues about the study such as their right to confidentiality.

During and after each interview, I took the time to make notes about the content and the conduct of the interviews, and maintained this reflective type journal throughout the process. At times, the notes were scribbles as much as anything else, but they were my source of recording key moments. Keeping in line with recommendations on how to conduct interviews (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993), I adopted a leisurely approach and told students that the direction of the interview would be guided by their answers, and that, if at any time during the interview that they felt uncomfortable or needed a break, the interview would stop and would resume only when they felt ready. The interviews began with ice-breaker questions related to details about their personal background (e.g. childhood experiences or activities), and then questions about teaching were posed. Although the questions' frame of reference was rooted in multicultural education, they were worded in a manner that encouraged the students to choose what topic they wanted to discuss, rather than an issue named by me. For example, the student was asked "during your practicum, which experiences, in your opinion, dealt with the topic of cultural diversity?" Which experience and to what extent they wished to share the information was for them to decide. At all times, I was keenly aware that my looking into student beliefs required a shift in the locus of control - away from my pre-determined agenda of questions to what the respondents wanted to discuss. Jackson (1990) offers that "perhaps [researchers] have become so intent in looking for that we no longer know how to look at. Perhaps looking for encourages us to look past

things rather than at them. Looking for constricts awareness; looking at expands it" (p. 163). As the interviews proceeded, my role moved from intent investigator to become more of a facilitator to encourage students to speak freely, express their opinions and beliefs, and elaborate on their views throughout the process.

In retrospect, the interviews were quite a draining process as I listened intently to the students' replies and struggled to formulate questions to further probe student beliefs. At times, as revealed by the transcripts, my questions were often posed with a hint of hesitation and uncertainty, mirroring the manner in which the students articulated their views and conveying a sense of empathy rather than detachment to the students. During post-interview conversations, the students often shared their thoughts on the process (e.g. "Wow, those were good questions. No one has ever asked me about my opinions on that.; That was good. I hadn't thought about my childhood in years and this [interview] brought me back"), but what was revealing to me was that several of the student teachers commented on my non-verbal and verbal cues: "Yeh, when you looked at me when I was having a hard time answering the question about the parent [not agreeing with you], I could tell that it's not an easy issue for you either." Although I had valiantly attempted to maintain a somewhat non-descript, non-judgmental type of veneer, my eyes had somehow betrayed me. My first reaction was one of surprise, "Really?" and internally, I was literally dying, scared to speculate on what the qualitative gurus would say about this. Fortunately I found my reassurance in the hands of the student who stated that that was a "good thing". When asked why, it was because the student knew then that "it was okay not to have perfect answers...it was what I believed...not like at university where you feel sometimes that your answer has to be textbook perfect" (Simon, personal communication, June 1997).

How an interview is conducted is an integral part of collecting data in order for a study to justifiably claim the students spoke for themselves and that their expressed thoughts

were 'really' captured. Interviews also provide a piece of evidence to support the view that the use of this methodology was "better able to make the feel of the place more vivid than a precise measured description of what students say they experience" (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, p. 12). Unfortunately, there are many critics who still believe that "real knowledge is generated through other [than qualitative], more tough-minded methods" (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, p. 11), adding fuel to the increasingly heated discourse regarding the criteria against which to judge qualitative research.

### **Appraisal of the Study's Credibility**

The difficulty with establishing criteria for determining the value of a qualitative project is captured by Eisner and Peshkin (1990):

*What are the grounds - if any - for generalization? And if no generalizations are possible, how can knowledge accumulate? Thus, what does one make of an approach to the study of the educational world that depends on the unique aptitudes and proclivities of the investigators, that possesses no standard method that focuses on randomly selected situations...are we justified in referring to the use of such a collection of procedures as "research"? (p. 10)*

In the ongoing debate regarding the applicability of conventional criteria, such as reliability, to judge the "standards" of qualitative research, theorists have proposed the use of alternative conceptions that differ not only in terminology but also by the assumptions made by researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Searching for credibility (or validity) in a qualitative view of the world, where one does not assume 'universal truths', is discussed.

### **Assessing the Study's Worth**

Although there are many types of validity that have been tagged and identified in the methodology chapters of research handbooks (e.g. external, internal, construct, face, etc.), they all lay claim to having found the 'truth' or the 'real thing' in a study. Validity in the

quantitative realm is the underlying concern of investigators if the research is to be of value, meaning, or usefulness (Charles, 1995; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993).

However, for many, the use of the same type of criteria to judge both qualitative and quantitative research is a mistake because the characteristics unique to qualitative inquiry are not congruent with the classical goals and conceptions of external validity (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Schofield, 1990). Eisner (1991) notes that "there are no operationally defined truth tests to apply to qualitative research and evaluation", and he suggests that the examination of the text's 'coherence', 'consensus', and 'instrumental utility' are key to believing the persuasiveness of the claims made.

Coherence and consensus refer to the "tightness of the argument" as it pertains to "the credence of the interpretation", and to the extent that readers "concur that the findings and/or interpretations reported by the investigator are consistent with the evidence presented" (Eisner, 1991, p. 53-56). For these reasons, excerpts are presented in the outcomes section to support the premise that the focus of the interviews was the exploration of students' beliefs and thoughts. Wolcott (1990) states that the use of primary data is to allow participants a "forum for presenting their own case" and to "speak for themselves because they [best] capture their expressed thoughts" (p. 130). The inclusion of the actual words spoken by the students are intended to enhance the persuasiveness of the claim that these are the ways they conceptualized their role in a culturally diverse society, and to illustrate what the inferences in the study were based upon, rather than relying solely on the researcher's 'take on things'. Interviewer comments and questions are also included in the excerpts, and they provide further evidence on the nature and conduct of the interviews.

The use of 'member checks' serves many purposes, but often they are used to confirm an observation and to reinforce the authenticity and accuracy of the researcher's reconstruction of the data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). To check on my interpretations

of the interviews, students were given copies of their interviews and drafts of the analyses to read and to provide feedback in any way they desired. Students were also invited to phone me and discuss or comment on the interpretations made and the portrayals of the interviews through the selected excerpts. The students were generally pleased with how the excerpts were categorized, and had little feedback to offer with regards to improvements or changes that could be made to the organization of the study's findings. Colleagues were also asked to read and offer suggestions on the soundness of the argument presented and other areas that needed refinement or redefinition. Their suggestions were helpful in establishing the coherence of the argument and the 'validity' of the findings presented in this thesis.

Instrumental utility refers to the usefulness of a study, or in traditional terms: What is the generalizability of your findings?; that is, the extent that findings of one study derived from one context or set of conditions can be used as knowledge about other populations or settings (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). Many qualitative researchers do not regard generalizability as a goal because it "appears to be a widely shared view that it is unimportant, unachievable, or both" (Schofield, 1990, p. 202) or that the argument for qualitative inquiry has "never been that its claims for generalizability are exceptionally strong" (Firestone, 1993, p. 22). However, Shulman (1981) believes that all researchers, despite disclaimers from some, "strive for some degree of generalizability" of their findings since they are "rarely content" to generate understandings relevant only to their particular case (p. 8).

Recently, theorists have proposed conceptions of generalizability that are applicable and appropriate for qualitative work. For example, LeCompte and Preissle (1993) state that the use of "comparability" and "translatability" enhance the generalizability of qualitative studies. The degree to which the components of the study, such as research methods and population characteristics, are clearly defined and described allow for

comparison and application of results across various groups and disciplines. Others describe the purpose of interpretive endeavors as the presentation of a rich and illuminating description which offer a perspective of the particular situation being studied, rather than the production of standardized results and universal laws (Cornbleth, 1991; Firestone, 1993; Schofield, 1990).

For this study, the generalizability of its findings will perhaps be judged on its personal relevance for the reader and by its "thick description" which provides the contextual understanding required for the making of informed judgments about the degree of "fittingness" between situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As Donmoyer (1990) notes, "practitioners in education are concerned with individuals, not aggregates" (p. 197), and generalizability emerges as a form of personal knowledge gained through the vicarious and powerful experience of reading the "narrative of the parable or the story" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Eisner & Peshkin, 1990). In the constructivist world, knowledge and experience is made and not simply had or discovered (Eisner, 1991, p. 60); the nuance of the interpretation lies within the reader, and which products of the research resonate and are of use within a particular situation are chosen by the personal reconstruction and reconnection of the knowledge that is presented. Eisner's (1983, 1991) discussion regarding the appraisal of the value and credibility of a qualitative study emphasizes the importance of the inclusion of aesthetics as a major criteria - is the study's view elegantly stated, and does it evoke a strong reaction within the reader? Indeed, the latter may be the ultimate standard against which generalizability of this present study is judged.

## CHAPTER 4

### Part 1: Conceptualizations of the Teacher's Role in a Culturally Diverse Society

#### Introduction

This first part of this chapter presents outcomes of analysis of the data for the first and major question guiding this research:

*How do preservice teachers conceptualize their role in a culturally diverse society?*

Spurred on by dramatic changes in student population, the rethinking of education's role in society has occurred in recent times. The success of any initiative in educational reform has been heavily dependent on teachers who present and translate these 'new directives'. Indeed, if teachers do not have the "knowledge, attitude, and commitment to the ideological change implied in equity and justice" (Ghosh & Tarrow, 1993, p. 81), few inroads will have been made by advocates who call for substantial change to occur if the education system is to better serve students of diverse backgrounds and experiences. Earlier, a brief discussion on the confusion over the multiplicity of terms used in relation to education for a heterogeneous society - ethnic studies, anti-racism, human rights, intercultural, interethnic, bilingual, multiethnic - was outlined. Although the definition of multicultural education is ambiguous at best, it is the most common term associated with teaching in a culturally diverse society. 'Multiculturalism' is perhaps the most often used, and misunderstood, term bandied about in the literature, but at the moment, it serves as a conceptual tool for the preservice students to use and frame their responses. Critical theorists emphasize that their definition of multicultural education is inclusive of the dialectical relationship between education and its sociopolitical context (Nieto, 1992). This definition is characteristic of the movement in the research about multicultural

education to be increasingly aware of the implications of the function of school knowledge with respect to whose interests it will serve, and the teacher's role in imparting that knowledge in a pluralistic society (Banks, 1991c). Decisions made in the classroom are framed by teachers' a priori knowledge and belief systems (Clark & Peterson, 1986), and consequently, implies that preservice teachers may conceptualize this role in qualitatively different ways. The categories described in this chapter portray different ways of thinking about what is entailed in becoming and being a teacher in a culturally diverse society.

This chapter is a construction of interpretations of one particular aspect of teaching, but the outcomes were often intermingled with numerous other speculations about the student's future classroom and decision making processes. In some ways, students were formulating a job description of 'teacher', espousing thoughts about the enormous responsibilities associated with such a career choice. The questions posed to the students were intentionally phrased in broad terms to allow the students to explore their beliefs and understandings, and to guide the interview. For example, students were asked "what should teachers committed to teaching in a culturally diverse society seek to accomplish?" While some interviewees focused on improving personal awareness and knowledge of the issues, others placed greater emphasis on raising awareness in the students who comprise their classroom. The respondents often referred to the association between personal experiences and their views on the importance of multiculturalism in schools. Clearly, the content of each response was influenced by personal history; different foci stemmed from passions that were a result of life experiences, and the second part of this chapter will examine influences that helped to frame their beliefs. The analysis in both sections draw on the transcripts that resulted from these discussions.

The aim of the research was to sample and explore conceptualizations of student teachers. However, as noted in the discussion about methodology, qualitative research is a search for meaning that does not negate the 'context' or the person who is trying to make



sense of his/her world. As a consequence, elements of various conceptualizations are presented 'by student' and acknowledge the unique views of each individual. In the first category, all five students will be presented, and short anecdotes about each student are included in each excerpt. This helps to introduce the student and inform the reader's understanding of the context, or personal frame of reference, in which the words were uttered. Moreover, the reader is also able to draw allusions to the way in which individual conceptualizations and life experiences are inevitably drawn and tied together.

Although all five students are included in the first category, they may or may not appear in subsequent categories. The selection of particular excerpts was based on interest in the content of the response, and conceptualizations are presented as distinct entities for analytical purposes only.

For the students, their beliefs ranged from the immediate and daily concerns faced by a classroom teacher to thoughts on what the future would hold if teachers could "change with the times" for the betterment of society. The images of what teaching in a culturally diverse society meant to them were organized by the following headings: 'bridging gaps in knowledge', 'being proactive as a role model', 'nurturing self-esteem and pride in personal heritage', 'focusing on care, respect, and acceptance', 'creating a safe and inclusive environment', and 'resisting the lure of assimilation and the status quo'.

### **Bridging Gaps in Knowledge**

'Bridging gaps in knowledge' represents a way of thinking about the central importance of knowledge and an awareness of and about all cultures on both the part of teachers and their pupils. Such knowledge was considered instrumental in building a rich learning environment that could embrace students from all backgrounds. To demonstrate and substantiate this, data from all students are presented.

Simon, a Chinese Canadian of Cantonese descent, was the youngest of all the students, and had entered the teacher education program after completing three years of university as a geography major. He was born in a small town in B.C., and moved to Vancouver when he was young, and all his school experiences were in Vancouver. Comparing the classrooms in Vancouver now to when he was growing up, he remarked on the "real influx" of immigrants and the pronounced presence of enclaves in the city. When asked about the role of the teacher in such a dramatically different social setting and background from his childhood days, Simon spoke of the responsibilities of the teacher to make sure that everyone in the classroom was aware that there are different cultures:

Simon: I think it's really important for the teacher in today's society to really make sure that everyone in the classroom is aware that there are different cultures. It's important to really focus on the students. Like they should not be afraid and they should not be ignorant of other students in the classroom just cause they have a different colour skin or they have a slight accent to their speech...so they have an understanding of who's in their classroom and don't feel intimidated. I think they should just feel comfortable with everyone in their class knowing that they can all be friends. (DS#1, S2)

Simon went on to discuss what he believed were the professional responsibilities of a teacher in contemporary society. In the following excerpt, he describes his own personal level of awareness and how his education would need to continue:

Simon: Since I'm Cantonese and I know some things about the Cantonese culture and the White Caucasian culture that is pretty much dominant in school today, but I really don't know too much about East Indian culture or Vietnamese culture or First Nations but I'm taking these courses and I am learning....If I were a teacher in the classroom I'd probably use my resources and find out more about the specific children in my classroom and just be more culturally aware so that I won't be ignorant myself. (DS#1, S2-3)

Although he initially focused on how he was going to further his learning, Simon elaborated on his response by discussing his overriding pragmatic concerns and consequences of not being personally aware:

Simon: We (student teachers) go into the classroom, and we see that people are different ethnic backgrounds but to be honest I don't really think that a lot of them were prepared, myself included, to like go into a classroom and be able to deal with the different learning styles, the different students and how some of them won't be able to speak English. I think that being in the day and age in today it's such a multiethnic society that we need this background knowledge...you need to be able to go into the classroom with some knowledge of how to cater to these students' needs or just how to approach them so you don't go into the classroom and say "Oh my gosh, I have ESL and what do I do?". They just feel lost...I think that a lot of people will lose out because they don't have the background knowledge. They'll just go into a classroom and they'll be totally shocked and it will be overwhelming for them. (DS#1, S8)

Throughout the interview, Simon continued to stress that teachers must be prepared to help students realize and feel comfortable about the changing face of society. In particular, he raised his concern that school shouldn't be "like when I grew up as a kid" where festivals, practices, and beliefs were dictated to and imposed on students. He believed that a program predicated on building awareness within a class would ultimately achieve an understanding that Canada was formed by immigrants of all backgrounds and break the "dominant" values and culture embodied by the "mainstream":

Simon: I think kids learn that that there's not just one way of looking at things, not just the Christian way, and that there are other points of view in life. I'd have to admit that the white society is still dominant today, but there are other points of view and different perspectives that need to be taken in the classroom. It's not just the white dominant perspective that needs to be taken, but the kids (need to be) taught to understand that their culture has a say in what goes on in Canada because it is a multicultural mosaic and every culture has a right to its own opinion. It's really important for the kids growing up to know that if they're from an ethnic minority that they have a say in how things are run in the world...even if you are an ethnic minority you will have a voice and you will not be drowned out by mainstream white society. (DS#1, S15-16)

Simon described his own experiences as a student as a phase through which he emerged out of being "so brainwashed as a child". When asked to elaborate on this response, he discussed how he was enlightened during university regarding how knowledge at all levels is socially mediated and constructed:

Simon: I took a first year course in history and (learned) that there were actually different points of view. I guess I just went through the system thinking okay, this is the way things are going to be, but as someone said, history is written from the point of view of the winners. You didn't really see the point of view of the losers or the people that didn't win so it really opened my eyes. In university, you really learned how to think and you learn about critical thinking and how the truth isn't really what it seems even though people frame it as the truth. These ideas might be too hard for children in elementary school to grasp, but I think you can really start off by just exposing them to different cultures and different ways of looking at things that they'll eventually internalize it and they will see there's not just one way....I think the main goal of education is to get the kids to think and understand that you can't really take everything at face value....you have to think about the underlying assumptions....like this prof (in university) really just made me aware that he even said that everything has a political agenda and that if you look at the world in general it's all driven by politics and how you want to frame things. (DS#1, S18-20)

In the second interview, Simon believed that an awareness of cultural norms and values was an integral part of any beginning teacher's repertoire of strategies when entering the classroom:

Simon: We need to be provided with resources or curriculum documents to get us started along the path to understanding....the opportunity to see the distinctive traits of different cultures so that you could take a proactive stance....Being a complete teacher means being aware of what your students need, how they learn, respecting them in regards to their cultures and their learning style. Knowing a little bit about their culture can help you connect with your students and they can see that you care. (DS#2, S2)

Linda, an Indo-Canadian who was born in Kenya and raised a Muslim, had completed a bachelor's degree in kinesiology, and had had many years of experience in working with young children prior to entering the faculty of education. In particular, she had been involved in the integration of special needs children in both community programs and schools. After her family's immigration to Canada, Linda was raised and attended schools in Vancouver. Similar to Simon's thoughts, she also believed that teachers have had to adapt and change since her days in school because of the changing composition of classrooms:

Linda: Teachers have to become more aware of different cultures...when I was growing up, the teachers may not have been aware and they just went along and did what they were comfortable doing. Now, there's a lot more emphasis on being culturally aware and learning different festivals and cultures that are going to be in your classroom...Before a teacher can make their students aware, the teacher has to learn more about it themselves, and not just say, "We're going to have a quick celebration and then go onto the next one." I think you have to become familiar and comfortable and learn what you can from the culture and then be able to teach the kids so much about the different festivals, and in that way, it's not again regarded as completely separate-that this is something different. I mean we're talking about a group of people. This is their celebration...This is what Canada is all about. (It) is all these different cultures, an awareness of that. That it's our big melting pot theory and that we all learn so much about. (DS#1, L2-3)

On her practicum, she recalled feelings of anxiety and inadequacy about her own ability to comprehend the reasons that lie behind the actions taken by students of different cultures:

Linda: The class had a large Asian population, but I didn't really know how to get through and it was something that really got to me....I can think of one child in particular. During lessons, he'd be totally unfocused, not concentrating and that would frustrate me, but I would just see it as a lack of interest and not listening. Then taking time to reflect, I realized that maybe he just wasn't understanding and I think my naiveté didn't allow me to take the time....I just wanted to think that maybe he did understand because as a student teacher it's almost intimidating to be faced with that and I don't have the knowledge yet to know how to modify...adapt to allow for this child to learn....I didn't have the skill yet to be able to put that into context and say "Okay, maybe he doesn't have the words to tell me why he's not listening and maybe he just truly has not understood and that this is his way of coping or dealing with it". (DS#1, L6-7)

In the second interview, Linda spoke with greater conviction about the need for teachers to develop personal awareness and the confidence in order to reach children from all backgrounds and levels:

Linda: To teach effectively is to overcome your own fears of different children cause it's intimidating for a teacher that doesn't have any experience to go into a classroom where there are a lot of children that are different minorities and not have the confidence....If your attitude is that segregation is better, then you're not going to be effective and be able to work with inclusion....When you stand in front of the classroom you want to portray that you know what you're doing and be able to get through to all these kids, and when you don't, it's frustrating and lessens your own self-esteem and doubt your ability....We need to be educating ourselves

in order to educate others. We can't go in with blinders and assume that everything's going to be okay. (DS#2, L6-7)

Jean, a fluent speaker of several languages, held a philosophy degree. He was born in British Guyana and attended a British private school in Brazil before his family immigrated to Canada. He enrolled in a high school in Vancouver, and recalled the experience of "culture shock" because of being one of only three "colored students" and of the inaccuracies in the content presented about other countries and cultures taught in social studies classes:

Jean: I had an English class and a Scottish teacher who basically had me stand up in the class and explain to the class about the British Guyana lifestyle...that it was extremely different from that in Canada. What really struck me was the fact that she thought and had explained to the class as a prep to my presentation that houses were on stilts. And I got up and I said, "No, you've got pictures that show that houses are on stilts there. This is a fallacy. I come from the main city Georgetown and houses are actually quite well built." She didn't like that and I remember I had a nickname there for a couple of months: "Stilty". (DS#1, J1)

The predominant images and notions that fed into stereotyping remained a constant theme in Jean's interview. When asked where he thought stereotypes originated from:

Jean: I think a lot of it starts early. We've got the media, we've got home. Some of it does come from the home. Just the school yard itself-exposure to other kids and things like that just get perpetuated. For example, look at the house on stilts. I mean if people had believed my teacher, there would still be people perpetuating that image all through high school...

Nellie: What do you think you as a future teacher would do to counteract these images?

Jean: Well, I think my approach that I used would be certainly best. A dose of reality helps to educate the person. Reality based on fact and not just hearsay or third hand news. (DS#1, J3)

Reflecting on his personal level of awareness, Jean revealed feelings of being overwhelmed and his search for answers:

Jean: On my practicum, I was going into a classroom that was culturally diverse. I felt lost in the sense that I wasn't trained to handle a few things....There was a grade four student who was having extreme difficulty writing. I didn't know how to address him....I saw him pull away to the back of the class many times, sitting

on his own. He already had so many traumatic experiences and he thought he was different from the rest and pulled away. I wanted to bring him into the group and tried many things but I didn't have a way to reach him at all....It's made me realize that my education isn't complete....(DS#1, J5-6)

In the second interview, Jean took more of a philosophical stance, and described the importance of student understanding of the cyclical nature with respect to the evolution of society:

Jean: Society is in a constant state of evolution, and logically, goals for education should parallel this evolutionary path. As a beginning teacher, I believe that raising awareness in students about the changing multicultural society is of prime importance. Teachers need to expose students to the vicissitudes of multiculturalism so students can become better functioning members of society...be more in touch with, more sensitive to, and more respectful of others, and more aware of themselves as they interact in society and contribute to its development. (DS#2, J1)

Christy, a Chinese-Canadian born and raised in Vancouver, was a history major with a minor in sociology. As a young child, she remembered the intense feelings associated with being the 'social isolate' in elementary school. Although she was unsure why she was treated this way, she suspected the reasons to be attributed to her ethnicity and her family's socioeconomic status in an affluent school and neighborhood. On her practicum at an inner city school, where most of her students were visible minorities, the topic of cultural diversity was constantly on her mind, and reaffirmed her desire to have this topic as a dominant theme for professional development for all teachers. Throughout the interview, Christy drew on her personal experience of social isolation to help her articulate her view on the teacher's responsibility to children in classrooms today:

Christy: I don't think we can totally meet the needs of all of our students. We can't be all things to all students but we don't come into classrooms value free. We come into classrooms with preconceived notions of what students from certain backgrounds come from....What we can offer, hopefully, is some level of sensitivity and try to be open and understanding to where a student is at....not trying to judge a child because they do things differently. Perhaps they don't celebrate certain things, but you know we shouldn't enforce our celebrations on them either....Students try to fit in but they feel isolated. People make fun because

they, the students, can't say things clearly.... Things were hard for my parents.... they struggled so hard and I could relate to where some of the kids were at. I mean their parents have worked hard and they came from another country to come here for a better life but sometimes they don't receive a better life because of negative feedback from other members within the society they they're mixed with. (DS#1, C2-4)

When asked to elaborate on what sensitivity in a teacher entailed, Christy stressed that the rhetoric surrounding multiculturalism and the celebration of cultural diversity would remain at a superficial level if teachers were not actually committed to its importance:

Christy: You may receive some information on cultural diversity, but I think it's up to the individual. Some people may hear a big chunk of it, but if they don't receive it well, then it doesn't mean anything. For me, it's because I'm already sensitive to it, well I try to be at least, that you know it means more to me so it hangs on to me more. I try to demonstrate what I've learned... I try to let other people know about the issues being weighed out there and what are some of the things that we have to face. (DS#1, C6)

Christy also spoke about the importance of the teacher taking the initiative to find out about her students' background:

Christy: You can really alienate someone if you're speaking above them. They need something they can understand and relate to the material you're presenting. If not, then you have to know bridge the knowledge.... (DS#1, C13)

In the second interview, Christy lamented about the actual skills teachers may be equipped with when dealing with issues such as isolation:

Christy: Teachers may be sensitive and really care what happens in their classroom, but at any given moment when students are mistreating other students, they may say something but I don't know how effective (that is) or (if they) know the tools to deal beyond that. (DS#2, C2)

Kathy, born and raised in a small Ontario town, had completed a B.A. degree with a major in English and a minor in history. Unlike the other students, Kathy believed that she had little knowledge or first hand experience with 'multiculturalism'. She stated that "being a white person was pretty much the main focus or the main representative



population in the schools that I went to when I grew up", but believed that Canada had rapidly changed due to the increasing presence of diverse cultures, and teachers would have to expand their knowledge of how to meet the needs of their students:

Kathy: I think teachers need to take into account the wide range of student cultures even if their particular classroom doesn't show all these cultures. They have to recognize that Canada as a whole has a variety of cultures in it and they need to make their students aware as well as help them understand....I think that teachers themselves need to continue their own learning to make themselves more aware of the different cultures and what it means to be a part of a different culture aside from what typically or historically has been Canadian culture....Personally, I don't have a vast knowledge, and I think that as a teacher if I am going to educate my students I need to know much more about them than I do now. (DS#1, K2)

The understanding of cultural background was highly correlated with student self-esteem and success in Kathy's mind. Teachers needed to encourage all students to believe in themselves and allow them to pursue the dreams of their choice, even if they did not necessarily agree with them. Kathy acknowledged that different cultures may have predetermined roles for their people based on, for example, gender or a caste system. Accordingly, out of a belief for respect of cultural norms and traditions, she did not think that teachers should project a western value system onto their students. However, in the context of "real life", Kathy recalled an incident during her practicum which caused deeper introspection, reflection, and a questioning of exactly how far the teacher should go with regards to respecting another culture's beliefs:

Kathy: When I broke students up to go work with a partner, one boy wouldn't work with a girl and my sponsor teacher said that "Oh well, he's Egyptian and he has always been like that. He won't work with girls." It was a cultural thing I was told....But in a situation like that, it brings up the question of whether you do change his behavior. I mean it's obviously something that is from his culture and is it my place? I don't know if it is my place to make him work with a girl if it's something he doesn't want to do but now, I am wondering about it....It's a difficult situation....I need to educate myself more....so that I know more personally and so that I am better prepared to approach those situations as they happen. It's tough too to have one point of view because there's always questions that come up just like the last one where you're not sure if it's your role. (DS#1, K10-11)

As indicated in these excerpts, raising awareness was regarded as an essential step to breaking the perceived and prevalent complacency in teaching. The student teachers strongly believed that gaps in both personal knowledge and those in their students needed to be bridged before an 'appreciation of all cultures' could take place. For the student teachers, this knowledge was a necessary first step away from ignorance and towards a personal sense of efficacy in their ability to reach out to students and help them in their pursuit of the elusive dream of succeeding in the North American way of life. Accordingly, the student teachers strongly believed that the teacher had to embody the principles of cultural awareness by consistently demonstrating sensitivity and understanding to their students and leading by example.

### **Being Proactive as a Role Model**

Each student teacher could readily name and describe a teacher who had made a lasting impact on their lives that was positive and sometimes negative. In turn, they felt that how teachers interacted with or what they said to their students was largely overshadowed and underplayed in terms of what they were being taught as the "essentials of learning to teach". It was apparent to them that teaching entailed a huge responsibility that went beyond lesson planning and management strategies. The teacher as a role model was seen as someone who did not shy away from controversial issues, but instead, took the initiative and the time to get involved in their students' lives and to answer their questions and teach lessons that were relevant in today's society.

Although Jean was raised in a country and a culture that was distinctively different from the experiences of the students born in Canada, he would also relate and retell stories about teachers who had made a difference in his life. Teachers who made a significant difference in children's lives shared common characteristics that transcended all cultural barriers and geographical boundaries:

Jean: [In Brazil], I grew up in classrooms that were culturally rich and there were teachers who were models for me in the sense that they actually took time to find out about each one of us and I'm coming back to this always finding out about students and their backgrounds. They tried their best to find out about us and using that knowledge to teach us. It was a powerful influence the fact that I was in a culturally rich classroom and that there were teachers there who were ready and willing to put in the extra research and time and effort to help teach us....They were caring and took time to understand....helping us with work and giving us a sense of self-worth that we were worth it, we could do it. (DS#1, J7-8)

In the next interview, Jean elaborated on what he learned from his teachers and described how he saw himself as a teacher of a culturally diverse classroom:

Jean: Respect and acceptance of others should be fostered in the classroom. As a beginning teacher, I would adopt a proactive role to model sensitivity and empathy and hope that my students would emulate such behaviors...it's through the absence of ridicule and blame that a willing and patient teacher can accept and show genuine concern for each student's culture and be ready to show attention to learning (himself) rather than just believing that they know enough. (DS#2, J2)

Throughout Linda's interviews, "teacher as role model" was a recurring image. She saw this person as someone who was able to espouse the tenets of the federal multiculturalism policy, and who had the commitment and drive to learn, lead, and set an example. As a visible minority, Linda discussed her fears and feelings about being an 'outsider' and the pressure of constantly trying to be considered a part of mainstream society. For these reasons, Linda believed that "standards of awareness" was a necessary prerequisite to understanding and the ultimate acceptance of differences. The teacher needed to be someone who embodied this attitude as a part of their daily life rather than assuming the role for the purpose of the job:

Linda: Kids might not understand why a certain group does what they do or is the way they are or dresses they way they do, but (they need) to be aware and accepting of differences...Society looks at teachers being role models and schools being the first place that kids are going to be totally immersed in different cultures...they're not going to learn about it anywhere else (DS#1, L3-4)...It is our responsibility to be culturally aware and not stereotype and not judge and not place unreal expectations on different kids cause they're all going to have different abilities....teachers have to portray that in their everyday life, not just when they go into the classroom. (DS#2, L4)

Linda went on to speculate about the low expectations placed on children who are considered "at risk" or "disadvantaged" because of their background. Like Jean, she thought that if teachers believe in their students' ability, they would stand a chance at hoping for and achieving the same goals as their peers:

Linda: I think that maybe more and more there's may be less expected of kids from different diverse backgrounds, but I think overall, the expectation and the pressure is there for kids to conform and to learn and to take the English classes and for teachers to put in the extra time in order for the kids to learn regardless (DS#1, L5)....[In order to succeed], I think that depends on the will of the child but also on their parents or the role models they have in their life. If they have role models that aren't encouraging them to strive for the highest, then I don't really know...but if they do have really strong influences, then I think the desire to work harder and be all you can be is greater. It takes time after the day is done to put in that individual one on one time for the kids that haven't been able to accomplish enough learning during the day that sometimes they need that extra little bit....I hope to make a difference by being open to the different cultures in the class and I guess not being scared not thinking that I don't have enough knowledge yet to deal with this situation. (DS#1, L13)

Echoing Linda's thoughts, Kathy also believed that to be a role model required the active participation and concerted effort on the part of the teacher:

Kathy: When you're trying to have children respect and accept many different cultures, it's important to incorporate it into everything you do....It has to be ongoing, all year long, in all your subjects....include it in everything you do so the children see it as a way of life. It's an attitude that should be held within an individual all the time, not just something to think about when it's multicultural time....you have to be cognizant of and you have to make an effort. (DS#2, K2-3)

Initially, Kathy stated that teachers have to take advantage of and use the "teachable" moment to have classroom discussions about differences. She later added that teachers had to also play a formative part in order to have this knowledge help students' understanding of the issue:

Kathy: It's better to take a proactive approach than a reactive one....It's important for teachers to take the initiative. We know there's discrimination and prejudice in our society even if I didn't see it in my classroom it doesn't mean it's not going on....It's the teacher's responsibility to give them the opportunity to talk about things. You need to provide them with situations they can examine, interpret, and

try to come up with strategies they can use for dealing with prejudice, discrimination, racism....(DS#2, K3-4)

On his practicum, Simon also witnessed a teaching style that he also labeled as being proactive. To define the term, he described his sponsor teacher as someone who immediately addressed precarious situations before they could continue and get out of hand. He recalled an incident where his teacher reacted swiftly to a stereotyped comment:

Simon: There was this one incident where this Chinese student was doing a math problem and he didn't know the answer. He wanted to ask the teacher for help and this white student made a racial comment: "Oh, he's Chinese. He should know the answer." My sponsor teacher immediately nipped the problem in the bud and she said, "What does that have to do with it? Just because he's Chinese doesn't mean he's necessarily good in math." I was impressed with the way she handled it. She really created a proactive environment and I didn't hear anything about that later on (DS#1, S5)....To me, being proactive means you try to stop problems before they occur so you're reinforcing the positive and being aware...you could recognize racism and prejudice in the classroom and know how to stop it...problems don't prolong and get out of hand...you're well aware of the students' needs. (DS#1, S10)

On the subject of role models, Christy spoke of how one of her past teachers had influenced her actions and attitude in the classroom. She strongly believed that if schools were to become more inclusive and welcoming places, it would be directly tied to the teacher's action:

Christy: Change would definitely start with the teacher because you can't cause change in a big way but you can begin with you. I would try to model the behavior that I would like my students to exhibit by, for example, being sensitive to kids from what background, be understanding and not quick to judge or stereotype but willing to be open to other ways of thinking, other ways of doing....I had a teacher in college who was a visible minority and my mentor too. She was always willing, even when people were not showing acceptance to others, not to judge them. She knew when people were making racial slurs and she didn't jump on them but let them work through what they needed. She would always bring up the issue so they could be aware of them and hopefully from there bring about some kind of change....acceptance is foremost (DS#1, C9-10).... For their (students') sake, you know the staff needs to try to work well with one another. The students look to us as role models, and we should really act like models. It's a huge responsibility that we should live up to. That's it....(DS#2, C9)

With respect to social class and status, Christy believed that teachers were in a position of privilege. However, in the context of the education system, teachers occupied the bottom in the school system's chain of command. Throughout both interviews, Christy wondered if she, herself, could actually live up to her beliefs. As a future teacher, Christy spoke passionately about equity and the acceptance of difference in her classroom, but that restraint would also be in order because of who signed her pay cheque. As a consequence, teachers who might fight for change would find themselves in a precarious situation because of the constraints associated with who they are:

Christy: I would like people, racial groups to get along with each other. There's a lot of racial tension that exists out in the mainstream. I would like to really eliminate it, but we know the realities. It's really difficult (DS#1, C15)...It would be interesting to see, once you're actually working, if we actually live out what we say. I think one of my goals is to live out what I say. Maybe it sounds idealistic, but at least I need to try to kind of walk the walk and match the walking with the talking. (DS#2, C9)

The actions and the words spoken by a teacher were clearly considered to be key to the kind of tone and climate established in the classroom by the student teachers. Only when a teacher modeled the desired behavior could he/she expect the same behavior from his/her students. Through leading by example, the teacher as role model would begin to entrench the value of cherishing children of all capacities, interests, and walks of life into the minds of the students in the classroom. The proactive teacher would encourage the growth of children who cared about both themselves and their peers by recognizing the importance of validating children's individuality and feelings of self-worth.

### **Nurturing Self-Esteem and Pride in Personal Heritage**

Beliefs which comprise key elements of this category include a focus on the development of a child's social and emotional needs and a need to create a classroom which encompasses and accepts children of all backgrounds. Underlying these beliefs was

the student teachers' overriding concern with how the melting pot theory versus the mosaic model would encroach upon both Canadian society and their future classroom.

When Kathy was asked why she thought it was important for her to learn about other cultures and share this knowledge with her students, she focused on the relevancy of education in contemporary times:

Kathy: (Students need to know) Canada's identity is changing more and more, but a lot of people have the idea that there is only one Canadian identity and I think that other cultures are getting squashed or losing part of their identity in trying to fit in with the Canadian identity and it's not right (DS#1, K2)....Sometimes you get the feeling that society historically has tried to keep change from happening. They tend to want to have mainstream thoughts continue and keep things one Canadian identity and they may be hesitant to allow you through curriculum or whatever to educate people about different cultures or religions. I think parents, whatever their ethnicity, want their child to go to school and get an education, but not at the cost of losing their own culture or identity. (DS#1, K6)

On her practicum, Kathy remembered the feelings experienced by children caught between the mosaic versus the melting pot:

Kathy: If there's a hesitation on the part of the people around children that what they are isn't accepted....if they're considered different, an outsider or not fitting in with the Canadian identity, I think they lose either respect or a desire to associate themselves with their own culture. As teachers, it's our responsibility to ensure that doesn't happen within our classrooms....On my practicum, students were hesitant to talk about their own cultures. If we were talking about Hinduism in class and the teacher was to ask a child of Hindi background for some examples that they had, often the child would be hesitant, wouldn't want to talk about it as if they were embarrassed....Children have to come to understand that it's okay to be different. It goes back to the old thing that it's not what's on the outside but what's on the inside....It's my job to help students create their own identity for themselves whether it's related to their own culture that they come from or whether it's combined with the Canadian culture....I wouldn't want them to feel that they have to give up something in order to feel that they fit in either in my classroom or Canada as a whole. (DS#1, K3-4)

Indeed, Kathy felt that children have a need to be considered as part of a whole, but that they also retain their own unique and identifiable traits:

Kathy: You need to treat students the same so that they belong, but every student is different. They have their own personality and own background and you need to acknowledge that at some level in order to best be able to reach them, to teach them. (DS#2, K6)

For Simon and Christy, the fostering of pride in one's own culture was deemed a major focal point in their classroom because of stories about people and family members turning on and away from their ethnic heritage. Both spoke with passion and pain in their voice as they recounted these memories:

Christy: I remember as a child the racial slurs from children or being chased home and yelled at because of my ethnic background. It was hurtful. Other times too when you sort of felt judged because of your skin colour. I remember one time when my younger sister had told me that "sometimes I wished I wasn't Asian" because it's just too hard. I didn't feel the same way, but I understood where she was coming from. When you're a visible minority, you stick out like a sore thumb and people say "I know an Asian person" (so I know what it feels like), but they don't totally understand what it feels like to have to always work from the bottom up. Not only that, but it's also being a woman too. (DS#1, C7)

Simon: You need to make kids aware that the teacher and the school values their culture and it's important for the students to have their culture recognized (as part of the Canadian identity)....The worst thing is when people turn on their culture when they see that they're not fitting in. One student was a Cantonese speaking student and she hated her culture since she had a hard time assimilating to the English culture and she ended up just not learning the Chinese language and spending so much time trying to assimilate into the White mainstream society that she lost her cultural heritage and now she just hates it. I think it's very sad and I'm trying to avoid that. A student's culture is something that they should cherish and it's part of their essence, part of their being. I really think in school that it's the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that they are proud of their culture and that everyone is different....It all starts in elementary school where they need to have those ideas put in place. (DS#1, S13-14)

In the next interview, Simon went on to describe the consequences students will face that arise from the pressure to fit in and be like everyone else:

Simon: If students aren't getting the attention that their culture deserves, they might grow to dislike or have an inner hatred towards it. If kids just immigrated here from another country, they're trying to fit into mainstream and get friends....It's a really delicate balancing act and it must be overwhelming to have to weigh being accepted as opposed to retaining the native language....If students



aren't up to the challenge, they could really turn on their own culture....As a teacher you have to accept everyone as they are and make sure equality is enforced and that students don't feel any less than others....It's important for the student's self-confidence that they understand that they can be accepted in society and hopefully retain both cultures. (DS#2, S9-11)

Jean's thoughts in this area were focused on the seemingly divergent rather than complementary goals of academics and the social/emotional needs. He believed that affirming a child's background was just as important as teaching them how to read and write. More often than not, however, Jean thought that too many teachers devoted most of their energy and time into examining the curriculum rather than learning about who they were teaching to:

Jean: Teachers have to be sensitive to the fact that these students do come from diverse backgrounds. Learning about their background helps to educate them because it helps you understand where they are from, who they are, their identity, strengths, weaknesses, and at the same time, it gets them talking to you. (On my practicum), I had this grade four student. Before I tried to learn about his background, I would just basically talk to him about his academic work and replies were always short, terse, to the point: "I don't know, no, yes"....I couldn't make contact with this student and it wasn't until I saw an opening to talk with the student and find out more about him. It made him feel comfortable....important and open up to the teacher....not feel so different but rather similar to the rest of the students, part of the class. (DS#1, J7)

Above all, Jean believed that teachers often forget that they are not there to please upper management, but that they are there to encourage and instill pride in children's beliefs about themselves, both socially and academically. A vision of a classroom with children feeling safe and secure about themselves was Jean's dream:

Jean: The classroom becomes a place where not only academic areas are covered, but important social issues are addressed. With a teacher's positive role modeling of sensitivity and empathy, students can come to a much deeper understanding of themselves through acceptance and appreciation of other cultures and belief systems....then, students become ready for entrance into a multicultural society. (DS#2, J4)

Linda also stressed that students needed to be valued for their unique qualities, although it seemed contradictory to societal expectations that students achieve the same learning outcomes at the end of their general schooling:

Linda: It's really hard when you have really low level learners to expect that by the end of grade twelve that they're going to have as much learning as everyone else. It doesn't seem realistic....I don't think I have the learning to get to the point where kids that are really high ESL or special needs are able to come out at the end with the same knowledge as your regular functioning kids....when they come out of high school with those skills, it's the teachers that get blamed. (DS#1, L4-5)

It was readily apparent that meeting a child's need for self-worth was a high priority for the students, although it was a decision that was weighed against society's demand for academic excellence. In this era of competition, the call to devote more time to the academic subjects has been issued, but attention to teaching children compassion and humanity has been at the forefront of recent literature looking at the moral responsibilities of schools (Noddings, 1995; Roland Martin, 1995).

### **Focusing on Care, Respect, and Acceptance**

As the 21st century approaches, a "new paradigm" in education has been proposed to address the growing concern over the lack of morality seen in today's younger generation. Advocates believe that the main educational aim should be focused on how to nurture students to be caring and compassionate individuals rather than pursuing the relentless drive towards "academic adequacy" (Noddings, 1992, 1995). Although many people believe the school system needs improvement, few critics respond with recommendations outside of answers that rely on more rigorous academic training; unfortunately, these critics have seemingly ignored the changing composition of schools, and instead impose that "all students study a particular, narrowly prescribed curriculum devoid of content they might truly care about" (Noddings, 1995, p. 366). The call for a new and more inclusionary curriculum that may better serve all children is a pressing concern, but as

Roland Martin (1995) notes: "...even when a nation's heritage is defined multiculturally, it is too easy for school to instruct children about it without ever teaching them to be active and constructive participants in living - let alone how to make the world a better place for themselves and their progeny" (p. 358). Proponents of this paradigm shift do not propose that traditional academic achievement be ignored, but they do claim that teaching children to care is an essential requirement in the "construction of human morality" (Diller, 1988, p. 329) and it is the "backbone of human life" (Noddings, 1995, p. 368).

In her classroom practicum, Christy reflected on how her students experienced feelings of frustration over being different:

Christy: My concern was the needs of the students and that I could be culturally sensitive to their needs. There was one student from Hong Kong and he couldn't speak the language. I suggested to my sponsor teacher that maybe we should let him sit with someone who speaks the same language and reduce his anxiety. But unfortunately, in the initial stages, my teacher said, "Well you know if it were a kid from Russia and if we didn't have anyone who spoke Russian then that student would be out of luck so why should this kid get any special privileges?"....I thought it was really unfair but I didn't pursue it. I think it would bring about tension between us (my sponsor teacher and myself)....it was heartbreaking.  
(DS#1, C2)

Later in the practicum, when Christy assumed the bulk of the teaching load, she went against her sponsor teacher's wishes and sat the student beside someone who spoke his first language. When it was apparent that the student was having an easier time understanding instructions and school work, her sponsor teacher relented from her initial hardline position. However, Christy's challenges with her students remained:

Christy: There was one girl who was being made fun of because of her accent. It's sad to see that students were not as sensitive to other students, especially those who were born here, may have come from an Asian background and they weren't as sensitive to [other Asian] students who were not born here. It was sad to see that students weren't as sensitive to other students (of their own culture)....(Another incident was) this one little boy who was Indo-Canadian made fun of another boy who had speech impairments, but at the parent teacher conference, his mother heard our concerns and really pressed on him, reminding him when there was a time in his life he felt misunderstood in some way and she

said, "Well now it's your turn to help someone else right now"....More than anything else, I wanted to address the needs of the whole class. What I ended up doing was trying to help students realize that they had to be respectful and they shouldn't make fun of other people (DS#1, C4-5)....Being sensitive to other people is to show love to others regardless of where they're at or who they are....I feel compelled to talk about the fact that we do live in a multicultural society and how hard it is to live in such a society where sometimes there's no acceptance because of differences. (DS#1, C11)

In the second interview, Christy reflected on the reasons why children of a visible minority would pick on people of the same or other minorities:

Christy: If you're born here, you basically fit in with the rest of the crowd, the mainstream. They're probably not self-conscious, but maybe it's self-esteem. They need to feel good about themselves cause they're different and maybe they feel that it's empowering to make fun of others who are not up to mainstream yet. (DS#2, C3)

When asked about the goals for her students in the area of social and emotional growth, Christy described how she would like to eradicate the pain felt by young children when they are judged harshly by others and feel rejected by society:

Christy: I would like my future students to be more sensitive to one another, bring understanding, and just hopefully, they can, from more understanding, learn to accept one another. It's asking a lot because a lot of people come with a lot of preconceived notions, but I would like students to feel that they learned something about other cultures and people. Talk is one thing, but living it is another. I mean not just you know do the multicultural day but actually to live it out....I would like them to get to the point where they could see the differences and be okay with it. Not tolerate but accept, supportive and encouraging like "Oh that's great."....Schools are like a reflection of society and within this microcosm that they could use what they know and hopefully penetrate the rest of the macro society in a positive way by bringing understanding....I hate that idea of tolerance [of differences] cause that's so empty. It's very empty (DS#1, C8)....Hopefully school can be an environment where students feel they can take risks without feeling like they're going to experience some prejudice or stereotyping. It's idealistic to talk this way. Reality is that school is one influencing agent. We're just one institution and this institution helps to make sure that people conform to society basically and that's what the ironic situation is. It's almost like an uphill battle and you're not getting anywhere, but you have to keep going [and trying]. (DS#1, C15)

Like Christy, Linda also reflected on the widely held assumption that it was the "white" mainstream who were equated with being instigators of racially motivated acts of verbal abuse or physical violence. By using an example from her culture, she expressed shock and dismay at incidents where people of a visible minority would attack others of the same culture:

Linda: Recently, a group of Muslim guys beat up another boy from the community....It was a new guy and everyone decided that they didn't like him, but it was a complete shock that we could, one of our own people, would do that to another....You'd like to think you're going to stand up for your own people and not take them down because there is so much oppression and you want to be able to stand with your own. (DS#2, L2-3)

An incident of this nature seemed to form the foundation from which Linda determined what to do in her classroom to prevent such acts. She spoke at length about empathy and the apparent lack of understanding of what it is or means in children:

Linda: Respect seems really key. You know the whole do unto others....If children realize that they don't like to be name called or picked on that other kids aren't going to like it either....When you're a different colour, you always feel different and when you're not included, you blame it on the fact you're different. You can see it in body language and when they open up their lunch and try to hide something....or when they're sitting by themselves on the playground and watching other kids and have this sad look....I can feel the pain....all the negatives that happen....all the hatred that there is and no good comes from that. (DS#2, L4, 8-9)

For Kathy, she felt appalled at the way people spoke to each other in today's society. From her observations of conversations and interactions between children and parents, students and teachers, and day to day contact with people during the rush hour commute or while shopping, she remarked that the lack of courtesy and rude behavior and tone in people's voices should be a major concern in schools for the kind of adults children would become. Establishing and maintaining a climate of respect would be a central aim of hers, and it would also influence many of the decisions made in the classroom, especially with regards to how she would meet the social and emotional needs of her students:

Kathy: Respect for all individuals goes beyond just teaching respect. You have to teach through education about other cultures and languages different from your own....Allowing there to be differences, accepting and even promoting awareness of differences. I think as a teacher you have to take the initiative to talk about differences, to explain, to educate (DS#1, K3-5)....[When the Egyptian boy didn't want to work with a girl], the way it happened [the boy] made her feel bad and it was also teaching about ways that you can work with other people and not being rude about it. He needs to respect her as a person even if he didn't want to work with her for this assignment....You can't change something that they believe in strongly that's culturally based, but you need to set up boundaries....You couldn't try to change the belief because that has gone on in their culture and in the home, but you could definitely tell them that type of behavior isn't acceptable in the classroom (DS#1, K8-9)....I just expect everybody to be treated equally, cultural norms aside. It's something you need to establish. Not that you can't treat everyone equally, I mean they're individuals and you need to treat them as such, but in general, if your class is to function at all, you need to set up boundaries for working and talking with other students. The way you communicate yourself in the classroom has to be with respect concerning everyone as an equal. (DS#1, K11-12)

In Simon's case, he recalled his own experiences as a child when he was told who he could play with based on criteria that centered on being "normal and Canadianized"-being born here and being able to speak English fluently. From his own experience of discriminatory actions in elementary school, Simon could now reflect on what he needed to do to minimize or prevent exclusionary behavior by his students:

Simon: A good teacher really needs to make sure that all the students realize that there are other cultures in the classroom and that everyone is going to be a little different and that they should be able to accept these differences. The teacher needs to ensure that students leave the classroom not afraid of 'different people' and that they are just like me. They have physical differences or speak a little different but that doesn't mean you should treat them any less than you or I....I remember as a kid you didn't want to hang around the kids that were ESL or LAC or all those three letter acronym words. I didn't even know what they stood for but all I knew was that, "Oh he's LAC or ESL and you didn't want to play with him." It's kind of like you just wanted to hang with English speaking friends (so you wouldn't get picked on)....It's really important for the teacher to make sure that everyone has an equal say in things and they're all equal and that just because you're Chinese doesn't mean you deserve less of a voice...you need to foster a sense of equality and I guess a sense of non-ignorance so that your kids won't be ignorant "Oh so that person speaks a different language. Oh he or she is less than I am." (DS#1, S16-19)

In terms of the stigma attached to children who were labeled, Christy described the problems associated with being a member of a class designated as ESL rather than a regular (i.e. normal) class with a division number which was seen as the "promised land" by the ESL parents and children:

Christy: Especially in ESL, I think kids just want to get out of the class because they're labeled and feel so different. They're so marginalized by their peers....They want to get out and be with the mainstream. (DS#2, C6)

Faced with the daunting task of breaking the stigma attached to children who are considered different and not someone peers wanted to have as friends, Simon hoped that instilling a sense of caring into his students would ease the tension children feel as they try to ease into Canadian society:

Simon: There really is hierarchy. They may be criticized that they're not making a good effort to assimilate into Canada (by not speaking English) so I think they're really looked down upon....I hope that there are sensitive students who will make the effort....give them a helping hand to bridge the gap between their culture and English and try to create a delicate balance but also not rejecting their first culture....For kids, their logic is simplistic. If they don't understand something, they might hate it and if they're not given an opportunity to see how people are so much like themselves then it robs students of being able to intermingle with different cultures and make up their minds for themselves. (DS#2, S10-11)

In the end, Simon stressed that a consistent approach by an entire school would be needed if the goals espoused in a multicultural policy could be realized:

Simon: Without consistency, students will be getting mixed messages: "Well this teacher values it but this teacher doesn't." They might end up being just as ignorant as before (DS#2, S14)....You have to make students understand the ideas behind it. It's not like a catchword or a buzzword but that they understand what it means....The end result should be acceptance or at least a tolerance....You have to build on that. (DS#2, S17)

The change in social reality has become such a pressing concern for educators, and has necessitated a call for the movement of schools away from the role of on-looker to one of deliberate involvement and action in teaching children the meaning of courtesy, grace,

respect, and acceptance. Unfortunately, the student teachers believed that the moral development of children was a responsibility that was too often neglected and denied by their profession. To be responsive to the welfare of the children in trying times, schools must become an environment "characterized by safety, security, nurturance, and love" (Roland Martin, 1995, p. 357).

### **Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment**

The rising violence in schools has precipitated the creation and proliferation of programs such as "Second-Step" and "Bully-Proofing Your School" to try and address the oppression endured by so many students today. For teachers, the challenge posed by children who are considered outsiders or pointed out as social isolates is formidable, but considered essential to producing students who can be classified as being an "educated citizen", one who is "co-operative, principled, and respectful of others regardless of differences" (B.C. Ministry of Education, 1989, p. 3).

Throughout Jean's interview, he stressed that, too often, children were made aware that they did not belong both at school and in their everyday lives. Questions about whether teachers should emphasize similarities or differences were a focal point in Jean's formulation of plans to encourage children to identify themselves with the school and Canadian society:

Jean: You can help to socially develop students by making them more aware of the fact that there are cultural differences but you've got to do it in such a way that you don't stress differences, make the other person feel out of place, and at the same time, you've got to educate the other ones....When we go into differences, the students come out just seeing black and white: "Oh you're different to me. You're not similar to me". In that way, I think stereotypes start or at least they are perpetuated (DS#1, J4)....On my practicum, students were told they could break up and the groups were quite mixed and it was quite non-threatening and there was a feeling of security....exposing the students to different cultural groups and there were no qualms or uneasiness in mixing....Once the student's self-esteem has increased, once the student feels part of the group, not different, learning will ultimately occur. (DS#1, J8-9)



For Linda, the imparting of knowledge that would enhance her students' awareness level and acceptance of the "otherness of others" (Aoki, 1992) was rooted in her belief that children feel that they had much in common, especially for those belonging to minorities:

Linda: I think it's important for children who are a minority of some sort to feel that they have things in common with other kids, that they aren't different all the time. So when they're on the school or on the playground, that they're not always aware of their differences, and that they learn that they have common interests and common goals, and they're quite often the same as other kids....By setting some sort of standard in the classroom, intolerance of name-calling or stereotyping, and having that go from the classroom to the playground that hopefully they'll be more comfortable....to offer a safe atmosphere where they feel that they can come if they're having troubles that they can come and talk. (DS#1, L13).

Being there for students in times of need, and acting on a code of conduct for classroom behavior would set the tone for a safe environment:

Linda: Establishing rules for mutual respect and by allowing children to feel safe by knowing that they can come talk to me if there is ever anything that bothers them and letting them know that I'm open and accepting....You need to open yourself up and opening up the door to your classroom to others and letting them know that there are so many other cultures. There is diversity....Teachers can quite often be the only person that children will trust. (DS#2, L9-10)

Linda went on to describe how her sponsor teacher established such a climate by involving the students in their learning and encouraging them to dream and pursue their passions:

Linda: The teacher was a positive role model and allowed the students to feel safe. Allowed classroom discussion and made it obvious to the children that they could come and talk to her and made them feel included in decisions, not just everyday things but in activities and class work they want to do as well. (DS#2, L11)

In contrast, the students on Christy's practicum appeared to be a group of "wandering souls" who felt excluded because of prior experiences and preconceived notions about each other:

Christy: They felt different in terms of their abilities because we (the students) come from this very culturally diverse class, and right after that, you go into "okay, how are your academic skills?" and that's really focused on. I mean that separates people. Some kids are new to the country so English is a second language and they're experiencing an uphill battle. The other is special needs or a combination of both....They feel isolated because maybe you don't understand and they know people have relegated them to certain spheres....I try to include them all myself and make sure everyone can address issues in class at different times and the thing is I can do that....(DS#1, C13-14)

Although Christy had high hopes for what she might be able to accomplish in the future, she acknowledged that she was only a small, almost negligible influencing agent in the students' lives. Christy also stated that however idealistic she sounded, change must and could only begin if teachers would take the first step in "making the world a better place":

Christy: For the sake of the children, we can't totally eliminate everything that goes on outside of the classroom, but within the classroom and the school, it would be nice if harmony could exist and a staff that really strived to be good examples to our students.... (DS#2, C9)

Christy's interviews demonstrated the wistful innocence and bright eyed aspirations of a beginning teacher who placed children's needs at the center of the curriculum and classroom decision making. By inviting their students to be decision makers and giving them choices about their learning, the student teachers hoped that the students could see themselves as being integral and important members of the classroom 'family'. With the alarming rise in violent incidents being reported in schools, the provision of a safe and inclusive haven for children in the classroom was the only way a teacher might be able to prevent his/her students from falling into the trappings of oppressive behaviors themselves. Beyond the temporal context of the classroom, the students shared the hope that teachers could be lasting influences in children's lives, and challenge the hegemony inherent in the larger society.

## **Resisting the Lure of Assimilation and the Status Quo**

Racial diversity has been perceived as a welcomed characteristic of Canadian society, yet at the same time, it also has had the enormous power to divide a nation trying to embrace its multicultural label. The struggle to enhance intergroup harmony has resulted in strategies for integration, and, most notably, vigorous demands to suppress differences in an all-out bid for assimilation (Hood & Parker, 1994). But in an age of democracy and protection for freedom of rights, where is the honor in calling on "others" to lose their "otherness", or for children to be ashamed of the "two-folded texture of their lives" (Aoki, 1992)?

When the student teachers were asked about what could result from their efforts to promote cultural understanding, they spoke of their classrooms as being places of hope - to legitimate the lived experiences of their children and allow them to dream of what could be. Their shared social and pedagogical vision is united by a desire to affirm who their students are and who they can become. "Educators, as advocates for children, one of the most powerless of populations" (Pang, 1988, p. 31), need to remain vigilant to inequities woven into our social fabric. From this understanding, it is hoped that teachers may be able to engage in a "collective struggle for social change" (Hood & Parker, 1994, p. 164) and have their classrooms be a place where they and their students to "gain a glimpse of the kind of society we could live in" (Bigelow et al., 1994, p. 4).

Although Christy began the interview with vivid memories of how other children taunted her in elementary school, such experiences were also to be revisited as an adult. In university, Christy described some classes where she remembered feeling outnumbered and challenged by peers who ascribed to a focus on commonalities. At the time, she didn't get angry at her peers for their opinions, but went on to discuss her thoughts on this topic in the interview:

Christy: In socials, [the focus] was to stress what we have in common and not so much the diversity. I guess for me if you're a visible minority you feel like sometimes you're losing your identity because you're trying to fit in so much that you forget your identity. It's important to allow children to express their ethnic customs....I brought in a book called "People" and it was showing all these diverse cultures and groups within the world. I was saying how great this book when another student said we should stress the similarities and not make a big deal about it [diversity]. It was hard and the discussion was getting heated...I mean we're taught to talk about the similarities, that's one thing, but we should also be free to talk about what differences we do have that makes us unique. (DS#1, C5)

When asked about her beliefs regarding goals for education in a diverse cultural society, Christy voiced her fears that students would feel the pressure to lose part of their identity in order to become a "Canadian":

Christy: The curriculum prescribes goals for you, but sometimes I wonder if the general goal is to try to fit in, try to assimilate and basically be like the rest of society....I get the impression that we are told not to make any waves....It sounds familiar to how it was like when my parents came to Canada. It feels like the same wave from more than twenty years back. The same rhetoric is still prevalent today: "You'll do better to fit in with the rest of society and be able to compete with everyone else or it will be really difficult"....School is a reflection of society but we're also an arm of society whereby we help maintain societal norms and values. (To change the meaning of mainstream), it means a total upheaval of societal values and norms and culturally accepted behavior. (DS#1, C9)

In her next interview, she continued to emphasize the tremendous loss to children when they took what they believed were the necessary steps to be accepted:

Christy: I think one of the sacrifices you make to fit in is to lose some of who you are. That's the saddest part. I don't think you should, but the true reality is it's assimilation and the melting pot. You almost have to lose a part of who you are....it's almost like survival so you won't be discriminated against. Part of me has felt that way when I went into the west end school. I felt like I had to dress like them although I couldn't be quite like them. (DS#2, C4)

"Educational change begins and depends on the teacher" is a phrase that is often bandied about, but Christy wondered if the teaching profession was prepared to challenge the status quo:

Christy: Change begins with the teacher, but it also begins with society, and we are limited too because we follow codes that pay our cheques. That's unfortunate but the truth. We conform whether we know it or not to what is called of us....Are we trying to maintain the status quo? Do we want students to conform to the mainstream?...I mean we have to really reflect and evaluate our own roles in the classroom personally....Hopefully you'll have a bit of freedom in your own class and make sure your kids aren't pushed into such conformity where they can't breathe....Teachers are a socializing agent and you mold some of the beliefs and values of students. (DS#2, C7-8)

Linda also wanted to discuss the pressure of being different from other students not only because of skin colour, but also, for example, because of language barriers, cultural expectations that families place on the child, and socioeconomic status. Linda's references to "being on the outside looking in" drew on her childhood experiences and family's guidance as she continued to focus on the dichotomy of difference and sameness:

Linda: I think back even to my own childhood and I remember the feeling to conform and I think now especially where there are so many expectations placed on kids when you come into a classroom and you're a little bit different than the other kids, there's a big pressure on them to socially conform...I was lucky that (my family) were quite Westernized already. Like I didn't have an accent or my parents didn't have an accent that really separated us from a lot of people other than our colour...but I always felt I was treated differently...I know that my Dad always used to say because you're a minority you're always going to have to work harder than everybody else, but I never really understood that.

Nellie: Do you think you understand it now as a future teacher?

Linda: Yeh, now I do...I think society places a lot of pressures on minorities. There's just, almost that stigma attached, (like) you know the minorities are getting all the jobs and because of that the western society doesn't want the minorities around. So as a minority, you feel you have to work harder. You have to prove yourself. You have to show everybody that it's not just because you're a minority and it makes you tougher, makes you really want to succeed and work really hard and get somewhere. (DS#1, L1-2)

The adage of needing to work harder than others appeared to remain applicable and pervasive in people's attempts, and sometimes desperate measures, to ensure that their child could compete in today's society. At times, Linda felt that minorities were so preoccupied with attaining the North American dream that they did not stop to reflect on the costs to their children in their drive to assimilate and become a success in the eyes of

their family, friends, and cultural community. One such example of this relentless pursuit of upward mobility was provided by Linda's observation in a coffee shop:

Linda: I saw an Asian man and his son who looked about three years old. There he had all these worksheets for him. They were going through the letters of the alphabet and he was spelling words. The father was watching and showing him how to do the letters....To me it was almost too much at three, maybe four, and I kind of thought, "Okay, what's going to happen in school?" This is going to be the child who's going to demand more homework and more work to do but not only for him but because he's going home and getting that. (DS#2, L3)

From a pragmatic perspective, Kathy and Jean both spoke about the pressure placed on teachers by ministry directives that stressed the curriculum over the child. For them, the status quo represented a society driven by a "survival of the fittest" motto where good teaching was often equated with turning out academic scholars rather than children who demonstrated strengths associated with the affective domain:

Kathy: Society is at a crossroads. Some people want children to go back to basics - to look at the product. Look at reading, writing, and arithmetic, and that tends to be going a bit backwards. They tend to be focusing on competition and success, and yet there is this new emergence of alternative schools and different schools trying to address the needs of students whose needs aren't being met in the regular public school system. It tends to be going both ways. Some schools are focusing on the mainstream, doing the curriculum one way, and those people that don't fit into that curriculum will then fall through the cracks (DS#1, K13-14)....[My teacher education program] tended to focus on the academics. They tended to teach the what you have to teach, what you need to know to teach certain subjects, the core ones outlined in the curricula, and different ways of teaching that material. It tends to be more what you actually do as a teacher and it doesn't really look at who you are going to be teaching or focus on the child as a person....They can't teach you how to teach if they don't teach you about who you have to teach. You can have all the methods courses you want, but unless you understand the population that you are teaching, I don't think you will be successful. I'm not sure of what the outcome would be if you don't take into account your students or the society around you - the different people and cultures. If you don't take that into account, what kind of students are you producing or will come out of your classroom? (DS#1, K16-17)

Jean: [In today's culturally diverse society], teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that these students do come from diverse backgrounds and to try and understand the backgrounds that these students have come from and use that

knowledge to work toward educating that student....It saddens me to say that I don't think that it [this aspect of teaching] receives much attention. I think a lot of kids are slotted into a spot, and from that spot, teachers teach them as students and not as individuals coming from a different background. I don't think teachers take much time and effort and research into the child's background. Teachers spend more time looking at the curriculum rather than at their students. (DS#1, J2)

Kathy and Linda also reflected on the importance and essential need to examine future teachers' thoughts on cultural diversity because they may also present a further obstacle to attaining equity for all children in schools. At university, one professor was noted for her continued emphasis to push for awareness about the implications for teachers regarding the changing face of contemporary classrooms. However, her topic and style of teaching was not well received by several of their peers:

Linda: A few had some real opinions as to where those kids should be. You know, like ESL kids needed to have specialized classrooms or learning assistance or kids with special needs shouldn't be integrated and actually continuing with segregation. It was shocking some of their views and being in this profession. (DS#1, L8-9)

Kathy: I've encountered some student teachers that tended to be egocentric and weren't too welcoming of "foreigners" coming or may have lived their whole lives in Canada. They weren't so open to accepting a Canadian identity that was different from their definition....People that have those types of views hold them very strongly...they may have grown up with maybe a unilateral view of Canada (DS#2, K1-2)....Just like its your job to educate the students you have to try to educate your colleagues. (DS#2, K4)

Like Simon, Jean believed that students should be made aware that many culturally diverse groups contributed to Canada's development as a nation. He used a unit on immigration that he taught on his practicum as an example to tie together his belief that education and knowledge helped to counteract negative images held by students. Although Jean acknowledged the central role of content in teacher planning, he stressed that knowledge conveyed to students should serve as a "lightning rod" which could draw them away from complacency:

Jean: The students were involved in the research (students were allowed to research a cultural group's history of their choice) and were actually gaining knowledge about this topic and were more into it and interested because of the fact that it wasn't slotted. It wasn't pigeon-holed and it wasn't something they had to do on a particular society-or cultural group. The very fact that it was open and broad led, in my mind, the students to the realization that culturally diverse groups came into B.C....certain stereotypes had been broken. On the other hand, post-testing on stereotypical attitudes...it was sad to see that a lot of the students still held onto certain images they had...but I think the very fact that they reached the knowledge that B.C. was composed of different groups and that certain groups came in. They helped on the railroads...sawmills...you know they reached that. (DS#1, J3)

Nellie: Did you interview your students on the practicum, talk to them about the stereotypes they held?

Jean: Yes, about half a dozen of them. I was quite shocked to see that some kids that I thought were quite innocent and naive to certain things had such strong opinions...There was one little kid. He came up with the comment that all First Nations were drunks and you know I asked him (about where he got this image from), he said "I don't know." That was a highly charged statement for him to make...After I finished speaking with him, I think he realized that he had gotten this (idea) from somewhere and he was just taking it and using it at will. Not realizing how important it was and how wrong his perception was. (DS#1, J3)

Ultimately, Jean believed that what students learned in school was intimately connected to the betterment of society:

Jean: (As a future teacher), I say that helping students develop socially and morally would be number one on my list. I think society is going down the drain and I really do think that the students who will grow into young adults soon need to have a different view....they need to be more entrenched in reality rather than some sort of artificial notion stuck onto them or some wrong notion about differences....(DS#1, J8)

Similarly, Simon felt that to be true to the notion of a multicultural nation, education in Canada required the active and cognizant participation of all teachers if schools were to truly represent the principles of democracy and justice in Canada:

Simon: You have to stress and make sure kids understand that in the society that we grow up in today that there are people with different colour skin; there are people that have different languages and that you shouldn't be afraid. I think it's really important to learn in school that people are, should be treated equally. It's in our charter of rights and everyone should have an equal opportunity to learn and have an education. It starts at the ground level in elementary school in that they need to grow up with unstereotypical influences even though their parents might



feel this way (DS#1, S14-15)....In this day and age, you can't go back to the racist ways some people feel. I think we have to start now in building a society that is free of racism....we have to teach them these values so they (the students) don't grow up to be racists and people that are prejudiced towards other people....You can't go to the classroom and just preach like the white dominant society's way of looking at things. The reality is that we live in a multicultural society, but you have to give kids the opportunity to experience different cultures and see things from more than one point of view so they won't be as ignorant when they grow older....It's your job as a teacher to break down the racial barriers and make sure that everyone is perceived as equal. (DS#1, S17-18)

Simon's continued emphasis on presenting children with multiple points of view on an issue stemmed from his own childhood experiences and his belief that classrooms have to adapt to the reality of a diverse society. The message students received when they were young was key to eliminating the idea of a hierarchical arrangement of cultures and race superiority:

Simon: I think I was brainwashed as a child in that I only saw the white way of looking at things....It's interesting how everything was once controlled by the church and then you got the White Anglo-Saxon point of view and how it molded what the education system is today. I remember back to grade one when we had to say the Lord's prayer and I know they don't do that anymore since so many things have changed....It's a reality now that we have all these cultures and you have to adapt. If it wasn't here, we'd still be learning the dominant society's point of view. If these people (the diverse cultures) didn't present themselves, I don't think society would change (DS#1, S18-20)....Students need to understand that when it comes to intelligence, all cultures are really equal, and regardless of stereotypes that are placed on certain cultures, I think students should take each individual person into consideration. (DS#2, S7)

Education is a lifelong process where "commitment to self-appraisal is the first step in the challenging journey to meaningful reform" (Pang, 1988, p. 32) and to believe change is within the realm of possibilities. In this collection of excerpts, the student teachers extended their classroom boundaries to reflect on their role in society. Their desire to "make the world a better place" for their students, through the elimination of all forms of discrimination, was foremost in their mind, and that to be entrusted with the job of the shaping of young minds was a tremendous and daunting responsibility. Perhaps the greatest challenge was how the student teachers could 'convince' children of minority

groups that they didn't have to give up their cultural identity in order to fit in and be accepted. To resist the lure of assimilation and the status quo was not an easy feat, especially when the children in their classes could see that speaking English and acting like a Canadian was sometimes the only way they could stop the teasing and the ridicule - a point not lost on the student teachers who, when reflecting on the inherent expectations of their job, also saw themselves as socializing agents employed by the public to transmit and uphold the cultural norms and values of western society. Despite this paradoxical situation, the student teachers were determined to help children maintain a strong sense of self and protect them from sacrificing a part of who they are in order to 'make it'. Through personal experience, the student teachers knew that the loss of part of one's identity was sometimes irretrievable, and this painful lesson was one that they did not want passed on to their students.

## **Part 2: Illuminating the Experiences Behind the Conceptualizations**

### **Introduction**

This part of the chapter examines the second research question which underlies the major research question:

*What life experiences have influenced how preservice teachers conceptualize their role in a culturally diverse society?*

The data for this question was generated in interviews of the first and second data sets by probing students' responses when they discussed what they thought would be their role in culturally diverse classrooms. Again, considerable effort was made throughout the interviews to use open-ended questions rather than present the students with specified topics. For example, when students would present ideas on what they believed was an important goal in their future teaching, they were asked to discuss what lead them to form such beliefs. It has been commonly noted that teaching practices reflect belief systems,

and in turn, reflect personal experiences and backgrounds. As Cabello and Burstein (1995) state: "Learning to teach diverse students requires that teachers examine their beliefs about teaching and explore the effectiveness of their practices in accommodating the various cultures, lifestyles, and learning styles of their students" (p. 285).

The presentation begins with perhaps the most difficult moments of the interview - when students themselves recalled times of discrimination against themselves or against others. Categories which stem from their formal education program are presented, and how the students felt about having the opportunity to "speak their mind" and explore the issues in depth is described.

### **Injustice in Society - Enduring Personal Pain and Hardship**

Many of the student teachers believed that being a visible minority enabled them to have an "insider's point of view" to what is entailed in encouraging and celebrating diversity in classrooms. Having been 'targets' of slurs or discriminatory practices, the student teachers believed this would allow them to be and remain vigilant to such incidents in school. Such experiences also permitted them to truly empathize with students, a notion that they believed was too often used in classrooms without much substance or meaning for children.

Early in the interview, Linda spoke with tremendous enthusiasm about her thoughts on working with children from such a multitude of backgrounds:

Linda: I think as all new teachers that are ready to burst out on the scene, I want to be a teacher that will make a child feel that they're not different, that they have an active role in the community, in the classroom, and that they're provided with some sort of learning in the safe atmosphere that we learn about. (DS#1, L1).

But as the interview continued, Linda began to move away from idealized statements to reflect on the difficult realities that minorities continue to face today. She drew on her dealings with peers and her family to discuss why it was important to her that her

classroom would be a safe haven for all children. Throughout her school years, she recalls that because there were very few minorities, it was easy to stand out in a crowd, and it caused her to encounter strife and struggle to maintain her self-esteem:

Linda: First of all, as a minority, I was always made aware of that fact. By being so aware and having my Dad tell me quite often, I had to almost prove myself which really bothered me, but made me really aware of difference....I feel I'm a bit more understanding of the hardships and pain that minority children go through realizing that they're so different and they're made to feel painfully aware that they're different. (DS#1, L11)

In the second interview, Linda drew parallels between her own experiences and her students, and elaborated on how she knows that Canadian society is still uncomfortable with its multicultural label:

Linda: Every time I start to feel like I was fitting in, someone would either name call or point out colour or ask what my name meant or where I was from or what religion I was or something that would make me realize that I was different than everybody else....When people asked me what I am, I say that I am Canadian, but people aren't willing to accept that. They want to know more. Sometimes it's out of curiosity, but it also just makes me feel that I'm not looked upon as a Canadian....I'm sensitive to my students because I am a minority and made very aware of it. (DS#2, L9)

Simon also reflected on the persistent feelings that mainstream society was not encompassing of all cultures in Canada. Despite the multicultural label, Simon stated that being an ethnic minority brought both pride and pain. He described times when he was the only minority in a place, and how he was made to feel awkward in those situations because of looks or comments he received. As a result, he believed that he could really support students who had been victims of discrimination:

Simon: Because I'm an ethnic minority that I understand what some of the students go through and I can really empathize with them....I've had the experience of being in situations where I was the only Chinese person in the class or in the group, what it feels like....I'm aware that there are other cultures and how they must feel not being able to communicate or being able to fit into mainstream society...I can empathize...understand...have the right attitude going in. Not saying, "Oh, you'll get English. It'll be no problem, it'll come...."(DS#2, S7)

For Simon, the ability to speak English well was the major factor in determining how people would ultimately be treated in everyday situations. He believed that people who did not have a good command of the language would not be accorded the same respect or service as someone with native-like fluency:

Simon: I've been in enough situations to notice like someone who has no English to try to understand people speaking English...I think people who don't speak the dominant language are really looked down upon...It's kind of in between the lines, it's not really stated. There are people who know how to speak English and they get along and can communicate with native speakers....There are others who recently arrived here and there really is a hierarchy that they're frowned upon, may be criticized that they're not making a good effort to assimilate into Canadian society. (DS#2, S10)

As a result, Simon did not want his students to live with the same pain he continued to witness and experience in his own life. He strongly believed that teachers were in a position to break the cycle of discrimination if they took a united stand and began to chip away at the obstacles and oppressive circumstances faced by children of ethnic minorities:

Simon: I have felt some racism, but I haven't (suffered as much as others). Like I've heard stories of people that have been laughed at and they've been beaten up. It's just been really tragic and they really remember all these racial slurs or prejudice. I think I would be in a good position to deal with racism in the classroom and have the empathy and understanding....I'll be able to make kids aware that making fun of people's skin colour, accent, or the way they look is not a good thing. (DS#1, S12)

Christy's painful experiences with injustice led to an emphatic belief that she would do whatever she could to protect children against the same pain. Because of society's continued inability to rid itself of discriminatory practices at all levels and institutions, including the educational system, Christy also expressed a clear mandate of her responsibility to the children in the classroom.

Christy: I'm dedicated to ensuring students will have a safe place in the classroom and are not discriminated against themselves. I see how today people are discriminated today based on their gender, based on their race, their economic status. It's such an injustice. I really abhor that. (DS#2, C5)

With her experiences of being a "double minority", Christy also believed that empathy was lacking in many people. But if classrooms were to become safe environments, teachers would have to learn that the emotional needs of children should be a priority, and the development of empathy in both teachers and students was crucial to the success of any program dedicated to the notion of inclusivity:

Christy: I think you have to put yourself in the situation as to how empathy is nurtured. I think whether it's innate or whether it's learned, part of it is somewhat innate and part of it can be learned. The reason why I say innate is that if you're a minority chances are you would have at one time felt or can identify with people who have been discriminated against or you yourself have been discriminated against, and the only way I think you can learn is probably to put yourself in the shoes of the children. Try to see past yourself, what you think you are, but put yourself in the children. (DS#2, C4)

Beyond the classroom, Christy discussed the role teachers may be, unwittingly, playing in the perpetuation of a society that continues to be characterized more by its discriminatory rather than its egalitarian ways. At times, her speculation led her to dwell on thoughts which were uncomfortable and would be considered extremely unpopular among the ranks of her colleagues:

Christy: I think people who are basically on top, think that being the same causes less waves, and that's probably why teachers have little or no acceptance to the teaching of difference. Without stereotyping, I think people who are in a privileged class and can't see past that, who've never experienced racism or other discriminations based on your skin colour or never been stereotyped in that way, I don't think they can fully understand because they have so many privileges that minorities don't. It could be that people want similarities. If you have a majority of views that are similar, then it causes less waves. (DS#2, C5)

In her line of thinking, Christy reiterated her belief that the profession of teaching was a career that belonged to the privileged class. Although of course there were exceptions to such a wide generalization, this may be one reason why teachers may not, if ever, be truly ready to make strong personal commitments to extend their classroom teachings to try and eradicate the ills which continue to plague society:

Christy: Honoring diversity is such an uphill battle is because we're not value free. We come with a lot of influences within our own lives. As professionals I think everyone comes in with different backgrounds and we don't even have harmony outside the school so why should we expect it inside the school. I mean there's so much diversity outside. Of course it's going to come in. I mean just because we're inside a school doesn't mean that we can escape that. (DS#2, C9)

As the lone member of "mainstream" society among the interviewees, Kathy felt that she didn't have much in the way of personal experience with respect to the topic of diversity, but that moving to Vancouver has enabled her to grow and learn about issues faced by minorities:

Kathy: I don't think my background has prepared me very well for implementing a program that meets the needs of children from diverse backgrounds. I didn't really have much experience with children from different cultures growing up so I think I'm limited perhaps even biased in my own views since I haven't had that exposure. Since moving out to Vancouver six years ago, I've been exposed to a lot more cultures, and I'm beginning to learn a bit more but I still have a ways to go. (DS#1, K16)

By moving to a city that is deemed multicultural, Kathy has also gained first-hand knowledge about the growing pains in a city learning to cope with its ever-expanding diversity. At times, she encountered an incessant "us versus them" mentality which lay beneath the tranquil blanket of cultural harmony, an image put out and perpetuated by so many educators:

Kathy: I think I've met a lot of people who aren't very accepting of other cultures. I've seen people who make fun of other people or tease other people or make derogatory remarks towards people of different cultures and I think that's mainly the result of ignorance so I think the main way to combat that prejudice and discrimination is to educate people. (DS#2, K1)

Kathy maintained that too many teachers had a "ho-hum" attitude towards the topic of multiculturalism and diversity because they didn't believe that it was a problem in schools, or more specifically, in their own classroom. However, despite her lack of so-called experience with, for example, racism, Kathy stated that she had witnessed too many

incidents of inhumane acts to fall in line with the status quo and be apathetic in the classroom:

Kathy: I don't have much experience with multiculturalism and diversity, but I guess a lot of it just comes from your own experiences, your interactions with people in society and I guess it probably comes from seeing bad examples of people treating other people without respect and you know people talking to others as if they're somehow superior and I think that's the stuff that sticks in your mind and it bothers me when I see it on the streets and I guess as a teacher you realize the opportunity to expand children's knowledge and view of the world so I think that would be the best way to try and address it is with children. (DS#1, K9)

In an earlier excerpt, Linda recounted how others never accepted her identity of being a Canadian. Ironically, Kathy also discussed the definition of a Canadian, and how a myriad of identities would be required to attempt to approach a definition. Moreover, such an image and associated traits underlie how the meaning of this country may be at the root of acceptance of its multicultural character:

Kathy: I thought I should redefine what it is to be a Canadian and I was thinking and thinking and I still couldn't come up with a definition so I thought it was like multiculturalism and I guess Canada doesn't seem to have one definition of what it is to be a Canadian. There is no one single person type that represents what it is to be Canadian. I think there's a wide group of people that would be needed if you wanted to have a picture of a Canadian person so that was interesting that even though I tried to think of one I couldn't come up with a definition. (DS#2, K10)

Vivid moments of discrimination helped to shape the students' outlook and understanding of why some children were rejected by their peers. Memories of name-calling, taunting, and feelings of being an outsider (with the exception of Kathy's childhood) united the student teachers in their desire to ensure that such things would not happen in their own classroom. Although school was acknowledged as only one influence in a child's life, it was also regarded as having the potential to play a pivotal role in determining the kind of adult the child could become. Only when teachers are able to demonstrate and work towards instilling empathy and compassion in their students can the



school become what critical theorists call "sites of resistance" and begin to chip away at the oppressive forces operating within society.

### **Teachers and Professors with Passion**

The powerful influence of role models was not underestimated by all the students. From family members to friends, a support network was essential in helping students learn to make decisions that consistently considered ethical and moral guidelines. In the context of the classroom, teachers are constantly faced with making decisions that range from the mundane (e.g. lesson plans) to more serious issues involving moral problems (e.g. violence). For the students, the kind of teacher they would become would be partly shaped by their own philosophy, as guided by their support network; but increasingly, they also believed that their sponsor teacher and professors would be critical influences in determining whether they and their future students could or would actively stand against injustices in their school.

Because of her practical work and volunteer experience, Linda knew that classrooms and communities had become extremely diverse. She thought that many of her peers, and her professors, were sheltered from this fact because of their background. As a result, Linda recalls only one professor who seemed to understand and highlight the changing responsibility of teachers:

Linda: I had one professor who was really good for being open to diversities in the classroom, and this was not all professors. There seemed to be a lot more focus on children with special needs and multicultural as well....She was very passionate about inclusion and diversity in the classroom and about our role as teachers in creating a culturally diverse and aware classroom. I really learned that it is our responsibility. (DS#1, L8)

The proactive style of her professor helped to affirm Linda's belief against the separation of children because of language barriers or physical disabilities. She watched as her professor was also challenged by her peers, some of whom strongly opposed

integration of ESL and special needs children. By embodying her beliefs about teaching people to care through both her words and her actions, Linda saw that her professor modeled sensitivity for her students even when she came face to face with adversity and dissension. Linda was able to draw strength from watching how her professor handled the animosity from some of her students:

Linda: She was very realistic and she opened up a lot of different doors and allowed us to explore there and to realize that we're not going to have the perfect white middle class classroom. We're going to have kids with different abilities and cultures....Some students had a really hard time accepting that there were going to be different abilities and diversity....She was unique because she was (and remained) open and accepting (of the different opinions). (DS#1, L9)

In the second interview, Linda was asked where she thought her professor drew her passions from:

Linda: I hope everyone would be able to be just as passionate as her, but I think when you're a minority, it becomes more. I think because she's a lesbian, she'd felt the stereotyping and the negativeness of other people. I don't think it was just that, but she just felt even more strongly....(DS#2, L8)

When asked how she might change a colleague's opinion about integration, Linda spoke about the importance of connecting the real world to classroom content at the university level too:

Linda: You need to learn hands-on, not just reading articles and analyzing and discussing them but to have real life situations and relevant discussions and having instructors who are knowledgeable and aware and that can open up the different classrooms and cultures to you. (DS#1, L13)

Linda went on to elaborate on the enormous difficulty with trying to change and mold an adult's way of thinking:

Linda: I think I would try to change their mind without pushing because adults have some pretty set ideas, but I think it would be important for me to voice my own opinions and have them be more aware. I don't know if I could actually change someone's opinion, but to make them more aware that if we can do this as adults, then we can allow our children to learn as well....once the children leave the

classroom they have to be able to survive and function on the playground and in the world they have to be able to socialize and interact with the changing world. (DS#2, L4)

In Christy's case, she also discussed a professor who inspired her because he did not shy away from controversial issues. The way he presented issues would force student teachers to come down their "glass tower", and look at the harsh realities that children in today's society come from:

Christy: I really am enjoying an educational studies of philosophy course. It's been beneficial to understand how to help students. The professor allows us to talk in class about inequalities and when you talk about inequalities, the inequalities that stem from race, gender, and other things you know that are related to those who don't received the same type of privileges others do. Those are the beneficial things and also my ESL courses. It's given me helpful applications to help students from diverse backgrounds. (DS#1, C6)

When asked to specify what was particularly engaging about this professor's style of teaching, Christy named and described his ability to be inviting and open to all points of view, but at the same, also force his students to consider their moral responsibility as teachers when making decisions in the classroom. In addition, this professor facilitated discussions that centered around the importance of thinking through a philosophy of education to discover and examine one's personal biases. Once revealed, the opportunity for change, rather than an adherence to outdated thoughts, was made possible:

Christy: What's beneficial is the fact that I had opportunities to relate to the faculty a little bit. I think when I come back to the whole issue about ed. studies, we were given a forum where we could discuss issues. He brought us a variety of controversial issues, and those were really critical in shaping my own philosophy on teaching. I think those were the beneficial times when I had to look at where my own values and beliefs stem from and come to some kind of understanding of them. (DS#2, C8)

In contrast to Linda and Christy, Simon did not feel that he had any professors who drew out his passions about cultural diversity. Moreover, he was extremely disenchanted with how the faculty did not offer in-depth culturally diverse perspectives because courses

and professors continued to emphasize the "dominant society's point of view". In his classes, Simon stated that children were lumped into one generic mold, and students who didn't quite fit into homogeneous group were rarely mentioned:

Simon: Most people in the faculty are of the dominant society, and that's the way they see it, and they kind of see multiculturalism as an aside kind of thing. They might talk about it, but it's kind of "Okay, we'll deal with it. We'll just throw it in and we'll talk about it and then it will be done." I think it goes back to the fact that they might not understand how people of ethnic minorities feel. I think there's a lack of empathy and they don't know some things that people grow through as they grow up. All the racism they're exposed to and I guess they don't understand what it's like to be an ethnic minority. I don't mean to sound racist, but I think they take it for granted that they're white and they don't really understand that people of different cultures do come across barriers and obstacles along the way through life. (DS#1, S21)

In the long list of recommendations researchers make about improving the status of cultural diversity in education programs, the presence of "minority" faculty was considered a key ingredient. Such an addition brings "unique racial and cultural perspectives that add to the knowledge base of majority faculty and students", and programs which "utilized the cultural capital of minorities" could enhance the preparation of student teachers in contemporary times (Hood & Parker, 1994, p. 169). Simon also concurred with beliefs that minority faculty could play a crucial role in encouraging critical discourse about cultural diversity in an education program's curriculum:

Simon: Professors who are a minority probably get more of more different perspectives rather than the dominant society's point of view because that teacher has different experiences...like you'd see things maybe not from the mainstream society's view. It really opens your eyes to different ways of looking at things....I think it's really hard for someone not from an ethnic group. I'm not saying they wouldn't do as good a job, but I think they would lack some empathy and some understanding. If you have someone who's actually been through all this teasing and all this racism and they know how it feels to be an outsider and not be accepted in mainstream Canadian society, of course they'll have a different slant or way of approaching multiculturalism. They'll actually identify certain issues that someone from the dominant society might gloss over or completely ignore all together. (DS#2, S12)

Simon, though, described his sponsor teacher as being extremely influential in helping him develop and affirm his beliefs about being forthright in his abhorrence of inequities in school:

Simon: My sponsor teacher was very knowledgeable and has an excellent repertoire of multicultural knowledge. She knew how to create a warm and equal environment, and she took the time to nip problems in the bud....She's very proactive in a lot of areas and well aware of the students' needs....I really learned a lot from her, and I fear for people in the program who didn't get sponsor teachers who aren't as of high caliber as my sponsor teacher....(Your sponsor teacher) could really influence the way you teach (DS#1, S10)....She showed me the ropes....knew how to run a classroom very well and acted as a good model....If I had had a really weak sponsor teacher, I think I'd be really lost and be a deficit to the teaching profession....I have all these ideals in my head, but to see it in practice made me feel good and that it could be done. (DS#1, S21)

In Jean's case, he also attributed little of his learning about diversity to his teacher education program. He believed his ideas came from personal experience, especially with his beliefs that society was losing its way in moral development, and that teachers needed to be part of the intervention plan. On his practicum, Jean watched how his sponsor teacher actively worked to break down cliques:

Jean: The students (on my practicum) felt included and were guided along the path of moral development. It was mostly because of the sponsor teacher and the way the classroom was structured and the teachers in the school taught....It was sort of intangible, but the way it was set up, kids were mixed, and the way they had come through the school, they had been exposed from other teachers to the fact that they could mix. It was really wonderful after the first week when the kids were in rows and we told them that they could break up and go into groups that were quite mixed in gender and race. It was quite non-threatening and there was this feeling of security....It was a lot of modeling from the teachers in the school and probably because it was the east side of Vancouver that they had been exposed to different cultural groups and there were no qualms or uneasiness mixing. (DS#1, J9)

From what he stated was a cynical view on the ills that plagued society, Jean stated that his priority would be fostering a child's moral development. When asked about being challenged by parents who wanted an emphasis on the academic subjects, he referred to his practicum once again. His sponsor teacher had taught him that teaching involved more

than the 3R's. For example, when you teach children to respect others or why they shouldn't plagiarize a piece a work, you are giving moral guidance. As a result, his sponsor teacher described to Jean that this was an inherent and inevitable part of teaching which he now understood:

Jean: In the future, I see myself devoting a lot of time and energy to the students - getting to know them better, making them feel similar not different, and hopefully aiding their moral and social development. I think once I address that goal as being primary, I think the academic arena will fill up automatically because once the student feels comfortable, self-esteem has increased, feels part of the group, not different, and begin to move his or her desk to the front of the classroom or with other groups, learning will ultimately occur. (DS#1, J9)

In the absence of strong teaching figures, the students believed that they would not have held out much hope that the fortunes of cultural diversity could be reversed. Although they held many visions of what a classroom could be, they did not believe that their ideals could be realized until they saw them in practice. The idealized image of the teacher they strived to become could and did exist in the real world. Hearing the inspirational words and witnessing the passions of teachers who fought against the tide of conformity gave the students the drive and the strength to continue in their work towards equity in schools.

### **Ever-widening Gap between Academia and Practice**

For most students, there is the belief that their formal education would be elevated to panacea like status and equip them with skills to successfully make the transition into the working world. With respect to issues around the subject of diversity in classrooms, though, the students expressed frustration with the scant attention paid to the topic in their university courses. Although they did not believe that their teacher training would provide them with all the answers, there was an expectation that it would at least be in step with contemporary educational issues.

Simon stated that his practicum experience was the most useful component of his education. In both interviews, he reiterated thoughts that theory was useful, but like the curriculum for children, such lessons needed to be relevant in order to be meaningful to the learner:

Simon: It was the practicum experience that I really learned how to be a teacher (page 6)....There is only so much you can go with the methods courses....It just can't be all theory. It just can't be, "Okay, here's a scenario"....You have to be in the environment to know all the factors and all the different things that happen in a classroom. It's all the little things that really add up....you can't really analyze those in a classroom at university....(DS#1, S9)

After the practicum was when Simon and Kathy both believed would be the most opportune time for students to dialogue with the university professors in education. Emerging from the experience with new insights and knowledge gave students the confidence to provide feedback about the applicability of various topics to today's classroom:

Kathy: The practicum was really helpful in making me aware of the areas that I needed more education in and I think that either those courses weren't offered or it's frustrating when you know what you want to learn and what you need to learn to be successful, but you can't either get into the courses or they don't offer the courses. The education program needs to look at the courses they're offering and why they are offering them. Why are they spending half a year teaching about the politics of school and the administration of schools when information like that can be looked up in a book. It's not something that is difficult to grasp. It's straightforward and readily available. A course like that can definitely be replaced with several things that it could be replaced with that would be much more useful....The most beneficial was the actual practicum which is sad to say when you figure you spend a year and a half in the classroom when you're supposed to learn all this stuff and how to teach it and how to address the needs of your students who are culturally diverse. Yet where I learned the most was actually in the classroom when I got to see the different students the different ways they worked. (DS#1, K14-15)

Simon: I think the program needs to be re-evaluated and refined, and I know it's an on-going process. They change it every year. I heard this year everyone has to do a specialization, and hopefully these will be ESL or special needs or just things are relevant to classrooms today. The program needs more input from students and what we're learning should apply to the classroom. (DS#1, S21)

After completion of their course work, Simon and Kathy remained perturbed that "mainstream" topics continued to push the topic of diversity to the outskirts of the program. Overall, both lamented about the priority given to the subject:

Simon: (As I finished up my courses), we touched on multiculturalism in edstudies but other than that, it was really treated as kind of an auxiliary topic. It was the kind of thing you learned in the classroom, kind of learned by experience....They give you theoretical knowledge and they made you aware of it, but they didn't really go in depth. It was really glossed over and it wasn't really addressed the way it should be. (DS#2, S3)

Kathy: As far as the program talks about naming the different cultures that are within Canadian society, but it doesn't spend time getting to know the background of these cultures, no depth....They always talk about how there is cultural diversity, but they don't tell you how to deal with it, how to address it, or how to promote it. A lot of courses that they are required are far less useful than they think they are. Courses on politics and administration don't really help beginning teachers with the things we need before we start teaching....People that are teaching now say that if you can get some ESL courses take them because that'll help you. Yet the program didn't offer a lot of these core courses this term because of the lack of teachers or lack of funding. A lot of them weren't offered so it doesn't seem that the program really wants to address cultural diversity. If it was one of the main issues in today's education, you think that one of the core courses would address it more than it does. (DS#1, K13)

With respect to her practicum, Linda also described it as an experience that allowed her to see the areas in which she thought she was lacking knowledge or understanding. In particular, she repeatedly expressed tremendous frustration with her inability to reach "ESL" students in her classroom, and talked about addressing the needs of both future teachers and students of today:

Linda: I think they need to make ESL a required course. It's definitely an elective, and a lot of people take it, but it's not offered often enough so everyone can have the opportunity.

Nellie: Why don't you think the program isn't offering it as one of the required courses?

Linda: I think it just could be the program not willing, not wanting to change and not wanting to go with the changes with the changing world. I think it's been a set program for so long that they're not looking at what's going on in schools and saying they're offering the courses, but not allowing it by not making it



compulsory. They're not accepting that there is the diversity in the classrooms. (DS#2, L6)

In addition, her first-hand experience with diversity in the classroom caused her to grapple with the issue of applicability of theory:

Linda: In the courses that I took, it would be hard to apply all the theory they tell us will work in the classroom.... Sometimes I thought to myself I just don't know after going on practicum, I think you could sit back and realistically, quite a few times I thought, "No it wouldn't work".... (The education program) is restricting because it doesn't allow for teachers to explore. (DS#2, L7)

When asked about what exploring in the education program would mean, Linda also strongly believed that there was a demand for a dialogue between students and faculty to discuss the criteria for compulsory and relevant courses:

Linda: I think more and more people are realizing that it's (diversity) something that they have to learn and it's something they have to be aware of.... My psychology professor changed her students who had some pretty strong ideas and opinions. Her being so open and wanting to make everybody aware, I think she found that really hard.... But a lot of people after the course said that they had learned a lot from her.... She did it in a way, well she was a strong personality, and she tried to make it everyday as possible that these were children you were going to find in your classroom, and it wasn't just a one in hundred kind of situation.... This is what you would find and without education, without knowledge, you were not going to be able to effectively teach. (DS#2, L7-8)

Among the participants, Christy appeared to be the most vocal about the low priority given to issues about cultural diversity in the education program. During both interviews, she spoke with reticence about whether her words and valiant effort would be a futile attempt to bring about a change in this situation:

Christy: There were some times where they (the university) do talk about multiculturalism but it's kind of grazed by. You may get one or two days spent on these issues, but not like the amount of time I think should be spent on it. (DS#1, C5)

When Christy was asked why she was, and almost the only one to consistently bring up the topic of cultural diversity, she attributed it to her background experiences and subsequent outlook on society:

Christy: Maybe personally I don't feel like they (faculty) can do justice to what it feels like to be a visible minority. Some profs do recognize and acknowledge the needs of visible minorities, but maybe I feel compelled to say something because I am a visible minority and maybe it's out of my own experiences that I feel that I can convey the message better because I am a visible minority. I don't know. Some profs have pinpointed a lot of things need to be addressed and a lot of them have done a great job, but sometimes we need to add more to it. Maybe I feel like it's we can add more to it. I know for sure I am a minority within the faculty. There aren't many visible minorities in the faculty. (DS#1, C7)

In the second interview, Christy was asked to to elaborate on her views on why the education program devoted so little time to cultural diversity:

Christy: Even despite the fact that you take courses like ed. studies where you're taught to be more culturally sensitive to your future students, I still find it that I would find myself always trying to bring up those topics. We would talk about issues that only pertained to maybe Europe, European history and studies, and I would always find myself quick to raise my hand and ask my "Well you know is it only pertaining to Europeans? What about you know other cultures?" I always feel I have to talk about those things....When you look at the textbooks and the materials that we have received, they're culturally biased. For a long time, a lot of historians have been Europeans so basically there's a lot of male European influences biases which doesn't include people from other cultures or gender. (DS#2, C1)

When asked whether she thought it was a professor or student driven demand to focus on a more Eurocentric perspective, Christy referred again to how one's experiences would influence how and what topics were presented and integrated into an existing framework based on the education one received:

Christy: I think both. I think we're all conditioned and socialized and taught in a certain way from a certain kind of education program. When I reflect on my own studies, it was very European based as I recall. You work with what you know basically, and I can say I would have to admit I know a lot more about European history than I do know a little bit about other histories, but not as much as European and Canadian history. (DS#2, C1)

To learn about children who may not fall within the continuum of "normal, regular functioning student", Christy discussed how a person interested in this area would need to select the course from a list of electives. On her own initiative, she took linguistic type courses to help her gain knowledge about language acquisition for ESL students, but even then, she expressed frustration about the continuous separation of the academic and emotional components of the child:

Christy: The general education program didn't prepare me (to teach ESL). Mostly the ESL class that I took on the side, on my own time, prepared me better, but I think they just said, "Be culturally sensitive." But what does that mean? Like what are they saying? They don't give specifics. It's hard for you to understand because they use a blanket statement and they want you to fill in the blanks and try to figure it out but I don't recall that they showed you how. (DS#1, C12).

When asked why she believed that courses on ESL and special needs children were electives rather than part of the core program, Christy again pointed out the inherent hierarchy in school and society. For example, ESL or special need classes were often located in the school basement or they were considered for a division number only after all the 'regular classes' had been numbered. Those students who were not considered part of the mainstream were, more often than not, relegated to "afterthoughts":

Christy: This just tells you how much children are valued - the ones who fall into the ESL and special needs categories. It tells you the value that the education system puts on children who are ESL. They're never considered first for any decisions made....I think they're starting to realize that ESL students make up a majority within classrooms but I think whether the teacher will actually do something about it is another thing. Teachers who are teaching ESL need a lot of support and they're not getting as much as they need or should. (DS#2, C3)

When the students were interviewed for the second time, they had completed the requirements for graduation. As they began to make the transition from their school life to the job market, they were still disgruntled about the apparent disparity between their education program and the actual classroom. Their beliefs were reinforced and made abundantly clear during several of the students' job interviews with school districts:

Kathy: I had an interview with a school district which asked me how I would address the issue of multiculturalism in my classroom considering the diverse society of that school district. The education program is out of step because I think a lot of it has to do with the people in the program who are teaching these future teachers have been out of the classroom for long periods of time. They're older instructors who may not have experience in schools, and the people doing the interviews for school districts are out there in the public schools and they see the student population that's coming into the classroom. They see the problems that may arise or issues they think need to be addressed and when they ask you about multiculturalism in an interview and it definitely shows that they believe in multiculturalism and believe that it's important for their teachers to believe in it. (DS#2, K10)

Linda: I had an interview with this school district, and a large focus of the interview seemed to be on multiculturalism because they asked you a lot of questions about it. I thought that was interesting.

Nellie: Did that surprise you?

Linda: It didn't cause I heard that it was a progressive district, but it surprised me that they were very focused on it that they seemed to come back a lot to that question. They wanted to know how I was going to a classroom inclusive for different minorities or children, how I felt I was going to do that, how I was going to make children culturally aware, what my classroom was going to look like - I knew they wanted to know more about that as well. (DS#2, L1)

Linda believed that because of her personal experiences, she was able to answer the questions confidently:

Linda: I went on my own knowledge. I kind of pointed out that I was a minority and by going on my own experience, I hopefully could teach the kids through what I had learned. (DS#2, L1)

Simon: I had an interview not too long ago and the interviewer specifically asked me the question: "How would I set up a multicultural classroom?", and I had some things to say and I'm really glad that I had the chance to think about it and it didn't catch me by surprise. I was able to say things what I've said in the interviews - being aware...giving students the opportunity...having that connection....(DS#2, S13)

In contrast, Simon stated that quite a few of his friends were not prepared to answer questions about the topic of cultural diversity in the interviews:

Simon: Some friends were caught by surprise and they did not feel they answered the question adequately. It just really hits home about the reality of

multiculturalism in the classroom and it's sad that it's not a requirement in the (teacher) program. (DS#2, S14)

When the students were asked what they might say to the "powers to be" about the content of the program, the students commented about the kind of preparation student teachers would need to truly be prepared and ready for the classrooms of today:

Simon: I don't know how some people in the program are going to deal with ESL when they go out into the teaching world. Some of them won't have the training, they'll be lost, they'll be looking for people to talk to....they'll be put into a situation and as I said "Basically, here teach these students"....I feel sorry for some of my colleagues who are from the dominant society and they don't really have an understanding what it's like not to speak English and they can't really empathize with the students so it's going to be tough...frustrating...lead to problems....So they should have some introductory knowledge in this area....I think you really need to, as a teacher, take that responsibility to have as much knowledge as you can possibly have going into the classroom. (DS#2, S4-5)

Kathy: The education program tends to look at mainstream culture or at least what mainstream culture used to be, and I think that is still what they're aiming for in their education. They're trying to teach all teachers how and what to teach, and how to control their classrooms. They teach them management strategies and how to deal with problems but they don't really address the issues behind why these problems may be occurring such as cultural differences or whatever. It's not really proactive. I think it's more teaching you how to deal with things after they happen or once they happen without necessarily teaching you how to keep them from happening....It's talking to you about what you would do in this situation, how would you fix it...but it's more of a reactive approach. (DS#1, K16-17)

The students were lead throughout life and conditioned to believe that schooling and education would provide them with the quintessential how-to of teaching. But in this case, these students were left with more questions than answers after the completion of their program. The information offered on issues of cultural diversity in university was a poor simulation to the actual classroom situation. Uneasy feelings of insecurity about whether they were ready to go out into the "real-world" were exacerbated during their interviews with various school districts. Although they had rehearsed their answers for how they would set up a reading program, the student teachers and their peers were not prepared for questions about how they would celebrate diversity in their classroom. It

was certainly at this critical time in their career, making the transition from student to professional teacher, when the widening gap between academia and practice was made excruciatingly apparent. Even though the students had objected to a Eurocentric perspective in the program, they also acknowledged that they were unsure if they could rise up to challenge the mainstream dominance of the school curriculum and promote the tenets of multiculturalism. As beginning teachers, they stated that they still had so much to learn, and that every experience, including being interviewed, would continue to mold and shape their journey to 'becoming a teacher'.

### **Articulation of Beliefs**

At the end of each interview, I asked the students if they wanted to add any further comments before we finished. Often, they commented on how exhausting the process had been, but surprisingly, they were thankful for the opportunity to discuss their concerns, hopes, and dreams about what teachers should be able to accomplish in their career. In the context of a large institution like the university, students expressed frustration by being caught in bureaucracy, top down directives, and, at times, displays of hypocrisy. More importantly, however, they wanted the Faculty of Education to model what they preached about student centered learning - student voices should be heard as part of the process of improving curriculum and modeling lifelong learning through a continuous desire to better serve the needs of a changing profession:

Simon: This has been a good experience for me. It just really made me kind of glue everything together what I've done over the years about multiculturalism, and it's been a good opportunity to voice my opinion about the teacher education program, where it needs refinement and retuning, and where changes should be made. Whether they're made or not, it's out of my hands, but at least I've made my voice heard....Not many people graduating from the program may have this knowledge...they may ignore it or give it less importance than it should really deserve so I think it's been a good opportunity to talk. (DS#2, S17)

Two student teachers also repeated Simon's ideas, but they also focused on how the interviews made them realize the intricate and sometimes overwhelming complexities associated with the job of teaching. Initially, they both assumed that if one could write good lesson plans, know the curriculum guides, have management skills, and be a caring person, then one would be able to confidently step into the role of teacher. As Britzman (1986) notes, teaching is the most familiar of professions in the public domain, but as Linda and Kathy discovered, there is so much more than meets the eye:

Linda: I learned that I do still want to continue to be a positive support in the children's lives, but I am starting to realize that I'll be faced with different issues. It's not just kids in the classroom, it could be other children, parents, teachers, and I don't think I had ever given a lot of thought to that. I just wanted my classroom to be positive and diverse and inclusive, and I was going to make it happen without a lot of thought of the doors that I would come up against. I think that'll be my policy. I want to be able to open the doors and make it a really positive place. It'll be a challenge, but a good one. (DS#2, L11)

Kathy: There are so many things to consider when you're teaching. There are so many different aspects of each child that you need to take into account that it's hard to come up with just one way of teaching. I think that's one of the key things. Teachers need to be prepared, to be flexible, and be able to adapt to the things that happen in their classroom so they can take the opportunities that present themselves to better educate their students. (DS#1, K18)

In the second interview, Kathy further described her contention that all teachers need to remain open minded and flexible to new ideas. These traits were essential in supporting and encouraging an education system that would avoid becoming outdated and unable to meet the needs of children in the 21st century:

Kathy: The one thing that this interview has taught me is that it's tough to define your own view because I mean you're biased. Everybody has their own biases and you can't see something completely objectively so although I think I'm fairly multicultural in my attitude, I also recognize that there are some things that you've brought up in the interview that I hadn't thought about and then it makes you question yourself. Sometimes you think that one thing would work but then someone gives you an example where that wouldn't work so I think you have to be able to adapt. As long as you have a strong foundation, like a strong base (of knowledge and understanding), then you will be able to adapt. (DS#2, K6-7)

Christy also discussed her fears about teachers who were unable to adapt to changing times. She speculated about the various paths she would take on her way to becoming a teacher now and in the future. At this moment, she held this image of herself as being a strong proponent for cultural diversity, yet she wondered what would happen after many years in the system. Would she also be in danger of being worn out from fighting the status quo and fall in with the masses under the umbrella of complacency? She hoped, however, that whatever might happen to her during her teaching career would not undermine her determination and passion for such things as the elimination of racism and the importance of nurturing children to care about one another:

Christy: When you've been in the system for so long, after a while, I think you can be a bit desensitized to the situation at hand, to be honest. If someone's been teaching for twenty years and they see the same situation, they're desensitized to things....Since we've been talking, I've been thinking maybe it's cause I'm just out of the system and so keen on these things. Maybe twenty years down the road, I don't know how I'll be like, but hopefully (I won't become desensitized because) part of it is my own personality because the fact is that these things mean something to me. (DS#2, C8)

Opportunities which explore, refine, reflect, and challenge one's belief system are critical to the formation of a personal philosophy of education which one carries throughout one's teaching career (Zeichner & Liston, 1987). For all the students, the articulation of their beliefs was a difficult process, but it also helped them to clarify their views. The interview experience helped the students gain insights into the challenges that they could face in the future, and further strengthened their resolve to work towards meaningful educational reform for all children.



## Summary and Discussion

In the first part of this chapter, six conceptualizations were presented to describe qualitatively different ways in which students conceptualized their role in a culturally diverse society. The presentation began with their conceptualizations of the importance of raising awareness in their students and within themselves. The acquisition of knowledge was thought to be one way to eliminate ignorance in discriminatory acts and practices such as the exclusion of a child because of skin colour. The remaining conceptualizations were broadly organized into categories which emphasized affective outcomes and a collective vision of a 'better tomorrow' for all students. Within these categories, various foci of interest were described. Concerning the social and emotional needs of children, themes revolved around the process of leading by example in the development of self-esteem and positive relationships among members of different cultural groups. Apart from academic subjects, the students wanted to teach lessons about "real life", but they also expressed a tenacious insistence and protective instinct to shelter the children by providing a sense of security in the classroom through instilling respect, acceptance, and compassion in their pupils. Thinking past the pragmatic concerns of daily teaching, the students also wanted to extend their teachings beyond the school or individual level and work towards social change. Such a change was defined in several ways: eliminating racism, tackling stereotypes, reducing prejudice, caring for fellow humans, and being able to critically examine systemic discrimination in institutions to achieve equity for all people. In these discussions, attention was focused on the role and potential of the teacher to affect the hierarchical arrangement of class and culture in schools and the larger society.

An examination of the conceptualizations constructed by the students reveal that they shared many of the same characteristics and goals of the categories proposed by researchers in the field of "multicultural education". For example, Grant and Sleeter's (1994) typology includes approaches which focus on helping students adapt to an existing

structure and environment, the strengthening of student self-concept and interpersonal skills among racial groups, recognizing the contribution of different cultural groups in the building of a nation, presenting different perspectives on how inequities are played out, and analyzing oppression to develop skills for social action. However, the conceptualizations portrayed above are based upon the content of students' responses in the interviews rather than a summary of the literature; they are the result of an analytical process that had the goal of categorizing students' responses on a collective basis, and do not represent any one individual's way of thinking about their role in a culturally diverse society. Ironically, during preliminary meetings to establish rapport, all the students stated that they had little knowledge of the well-known authors or research findings in this area, and it was highly unlikely that such writings could have influenced the students' beliefs.

The students were extremely diversified in their background profile, and as expected, they gave wide ranging and varied responses. Yet, it was clear that they all were united in their goals and beliefs about the role that teachers should play in a country undergoing dramatic demographic change. These student teachers demonstrated a desire to bring hope back into the lives of all children, and a commitment to the vision of a future with possibilities rather than one that is predetermined or foreclosed. Each student believed that taking care of the social and emotional needs of the children was as equally important as teaching the academic subjects. When asked why, the students spoke about how the feelings associated with low self-esteem, depression, and rejection could easily be overwhelming and effectively stop children from having the ability to concentrate, for example, on the multiplication tables. Accordingly, the teacher's attitude and actions were considered instrumental in creating an inclusive environment which aimed for the respect and acceptance of all children. If the student teachers expected to instill a sense of humanity in their student's treatment of each other, they also needed to show care, compassion, and empathy. In ever-evolving classrooms and understandings, the students

emphatically stated that it was the teacher's professional responsibility to continue their learning beyond the university years and be knowledgeable about pressing educational issues. In contemporary times, this knowledge would necessarily include the topic of cultural diversity. Despite differences among the methods by which they would achieve these goals, the students believed that it would take drive, initiative, and an incredible inner strength to avoid falling, with ease, into the existing structures in societal institutions.

With right wing rhetoric and conservative agendas securing their strong hold on the status quo, approaches such as those coined by Liston and Zeichner (1991) and Grant and Sleeter (1994), "Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist" (see Chapter 2), call for a major restructuring in teacher education program. This type of approach, as supported by critical theorists, is the only one in which the goals of social and structural equality have any chance of being realized. Its main focus is a program dedicated to the preparation of educators who will teach their students how to recognize and analyze inequality and oppression in society, especially as this pertains to their own life circumstances. It was this type of education that the students hoped for in their future classrooms.

For beginning teachers, the students displayed a profound understanding of the societal context of schools, and of the moral responsibility associated with teaching young people. Teaching about morality went beyond stating rules; it also had to foster and appeal to a child's emerging sense of humanity. The interviewees were appalled to think that teachers would stand idly by and not partake in helping students learn about ethical issues and guidelines as part of the decision making process. As Jean stated, "society is going down the drain" (DS#1, J8), and the moral and social development of children, who represent the future, must be a major priority in classrooms today. If future generations were to contribute to the evolution of a more just world and the improvement of social

conditions for all people, the status quo had to be challenged by teachers and their students. However, as Christy noted, teachers were in the precarious position of belonging to the privileged class. For this reason, they may be unprepared to be truly committed to an inversion of society, or unable to 'resist the lure of assimilation or the status quo'.

In the second part of this chapter, four categories were presented to capture the experiences students believed had influenced the way in which they conceptualized their role in a culturally diverse society: 'injustice in society - enduring personal hardship and pain', 'teachers and professions with passion', 'ever-widening gap between academia and practice', 'articulation of beliefs'. Within these categories, various personal anecdotes were described. Themes interwoven in the description concerned the cycle of oppression, the strength drawn from teachers who represented a vision of the future, and the knowledge gained from experiential, hands-on learning in the field.

In the first category, the students recalled memories and acts of intolerance and discrimination. If they were a visible minority, the students stated that they were easy targets for members of the mainstream to exclude them from the inner circle. Seemingly, what was at stake was the right to be considered and be included in the definition of being a Canadian. Particularly urgent was the desire for the student teachers to protect the children in their classroom from the same experiences they had endured. To stop the pain, teachers and schools needed to be cognizant of how their students were being victimized in order to break the cycle of oppression.

The outcomes for the second research question are consistent with the constructivist perspective that students experienced the teacher education program with pre-existing beliefs and made sense of their learning in the framework of their belief system. In terms of a constructivist theory on learning, prior experiences impact on how students will receive and integrate new information. While two students may sit and listen to the same

lecture, they will make different interpretations of the same experience. As noted by Linda, Christy, and Kathy, some peers favored a 'bootstrap' type of philosophy rather than worrying about how to meet (i.e. 'cater to') the needs of diverse students. Although Linda labeled such beliefs as "shocking", it was equally disturbing to see this sentiment seemingly carry over and occupy the dominant position in most university classes. Overall, the students expressed disappointment in their teacher education program with respect to issues of cultural diversity, difference, or equality in education. In general, the core courses gave minimal attention, if any, to such topics. One had to take electives to pursue information on ESL or special needs children, and the hidden message students gained from such an arrangement was, once again, the lack of importance placed on children who did not fit the traditional profile of the 'typical' kid. As pointed out, though, the face of Canadian classrooms was dramatically changing, and children in schools could no longer be classified or counted on as being 'typical'.

The components of the program which contributed most to the students' learning about cultural diversity were the thirteen week practicum and the professors who made the topic a focal point in their class. The practicum was where students were able to experience the reality of today's classrooms, and begin to piece together a philosophy of education that was congruent with their beliefs in the attainment of equity for all children. The most salient experience, however, was the opportunity to work and be in the presence of a teacher, whether in an elementary school or at university, who embodied the qualities of the compassionate educator the students dreamed of becoming. In the age of cynicism, the students were presented with role models who spoke a language of possibility and hope, and were given a personal sense of efficacy to engage in realizing and living out their ideals in the classroom.

In conclusion, students' responses in the interviews indicated a rich and wide variety of perspectives on teaching in a culturally diverse society. Their life experiences were

inextricably tied to the formation of their belief systems, and in turn, framed how they viewed their role in the classroom. Within the education program, the long term practicum, combined with professors who encouraged the discussion of controversial issues and the moral responsibility of teaching, set the context to help students refine and reflect on their thinking about cultural diversity. A final factor involved the participation in this study. The opportunity to discuss and reflect on their beliefs gave them a chance to explore the issues with greater depth. The interviews gave students a chance to clarify their understanding, priorities, and commitment to educational equality and excellence. The process also enabled students to see the incredible complexity of teaching underneath its familiar exterior, and realize the constraints involved with trying to resist the lure of assimilating into existing systems and structures.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Making the Transition from Student to Teacher: Conclusion and Implications**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of the study was to portray students' conceptualizations of their role in a culturally diverse society (first question), and to examine what experiences were influential in the formation of these conceptualizations (second question). Interviews were conducted with students in a two year elementary education program. The outcomes of the analyses of data for the research questions underlie the study's rationale and claims. Given the paucity of Canadian studies in this area, the portrayal of students' conceptualizations of teaching in multicultural classrooms make a substantive contribution to the literature. The study also informs the practice of incorporating a 'multicultural' perspective in teacher education programs. It provides insight into the ways in which some students viewed and experienced the topic of cultural diversity in the teacher education program. Drawn from these insights and the outcomes of the two research questions, a proposal, in the form of recommendations, is made regarding an approach to multicultural teacher education.

This chapter is based on these intertwined and inter-related contributions, and consists of three sections. Two sections consider the outcomes in relation to the contributions made by the study - substantive and pedagogical - and the third section offers considerations for further research.

#### **I. Substantive Contribution: Students' Conceptualizations**

This section reviews the study's outcomes with respect to the first and second research questions. The focus is on the "substance" of the conceptualizations portrayed in Chapter 4, especially as they relate to approaches outlined in the literature.

### *Conceptualizations of the Teacher's Role in a Culturally Diverse Society*

Six conceptualizations were presented for the study's major research question. They are a portrayal of the visions of future teachers as they begin their role in classrooms that are becoming increasingly diverse in student needs and composition. Although there was a great deal of consensus about the aims of teaching in a culturally diverse society, there was also a high degree of variability among the responses from this group of students. Based on the wide range of issues raised, it may be inferred that the interpretation of multicultural education for the classroom of these future teachers fell on a continuum - from an emerging awareness to the more reflective and in-depth search for meaningful engagement of ideas about diverse others. A first conclusion arising from the study is that these students, collectively, espoused qualitatively different ways and degrees of thinking about education in a multicultural society. A factor which contributed to the variability of perspective within the conceptualizations was the distinct life experiences of the participants revealed in the second research question. At university, only one or two professors were cited as exemplars and role models in deepening students' understandings about multicultural theory. With such minimal exposure to the topic of cultural diversity, students felt that little of the information presented in university classes could be construed as expanding their knowledge of the issues. Instead, it was the differences in the students' personal backgrounds that were the most influential in the formation of their beliefs and commitment to teaching in a culturally diverse society. While some had been raised in communities with relatively few overt acts of discrimination or violence towards minorities, others had experienced and witnessed the pervasive and persistent nature of oppression, prejudice, and privilege. From such markedly different initiations into the structure and fabric of society, the students drew upon these experiences for their interview responses.

Overall, the conceptualizations could be divided between two broad foci: the professional development of the teacher as purveyor of curriculum and, in turn, the



teacher's responsibility to translate this knowledge into practice while, at the same time, addressing the social and emotional needs of the child. For the first focus, the students discussed the indispensable need for the teacher to be knowledgeable about contemporary issues, the power of being a role model for children, and the desire to somehow make a difference in order to have the world become a better place. With respect to the second focus, the students turned to examine the integral link between the self-worth and esteem of children and their ability to succeed in school. With such different foci, the resulting dilemma was the question of which issues would constitute appropriate and inclusive curriculum and guide teacher decision and practice for multicultural education. Although the students were extremely aware of and deplored discrimination in all forms, they were somewhat limited in the scope of their explanation of how teachers perpetuated the stratification in the existing social order and what they could do to promote equity. This result was not surprising given that these students were at the beginning of their teaching careers, and even experienced teachers lack depth in their understanding of structural inequalities in society and the education system (Kailin, 1994). With the exception of Christy who voiced her abhorrence over a dominant and strongly held view of equating multiculturalism with the tolerance of 'other', the students perceived culturally responsive teaching as a way to meet the needs of individual students rather than as a way to challenge the "framework of a society (and its institutions) in which racism and discrimination are normative" (King, 1991, p. 136).

At the heart of each interview was the issue of teacher neutrality in the moral development of children where, in particular, students cited their desire to eliminate racist and stereotypical attitudes among children as major goals. In another study examining beliefs about the role of the teacher in the implementation of programs focused on achieving such goals, students were divided between the ideas of teacher neutrality and the impossibility of presenting unbiased facts or perspectives in the classroom (Harrington &

Hathaway, 1995). In this study, the students believed that teacher neutrality was not only impossible, but that it was also detrimental to the achievement of educational goals designed to attain equity for all children. Teachers who remained neutral on issues of oppression, for example, contributed to the continued stratification of society, and were committing an incredible disservice to an education system that promises to attend to the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds. However, when the students were asked to give examples of how they translated these beliefs into practice, most of the students stated that they had devoted little time to anything "multicultural" on their practicum. Students attributed this situation to their 'temporary guest' status in a classroom that belonged to and was ruled by someone else (i.e. the 'real' decision maker). If their sponsor teacher did not perceive the topic to be important, the students felt that they could do little else but follow their lead. Although one student appeared to be more insistent on gaining some leeway to implement her ideas, the majority were relegated to the role of 'silent' participant and, ironically, found themselves involved in a very personal battle over power and control in the classroom.

In general, the type of multicultural practices modeled in these classrooms centered around the development of awareness and respect for others. While important in any classroom, the emphasis on interpersonal skills may lead to the interpretation that the sum total of multicultural education is the human relations approach (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). As a consequence, resulting policies and practices often "require no fundamental changes in the views, assumptions, and institutional practices of teachers and administrators", and do not support nor encourage the reform needed to equalize life chances of all students (Banks, 1988, p. 99). Although the practica were located in culturally diverse settings, the conspicuous absence of multicultural theory at the classroom level highlighted the discrepancy between actual practice and the rhetorical commitments in school policy. For many of the student teachers, they were taught to teach about rather than for diversity,

and consequently, distance themselves even further from the realization of "meaningful educational change" (Fullan, 1982) and the kind of reform advocated by multicultural proponents.

In summary, the findings of this study demonstrated that prior life experiences were extremely influential in how preservice teachers constructed their belief systems and, specifically, their conceptualizations of teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. These findings are consistent with studies by Cabello and Burstein (1995) and McCall (1995) that point to the significance of personal background in how students receive, or reject, information about cultural diversity in their teacher education program. Although difficult to modify or change, Cabello and Burstein (1995) state that it is only through experiences that "create dissonance" and involve the cycle of new knowledge, teaching, and reflection (p. 286) can teacher education programs hope to challenge the ingrained images and beliefs of their students. Such experiences are essential to the development of teachers who are able to implement pedagogical practices that are characteristic of inclusive classrooms.

## **II. Pedagogical Contributions: Illuminating Beliefs about Diversity**

*Knowledge is not transmitted from teacher to student but rather invented and reinvented together in a dialogical exchange. The learner is more important than the content, which is constructed in relation to the background, needs, and interests of the students....through a process of dialogue and reflective action in the interests of a more just and equitable society, I believe in the knowability of pedagogy. (Ahlquist, 1992, p. 91)*

This section examines the study's outcomes from a pedagogical point of view, and deals with the relevance of students' preconceptions about teaching, the place of a culturally relevant curriculum and teaching practices in the education of student teachers, and the question of whether particular conceptions of 'multicultural education' should be promoted in education programs. Finally, the research outcomes, as evidence of the

"knowability of pedagogy", are used to support a proposal for an approach to the preparation of teachers for culturally diverse classrooms (Ahlquist, 1992, p. 91).

***The Assumption of the Tabula Rasa: Student Teachers as Co-investigators in the Construction of Knowledge***

Historically, students have often been viewed as tabula rasas - blank slates to be inscribed upon (Miller & Seller, 1990). This view persisted into university where, in one study examining prospective teachers ideologies about learning in a multicultural foundations course, students strongly believed that "knowledge emanated from experts, and their own role was to passively absorb content generated by teachers" (Ahlquist, 1992, p. 93). If we were to follow this reasoning, there would be little need for interpretive research to explore students' beliefs because they would know nothing that would be relevant to the instructional content delivered by experts. These issues - the place of students' views on learning, the value of interpretive research, and the pivotal role of students' personal beliefs in a curriculum for cultural diversity - are inter-related concerns and questions of this study.

A constructivist perspective on learning underlies this study's desire to elicit and portray student's beliefs about teaching in culturally diverse classrooms, particularly within the context of experiencing their formal education program. Given the differences between the adopted theoretical framework of the study and the transmissive oriented approach to education indicated above, the findings demonstrated a rich variety of knowledge and understandings instead of the more traditional, conformist, and limited view of students assumed by some university instructors (Hood & Parker, 1994). The outcomes also substantiate claims that students do not arrive in university as empty vessels to be filled; rather, the "story of learning to teach begins actually much earlier than the time one first decides to become a teacher" (Britzman, 1991, p. 3). This position has been reiterated frequently in the literature on students' pre-instructional knowledge of teaching

and learning, and the recent research on the implications of such knowledge with respect to cultural diversity for teachers and teacher educators (Chapter 2). As another example of the growing trend towards qualitative research in multicultural education, the study presents further evidence in support of such claims with respect to the rethinking and redesigning of a teacher education curriculum which is responsive to issues of cultural diversity. The approach to the construction of a program devoted to multicultural education is based on an understanding of issues, and inevitably will reflect belief systems, the role of teachers in a diverse society, and the interdependent connection between them (Harrington & Hathaway, 1995).

Teacher preparation programs typically introduce student teachers to new ideas and information that will hopefully become part of their repertoire of what constitutes good teaching. However, many studies have shown that students would more likely reject than assimilate new knowledge (Ahlquist, 1992; Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Pajares, 1992), and that "incongruence between personal beliefs and actual teacher education programs can contribute to preservice teachers' dissatisfaction" with what is held out as necessary information on the road to becoming a teacher (Goodwin, 1994, p. 119). Tabachnick and Zeichner (1991) found that student perspectives on teaching did not change as they experienced their education program, but instead, their views tended to become even stronger and more ingrained as they were able to better articulate and justify their beliefs. In this study, students did refer to exemplary ideas, professors, and discussions found in the university setting, but much of the knowledge students expressed in their responses were shaped by external experiences in their lives. Although the students' first formal encounter with cultural diversity may have been in their education program, they were familiar with the topic as they had encountered the bigots and injustice, in its many forms, throughout their lives. Even in the education program, the students were reminded that not all future teachers believed in the same values they did. Most disturbing were the

number of peers who believed that ESL or special needs children had no business in the regular school system and were better off in a segregated school with their own kind. From both their shared university experiences and divergent life paths, the students in this study spoke of their desire to protect children from discrimination, and each one held different ideas about how to create a classroom which exuded compassion, love, and respect for all. The richness of the outcomes were a reflection of the incredibly diverse cultural backgrounds and upbringing of the students in different communities and countries. Findings from this study give credence to Grant and Secada's (1990) claims that efforts by teacher educators to prepare their students for diversity must first examine how education for a multicultural society and the concept of multiculturalism is conceived and understood by their students. The persistency of particular world views and teaching practices will ultimately determine the success, or failure, of the inroads to be made in culturally diverse classrooms (Greenman & Kimmel, 1995).

### ***Culturally Relevant Curriculum in Multicultural Teacher Education***

Although little attention has been paid to preservice teacher's a priori knowledge, an endless number of studies have pointed to the significant role that teacher beliefs play in the decisions made in the classroom (Goodwin, 1994; Greenman & Kimmel, 1995; Pajares, 1992;). As argued in Chapters 1 and 2 and re-visited here, future teaching practices reflect the perspectives on multiculturalism stated by the students. Some, for example, have argued that good teaching practices are "culturally blind", and transcend cultural and language differences in students (Cabello & Burstein, 1995). Despite the fact that the students interviewed in this study thought of themselves as being proponents of multicultural education, they also adhered to this bootstrap type philosophy during their practica where technical prowess and competency were constant concerns. Indeed, the students were confronted with the paradoxical situation of "expecting everybody to be treated equally, cultural norms aside....but you also have to look at the students

individually...there's so much to consider that I guess it would be impossible to treat everyone equally" (DS#1, K9). Thus, sessions in teacher education exploring cultural diversity should examine and inform students about the philosophical arguments for multicultural teaching. This would allow for increased awareness of their own perspectives, how they impinge on their practice, and enable them to better attend to the unique needs of their pupils with greater empathy and understanding. A further aim for encouraging students to examine their own beliefs is to encourage them to explore the reasons why the promotion of 'multiculturalism' may be essential to becoming an effective teacher for all students.

The implementation of multicultural perspectives within school curricula is contingent on the support and commitment of individual teachers. Yet, even if these perspectives are included in university courses, there is no guarantee, as noted above, that students will adopt such an attitude. Through the responses given by the students in the study, it is clear that the position of their peers ranged a wide continuum - from having no knowledge at all with respect to issues about cultural diversity to those who were firmly set against what they viewed as preferential treatment for students of different backgrounds. Moreover, those expressing the latter point of view were so vocal that it seemingly intimidated others from pursuing an exploration of arguments over why multiculturalism should be a concern of schools at all. Indeed, the study suggests that students did very little to promote multiculturalism during their practica, and only focused on such issues when there was a "problem" with the children in their class. Although the students all stated that their practica occurred in culturally diverse settings, few instances of multicultural practice were witnessed or modeled for them. More importantly, if their sponsor teacher appeared indifferent to the issue, the students were unlikely to challenge this position. United through the common endeavor of facilitating the student teaching experience, the relationship among the student and sponsor teacher and the faculty advisor

is often presented as an equilateral triangle. However, it is more likely that the student teacher views the situation as an unequal power relationship, and sees him/herself as the one who is disempowered. Indeed, the inherent hierarchy in the triad is evident in the lack of "reciprocity" - only the student's performance is open to critique, and thus, the "investments and consequences are not equal" for all (Gore, 1991, p. 263). For example, Christy spoke about the tenuous nature of the relationship forced upon the participants in a practicum. Even when she disagreed with her sponsor teacher about the decision made over the newly arrived immigrant student having difficulty in class, she did not speak out in order to avoid causing "waves" and tension between them. In this case, and likely the norm, the teaching of the sponsor teacher was not open to critique or discussion over matters such as multicultural education where years of teaching experience dictated practice and decision making, and would override the concerns and questions raised by the inexperienced member of the triad.

From the constructivist's vantage point, "meaningful multicultural education begins with teacher self-awareness" (Goodwin, 1994, p. 119). If multicultural perspectives and practices are to be promoted within teacher education, programs need to encourage their students to search for the reasons why they should be committed to multiculturalism, and enable them to see it as more than a mere justification for a disciplinary measure to deal with problems involving cultural difference. A commitment to multicultural education involves the engagement of student teachers in the literature for culturally relevant teaching. The purpose of such literature is to have teachers understand how and why they should enact a curriculum and make decisions that are responsive to the educational needs of all students. Children continue to enter classrooms where few modifications or little accommodation has been made to address their learning needs (Bowman, 1990). A contributing factor to the widening gap between teachers and students is the lack of familiarity of many educators with the cultural backgrounds, learning styles, or effective



teaching practices for the diverse children who comprise today's classrooms (Cabello & Burstein, 1995). Culturally relevant teaching examines the meaning of the inclusive classroom, and considers pedagogical practices and strategies that may be crucial in creating school success for students who have not been served well by traditional methods of teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Thus, this literature has the potential to have students become interested in probing the purpose of their work as teachers, and to critically examine their own perspectives in order to consider alternative approaches to teaching and curriculum. For Connelly and Clandinin (1988), the study of personal experience (i.e. teacher reflection) allows for the reconstruction of curriculum meaning that "remakes the taken-for-granted, habitual ways we all have of responding to our curriculum situations" (p. 81). Opportunities for students to discuss and recognize the inter-relatedness of their personal philosophy, pedagogy, and their moral and professional responsibilities as teachers enhance their understanding of the underlying consequences associated with holding too tightly onto the status quo (Harrington & Hathaway, 1995).

In this study, theoretical inquiry into the driving force behind the multicultural education movement was not a component in the student teachers' experience in their teacher education program. If there was any mention of the subject in a course, it was through the initiative of certain faculty who deemed it as an integral part of the preparatory knowledge of student teachers. Overall, though, students in the program received little information on cultural diversity, and served to reinforce a general feeling about the topic's lack of status as a contemporary educational issue. At best, the students who took electives and were exposed to the issue with any depth received a mixed, or hidden, message that cultural diversity was certainly an expendable topic in the already crammed curriculum of teacher education. This situation is not unique, and reflects the current state of multiculturalism in many teacher education programs in both Canada and the United States; there is little discussion on the topic's place in teacher preparation programs, let

alone debate on particular approaches proposed to infuse the curriculum with multicultural knowledge (Ahlquist, 1992; Garcia & Pugh, 1992; Ghosh & Tarrow, 1993; Henley & Young, 1989; Hood & Parker, 1994; VanBalkom, 1991).

### ***Choosing the Approach to Multicultural Education - the Dilemma and the Challenge***

Several researchers have proposed that specific approaches to culturally responsive teaching should be promoted in educational programs (Ahlquist, 1992; Banks, 1993a; Gollnick, 1992; Lou Fuller, 1992; Sleeter & Grant, 1994). Zeichner (1993), for example, proposes that in the struggle for social justice, teacher education research needs to expose the "connections between the micro and the macro" to reveal how everyday decisions made by teachers are intimately related to "issues of social continuity and change"; such a commitment is needed if we are to "bring about a world where everybody's children have access to decent and rewarding lives" (p. 215). From the perspective of the educational institution, a question is posed: Are certain approaches to 'multicultural education' to be considered more 'worthy' or 'valuable' to pursue in the structuring of and inclusion in the content of teacher education curriculum? In other words, should the approach chosen to be presented to students be compatible with what is decided as the purpose or goal for teaching about multiculturalism espoused in mission statements? However, even when students are encouraged to reflect on and examine their beliefs, education programs and faculty stand to be accused of indoctrination if they aim to 'correct' attitudes and views deemed inappropriate or wrong. As Ahlquist (1992) noted in her course, the "students perceived the rigor of my argument (that emancipatory pedagogy from an anti-racist perspective and reflective teaching are more viable approaches to education) as an attempt to impose my point of view on them" (p. 95). The dilemma and the challenge is how to give students experiences which will create the dissonance in which they will question their practice and beliefs in the light of contemporary needs and demands on the teaching profession. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) note that the images of teaching gained from

such experiences are key because they act as guides to future practice; such images "reach into the past, gather up experiential threads meaningfully connected to the present, and reach intentionally into the future and create new meaningfully connected threads as situations are experienced and new situations are anticipated from the perspective of the image" (p. 60). These experiences and images are "critical to the preparation of teachers" who will be able to better serve and meet the needs of culturally diverse students (Cabello & Burstein, 1995, p. 286).

Growth and gains made in the research on teacher thinking have influenced and paralleled the recent turn towards the need to examine student teachers' beliefs about multicultural education and issues (Greenman & Kimmel, 1995; Harrington & Hathaway, 1995; Hood & Parker, 1994; McCall, 1995). The empirical evidence from studies about teacher learning "clearly demonstrates that the perspectives, conceptions, and dispositions that students bring to teacher education programs are very influential in determining what students will learn in those program" (Liston & Zeichner, 1991, p. 191). In particular, certain conceptualizations and orientations to teacher education are favored over others by educators in order to reflect the kind of tenets they believed should be promoted in the program. For example, an emphasis on technical competence in teaching contributes little to enhance teacher's knowledge of how their actions sustain or disrupt the status quo in schools (Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1991). The combined insights from research in the various fields of education have been used to develop pedagogical practices designed to encourage students to reflect on and situate their practices within the institutional and larger social contexts of schooling. Given the widespread consensus that beginning teachers' notions and views about teaching and schooling undergird their actions in the classroom, it seems appropriate to heed calls which ask for the determination of how student teachers conceptualize multicultural education before embarking on the journey to educate them about the work in a culturally diverse society (Grant & Secada, 1990).

Indeed, if we are to realize the dream of a more humane and just society, it is imperative to present students with experiences that will challenge cherished beliefs and use them as starting points to begin genuine deliberation and inquiry into the crisis of inequality in schools.

The approach held out as holding the most promise for social change and justice has been labeled as education which is multicultural and social reconstructionist (Sleeter & Grant, 1994, Chapter 2). In differentiating it from other approaches, Goodwin (1994) describes this type of education as one which "operationalizes rhetoric supporting the development of thinking, empowered human beings; it moves away from the cosmetic and marginal" (p. 127-128). In advocating for a "social-reconstructionist agenda" for teacher education, Liston and Zeichner (1991) noted the prevalence with which pedagogy, in their students' minds, was separated from its moral and ethical roots, and "good" teaching was equated with getting through prescribed curriculum and having children master specific skills. Their proposed framework for a pedagogy of teacher education is "situated in students' realities and responsive to their concerns but, at the same time, takes them beyond their current horizons to consider perspectives and issues that they would not normally entertain" (p. 193). In particular, they emphasize the need to develop students who can distinguish between and are capable of engaging in reflective versus routine action, and who are able to give both sound and morally defensible reasons for their educational actions. Using the typology of Sleeter and Grant (1994) for comparative analysis, the students in this study primarily viewed their role in a culturally diverse society as a blend of teaching the exceptional and culturally different, the human relations approach, and the single group studies. The students noted that on their practicum, their expectation of children differed only on the basis of chronological age, and exceptions were made only for a few "others", such as ESL and special needs students who did not seem to have the skills to keep up with the rest of the class. Although the students

showed much concern over the state of educational equity, and, for example, the eradication of racism and prejudice as an important focus, they did not implement a program on their practicum to further the achievement of such goals. The extent of multicultural education was limited to modifying content for individuals who did not fit the mainstream, and little, if any, education which is multicultural and social reconstructionist was enacted into practice. However, the pragmatic concerns of student teachers would likely override such concerns, and the practicum would probably have been an unlikely context in which to promote such ideals - especially given the unequal power relationship in the student teaching triad. The constraints which contributed to the incongruity between belief and intended practice were again associated with the desire to "get through the practicum by giving them the skills" because that's what was expected of student teachers by both the institution (i.e. sponsor teacher and faculty advisor) and the society (i.e. the parents).

Approaches to multicultural education encompass much more than the type of units to be taught; they also underlie if and how educators will break out of "dysconscious racism - an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs)" (King, 1991, p. 135) which accepts the existing social order as a given, and does not consider the need for fundamental social change (Ginsburg, 1988). The impetus within the social reconstructionist movement concerns an interest to develop student teachers who are reflective about what they know and believe about the social conditions of schooling, and how their actions may reinforce societal inequity and oppression (King, 1991). However, the question remains over the defensibility of 'promoting' particular approaches or actions, and the need to make the distinction between imposition versus education. Indeed, one of the most contentious issues among social reconstructionists is the degree to which teachers and teacher educators "should consciously indoctrinate their

students with socialist and collectivist issues or rely on the methods of experimentalism and reflective inquiry to lead to social improvements" (Zeichner & Liston, 1990, p. 12).

Advocates for social reconstruction emphatically state that education without critique perpetuates a model of teaching that remains at the surface, and virtually ignores the underlying issues of exclusion and inequality facing so many students today (Nieto, 1992). As diversity looms large as a pressing educational concern, it appears crucial to ensure that student teachers will be given perspectives that are expansive and demonstrate a more inclusive way of thinking. Rather than treating each approach to the integration of multicultural thinking in teacher education programs as equals, it may be necessary for teacher educators to provide deliberate direction, rather than indoctrination, by including specific curriculum topics which allow for dialogue and "by insisting upon an analysis of those issues that addresses the moral and political implications of particular practices and institutional structures" (Liston & Zeichner, 1991, p. 193). Although there is no assurance that the students will align themselves with the position of social reconstructionists, teacher educators can aim to ensure that they can create conditions where students can engage in ideological critique, and at the very least, contribute to their awareness of alternatives to practices that may be debilitating to the achievement of genuine educational equity. The conceptualizations portrayed in this study are valid arguments for why teachers should see themselves as integral to praxis-oriented practices (Lather, 1986; Nieto, 1992) and the pursuit of excellence in education. "Equity means that every child has access to educational excellence and that every school is a delivery system that enables each of its students to derive the full benefits of intellectual rigor, challenging content, and effective pedagogy" (Pine & Hillard, 1990, p. 598). Whether the arguments originated from the students' moral and ethical stances (e.g. portrayed in the category of resisting the lure of assimilation and the status quo) or from the students' personal experiences (e.g. such as views portrayed in nurturing self-esteem and pride in personal heritage), they are

all ways in which students accounted for why they should attend to the 'multicultural underpinnings' inherent in today's diverse classrooms. Based on the 'assertions' offered by the students, a number of recommendations for a pedagogical approach to 'multicultural teacher education' follow in the next section.

### ***Recommendations - Toward Critical and Liberatory Pedagogy in Teacher Education***

There is widespread consensus that the changing demographics of Canadian society and classrooms necessitate the preparation of teachers who are able to address the needs of students who come from incredibly diverse backgrounds (Bernhard, 1992; Ghosh & Tarrow, 1993; Henley & Young, 1989). However, the challenge facing teaching education programs is the daunting task of engaging their students in meaningful learning about cultural diversity - especially when these students come with preconceptions and beliefs that influence and often interfere with the interpretation of the knowledge presented to them in their course work. Indeed, the literature suggests that the world view of students need to be revealed and made problematic in order to understand how hidden assumptions, prejudices, and misconceptions continue to persist and stagnate the call for reform ascribed to multicultural theorists. The transformation of preservice teachers into social-reconstructionist educators can only happen if students are able to fully understand the inner workings and structure of society, and have opportunities to think about the need for fundamental social change. As King (1991) notes, it is "precisely because what my students [preservice teachers] know and believe is so limited, it is necessary to address both their knowledge (that is, their intellectual understanding of social inequity) and what they believe about diversity" (p. 142-143).

The recommendations offered in this section reflect the beliefs and ideas of the students interviewed in the study. Their thoughts on teaching in a culturally diverse society parallel and echo those stated by the 'experts' in this area, and reveal a level of sophistication beyond what might be expected for beginning teachers. Consequently, what

they believe are integral components of an education program that addresses the needs of teachers and students for the 21st century are congruent with findings from other studies (Cabello & Burstein, 1995; Ghosh & Tarrow, 1993; Goodwin, 1994; Harrington & Hathaway, 1995; Hood & Parker, 1994; McCall, 1995). Although the list of recommendations is not exhaustive by any means, they may be used as the basis for developing a program that encourages students to "choose critical multicultural consciousness over dysconsciousness" (King, 1991, p. 143-144).

Recommendation #1: Elicit and examine beliefs

As Banks (1991c) notes, teachers must deal with their "personal and cultural values and identities in order for them to help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups" (p. 139). As a consequence, teacher education programs need to elicit students' personal beliefs in order to facilitate the design of curriculum that can truly address the needs and concerns of future teachers in today's diverse classrooms, and create an environment in which teachers begin to discuss and reflect on how ingrained practices contribute to the perpetuation of inequity in society. To move students beyond the conception of viewing teaching as merely a technical profession to one that is more in line with the image advocated by social reconstructionists, teacher educators must become aware of student perceptions about the changing role of teacher in a multicultural society. This may be achieved, for example, by having students express their conceptualizations about this particular role and the reasons why they hold this view through an interview, a survey, or a short answer profile sheet. From here, teacher educators may proactively begin to attend to the a priori beliefs of preservice students if they are to transform students' thinking about teaching learners from such a wide variety of backgrounds.

Recommendation #2: Practica in settings with culturally relevant and responsive teaching

In a survey of recent graduates of B.C.'s teacher education programs, over 95% of respondents considered the practicum to be the most important component of their



program (BCCT, 1997). Further, the survey participants believed that the practicum was the time where they began to develop their own style of teaching. Clearly, where students experience their practicum is essential to the development and growth of their outlook on teaching, and its impact on their view of teachers as links to, or the foundation of social change, cannot be underestimated.

Indeed, many students go through their education program with a preconceived set of beliefs that are rarely changed, and, at times, reinforced (Haberman, 1991). Although most of the students in this study appeared to enjoy their practicum experience, it was apparent that not all of them were in environments that demonstrated types of multicultural practice that reached beyond the superficial "museum"-like approach (Werner et al., 1974). Despite the fact that students believed that they were all in culturally diverse classrooms, few of them could cite examples of consistent and observable models of culturally responsive teaching which would help them to gain knowledge and confidence in their ability to implement such practices in their future classrooms. Thus, if education programs are to produce teachers who are able to work towards the design of more inclusive classrooms, practicum placements, a crucial part of teacher education, should be in settings where culturally relevant curriculum and responsive teaching is a priority.

#### Recommendation #3: A multicultural emphasis in the teacher education program

The students in the study stated that they had only been exposed to a cursory examination of the topic of cultural diversity. Even within electives that held the promise of multicultural know-how, the students were disappointed in the lack of in-depth discussion of the issue, especially in the face of resurgent conservatism with respect to how to effectively run, manage, and teach in the school system. In each interview, students struggled with the meaning of culturally responsive teaching. For some, it was difficult to integrate the conception of the role of the teacher with their understanding of

cultural diversity. As purveyors of the curriculum, teachers act as filters for the information presented and made available to their students, but issues of control and power were rarely mentioned. There was little acknowledgment or understanding of the interdependent relationship which exists among curriculum selection, teacher choice and action, multicultural education, and the underlying blanket of power.

To develop this understanding, it is necessary for students to be exposed to the approaches to multicultural education, as outlined by various theorists, before they can engage in a critical analysis on how the school system, and they as teachers, contribute to unequal educational outcomes and reinforces the stronghold of the status quo. Belief systems are the foundation and the scaffold by which students integrate knowledge and make meaning about cultural diversity. Teacher education programs must seriously consider offering, and making mandatory, courses that challenge "students' taken-for-granted ideological positions and identities and their unquestioned acceptance of cultural belief systems which undergird racial inequity" and social oppression (King, 1991, p. 134). Faculty who encouraged debate in their classes and demanded that students learn how to formulate sound reasons and justifications for their practice were praised by the students in the study. For many, the road to becoming a teacher is "not enriching their lives with a wider repertoire of abilities and insights but, rather, discarding and excluding various identities and experiences that do not conform to the constricting cultural myths and practices conditioning the teacher education curriculum" (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996, p. 81). Faculty members who encouraged dissonance and presented compelling arguments for students to face and challenge their "fictive teaching identities" were considered vital links to the surrendering of the homogenizing practices that are intertwined with the process of learning how to teach (Britzman, 1991; Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996). Indeed, the students in this study believed that such professors were crucial to the development of student teachers who are able to transcend the myths and

identities they bring with them to their education program, and undergo a transformative process as they experience a revitalization of the art of teaching. Above all, these professors were singled out for their ability to capture and represent the dynamic nature of contemporary classrooms, and students were given a glimpse into a view of teaching as an evolving profession, rather than a regurgitation of the past.

Overall, what is being proposed in these recommendations is an education program that infuses knowledge and experience about culturally diverse classrooms as students learn how to teach in a multicultural society. In this case, academic theory and practice (i.e. coursework and the practicum) must be combined in a complementary and interactive fashion in order to facilitate the acquisition of information, skills, and understanding that is needed for the classrooms of today. As they experience the struggle of learning how to apply theory to practice, students must use this opportunity to test and reflect on their beliefs, and to determine how they can become an effective teacher in an inclusive classroom. By providing the impetus and a context in which student teachers can imagine alternative conceptions and possibilities for themselves and their students, the movement towards transformative education and critical and liberatory pedagogy in classrooms can begin. Only then will students understand how they, as teachers and role models in the formative years of young children's lives, are an integral part of the process of social change.

### **III. A Final Word**

This study indicates that approaches to multicultural education discussed in the literature enhance and inform the understanding of the challenges which face those who continue to fight against the token status accorded such an education. As noted, the inroads made by any type of curriculum or program that lie on the outside of the core academic subjects is dependent on the personal commitment of the instructor, and herein may lie the ultimate fate of the future of the movement for educational equity. This study

makes the case for incorporating and examining students' perspectives on cultural diversity since its outcomes suggest that approaches in the literature complement and are often congruent to the perspectives offered in Chapter 4. Consequently, encouraging students to consider these approaches with respect to their own beliefs may increase their commitment to promoting and becoming an advocate for culturally relevant teaching and curriculum in schools.

Increasingly, researchers are using qualitative methods to explore teacher beliefs and perspectives on the changing demographics of society and contemporary classrooms. Exploratory in nature, the study investigated five student teachers' conceptualizations of teaching in a culturally diverse society, and which life experiences contributed to and influenced the formation of these conceptualizations. The outcomes portrayed students' perspectives on a collective rather than individual basis, and provide the basis for further research to complement the work reported here. A multiple case study design could facilitate the study of questions, for example, related to the influence of context on the espousal of particular conceptualizations, and the extent of conceptual dispersion and the predominance of specific categories within and between students of different cultural or social background. Many other research questions arose during the course of the study that would follow-up on the initial work presented in this study (e.g. What will the participants' actual classroom practice look like? How prepared will students feel about teaching in a multicultural society after one year in the classroom?). Future research would also likely elaborate on the categories presented here, and further categories might also be added. For example, this study did not adequately describe a conceptualization that encouraged teachers to challenge the assumptions and biases of the curriculum inherent in ministry policy. As Simon stated, the stories of history are recorded from the perspective of the conqueror, and teachers need to infuse different frames of reference to extend children's understanding of the nature and evolution of Canadian society.

However, as beginning teachers, the students were caught in the precarious dilemma of being advocates for the transformation of the curriculum, but also fearing the tension inherent in an approach that is critical of existing institutional structures who issue their pay cheques and determine if they will receive tenure (Liston & Zeichner, 1991).

As they experienced the teacher education program, the students may have been presented with the same information, but as active constructors of knowledge, the students filtered such information through personal screens and as it related to prior belief systems. Throughout the interviews and during informal discussions, the students were often forced to clarify, confront, and sometimes reconceptualize the meaning they had constructed about teaching culturally diverse children. In turn, such reflective experiences also strengthened their resolve to work towards and enact critical and liberatory pedagogy in the classroom. "(Un)becoming a teacher" suggests that learning to teach is a form of "unbecoming" the identity one brings to the process of learning to teach (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996), and an emerging identity of self as a teacher for cultural diversity.

In the survey of recent B.C. teacher education students (BCCT, 1997), it was reported, and heralded, that the number of social issues being discussed in education programs is on the rise. However, 20-30% of respondents reported that the topics of anti-racism, ESL, First Nations, and Gender Equity were not addressed at all. Moreover, the study did not give any indication of the depth with which these issues were addressed, or if such discussions actually influenced or changed their perspective on culturally relevant teaching. In this study, students also reported that social issues were addressed in their program, but all of them remarked that these topics were discussed in isolation, whether in one elective or a single class. Overall, the treatment and priority given to such issues were superficial at best.

The preparation of student teachers for a culturally diverse society is a complex process, but teacher education programs must acknowledge the central role of student

teachers' cognition, life experiences, and belief systems (Kagan, 1992). The presentation of information in university, without a critique of personal ideology and indoctrination, does not help "prospective teachers gain the critical skills needed to examine the ways being educated in a racist society affects their own knowledge and their beliefs about themselves and culturally diverse others" (King, 1991, p. 143). This study's outcome suggests that they must offer student teachers the opportunity to be aware of how their experiential background can influence and perhaps explain their conceptualizations, and concerns, about teaching in a multicultural society. It is a teacher's professional responsibility to be as fully informed as possible about a topic and its related issues before they can contemplate the teaching of it. Diversity looms as a major issue for the preparation of teachers for the 21st century. Education programs can gain valuable and critical insight into the needs of students as they make the transition to professional status and form the best hope for future exemplars of culturally relevant and inclusive classrooms.

## References

- Adler, S. (1991). Forming a critical pedagogy in the social studies methods class: the use of imaginative literature. In B.R. Tabachnick & K. Zeichner (Eds.), Issues and practices in inquiry-oriented teacher education (pp. 77-90). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Ahlquist, R. (1992). Manifestations of inequality: Overcoming resistance in a multicultural foundations course. In C. Grant (Ed.), Research and multicultural education: From the margins to the mainstream (pp. 89-105). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (1987). Teaching teachers: Facts and figures. Washington, D.C.: AACTE.
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (1990). Survey of teacher education students. Washington, D.C.: AACTE.
- Anderson, G. (1989). Critical ethnography in education: origins, current status, and new directions. Review of Educational Research, 59(3), 249-270.
- Anyon, J. (1981). Social class and school knowledge. Curriculum Inquiry, 11(1), 3-42.
- Aoki, T. (Ed.). (1990). Voices of teaching (volume 1). Vancouver: BCTF.
- Aoki, T. (Ed.). (1992). Teachers narrating/narrating teachers: Pacific Rim experiences. Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights.
- Aoki, T. (1993). Legitimizing lived curriculum: Towards a curricular landscape of multiplicity. Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 8(3), 255-268.
- Apple, M. (1990). Ideology and curriculum. New York: Routledge.
- Apple, M. & Christian-Smith, L. (1991). The politics of the textbook. New York: Routledge.
- Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H. (1991). Postmodern education: Politics, culture, and social criticism. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Baird, J. (1992). Collaborative reflection, systematic enquiry, better teaching. In T. Russell & H. Munby (Eds.), Teachers and teaching: From classroom to reflection (pp. 33-48). Bristol: Falmer Press.

- Baker, G. (1977). Multicultural education: Two preservice approaches. Journal of Teacher Education, 28(3), 31-33.
- Banks, J.A. (1988). Multiethnic education: Theory and practice. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Banks, J.A. (1991a). Social science knowledge and citizenship education. In M. Kennedy (Ed.), Teaching academic subjects to diverse learners (pp.117-127). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Banks, J.A. (1991b). Teaching multicultural literacy to teachers. Teaching Education, 4, 135-144.
- Banks, J.A. (1991c). A curriculum for empowerment, action, and change. In C. Sleeter (Ed.), Empowerment through multicultural education (pp. 125-141). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Banks, J.A. (1991d). Multicultural education: Its effects on students' racial and gender role attitudes. In J.P. Shaver (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning (pp. 459-469). New York: MacMillan.
- Banks, J.A. (1993a). Approaches to multicultural curriculum reform. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives (pp. 195-214). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Banks, J.A. (1993b). Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives (pp. 2-26). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Banks, J.A. (1995). Multicultural education: Historical development, dimensions and practice. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education (pp. 3-24). New York: MacMillan.
- Barnerd, H.R. (Ed.). (1994). Unstructured and semi-structured interviewing. In Research methods in anthropology (pp. 208-236). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bennett, C. (1988, April). The effects of a multicultural education course on preservice teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. Paper presented at annual meeting of American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- Beyer, L. (1988). Knowing and acting: Inquiry, ideology, and educational studies. Basingstoke: Falmer Press.
- Beyer, L. (1989). Critical reflection and the culture of schooling: Empowering teachers. Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.



- Beyer, L. & Zeichner, K. (1987). Teacher education in cultural context: Beyond reproduction. In T. Popkewitz (Ed.), Critical studies in teacher education: Its folklore, theory, and practice (pp. 298-334). London: Falmer Press.
- Bigelow, B., Christensen, L., Karp, S., Miner, B., & Peterson, B. (Eds.). (1994). Rethinking our classrooms: Teaching for equity and justice. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools Ltd.
- B.C. College of Teachers. (1997). Report of the 1997 survey of recent graduates of B.C. teacher education programs. Vancouver: BCCT.
- Borg, W. & Gall, M. (1979). Educational research. New York: Longman.
- Bowman, B. (1990). Educating language-minority children: Challenges and opportunities. Phi Delta Kappan, 71(2), 118-120.
- Bowman, A. (1992). The voices of inquiry and practice. In A. Bowman & N. Haggerson (Eds.), Informing educational policy and practice through interpretive inquiry (pp. 187-198). Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing.
- Britzman, D. (1986). Cultural myths in the making of a teacher: Biography and social structure in teacher education. Harvard Educational Review, 56(4), 442-456.
- Britzman, D. (1991). Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Cabello, B. & Burstein, N. (1995). Examining teachers' beliefs about teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Journal of Teacher Education, 46(4), 285-294.
- Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. (1986). Becoming critical: Education, knowledge, and action research. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Carson, T. (1995). Reflective practice and a reconceptualization. In M. Wideen & P. Grimmett (Eds.), Changing Times in Teacher Education: Restructuring or Reconceptualization? (pp. 151-162). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Charles, C.M. (1995). Introduction to educational research. New York: Longman.
- Cherryholmes, C. (1988). Power and criticism: Poststructural investigations in education. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Cherryholmes, C. (1991). Critical research and social studies education. In J.P. Shaver (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning (pp. 41-55). New York: MacMillan.

- Clandinin, J. (1992). Narrative and story in teacher education. In T. Russell & H. Munby (Eds.), Teachers and teaching: From classroom to reflection (pp. 124-137). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Clark, C.M. & Peterson, P.L. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Teaching (pp. 255-296). New York: MacMillan.
- Connelly, F.M. & Clandinin, D. J. (1988). Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives as experience. Toronto: OISE Press.
- Contreras, A. (1988, April). Multicultural attitudes and knowledge of education students at Indiana University. Paper presented at annual meeting of American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- Cornbleth, C. (1991). Research on context, research in context. In J.P. Shaver (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning (pp. 265-275). New York: MacMillan.
- Cumming, A. (1995). A review of ESL services in the VSB. Vancouver: VSB Publications.
- Cummins, J. (1986). Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention. Harvard Educational Review, 56(1), 18-36.
- Cummins, J. (1988). From multicultural to anti-racist education: An analysis of programmes and policies in Ontario. In T. Skutnabb-Kangas & J. Cummins (Eds.), Minority education: From shame to struggle (pp. 127-157). Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Cummins, J. (1989). The sanitized curriculum: Educational disempowerment in a nation at risk. In D. Johnson & D. Roen (Eds.), Richness in writing: Empowering ESL students (pp. 19-38). New York: Longman.
- Cummins, J. (1992). Preface. In S. Nieto, Affirming diversity. New York: Longman.
- Dewey, J. (1916). Democracy and education. New York: MacMillan.
- Diamond, P. (1991). Teacher education as transformation. Bristol: Open University Press.
- Diller, A. (1988). The ethics of care and education: A new paradigm, its critics, and its educational significance. Curriculum Inquiry, 18(3), 325-342.
- Dobbert, M. (1982). Ethnographic research: Theory and application for modern schools and societies. New York: Praeger.

- Donmoyer, R. (1990). Generalizability and the single case study. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 175-200). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Edmundson, P. (1990). A normative look at the curriculum in teacher education. Phi Delta Kappan, 71(9), 717-722.
- Eisner, E. (1983). Anastasia might still be alive, but the monarchy is dead. Educational Researcher, 12(5), 13-24.
- Eisner, E. (1991). The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice. New York: MacMillan.
- Eisner, E. & Peshkin, A. (Eds.). (1990). Qualitative inquiry in education: The continuing debate. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Estrada, K. & McLaren, P. (1993). A dialogue on multiculturalism and democratic culture. Educational Researcher, 22(3), 27-33.
- Firestone, W. (1993). Alternative arguments for generalizing from data as applied to qualitative research. Educational Researcher, 22(4), 16-23.
- Fisher, D. & Echols, F. (1989). Evaluation report on the Vancouver school board's race relations policy. Vancouver: VSB Publications.
- Fleras, A. & Elliot, J. (1992). Multiculturalism in Canada. Scarborough: Nelson Canada.
- Fontana, A. & Frey, J. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp. 361-376). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed. New York: Seabury.
- Fullan, M. (1982). The meaning of educational change. Toronto: OISE.
- Fullan, M. (1993). Change forces. London: Falmer Press.
- Futrell, M. (1989). Mission not accomplished: Educational reform in retrospect. Phi Delta Kappan, 71(1), 9-14.
- Garcia, J. & Pugh, S. (1992). Multicultural education in teacher preparation programs: A political or an educational concept? Phi Delta Kappan, 74(3), 214-219.

- Garcia, R. (1982). Teaching in a pluralistic society: Concepts, models, strategies. New York: Harper & Row.
- Gardiner, G. (1972). Complexity training and prejudice reduction. Journal of Applied Psychology, 2(4), 326-342.
- Gay, G. (1983). Multiethnic education: Historical developments and future prospects. Phi Delta Kappan, 64(8), 560-563.
- Gay, G. (1988). Designing relevant curricula for diverse learners. Education and Urban Society, 20, 327-340.
- Gay, G. (1995). Curriculum theory and multicultural education. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education (pp. 25-43). New York: MacMillan.
- Ghosh, R. & Tarrow, N. (1993). Multiculturalism and teacher educators: Views from Canada and the USA. Comparative Education, 29(1), 81-92.
- Gibson, M.A. (1976). Approaches to multicultural education in the United States: Some concepts and assumptions. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 7(4), 7-18.
- Ginsburg, M. (1988). Contradictions in teacher education and society: A critical analysis. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Ginsburg, M. & Clift, R. (1990). The hidden curriculum of preservice teacher education. In W.R. Houston (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Teacher Education (pp. 450-462). New York: MacMillan.
- Ginsburg, M. & Newman, K. (1985). Social inequalities, schooling, and teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 36(2), 49-54.
- Giroux, H. (1981). Ideology, culture, and the process of schooling. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Giroux, H. (1992a). Educational leadership and the crisis of democratic government. Educational Researcher, 21(4), 4-11.
- Giroux, H. (1992b). Curriculum, multiculturalism, and the politics of identity. NASSP Bulletin (Dec.), 1-11.
- Giroux, H. & McLaren (1987). Teacher education as a counter public sphere: Notes towards a redefinition. In T. Popkewitz (Ed.), Critical studies in teacher education: Its folklore, theory, and practice (pp. 266-297). London: Falmer Press.

- Giroux, H. & Purpel, D. (1983). The hidden curriculum and moral education. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing.
- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Aldine.
- Gollnick, D. (1992). Multicultural education: Policies and practices in teacher education. In C. Grant (Ed.), Research and multicultural education: From the margins to the mainstream (pp. 218-239). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Gollnick, D. & Chinn, P.C. (1983). Multicultural education in a pluralistic society. St. Louis: Mosby.
- Goodlad, J. (1990). Better teachers for our nation's schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 72(3), 185-194.
- Goodlad, J. (1990). Teachers for our nation's schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Goodson, I. (1995). Studying the teacher's life and work. In J. Smyth (Ed.), Critical discourses on teacher development (pp. 55-64). New York: Cassell.
- Gordon, B. (1992). The marginalized discourse of minority intellectual thought in traditional writings on teaching. In C. Grant (Ed.), Research and multicultural education: From the margins to the mainstream (pp. 19-31). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Gore, J. (1991). Practicing what we preach: Action research and the supervision of student teachers. In B.R. Tabachnick & K. Zeichner (Eds.), Issues and Practices in Inquiry-Oriented Teacher Education (pp. 253-272). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Gowin, D.B. (1981). Educating. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Grant, C. (1981). Education that is multicultural and teacher preparation: An examination from the perspective of preservice students. Journal of Educational Research, 75(2), 95-101.
- Grant, C. (Ed.). (1992). Research and multicultural education: From the margins to the mainstream. London: Falmer Press.
- Grant, C. & Koskela, R. (1986). Education that is multicultural and the relationship between preservice campus learning and field experience. Journal of Educational Research, 79(4), 197-203.
- Grant, C. & Millar, S. (1992). Research and multicultural education: Barriers, needs, and boundaries. In C. Grant (Ed.), Research and multicultural education: From the margins to the mainstream (pp. 7-18). Bristol: Falmer Press.

- Grant, C. & Secada, W. (1990). Preparing teachers for diversity. In W.R. Houston (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Teacher Education (pp. 403-422). New York: MacMillan.
- Grant, C. & Sleeter, C. (1986). After the school bell rings. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.
- Grant, C. & Tate, W. (1995). Multicultural education through the lens of the multicultural education research literature. In J.A. Banks and C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education (pp. 145-166). New York: MacMillan.
- Greenman, N.P. & Kimmel, E.B. (1995). The road to multicultural education: Potholes of resistance. Journal of Teacher Education, 46(5), 360-368.
- Grimmett, P. (1995). Reconceptualizing teacher education: Preparing teachers for revitalized schools. In M. Wideen & P. Grimmett (Eds.), Changing Times in Teacher Education: Restructuring or Reconceptualization? (pp. 202-225). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Grossman, H. (1995). Teaching in a diverse society. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research in N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gutmann, A. (1987). Democratic education. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Haberman, M. (1991). The rationale for training adults as teachers. In C.E. Sleeter (Ed.), Empowerment through Multicultural Education (pp. 275-286). Albany: SUNY Press.
- Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1995). Ethnography. New York: Routledge.
- Harrington, H. & Hathaway, R. (1995). Illuminating beliefs about diversity. Journal of Teacher Education, 46(4), 275-284.
- Henley, R. & Young, J. (1987). Multicultural teacher education, part 1: Faculties of education and state policies of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, 10(1), 17-19.
- Henley, R. & Young, J. (1987). Multicultural teacher education, part 2: Ethnic minority representation in faculties of education. Multiculturalism, 11(1), 3-8.
- Henley, R. & Young, J. (1989). Multicultural teacher education, part 3: Curriculum content and curriculum structure. Multiculturalism, 12(1), 24-27.

- Henley, R. & Young, J. (1989). Multicultural teacher education, part 4: Revitalizing faculties of education. Multiculturalism, 12(3), 40-41.
- Hirsch, E.D. (1987). Cultural literacy: What every American needs to know. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Hitchcock, G. & Hughes, D. (1989). Research and the teacher: A qualitative introduction to school-based research. New York: Routledge.
- Holland, P. (1992). Recovering the story: Understanding practice through interpretation of educational narratives. In A. Bowman & N. Haggerson (Eds.), Informing educational policy and practice through interpretive inquiry (pp. 199-216). Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing.
- Hood, S. & Parker, L. (1994). Minority students informing the faculty: Implications for racial diversity and the future of teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 45(3), 164-171.
- Hursh, D. (1995). It's more than style: Reflective teachers as ethical and political practitioners. In J. Smyth (Ed.), Critical Discourses on Teacher Development (pp. 101-112). New York: Cassell.
- Jackson, P. (1990). Looking for trouble: On the place of the ordinary in educational studies. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 153-166). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Jennings, T. (1995). Developmental psychology and the preparation of teachers who affirm diversity: Strategies promoting critical social consciousness in teacher preparation programs. Journal of Teacher Education, 46(4), 243-250.
- Kagan, D. (1992). Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers. Review of Educational Research, 62(2), 129-169.
- Kailin, J. (1994). Anti-racist staff development for teachers: Considerations of race, class, and gender. Teaching and Teacher Education, 10(2), 169-184.
- Kincheloe, J. (1991). Teacher as researcher: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment. Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Katz, P. (Ed.). (1976). Towards the elimination of racism. New York: Pergamon.
- Kehoe, J. (1984). A handbook of selected activities for enhancing the multicultural climate of the school. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

- Kehoe, J. & Mansfield, E. (1993). The limitations of multicultural education and anti-racist education. In K. McLeod (Ed.), Multicultural Education: The State of the Art National Study (pp. 3-9). Toronto: University of Toronto.
- King, J.E. (1991). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. Journal of Negro Education, 60(2), 133-146.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Culturally relevant teaching: The key to making multicultural education work. In C. Grant (Ed.), Research and Multicultural Education: From the Margins to the Mainstream (pp. 106-121). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Multicultural teacher education: Research, practice, and policy. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education (pp. 747-759). New York: MacMillan.
- Lancy, D. (1993). Qualitative research in education: An introduction to the major traditions. New York: Longman.
- Lather, P. (1986). Research as praxis. Harvard Educational Review, 56(3), 257-277.
- LeCompte, M.D. & Preissle, J. (1993). Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Liston, D. & Zeichner, K. (1991). Teacher education and the social conditions of schooling. New York: Routledge.
- Lockhart, A. (1991). School teaching in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Lortie, D. (1975). School teacher: A sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lou Fuller, M. (1992). Teacher education programs and increasing minority school populations: An educational mismatch. In C. Grant (Ed.), Research and Multicultural Education: From the Margins to the Mainstream (pp. 184-200). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- MacDonald, B. & Sanger, J. (1982). Just for the record? Notes toward a theory of interviewing in evaluation. In E.R. House, S. Mathison, J. Pearsol, & H. Preskill (Eds.), Evaluation Studies Review Annual, Volume 7, Beverley Hills.
- MacKinnon, A. & Erickson, G. (1992). The roles of reflective practice and foundational disciplines in teacher education. In T. Russell & H. Munby (Eds.), Teachers and teaching: From classroom to reflection (pp. 192-210). Bristol: Falmer Press.



- Mallea, J. & Young, J. (Eds.). (1984). Teacher education for a multicultural society. In Cultural diversity and Canadian education: Issues and innovations (pp. 399-408). Ottawa: Carleton University Press.
- Mathison, C. (1992, November). Project stars: Helping future teachers recognize and address the needs of a multicultural student population. Paper presented at Power within Diversity Conference, Toronto.
- Masemann, V. & Mock, K. (1986, June). Multicultural teacher education. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Winnipeg.
- McCall, A. (1995). Constructing conceptions of multicultural teaching: Preservice teachers' life experiences and teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 46(5), 340-350.
- McCarthy, C. (1990). Race and curriculum. Bristol: Falmer Press.
- McCarthy, C. (1993). After the canon: Knowledge and ideological representation in the multicultural discourse on curriculum reform. In C. McCarthy and W. Crichlow (Eds.), Race, Identity, and Representation in Education (pp. 289-305). New York: Routledge.
- McCutcheon, G. & Jung, B. (1990). Alternative perspectives on action research. Theory into Practice, 29(3), 144-151.
- McIntosh, P. & Style, E. (1988). Curriculum as window and mirror. In Oak Knoll School (Ed.), Listening for all Voices (pp. 1-6). Summit, NJ: Oak Knoll School Monograph.
- McLaren, P. (1989). Life in schools. New York: Longman.
- McLeod, K. (1992). Multiculturalism and multicultural education in Canada: Human rights and human rights education. In K.A. Moodley (Ed.), Beyond multicultural education: International perspectives (pp. 215-242). Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.
- Mehan, H., Okamoto, D., Lintz, A., & Wills, J. (1995). Ethnographic studies of multicultural education in classrooms and schools. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education (pp. 129-144). New York: MacMillan.
- Merriam, S.B. (1988). Case study research in education: A qualitative approach. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Michael-Bandele, M. (1991). Who's missing from the classroom: The need for minority teachers. Washington, D.C.: AACTE.
- Miller, J. & Sellar, W. (1990). Curriculum perspectives and practices. New York: Longman.
- Ministry of Education (B.C.). (1992). Year 2000: A framework for learning. Victoria, B.C.: Ministry of Education.
- Moodley, K. (1983). Canadian multiculturalism as ideology. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 6(3), 320-331.
- Moodley, K.A. (1995). Multicultural education in Canada: Historical development and current status. In J.A. Banks and C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education (pp. 801-820). New York: MacMillan.
- National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Neaman, E. (1987). Effects of a cultural curriculum in changing children's interethnic attitudes. Unpublished master's thesis. University of British Columbia, British Columbia.
- Nieto, S. (1992). Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education. New York: Longman.
- Noddings, N. (1992). The challenge to care in schools. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Noddings, N. (1995). A morally defensible mission for schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Phi Delta Kappan, 76(5), 365-368.
- Novak, J.D. & Gowin, D.B. (1984). Learning how to learn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Connor, T. (1989). Cultural voice and strategies for multicultural education. Journal of Education, 171(2), 57-74.
- Ogbu, J. (1992). Understanding cultural diversity and learning. Educational Researcher, 21(8), 5-14.

- Orlikow, L. & Young, J. (1993). The struggle for change: Teacher education in Canada. In G. Verma (Ed.), Inequality and Teacher Education: An International Perspective (pp. 70-88). London: Falmer Press.
- Padilla, A. & Lindholm, K. (1995). Quantitative educational research with ethnic minorities. In J.A. Banks & C.A.M. Banks (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education (pp. 97-113). New York: MacMillan.
- Pajares, F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. Review of Educational Research, 62(3), 307-332.
- Pajares, F. (1993). Preservice teachers' beliefs: A focus for teacher education. Action in Teacher Education, 15(2), 45-54.
- Paley, V.G. (1989). White teacher. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pang, V.O. (1988). Ethnic prejudice: Still alive and hurtful. Harvard Educational Review, 58(3), 375-379.
- Parkay, F. (1983). White teacher, black school. New York: Praeger.
- Patton, M. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pine, G. & Hilliard, A. (1990). Rx. for racism: Imperatives for America's schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 71(8), 593-600.
- Pine, N. (1992). Three personal theories that suggest models for teacher research. Teachers College Record, 93(4), 656-672.
- Polanyi, M. (1958). Personal knowledge: Towards a post critical philosophy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Popkewitz, T. (Ed.). (1987). Ideology and social formation in teacher education. In Critical studies in teacher education: Its folklore, theory, and practice (pp. 2-33). London: Falmer Press.
- Preissle-Goetz, J. & LeCompte, M. (1991). Qualitative research in social studies education. In J.P. Shaver (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Social Studies Education (pp. 56-66). New York: MacMillan.
- Price, G.G. (1992). Using quantitative methods to explore multicultural education. In C. Grant (Ed.), Research and Multicultural Education: From the Margins to the Mainstream (pp. 58-70). Bristol: Falmer Press.

- Ramcharan, S. (1988). The role of education in multi-racial Canada. Multiculturalism, 11(2), 23-27.
- Roland Martin, J. (1995). A philosophy of education for the year 2000. Phi Delta Kappan, 76(5), 355-359.
- Roman, L. & Apple, M. (1990). Is naturalism a move away from positivism? Materialist and feminist approaches to subjectivity in ethnographic research. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 38-73). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Said, E. (1978). Orientalism. New York: Pantheon.
- Schofield, J. (1990). Increasing the generalizability of qualitative research. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 201-232). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Schon, D. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schumacher, S. & McMillan, J. (1993). Research in education. New York: Harper Collins.
- Schwandt, T. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (pp. 118-137). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Segawa, M. (1994). A comparison of the effects of multicultural and anti-racist teaching on student attitude change. Unpublished master's thesis. University of British Columbia, British Columbia.
- Sheehan, N. & Fullan, M. (1995). Teacher education in Canada: A case study of B.C. and Ontario. In M. Wideen & P. Grimmer (Eds.), Changing Times in Teacher Education: Restructuring or Reconceptualization? (pp. 89-101). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Shulman, L. (1981). Disciplines of inquiry in education: An overview. Educational Researcher, 10(6), 5-12.
- Sirotnik, K. (1983). What you see is what you get-consistency, persistency, and mediocrity in classrooms. Harvard Educational Review, 53(1), 16-31.
- Sirotnik, K. (1990a). On the eroding foundations of teacher education. Phi Delta Kappan, 71(9), 710-716.

- Sirotnik, K. (1990b). Society, schooling, teaching, and preparing to teach. In J. Goodlad, R. Soder, & K. Sirotnik (Eds.), The moral dimensions of teaching (pp. 296-327). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Sleeter, C. (Ed.). (1991). Empowerment through multicultural education. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sleeter, C. (1992). Keepers of the American Dream. Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Sleeter, C. (1993). How white teachers construct race. In C. McCarthy & W. Crichlow (Eds.), Race, identity, and representation in education (pp. 157-171). New York: Routledge.
- Sleeter, C. & Grant, C. (1987). An analysis of multicultural education in the United States. Harvard Educational Review, 57(4), 421-444.
- Sleeter, C. & Grant, C. (1988, 1994-2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender. Columbus: Merrill.
- Soltis, J. (1990). The ethics of qualitative research. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 247-257). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sullivan, H. (1988). A legacy for learners: The report of the Sullivan Royal Commission on education. Victoria, B.C.: Queen's Printer.
- Sultana, R. (1995). From critical education to a critical practice of teaching. In J. Smyth (Ed.), Critical discourses on teacher development (pp. 131-145). New York: Cassell.
- Sumara, D. & Luce-Kapler, R. (1996). (Un)Becoming a teacher: Negotiating identities while learning how to teach. Canadian Journal of Education, 21(1), 65-83.
- Swartz, E. (1992). Multicultural education: From a compensatory to a scholarly foundation. In C. Grant (Ed.), Research and Multicultural Education: From the Margins to the Mainstream (pp. 32-43). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Tabachnick, B.R. & Zeichner, K. (Eds.) (1991). Issues and practices in inquiry-oriented teacher education (pp. 1-21). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Tator, C. & Henry, F. (1991). Multicultural education: Translating policy into practice. Ottawa: Ministry of Multiculturalism.
- University of British Columbia. (1996-1997). Teacher education program handbook. Vancouver: Teacher Education Office.

- VanBalkom, W.D. (1991). Multicultural education in Alberta's teacher training institutions. Education Canada, 31(3), 45-48.
- Vancouver School Board. (1996). Support and instruction of ESL students. Vancouver: VSB Publications.
- Verma, G. K. & Bagley, C. (1973). Changing racial attitudes in adolescents: An experimental English study. International Journal of Psychology, 8(1), 55-58.
- Wassermann, S. (1995). Teaching with cases: Teacher educators and preservice teachers in professional preparation. In M. Wideen & P. Grimmett (Eds.), Changing Times in Teacher Education: Restructuring or Reconceptualization? (pp. 135-150). Bristol: Falmer Press.
- Werner, W., Connors, B., Aoki, T., & Dahlie, J. (1974, 1980). Whose culture? Whose heritage? Ethnicity within Canadian social studies curricula. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.
- Wolcott, H. (1990). On seeking - and rejecting - validity in qualitative research. In E. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing Debate (pp. 121-152). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Woolfolk, A.E. (1990). Educational psychology. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Young, J. (Ed.). (1984). Breaking the mosaic: Ethnic identities in Canadian schooling. Toronto: Garamond Press.
- Zeichner, K. (1993). Action research-personal renewal and social reconstruction. Educational Action Research, 1(2), 199-219.
- Zeichner, K. & Gore, J. (1990). Teacher socialization. In W.R. Houston (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Teacher Education. New York: MacMillan.
- Zeichner, K. & Liston, D. (1987). Teaching student teachers to reflect. Harvard Educational Review, 57(1), 1-22.
- Zeichner, K. & Liston, D. (1990). Traditions of reform in U.S. teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 41(2), 3-20.
- Zeichner, K. & Tabachnick, B. (1981). Are the effects of university teacher education "washed out" by school experience? Journal of Teacher Education, 32(3), 7-11.

## **Appendix**

### **Sample Interview Questions**

The following is a list of sample questions posed to student teachers during the first set of interviews during the data collection process.

- 1) What role do you think teachers play in a culturally diverse society?
- 2) What do you believe are the goals of education for a society which encompasses learners from diverse backgrounds?
- 3) What do you think a teacher committed to meeting the needs of students from culturally diverse backgrounds should seek to accomplish?
- 4) In your teacher education program, has the topic of education for a culturally diverse society been mentioned or discussed?
  - if so, when, where, the depth of the presentation or discussion?
  - what has been the most beneficial aspect of your teacher education program in helping you to understand the issues around this topic?
- 5) During your practicum, which experiences, in your opinion, dealt with the topic of cultural diversity?
- 6) How do you think your life experiences have helped or hindered your understanding and implementation of a program committed to meeting the needs of students in a culturally diverse society?

This page left intentionally blank.