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**IMMIGRANT INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS: CAN TEACHER TRAINING MAKE A
DIFFERENCE?**

by

Lindsay Kane, BA, Bishops University, 2004

A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2009

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IMMIGRANT INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS: CAN TEACHER TRAINING MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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Masters of Arts, 2009
Immigration and Settlement Studies
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ABSTRACT

According to a 2008 report by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, many immigrants in Ottawa perceived schools to be a contributing factor to their sense of societal exclusion. It has been suggested that if teachers received more appropriate and adequate teacher training, they could better help minimize problems of exclusion (Gerin-Lajoie, 2008a, 2008c; Abbate-Vaughn, 2008; Ghosh, 1996). This paper explores training topics that could promote the inclusion of immigrants in schools, while also questioning whether it is possible to assume that teacher training can have an impact. The opinions of three Ottawa-Carleton District School Board teachers are discussed. An examination of additional ways in which inclusion can be addressed is also provided.

Key words: schools; pre-service teacher training; immigrant; Ottawa

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Introduction

It is expected that the number of immigrant children arriving in Canada will substantially increase in upcoming years (Areepattamannil & Freeman, 2008).¹ How these children adapt to life in this country is bound to have a large impact on society (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003). According to Anisef et al. (2008), schools play a major role in the integration of immigrant children. However, it is questionable whether immigrant students and their families feel included in their schools. According to a 2008 report by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, many immigrants in Ottawa perceived schools to be a “contributing factor to their experience of exclusion” (73).²

The number of immigrants settling in Ottawa has been on the rise in recent years. Census data from 2006 indicates that the foreign-born population in Ottawa increased by 9.5%, from 185,100 to 202,700, between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2008a). According to the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (2009), approximately 6,418 recent immigrants to Ottawa were children aged 0-14.³ Since it is common for cities such as Ottawa to have immigrant students in schools (Dorfman, 2008), it is important for teachers to be aware of how to accommodate and address these students’ needs, as well as their parents’ needs. However, not all teachers feel prepared.

An acquaintance of mine recently started teaching for the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), which is the largest public school board in Eastern Ontario (OCDSB, 2008). She admits that she feels unprepared to address the needs of

¹ Throughout this paper, the term ‘immigrant’ is occasionally exchanged with the term ‘English as a foreign language’ (EFL) student. The choice to exchange these terms follows the lead of many notable studies (Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2005; People for Education, 2008; and Cho & Reich, 2008).

² The Social Planning Council of Ottawa’s study (2008) focuses its attention on visible minority individuals living in Ottawa, however, its data indicates that the majority of these individuals are also immigrants.

³ ‘Recent immigrants’ refers to immigrants who have arrived within the past five years.

many of her students and the parents of her students who are immigrants. She feels that her pre-service teacher training program did not familiarize her with challenges commonly experienced by immigrants. As a result, she often questions her ability to make these students and their parents feel included in school.⁴

It has been suggested by various researchers, such as Gerin-Lajoie (2008a, 2008c), Abbate-Vaughn (2008) and Ghosh (1996), that if teachers received more appropriate and adequate teacher training, they could better help minimize problems of exclusion in schools. This paper will explore this suggestion. The original intention of this paper was to explore training teachers topics that teachers wanted to receive in order to make immigrant students and their families feel more included in schools. After conducting three insightful interviews with OCDSB teachers, this paper has also been extended to explore whether teacher training can, in fact, affect immigrant inclusion.⁵

Teacher training is a complex topic. This study will, therefore, limit the focus of its interviews to the *pre-service* teacher training that *elementary* school teachers received, as opposed to *in-service* teacher training or *secondary* school teachers.⁶

There are four main sections to this paper: 1. a literature review; 2. primary research; 3. an analysis of the primary research and; 4. recommendations based on the analysis. The paper begins with a literature review which discusses the reasons for this

⁴ Due to the fact that there is a substantial number of immigrant children in Ottawa, it is probable that many of them are attending the OCDSB schools. However, I was not able to find any statistical data on the OCDSB website referring to immigrant students or EFL students. I am not aware of the exact number of immigrant students who are enrolled in the OCDSB's 117 elementary schools (OCDSB, 2008).

⁵ The immigrant population group in Canada is diverse and complex. The word immigrant encompasses a great number of different ethnicities, races, mother-tongues, religions, customs, ages, and backgrounds. Since pre-service teacher training courses do not appear to provide courses on just one immigrant group (see Appendix 1), this paper looks at immigrants in the general sense: individuals who have been granted permission to live in Canada, usually having been born outside of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006).

⁶ Pre-service teacher training refers to training received before becoming a teacher; whereas in-service teacher training refers to training received while working as a teacher.

paper's perspective and briefly describes how education, over the years, has addressed issues concerning exclusion and inclusion. It also includes a list of teacher training weaknesses and suggestions for improvement. Next, this paper describes interviews with three OCDSB teachers. Teachers are asked what was included in their pre-service teacher training programs in regard to immigrants and how, if at all, these programs could be improved. Then, an analysis of the teachers' opinions is provided. Due to their responses, questions about whether teacher training can impact issues of inclusion/exclusion are also discussed. Finally, a list of recommendations about how issues of exclusion can be better addressed is provided.

Literature Review

The Importance of Inclusion

There is great value in including immigrant students and their families in society. Not only is it national policy to promote the inclusion of diversity in society (Library of Parliament, 2009), having immigrants feel included in society can benefit all citizens. As the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (2008) argues, “a city which does not address exclusion cannot maintain a high quality of life. Polarization and social division affect everyone” (7). Immigrants who grow up in communities where they feel economically and socially excluded from their communities often experience loss of self-esteem, family conflict and despair about one’s future opportunities (Omidavar & Richmond, 2003). As indicated by Mwarigha (2002), when young immigrants are exposed to such conditions for an extended period of time, they may develop sentiments of exclusion both from their families, as well as from their original and new communities. These conditions can be detrimental to young immigrants, as well as to their families and communities.

Schools tend to represent society’s main ideas and values. Dominant ideologies “...permeate the everyday experiences and practices within schools through the largely unspoken yet recognizable representation of what is valued” (Rishel, 2008, 47). Researchers, such as Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993), indicate that schools act as independent communities, while representing societal values. Schools help inform students and families about the society in which schools are located (Saracho & Spodek, 2005). Since schools play such a major role in representing society, if one feels excluded from school, it is understandable how one can just as easily feel excluded from society.

Pre-service Training for Elementary Teachers

This paper focuses its interviews on the *pre-service* teacher training that *elementary* school teachers received, as opposed to *in-service* teacher training or *secondary* school teachers. The selection of this focus is due to the following reasons. First, according to Stead (2006), there is a high turnover rate of new teachers; many of whom have not have been properly prepared to address the needs of diverse students and their families. If new teachers are leaving the profession early, it is unlikely that they would have received much in-service teacher training, in comparison to what they received in pre-service teacher training. As a result, there is a great need to focus on pre-service teacher training. Second, elementary school teachers were selected because of their more common interaction with parents (ie. parent-teacher interviews). Parents are known to have a major impact on their childrens' school experiences (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Watkins, 1997; Norris, 1999). The parents of immigrant students, however, often face challenges when assisting with their children's education (Bernhard & Friere, 1999; Dyson, 2001). Since parents are often more involved in the education of young children, in comparison to their involvement with older children, it was assumed that elementary school teachers, as opposed to secondary school teachers, would be more aware of the challenges that these parents experience. Therefore, this study will also focus on elementary school teachers.

Changing Notions of Exclusion/Inclusion in Education

In the late 1800s, immigrants arriving to Canada from Southern and Eastern Europe were commonly perceived as being distinct from the main Anglo-Saxon

population. Similar perceptions were made about Canada's aboriginal population and for much of its francophone population living outside of Quebec. Many Northern European and British settlers living in Canada were fearful that these individuals would not assimilate into Canadian culture (Kelly & Trebilcock, 1998). A notable researcher of education systems, Harper (1997), explains that over the past two centuries, societal bodies, such as systems of education, sometimes sought to minimize immigrants' differences; whereas at other times their individual differences were ignored or even emphasized.

In the late 1960s, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-1969) was established by the federal government in order to address a number of issues, including the topic of dissatisfaction and nationalism among the population in Quebec (Li, 1990). Gerin-Lajoie (2008a) explains that at the commission's public hearings, many non-Francophone and non-Anglophone groups expressed their frustrations with the way in which their cultures were represented in Canada's framework. Many members of these groups described how they felt marginalized by Canada's dual-culture structure. In 1971, in an attempt to make all groups feel included in society, the government adopted a national policy of inclusion. This policy is commonly referred to as the 'Multiculturalism Policy' (Gerin-Lajoie, 2008a).

Canada's multiculturalism policy intends to recognize all Canadian citizens and to include them in society, regardless of their culture, religion, language, race or ethnicity. Its perspective is popularly referred to as the 'Canadian cultural mosaic.' In 1988, this policy was enacted into legislation by the federal government. It is known as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act or Bill C-93.

Public education, even though it is a matter of provincial jurisdiction,⁷ is known to have greatly changed as a result of multiculturalism (Harper, 1997). Ontario school curriculums incorporated multicultural frameworks, which aimed to preserve traditions and to respect and acknowledge students' differences, while also promoting the inclusion of student diversity (Harper, 1997). Multicultural education, as a result, has served as an approach to promote student inclusion. Its effectiveness, however, is questionable.

Although ministries of education across the country typically assert that multicultural education is generally "well received" (Gerin-Lajoie, 2008a, 17), not everyone agrees.

There are a number of critics who believe that multicultural education has many weaknesses (Mujawamariya & Mahrouse, 2004; Jones, 2000; Harper, 1997). Gerin-Lajoie (2008a) and Cochran-Smith (1995) believe that much of what is considered to be 'multicultural education' is simply the participation in superficial cultural activities, as opposed to teaching children about more profound issues such as discrimination and equity. Cochran-Smith (1995) scoffs at what she considers to be 'basket making'-type multicultural activities. These researchers argue that multicultural education, as it is often practiced, does not eliminate problems of exclusion within schools. There is still the need to find solutions to problems of exclusion.

Some studies have indicated that teacher training, if sufficient and appropriate, may be able to play a role. Nevertheless, various researchers believe that teachers are not receiving adequate teacher training concerning student diversity, particularly in regard to immigrant students.

⁷ Each province and territory has its own ministries or departments of education. In Ontario, all schools operate according to the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum (Collet, 2007).

Teachers are not Prepared

In 1994, McLaughlin explained that many North American teachers "...simply do not know how to help those students, who are unlike the students they were trained to teach or those whom they have taught in the past" (32). She, along with others (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Gunderson, 2000), claimed that teachers often don't know how to deal with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Even though this problem was identified at least a decade ago, gaps in teacher training have persisted.

In 2007, Pappamihel described how many teachers who teach content-area courses, such as science and math, feel that they are not equipped with the skills for teaching immigrant students and that they lack knowledge about how to adapt their instructions to these students' "unique needs" (42). Abbate-Vaughn (2008) explains that "[t]he discussion of what it means to be a highly qualified teacher has paid scarce attention to the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions teachers need to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in urban schools" (175). Having interviewed 100 teachers and principals from Toronto about the topic of diversity, Gerin-Lajoie (2008b) found that although some participants "...felt confident that they had what it takes to work with the student diversity in the classroom," the majority of the participants "...felt that they were not adequately trained to face the multiracial, multi-ethnic, and multilingual classroom" (125). According to Gerin-Lajoie (2008b) pre-service teacher training programs:

“...have not systematically and deeply taken into account the issue of students’ racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in their training with future teachers. As a result, most of the literature on the issue tells us that teachers are not always well prepared to face the challenge of a racially, ethnically, and linguistically heterogeneous classroom (Gerin-Lajoie, 2002; Sleeter & Grant, 1991; Sleeter, 2004; Solomon & Levine-Rasky, 1996)” (123).

Many researchers agree that teachers need to be better trained to address immigrant children and their parents in schools. Gerin-Lajoie (2008a, 2008c), Abbate-Vaughn (2008) and Ghosh (1996) are three researchers who provide many suggestions about how issues of exclusion can be minimized for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Among their many suggestions, they indicate that if teachers were provided with more appropriate teacher training, they would be better able to address issues of exclusion.

Suggestions for Teacher Training

There is a plethora of information indicating common barriers that immigrants experience in schools, as well as suggestions for ways in which teachers could become better prepared to address these barriers; all of which could make teachers more able to promote inclusion in schools. This section identifies areas of concern and discusses these suggestions.

Although this paper focuses on the inclusion of immigrants, similar discussions of inclusion are often had with any group that is perceived to be ‘different.’ For example,

Frankel (2004) discusses the topic of inclusion in terms of children with disabilities. Harris and Depledge (1996) discuss this topic in terms of aboriginal students. Exclusion can only exist when there is something to be included *in*. 'Difference' can only exist with the concept of 'normal.' As a first suggestion, many studies explain that teachers should develop awareness about general theoretical concepts of diversity. Gerin-Lajoie (2008a) indicates that educators need to,

“acknowledge that the need for consciousness-raising among teachers and principals is real. Diversity must not be discussed only in terms of adapting the curriculum or the pedagogy, although this is also an important component of student inclusion, but first diversity needs to be examined within the existing power structure of our society” (125).

Bodycott (2006) indicates that teachers should be aware of the roots of cultural knowledge. In North America, teachers often have classrooms which are ethnically and culturally diverse, whereas teachers have historically been “white, middle class and female” (Whitfield et al., 2007, 259). As reported by Whitfield et al. (2007), teachers’ cultural backgrounds may frame the way they understand knowledge. Teachers can experience ‘situated cognition,’ whereby their experiences create mental contexts for understanding reality. Situated cognition may help to explain why one person’s understanding of reality may be very different from someone who has had distinct experiences. If a teacher’s cultural upbringing is very different from their students’, the teacher may have a lot of difficulty understanding their students’ cultural values and identities, due to their different mental contexts (Whitfield et al., 2007). Villegas and

Lucas (2002) believe that teachers should expand their social consciousnesses. They indicate that there is a great need for teachers to understand other people's ways of knowing and being.

According to Gerin-Lajoie (2008a), teachers often view the different cultural and linguistic challenges that students experience as being specific to the individual. Many teachers do not view these challenges as a result of systemic exclusion. Therefore, it has been argued that teachers should be well informed about society's notions of what is 'different' and what is 'normal'. These notions must be broken down in order for more inclusive notions of diversity to be established. Many researchers, such as Gerin-Lajoie (2008c) and Bruner (2008), advocate for teacher training courses which discuss these ideas.

Other researchers indicate that teachers are in need of more practical knowledge. As a second suggestion, some researchers stress that teachers should be more knowledgeable about how to teach EFL students. In 2006, approximately 70% of Canada's foreign-born population reported a mother-tongue other than English or French (Statistics Canada, 2008a). In Canada, it is common that 20-50% of students in major urban school boards have EFL backgrounds (McInnes, 1993; Dawson, 1998; Depster & Albert, 1998). If all teachers were provided with English language instruction training, immigrants who are in need of English instruction could greatly benefit (Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2005). Yet, according to Flannery (2006), in the U.S., less than 15% of teachers with EFL students in their classes have taken part in at least one day's worth of EFL training during the past three years. In Canada, only about

5% of teacher candidates who graduated from the University of Toronto's teacher accreditation program have taken a course on how to teach EFL material (Duffy, 2004).

Pappamihel (2007) indicates that even though many teachers have students who are linguistically diverse, teachers are not always trained to teach to these students' EFL needs. She describes how these students "...present many challenges for their teachers, who are often not appropriately trained to meet their needs" (44). Gunderson (2000) indicates that many teachers do not view it as their role to address the needs of EFL students, in a non EFL-focused class. Many EFL students will suffer if teachers are reluctant to help them. According to Gunderson (2000), all teachers, regardless of whether they are EFL teachers or other content-area teachers, should be helping EFL students succeed. Although there is a need for many more teachers to learn EFL instructional strategies, it appears that this type of training is not the biggest concern among all teachers. In a report written by Cho and Reich (2008), many teachers in the U.S. indicated that they had a preference for learning about cultural understanding, as opposed to EFL instructional strategy training.

A third suggestion is to teach teachers how to best communicate with the parents of immigrant students. A number of studies emphasize the academic benefits of having families involved in their children's learning process (Berger, 1995). Studies by Christenson and Hurley (1997) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) indicate that children who have parents who are highly involved in their lives have high academic performance, fewer drop-out rates, high homework completion rates, and positive attitudes about school. Organizations such as the Canadian Child Day Care Federation and bodies which create the National Statement on Quality Early Learning and Child

Care, as well as the Occupational Standards for Child Care Administrators strongly support the notion that parents should be involved in their children's education (Wilson, 2009). Since parents are recognized as having the potential to significantly effect their child's development, various researchers indicate that teachers should be trained about how to best interact with the parents of students. According to the United States' National Association for the Education of Young Children (1996) "...for optimal development and learning of all children, educators mustpromote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families..."(5). Many researchers, such as Norris (1999) and Watkins (1997) have linked children's academic motivation and academic achievement to home-school communication.

Teachers need to better understand various problems that can occur at parent-teacher information sessions. Dyson (2001), as well as Bernhard and Freire (1999), describe how many immigrant parents are reluctant to participate in their children's education due to their limited English skills and different cultural understandings of the role that schools play in society. Bernhard and Freire (1999) found that a breakdown in communication between Latino parents and teachers can be attributable to a teacher's use of certain educational terms. Yet, communication barriers can be just one of a number of reasons why immigrant families may experience confusion and problems at these interviews.

Along with parent communication, a fourth suggestion is that teachers should be more aware of cultural issues affecting immigrant parents. Parent-teacher interviews are a new concept for many immigrant families. Dorfman (2008) explains that immigrant families, when in their home country, may have gone to meet teachers only when their

child was experiencing problems. Unless teachers or some other school representative explains the typical function of parent-teacher interviews to immigrant parents, they may feel misunderstood and confused.

In this same vein of misunderstandings, a study conducted in the United Kingdom revealed an interesting finding. According to Lareau and Weininger (1989), teachers often misinterpreted the parents of immigrant students' lack of involvement in their children's school activities as indicative of their lack of concern about their children's education. The teachers in their study did not understand the stresses that many new immigrant families face. It would be worthwhile addressing this issue in training.

Weinstein et al. (2003) encourage teachers to become knowledgeable about their students' cultures. Teachers should be careful not to devalue their students' cultural practices, which may be different from mainstream ones. Effective teaching is generally based on the assumption that teachers know their students, both inside and outside the classroom. This involves teachers being aware of their students' races, ethnicities and social classes, which can greatly impact the way in which a child constructs his or her understandings (Howard, 1999; Gay, 2002). In fact, Peterson and Heywood (2007) explain that children, whose first language is not English, develop a stronger sense of self when teachers appreciate these students' cultures and mother-tongues. Under these conditions, it is also more likely that a child will perform better academically.

A fifth suggestion concerns the lifestyles of many immigrants. Immigrants often experience settlement challenges upon arrival. According to Statistics Canada (2007), between 1992 to 2000, approximately one in five recent immigrants had low-incomes for several years upon their arrival to Canada. Ladky and Peterson (2008) explain that many

parents do not have time to participate in their children's schooling. Many immigrants have full schedules and are often dealing with full time jobs, EFL classes, and are looking after children at home. As such, immigrant parents may have difficulties participating in their children's school activities. Peterson and Heywood (2007) explain that "[t]here is clearly an urgent need to expand teachers' understandings of the role of parents as co-teachers at home without necessitating their physical presence in school" (897).

Furthermore, Lareau and Weininger (2003) argue that the role that other family members can play in the life of a student should not be ignored. Teachers, according to Lareau and Weininger (2003), are often unaware of the extended family networks of many immigrants. They explain that for many immigrant families, communal childrearing is typical, and that teachers should be careful not to downplay the positive effect that extended families can have on the academic development of students. Teachers may be unaware of the lifestyle realities of many immigrants. As Peterson and Heywood suggest (2007), it would be useful for teachers to be informed of these realities.

A sixth suggestion involves immigrant students' academic achievement. It has been suggested that teacher training should focus on certain immigrant groups' grades and drop-out rates. Although many reports show that, on average, immigrant children do very well in school, if not better than Canadian-born children (Schleicher, 2006; Worswich, 2001), this does not appear to be the case for all immigrant children. For example, Gunderson (2007) found that by looking at 5,000 EFL students attending schools in Vancouver, from 1991-2000, Mandarin and Cantonese speaking students in grades 8 to 12 outperformed English-speaking Canadians in most school subjects; whereas, Indian, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Spanish speaking students often performed

less well than Canadian born students. Thus, not all immigrant students are excelling. Furthermore, a study by Xu et al. (2007) brings to light potential generalizations that can occur with studies like that of Gunderson's (2007), by describing a Chinese student struggling in school in Toronto. Xu et al. (2007) explain that contrary to the stereotype that all Chinese students excel (Lee, 1996), not all do. They stress the importance of acknowledging this reality.

An Ontario Ministry of Education report (1987), titled *Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education, and the Issue of Dropouts*, shows that 53% of grade 9-12 EFL students dropped out of high school (Watt & Roessingh, 1994). A study in Calgary, conducted by Watt and Roessingh (1994) reveals that 74% of EFL students enrolled in a high school in Calgary failed to graduate. Also, Derwing et al. (1999) found that 60% of EFL students enrolled in Edmonton Catholic high schools did not graduate⁸. If a child drops out of school, many problems can arise when they reach adulthood. For example, Statistics Canada (2008b) has revealed that there is a high correlation between dropping out of high school and being unemployed; unemployment being a factor often associated with societal exclusion (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2009).

Although studies concerning drop out rates generally concern high school students, it would still be useful for all teachers, primary and secondary teachers alike, to be aware of these potential statistical and stereotypical confusions so as to prevent problems from occurring at a later date. As Gay (2002) argues, when teachers provide

⁸ Watt & Roessingh (1994) and Derwing (1999) do not indicate if all the students in the EFL courses were strictly immigrant students. However, since there is a lack of data concerning EFL students, these statistics were used in this present study. It is interesting to note that even the largest public school board in Toronto, the Toronto District School Board, does not have public data on its website about immigrant students' or EFL students' drop out rates. They do, however, have statistics on the drop out rates of students from different racial-ethnic backgrounds but they do not indicate if they are also immigrants (TDSB, 2007).

“culturally responsive teaching” to ethnically diverse students, students will benefit academically (106).

A seventh suggestion concerns issues of trust and dependency. Roessingh’s findings (2006) indicate that many immigrant parents depend heavily on teachers to provide them with information about the school culture. Roessingh (2006) acknowledges that many “[i]mmigrant students and their parents have few options but to trust, and the EFL teacher may be the front-line professional to whom they turn” (570). It has been suggested that teachers, particularly EFL teachers, should be aware of how to create and maintain trusting relationships. This could represent an important aspect in teacher training, especially since Stead (2006) indicates that there is an increasing number of teachers who are not developing trusting relationships with their students and their families.

There are also views which are less commonly suggested, yet make important contributions. For example, as an eighth suggestion, it has been indicated that teachers should be given training about how to make immigrants more aware of how to interact in their new society in order to decrease the amount of tension they will experience. Teachers should be aware of how to best educate immigrant students about the “mainstream ways to interact in social situations, in order to succeed in dominant social spheres” (van Tartwijk et al., 2009, 460).

This literature review has discussed this study’s framework and has briefly reviewed ways in which issues of exclusion and inclusion have been dealt with in education. Literature indicating that teachers require more training concerning how to include immigrants in schools was provided. A sample of suggestions identifying barriers

that many immigrants experience in schools and what training teachers should receive to address these barriers was also included. In the following sections, an analysis about the opinions of three OCDSB elementary school teachers will elaborate on these topics.

Methodology

Primary qualitative and exploratory research was conducted in order to better understand what type of pre-service training teachers have received and what kind of training they would like to receive. In interviews, OCDSB teachers expressed their opinions regarding how pre-service teacher training programs could be improved. These opinions provide insights into ways in which pre-service training could be altered, so as to make teachers more prepared to address immigrants in schools. The interviews took place in the last week of July and the first week of August, 2009.

Currently, there are more than 2,700 teachers working for the OCDSB (OCDSB, 2008). Due to the limited scale of this research project, only three teachers were interviewed. These three participants were selected using a snowball approach. Five OCDSB elementary school teachers, with whom I was an acquaintance, were each given ten contact cards. In order to ensure that the participation of teachers was voluntary, the five teacher acquaintances were not interviewed. Instead, these five teachers distributed their contact cards to other OCDSB teachers. Any OCDSB teacher who received one of these contact cards could decide, at their own discretion, if they wanted to participate in the study by contacting me. The first three teachers who responded to the contact cards were interviewed.

The first participant (#1) was a female who had been working as a teacher since she graduated from the University of Ottawa's pre-service teacher training program in 1986. Most of the schools where she had worked had a high number of immigrant students. The second participant (#2) was also a female who had attended the University of Ottawa's pre-service teacher training program and who has worked with immigrant

students. She attended her pre-service teacher training program four years ago and has been working as a teacher for the past three years. The third participant (#3) was a male substitute teacher. He had attended the University of Windsor's pre-service teacher training program, five years ago. He had occasionally worked with immigrant students, while substituting in OCDSB schools.

Each of the three interviews was approximately half an hour in length. The interviews were conducted in person, at each teacher's home. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and then analyzed. To analyze the data, I used principles of grounded theory, which is based on the notion that theories are build, not tested (Corbin & Holt, 2005). I worked through two main stages of coding: open and axial. By conducting these two stages of coding, I was able to link ideas and categorize data. I paid particular attention to what kind of training teachers wanted to receive and compared it to the challenges that they noticed many immigrants experiencing. The six main interview questions were the following:

- Have you previously taught immigrant students?
- Where and when did you attend your pre-service teacher training?
- Do you think that immigrant students and their parents have needs and/or face challenges that are different from non-immigrant students and their parents in the classroom? If so, what are they?
- Did your pre-service teacher training program prepare you to deal with the needs and/or challenges that immigrant students and their parents experience?
- Do you think there should have been a greater focus placed on the needs and/or the challenges often experienced by immigrant students and their families in your pre-service teacher training program?
- How can pre-service teacher training programs be improved, in order to better train teachers about any challenges that immigrant students and their parents experience in the school environment?

Limitations

There are some limitations to the interviews that should be taken into consideration. First, it is difficult to generalize the answers provided by the participants since the sample is so small. Second, the sampling of OCDSB teachers was not done at random. There was only a small separation between each participant and the interviewer. Third, the participants were in different pre-service teacher training programs and they all appeared to have different amounts and kinds of experience working with immigrants in schools. Due to these three limitations, the opinions of the participants should not be generalized to all OCDSB teachers. A fourth consideration is whether a social desirability effect could have influenced the participants' responses. During the interviews, the participants may have answered questions in a way which corresponded with how they would like to present themselves, their students and their training. As a result, their answers may not include all the details they might otherwise have included if they had not been audio recorded and interviewed by a stranger. A fifth aspect is that the participants who were interviewed had all graduated several years ago from their pre-service teacher training programs. As a result, their answers concerning their memories of their pre-service training and their memories of interacting with immigrants in the classroom may be distorted with time. This study accepts what they say as true, while acknowledging the possibility for distortions. As a sixth aspect, a similar acceptance will be made for the participants' understanding of the term 'immigrant'. It is assumed that when the participants were asked about 'immigrant' students, they understood this to mean first generation immigrants and that it was not confused with another population category, such as visible minority individuals.

Interview Findings

This is a review of the responses provided by the participants. The five main topics of their answers are categorized thematically.

Challenges that Immigrants Experience

Participants agreed that the immigrants in their classrooms often experience a number of challenges and barriers. Nevertheless, the focus of their answers concerned the challenges experienced by the *parents* of immigrant students, not those of the immigrant *students* themselves. As described by participant #1, children adapt easily. It is the parents who have a harder time adapting to their new environments.

Participant #1 explained that many immigrant parents can experience challenges due to cultural barriers, especially those "... who did not come from affluent backgrounds." She indicated that some immigrant parents are unfamiliar with having female teachers in the classroom. Immigrant parents who come from more impoverished backgrounds, according to her, often require "... a lot more welcoming, a lot more help getting resources. They needed a lot more information." Upon arrival, these parents are exposed to a new environment, with a new culture and a new structure for accessing information; all of which, she explained, can require some adjustment time to understand.

Communication issues were provided as another challenge for parents. If the family of a child does not speak English, it can be difficult for teachers to communicate with the parents, especially if there are also cultural barriers. Participant #3 described how it can be difficult for an immigrant parent to assist with their child's homework. He explained how it can be "... harder for [immigrant] kids to bring homework home. Their parents can't help them with homework, some of them. Not all of them, but it's tough because I'm sure the

parents want to help but they just don't know enough to help." According to him, many of these parents are not familiar with English. As a result, they can often experience problems with the language of the homework and there may be cultural aspects of the homework that they do not understand. He also suggested that sometimes "...they don't have the time." (It appeared that he was suggesting that lack of time was a situation more prevalent among immigrants, in comparison to non-immigrant parents.)

Poverty was also discussed as a challenge for immigrant parents. Participant #1 indicated that the parents of many immigrant students whom she teaches experience a great deal of poverty. She explained that living in situations of poverty "...has its own challenges." This participant described how she had worked for many years in neighborhoods where immigrants were living in public housing projects. She indicated that it is hard to extract 'immigrant needs' from needs that are attributable to poverty. She was aware of the poverty that many immigrants experience, as well as the lifestyle that often accompanies poverty.

Many of the challenges raised in the literature were not mentioned by the participants. Immigrant children's lack of English was not discussed as presenting a challenge to children or teachers. According to the participants, students who were in need of English language assistance often attended courses or met with EFL teacher specialists who assisted with their English ability. The students' lack of English and their language acquisition was discussed in terms of it being "part of the students' normal learning process." The topic of mainstream interaction styles was never brought up. The participants indicated that the children adapted easily to Canadian society. As a result, the teachers indicated that they did not need to explain to children *how* to adjust. Furthermore, the topic of immigrant student drop-out was not addressed by the teachers. As participant #2 explained, as an elementary school teacher, she never had to deal with this topic.

Pre-Service Teacher Training Provided

The three participants all described very different experiences in their pre-service teacher training. The one who had graduated from the University of Ottawa's pre-service teacher training program in 1986, participant #1, indicated that she had not received any training concerning immigrant students. There was no mention of immigrant students throughout her training, nor was any EFL training provided.

Participant #2 had also attended the University of Ottawa's pre-service teacher training program. However, she attended the program in 2006. She explained that at the time of her training, there was a non-mandatory EFL course provided. She had elected to take it. "[I]t was an elective that we were allowed to throw in at the end. People took all sorts of things." However, since it was an elective, "a lot of people didn't take it at all." She was fairly sure that it was offered as a one-month course, which was a shorter amount of time compared to other courses. Her EFL course included basic EFL training and some information concerning cultural issues experienced by immigrants.

Participant #3, a teacher who had attended his pre-service teacher training at the University of Windsor, indicated that he had attended a mandatory course which dealt with EFL students. That course discussed various topics, one of which concerned EFL students. He explained that he, "...probably had two or three weeks on how to deal with ESL⁹ students..." For example, he described that he had been taught that if an immigrant student experiences language barriers "...then you try to match them up with some student that is helpful." He concluded that, "[s]o I would say yes, I did get some exposure [on how] to deal with ESL and immigrant students at the university which I attended." Since only three participants were interviewed and their experiences and opinions were vastly different, it is difficult to establish a comparative analysis about their pre-service teacher training.

⁹ For the purpose of this paper, the term 'ESL' (English as a second language) has the same general meaning as 'EFL'.

Weaknesses of Pre-service Teacher Training

All three of the participants suggested that their pre-service teacher training programs could be improved. Participant #1 explained that due to not having received training regarding immigrant needs, she had to “catch-up” once she entered into the classroom. She had initially found it really shocking when new groups of immigrants entered into her classrooms with significantly different needs. On many occasions she felt unprepared to address their needs. She explained how she was forced to learn on the job. According to her, “... we were running to catch up with the whole concept. Yeah, so it happened on the job, very much on the job.” The pre-service teacher training, in her opinion, did not prepare her for teaching.

Participant #2 believed that a common weakness of teacher training programs is that many of them do not provide mandatory EFL courses. She believed that “...in this day and age, in this city, I mean in any city in Canada, any major city in Canada... [it] should be mandatory....whether you want to be an ESL teacher or not.” She also believed that many of her pre-service teacher training professors at the University of Ottawa had “...been in the game for too long.” In her opinion, many of the professors were no longer aware of current classroom topics, such as the needs and challenges that many immigrant students experience. Participant #1 and participant #2 both believed that it was problematic for pre-service teacher training programs not to teach about general theoretical concepts concerning student diversity. She explained how general theory concerning individual differences can positively affect one’s interactions with immigrant students, as well as with all students. There was, however, at least one professor who participant #2 described as being inclined to discuss theoretical knowledge. It was unfortunate, according to her, that there were not more professors who focused on theoretical knowledge.

Participant #3 felt differently than the other two participants. Although he thought that "...you can never get enough exposure to immigrant or ESL students [in pre-service teacher training]," he explained that "...it's hard to say how much is enough." He agreed that there is always room for improvement, but for practical purposes, he felt that the three weeks of training he had received was "adequate enough" for him. When asked about the topics which he wished his pre-service teacher training program had addressed, he explained how he wished he had been provided with more information concerning how to grade using a grading scheme, which he referred to as a 'rubric.' He also believed that it was too difficult to incorporate more training regarding immigrants into the programs. As a result, although the three participants admitted that they would all welcome more training, their answers differed in terms of the necessity for more and better training.

Improved Pre-service Teacher Training

Participant #3 did not provide any relevant suggestions about how teacher training could be improved, since he did not believe there was a great need or possibility to implement more. Participant #1 and #2 both provided suggestions about how to improve the programs. They indicated that there would be great value in having courses which discuss the social environment of students. For example, participant #1 discussed the potential benefits of having sociology and psychology-type courses provided in pre-service teacher training programs, as a way to better understand the children in the classroom. Being taught student diversity theory, according to her, was of great importance. She indicated that "you are not just receiving that child...you are receiving his experiences. You are receiving his culture. You are receiving his family. You are receiving his community...and you're not teaching curriculum, you are teaching the student."

These two participants elaborated on how theoretical information concerning student diversity could make teachers more accepting of all forms of 'difference'. These two believed that learning about diversity can expand a teacher's general classroom framework. Furthermore, participant #2 suggested that it would be ideal if all courses included sections which focused on student diversity. For example, she mentioned that it would be beneficial for courses which focus on math curriculum to have a section concerning how to make math language-friendly.

Participant #3 made it clear that although these theoretical concepts of diversity were important in teacher training, he questioned how there would be room to include this curriculum into one-year teaching programs. Unknowingly, participant #1 provided a suggestion of how to fix this problem: four year pre-service teacher training programs, as opposed to only one-year programs. Participant #1 explained, "[w]e, as people who come from a variety of degrees, and have done this one year program, come to the table with nothing. You know, we don't have background." Nevertheless, although she argued for the addition of pre-service teacher training, she acknowledged that it was not likely that changes would be made. According to her, educational institutions are slow to make changes due to traditions.

Participant #3 indicated that it was unrealistic to make changes to the one-year program since "[t]hat's a lot more money and it's long for them [teachers] to start teaching." He described how the one-year pre-service teacher training program focuses on "...the Ontario curriculum. We'll look at the curriculum itself. It will expose you to special needs¹⁰. A little bit, one course in art. Other than that, it's all about reading and writing. That's the main focus." The time restraint of a one-year program was referred to on several occasions. It

¹⁰ A child with special needs, according to him "...may be an ADHD child. It could be a child with autism. It could be a child who is a little bit more slow than the other students." He suggested that immigrant students may be classified as a 'special needs' student. However, they generally aren't.

appears likely that this time restraint could also be a reason why many programs don't have mandatory EFL courses, as advocated by participant #2.

As a final suggestion for ways in which pre-service teacher training could be improved, participant #2 indicated that there was a need to have professors who were more aware of current issues affecting classrooms. She provided an example of a professor who had a unique, fresh style; a professor who discussed some of the more current theoretical aspects of diversity. She believed that it was very important for professors to have current knowledge of classrooms. According to her, if professors were not aware of current topics, they should return to the school classroom.

Interpretation of Findings

Desire for More Training

All three teachers believed that their pre-service teacher training programs *could* be improved, yet not all of them believed that there was a real need or possibility for them to be improved. Participant #3 believed that his pre-service teacher training, which included a mandatory course on topics relating to EFL students, was sufficient. In my opinion, his vague description of the content of the EFL material he had received, as well as the fact that he had learnt the material in a fairly short period of time, suggested that the training he received about issues affecting immigrants was limited. However, his position is not surprising, keeping in mind that he had had little experience working with immigrants in schools. The other two participants, in comparison, both had more experience working with immigrants in schools. In particular, they had more experience working with the parents of immigrant students. These two participants both expressed a desire to be provided with more pre-service teacher training regarding immigrants. As a result, this situation raises the possibility that the more teachers interact with immigrants, the more pre-service teacher training is necessary. Had participant #3 received more experience working with immigrants, it is tempting to assume that he would have expressed a greater desire to have received more training. More research would be required before definite conclusions could be made.

Ways in Which Teacher Training could be Improved

Participant #2 and #3 provided suggestions about how pre-service teacher training could be improved. (Participant #3 did not provide any relevant suggestions since he did not believe there was a real need for training to be improved, nor did he believe it was possible for the programs to be improved.) The two who provided suggestions addressed a total of

four topics: three of which are identifiable in the literature, whereas one appears to be absent from the literature.

One of the suggestions was that pre-service teacher training programs should offer courses concerning theories of diversity. Similar to Villegas and Lucas's (2002) and Whitfield et al.'s (2007) comments, participant #1 and #2 indicated that there should be information provided about people's social environments. The participants explained that they wanted courses that made teachers think about all students' differences, not just differences relating to immigrants. They indicated that teachers should be aware that all students are different from one another. Both of them stressed the need for general student diversity training to be expanded in pre-service teacher training programs.

A second suggestion concerned the need for EFL training courses to be mandatory. As indicated in the literature review, a report by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (2005) suggests that EFL students can benefit if teachers are trained about how to teach EFL material. Yet, not all teachers are receiving basic EFL training (Flannery, 2006; Duffy, 2004).

A third suggestion involved the length of teacher certification programs. Participant #1 indicated that one year of pre-service teacher training does not provide sufficient training in order for a teacher to be aware of immigrants' needs. On the website of every Ontario academic institution that offers full-time English teacher certification programs, an outline of the requirements for their program can be found (see Table 1). After conducting a review of the requirements for these programs, it appears that all full-time teacher certification programs in Ontario are one year in length. It also appears that it is possible to apply to these teacher certification programs without a background in education. While some institutions offer undergraduate degree programs in education, it does not appear

necessary to have an undergraduate degree related to the field of education in order to be accepted into a teacher certification program. As a result, an individual with a background in math, for example, could be accepted to a teacher certification program. With a math background, that individual is unlikely to have an academic background in teacher training.

A fourth suggestion was that professors who teach pre-service teacher training programs should return to school classrooms if they are no longer aware of current school issues. Participant #2 explained that several of the professors from her pre-service teacher training program had "...been in the game for too long" and should return to school classrooms. This topic could not be found in the literature. It is likely that this is an unpopular topic since individuals who typically write academic papers tend to be professors. It is probable that an author of a paper concerning this topic would not be popular. Yet, it provides valuable insight concerning potential weaknesses in pre-service teacher training programs.

As a final point, it is noteworthy that when the teachers were asked about the challenges that immigrants experience in the classroom, all three participants indicated that parents, not children, are the ones who primarily experience challenges in the classroom. It is therefore curious that when teachers were asked to provide suggestions for how to improve their pre-service teacher training, none of them asked to receive training concerning how to address the specific needs and challenges that *parents* often experience.

Implications

Since there were only three participants interviewed and all three received different amounts of training and because they came from different programs and had different amounts of time working with immigrants in schools, it is difficult to generalize their findings. Nevertheless, it is worth examining their individual statements in further detail, in

an attempt to better understand various puzzling issues. For example, it is curious that participant #3 indicated that he did not feel that more teacher training was necessary and that participant #1 felt that her pre-service teacher training program was overall rather useless. It raises the question of the effectiveness of teacher training; more specifically, can teacher training even have an effect on issues of inclusion/exclusion? Gerin-Lajoie (2008a, 2008c), Abbate-Vaughn (2008) and Ghosh (1996) *suggest* that teacher training can impact issues of exclusion and inclusion, however, they do not provide concrete *evidence* that teacher training can have this impact. Moreover, even if teacher training can have an impact, it is questionable what kind of training and what length of training would be required for it to be effective. This is particularly relevant since the participants in this study identified having problems interacting with the parents of immigrant students, yet did not request specific training in regard to those challenges. It is also surprising that although literature on this topic provides numerous ways in which teachers should be trained, few of these training suggestions were addressed by the teachers in the interviews. It would be worthwhile conducting studies concerning the effectiveness of teacher training in regard to school inclusion and exclusion.

On another topic, it is also important to consider topics beyond the scope of teacher training. For example, the participants discussed how many parents experience EFL, cultural and financial barriers. Since parents are commonly known to play an important role in the education of their children (Berger, 1995; Christenson & Hurley, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995), it appears necessary for parents to receive assistance confronting these barriers. If parents are able to decrease the barriers they experience, it is likely that they themselves would be able to better assist their children. There are many ways in which these barriers can be addressed which do not concern the training of teachers. These topics will be further described in the next section.

Recommendations

The following recommendations concern 1. research regarding teacher training and 2. topics beyond the scope of teacher training. More research would be required in order to establish whether teachers, if provided with more appropriate training, could affect immigrants' perceptions of exclusion. For example, there is a need for more academic literature concerning what training is currently being provided in pre-service teacher training since there is currently little academic literature on this topic. Once that is better understood, social experiments could be designed so as to determine if teacher training could have an impact. Additionally, it is important to consider other ways in which inclusion and exclusion can be addressed in schools. Parents and communities play important roles in this discussion.

Before these recommendations are described in further detail, it should be acknowledged from the outset that it is also necessary for *in-service* teacher training to be examined. Because of the time restriction, this study only focused on pre-service teacher training, however, its limited scope does not address a great deal of potentially relevant teacher training. A more comprehensive review of all forms of teacher training could greatly benefit the discussion of inclusion.

The Content of Pre-service Teacher Training Programs

Literature on the topic of what is provided in teacher certification programs is scarce. Few academic studies describe what is being taught in Canadian pre-service teacher training programs. As Stead (2006) notes, in discussing a study by van den Berg (2005), "...little is known about the skills of the course instructors, the quality of the curricula, the number of training hours and the extent to which participation is mandatory,

supervised, or compensated” (15). Nevertheless, there are some studies which have attempted to address this issue.

Asselin & Doiron (2003) have reviewed various Canadian universities to establish what teachers in pre-service teacher training programs are learning about library preparation. Beckford’s study (2008) makes reference to an unpublished master’s paper concerning a recent on-line review of environmental education that is provided to faculties of education in Ontario. It is likely that there are others as well. However, using various academic search engines, such as Eric, Proquest Research Library and Academic Search Premier, Ghosh’s study (1996) appears to be the only one discussing a topic related to immigrants (and its relation is fairly general).

In 1993, Ghosh (1996) did a national survey of forty-seven faculties of education across Canada to find out if teachers were receiving training which would help them better understand how to address diversity in the classroom. Although she did not focus on issues specifically pertaining to immigrants, her concerns about diversity include immigrant students. Of the thirty-one faculties who responded to the survey’s questions, a majority of them formally taught material about the following topics: sexism, 84%; equity, 81%; students’ rights, 72%; racism, 69%, and human rights, 56%. According to Ghosh (1996), what was most shocking was “...that 97 per cent of the institutions did not have any separate compulsory courses devoted to multicultural education” (46). She indicated that although the majority of these faculties offered separate courses, they were not compulsory. Her study, unfortunately, does not outline the actual content of the courses or their purposes.

Despite the lack of academic research concerning this topic, there are institutions which have access to pre-service teacher training programs and courses. The following institutions are likely to possess this information: The Ontario College of Teachers, the Association for Universities and Colleges across Canada and the educational institutions themselves.

Ontario College of Teacher: In 1997, the Ontario College of Teachers was formed. It is a body that “allows teachers to regulate and govern their own profession in the public interest” (Ontario College of Teachers, 2009, website). Any teacher who wishes to work in a publicly funded school in Ontario must be a member of the college. Among its many roles, it is responsible for having information about all teacher certification programs. The college accredits pre-service teacher training programs and also issues teaching certificates. Online public information indicates that it makes major decisions concerning what needs to be included in pre-service teacher training programs, however, details concerning its determination process are not provided (Ontario College of Teachers, 2009).

The Association for Universities and Colleges across Canada (AUCC): The mandate of the AUCC “is to facilitate the development of public policy on higher education and to encourage cooperation among universities and governments, industry, communities, and institutions in other countries” (AUCC, 2009, website). The AUCC indicates that thirteen institutions located in Ontario (twelve universities and one college), offer full-time general teacher certification programs in English at their institutions (AUCC, 2009). In a section with the heading ‘Search Academic Programs’, there are no

descriptions about the programs. Instead links are provided to the educational institutions that offer the programs.

Educational Institutions: According to the websites of those thirteen institutions, it appears that most programs offer general EFL training courses and that each program offers at least one course related to topics which could involve immigrant students, such as *Childhood, Youth and Society*, *Teachings in Multicultural Settings*, *Exclusion to Inclusion: Imagination and Creativity in the 21st Century Classroom* (see appendix 1). However, the course descriptions are not always provided. Moreover, when descriptions are provided, they are often vague. Much is unclear about what pre-service teachers are expected to learn from these courses. For example, how much of the material in each course discusses topics specifically related to immigrants' needs? How much of each course deals with general theoretical concepts of diversity? Are topics relating to the parents of immigrant students discussed in these classes? The public information provided on these websites is difficult to navigate and it is often unclear exactly what is included in the programs. Consequently, it is hard to make definite conclusions about what is currently provided in pre-service teacher training programs and if it is enough.

Would Teacher Training Work?

There are experimental studies which reveal that teacher training can affect students' academic achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Whitehurst, 2002). However, I was not able to find any studies that demonstrate whether teacher training can affect issues of inclusion. Although studies such as Gerin-Lajoie (2008a, 2008c), Abbate-Vaughn (2008) and Ghosh (1996) *suggest* that teacher training can affect issues of exclusion in the classroom, a review of academic search engines, such as Eric, Proquest Research Library

and Academic Search Premier, indicate that there are no studies which use academic data to *prove* this point. The suggestions provided by the participants in this study, although thoughtful, do not answer questions concerning the effectiveness of implementing them. This is of particular concern since Sleeter (2001) explains that there is little evidence to indicate that teachers who receive training about the inclusion of diverse races and ethnicities will become better teachers in situations where racial-ethnic diversity is present. As a result, it is important that suggestions be interpreted as useful avenues for future research and not as definitive ways in which inclusion can be promoted. Testing these suggestions in social experiments could allow for more conclusive statements.

Social Experiments

There are various topics regarding pre-service teacher training which would be useful to analyze. For example, do teacher training programs that provided mandatory EFL units in their course(s) better prepare teachers to address issues of immigrant exclusion? Are the professors of pre-service teacher training program, who are kept abreast on current topics within school classrooms, better able to prepare teachers to address issues of immigrant exclusion? Do pre-service teacher training programs that discuss general theories of student diversity better promote the inclusion of diversity in classrooms? What amount of training is necessary for teachers who work regularly with immigrants? What training topics should be provided to pre-service teachers (ie. material discussing immigrant parent needs, EFL material, etc)? It would be worthwhile conducting studies which address these questions in order to better establish the effects of teacher training regarding immigrant inclusion and exclusion.

To conduct studies of this nature would not be a simple task. It is likely that longitudinal research would have to be conducted. Partnerships with teacher training institutions would need to be made and variables such as professors, recruitment policies, course content, schools, classrooms, etc., would all have to be considered. It would then be necessary to ask immigrant families, interacting with teachers who received different teacher training, their perceptions of school inclusion and exclusion. Findings on this topic could provide valuable insight concerning how to best train teachers in this regard. Although this type of study appears complex, it is not unrealistic. A similar study was done by Darling-Hammond et al. (2005), which examined if teacher training could affect students' academic achievement. Its findings were groundbreaking.

Topics beyond the Scope of Teacher Training

Some studies indicate that not all issues concerning exclusion in schools can be addressed by teachers and their training. For example, according to the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (2008), many immigrants in Ottawa explained that their sense of exclusion from school was not always associated with topics relating to teachers.¹¹ Its study identified several other factors that can also affect exclusion.

One of these factors concerns the quantity of EFL training being provided to students. The interviewees explained that there is a need for immigrant students to receive more EFL training prior to their regular school programs, such as in the summer. Teachers have summer vacations and cannot be expected to address this need without a major restructuring of their job description and salary. The group, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), recognized

¹¹ The category of individuals who were interviewed for this study was 'visible minorities'. However, most of them were also recent immigrants.

this need. They recently started providing more EFL training to students prior to their normal classroom experiences.

SWIS is a group that is directed by settlement agencies, boards of education and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. SWIS implemented summer EFL pilot projects starting in 2007 (Settlement.org, 2009). Since then, the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO), a large immigrant centre which has been providing immigrant services in Ottawa for over 30 years, has been offering these summer EFL programs to recent immigrant students (OCISO, 2009).

As a result, unless teachers' job descriptions and salaries are adjusted, the topic of additional EFL training is not an issue which should be directed at teachers; instead it concerns institutions such as settlement agencies, boards of education and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Additionally, EFL training also concerns parents. Although immigrant parents, who do not speak English, may not be able to teach their children English, they have an important role to play in the language development of their children. For example, as indicated by the Ontario government program, First Words (2009), if a child is strong in their mother-tongue language, the child's ability to learn a second language, such as English, is greatly improved.

A second factor is that the ethnic background of school staff is often different than the student body. Many interviewees felt that there were few role models working within schools who represented their ethnic backgrounds. Some of the interviewees indicated that this can send a negative message. For example, students of diverse ethnic backgrounds may feel that people of their ethnicity cannot work in leadership roles within a school, since there are no staff with their same ethnicity currently working in their school. As discussed in the literature review, many teachers are "white, middle class, and female" (Whitfield et al., 2007,

259).¹² Teacher training cannot change the ethnicity of teachers. In order to encourage a more diverse staff, it has been suggested that the recruitment of teachers for pre-service teacher training should increase (Basit et. al, 2007). The same has been suggested for schools' hiring practices (Stead, 2006). It is also advisable that schools consider hiring the parents of immigrant children who are looking for ways to gain 'Canadian experience'. In doing so, this could help improve the proportional representation in schools, as well as provide valuable work experience to new immigrants.

A third factor is school fees. The interviewees in the Social Planning Council of Ottawa's report (2008) felt that school fees, such as basic school supplies, can present problems for families who have low-incomes. Since many immigrants have low-incomes (Statistics Canada, 2007), it is understandable how school fees can act as an exclusionary barrier. Teachers, no matter how much training they receive, cannot be expected to cover these costs. School budgets, however, can play a role in addressing this financial burden. Furthermore, it is important that immigrant families are familiarized with subsidies which they may be entitled to. It is also important that society recognizes the overwhelming challenges that many immigrants experience when first settling into Canada, in an attempt to accommodate their economic needs.

The aforementioned section described how language, the under-representation of various ethnic groups and finances can create barriers for immigrants in school settings. If teachers were more knowledgeable about these factors, there is the possibility that they could help immigrants feel more included. Nevertheless, these factors would not disappear. The topic of exclusion is complex and has roots in a number of sectors in

¹² However, Blais and Ouedraogo (2008) indicate that the number of visible minority teachers has been significantly increasing.

society. Although it is valuable to consider how teacher training can affect school inclusion, addressing more appropriate family and community socio-economic strategic planning appears imperative.

As Harper (1997) explains, “schools are expected to meet the needs of a population that is racially, culturally and linguistically diverse, to confront gender, racial and economic disparity and discrimination” (192). Ideally, schools meet this expectation. Teachers, however, are not the only ones who can make this expectation happen. It appears that teachers, along with parents, various community institutions and community representatives need to work together in order to help transform exclusionary school structures.

Gerin-Lajoie (2008b) explains that the topic of “true student inclusion” within schools must be recognized as an important issue (115). She indicates that racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity is currently not a major concern among educational stakeholders. These stakeholders, she explains, are instead more concerned with topics such as standardized testing and with making schools safe. Although she acknowledges that these other topics are valuable, she stresses that issues of school diversity and exclusion are equally important. The process to promote inclusion may be difficult but there are ways in which communities have successfully worked together in the past to address similar issues. The Pathways to Education program (commonly referred to as Pathways) is a prime example.

Pathways, according to Lorinc (2006), set out to address a number of problems that children from Toronto’s Regent Park community were experiencing. Regent Park, build in the 1950s, is a community where there are a number of individuals living in housing projects, many of whom are immigrants. In 2004, the average annual income of families living in the community was \$18,000. Children living in this neighborhood were

often experiencing problems during their high school years. As Lorinc (2006) explains, most of the children living in the Regent Park area

“...attended the local elementary school, which provided a welcoming and inclusive environment. But after grade eight... Regent Park kids traveled far outside their community, and their sense of isolation helped create a dropout rate twice the city average. Their prospects were discouraging: homelessness, jail, or low-paying jobs with no future” (180).

In an attempt to address the high drop-out rate, Pathways identified the need for more community role models. Pathways paired at-risk students with adult mentors and tutors. Its impact has been monitored and the program has had impressive results (Lorinc, 2006). Pathways has even been extended to other neighborhoods throughout Canada. The City of Ottawa recently started providing a Pathways program to students living in its most at-risk neighborhood (PQCHC, 2009).

This program is just one example of how community needs can be identified and addressed. It is likely that sufficient investment in programs similar Pathways can produce very worthy results for the whole community. It is recommended that all sectors of society engage in discussions about how to promote school inclusion. Discussions should be held with at-risk population groups, parents, school boards, principals, school personnel, policy makers, government representatives, lawyers, social workers, police, medical professionals, etc. It is only when broad issues of exclusion are understood that the roots of exclusion can be identified and addressed.

Conclusion

Schools often play a role in the successful integration of immigrants into society (Basu, 2005). Unfortunately, immigrants do not always feel positively about the role schools play in society. In a report by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (2008), immigrants and visible minority individuals perceived schools to be a “contributing factor to their experience of exclusion” (73).

This paper provided a review of studies suggesting how teachers, if provided with more appropriate teacher training, can better address issues of exclusion in schools. Although it appears logical that teachers could have an impact on promoting inclusion within schools, it is unclear whether teacher training does, in fact, have a definite impact since there are a number of gaps in the literature. As a result, it is recommended that more research be conducted to more clearly identify what training is provided in teacher training; whether teacher training can affect inclusion/exclusion in schools and; if so, what kind and amount should be provided.

Problems of exclusion can be incredibly deep rooted in society. Many of these problems do not directly concern teacher training. It is, therefore, also recommended that schools, parents, community representatives, as well as other related sectors of society engage in efforts to identify and eliminate barriers. It is by developing broader strategies at the provincial, community, and family levels that these other factors can be better addressed.

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Appendix 1

Course Information about Pre-service Teacher Training Institutions in Ontario

1. Brock University

<http://www.brocku.ca/webcal/2009/undergrad/>

2. Lakehead University

<http://mycoursecalendar.lakeheadu.ca/pg146.html>

3. Nipissing University

http://www.nipissingu.ca/calendar/downloads/AcadCal2009_2010.pdf

4. Queen's University

http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/education/Teacher_Education_Courses_BEd_DipEd.html

5. Redeemer University College

<http://www.redeemer.ca/Media/Website%20Resources/pdf/academics/registrar/AC0910.pdf>

6. The University of Western Ontario

<http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2009/pg321.html>

7. Trent University

http://www.trentu.ca/calendar/programs_edconsecutive.php

8. University of Ontario Institute of Technology

http://www.uoit.ca/EN/main/11258/231915/academic_calendar_2009_2010.html

9. University of Ottawa

<http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/regist/calendars/courses/PED.html>

10. University of Toronto

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/preservice/elementary/program_overview.php

11. University of Windsor

<http://web4.uwindsor.ca/units/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/cur.nsf/SubCategoryFlyOut/7E4EDF63A9990D72852572C80056F592>

12. Wilfred Laurier University

http://www.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=1867&p=8245#EU402_School_and_Society

13. York University

<http://edu.yorku.ca/bed/index.html>