TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND EDUCATION

Peacebuilding, Citizenship, and Identity

Empowering Conflict and Dialogue in Multicultural Classrooms

Christina Parker



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Empowering Conflict and Dialogue in Multicultural Classrooms

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FOREWORD

We are witnessing a major shift in educational endeavours, away from neoconservative, reductionist approaches that claim to prepare children and youth for adult lives in a world of political and economic strictures. Instead, more enlightened approaches seek to prepare young people to think deeply about the world and their own purpose in life via citizenship education, represented in this book as peace education. Including others is key to peace education. In spite of conflicts and in light of increasing diversity, integrative peace education is a major force for including student voices in the curriculum.

In diverse metropolitan centres we see injustice erupt on a daily basis, as marginalized students are cast aside from a system they are unable to navigate because their identities do not permit their inclusion. This is why Christina Parker's work is so necessary. She shows how the process of peacebuilding in a world of conflict calls for the development of identities in Canadian citizenship education, and also seriously considers why peacebuilding, citizenship, and identity are important in education more broadly. To achieve these goals, Dr. Parker focuses on the classroom, where difference and conflict in education for democracy may be dealt with by means of conflict dialogue, for which she provides many useful tools.

This book will help users make cultural exclusion visible and gather the energy and courage to do something about it: to make peacebuilding education integral to all aspects of curriculum. In the classrooms and schools discussed here, teachers and students negotiated their language, environment, and classroom participation codes to build classroom climates that developed social and pedagogical contexts for inclusion. The teachers that were part of this multilocus study used critical pedagogies to link academic status and participation—revealing the power of those who previously remained silent in the classroom. Participants learned to navigate conflict and live together peacefully.

Dr. Parker's careful consideration of the nuances of pedagogical patterns illustrates how students interacted with cultural conflicts that were negotiated internally, so as to move forward via pedagogies for classroom engagement. Such moments championed internationally recognized principles of democracy and civic engagement—initiatives so relevant and necessary in today's globalized world. Where implemented, these ideas can enliven schools and communities around the globe.

The book connects curriculum, student identities, and religious and Canadian conflicts within its research focus. It reveals the realities of immigrant children's lives at school through critical ethnographic moments, uncovered with research tools such as classroom observations, interviews, group conversations, documentary knowledge, and the researcher's personal insights. A final conversation deconstructs historical and political issues, while recognizing teachers and school sites as privileged agents and contexts.

An important aspect of peacebuilding's theoretical foundations is the significance of identity within local concerns. Dr. Parker clearly illustrates that democratic peace cannot be planted as in a garden, row by row—it must grow out of local contexts, throughout the population.

Much needed, this book's main focus is the development of diverse students' critical consciousness, so that they may become aware of societal inequities. This prepares them to become active, responsible citizens. The contribution of peace education to society is critical. The book visualizes a way forward, through peacebuilding. It is indispensable for peace and citizenship education.

Yvonne Hébert, University of Calgary

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This book is a result of a multifaceted collaborative process that involved the input and contribution of many. I am grateful for the many people in my life who have contributed to my own learning and development as a scholar in peacebuilding education. I have been privileged to work with the fascinating teachers and students who have made this book possible. I thank each of them for their contributions, openness, and commitment to dialogue.

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INTRODUCTION

In late January 2009, a few hundred Sri Lankans from across the Greater Toronto Area gathered in front of the Sri Lankan consulate, on the corner of Yonge and Eglinton Streets, to protest the Sri Lankan civil war. Their numbers swelled to a few thousand overnight as the protest moved south to the United States consulate on University Avenue, this time in protest against that government's inaction. As their numbers grew, so did their determination and range of tactics: they blocked major streets in downtown Toronto, formed a five-kilometre human chain along Yonge Street, and more. The protests continued for months, and involved sit-ins, hunger strikes, internet activism, and a continual blockade of major intersections, often during rush hour. By May 10 the protesters, including women and young children, blocked the Gardiner Expressway, a major highway in downtown Toronto, and demanded attention from the Ontario premier.

The Government of Canada's resolute silence in face of the conflict was the eventual focus of protests in Toronto and Ottawa. Several thousand of the Sri Lankan diaspora gathered on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. These protests led to social ferment and an appeal to all Canadians for their support in resolving this conflict in their homeland. These proletarian actions attempted to get the attention of Canadian parliamentary officials. Worldwide protests were held, urging world leaders to help bring a ceasefire to the conflict. In the United States, President Barack Obama called upon both the Sri Lankan Army and the Tamil Tigers[1] to bring an end to the bloodbath.

Meanwhile, another wave of activism developed—demonstrators began to protest the protesters. These were the Sinhalese, a Sri Lankan minority group. With their campaign motto, "Stop the Tamil Tigers," they argued that the Tamil Sri Lankans were in fact supporting terrorists. Interestingly, mainstream Canadian rhetoric appeared to align with this group of ostensibly more peaceful protesters. Perhaps they could restore the freedom for Canadians to travel unhampered through their streets, the media said.

Many controversies abounded surrounding this protest. Misconceptions about the Sri Lankan civil war grew, due to the multitude of messages from the two Sri Lankan groups. I do not seek to editorialize on the conflict or insert my own attempt at clarifying the many misconceptions about the protests or about the Sri Lankan Civil War that arose. I am, however, interested in understanding the experiences of the many young Sri Lankan students across Toronto—for on both sides, many of the protesters were young people born in Canada. They showed up in class the next day, having either stood side by side (or face to face) in a protest the day before. Many non-Sri Lankan students also showed up in class having heard their parents' perspectives (or perhaps complaints) about the protests.

Culturally inclusive educators strive to offer education that is relevant and affirming. Schools in metropolitan areas around the globe serve a multitude of

children who come from different parts of the world. In educators' attempts to empower young people with these diverse identities—where identity is characterized by pluralism and globalization, not by place of birth and location of residence—they must engage with much complexity in order to affirm the students' "glocalized" identities.

What kind of education will create democratic citizens who are critical thinkers, and who uphold strong values of their respective societies? While liberal multicultural education has typically been the response to addressing diversity in schools, I argue that it is not enough to simply present the heroes and holidays as tokens in time. Rather, a deliberate engagement with difference, which begs for the confrontation and examination of diversity and conflict, is what I believe paves the way for the inclusion of all children. In this book I examine how such education is achieved through integrating peacebuilding education. The intentional generation of conflictual dialogue for transformation includes exploring the roots of conflict, applying nonviolent solutions to conflict, and promoting inclusive strategies to resolve complex disagreement. I look at how education and instruction can promote peace, and how peace education can promote understanding of the Other and compassion for the Other.

The aim of this book is to offer an empirical account of how children of immigrants in a globalized world have negotiated their identities as members of various diasporas. To do this, I discuss the possibilities—and perils—of peacebuilding education, in a careful examination of data arising from field work in three classrooms, where I interviewed and observed teachers and students. The identities of immigrant children were honoured within the implemented curriculum. These young people are shown coping with the struggles of acculturation and the subsequent processes of containing or maintaining their cultural identities. Vignettes from observations of both teachers and students vividly depict classroom settings where conflicts and diversity were openly discussed.

This book in its discussion of culturally relevant and peace-based pedagogy fills a gap in the theory and the practice, and as such will be helpful for practising teachers, student teachers, and scholars in the field of multicultural and peace education. Original in its Canadian focus, the book will be of international relevance. It shows how teachers and students can engage in teaching and learning practices related to diversity. It shows that diversity education is happening, how it is done, and how teachers grapple with the issues.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1, I present the theoretical foundation for the concepts I discuss in this book. I outline the opportunities available in classrooms today to create spaces to engage divergent perspectives. I introduce various processes that can be used to confront multifaceted identities, through intersectionality and the implicit and explicit narratives present in the curriculum. I question how students' ethnocultural

and gender identities are acknowledged and incorporated into the curriculum they engage with at school.

The foundations for creating a framework for inclusive peacebuilding education is a particular focus of my analysis. I describe how conflict management tools can work to address contested classroom dialogues concerning the unsettled social and global issues that are inherently present in transnational contexts. I also review methodological approaches to conducting critical ethnographic research in diverse and privileged contexts, and situate the connection with my personal identity in this research.

In Chapter 2, I synthesize national and international research on students' experiences with multicultural and democratic citizenship education. I also look at various methods researchers have used to study inclusion in peacebuilding education and conflict dialogue processes. I review how ethnocultural minority students' experiences are represented or underrepresented in implemented curriculum. My main focus is how to develop diverse students' critical consciousness so that they become aware of societal inequities. In order to make space for a democratic and inclusive paradigm, we need to know how the hidden and the explicit curricula shape what we know, how we know what we know, and how a purposive and constructive engagement with conflict creates an interruptive democracy.

In the third chapter I situate the context and characteristics of the globalized and transnational classroom cases represented in the three classrooms of my study. This research was carried out in one of the most multicultural cities in the world—Toronto, Canada. While this book presents a local case, it also illustrates connections to cross-national and global cultural contexts. Peacebuilding education is not unique to Western schools. In many ways, the principles of peacebuilding education encourage the intersection with Eastern principles and traditions, where the reliance on connection through dialogue is paramount.

In my view, in order to graduate tolerant, democratically engaged, participatory citizens, the future of schooling needs to be inherently connected to peacebuilding education. My empirical analyses therefore focus on students' experiences with democratic citizenship education in diverse school contexts. If racialized bodies occupy the entire classroom, what approaches might the teacher use to build community and develop resilience to challenge heteronormative and Eurocentric content? And how do these approaches compare to others that work to reproduce systemic and structural power imbalances, which most schooling systems perpetuate? All students benefit from the purposive integration of peacebuilding content and pedagogy that encourages constructive dialogue about diversity and social issues. Still, however, most schools and classrooms around the world—including Canada—have not made the kinds of shifts that are possible and viable building blocks for the future development of strong, global citizens. I do, however, present cases where various pedagogical shifts have contributed to the inclusion and exclusion of diverse students in these classrooms. In spite of this, the classrooms I introduce in this book are still developing and remain in the early stages of such a pedagogical evolution.

In the fourth chapter I focus on identity and belonging, and the ways in which young people negotiate new ways of bridging and connecting their experiences with migration and citizenship across time and space. To do this, I pay particular attention to what happens when teachers engage with students who come from high-conflict parts of the world, using contested narratives and perspectives. Such situations have the power to both transform and reform critical perspectives on multicultural education and its connection to peacebuilding. I also critically examine how racialized students' experiences are represented or underrepresented in the implemented curriculum. The vignettes highlight how both teachers and students negotiated belonging and inclusion to bridge ethnic and local identities. The teachers used a range of conflict dialogue processes and pedagogies that supported or impeded the students' learning and inclusion in these processes.

In the fifth chapter, I examine how the hidden and explicit curricula functioned in the three classrooms to develop students' civic and national identities. If the intention of schooling is to engage young people to be active and contributing citizens, then structural power and systems need to be confronted. I illustrate how select teachers navigated the development of their students' critical consciousness by inviting them to both challenge and participate in mythical democracies. I also explore how these implemented curricula intersected with diverse students' social identities and differential power locations.

Particular foundational and structural issues need to be addressed in order to formulate inclusive classroom contexts. Chapter 6 is dedicated to imagining the hope and constituting the power to integrate peacebuilding education in all classrooms. The success of these approaches is illustrated in my exploration of how silenced voices were heard and religious identities nourished.

Finally, the seventh chapter deals with implications for the pedagogical processes that seek to affirm diverse identities. Such processes show how conflict and diversity can serve as resources for critical social and academic engagement in multicultural classrooms, lead to increased academic achievement, and address broader issues of structural violence. Were teachers to implement dialogic pedagogies to integrate immigrant students' cultural and linguistic identities, how might they also support those students' civic and literacy engagement, and facilitate an inclusive space where all students have the opportunity to participate and have their voices heard?

NOTE

[1] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), also known as the Tamil Tigers, was founded in 1976. "Eelam" is the ancient Tamil name for Sri Lanka. The LTTE, recognized as a terrorist organization, sought to create an independent state in North and East Sri Lanka for Tamil people. This campaign led to the Sri Lankan Civil War, which officially began in 1983 and ended in 2009, when the Sri Lankan military defeated the LTTE. See "Sri Lankan Civil War" (2014).

CHAPTER 1

WHY PEACEBUILDING EDUCATION?

Sā vidyā yā vimuktaye [Education is what liberates].

—*Vishnu Purana*, 1.19.41

Beth Roy (1994) has recounted a story from the 1950s about Hindu and Muslim farmers in a remote Bangladeshi village, where conflict appeared to arise of out nowhere. The owner of a seemingly insensible cow explained:

> "There was trouble with the cows," said the farmer. "I tied my cow and went home. But the cow got loose and ate the [plants] in their field." (p. 13)

Roy went on to examine the subsequent village riot that occurred:

> By the time the "trouble" was over, masses of men had mobilized, several people had died, many were injured, and life in the village was altered forever after. The problem, it seems, was that the cow belonged to a Muslim and the crop to a Hindu. (p. 13)

Adults and children alike, our positions and perspectives are inherently attached to our identities. Children quickly size up their playmates, often through nonverbal communication. On the playground, they determine unabashedly who to include and who to exclude. Similarly, in the classroom, teachers of implemented curriculum may present and affiliate with hegemonic narratives by falsifying and ignoring people and histories.

While not resulting in a community riot, a religiously motivated conflict ensued in a Grade 4 classroom at Aria Public School, an elementary school in a southern Ontario community in Canada.[1] "Your God is not the *real* God," said Tina,[2] the one girl of African heritage and only Christian in the class. Fatima, a Muslim girl who had recently immigrated from Pakistan, and who covered her hair with a hijab, knew that Tina was asking for trouble, because religious intolerance was not accepted at their multicultural school. She informed Tina that she was going to tell on her.

Tina and Fatima's class did not have any White students—not surprising, in a school population largely comprising visible minority immigrants from India, Sri Lanka, China, and Hong Kong. The girls' community had recently attracted an influx of immigrants. Parks there were filled with older adults, many of whom were the grandparents of children attending the school. They met in this ethnically connected community to sit, have tea, and talk. Some played cricket on the soccer field. For many of them, this was the only time they had connection with people outside of their homes. Many new immigrants are isolated upon their arrival in a

new land, but the school community served as a place where many from the same ethnic origins congregated.

In many ways, the community facilitated their integration into the larger society. The school was looked on as the place that was going to pave the way for the acculturation of their next generation: caught between multiple cultures, it remained clear that young children would continue to be taught ancestral values at home, but that the school would teach them how to be Canadian.

Ms. Marlee, the Grade 4 teacher, aware of and clearly upset by the religiously motivated conflict between Tina and Fatima, addressed her entire class of students: "When you have conflict in the playground, it shouldn't be over religion." Drawing on her own experiences as a second-generation immigrant, she reminded her students that their engagement in conflicts over religion violated the foundational goal of their families' choice to emigrate: to live in *peaceful* Canada. In their new, chosen culture, riots or conflict based on perceived identities should not occur.

The conflict between the two girls could have been settled at this point, with the teacher admonishing them for participating in a religiously motivated debate. However, Ms. Marlee did not reprimand anyone or send anyone to the office—instead, she chose to extend this conflict. She used it as a learning opportunity. Connecting the incident to a story about Inuit creationism that appeared in their literacy textbook, she gave these instructions to her students: "Tonight, you're going to go home and ask your parents what the creation story from your culture is, and then you're going to write it out and bring it to class to share with all of us." Sharing these creation stories sparked considerable interest among students. Fatima and Tina listened calmly to each other speak; they and others asked questions. Together, Ms. Marlee's Grade 4 class seemed to develop a greater appreciation for the diversity that existed among the classmates as they participated in an intellectually motivated peacebuilding dialogue. Her class lesson extended her implemented curriculum content beyond the textbook, making it relevant to the students' diversities and conflicts. Even in constrained and conflicted classrooms, such dialogue is possible.

All conflicts bring the potential for constructive change. Still, most people shy away from conflict because it has so often led to destruction, pain, and suffering. The simple key to transformation is to see the positive possibilities that can exist within such divisive moments. Also, to engage in such conflict learning does not necessarily involve the most talented or tenured teacher. In fact, as Ms. Marlee's character unfolds in the subsequent chapters, you will see that it was not necessarily her passion for engaging conflict that drove her pedagogy. Rather, she more consistently implemented authoritarian, conflict-neutral curriculum in a way that did not engage her students. However, even in this context, she managed to create space for dialogue. I return to an analysis of this conflict in Chapter 4.

CONFLICTS AND IDENTITIES EMBEDDED IN CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Southern Ontario is home to students whose ethnocultural ancestries are more diverse than anywhere else in the world (Statistics Canada, 2006, 2011). However, many of these diverse immigrant students may not get the same learning opportunities as their mainstream peers. Teaching students as though they were all the same will not create equitable social relations (Bickmore, 2005; Dull & Morrow, 2008). A curriculum in which only White, male, heterosexual viewpoints and knowledges are reflected discourages the exploration of alternative perspectives and excludes diverse students who may not share those values and frames of reference (Kumashiro, 2000).

Issues of diversity have been addressed in various ways: through curriculum mandates, board initiatives, and teachers' professional development. Pedagogies that invite discussion of alternative viewpoints and conflicts may engage diverse students and contribute to their inclusion in the classroom. Engaging students in open, inclusive dialogue about conflictual issues can support them to develop skills, values, and inclinations for democratic civic engagement (Haas, 2008; Hahn, 1998; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001). Such conflict-dialogue processes can provide opportunities for students to practise tolerance and inclusion, thereby becoming participatory citizens (Avery & Hahn, 2004).

How are students' ethnocultural and gender diversities acknowledged and incorporated into the curriculum they engage with at school? Conflict management processes and other pedagogical tools presumably guide and shape the dialogue experiences of diverse students, and the ways in which conflict dialogue is approached in schools are presumably influenced by the ethnocultural and gender identities of both students and teachers. But, even with the implementation of policies to infuse equity-oriented activities in classrooms, research on—and evidence for—the ways that culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies actually are facilitated and experienced by diverse students is slim. While some educational initiatives (e.g., critical literacy, inclusive schools) have encouraged teachers to implement dialogue pedagogies in the classroom, there has been little research on diverse students' experiences with such pedagogies.

Empowering Conflict in Peacebuilding Education

I urge the inclusion of *conflict dialogue* in the classroom curriculum. With this in mind, I intend this book to contribute to the research on conflict dialogue in school settings and to respond to its limitations in attending to student diversity. For this purpose, I investigated how conflict dialogue occurred in three public elementary classrooms, and what its consequences were for diverse students, especially newcomer immigrants. I researched how diverse elementary students aged 9 to 13, mostly first- and second-generation immigrants,[3] experienced and responded to conflictual issues, pedagogies, and discussions in relation to their own

perspectives, histories, and identities. Some studies have explored students' experience with conflict dialogue, but few have studied diverse students' experiences of particular conflict-dialogue pedagogies in elementary classrooms. I therefore also examined how effective (or not) various conflict-dialogue pedagogies were at facilitating inclusive spaces and influencing diverse students to participate in social studies and language arts curricula.

I use the term *conflict dialogue* to describe constructive discussion of conflictual or controversial issues in educating for and about peace, democracy, equity, and social justice (Bickmore, 2011b). Conflict-dialogue processes of constructive discussion can be understood broadly as *peacebuilding education*, which is the purposive generation of conflict as a learning opportunity, and in which issues are explicitly aired and taken up in ways that can promote positive peace.[4] Purposively generating conflictual dialogue means confronting difficult issues that are highly emotional and linked to identity—in short, personally relevant (Bekerman, Zembylas, & McGlynn, 2009; Bickmore, 2008a; Boler, 1999).

Peacebuilding education includes dialogic and culturally relevant pedagogies designed to (re)build strong, healthy relationships that respect human rights, and that challenge inequities: all necessary for democratic societies. In the context of diversity, a critical, multicultural education program is necessary to encourage the inclusion of diverse perspectives and to facilitate critical reflection on social power structures (Nieto, 2002). Such critical reflections are key aspects of peacebuilding education and in educating for democracy (Bickmore, 2006; Davies, 2004a).

On Identity, Transnationalism, and Inclusion: Some Definitional Considerations

Curriculum and pedagogy—including conflict-dialogue learning opportunities—can create inclusive spaces for diverse young people to find their place in the curriculum and in their world. These opportunities can connect immigrant students' diverse and intersecting identities in ways that facilitate their social and academic engagement. Simply put, they learn how to connect their identities, experiences and the curriculum content.

An intersectional interpretation of multiple identities allows for consideration of how both adults and young children navigate the local and global cultural boundaries that shape their histories and experiences. Identity is not a singular construct; it is multiple, ever-changing, and fluid. It is "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices" and is shaped by various social contexts (Hall, 2000, p. 17). This postmodern conception of identity "assumes different identities at different times" that are "historically, not biologically, defined" (Hall, 2006, p. 250). In partial contrast to Hall, Woodward (2002) argues that the broad cultural roots of identity are just as important as identity's evolution or construction within the life of any individual. In her view, while race carries biological foundations, "ethnicity marks cultural and social differences between groups of people" (Woodward, 2002, p. 146).

Identity is socially constructed and understood through difference (Allahar, 2006; Gérin-Lajoie, 2011; Hall, 2006). Thus, curriculum that recognizes and addresses difference can create space for the inclusion and democratic development of diverse students. I use *diverse* to refer to students' intersecting identities and experiences, based on their perceptions of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, social status, and immigration history. Paying attention to these different identities pushes back against prescriptive and normative pedagogies. When referring to ethnocultural minorities, I consider how particular ethnic origins intersect with other aspects of identity that perpetuate disadvantage, such as racialized identity, home language, poverty, and undocumented status (Ghiso & Campano, 2013). In these ways, through democratic peacebuilding education, the siloed student experience and perspective can be challenged.

Importantly, all of the children and teachers in this book identified with a visible minority group. I use descriptive terms such as *immigrant*, *marginalized*, *diverse*, *ethnocultural*, and *minority* to illustrate the wide range of groupings that children and adults carry when they are visible minorities, racialized, or people of colour, living in a context where they are not the dominant majority. Even though visible minorities may be the "majority" in terms of numbers in certain communities or contexts, they still do not have access to the same kind of power and privileges afforded to the dominant majority of the White Canadian population.

Migration patterns shifting across geopolitical borders have fuelled transnationalism, which integrates cultures, languages, and diversities. Within the Canadian context this process is pronounced, through historical and evolutionary policies and practices that have shaped how both immigrants and nationals view and respond to cross-border and hybrid identities.[5] Transnationalists are typically characterized as those who settle in their host country but who remain in close contact with those in their home country, such as by sending resources to them and maintaining frequent communication. The receiving country sometimes looks down on immigrants for nurturing these ties and connections to their homeland (Van Den Anker, 2010).

Active civic participation, such as maintaining membership in local community groups and voting, are examples of indicators for immigrants' level of integration. However, levels of integration vary and are dependent on various economic and sociocultural factors, such as material living conditions, health, education, and the labour market, as well as civic engagement (OECD, 2012).

Diaspora broadly refers to groups who live outside their ancestral regions. Members of diaspora groups are multifaceted and diverse, and carry differing experiences of and perspectives on their connection with their place of ancestry. In this way, transnational communities include diasporas (Wong, 2007/2008). Transnationalism also refers to multiple cultural associations between the host society and places of origin and ancestry.

Grouping all immigrants together does not allow for a consideration of the diversities and differences within these groups. While "immigrants" are typically grouped together, various immigrant groups contain many differences. For instance, all immigrants are not necessarily accepting of other ethnic groups and

immigrants, just because they themselves may be immigrants. In fact, some may carry strong prejudices against other ethnic groups, which may have developed in their home country or after their arrival in their new community. In this way, while inclusion may be the height of a transformational peacebuilding practice, it is also necessary to consider that tokens of inclusion may still persist within a dominant threshold of exclusion. In this milieu, Amartya Sen (2006) argued that the "adversity of exclusion can be made to go hand in hand with the gifts of inclusion" (p. 3).

I argue that including all identities in one's thinking and practice promotes the acceptance, recognition, and involvement of marginalized identities that would otherwise be ignored or excluded.

Identity and Conflict Dialogue in Diverse Contexts

Discussions about diversity and conflictual issues invites students' diverse perspectives, viewpoints, and experiences to come forward; this can serve as a resource for critical reflection about social conflicts (Banks, 2006a; Nieto, 1992). But many immigrant students seem to have fewer opportunities than mainstream students to engage in issues-based discussions (Dull & Murrow, 2008; Hess & Avery, 2008). While research has shown that open discussion of conflictual issues promotes the average student's civic capacities and engagement, little evidence exists regarding how or whether diverse and marginalized students, in particular, are engaged by these dialogue practices. Even less is known about which curricular and pedagogical tools for issues dialogue may best create or impede democratic, inclusive learning opportunities for diverse and marginalized students.

Current political and social conflicts inevitably influence school and classroom dynamics. Curriculum (both mandated and implemented) may address social conflicts related to ethnic identities in diverse ways (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Harris, 2004; Tawil & Harley, 2004). Cultural symbols and practices in curriculum, as well as in society, can reinforce (or mitigate) ethnic and social conflict (Bekerman, 2009; Funk & Said, 2004; Ross, 1993/2007). For Bekerman (2007), individual identity is influenced by nation-state ideologies and, thus, possibilities for interaction between students from contested settings (such as Israel and Palestine) must involve recognizing power imbalances and committing to the dialogue process.

In Ontario, such recognition is also important where teachers facilitate conflict-dialogue processes to examine and challenge cultural and political hegemony in their diverse classrooms. Like Lederach (1995) and others, Ross (1993/2007) argued that culture is central to how people approach conflict. Ross theorized that two kinds of factors influence social conflict over intergroup identity issues: psychocultural (people's narratives and emotional interpretations—such as trust or fear—of issues or identity groups); and sociostructural (people's interests in tangible human needs and the social institutions that differentially distribute or deny them to different social groups). He highlighted both sociostructural and

psychocultural elements in a discussion of the conflict in France over whether girls should be free to wear the Muslim chador to school.

Cultural responsiveness and flexibility of power are key characteristics of peacebuilding education initiatives (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Lederach, 1995). The chador conflict may be seen as an unsettled issue, because many teachers and much of the public would consider the different viewpoints as legitimate (Hess, 2001). Dialogue on such an issue could be expected to look very different in a classroom where there were no Muslim students, where Muslim students predominated, where only one or two students identified as Muslim, or where there were various Muslim students (e.g., from different sects) who did not practise the religion in the same way. Clearly, such complexities of student identities would influence the pedagogical choices teachers would make in facilitating or avoiding discussing conflictual issues, and the ways each student would experience those discussions.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

This study is very dear to my heart. In some ways, it is a study of my childhood; of my own experience growing up as a second-generation immigrant in a southern Ontario community. While I did not set out to study my personal experiences, I realized over time—each day I spent in the field, and each day I spent writing this book—that this is a study of others and myself. I knew I wanted to research newcomers and second-generation immigrants. I had no particular ethnocultural group in mind, no particular location in southern Ontario; I did not anticipate that the school board I would obtain approval from to conduct this research would be the same school board in which I had been a student. Nor did I expect, when asked to identify potential school sites, that one school on my list, my old elementary school, would actually be considered by the board an ideal school in terms of what I wanted to study.

This research, therefore, came even closer to home than I imagined: for 20 years, I had lived in the community I study in this book. The community holds my childhood memories; it was where I walked our family dog, Dax, and played with my childhood friends. When I first walked into the school office at one of my research sites, I felt, for a moment, that same feeling of fear that I used to feel when I was sent to the office. As I gathered my thoughts and composed my feelings, the secretary asked me what she could do for me. I felt a moment of joy in knowing that I didn't have to report my lateness, absence, or rebellion against a teacher. Instead, I was an adult and a doctoral candidate, and I had an appointment with the principal. Nonetheless, while I waited I took out my Blackberry and began to check my emails—only noticing my misdemeanour when I was met with wide-eyed children wanting to see my "cool phone," and even wider-eyed secretaries who indicated that cell phones were not allowed at the school!

I conducted this ethnography with a critical perspective in three classrooms at two different schools, one of which had been my own elementary school (Grades 1 to 8). This connection allowed me to have an insider's perspective on a school

community that had once been my own. The difference, however, was that when I had been a student in this community, I was one of the few ethnoculturally visible minority students there. My fellow students and friends were predominantly White, and many teachers at the school were also White; I recall having had one Black teacher. During my research, I reflected and reimagined how school content and teachers' pedagogies had shaped my own schooling experiences. In one of my study's classroom observations, Grade 5 students excitedly engaged in a lesson about Greek gods and goddesses. In that moment, I thought about how such a lesson and classroom discussion might have gone if this classroom activity had been taking place 20 years before, when many students' ethnocultural identities were directly connected to this curriculum content. Such discussions may well have taken place, but at the time I felt it was perfectly normal to be taught about other people's histories, and so I may not have noticed. However, many student participants in my current research were interested in learning about ancient Egypt, India, and China, as well as Greece. This had become the norm for these students, whose diverse cultural histories may now be better embedded in implemented curriculum content.

I wanted to find out how the teachers in these three classrooms had accomplished this norm. Conceptually, I focused on peacebuilding education in a multicultural education context, centring my attention on the dialogic pedagogies and strategies the teachers used to facilitate linkages between curricular content and their students' identities. I investigated how they facilitated implemented curriculum in ways that intersected with their students' Canadian cultural and civic identities. I examined how the perspectives and experiences of diverse students operated within the three classrooms when issues of conflict and diversity arose. And I explored the juxtapositions and contradictions that arose when ethnocultural minority students' cultures were reflected or not reflected in the content they were taught in these three classrooms, and how their teachers' pedagogical processes for addressing conflict and difference did or did not support their inclusion.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This book is based on a critical examination of conflictual, issues-based discussions and activities in elementary public school classrooms where all the participants identified with visible minority groups. I examined variations in and among three classroom cultures, each including immigrant and marginalized students, to understand how teachers used (and avoided) curriculum content about conflict and diversity as learning opportunities, and how various students in those classes experienced those conflictual pedagogies. My purpose was to learn when and how those conflict-dialogue processes did and did not promote inclusion and facilitated democratic peacebuilding education.

I used an ethnographic method with a critical perspective in order to position it as research towards social change, without seeking to prove that social change was achieved among the participants due to their sole participation in this study (Thomas, 1993; Woods, 1996). Ethnography can be used with different levels of

criticality and forms of cultural critique, in both academic and public spheres (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Hammersley, 1990; van Manen, 1992). The limits, form, and extent of using this method for social justice purposes ultimately depends on the context, setting, and participants involved (Simon & Dippo, 1986). The strength of ethnography is in its aim to study cultures through immersion in a particular space for an extended amount of time. The method allows for the opportunity to observe critical incidents and discussions that occur unexpectedly and also aligns with my political purpose of supporting pedagogical and curricular change for social justice.

Educational ethnography is an in-depth study of how participants behave in and experience the classroom space. Classrooms each have their own culture, including participation norms and language (Jackson, 1968, and others). It is necessary to use ethnography with criticality, in order to study how marginalized students' lived experiences are intertwined with power and oppressive systems.

This method provided a framework for my continuous, critical examination of schooling and curriculum at both individual and classroom levels, and encouraged my consideration of the ways in which the identities of my participants and my own history and identity connected and contrasted to form a subjective narrative (Denzin, 1997; Gallagher, 2004). Intentionally subjective, my identity helped to shape the design of my study, since my interpretations of the data ultimately reflected my own history and culture (Britzman, 2002; Fine, 1994; Gallagher, 2007; McCarthy, 1988). I acknowledge that my position as a researcher who was a second-generation immigrant did not provide me with a privileged understanding of my participants (Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2000). Even though I closely witnessed my parents' migration experiences, my understanding of their cultural navigation and assimilation process is not and never will be the same as that of the diverse students who were part of this study. Their race, ethnicity, class, and gender identities, too, complicated their individual histories. In this way I came to understand and interpret how conflictual-issues discussions allowed for a greater or lesser sense of inclusion of diverse identities, based on my personal history and identity.

My personal experiences and connections also shaped my relationship to the schools I researched. My older brother and I both attended Aria Public School from Grades 1 to 8. I lived with my parents, grandmother, and brother in the school community and neighbourhood throughout my childhood and into early adulthood. My parents immigrated to Canada when they were young adults. They met and married in Canada, and my brother and I were born in Toronto. I myself have yet to travel to Guyana, my family's country of origin. My racial identity would appear to be South Asian, one that I shared with many of my participants.

My connection to many of the students deepened. The fact that I had attended Aria was something the students were aware of; they displayed their excitement about it, and would often point out my and my brother's graduation photos whenever they passed by them in the hallway.

Both Aria and Georgetown were located in working-class communities where most of the residents were newcomer immigrants. In many ways I did not feel as

though I had experienced newcomer immigrant school/community challenges (and opportunities) in the same way that many of my research participants described. Perhaps this was because I was not a newcomer, but a second-generation immigrant, and as such I experienced different kinds of challenges (and opportunities) in what was then a predominantly White school and community.

Ghiso and Campano (2013) have drawn on realist theorists to discuss how "epistemic privilege" provides minorities with a special advantage in understanding how to identify power; those "who experience unjust or ineffective practices and policies in their own schooling may be in a unique position to investigate how to reform education for the better" (p. 254). Ethnography with a critical perspective encourages the empowerment of these hidden powers, by offering platforms for participants to identify privilege.

Aria and Georgetown were located in the same community. It had a large newcomer immigrant population, and was part of a large urban area in southern Ontario. The ethnic distribution of the community was not representative of the whole school board or urban area. Based on the most recent census data in this school board's region 65% of the population were visible minorities, the top five of which, in descending order, were: Chinese, South Asian (e.g., Indian), West Asian (e.g., Iranian), Black, and Filipino (Statistics Canada, 2006). In 2011, 98% of the students that attended Aria, from kindergarten through Grade 8, were visible minorities, mostly from East and South Asian backgrounds. Only 48 of the 725 students were White.

All of the 746 students at Georgetown were from visible minority groups. The school secretary provided me with a breakdown of the ethnicities of the students, pointing out that they "lost their one White kid last year." Students were predominantly South Asian, from Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. The Indian students were mostly Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim. The students' first languages were predominantly Urdu, Tamil, Punjabi, Hindi, and Gujarati. I was told that there were 15 Black students, one student from the Philippines, and one from Vietnam.

All the students at Georgetown wore a simple uniform—a white shirt and grey dress pants. The uniform had been mandated one year after the school opened, in response to the lower socioeconomic status of many of the students. Aria was also in the process of instituting a school uniform policy for the following year. When I was a student there, we wore no uniforms; the only publicly funded schools with instituted uniform policies in this community, at the time, were Catholic schools.

I worked with classroom teachers who demonstrated some knowledge of conflict-dialogue processes and who told me that they used conflict proactively to engage all their students, particularly in the social studies and English language arts curricula. All three teachers happened to identify with a visible minority immigrant group. Attracting diverse teachers to this study, while not intentional, proved to be an enlightening addition to this study of newcomer and diverse immigrant students.

There were 78 students in the three classes that were part of this study; 39 females and 39 males. The racial makeup of students was 71% South Asian, 22%

East Asian, 5% Black, 1% West Asian, and 1% mixed ancestry. All students were either first-generation immigrants (18%) or second-generation immigrants (81.5%) with the exception of one student who was of mixed ancestry (0.5%).

I gathered students' ethnicities through my interactions with students, from activities done in class related to their ethnicity, and during interviews with them. Ethnicities were 26% Indian, 26% Tamil Sri Lankan, 19% Chinese, 15% Pakistani, and 4% Jamaican; the remaining 10% were Guyanese, Trinidadian, Egyptian, Kenyan, Nepalese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, and White Canadian.

I was also able to gather data on the students' religions through my observations and interactions with them: 44.5% were Hindu, all South Asian; 19.5% were Muslim, all South Asian or West Asian; 10% were Buddhist, all East Asian; 9% were Christian, and were a mix of ethnicities; 5% were Sikh, all South Asian; and I did not gather the religious identifications of 12% of students. Overall, while my particular research concern emphasized ethnocultural minority and immigrant students, the comparisons and cultural interaction patterns among all the students in each classroom provided insights into how various diverse students experienced these processes.

I used various data sources to analyze how teachers in the three elementary classrooms stimulated discussion of curricular material, to better understand how this facilitated democratic learning opportunities for diverse students. Using observations, interviews, a personal journal, and documents such as lesson plans, worksheets, and student work samples, I studied how conflict-dialogue processes were implemented in three classrooms, and how diverse students, particularly visible minority and first- and second-generation immigrants, experienced these pedagogies.

I observed classes at each school consecutively, spending approximately six months in each classroom. I observed these teachers across the curriculum: in literacy, art, social studies, health, mathematics, science, and technology classes. My observations revealed critical incidents where conflict was evident, and in which conflict-dialogue processes were (or were not) implemented to address the conflict. As a result of my immersion in each classroom, I developed close relationships with the students. Various groups of students would typically approach me during lunch to chat about their day or their lives. The boys would ask me to play basketball with them and the girls would ask me to sit with them during lunch. In many ways, the students apparently saw me as their friend. I used both social and academic classroom opportunities to develop my relationships and to secure a level of trust with all the students.

In summary, the main strengths of using ethnography with a critical perspective to study conflict-dialogue processes in diverse classrooms were twofold. First, the method encouraged in-depth cultural immersion in the research setting; and second, it facilitated the use of a critical lens to continually question how social norms and dominant assumptions influenced the behaviours of participants. My use of three research sites further enhanced the in-depth, critical nature of this study, by providing opportunities to compare and contrast the ways conflict-

dialogue processes were used in these different, yet similar, classroom social contexts.

Finally, my implementation of this method enabled my research to make a significant contribution to the study of conflict-dialogue processes and democratic peacebuilding education, which connects with and goes beyond the existing research literature in this area. In the following chapters I present the different classroom cultures I observed and provide analyses and syntheses of the various themes and issues that emerged from the study.

NOTES

1 The school names in this chapter, Aria Public School and Georgetown Public School, are fictitious. I refer to the schools hereafter as "Aria" and "Georgetown."

2 All teachers' and students' names used in this book are pseudonyms. For some participants, I have used culturally ethnic pseudonyms to accurately represent those whose real names reflected their ethnocultural identity.

3 For the purposes of this study, the term "second-generation immigrant" is used to refer to children of immigrants who may also be first-generation Canadian.

4 Galtung (1969) defined *positive peace* as a sustainable and just peace that promotes dialogue, relationship building, and structural change, whereas negative peace is the absence of war or physical violence.

5 Not all migration necessarily leads to transnationalism. For instance, refugees often have restrictions posed on rights to travel and have likely been hosted in many different countries before they have been able to securely "settle" in one place (Van Den Anker, 2010).

CHAPTER 2

CONFLICT AND DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOMS

> "Washing one's hands" of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.
>
> —Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education*

WHY ARE PEACEBUILDING, CITIZENSHIP, AND IDENTITY IMPORTANT IN EDUCATION?

Conflict can provide opportunities to learn for everyone, even young students. Conflict dialogue processes have been described in various contexts; in elementary classrooms, teachers may use conflict dialogue processes to facilitate open and inclusive social and academic engagement and democratic opportunities to learn. For example, a cross-national study demonstrated how open, inclusive dialogue can support democratic learning outcomes when conflictual issues were being discussed in classrooms (Hahn, 1998).

Some citizenship education has been criticized for not attending sufficiently to issues of diversity or to critical reflection regarding social and cultural inequities (Joshee, 2004; Osborne, 1995; Sears & Hughes, 2006; Tupper, 2005; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Similarly, mainstream multicultural education theories and practices have paid insufficient attention to pedagogies of dialogue and deliberation, and to developing the critical inquiry skills necessary for citizenship in pluralist societies (Banks, 2006b; Dei, 2000; Dilworth, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2002).

However, scholars have examined where diversity and conflict issues intersect with goals of education for democracy, through many overlapping perspectives, including antiracism, critical multiculturalism, critical pedagogy, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, and citizenship education. To conceptualize how critical reflection on conflict and difference may provide inclusive, democratic learning opportunities for diverse students, in this chapter I gather insights from these areas of work and place them in an overarching conceptual framework of *peacebuilding*. Acknowledging diverse viewpoints and critically reflecting on social power structures are key aspects of peacebuilding pedagogy and critical components of educating for democracy (Bickmore, 2006; Davies, 2004a).

Together, culturally relevant curricula and peacebuilding pedagogies can help diverse students recognize and respond to questions of power and justice in society.

DIALOGUE, DIFFERENCE, AND CONFLICT IN EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

A curriculum may normalize hegemonic assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, and power, thereby silencing or ignoring others (hooks, 1994; McCarthy, 1988). Moreover, when such curriculum adopts a so-called neutral stance, treating conflict as something to be avoided, it implicitly invites students to maintain White, male-centred, heterosexual, and middle-class/upper-class norms and values (Apple, 1979/2004; Kumashiro, 2000). Avoiding explicit critical attention on conflict limits opportunities for students to engage in discussion and to explore alternative perspectives. In contrast, curriculum that airs conflicting perspectives invites and supports critical thinking, exposing the ideological underpinnings of the existing system.

Conflict dialogue processes prepare diverse students for democratic and inclusive learning. Inherently connected to questions of student diversity is the concept of the *hidden curriculum*, based on the work of Jackson (1968) and Apple (1979/2004). Freire's (1970/1994b) theory of *critical consciousness* and *dialogic pedagogy for liberation* and Lynn Davies' (2004a) *dialogue for democratic education* illustrate how critical dialogic education may help teachers and students engage in inclusive peacebuilding learning.

All curriculum includes "norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively, taught in schools and that are not usually talked about in teachers' statements of ends or goals" (Apple, 1979/2004, p. 84). Together, these norms and values are known as the *hidden curriculum* (Jackson, 1968). While the hidden curriculum in North American schooling typically avoids conflict, it is entirely possible for conflict, whether explicit or implicitly embedded in the curriculum, to cut against this grain. In fact, it can be used to encourage critical, inclusive engagement. Conflict dialogue can be purposefully generated to address issues of power and difference, creating spaces for inclusion of multiple histories, experiences, and perspectives (Bickmore, 2007).

The identities of people involved in any conflictual discussion can be expected to play a significant role in the ways they understand and approach social and political issues. In conflict dialogue processes in the classroom, students and teachers engage with their many identities, and draw on their diverse lived experiences and perspectives to interpret and respond to particular issues. Diverse students can better navigate the multiple worlds of home, school, and community when teachers' pedagogical strategies engage their personal experiences and identities (Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1991). To support diverse students' identities as they engage in conflict dialogue, teachers need to be equipped with culturally appropriate pedagogies (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004). By contrast, when power and difference are ignored, it is possible for conflictual issues pedagogies to

be detrimental, particularly for students who carry marginalized identities (Apple, 1970/2004; Hess & Avery, 2008).

In societies characterized by social inequality, the dominant group's ways of thinking are legitimated when unproblematized; that is, when dominant world views are embedded in curriculum content, and delivered in a top-down manner (Anyon, 1981; Apple, 1979/2004). This inhibits the possibility for authentic, critical dialogue, which Freire (1970/1994b) argued is crucial for democracy and social development:

> True dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking—thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them—thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as static entity-thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved. (p. 73)

Dialogue evolves through developing *critical consciousness*—understanding gained through a combination of transformative dialogue and praxis, action and reflection: "Dialogue (the two acts of speaking and listening) is actually about emergence: the bringing out of new and previously hidden meanings and understandings" (Davies, 2004b, p. 216). Dialogue and critical and creative thinking are ways to engage and teach towards social transformation. However, for such dialogue to be democratic and transformative, the hegemony of socially constructed norms must be explicitly challenged (Davies, 2004b). Hegemony is the pervasive and uncritical acceptance of particular ideologies and discourses that work to maintain the dominance of certain groups (Giroux, 1981). Applying Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony to education, Giroux (1981) explained that this domination is perpetuated by mutual (unconscious) consent, through the "power of consciousness and ideology" (p. 16). Education typically assumes, repeats, and reinforces hegemonic discourses (Apple, 1970/2004; Giroux, 1981); but, through naming and challenging problems of inequity or domination, critical dialogue offers counterhegemonic possibilities.

Interruption, in which a challenging or alternative view is presented, invites students to shift their initial tacit beliefs and to form new and potentially counterhegemonic questions or perspectives (Haroutunian-Gordon, 2010). Conflict dialogue pedagogies that do not include marginalized perspectives limit the potential for such interruptive discussion (Davies, 2004b; Haroutunian-Gordon, 2010). On the other hand, conflict dialogue that includes marginalized perspectives challenges and disrupts hegemonic ideologies, and presents a way to achieve recognition of difference. Its very goal is to elicit diverse and critical perspectives that question dominant assumptions.

In a healthy, inclusive classroom, diverse students can freely and confidently learn from and with their peers and teachers, actively and respectfully exchanging multiple and divergent perspectives (Fine, 1993; Hahn, 1998; Larson, 2003). A curriculum characterized by "interruptive democracy"—frequent generation of dialogue and deliberation—engages in praxis (Davies, 2004b). Teachers in such

classrooms encourage students to challenge hegemonic assumptions, and create inclusive spaces for expressing and challenging multiple identities. Such a curriculum may include organized forms of conflict dialogue such as student councils, circle time, diverse student representation on governing bodies, and critical pedagogy to address inequalities such as class, ethnicity, gender, and global injustices (Davies, 2004b, p. 223). Overall, conflict dialogue that is inclusive of multiple and diverse perspectives may contribute to democratic learning experiences.

CONFLICTUAL ISSUES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

> Schools lie in the nexus of political manipulation, fear, and societal conflict but also can be a potent forum for change.
>
> —Weinstein et al., "School Voices: Challenges Facing Educational Systems after Identity-Based Conflicts"

Classroom discussions of social and political issues are an essential component of education for democratic citizenship because they encourage students to be active and critical participants, and because they denormalize the status quo (Bickmore, 1999; Hahn, 1998; Hess & Avery, 2008; Torney-Purta, 2001). However, many teachers do not feel confident in facilitating open dialogue about conflictual issues (Bickmore, 2005, 2008b; Goldston & Kyzer, 2009; Yamashita, 2006). Avoiding conflict and complexity is part of what McNeil (1986) called *defensive teaching*, which reinforces standardization of hegemonic school knowledge. But explicit conflict learning scenarios challenge such antidemocratic education, in several ways. Teachers can choose to position conflicting perspectives as teachable moments (Houser, 1996). In critical pedagogy, attention can be paid to conflicting perspectives, thus stimulating critical self-reflection and thoughtful, constructively critical discussion (Houser, 2008; Shor, 1992). Open, inclusive dialogue about diverse viewpoints on conflictual questions contributes to peacebuilding by creating space for critical democratic learning.

Topics that may spark conflict in the classroom are extremely diverse, ranging from concerns over human rights to alternative ways of interpreting science experiments (Claire & Holden, 2007). For instance, science teachers may present students with actual cases of conflicts among scientists in history (Barton & Yang, 2000; Settlage & Sabik, 1997). Lesson materials on questions of human rights, prejudices, stereotypes, gender biases, current events, Canadian immigration patterns, sex education, and social justice literature present opportunities for conflict learning.

As Freire (1970/1994b) and Apple (1979/2004) argued, there is no such thing as neutral curriculum: particular perspectives, acknowledged or not, underlie all curriculum content. Biases in curriculum emerge from teachers' own choices and beliefs, curriculum mandates, and students' own perspectives influenced by their cultural, ethnic, religious, and gender identities. Thus, conflictual issues and topics

explicitly embedded in curriculum content provide opportunities for including divergent perspectives.

What are such conflictual issues? In one definition, they are "those on which society has not found consensus and which are considered so significant that each proposed way of dealing with them has ardent supporters and adamant opponents" (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 39). Hess (2009) categorized two kinds of controversial political issues: *settled* issues (including prejudice, racism, and bullying), to which teachers believe there is one acceptable answer; and *unsettled* issues (including the death penalty, abortion, and same-sex marriage), where public opinion is still widely split and teachers accept the legitimacy of alternative viewpoints. Hess (2001, 2009) argued that unsettled issues are the best topics for issues discussions, because they provide the opportunity to take a legitimate stance on either side of a question. In issues discussions in classrooms, of course, "reflective dialogue [is promoted] among students, or between students and teachers, about an issue on which there is disagreement" (Harwood & Hahn, 1990, p. 1). Hess and Posselt (2002) studied how Grade 10 students in two social studies classrooms participated in discussions on such unsettled issues as gambling, physician-assisted suicide, and free speech. Through pre- and post-questionnaires, observations, and interviews, the authors found that students' engagement was affected by "knowing a lot about the topic, being interested in the topic, and recognition from classmates" (Hess & Posselt, 2002, p. 299). They argued that positioning curricular material as controversial can motivate students to work together to find evidence to support their opinions, thereby increasing their confidence and interest in the material, and their participation in dialogue processes. These authors did not examine the ways these issues and pedagogies might have differentially engaged diverse students. Clearly, any curriculum is culturally bound, and varies depending on the context in which the issue is being discussed.

Positioning curriculum material as conflictual clearly offers teachers and students opportunities to make diverse, plausible interpretations through examining and evaluating politically relevant academic content. However, students' diverse identities increase the complexity of addressing conflictual issues in the classroom (Kim & Markus, 2005; Peck, 2010). Thus, I challenge the notion that unsettled issues are necessarily the most fruitful topics for discussion (Hess, 2001; Hess & Avery, 2008; Hughes & Sears, 2007). Instead, in examining how diverse students engaged in reflective dialogue on a broad spectrum of conflictual issues, I discovered that they found meaning in relation to their diverse identities. For instance, historical oppression and marginalization of particular cultural groups, such as Japanese-Canadians during World War II, are represented in Canadian textbooks in ways that implicitly or explicitly reinforce or challenge the status and membership of diverse students' ethnocultural groups in society. As Apple (1979/2004) and Barton and Levstik (2003) argued, critically addressing such social conflicts creates opportunities for democratic citizenship learning that interrupts prevailing inequities (Davies, 2004a; see also Epstein, 2000; Seixas, Peck, & Poyntz, 2011).

Integrating into the curriculum opportunities for diverse students to examine, interpret, read, write, and speak about social conflicts encourages critical literacy. With critical literacy, diverse students can challenge social injustices, develop and take stands on social conflicts, and "analyze and understand the social realities of their own lives and of their communities" (Cummins, 2009, p. 6). Engaging students in higher-order thinking involves purposeful inclusion of diverse perspectives, which deepens discussion and engages critical reading and writing (Applebee, 2002). Applebee, Langer, Nystrand, and Gamoran (2003) studied 64 middle and high school English classrooms and found that discussion-based pedagogies and high academic standards positively influenced diverse students' literacy performance. Further, addressing conflictual issues that are clearly relevant to students' identities and life experiences can offer newcomer immigrant students and language learners greater opportunities to participate. For language learners, "opportunities to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing" in the target language are vital for second-language acquisition (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 414). Such engagement encourages opportunities for literacy improvement as diverse students read and write about important social issues that are meaningful and engaging (Cummins, 2009, 2011).

Pace (2011) has reminded us that "teachers provide students access to particular educational experiences through the choices they make about content and methods" (p. 34). She studied how social studies content was taught in American schools that did not hold standardized achievement tests (Pace, 2008). She found variations between what was taught in more affluent schools with mostly White students, and in poorer schools with more visible minorities. Much of the literature points to social studies as the ideal curricula in which to raise conflictual social and political issues. However, accountability via standardized testing that may exclude social studies (especially beyond a narrow history and civics content) limits what content is taught and the extent to which it may be presented critically and inclusively.

Social studies and language arts classrooms offer many possibilities of engaging elementary students in dialogue about alternative perspectives. The majority of research on dialogue processes in schools has been done in these settings; considerable research has been done on the rationale, complexity, and consequences of teaching conflictual issues in social studies and history curricula (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 2003; Osborne, 1995). "Schools teach a version of history that reflects 'their' truth—a nationalist perspective using literature and historical sources as evidence for that perspective" (Weinstein, Freedman, & Hughson, 2007, p. 63), which may marginalize students who do not identify with that history. A case study of Palestinian and Israeli teachers who cowrote a dual-language narrative on their countries' conflict history showed how curriculum content might be constructed to teach students to make sense of contrasting interpretations of historical events, in order to facilitate de-escalation of violent conflict (Steinberg & Bar-On, 2009; see also Freedman, Weinstein, Murphy, & Longman, 2008). In contrast, curricula most often offer hegemonic narratives that ignore conflicting perspectives on history and social structures—such as those of immigrants or

indigenous peoples—and the people who have been marginalized through that history (Bannerji, 2000; Nicholas, 1996). As discussed above, many social studies teachers avoid making choices to engage in such complex and conflictual pedagogies; instead, they encourage their students to memorize and reiterate stories and facts from the past (Hughes & Sears, 2007; McNeil, 1986; Tupper, 2005).

Conflict can indeed be used for learning opportunities in the classroom. Social studies and language arts curriculum content that presents diverse perspectives, in conjunction with inclusive, engaging pedagogical tools, supports conflict learning for diverse students. Critical study of dominant and alternative narratives helps teach students to understand how narratives work (Funk & Said, 2004). And the study of fictional characters or events represented in literature can address power relations among participants with different identities. Such engagement with difference can in turn support processes of empathizing with others (Zembylas, 2007).

DIVERSITY, IDENTITY, POWER, CONFLICT, AND PEACEBUILDING EDUCATION

Students' identity and social status influence the ways they may choose to participate in conflict dialogue: diverse students' multiple identities—including race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status—in particular. Studies have shown that students' personal identities, histories, experiences, and social class shape the ways in which they interpret curricular subject matter (Banks, 2006a, 2006b; Delpit, 2006; Ogbu, 1992). "Language learners' identities are always multiple and in process," depending on the context, according to Norton and Toohey (2011, p. 437). Cummins (2001) argued that when "students' developing sense of self is affirmed and extended through their interactions with teachers, they are more likely to apply themselves to academic effort and participate actively in instruction" (p. 2).

However, Dull and Murrow (2008) and Kahne and Sporte (2008) have found that students in lower-income schools with higher percentages of newcomer immigrant and minority students had fewer opportunities to participate in conflictual issues discussions in their social studies classes than students in affluent and homogenous classrooms. In one case, Subedi (2008) observed and interviewed two immigrant teachers who tried to engage students in conflict dialogue about cultural differences in their diverse social studies classes, and found that these teachers were met with significant resistance and challenges from mainstream and minoritized students alike.

Hahn's (1998) cross-national, mixed-methods study showed that students who participated in conflictual issues discussions developed skills and inclinations for greater democratic civic participation. However, in interviews Hahn also found that some students in the classrooms she observed feared they would be embarrassed if they voiced unpopular dissenting views in classroom discussions (see also Bekerman, 2009; King, 2009). She concluded that key elements of the

instructional climate—content, pedagogy, and atmosphere—could "model democratic inquiry and discourse" (Hahn, 1998, p. 232).

Participating in classroom discussions is risky for anyone, and feared repercussions (such as peer or teacher reprisal) when participating in conflictual issues discussions are even greater for visible minority newcomer students in Canadian elementary schools. These students simply may not possess the social or cultural capital to present the nuanced, normative perspectives that dominate most classrooms. One approach to address this fear is to create opportunities for young people to connect their identities to the curriculum.

While such connections might contribute to promoting democracy and peacebuilding education, it is still a complex endeavour that involves negotiating identities amidst sometimes painful acculturations. In an attempt to fit in to their new society, many minority immigrant students sometimes attach negative connotations to their ethnicities. For example, in one American study, predominantly Mexican and Vietnamese minority high school students felt excluded because of how stereotypes and misperceptions concerning their ethnic identities and immigration histories were presented in the classroom (Urrieta & Quach, 2000). As some students strive to be fully accepted into mainstream society, they may try to dissociate themselves from their families by purposely not speaking their familial language or connecting with their cultural heritage (Cummins, 2001; C. A. Parker, 2010b).

A climate of social prejudice may also contribute to students' marginalization, silence, or exclusion during conflictual issues discussions that touch upon or imply linkages to their ethnic identities. In their study of Asian students in a predominantly White high school, Quach, Jo, and Urrieta (2009) found that in this majority White population, some visible minorities vigorously attempted to subscribe to this Whiteness, while others chose to emphasize their ethnocultural differences. There is minimal research on whether students in predominantly visible minority communities experienced similar processes. But, in a Canadian study, ethnic minority immigrant youth formed strong attachments to their ethnic cultures and identities—and, at the same time, also identified with the larger Canadian political community—when these were recognized positively at school (Lee & Hébert, 2006).

Acknowledging and relating diverse identities to issues being discussed contributes to peacebuilding education. Discussions that encourage such diverse, tolerant, and dissenting viewpoints carry democratic peacebuilding potential, but they also risk further marginalizing or silencing diverse students. However, when teachers connect students' identities to the curriculum content, this may motivate and empower students to participate safely in democratic dialogue in the classroom, lessening that risk (Hemmings, 2000).

Pedagogical Tools for Conflict Dialogue

Teachers often fear managing controversial and politically charged material in inclusive and constructive ways, especially in classrooms with diverse students

(Bickmore, 2005, 2008b; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Yamashita, 2006). Teachers' sense of their own expertise in curriculum content and pedagogy, as well as their positionality on ethnic and political conflicts, influences how they facilitate or avoid conflictual issues discussions (see above and also Bekerman et al., 2009; Oulton, Day, Dillon, & Grace, 2004). Studying diverse classrooms and students' experiences with conflictual issues discussions is an effective means of revealing ways in which teachers can better facilitate effective, inclusive conflict dialogue.

Many pedagogical tools are available to teachers for guiding and inviting students to participate in discussions of conflicting perspectives. Some pedagogies prescribe particular, "correct" ways of handling conflict, while others rely on broad principles for including the diverse experiences of the participants to guide the dialogue process. *Prescriptive* approaches to conflict education often reflect dominant norms and behaviours, by teaching an assumed-neutral package of "how tos" that emerge from dominant cultural contexts, leaving minimal space for diversity of experiences and perspectives of participants (Lederach, 1995, p. 5).

By contrast, *elicitive* pedagogies invite participants to make explicit cultural knowledges that were formerly implicit, through storytelling and critical analysis of language, proverbs, and cultural symbols (Lederach, 1995). Such approaches can uncover culturally rooted knowledge resources for critical, creative, and locally relevant conflict learning. In this way, conflict education is a type of cultural learning; participants identify the different understandings of conflict embedded in curriculum content, thereby co-creating a new body of knowledge. Explicitly inviting students to voice and examine their diverse experiences helps them question and resist prescriptive Western models for understanding conflict and their own so-called common-sense assumptions regarding prevailing social relations. The way can thereby be paved for democratization.

Other pedagogical tools for facilitating conflict dialogue include structured academic controversy (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), peacemaking circle processes, and controversial public issues discussions. In structured academic controversy, students are taught to take positions in small-group discussions, then later to reverse their perspectives, and finally to attempt to reach consensus. The purpose of these dialogues is not to solve any conflictual issue. In the final stage of the process, students analyze and integrate the best arguments and evidence presented. While there is some empirical research on structured academic controversy, there is little research on how such a small-group conflict dialogue process might differentially engage and support learning of diverse and/or marginalized students.

Another pedagogical tool for conflict dialogue is the circle process, types of which include talking circles and community circles. These may be used in classrooms to build community or resolve conflict (Bickmore & Scheepstra, 2011). Circles can also be used during class meetings, to offer all participating students the opportunity to speak in discussion and decision-making on issues they are concerned about. Some facilitators may circulate a "talking piece," to provide all students with the opportunity to participate—the person who holds the talking piece, which is passed sequentially around the circle, is the only one who is entitled to speak. In such a circle, everyone is given the opportunity to voice his or

her perspective, and as the talking piece is passed around, everyone is encouraged to listen.

Circle processes invite those "who are quiet, shy, or struggling to find their voice in a group space … to share what's on their minds and hearts" (Pranis, Stuart, & Wedge, 2003, p. 93). Such pedagogies may contribute to creating inclusive spaces for students who may feel marginalized or less confident to voice their perspectives. Peacemaking circles are designed to facilitate discussion and resolution of particular problems or conflictual issues; they work towards transformation through open-ended dialogue. In general, my research investigated how various kinds of dialogue pedagogies reinforced marginalization and/or encouraged ethnic minority students to identify positively with their cultural and ancestral histories. The limited literature on circle processes in school settings (McCluskey et al., 2008; Morrison, 2007) did not show how or whether marginalized students might experience a reduction in their sense of inclusion through such processes.

In one Grade 9 world history class, Kohlmeier (2006) found that when historical events were presented to students as being debatable, the students became engaged and intellectually stimulated to gather evidence and take on various perspectives (see also Hahn, 1998; Hess & Avery, 2008; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Kohlmeier used a discussion tool known as the Socratic seminar, in which students engage in critical dialogue about multiple perspectives on a question posed by the teacher. However, Kohlmeier's study did not address how diverse students in this classroom might have experienced this conflict dialogue process in different ways.

King (2009) used an ethnographic method to study a cross-cultural reconciliation program involving Catholic and Protestant Northern Irish high school students and their teachers. In addition to extensive classroom observations, he conducted semistructured interviews with teachers and students, to explore how multiple perspectives influenced students' experience and participation in conflictual issues discussions. He found that through the use of conflict dialogue processes (including structured academic controversy), these students were equipped to engage in critical self-reflection while also exploring multiple perspectives.

Overall, the above cases illustrate how dialogic practices are demonstrably possible in social studies classrooms. Children in highly conflictual and in relatively harmonious settings may develop different understandings and approaches to conflict (Kitson & McCully, 2005). Conflictual issues discussions are not inevitably constructive learning experiences (Bekerman et al., 2009). Students need to learn to address conflictual material in any setting, but they tend to build on different knowledge and skills learned informally in conflictual or peaceful contexts (Merelman, 1990). Educators in conflict zones initially need to set up their programs to address safer conflictual issues so that students can first learn basic skills and values and develop trust: "Attempting too early to debate group *political* aims would destroy trust, alienate students, and bring parental reprisals" (Merelman, 1990, p. 59; see also Hemmings, 2000; Hess & Avery, 2008; King, 2009; Schultz, Buck, & Niesz, 2000).

Discussing Conflicts with Young Students

A number of studies of conflictual issues discussions have investigated the experiences of high school students (Byford, Lennon, & Russell, 2009; Freedman et al., 2008; Hess, 2001; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Kohlmeier, 2006; A. Ross, 2007). A smaller body of theory and research challenges preconceived notions about the supposedly limited capabilities of elementary children to engage in such discussions (Angell, 2004; Beck, 2003; Kelly & Brooks, 2009).

It is vital to provide adequate support for teachers when they engage with sensitive material, especially with younger students. Fine (1993) described a vignette from her research in a Grade 7/8 classroom, in which two students voiced perspectives that differed from the teacher's views about the Holocaust and Israeli-Palestinian relations. In an effort to address one student's anti-Semitic bias regarding a so-called Jewish conspiracy, the teacher brought in a guest facilitator from Facing History and Ourselves[1] to facilitate a follow-up discussion. This organization's curriculum materials and teacher training helps students examine cases of genocide from various contexts, and guides them to explore their own identities and perspectives as citizens who can resist violence in their own societies.

Elementary students are capable of engaging in conflict dialogue, especially when they have the benefit of preparatory lessons and scaffolding content and process (Bickmore, 1999, 2014; Bickmore & Parker, 2014; Parker, 2011, 2013). Beck (2003) studied a case in which a suburban American Grade 4 class engaged in a Civics Deliberation unit on rights and government. He reported that the teacher's preparatory lessons on how to engage in conflictual discussions had created a classroom climate where at least some students felt comfortable in expressing minority points of view. During classroom discussions, one student's point of view was that, if someone was accused of murder, he shouldn't get a lawyer: "He should just go to jail" (Beck, 2003, p. 326). Beck's study shed light on how young children could engage in conflict dialogue about issues that may be familiar to their lived experience.

In any context, children's experiences of conflict are closely connected to their social status, gender, and cultural identity, and form part of their citizenship learning. Children who grow up in diverse neighbourhoods tend to become aware of ethnic and racial differences at an earlier age than children who live in monoracial settings (Kendall, 1983; Parker, 2010a; Peck & Sears, 2005; Ramsey, 2004; Ramsey & Myers, 1990); some argue that such awareness develops by the age of four or five (e.g., Derman-Sparks, 2006; Hyun, 2007; Wolpert, 2006). It is therefore important to pay attention to the ways that these differences may influence the ways that diverse students in elementary schools experience conflictual issues associated with such diversities. Cultural sensitivity in discussions with young, diverse students can contribute to all students developing positive feelings about their racial and cultural identities (Biles, 1994; C. A. Parker, 2010b).

Literature circles that elicit conflict dialogue may encourage students to draw on and voice their lived experiences in response to conflictual issues. For instance, inviting students to express their viewpoint through a character in a story can provide safety for students to participate (Bickmore & Parker, 2014). In an urban American Grade 1/2 mixed classroom with predominantly Latina/Latino students, Fain (2008) studied how the teacher's use of literature circles facilitated the students' discussion about issues of oppression. The teacher purposely selected controversial literature; the narratives explicitly addressed issues of racism, discrimination, and social exclusion. Fain argued that the literature circle provided a "safe space" where the students "established their voices in democratic ways by taking multiple positions in the dialogue" (Fain, 2008, p. 207). DeNicolo and Franquiz (2006) described similar critical incidents during literature circles on cultural literacy in a diverse American Grade 4 classroom.

Stereotyped notions of "childhood innocence" may make educators reluctant to raise conflictual issues with young children (Bekerman et al., 2009; Davies, 2004a; Yamashita, 2006). Kelly and Brooks (2009) challenged these preconceptions in their study of how novice teachers in British Columbia approached social justice issues in their Grades 4, 5, and 6 classrooms. They found that the teachers' presumptions about students' innocence and indifference to political and social justice issues (such as death, drugs, or poverty) usually caused those teachers to report that they avoided discussing controversial issues in their classrooms.

However, conflict dialogue pedagogies can be infused into the curriculum safely enough to engage diverse students in inclusive, democratic learning opportunities. For example, one teacher in Kelly and Brooks's study facilitated a conflict dialogue with his Grade 2 class of primarily South Asian immigrant students. In a discussion of the conflict between India and Pakistan, a student raised the issue of atomic bombs. The teacher linked this issue of global conflict with a lesson the class had already done on interpersonal conflict, in order to reduce the "heaviness" of the topic (Kelly & Brooks, 2009, p. 208). Clearly, issues discussions with young children are not only possible—they are also necessary. Voicing divergent perspectives and stories in the curriculum may contribute to diverse students' understandings of how issues of power and inequity are associated with their and others' race, ethnicity, gender, and migration experiences.

CRITICAL MULTICULTURALISM AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

As Delpit (2006) has argued, mainstream cultural codes for language and interaction are generally assumed in schools, rather than being taught explicitly: this inexplicitness tends to disadvantage culturally minoritized students, such as new immigrants, who do not have prior access to such cultural knowledge. Culturally relevant pedagogy aims to challenge mainstream hidden curricula that teach acceptance of the status quo, by making the dynamics of the dominant society explicit—accessible for learning and for critique (Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995). It encourages a wider range of diverse students' voices through

equity-oriented teaching methods (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). A main tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy is cultural reflection; teachers facilitating dialogue about sensitive, identity-linked issues can encourage diverse students to reflect on how conflicts are connected to their identities through their race, ethnicity, or gender. Such pedagogies are often promoted for students of colour (Nieto, 1999).

Distinct approaches to diversity and multiculturalism influence how conflict is approached in schools and how possibilities for uncovering hidden curriculum are managed. Banks (2006a) identified four approaches to multicultural curriculum reform: the contributions approach; the ethnic additive approach; the transformation approach; and the decision-making and social action approach. The contributions approach is the typical default approach, in which mainstream ethnic heroes and holidays are added to the curriculum. In ethnic additive approaches, teachers include content from various ethnic groups without encouraging students to understand society from these diverse perpectives. The transformation approach is fundamentally different from the first two approaches, because it considers how dominant assumptions can be challenged by interrogating the multiple perspectives of several ethnic groups. The decision-making and social action approach includes all elements of the transformative approach, but also provides students with opportunities to critically reflect on social issues and make decisions about how to take action and solve these issues.

Kumashiro (2000) also identified four approaches to antioppressive education: education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society. As in Banks's model, the first two approaches reflect liberal and additive approaches to address issues of diversity and oppression and the last two approaches promote critical transformative multiculturalism. The latter approach explicitly addresses conflicts and questions of power, to motivate and equip diverse students to engage in cultural critique and democratization.

Uncritical, liberal approaches to multiculturalism produce national histories that imagine Canada as a socially just and successful multicultural state; in this way, normative Canadian history produces Canada as a nation that is "tolerant" and "innocent" (St. Denis, 2011, p. 310). But these multicultural initiatives can work against Aboriginal sovereignty and anticolonialism, sometimes excluding them: "By inciting multiculturalism, public schools effectively limit meaningful incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives into public schools" (St. Denis, 2011, p. 307). Multiculturalism sometimes equates Aboriginals' history and that of immigrant groups, inaccurately assuming shared commonalities. By doing so, it erases the specific experiences of Aboriginal peoples, who are indigenous to the land—experiences that are very different for people who have newly arrived to the country.

In order to respond to the so-called problem of difference, multicultural education is often used to promote a discourse of hybridity, cosmopolitanism, and equality amongst all cultures (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008a, 2008b; May & Sleeter, 2010; Nieto, 1999). But practitioners and theorists understand, experience, and interpret

difference differently (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008b; Nieto, 1999). In the dominant discourse of liberal multiculturalism, equity and diversity are promoted at a minimal, generic level and focus on "celebrating" differences (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008b; Harper, 1997; Nieto, 1999). Some teachers still believe that an adequate response to multiculturalism and diversity would be to hold a "holiday party" instead of a "Christmas party." While this is a step towards inclusiveness, such conventional views of liberal multiculturalism are presented as short-term '"feel-good' additives" to curriculum programs, meant to "boost self-esteem for 'minority' students" (Nieto, 1999, p. 27). But one of the core concepts of multicultural education has to do with facilitating inclusion of diverse students, through sustainable interventions. A critical approach to multiculturalism presents antiracist and social justice education as basic education that is pervasive and important for all students (Nieto, 2002). A critical multicultural praxis involves "moving beyond dysconsciousness and miseducation toward liberatory pedagogy" (King, 2004, p. 81). Mainstream views that perpetuate dysconsciousness are challenged by acknowledging that education is not neutral. Dysconsciousness means uncritically accepting social structures which maintain a limited awareness of inequity and diversity:

> Dysconscious racism is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness (i.e., not unconsciousness) but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness. (King, 2004, p. 73)

Critical multicultural education focuses on knowledge construction and praxis; it is an "anti-racist, egalitarian, inclusive process that is embedded in all aspects of school life: program, pedagogy, social interactions between school actors, and notions of learning and teaching" (Jacquet, 2008, p. 61). This kind of teaching is necessary in order to pay attention to race and racism, equality and equity, and inclusion and exclusion, in both the content and pedagogy that students are engaged in at school. When students are free to examine and present multiple perspectives in democratic classrooms, multicultural education becomes critical, transformative, and antioppressive (Banks, 1996; Nieto, 2002; Kumashiro, 2000).

Multicultural education is part of citizenship education; however, both have been taken up in various ways. Liberal, additive, and uncritical approaches focus on generic, top-down content that ignores conflict and uncertainty. For example, while there have been nation-wide shifts in educational policies that seek to promote greater understanding and respect for diversity, early assimilation-oriented educational policies "were meant to be a homogenizing force that would work with immigrant and native-born children and their families to create 'good Canadian citizens'" (Joshee, 2004, p. 135). Such assimilation policies promote liberal, additive approaches that educate for and about the Other but do not invite critical reflection about social issues. Canadian federal policies have since been repositioned to reflect a social cohesion approach, which recognizes diversity but

still maintains an uncritical approach to multicultural and human rights education (Joshee, 2004).

When power and hegemony are ignored, liberal multicultural educational practices can easily be implemented in the curriculum. In contrast, critical, progressive, and transformative approaches embrace the inevitable (and potentially positive) consequences of conflict and explicitly surface the hidden curriculum. Such approaches encourage dialogue about diversity, conflictual issues, and the necessity of action for social change to produce justice.

Teaching marginalized students to be good citizens is a goal of both multicultural and citizenship education (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Osborne, 1995). Critical multicultural education allows students and teachers to draw on their diverse lived experiences and perspectives to interpret and respond to particular issues. A critical multicultural education program encourages diverse students to reflect on how their lived experiences are part of conflictual and social issues in the democratic society in which they live. When teachers explicitly acknowledge issues pertaining to ethnocultural difference, such as racism, they acknowledge social conflict, thus fulfilling the peacebuilding education mandate of including social conflict issues in the implemented curriculum (Bickmore, 2008a).

Through connecting curriculum content and students' experiences, teachers empower students to critically reflect on their social and cultural identities. Critical race theory scholars (e.g., Delgado, 1995; Lopez, 2003) argue that maintaining a false neutrality about race and racism ignores the impact and reality of racism in schools. By acknowledging counternarratives about racism and injustice, applied critical race theory provokes critical reflection and an open space to challenge the status quo (Delgado, 1995; Knaus, 2009). Knaus, a high school teacher, described his personal experience in applying critical race theory in his class of predominantly African American and Latino students in California; his students were able to share their personal experiences with racism and oppression. Bolgatz (2005) showed how the pedagogy of two teachers, one Black and one White, facilitated conversations about race and racism in a high school class. The two teachers team-taught lessons that asked students to discuss issues of race and racism. Key features of their practice included explicitly teaching students to listen, "back up their opinions with evidence, and make use of their own experiences in discussions," and engaging students in peer-to-peer discussion (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 30). Similarly, in a qualitative study of an American middle school history classroom, the teacher used counterstorytelling as a method of resistance to racism; including alternative narratives, students reflected on their social realities and engaged in dialogue about race (Howard, 2004). In these examples, culturally relevant pedagogies supported ethnocultural minority students to share personal experiences, thereby creating space for them to engage in critical dialogue about social issues.

In another study, two male teachers, one Black and one White, integrated multicultural content in their diverse middle school and high school social studies classrooms and found that the teachers' lived experiences influenced how they chose to present conflictual historical issues (Dilworth, 2004). In both classes, the

teachers articulated their confidence about integrating multicultural content in their curriculum, but both still relied heavily on the classroom textbook that presented multicultural issues through limited additive approaches. They extended their implemented curriculum through the contributions approach, presenting multiple perspectives and encouraging students to critically reflect on the contributions of diverse groups of people to society. The study showed that while integrating multicultural content was a necessary component of citizenship education, teachers' personal choices strongly impacted the extent to which students were able to dialogue about conflictual issues and develop a deeper awareness of their sociopolitical communities.

Obviously, discussing sensitive issues can be detrimental to classroom social relations if adequate preparations have not been made. For instance, one Toronto teacher attempted to engage with his diverse Grade 3 students' cultural histories (Dudley-Marling, 1997). However, during a discussion about a folk tale, he mistakenly assumed one of his students, an Afghani, was from Pakistan. The student, who had spent a year at a Pakistani refugee camp, was hurt, and retorted, "I'm not from Pakistan." Like this student, others might be sensitive to discussions that highlight their perceived ethnicity and experiences based on stereotypes. While I advocate for dialogue about diversity, I also acknowledge that such practices are not a panacea; in fact they are risky pedagogy. Even though risky, however, such practices are necessary to disrupt the guise of neutrality and to address social injustices (Freire, 1985).

When teachers' pedagogical strategies engage diverse students' personal experiences, they affirm students' identities—encouraging their active engagement in the curriculum (Cummins, 2001; Nieto, 1992). To provide this support, teachers need to be equipped with culturally appropriate pedagogies (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Particularly when teachers encourage diverse students to voice their perspectives, conflict dialogue processes can open space for discussion of alternative viewpoints across all subject areas. For example, in the language arts curriculum, studying conflictual issues in fiction and nonfiction plots and themes can help diverse students relate to conflicting perspectives of characters. In a previous research study (C. A. Parker, 2010b), I described a new immigrant student who initially showed reluctance to engage in a multicultural unit integrated to the Grade 4 English language arts curriculum. However, he spoke up during a class discussion following a read-aloud of the picture book *The Name Jar* by Yansook Choi. The book is about a girl named Unhei who is embarrassed by her Korean name when she first goes to school in America, because her classmates cannot pronounce it. After the class read the book the student chose to share cultural and language challenges he had experienced when he moved back to China for a few years after his family first came to Canada. Despite this student's limited English language skills, he became comfortable participating in a discussion about this story as he related it to his own troubling story of cultural transition. This study demonstrated that, when curriculum content and pedagogy supported diverse students' inclusion, students may indeed be encouraged to share sensitive or personal issues about cultural conflict.

In sum: cultural responsiveness and flexibility of power are key characteristics of peacebuilding education, because they address destructive social conflict and systemic violence (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Lederach, 1995). Critical multiculturalism and culturally relevant pedagogy are necessary components of this peacebuilding education. Transforming implemented curriculum by inviting dialogue about conflict and diversity increases the possibility of inclusion for all students, and contributes to building peace.

CONCLUSION: CONFLICT AND DIVERSITY IN DEMOCRATIC AND DIVERSE CLASSROOMS

When curriculum and pedagogy engage diverse students' identities, histories, and perspectives, the students increasingly become included in the class. Democratic peacebuilding education relies on dialogic pedagogies to offer opportunities for all students to participate and have their voices heard. In elementary classrooms there still remain shifting approaches to understanding how these processes are used and whom they include. Hidden curriculum embedded in classroom practices that teach acceptance of the status quo tend to exclude some diverse students. However, as many diverse immigrant students acculturate to classroom settings, they may also encounter cultural barriers in the explicit, planned classroom curriculum. Apple's (1979/2004), Freire's (1970/1994a, 1970/1994), and Davies' (2004a, 2004b) theories suggest that inviting students to explore conflicting perspectives on unresolved issues would facilitate education for democratization. Conflict dialogue pedagogies may or may not be sensitive to diverse students' identities. Equity issues embedded in curriculum (e.g., experiences of historically marginalized, oppressed groups) are often skimmed over or not mentioned at all. In contrast, the infusion of conflictual issues dialogue provides opportunities to voice multiple, contesting, perspectives—which may be relevant to diverse students' identities.

NOTES

[1] Facing History and Ourselves is a North American organization that began as a way to support educators to teach about the Nazi Holocaust; it is an example of an organization that educators may consult for support in facilitating conflictual issues.

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING CLASSROOM CLIMATE: WHAT NORMS AND PEDAGOGIES SUPPORT AND IMPEDE DIALOGUE?

> The act of sharing with those who have been silenced and marginalized is a spiritual task that embodies a sense of humility and intimacy. Furthermore, a sense of reciprocity is fundamental from this epistemological space, a sense that the researcher and the researched are changed in this process of mutual teaching and learning the world together.
>
> —C. B. Dillard and C. L. Okpalaoka, "The Sacred and Spiritual Nature of Endarkened Transnational Feminist Praxis in Qualitative Research"

How teachers deal with conflict and diversity in multicultural classrooms can influence how students interpret and respond to conflicts and issues of diversity in their lives as citizens, as well as in the classroom. In theory, teachers in public, urban, and diverse classrooms are encouraged by policy documents and guidelines to engage in discussions about controversial issues in the classroom. However, the nature of the typical ways that teachers seek to do this illustrates the challenges of peacebuilding education in practice. In a confined system, which emphasizes mainstream curriculum and relies heavily on standardized testing, opportunities for nurturing conflict are often missed. But when teachers are supported and encouraged by their colleagues, administration, and community, they may be better equipped to handle and respond to controversial issues embedded in the curriculum (Bickmore, 2008b).

Prescriptive approaches to conflict education may not reflect the experiences and identities of diverse students in the classroom. For example, teaching a package of how-tos assumed to be neutral often reflects societally dominant norms and behaviours. Little room is left for diversity of experiences or perspectives. Many pedagogical tools are available for teachers to guide and invite students to participate in discussions of conflicting perspectives. These include issues discussions, circles, class decision-making meetings, role plays, simulations, and community-building activities. However, such inclusive pedagogy may be difficult to integrate into traditional classroom teaching that relies on defensive teaching (see McNeil, 1986). Some pedagogies prescribe specific, correct ways of handling conflict, while others rely on the diverse experiences of the participants to guide the dialogue process (Lederach, 1991). The process of affirming diverse students' identities "focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for

social change" (Nieto, 1992, p. 30). When divergent perspectives are voiced in the curriculum, diverse students may be better equipped to confront issues of power and inequity and to better connect with their and others' race, ethnicity, gender, and immigration experiences. But teachers often refuse to engage their students in discussions about racism, because it might "demoralize" them; and therefore if it would be "too dangerous a topic, … best left untouched" (Nieto, 1992, p. 31). Some teachers carry problematic preconceptions about students who are of a visible minority race: "One can read most discussions of teacher race as tacitly assuming that the system of education is basically as it should be but that it functions most effectively when there is cultural congruence between teachers and students" (Sleeter, 2004, p. 163). Like Delpit (1988, 2006) and others, Sleeter deconstructed the problem of how diverse children are perceived and subsequently treated by teachers who do not attempt to connect with their students' multiple identities, and subsequently misunderstand their histories and identities.

Although conflictual issues exist in all classrooms, they are most often silenced. I spent significant time in three classroom communities to find and identify moments of divergence that allowed, and at times engaged, perspectives outside of this normalized state of avoidance. Gramsci (1971) was interested in questions of power and identified institutional and oppressive structures as hegemonic. My intention in this work was to explore the ways in which those who are relatively powerless negotiate their power within the institutional structure of schooling contexts. The conflicts I identify are not revolutionary, nor are they always overtly conflictual; they are *moments*, which, at times, created some upheavals. While the structural institutions remained intact, those within these structures found ways to manage and explore power, and some attempted to rearrange it. At other times, those moments remained in the null and hidden curriculum that allowed for "dangerous" topics to be left untouched, while nourishing prescriptive norms and values that did not necessarily connect to students' identities. Critical theorists like Freire (1970/1994b) recognized that those who are aware of their (powerless) position have the capacity to change it by exercising their will to resist the constraints of oppressive institutions. In this way, subaltern masses develop the consciousness necessary to explore options: to be compliant or to protest.

In my analysis of these students and teachers, I pay attention to nuances of race, ethnicity, and gender, in order to consider how these identities may have influenced their perceptions and responses. However, I do not assume that these characteristics ultimately shape perspectives and experiences. Nor do I assume that, in a conflict situation, people respond out of single characteristics such as these. Such an assumption can create isolated, essentialized images that stigmatize particular groups of people. I identify these differences in order to acknowledge them, and consider them when attempting to understand how particular viewpoints are raised or not raised.

This chapter deals with the sociocultural landscape of the classroom; a space that exists between powerful social structures and diverse cultural milieus, placing the people who negotiate these landscapes—the students and teachers—at the centre of the study.

SOCIAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTEXTS FOR INCLUSION

In three classroom environments, the teacher-student-researcher relationships and pedagogies worked to sometimes support and to sometimes impede possibilities for the inclusion of conflict and diversity and diverse students' experiences in the curriculum. My relationship with each teacher shaped my perceptions and understandings of their identities and their pedagogical approaches. The classroom set-up, guidelines, and norms shaped the opportunities for classroom dialogue. An overview is provided of the different types of content that teachers covered, and the different pedagogical approaches they used in their implemented curricula. In the final section of this chapter, I compare and contrast the three cases, to theorize how classroom culture shaped peacebuilding education and citizenship learning.

ARIA PUBLIC SCHOOL, GRADE 4, MS. MARLEE

Ms. Marlee was an African-Caribbean-Canadian teacher who had taught special education in previous years. It was her first year teaching Grade 4 students in a regular classroom. There were 23 students in this class; 10 boys and 13 girls. The ethnocultural makeup of the class was 34.5% Chinese, 34.5% Indian, 15% Pakistani, 15% Tamil Sri Lankan, and 0.5% Jamaican. The one Black female student was Christian—also a minority in this class. My attention to the demographic makeup of the class allowed me to explore in detail how the curriculum related to these diverse cultural identities.

Ms. Marlee was in her early 40s and lived in the neighbouring community. At the time she was working on her PhD through an online university. Ms. Marlee and I developed a light-hearted friendship. Through interviews and casual conversations with her, I learned that her teaching philosophy included a commitment to teaching for social justice and diversity. My observations of her day-to-day classroom lessons showed that this teaching philosophy was constrained by time and curriculum expectations, often driving her to use her computer at her desk during class time.

My role evolved into that of a participant observer. During class time, I supported students who approached me. I spent a lot of time going around to the different groups of students, talking to them about the tasks they were working on, such as mathematics problems. Asking them about what they were doing and how they were experiencing particular tasks allowed me the freedom to build strong relationships with the students.

Language and Classroom Participation Codes

Two of Ms. Marlee's students were designated English language learners (ELL) who were withdrawn from the classroom during language arts and mathematics for additional support. One of these students, Nancy, who was from China, was known as the "class mute." Early in my classroom observations, I noted Nancy's silence.

One of the female students noticed me observing Nancy's behaviour, and whispered to me, "She doesn't speak in class. Only at recess." Ms. Marlee told me that when she called on Nancy, the class typically quieted down and waited for her to speak. Sometimes she did, but only in a whisper. I observed that Nancy did begin to speak more over the course of the year; sometimes, when Ms. Marlee directed questions specifically to her, she would offer a response. However, she still did not volunteer to participate verbally in any whole-class discussions. The other ELL student, Mei-Ling, also from China, was not typically called upon by Ms. Marlee because she spoke minimal English. When I did observe her speaking in class, she was speaking to her peers in Cantonese. Overall, these two different ELL students, one of whom knew relatively more English and was encouraged by Ms. Marlee to speak aloud during whole-class, turn-taking activities, still typically chose to remain silent in the classroom.

Shaun was another student who departed from classroom participation codes, but in a different way. Born in Canada, with parents from China, Shaun was an active and sometimes overly-eager student. He appeared to enjoy the opportunity to speak and have his voice heard, but he interrupted frequently and spoke without raising his hand, and as a result was often asked to be silent in the classroom. Despite usually knowing most of the answers, he spent a significant portion of class time seated by himself facing a wall—an intervention by his teacher to address his misdemeanours.

Overall, my relationships with the students in this Grade 4 class were very harmonious. When I entered the classroom, they would all greet me at once and inquire whether I would be able to join them for gym class or art—subjects they obviously felt would build a more social or personal connection. Both girls and boys would approach me to share pictures, artefacts and personal stories—what they did on the weekend, or to announce their family member's imminent arrival to Canada. My efforts to develop and deepen these relationships contributed to students' comfort in sharing their experiences with me.

Environment and Groupings: Team Building and Exclusion

Ms. Marlee had implemented a points system, which rewarded her students for abiding by classroom rules such as being quiet and obedient, or doing homework. The students' understanding of the system was clear: behave well and be awarded a free McDonald's lunch. Ms. Marlee consistently rewarded proper behaviour, thereby embedding her system in the thoughts and behavioural patterns of students. For instance, in one small-group interview, with Shaun and Nakaur (a female student who recently arrived from Pakistan the year before), I asked:

> Christina: What about the points system that you have in class—do you like that system? That you get points or you lose points if you do something good or bad?

Nakaur: We like it because it's a way to make everyone quiet and listen. Also if you're quiet and if your group is the quietest you get free lunch.

Christina: OK, I didn't know that. *(pause)* What don't you really like about the points for each group?

Shaun: *(sliding to the front edge of his seat and responding quickly)* If you're last you-get-nothing.

Shaun's and Nakaur's comments demonstrate that the points system process reinforced a competitive classroom environment. Moreover, the norms represented by the points system were more visibly regulated by the students than by Ms. Marlee; peers monitored and controlled each other's behaviour and even subsequently decided who would be included in different class groupings. Ms. Marlee allowed and encouraged her students to vote classmates out of their groups, if they felt that the classmates had been disrespectful, disruptive, or did not fulfill their obligations as obedient students. High and low social statuses in Ms. Marlee's classroom were thus made visible by the ways in which small groups had been created and regulated. In a student group interview, Jade, a Chinese student, shared her experience of this group voting process: "In my old group … there were three other girls and they were, like, they were going to vote me off because they didn't like me." In contrast, when I asked Ms. Marlee to describe the voting-out process to me, she described a recent incident involving Seef, a Muslim South Asian student:

Ms. M: He almost got voted out because apparently, and I've heard this from previous teachers as well, he comes from a culture where the man is above and the woman is below. So when he's with the girls, he thinks it's his right to bully and tell them to shut up and this and that. So, the girls are, like, "He's been telling us mean things!" and I'm, like, "*Vote him out.*"

This was an instance in which Ms. Marlee showed that she wanted her students—the girls, in this case—to stand up for their rights. The voting-out process empowered the students to recognize and interpret right, wrong, fair, and inequitable responses. However, Ms. Marlee's personal, and at times biased, assumptions about her different students—Muslim males, in this case—shaped the ways in which she chose to address interpersonal conflict in her classroom.

Making assumptions about students' behaviour based on their identities stigmatizes and essentializes groups of people and are often based on stereotypes. Ms. Marlee's Islamophobic[1] attitude showed how dominant, and often flawed, rhetoric can perpetuate stereotypes. Unknown to Seef, his teacher attached a narrative to him: being South Asian, Muslim, and male, his culture made him a bully as far as his teacher and female peers were concerned. Perhaps Ms. Marlee intended for her competitive classroom dynamic to address her personal fears about uncivilized cultural practices.

Obviously, newcomer students go through a process of learning various codes of power and appropriate behaviour—as do all students entering any schooling system. Teachers are often expected to be the experts in handling conflict, and students look to them to set examples for their own behaviour. In another study I conducted (Parker & Bickmore, 2012), a novice teacher participant described the conflict she experienced with her South Asian students; she assumed they were being disrespectful when they did not look her in the eye. Seeking to better understand this behaviour, she realized that these students were attempting to show deference and respect to her as their teacher. In educating herself to better understand this cultural practice, she had to confront her misconceptions. The learning curve and processes of integration are a continual journey, and it is the responsibility of both the receiving country and newcomer immigrants to participate in this process.

There were few posters on the walls of Ms. Marlee's classroom, although some student work was posted on the classroom door. The group names and the point system chart were posted on one bulletin board in the classroom, prominently displaying the current points level for each group. Overall, the voting-out process influenced the class norms for engagement, creating a competitive group dynamic amongst the students in which they were given the responsibility to manage peer conflicts and essentially to control each other's behaviour. However, Ms. Marlee's points system also influenced some instances of inclusion, as small groups of students encouraged each other to participate in class discussions, in order to earn points for their contributions.

Integrating into new classroom cultures at the beginning of a school year is never easy for any student. Arriving from another country is even more challenging. With only about two months left in the school year, a new female student arrived in Ms. Marlee's class.[2] Ms. Marlee was interested in including this student in the classroom and subsequently called upon her to respond to a math question. The student, wearing traditional Indian clothing, rose from her chair and stood up facing the front of the classroom as she quietly shared her response. She was met with muffled giggles amongst the class. This young girl had just arrived from India and still had much to learn about the cultural norms and codes of power. What was interesting about this newcomer immigrant experience was the ways in which the other students in the class differentiated themselves from their new classmate—even though many of them also experienced the perils of immigrant integration. In Ms. Marlee's competitive classroom context, the possibility for her exclusion was a pervasive reality.

Teachers in communities where there are increasing newcomer immigrant students face certain constraints. In addition to teaching the core curriculum, they are also met with the commitment to (re)teach cultural expectations for norms and behaviours. In this case, Ms. Marlee herself articulated her struggles and uncertainty in how she might handle the situation. She planned to speak to the new student privately, to let her know that it was not necessary to stand before speaking in her new Canadian classroom.

Pedagogical Patterns: Turn Taking and Teacher Authority

Ms. Marlee used various electronic pedagogical technologies in her classroom, such as a SMART Board™, class laptops, and Glogster (graphic blogs with multimedia features, such as music and images). During class exercises, students took turns writing answers on the SMART Board. This technology seemed to encourage and create excitement for participation; all students wanted the opportunity to use the laptop or digital marker to write their answers on the screen. In these types of technology-based activities, students were asked to not raise their hands; instead, Ms. Marlee went from group to group in order to ensure that each student had their much-sought-after turn. Such classroom-rich technology integration can "scaffold complex patterns of activities and connect students to rich, collaborative learning experiences" (Slotta, 2010, p. 239). During whole-class discussions without technological devices, students were not equally eager to participate. Ms. Marlee constantly reminded students to raise their hands and participate. On one occasion, the vocally dominant Jade questioned this norm for engagement: "What about Nancy, Ms. [Marlee]?" The question illustrated her understanding that nonverbal observers might opt out of participation when volunteering and hand raising were required.

In an interview (with Nancy, from China, and Souhaila, who had arrived from Pakistan a few years before), Nancy articulated how having roles assigned for particular tasks in the group helped her to feel more included and more inclined to participate, "because Ms. Marlee gives us different things for us to do, like, someone writes, and someone speaks, and stuff." Souhaila, however, disagreed with her quiet peer about how roles were taken up in small groups, and articulated her feelings of exclusion because she worked at a slower pace than other students. Souhaila's speech was slow and she usually needed extra support. Souhaila passionately articulated her experience to me and Nancy:

> Souhaila: *(pause)* I think *some people* just give me a *little work* when I want to do *a lot of work* and learn more about it and then they tell me to do just one thing after they do all the stuff and I get bored because I'm just sitting there watching what they're doing and it feels like I'm invisible, like, they don't think about me. *(pause)* So, that's why I feel lonely when I'm in groups, because they do all the work. Like, one day when I was in a group, they bugged me and they just told me to do one thing and I felt really bad and that made me feel like I was *invisible* … I mean, how would you feel?
>
> Christina: I wouldn't feel good.

Souhaila's comments clearly showed that her lower social and academic statuses were barriers in mixed academic groupings.

In February, during Black History Month, a few of the teachers in the school paused their regular curriculum to participate in a full-day classroom and school-

wide initiative. Some teachers, including Ms. Marlee, opted to lead classroom activities on Black history. Students went to various classrooms throughout the day to participate in the activities. They danced to Freedom music; coloured in graphic outlines of Black leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Michael Jordan; and took part in what was referred to as a "critical thinking" writing activity on making decisions, such as "What would you do if a slave came to your door seeking food and shelter?" Ms. Marlee was one of the organizers of this event, with a Black male teacher at the school. When less than half the Aria P.S. teachers[3] opted to participate in the event, Ms. Marlee expressed her concern to me that certain teachers might think that she was making "too big of a deal" of Black history because she was Black. On this day, she also passionately told me that she felt that some colleagues wanted her to conform to their teaching styles and not to bring up Black history issues. Clearly, the students at Aria were not alone in experiencing challenges in school integration. At the same time, Ms. Marlee reiterated her belief that students at Aria did not notice racial differences, because the school was "so multicultural." This comment raised questions for me about how certain issues and histories might be taken up in schools, in particular where the student demographics did not reflect that particular identity. There were very few Black or White students in the Aria school community: almost the entire student population was South Asian and East Asian. This may have contributed to Ms. Marlee's view that many teachers overlooked Black history education. In this instance, students learning about other cultures, a part of peacebuilding education, did not appear to be actively present in the school.

In many ways, Ms. Marlee was an authoritarian teacher in her classroom; she controlled how and who spoke during lessons. Overall, in the various activities I observed in her classroom, students would often wait for their turn to participate. For instance, they waited to be called upon or given the opportunity to respond during a teacher-led recitation. In this competitive classroom environment, her attempts to encourage dialogue and recognize diverse perspectives were minimal. However, her inclusion of some role-play exercises and her use of some collaborative, technology-based activities provided opportunities that invited and encouraged all students to participate.

ARIA PUBLIC SCHOOL, GRADE 5, MRS. AMRITA

Mrs. Amrita had immigrated to Canada from India nine years previously, and had taught in Ontario for the last six years. It was her first year teaching Grade 5; previously she had taught Grades 3 and 4. There were 26 Grade 5 students; 15 boys and 11 girls. The ethnocultural makeup of the class was 31% Tamil Sri Lankan, 27% Chinese, 15% Indian, and 15% Pakistani; the remaining 12% represented Vietnamese, Taiwanese, and Kenyan backgrounds. The one Black male student had recently emigrated from Kenya.

Mrs. Amrita was in her 50s and was married with two grown children. She lived in the Aria P.S. community and appeared to have a relatively high socioeconomic status. Mrs. Amrita spoke with her students and colleagues at the school about

being a practising Hindu. In many ways, she was a traditional Indian-Canadian woman who showed pride in her heritage by sharing and celebrating Hindu religious days of worship with her students. I became relatively close, professionally and personally, to her during the time I observed in her classroom.

Critical Ethnographic Moments

Like Ms. Marlee's students, many of the students in Mrs. Amrita's class saw me as a mentor and were often eager for my attention to share their academic work or personal stories about their lives. I was constantly involved in the classroom activities, assisting with learning activities as I walked around to the different groups, sometimes helping to make sure students were on task. It was during the student group interviews that I further developed my relationships with many of the students. In one group interview with Sobi (female, of Sri Lankan origin), Sugriva (male, Indian origin), Jamal (male, Kenyan born), and Faith (female, Chinese origin), Faith disclosed to me and to her peers in the group that she often felt excluded in the class because she was the last to be picked when students formed groups and would often be alone during recess. I asked her to describe why she was left out in her class. She said that no one had included her in the dance performance group that was part of a drama class activity. I asked everyone in the interview group if they would be willing to include Faith in their dance group. Sobi said that, because she was not allowed to dance, she was not in a group. Sugriva said that his group was doing a cultural (Indian-Punjabi) dance. I asked him if he could teach Faith how to do it. He then said his group were all males. I asked Jamal if he could invite Faith to join his group and he said he would, but said he still had to ask the rest of his group. I used this opportunity to encourage pro-social peer support and while sitting in a circle we discussed how it felt to be included or excluded in groups. As a result, everyone agreed that they now had a new responsibility to include Faith in their groups whenever they were allowed to choose their small groups. At first, while I was surprised that these students chose to share their stories of exclusion in the class with me, I also found that my ethnographic methodology supported my involvement in hearing and responding to these stories. The participative interview had evidently engaged the critical consciousness of some marginalized students who participated in these small-group discussions. The shared commitment that these four students made, responding to Faith's revelations about feeling excluded, illustrated their desire and capability to effect social change in their classroom.

A few months later I followed up with Sugriva. He reflected on our earlier conversation, showing how his consciousness had evolved in response to my critical, engaged perspective:

Sugriva: Remember in our last interview with Faith …?

Christina: Yes.

Sugriva: Well, remember how you said that we should make efforts to be friends with her and be her partner with her for groups?

Christina: Yes.

Sugriva: Well, I've been doing that. And I have learned a lot from her and she's very smart. But she just can't say some things out loud, because she is very shy.

Environment and Groupings: Academic Status and Participation

A hallmark of the collaborative classroom is group or team-based learning. Working in teams is vital to productivity, economy, and emotional well-being. Group-based learning also emphasizes autonomy, because students rely on their peers to solve problems, make decisions, and hold each other accountable. Collaborative inquiry thus contributes to generating new knowledge while also maintaining a safe and healthy democracy (Salas, 2013).

The arrangement of desks in classrooms plays its part in group-based learning. Indicating the values of the educational era, seating has evolved, from single desks in rows to the cluster seating for small groups seen in today's classrooms, which emphasizes teamwork and connection. Seating arrangements also reflect the goals for developing particular types of behaviours or skills (Weinstein, 1977), so that teachers' choices for seating arrangements are often related to classroom management. The industrial era demanded high-producing citizens who would be efficient at completing individualized tasks. The movement towards cluster seating recognizes the importance of citizens cooperating to effectively complete tasks. In the open-space schools of the 1970s the physical walls separating each classroom were removed. This was meant to encourage teacher and student collaboration. While a failed attempt at successful collaboration, due to noise levels and disruptions, the collaborative classroom is still the current hallmark of seating arrangements, particularly for elementary students.

Mrs. Amrita organized her collaborative classroom seating arrangement in small groups of four to six students. She only changed these grouping assignments twice during the course of the year. She usually selected groups based on the participants' similar academic achievement levels. Acknowledging her role and authority over this group formation process to me, she pointed out that her strategy eliminated the possibility that more advanced students would do all the work, leaving those who were less advanced still struggling. Most of the many small groups I observed were teacher-selected, but her students still had the opportunity to select their own groups for some activities, such as dance.

While some of the groups included mixed lower and higher academic levels, most were organized homogenously by academic level and skill. Students were not oblivious to the status element of these group dynamics. During an interview, two South Asian boys, Arun, a Hindu and Tandeep, a Sikh, reflected on how groups formed when Mrs. Amrita gave students the rare choice of who to work with:

> Arun: Kate and all the smart people went into one group for the project we're doing right now. They all come together and we're not included. It's like we're not there …. No one had a say. No, we're just, like, a back-up plan, in case they need us.

Kate was born in Canada, with parents from China and she was an academically and socially high-status female in the class. In this classroom, perceived academic status appeared to trump gender in terms of access to power in the classroom.[4]

I observed how Mrs. Amrita's academic streaming arrangement worked during a mathematics activity: students were given the task of creating a family vegetable garden using fractions and decimals. A group of lower-achieving students initially struggled to figure out the task, but when they did figure it out, they appeared to do it collaboratively and fairly equally. The streaming arrangement has its disadvantages, however. In many ways, such structured academic groupings may encourage exclusion, while also leaving some students feeling unchallenged, and incapable of working across difference. Also, research shows that, on average, such segregated and lower-academic groupings have fewer rich opportunities to learn (Cohen, 1994, 2004; Levin, 1987).

Mrs. Amrita consistently engaged her students in small-group work or paired discussions prior to sharing with the whole class. The class had many posters on the wall, including student work. Inspirational posters included sayings such as "Attitudes are contagious, is yours worth catching?" and "You are valuable—don't let anyone make you believe differently." Posters from a cooperative learning program also displayed classroom norms of mutual respect, participation, right to pass, appreciation, and listening—elements that more often than not contributed to setting the stage for the classroom dialogue that Mrs. Amrita favoured.

Pedagogical Patterns: Cultural Expectations for Participation and Expression

In her Grade 5 Social Studies class, Mrs. Amrita focused on immigration to Canada as a way to support the inclusion of her students' background knowledge and experience in her implemented curriculum. I also observed a whole-class simulated election campaign in which students formed parties, wrote political platforms, and participated in a voting process to elect a candidate. In Language Arts, I observed elements of the classroom activities associated with the school board-wide initiative on critical literacy, which focused on teaching students to make inferences and connections. Most of the students appeared to enjoy participating in self-guided reading groups and writing from various points of view. In Mathematics, I observed several critical inquiry initiatives in which students were given real-life problems to solve using mathematics, such as designing a garden. In Science, students studied properties of matter and the human body.

I noticed a wide contrast between the mathematics and science lessons compared to the language arts and social studies lessons—the latter had a much more prominent focus on including students' own background knowledge,

personal identities, and experiences. The science lessons I observed were very content focused and teacher directed: students mostly received the information presented by Mrs. Amrita and their textbook. While the possibilities to engage with conflicts in science are vast, most teachers are reticent to implement controversial pedagogy in their science programming (Barton & Yang, 2000; Settlage & Sabik, 1997).

Mrs. Amrita's students were given plentiful opportunities to voice their perspectives on sensitive and conflictual issues in class discussions and activities. They seemed free to openly engage with each other in conflictual discussions about social conflict and diversity. Perhaps Mrs. Amrita's identity as a relatively recent immigrant from India, and the students' similar East Asian and South Asian immigrant backgrounds, offered a level of comfort for inclusive discussions about diversity. Mrs. Amrita's norms for engagement typically encouraged students to participate; she consistently required them to raise their hands before speaking. Her students rarely kept their hands down when their teacher posed content-based and reflective questions to them. They knew that, if they did not raise their hands, Mrs. Amrita might still call on them to find out why. But Mrs. Amrita also allowed students the option to pass, which was outlined as a "right" in the cooperative learning program instituted in the class. The right to pass allowed students to choose to remain silent during sensitive and identity-linked issues such as sharing personal immigration stories—a topic I return to in Chapter 4.

GEORGETOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL, GRADE 7, MR. HIROSHI

Mr. Hiroshi, of mixed Japanese and European ancestry and in his mid-20s, was in the second year of his teaching career, and was teaching Grade 7 for the second time at Georgetown P.S. There were 29 students in the class; 14 boys and 15 girls. The ethnocultural makeup of the class was 28% Tamil Sri Lankan, 28% Indian, 17% Pakistani, 7% Guyanese, 6% Trinidadian, and 6% Jamaican; the remaining 8% were Nepalese, Egyptian, and White Canadian. The majority of students were South Asian. There were two Black boys and one half-White/half-South-Asian-Caribbean girl. Mr. Hiroshi was married and lived just outside the school community. He treated me as he did all guests and visitors in his classroom space—with a great deal of respect, particularly around his students. The ease with which he integrated me into his classroom community seemed to have an impact on how quickly my relationships developed with the students in his class.

Language and Power

Crystal, who was half-White and half-Trinidadian, identified with her dual identity in different ways: she embraced her Trinidadian heritage by speaking about cultural customs, yet she also found herself being labelled by others as White. In her classroom and school she was the only mixed race student with a White identity. In an interview with her and her best friend, Anita, Crystal disclosed to me that she was being racially targeted by Tyrone and Jerome, the two Black boys

in the class, who made fun of her. The boys would sometimes call her "Whitey" or poke fun at her during classroom discussions. We spoke about how she coped with this problem during class, where she and Tyrone were both frequent vocal participants. She told me she felt she needed to ignore Tyrone, but she became progressively more silent during classroom discussions as their interpersonal conflict intensified. During one intense conflict period, I observed Crystal purposely self-silence during health class, as Mr. Hiroshi led a discussion about peer pressure, drugs, and alcohol—a topic in which Crystal had readily engaged during previous classes, where she freely shared her insights and knowledge about various types of drugs. Now, she felt targeted for her previous participation. She shared this experience with Mr. Hiroshi, who then held a small-group meeting with Tyrone and Jerome, in which he invited them to explore how their actions affected their classmate and school community.

Madia and Aalia were typically quiet during all class discussions. They raised a critical issue for me as a researcher when they expressed their discomfort and embarrassment at not having access to the language of power during our small-group interview. Madia began by saying, "My English is not very good. I hope you'll understand it." They questioned their academic language proficiency, even when I reassured them that their English was understandable. As English language learners, Madia and Aalia experienced a lot of self-doubt and relied on each other for support. Like many newcomer immigrants, they struggled with the confidence to use academic language and perhaps did not feel competent to participate in particular classroom activities using the dominant academic discourse (Cummins, 2000). While they did not question their language proficiency during informal social conversations, they said that they did not feel confident in formal contexts, such as responding to their teacher's questions in front of the whole class. Madia and Aalia may have been concerned about whether their minoritized cultural knowledge aligned with what Delpit (1988) referred to as the culture of power. (I return to the case of Madia and Aalia in Chapter 6.)

Environment and Groupings: Gender, Social Status, and Power to Voice

Mr. Hiroshi used a variety of online resources and conflict-dialogue pedagogies to connect with his students' identities and interests. Current events and social conflicts were frequently discussed in the classroom, using social media and whole-group discussions. Mr. Hiroshi frequently incorporated technology in his teaching. For instance, when it was Chinese New Year, Mr. Hiroshi posted a message to his students on Twitter and then brought in a newspaper article the next day to further stimulate classroom discussion about this cultural event.

Students were always seated in small groups of five or six, and Mr. Hiroshi changed the class seating plan every two or three weeks. These frequent shifts in group membership allowed me to see how participation patterns of quiet and vocal students changed in relation to different seating arrangements. For instance, Malika, a female student known to her class to be quiet, began to speak more often in whole-class discussions when she sat beside Crystal, a vocal, dominant female

student. Also, particularly important with young adolescents, the dynamic seating arrangements reduced the potential for cliques.

Mr. Hiroshi's desk was in a corner, off to the side of the classroom. A round table with bar stools was reserved for students working independently. The classroom was connected to a separate, pod-type workspace containing computers and additional tables, visible through a glass window from the classroom. The class had a gerbil named Hotwheels that the students cared for together, taking turns to make sure food and water had been put out. Lots of student work was mounted on the wall, as well as posters about success, two Free the Children posters, and an Einstein poster. A class library, off to the side, held magazines and newspapers. A homework chart on the board contained reminders for each subject. A chart listed "Criteria for Success" for each unit they were currently working on, such as goals and expectations for the Mathematics unit on probability. On a live Facebook wall, students were represented according to their hobbies, likes, and dislikes.

Mr. Hiroshi had also created a current events board in response to his and his students' growing interest and awareness of local and global current events, many of them involving conflicts. He encouraged students to bring in newspaper articles. Articles posted included various photos and articles on the uprising in Egypt, the death of Sgt. Ryan Russell,[5] and the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Pedagogical Patterns: Open Climate—Trust, Value Sharing, and Conflict

Mr. Hiroshi incorporated various activities and topics to make the lessons relevant to his students, such as current events. For example, the magnitude 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that occurred in Japan on March 11, 2011 was a focus of study during the Geography unit.

Mr. Hiroshi's students did not typically work in academically streamed small groups. During another unit of study, however, students met in teacher-assigned, academically streamed literature circle groups to discuss the novels Mr. Hiroshi had assigned to them based on their reading level. They met almost daily in these circle groups. They took on various roles: summarizer, discussion facilitator, connector, word master, and passage picker. The students changed roles for each circle meeting, so everyone was provided with the opportunity to facilitate potentially conflictual dialogue and to voice their perspectives. Mr. Hiroshi's norms for engagement, linked to students' role responsibilities, provided a structure for the literature circles that was consistent across the groups, although each was entirely student led. Students in each group decided how many chapters to read and how to discuss them; they gave each other feedback, and responded to each other's questions. The authority and ownership that role responsibilities conferred in these structured conversations seemed to contribute to the students' inclusion.

They were encouraged to speak using personal examples that had an emotional connection or meaning for them. One group of four, a mix of higher and lower social status boys who were at a lower reading level, read a book that was

considered by Mr. Hiroshi to be appealing for boys. Tyrone, who had a high social status in the class and was typically dominant during conversations, was in this group. On one occasion, the discussion facilitator for that day, Thanjai, decided to implement the use of a talking piece so that students would not talk over each other and would each have the opportunity to speak. This student-initiated control of the dialogue process seemed to be a natural outgrowth of the literature circle process overall, in that students had the authority and opportunity to guide their own reading and discussion process.

Internally Negotiating Cultural Identity Conflicts

A high school student visited Mr. Hiroshi's class and spoke to them about preparing for high school. Her presentation focused on the cultural and religious divisions that she said they could face in their designated high school, in which "Tamils, Indians, and Muslims were separated in the hallways and in the cafeteria." This information about conflictual social relations caused considerable anxiety for many of the Grade 7 students. They remained silent during her speech, but the next day they all came to school bursting with discontent and anger, which they expressed to their teacher and each other. Mr. Hiroshi had sent all the students a Twitter message the night before, acknowledging the "uncomfortable presentation" that had occurred during the last period at the end of the school day and informing the students that they would discuss the guest presentation the next morning. This instant e-communication prepared students to come in knowing they would be welcome to voice their discomfort with what the guest speaker had presented. Anita (Indian/Muslim-Hindu) and Crystal (White-Caribbean/Christian), two higher-status female students, reflected on the fear that had been generated by this conflictual race relations "conversation" about their future high school:

Anita: Yeah! I actually didn't even want to go to high school after hearing that.

Crystal: Yeah, it's like she was trying to freak us out. She was, like, all the cultures stick together, but here we all get along.

Anita: Yeah, so I just got scared because I'm, like, now we'll be separated into groups and stuff.

Crystal: Yeah, and I'm, like, well I'm cool with it now, but I don't know.

Anita: [Well] my dad is Indian [Hindu] and my mom is Muslim, and last year all the Muslim girls would make fun of me because they'll say that my dad is Indian. And it was Ramadan and I ate yogurt and they were all like "What are you doing?" and they got all mad and stuff.

Anita's and Crystal's responses illustrated how confident they felt in their consensus that the guest speaker was trying to "freak them out." However, they also noticed ways their peers from different cultural and religious groups had already begun to exclude them, for example by shunning the half-Muslim Anita for eating during Ramadan. In many ways, Mr. Hiroshi had sought to reinforce the importance of unity among religions when asking the class to discuss the conflictual information that had been presented by the guest speaker. In an interview, a group of four Tamil Sri Lankan/Hindu females echoed a communal belief:

Jawali: It's not like … *(interrupting excitedly)*

Sunita: Our class is very welcoming … *(interrupting excitedly)*

Jawali: Like, we're really friendly and everything and yeah …. *(interrupting)*

Reshma: People don't judge each other. *(short pause)*

Sunita: People don't judge each other, but sometimes when someone is saying something someone might be, like, "Oh they're racist."

Even though underlying religious and cultural tensions existed among these diverse South Asian students, for example between Muslims and Hindus, these tensions were often overcome or at least hidden through Mr. Hiroshi's constant and consistent message of unity among and across diversities. In another example, Mr. Hiroshi volunteered his class to be reading buddies for some students with severe disabilities who attended a special education program at Georgetown. One male student in the special education program used a wheelchair and a breathing tube. His speech and hearing were also impaired. This student's personal support worker occasionally brought him to visit Mr. Hiroshi and his class. When this student was wheeled into the classroom, Mr. Hiroshi loudly shouted a welcome greeting and ran over to shake the boy's hand, expressing joy and excitement when seeing him. Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 students clearly strived to emulate their teacher's inclusive behaviour.

In health class, students discussed choices and decision-making processes in relation to various conflictual scenarios. Examples included peer-pressuring other friends to smoke or drink, and staying out past curfew. Mr. Hiroshi spoke to the students about choices he had made when he was growing up. Many, if not all, students looked up to Mr. Hiroshi as a mentor and I believe that he impacted his students' lives and personal growth by sharing his stories, personal values, and perspectives. Mr. Hiroshi's care, concern, and respect for his students was evident. He played basketball with the boys on most Fridays after school and secretly bought lunches for those who didn't have one. It is no wonder that, in this kind of classroom environment, the possibilities for learning about conflict and diversity were abundant.

Mr. Hiroshi provided his class with multiple, inclusive learning opportunities about diverse social conflicts that often reflected links to the ethnocultural identities in the room. Still, even in this ostensibly safe context, some students still felt pangs of exclusion. In an interview with me, two male students, Tajinder (Indian/Sikh) and Akmed (Pakistani/Muslim), talked about the process of sharing their perspectives in a diverse classroom:

Christina: So does that [multiculturalism and diversity in the class] affect how you participate or share your thoughts and feelings in class?

Tajinder: You know, I was always in a multicultural class, so I'm used to multicultural neighbourhoods, so it doesn't matter to me.

Akmed: Sometimes people disagree with you because you're a different religion.

Christina: Like how …

Tajinder: I don't think it's because … *(trails off, goes silent)*

Christina: Say a little bit more about that, Akmed.

Akmed: Sometimes when they, like, whenever they, … well you know how some people don't like different cultures.

In this interview, Akmed directed us to consider the internal discretion that students who view themselves as religious minorities may exercise when sharing opinions on potentially sensitive subjects, such as racism. Many other Muslim students I encountered in this study echoed beliefs similar to Akmed's. They felt reluctant to participate, and connected their silencing to responses about their religious identity they anticipated from others. While Mr. Hiroshi consistently demonstrated skills in guiding discussions about conflict and diversity, the Muslim Akmed and the Sikh Tajinder displayed two different perspectives. Tajinder, "used to multicultural neighbourhoods," suggested that he was comfortable among some students. However, Akmed suggested that classroom conflicts might easily be connected to ethnic and religious disrespect when underlying and implicit racial and religious tensions are present in diverse classrooms.

Through Mr. Hiroshi's various dialogic pedagogies about conflictual issues, such as teacher-led discussion, small-group discussions, problem-solving tasks, debates, structured academic controversies, Town Hall simulations, and the use of online learning tools, many of his ethnoculturally diverse, minoritized students found their voices in whole-class and small-group activities, although a few did not.

DIFFERENT CLASSROOM CULTURES AND PEDAGOGIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Different classroom arrangements (such as seating plans, norms for participation) and pedagogies (such as activities and discussions to facilitate inclusion and dialogue) demonstrated how diverse students were engaged in dialogue opportunities. Ultimately, the three teachers' different pedagogies influenced how various students responded to classroom curricula about conflict and diversity. Each teacher used different pedagogies and principles in the implemented curriculum. As such, each presented content in ways that opened up spaces or impeded discussion and reflection on conflict and diversity. The different levels and kinds of openness in the three classroom climates influenced possibilities for various students to participate and be included (or not).

While all education inevitably involves conflict, these teachers did not consistently refer to the implicit and hidden conflicts embedded in the core curriculum. As illustrated in some classroom moments, although conflicts were present in the classroom, multiple or divergent viewpoints were often shut down.

Peacebuilding pedagogies are still developing in terms of their infiltration into traditional schooling. In the chapters that follow, I present further cases and incidents illustrating how some movements to shift pedagogy facilitated the inclusion of diverse students in these classrooms. The teachers presented in this book, although broadly committed to peacebuilding education, were working within the constraints of high demands for delivering a curriculum and maintaining social order, and their classrooms remained in the early stages of this pedagogical evolution. In this way, the teachers serve to provide evidence for how to negotiate such constraints through curriculum integration.

I have described the students' different types of response—dominant and vocal, less dominant, quieter, and less vocal—to classroom discussions and activities in which conflict was avoided or deemed to be absent, and when conflict was invited. I introduced particular target students to illustrate how different groupings and social status arrangements within each classroom influenced their power to voice their perspectives during discussions. For instance, in Ms. Marlee's class, one female student, Nancy, seldom or never spoke during whole-group discussions, while a male student, Shaun, was often disruptively eager to frequently speak up in lessons on topics such as Black history and Canada in the world. In Mr. Hiroshi's class, two dominant-vocal students (Tyrone and Crystal) often clashed; their voices and participation often shaped whole-class discussions such as those on drugs and alcohol, Facebook, and gangs. Mrs. Amrita frequently grouped her students homogeneously by their perceived academic abilities, and required students to collaborate with assigned peers in a structured manner. Interviews with students described the tension that some students felt around their participation and inclusion in academic groupings such as gender and social status divisions during the class election simulation and the Rights and Responsibilities unit. Overall, dialogic pedagogies (including teacher-led, whole-group, and smaller-group student dialogues) influenced the extent to which both teacher and students responded to some issues about diversity and conflict.

In this book, I intend to show that inviting students to explore conflicting perspectives on unresolved issues facilitates education for democratization. Tables 1 and 2 summarize apparent outcomes for diverse students of particular teacher facilitation strategies across the three classroom cases. They also categorize the students' experiences facilitated by the teachers and identify how the three teachers enacted praxis for critical conflict-dialogue engagement in their classroom settings. I acknowledge that conflict-dialogue pedagogies may or may not be sensitive to diverse students' identities. Nevertheless, these elements illustrate how diverse ethnocultural minority students, in particular, typically responded to and said they experienced the different kinds of dialogue opportunities about diversity and conflict in their classrooms.

Table 1. Elements of Facilitation and Potential Outcomes

Dialogue Facilitation	Responses
Silencing	• Nonverbal observer takes on lesser, quiet role • (Non)response to opportunities to engage in conflictual issues dialogue
Voicing	• Voicing similar and different perspectives, divergent points of view • Peer-to-peer dialogue about difference and conflict
Including social and individual identity	• Speaking from individual/group identities (ethnocultural, religious, gender) • Drawing on personal background knowledge, history, and experience

Table 2. Students' Responses to Dialogue About Diversity and/or Conflict

Elements of Teacher Facilitation	Generalized Outcomes
Acknowledge conflict, power, and diversity	• Explicitly recognize social power structure and social conflict within curriculum content • Raise consciousness of critical multiculturalism about conflictual issues through dialogue about difference and conflict • Discuss diversity
Teacher selects engagement norms	• Encourage self-directed responses and perspectives • Encourage opportunities to handle conflictual issues
Teacher sets inclusive and conflictual dialogue tone	• Encourage activities, strategies that increase potential for inclusion through pedagogical tools for conflict dialogue

Diverse students engage with and experience conflict dialogue processes in multiple ways. Their experiences cross boundaries differently, depending on the conflictual issue and the pedagogical process facilitating the discussion of that issue. Ultimately, the teachers' facilitation strategies influenced various students' responses to different kinds of dialogue about conflict and diversity.

The ways the three teachers facilitated conflictual dialogue and other pedagogies in the context of critical multicultural education fostered spaces for the inclusion of some diverse student voices and identities. Through various facilitation strategies, including establishing particular participation norms, the three teachers offered different kinds of opportunities for students to engage with their multiple identities, some leading to greater engagement and inclusion, and others perpetuating exclusion. In the following chapters, I build on this foundation to illustrate how the teachers sometimes purposely drew on students' diverse lived experiences and perspectives, in ways that seemed to contribute to students' critical interpretation and response to various social-conflict issues.

NOTES

[1] The prejudice or fear of Muslims (or people who are perceived to be Muslim, or subscribe to Islamic ideology) is called *Islamophobia*. The term also describes a perceived threat posed by Muslim people, which global powers use to justify attacks and violence towards Muslims.

[2] This student is not included in the class size or demographics, since at the time I had nearly completed my data collection in this classroom. My observation of this interaction was one of the last classroom observations in Ms. Marlee's class.

[3] The other teacher participant in this study was a Grade 5 teacher, Mrs. Amrita, who appears later in this chapter. Mrs. Amrita did not participate in the Black history one-day initiative, as she was on a field trip with her students that day. At the other school site, Georgetown P.S. in the Grade 7 class, I also did not observe any activities or lessons about Black history.

[4] Kate's role in Mrs. Amrita's classroom is further discussed in Chapter 6, in which her election by the class as prime minister is described.

[5] Ryan Russell was a Toronto police officer who died after a snow plow chase on January 12, 2011. He was 35 years old at the time and left behind a wife and a two-year-old son. His widely publicized funeral was one of the largest in Canadian history for officers killed in the line of duty, and was attended by more than 10,000 police officers and emergency service workers. Mr. Hiroshi screened the funeral procession live in his classroom, while students worked on a small-group assignment. Many students opted to watch and discuss the funeral procession with their peers.

CHAPTER 4

IDENTITY CONNECTIONS: CONFLICTUAL ISSUES ACROSS TIME, SPACE, AND CULTURE

> History is sacred because it is the only chance that you have of knowing who you are outside of what's been rained down upon you from a hostile environment. And when you go to the documents created inside the culture, you get another story. You get another history. The history is sacred and the highest, most hallowed songs in tones are pulled into service to deliver that story.
>
> —J. M. Latta, *Sacred Songs as History*

CONNECTING CURRICULUM AND STUDENTS' IDENTITIES

Teachers can use curriculum content to connect with students' experiences and identities. The three teachers in this book presented different—and controversial—historical, religious, political, and identity-linked issues, positioning them as conflictual in order to develop connections with students' experiences and background knowledge. Such issues included religious identities, the meaning of democracy in home countries, immigration patterns, citizenship, social structures and power, and the dichotomy between rural and urban communities. How the teachers presented the various conflictual issues influenced how the students participated and responded during classroom discussions. The teachers' choices of texts, activities, and discussion topics provided opportunities as well as impediments for students to critically reflect on their diverse identities and cross-cultural experiences within local, global, and historical contexts. When the curriculum connected to students' lived experiences and cultural histories in this way, it stimulated more opportunities for participation and the inclusion of more diverse student voices.

The contentious and sometimes sensitive topics presented allowed the more confident students to voice their perspectives in the classroom. Sometimes the voices of less vocal, perhaps marginalized students were silenced in these discussions, for example when personal, familial patterns of immigration were being discussed. However, during small group interviews in all three classrooms, students articulated their challenges and their opportunities for engaging in classroom discussion and activities, depending on how they viewed the learning material as connected or not connected to their personal experiences and identities.

Hess (2009) studied and advocated teaching controversial political issues, and distinguished two basic types of issue: *settled* and *unsettled*. Settled issues are

those that the dominant society is generally in agreement about; for example, racism is unacceptable (Hess, 2001). Hess argued that settled issues do not constitute pedagogically useful controversial issues, because they do not offer choices that would encourage students to practise democracy and act politically. In contrast, unsettled controversial political issues are those over which the dominant society's views are widely split; such issues would include the death penalty, abortion, and immigration policies. Unsettled issues provide valuable democratic learning opportunities.

An issue (e.g., should abortion be free and legal?) is very different from a topic (e.g., abortion) or a unit of study (e.g., sex education). Issues also differ from current events. For instance, the uprising in Egypt in early 2011 was a global current event; however, the question about whether Canada should have intervened in the uprising was a controversial issue, because some minorities saw it as unsettled (i.e., they were not in agreement with Canada's intervention).

Contentious issues raised in school curricula include both settled and unsettled questions. Although Hess (2001, 2009) would consider racism a settled issue in most contexts, elements of this problem are unsettled issues in current and ongoing conflicts, such as whether to accept illegal immigrants or those claiming refugee status. Hess (2009) purposely did not consider historical issues—such as "what caused a particular event in history" (p. 38)—as unsettled issues. However, such issues can still be controversial if the question and answer were unsettled, such as the causes of the War of 1812. Any classroom curriculum can elicit a range of questions and should address issues that allow for more than one legitimate answer.

People's identities help to shape the ways they understand and approach social and political conflict issues, in classroom settings as elsewhere. As I see it, identities are multiple, ever-changing, and fluid, and contain nuances of various social contexts (Hall, 2000). Importantly, they are also constructed and understood through difference (Allahar, 2006; Gérin-Lajoie, 2011; Hall, 2006). Thus, discussions of conflicts and differences create opportunities for students and teachers to interpret and respond to issues through their multiple identities, which in turn are based on their diverse lived experiences and perspectives.

In the following vignettes, I illustrate how teachers embedded various types of conflicts in curriculum content and pedagogies, and how these influenced diverse students' engagement and inclusion in each classroom. I begin with Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 class. Mr. Hiroshi frequently presented conflicting perspectives and ideas in his open classroom climate, predominantly in his history and literacy lessons. He introduced historical topics as issues, thus including conflict in his implemented curriculum. For instance, he invited students to discern causes and outcomes of conflict, by guiding his class to compare past and present wars during classroom activities. He implicated his transnational, bi-ethnic Japanese and Anglo-Canadian cultural identity in connecting to his immigrant students and inviting them to discuss how their allegiances to Canada could complexify their connection to their countries of ancestry, particularly if Canada were to be in conflict with their country of origin.

Next, I discuss Ms. Marlee's Grade 4 class, showing how she addressed an interpersonal conflict about religious difference or intolerance that came up between two girls, a Muslim and a Christian, in her classroom. Ms. Marlee guided her students to contextualize this conflict by asking them to research and present stories from their various religions. By inviting these disclosures, Ms. Marlee embedded conflictual religious content in her implemented curriculum. Ms. Marlee, a Catholic turned atheist, told me in my first interview with her that she was confident in her ability to entertain beliefs from different religions, and she demonstrated this self-assurance when she led the discussion of the various creation stories that her students brought in.

Lastly, I discuss Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 class, and show how she introduced conflictual issues that directly related to students' family experiences. She invited her students to share personal immigration experiences orally in class, and compared and contrasted these with fictitious and historical immigration stories from the textbook. Mrs. Amrita invited critique and feedback from students. In doing so, she invited conflicting narratives into the classroom in ways that apparently encouraged the engagement and participation of all students; they felt connected to these issues, and safe to talk about their and their peers' diverse lived experiences.

BATTLING (GENDER) IDENTITIES IN WAR: DECONSTRUCTING HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES IN A GRADE 7 CLASS

Mr. Hiroshi frequently led his Grade 7 students in discussions about diversity and social conflict. The discussions encouraged students to reflect individually and in small groups on connections between lesson topics and their own experiences and histories. Mr. Hiroshi taught his students about the War of 1812 as both a historical and political conflict. He did not ask "Who won the War of 1812?"[1] Instead, after stating a typical contention that it was a war that no one won, he asked his students to consider what the causes of the war might have been:

Mr. H: There are causes for every war, no matter what. Like, right now there is a war happening. Why is America in the Middle East?

Akmed: 9/11.

Thanjai: Is that George Bush keeps on attacking them and the gas prices are going up.

Mr. H: There's a variety of reasons, but George Bush is not even the president anymore.

Tyrone: When do the British and the U.S. ever get along? *(not responded to)*

Mr. H: So the War of 1812 is considered the war that no one won, so think about why that might be.

Mr. Hiroshi's open-ended questioning about causes of wars stimulated mostly male students to respond. For example, Akmed (a Muslim male) and two Sri Lankan males said that they thought the terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 (what they called "9/11") was the cause of the war in the Middle East. Tyrone posed a controversial rhetorical question that seemed to illustrate how he understood this conflict: when countries do not get along, they go to war.

Since Mr. Hiroshi had positioned the War of 1812 as a war that no one had won, he asked the students to figure out why that might be. In small groups, students worked excitedly to discover the truth about this unresolved conflict, consulting with each other, and reviewing information online and in the classroom textbook, *Their Stories, Our History* (Aitken, Haskings-Winner, Mewhinney, & Rubenstein, 2006).[2] Crystal and Tyrone, both outspoken students, were in the same group, along with a South Asian male and female. Tyrone, after interpreting what he had read in the text and heard from his teacher, articulated his beliefs against the British regime: "Yo, the British people got temper tantrums." Tyrone, an influential male, sparked excitement in his small group, who looked to the text for evidence with which to counter Tyrone's views on Britain's attitude. Kadil (a Sri Lankan male) and Crystal cited Tecumseh, an Indian chief, as a controversial personality who had resisted the United States and fought (and died) alongside the British during the War of 1812.

Mr. Hiroshi's mathematics lessons were as dynamic as his social studies lessons; the engagement level and participation patterns were equally high, and many students called out answers to his mostly information-gathering questions. In social studies and language arts, Mr. Hiroshi did not spend as much time speaking and writing on the board at the front of the class as he did in mathematics class. Instead, giving lessons on debates, reflective writing, and making inferences, he consistently posed questions that provided opportunities for students to reflect on their values and to interpret content. During many history lessons, Mr. Hiroshi sat off to the side on a bar stool, sharing information and facilitating discussion about historical and present-day conflicts. He taught history through multiple stories that extended across time and space; he connected current and past conflicts in order to help students reflect critically on the present.

One day, Mr. Hiroshi informed his students that they would be talking about the battle on the Plains of Abraham[3] that had ended the conflict between the British and French in 1759. Doing a drumroll, he went on to say: "It [the war] ended in … [various guesses from students] … 15 minutes!" Students responded with equal enthusiasm: "15 minutes!" Mr. Hiroshi gathered students' attention and positioned this conflict as an inquiry: "Now, we have to find out how!" He went on to explain that the different military styles and tactics of both the British and French were indicators of warfare intellect and strength. He drew an analogy between the War of 1812 and contemporary wars:

Mr. H: It is no secret that war is still happening right here and right now.

Students: (*calling out*) Afghanistan, North Korea!

Mr. H: Yeah, in the Middle East. *Why is war happening there*?

Students: (*mostly male*) Because of the 9/11 attacks.

Mr. Hiroshi listened to his students' responses, acknowledged the subjective truth in them, and then went on to show YouTube video clips of war footage, captured at various points in history. A male teacher, Mr. Hiroshi moved with ease in connecting with his male students during this discussion about war-related tactics. During recess almost all of the boys spoke about violent video games, such as *The Call of Duty*, a game that simulates infantry and warfare based on World War II and where the player is a first-person shooter.

Many of the boys, particularly Tyrone and Thanjai, excitedly called out names of different weapons that they recognized from video games. Mr. Hiroshi praised them for their background knowledge and engagement in retaining this academically relevant knowledge: "A lot of you play video games that include modern warfare …. See, Tyrone knows what a guillotine is." The classroom was quiet when the YouTube video of World War II footage streamed on the screen, as students looked on attentively. Most of the boys, especially those skilled in warfare videogames, with evident interest called out names of guns and weapons and "ohhhed" and "ahhhed" at the violent attacks at different points on the clips. Many of the nondominant boys and almost all of the girls remained silent, but still actively engaged in the lesson, with their bodies leaning forward, their eyes on the video and their teacher. Many smiled, apparently entertained by the boys' engagement and commentary about various weapons.

Mr. Hiroshi's use of military strategy and weapons to engage (his primarily male) students instead of to problematize war was complicated, particularly as the Canadian government was currently glorifying the War of 1812. While this strategy stimulated engagement for some of the male students, it visibly excluded others, namely most of the female students. In many ways, this male-centred pedagogy aligned closely with the core curriculum that glorified war. Mr. Hiroshi also illustrated his personal emotional connection to the issue, openly empathizing with soldiers who had to leave their families to serve their country, sharing with his students that "he could never imagine having to leave his family" to go to war.

Using this history as a conflictual issue, Mr. Hiroshi positioned students in the material, representing the reality of the battle through online visual media, photos from their textbook, and connections to warfare video games. He chose to present the conflict between Wolfe and Montcalm to further discuss the context of war between the British and French. He asked his students to imagine that they had the authority and agency as decision makers, which stimulated their inclusion in the discussion. "What is Wolfe's problem?" asked Mr. Hiroshi. "You're in battle. What are *you* going to *do*?" Crystal and Anita, both vocally dominant females, raised their hands simultaneously and announced: "Get resources!" Mr. Hiroshi gathered additional responses as he prepared everyone for deeper reflection. "OK, how did they signal the troops? Email?" Students laughed at Mr. Hiroshi's historical anomaly and began to enthusiastically raise their hands to respond:

Nira: *(F-SA)* A runner!

Crystal: *(F-W/SA)* Attacking from behind.

Anita: *(F-SA)* If they were signalled they would've been more prepared.

Mr. H: Who?

Anita: The French.

Bravia: *(F-SA*) It would've been a surprise to them.

Mr. H: Yeah, for sure.

Tajinder: *(M-SA)* The British could've attacked differently if they weren't on the Plains of Abraham. Like if they had moved their people back.

Crystal: They needed more people.

Mr. Hiroshi's decision-making questions encouraged the students to draw on personal background knowledge and what they had learned from the text:

Mr. H: I want you guys to think that you're Montcalm and then make a decision about what you are going to do. *You have to make the call.* The British are on the Plains of Abraham. What are you going to do? What do you do? Why did Montcalm make the decision that he made? *What would you have done?*

Mr. Hiroshi then asked students to come back together from their five-minute free-time chat and said: "Let's talk about our decision-making process." Sitting on the bar stool, his text open and turned towards the students, he commended his students for the creative choices they had made when they took on the role of Montcalm. Everyone agreed that Montcalm had made a bad choice. He then turned his students' attention to an issue about tensions of aligning with one's personal ethnocultural identity (i.e., ancestry) and/or with one's political (i.e., nation-state) group identity. Mr. Hiroshi reflected on the responses of students who had argued that Montcalm, as a French general, had wanted to protect Quebec from the British, and attempted to characterize Montcalm:

Mr. H: I think that everyone knew that if they lose Quebec, they lose the war. Quebec was, like, the spot. I think one of you said that he had a lot of pride—a big, bad ego. What does that mean?

Crystal: (*raises her hand and Mr. H calls on her*) He thought he was all that and was really cocky.

Tyrone: *(pointing to Crystal)* Like her. *(She gives him a dirty look and turns away.)*

Mr. H: Yeah, OK, so he thinks he's all that, but what does that mean in the setting or context that he's in?

Thanjai: He probably wants to be recognized.

Jerome: He wanted to die on the battlefield.

Mr. H: Yeah, he thought he'd be considered a hero if he died on the battlefield.

Many of the higher social status male students participated actively in this discussion, where decision making about the conflict was at the forefront. Tyrone, Thanjai, and Jerome consistently shared their viewpoints, often calling out their responses to share what they would have done. Lower social status males and females also demonstrated active engagement in the lesson, their eyes on Mr. Hiroshi and their peers who spoke. Crystal, however, a higher social status female, opted to state her point in what seemed to be an implicitly male-oriented discussion. Tyrone, who clearly saw the lesson and topic as his playing field, rebuked her by rolling his eyes and saying under his breath, "Awww maaann."

Crystal's position as an insider-outsider in this discussion was complicated by her minority-majority status; she was half-White and thus a minority in this class. Mr. Hiroshi had used Shaun Tan's (2007) illustration-only picture book, *The Arrival*, to guide the class in a lesson on inferencing; the students had inferred that the illustrations told a story about an immigrant arriving to a new land. The character's alien status is played out as different kinds of creatures surround him and provide challenges to his acceptance and integration. This served as an opportunity for many of the immigrant students in the class to connect to this literature and activity, but in an interview with me Crystal reflected that when she had first arrived at Georgetown she had felt like the man depicted in *The Arrival*—an outsider. However, she moved up the social status ladder quickly as she was admired by many other female students in the class. This appeared to boost her confidence. As she put it: "Now I just say whatever's on my mind."

Mr. Hiroshi posed open-ended questions to prompt diverse students' responses. He went on to ask a provocative question, in which some students evidently felt a concerted interest: "Who won the battle?" Almost the whole class, males and females, responded: "Wolfe! Wolfe! Wolfe!" Mr. Hiroshi corrected their historical accuracy: "Wolfe didn't win, because he died, but OK, British won and they took over so New France is now what?" Jerome responded, shouting out, "New British!" Mr. Hiroshi laughed and commended Jerome for "being close" to having guessed correctly: British North America. Mr. Hiroshi continually got his students' attention with his questioning and repositioning of the different sides in battle:

Mr. H: Hey, wait a minute! There were still lots of French people in New France, right? They weren't all killed. So what happened to those French people?

Thanjai: *(Sri Lankan male)* They were deported!

Mr. Hiroshi continued his storytelling, stimulating the students' attention. He went on to explain that, while the French weren't deported, they were told:

Mr. H: Listen to the British at all costs! Meaning that if there was ever a war again, *what do the French have to do?*

Tyrone: Suit up!

Mr. H: Yeah, they'd suit up in the British uniform and fight for the British. *Yeah, so is that a good idea or not a good idea?*

Students: (*many respond, mostly males*) Good idea. Good idea. Good idea.

Mr. Hiroshi further complicated the conflict between the British and French by adding the layer of identity and allegiance to one's culture. He raised the issue of the Acadians' disconnection to their French heritage. Consistent with his pedagogical approach and norms for engagement, Mr. Hiroshi asked open-ended questions, allowing multiple students to respond, often at the same time:

Mr. H: OK, remember how the Acadians lived in Acadia. What was their background or heritage?

Thanjai: French.

Mr. H: OK, and did they consider themselves French or Acadian?

Students: Acadian.

Mr. H: Why did the Acadians feel more identity with Acadia than with New France?

Tajinder: Because they wanted to be neutral.

Mr. H: But why? How did that happen?

Jerome: They didn't want to be caught between [sides in] the war with the French.

Mr. Hiroshi's questioning problematized how students understood identity. By probing how different ethnic and cultural groups had navigated their identities during times of conflict, Mr. Hiroshi invited students to explore the fluidity of their own identities in relation to their sociopolitical context, in Canada. Mr. Hiroshi chose to illustrate his allegiance to Canada in relation to his personal identity and heritage:

Mr. H: OK, but how did that happen? OK, here's a better example.… Now I hope this never ever happens, but if Japan would go to war with Canada, and I have a Japanese background, would I feel loyal to Japan?

Students: No, no, no.

Mr. H: No, right. Hopefully that'll never happen, right, hopefully not. But yeah, the answer is No. I don't feel loyal to Japan, even though I have a Japanese last name. And did the Acadians feel loyal to the French?

Students: Noooooo.

Mr. H: So why don't I feel loyal to Japan?

Students: Because you live here.

Mr. H: Yeah, I was born here, my dad was born here, my grandfather was born here … So *I don't feel loyal to Japan, or in their case France.* Were the Acadians born in France?

Students: Noooo.

Mr. H: Yeah, so even though they had French last names, they didn't identify with France, they were, like, "I'm not French." So, what happened, generations after generations have gone by and so much so they don't associate themselves with Japan. So, I'm neutral.

Mr. Hiroshi's representation of his own Japanese cultural heritage and identity within Canada and Canadianness had a clear influence on students, who may have experienced a sense of cultural disequilibrium in balancing their own cultural allegiances to both their countries of ancestry and to Canada. His disclosure provided these ethnocultural minority students with an opportunity to compare and contrast, and thus to reflect on, their developing identities with his own. Most students did not contest Mr. Hiroshi's stance; they were silent, and listened with respect. Students who either shouted "Noooo" or who remained silent appeared to indicate their agreement with their teacher—that Mr. Hiroshi was loyal to Canada and would therefore be unaffected if Canada and Japan were at war because he would remain on the Canadian side.[4] Mr. Hiroshi went on to discuss the Acadians who, after generations, carried no loyalty to France. When Mr. Hiroshi asked his class to explain why the Acadians might have felt more loyalty to British North America than they did to France, Crystal announced, "Because they were, like, the Acadians of [British North] America and they wanted to be neutral."[5] In her outspoken manner, Crystal echoed her teacher's belief: loyalty to one's nation-state would override loyalty based on ethnocultural identification.

This classroom discussion carried complex messages about identity and cultural allegiances and maintaining loyalty when in cross-group conflict. No students shared any of their personal experiences aloud, but as an observer I noticed tension in the classroom. A significant number of students in the class were Tamil Sri Lankan, many of whom had participated in recent protests in southern Ontario against current government policy, to argue for Canada's intervention in the war in

Sri Lanka. For instance, in an interview with a group of Tamil Sri Lankan females, Sunita stated: "I really *hate* the Canadian government right now," to which her peer Jawali replied, "'Cause it's *our* people who're getting affected." Unlike Crystal, Sunita and Jawali did not whole-heartedly agree with Mr. Hiroshi's decision to remain loyal to Canada alone in times of war.

The students were all in some way implicated in this discussion, by virtue of all being first- or second-generation immigrants; unlike their third-generation immigrant teacher, they perhaps felt more connected to their ethnic identity. Crystal, who was known to sometimes contest Mr. Hiroshi's perspectives, aligned with him; the other students chose to not challenge their teacher's authority. Mr. Hiroshi—a young, vibrant, and engaging teacher—was a great influence on his students. In this instance, it may therefore have been challenging for some students to share their alternative or conflicting narratives—in which some students may have chosen Sri Lanka over Canada. The incident highlighted the duality of transnational children, as they negotiate the pulls and pushes of their identities between two nations.

Mr. Hiroshi's students were aware of his practice of including current world issues in the curriculum. For instance, in an interview, Crystal and Anita (higher social status females) both said they believed that they were knowledgeable about the world and confident in their preparation for participation in society because of the ongoing world issues discussions that Mr. Hiroshi had implemented:

Crystal: It's good to know about what's going on in the world …. Mr. Hiroshi doesn't shelter us from what's going on in the world; he's preparing us for high school and for university and for the world.

Anita: Like, he tells us everything …. And yeah, we're lucky to be in Canada, where that's not happening to us.

Here, Crystal and Anita showed how, for them, discussions about world issues had created an awareness of global conflicts and a sense of connection to the world. At the same time, Anita's assertion, "we're lucky to be in Canada," illustrated that not all students may have felt personally connected to their ancestral country.

The following snippet illustrates how Mr. Hiroshi compared the Rebellions of 1837 to his students' lived experiences:

Mr. H: I was thinking about how people were rebelling in 1837 and how you were all connecting that to what's happening in Egypt and one thing I want you to be aware of is what's going on in the world. (*asking students directly*) Does it affect any of us? Right here and right now as we're sitting here, does it affect us? Can I use you as an example, Mona?

Mona: Yes…. My neighbours and my family are still there.

Mr. H: So it may not affect a lot of you now directly, but in a quest to make us think about things in our schema [here on the current events board] we want to recognize what's happening in the world.

While the students may have felt disconnected from this conflict at first, it seemed to become more personally relevant to them when Mr. Hiroshi posed the question "Does it affect us?" and their classmate, Mona, shared her personal connection to it. Later, in an interview, Mr. Hiroshi reflected on how he had connected the Acadian expulsion to the war in Sri Lanka, as an example of how he extended prescribed curriculum to make it relevant and accessible to his diverse students, many of whom were from Sri Lanka or had family in Sri Lanka.

Mr. H: I incorporate a lot of world issues because I feel that they don't read the news at all or watch the news. So just to try to make things a little closer to home for them …. We had a whole bulletin board up with stuff. *(about the Sri Lankan protests)* Yeah we do things like that, but um, I don't know if it's, like, because they're brown, but I think it's because they're all in Grade 7. So trying to talk to them about Acadian expulsion, well it's hard. It's the hardest concept for them to grasp.

Christina: Yeah.

Mr. H: But, but if we can modernize it by using examples from the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. You know anyone could connect to that. Tamil people might be able to understand it a little better.

Mr. Hiroshi believed that modernizing historical conflicts by relating them to present conflicts would contribute to a deeper understanding of both past and present conflicts. Through the study of current events in relation to historical events, a range of diverse students, including quiet ones and those of lower social status, were given opportunities to individually and collectively shape their perceptions of their world. Mr. Hiroshi presented issues that he found fascinating (war-related games, facts, and news) and it appeared, from the students' level of engagement, that most agreed with their teacher's positions on the conflictual issues he presented. Many of the male students participated verbally more frequently during discussions about war and weapons. Most girls chimed in with whole-group responses—such as "Yeah!" or "Noooo!"—which Mr. Hiroshi encouraged. In some instances, when students' personal identities were engaged, quiet females, including Mona, also shared their perspectives and connections.

Overall, the multitude of connections amongst students, and between students and Mr. Hiroshi, meant that there was little or no open disagreement about alternative perspectives on some conflictual issues. Mr. Hiroshi expressed this awareness himself during our interview: "The stuff I didn't agree with, they didn't agree with either." It is possible that some students did not concur with

their teacher's position, and their response may have been to self-silence (see Chapter 7).

RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND CANADIAN IDENTITIES IN A GRADE 4 CLASS

I observed Ms. Marlee, in her Grade 4 class, facilitating a lesson motivated by an openly expressed religious conflict she had observed erupting between two girls in her classroom: Fatima, a Muslim, and Tina, a Christian. This was the first time Ms. Marlee had experienced such an incident in her teaching career, she said in her interview. In the classroom, Ms. Marlee voiced the perspective that people should all practise acceptance and understanding of other cultures to maintain a harmonious community. Fatima and Tina, who were both usually vocally dominant in class, did not reply aloud to Ms. Marlee after she said this; they self-silenced. The topic appeared to be closed, settled.

But when I arrived at Ms. Marlee's class early that January, right after lunch break, I immediately noticed the tension in the room. Fatima was clearly upset and was crying at her desk. The lunch duty supervisor reported the incident to Ms. Marlee, who asked Fatima and Tina to speak with her privately in the hallway so she could personally hear the details of what had transpired between them.

Tina, the one Black female in the class, who Ms. Marlee told me came from an observant Christian family, had told Fatima, the only one in the class who wore a hijab, that her God was not the real God because her faith didn't believe in Jesus. Rather than pinpointing the girls in the class right after this conflictual episode, she chose to speak more generally about religious diversity to the entire class. Ms. Marlee stepped out of her authoritarian, neutral, teaching role and passionately expressed her personal beliefs with deep emotion. The classroom was silent as everyone listened to their teacher's 15-minute speech.

Ms. Marlee, clearly upset, began by saying: "When you have conflict in the playground, it shouldn't be over religion." She pleaded passionately with the students: "Fight for those who don't have food to eat, fight for those who are violated or oppressed, but don't fight with each other about religion and about whether or not someone else's God is better than yours." Tina and Fatima were friends and both frequently volunteered to speak during whole-class discussions. However, during this teacher-led recitation they did not speak to each other, nor to the class. The lecture and question and answer session continued for the entire 40-minute social studies period.

> Ms. M: Depending on who you ask, an innocent question like "Do you believe in Jesus?" can actually be an insult, right? People come to the public school system because we're all different religions, we're all different creeds, we're all different ethnicities, and we're all learning to be Canadian together. And it's a wonderful thing. OK. *(short pause)* We don't go to the Catholic school system across the way. I was raised Catholic,

but still chose to teach in a public board because I have had friends and have friends who are not Catholic.

A few students raised their hands to ask questions, such as Who is Allah, What is Catholic, Who is Jesus. Ms. Marlee responded by offering matter-of-fact responses, such as "Allah is another word for God." The students did not respond to each other's questions.

Veeran: *(male, Sri Lankan/Hindu)* What's Catholic?

Ms. M: Catholic is another term for Christian. I'm actually what they call a nonpractising Catholic. There are so many different religions out there and I believe that every single one has a valid point. OK. *(short pause) Muslims (short pause)* do not believe in Jesus as the Son of God. They do not think that Jesus is God. In *Christianity, for some reason*, because Jesus was born as the Son of God, all right, he became linked to God. And some Christians actually believe that Jesus was born and walked the Earth, but not everybody believes that. In the Muslim religion, they believe in one of the many prophets, Mohammed, but God is above them all. It does not mean that if a Muslim tells you that they do not believe in Jesus as the Son of God that they do not believe in God. They do believe in God and their God is as valid as any other God. He is as valid as the God of Christianity. And as valid as the God of Judaism. What a person believes religiously is what many of them believe inherently; it is part of their being and no one has the right to question that.

Ms. Marlee then proceeded to ask students to raise their hands if they were the religion that she called out: "Christians?" (Tina raised her hand); "Muslims?" (five or six students raised their hands); "Hindus?" (no one raised a hand, even though there were Hindu students in the class); "Jews?" (no one raised a hand); "Tamils?" (a number of students raised their hands; they hadn't responded as Hindus, but did identify as Tamil). Some students chose not to participate.

Ms. Marlee then talked about her own identity as a second-generation immigrant, to remind her students that their engagement in conflicts over religion violated the foundational goal of their families' choice to emigrate: to live in peaceful Canada.

Ms. M: We are all in Canada here. Religion is not worth fighting over. Your families came to this country, my family came to this country—all for a better future, all right. And some people's families come to the country to escape the conflict of religion that was destroying their country.

Veeran: *(calls out)* There is a war in Sri Lanka over religion.

Ms. M: *(questions him)* Like with the Tamils, there's a war?

Veeran: *(and other Tamil males, responding together)* No, with the Hindus and Muslims.

Ms. M: Oh, right.

Students: *(Some male students began to then make fighting noises with their mouths, and many students began mumbling to their peers. Ms. Marlee does not respond to this)*.

When students left to go to gym class, I noticed that the two girls in the original conflict were at opposite sides of the line formed at the door.

This religious conflict was a critical incident in the class. It interrupted the regular social studies program and invited an alternative implemented curriculum that stimulated the opportunity to learn through and about diversity. The next week, during the same Social Studies unit, students were reading aloud from their textbook (*Nelson Literacy 4,* n.d.) about the Arctic lowlands. In a sidebar of the book, there was an Inuit creation story. Ms. Marlee stopped the class read-aloud to reflect on this text, "The Earth and the People," which began with the words, "The Earth was here before the people. / The very first people / Came out of the ground." Ms. Marlee asked her students where they had heard similar kinds of stories and what kind of story it was. "A true story," offered Tina. "A fiction story," said Fatima. Ms. Marlee then went to the board and wrote "Creation Story." She told the students: "Every culture in the world has a creation story. A creation story tells how man [sic] came to be on the planet." As she said this, many students began making noises while they raised their hands, "Oh, oh, oh, I know, me, me, me," indicating affective engagement with this idea; they wanted to speak.

Ms. Marlee continued, telling students that this was an Aboriginal creation story, and it said that people came out of the ground. She continued, saying, "The creation story I was taught in school was about Adam and Eve." Tina enthusiastically responded, without raising her hand, "I know that one!" Ms. Marlee didn't invite any further comment from Tina. Instead, she directed her questioning to Fatima: "Fatima, is there a creation story in the Muslim culture?" Fatima, unsure of how to answer the question right away, began to converse with another Muslim student in the class, Farat, to think of a proper response. After conferring, she announced with a quiet giggle, "We have one, but it's too long." Fatima's collaboration with her Muslim peer helped her to respond to Ms. Marlee's request. It also illustrated how other Muslim students in this class, such as Farat, had become engaged in the lesson when asked, also by the teacher, to reflect on their personal religious identity.

Swetha, a female Sri Lankan student, referred to the Aboriginal story, asked: "So that means that my great, great, great, grandmother came from the Earth?" To which another male South Asian student said, "My cousin told me that the first people came from Africa." Ms. Marlee replied, "That may be true. Science shows us how far back we go, so that one may actually be based in fact." Again, Swetha

questioned this so-called fact: "So we're all African?" Ms. Marlee replied, "The oldest human bones were found in Africa," and then questioned the students, "So how did they get from Africa to other parts of the world?" Shaun, who was becoming anxious in his seat, spoke: "They travelled!" Ms. Marlee reprimanded Shaun for speaking without raising his hand, and reminded him to remain quiet.

Ms. Marlee then confirmed what he had said: Yes, she said, people emigrated from Africa to other parts of the world. Tina abruptly raised her hand, and asked: "What if you already *know* the creation story?" Ms. Marlee didn't acknowledge Tina's comment and tried to close what was becoming a conflictual conversation, even as Tina continued, "Can we tell the *real* story now!?" Ms. Marlee waved, clapped her hands, and gathered her students' attention as she changed the subject, by announcing their homework: "Tonight, you're going to go home and ask your parents what your creation story from your culture is, and then you're going to write it out and bring it to class to share with all of us."

When Ms. Marlee stopped the class lesson to extend her implemented curriculum content beyond the textbook to make it relevant to students' diversities and conflicts, she integrated some of their perspectives and identities into the curriculum. Many students were excited to share; many simultaneously spoke over each other. At the same time, Ms. Marlee maintained her authority, by directing the questions and responding on behalf of some students. At the end of the lesson, Ms. Marlee told me privately that she purposely had not engaged Tina's comment about her knowing *the* creation story, because she had wanted to make sure other voices were heard and to make sure that the recent religious conflict was not escalated into another debate. Thus, Ms. Marlee's initial approach was somewhat conflict avoidant. However, in first addressing the conflict itself and then postponing any potential conflict dialogue, she invited her students to prepare for sharing their different religious stories during the next social studies class.

Interviews about this religious conflict conducted with Tina and Fatima separately, and with other Grade 4 students, support my interpretation that this critical incident served to identify cultural and religious difference in a way that perpetuated marginalization of some students while it increased the confidence of other students whose identities had been affirmed and recognized during this discussion.

Ms. Marlee typically chose who spoke in class discussions. During our interviews, Fatima expressed discomfort at normally feeling unheard and unrecognized in class because of Ms. Marlee's strict participation patterns, and because of the lack of discussion about Muslims in the curriculum content. Tina, on the other hand, was very quiet when I asked her to tell me about what had happened when she shared her Christian story with Fatima. While I had developed relationships with most of the students in the class, particularly the girls, I was left wondering whether Tina had felt that what she perceived as my own religious and cultural affiliation was a barrier to her communicating how she felt and what she had experienced.

Ms. Marlee was the only other person in the class who shared Tina's African-Canadian heritage. With her, Tina exhibited greater comfort in disclosing her

personal religious beliefs, and actually demonstrated excitement in class, in raising her hand and saying, "I know that story!" and "What if you already *know* the creation story? Can we tell the *real* story now!?" Ms. Marlee told the students directly that she had been taught the Adam and Eve story, the same one that Tina had brought to share.[6] This explicit cultural and religious alliance clearly made Tina feel affirmed and included when sharing her religious perspectives in class, with and beyond Ms. Marlee, even when Ms. Marlee tried to impede that dominance. However, in a group interview with me and other South Asian females, she shied away from disclosing or further discussing her religious beliefs. Tina's reticence to discuss her Christian identity with me, a South Asian researcher, in a group of her South Asian (mostly Hindu and Muslim) peers most likely illustrated that she did not feel as confident voicing a minority perspective without having Ms. Marlee present to affirm her identity. Thus, my perceived personal identity may have influenced the kind of dialogue that emerged in small group interviews.

I observed that Tina saw Ms. Marlee as an ally, to whom she seemed to feel culturally connected because of their shared African-Canadian heritage and because of Ms. Marlee's acknowledgement and knowledge of the Christian faith. Ms. Marlee told me in an interview that Tina had screamed "Yesss!" and high-fived her mother on the first day of school when she found out she had a Black teacher. Presumably, Tina believed that Ms. Marlee would speak for her in this instance and would represent "their" side during the religious conflict with the "Other-Others." In this way, Tina and Ms. Marlee became a dominant minority (i.e., Black-Christian) in this class of East and South Asian ethnic minorities.

The lesson in which students shared their different creation stories opened a discussion about diversity within and among religions. It provided opportunities for many students to share their familial beliefs, which seemed to foster a sense of social and identity inclusion for diverse students. None of the students in Ms. Marlee's class identified as Aboriginal Canadian. However, the Aboriginal creation story had served as an example of difference, and created a space for Ms. Marlee to affirm that all students had different—and valid—cultural and religious identities. While only about eight students came prepared to tell their stories in front of the class, many others engaged in the discussion of those stories, feeling free to voice perspectives similar and different among their peers as they asked and responded, to both their teacher and peers' questions, about their religious beliefs. For instance, when Fatima shared her version of a Muslim creation story, the typically quiet Farat added to Fatima's story by providing additional details about followers of Islam.

Creationism was another topic that sparked considerable interest in the class and seemed to help students develop a greater appreciation for the diversity that existed among their classmates. For example, Swetha, who had been an excited participant during the reading of the Aboriginal creation story, came prepared to tell a story from her Tamil Sri Lankan/Hindu perspective.[7] She introduced various Hindu gods, creating considerable engagement amongst her classmates. Many, including Tina and Fatima, listened respectfully and attentively. When she finished her story, there was a murmur of voices: students made comments aloud and to their peers,

some students raised their hands to ask her questions, and a few even asked if she would tell more Hindu stories. I asked Swetha in an interview whether she thought anyone had disagreed with her story, but she felt that everyone had agreed with her because they were engaged and interested in what she was saying, noting her initial apprehension: "I was kinda nervous about sharing that kind of stuff. I was happy that the class understood what I was saying … and they even asked for copies of my story." It appeared that another creation story with a divergent perspective had engaged the students in wanting to learn more about diversity. These students, considerably younger than Mr. Hiroshi's, embraced the opportunity to dialogue and listen to each other's diverse perspectives. This illustrates how opportunities to dialogue about conflict can prepare students for speaking and listening amongst the diverse ethnocultural identities in the larger Canadian political community.

Homogenizing Perspectives through Social Cohesion

As part of a Social Studies unit on Canada and the World, Ms. Marlee asked her students to reflect on what they understood *Canada* to mean. First she had them fill in a worksheet. She encouraged students to voice uncontested narrative symbols and to write out dominant Canadian rhetoric in the nine boxes on the worksheet. This did not allow issues concerning *peace* or *no-war* to be taken up for discussion. Rather, students recited and named characteristics without any critical reflection on the meaning of them. After students shared their lists, Ms. Marlee asked if anyone had anything else to add to the list generated by the whole class. In keeping with her usual norms for engagement, she called on students who were silent.

It appeared that the students' historical, political, and cultural backgrounds influenced them to use stereotypical words in describing Canada. The images they shared were reminiscent of the dominant Canadian rhetoric that many newcomer immigrants memorize for their citizenship test (see, for instance, Gulliver, 2011). As students looked at photos of popular Canadian images on Google and in their textbook, they added to their class list, continuing to identify popular and exotic images of Canada (e.g. totem poles in British Columbia, the parliament buildings in Ottawa, lobster in New Brunswick). For the most part, they named popular landmarks and characteristics of Canada such as the CN Tower, snow, and maple trees. These stereotypical Canadian images paved the way for low-risk (i.e., social cohesion) conversation (Joshee, 2004). Ms. Marlee did not ask for reflection on these symbols, thus indicating her alignment with liberal multicultural practices.

Further discussion revealed that most students saw Canada as different from their ancestral countries; some students from contested settings had developed shared group identities that included "war at home" and "being safe in Canada." A few students also offered freedom and peace as examples; some named popular Canadian places and attributes that they characterized as *free* and *at peace*. But while this discussion of a peaceful Canada was taking place, some students were thinking of different, underlying stories about violence and war.

In August of 2010, during the Sri Lankan civil war, Tamil Sri Lankans had arrived in Canada, some of them seeking refugee status or other Canadian

government action. This was Swetha's family's experience, revealed to me in an interview:

> Swetha: In my parents' home country … in Sri Lanka nowadays there is, like, armies and … they're, like, shooting only the Tamil people and Tamil people are dying … but the government of Sri Lanka is the one that's telling them to do it because he's Singhalese and everything, you know. And they hate Tamil people …. And our side, they call them Tamil Tigers and because we fight for them …. They can't find my uncle anymore and my friend's cousin's uncle found [people] in a cave …. Oh, and 2,000 people came on a boat to Canada, and my parents were so happy. One of my cousins was on the boat, too.

Swetha knew from experience the difference between countries at war and countries at peace, but it was not something that she raised in the whole class. There, she chose to show a personal sense of connection to refugees, articulating her family's happiness about their arrival. However, because of Swetha's close connection to Sri Lanka and her awareness of political unrest, she was perhaps more aware than many others in her class about what it meant to actually live in what she perceived to be a peaceful country. The Sri Lankan civil war was a contentious issue in the news at the time of this research. The dominant Canadian rhetoric advocated for the rejection of the Tamil Sri Lankan refugees and intervention policies. But this current issue was not raised in Ms. Marlee's class.

Teachers who use noncritical pedagogical approaches may be unconscious of the political messages implicit in their teaching, which in many ways maintains the status quo (Apple, 1990). Discussions about mainstreamed symbols of Others-within, such as Inuit people and totem poles, do not recognize the power inequities in dominant elite social structures. Acknowledging diversity in such discussions does not invite any questioning of power and hegemony. In fact I observed Ms. Marlee using a noncritical, fact-transmission, style in most of her classes, different from her approach in the religious conflict discussion mentioned above. Dialogue was not evident in these classes, although the usual (i.e., more vocal) students raised their hands to offer responses to Ms. Marlee's fact-gathering questions.

In our first interview, one month before the religious conflict that erupted in her classroom, I asked Ms. Marlee how she would encourage discussion about diverse identities, experiences, histories, and power/privilege amongst the students of varied cultural backgrounds in her class. She responded with what I believe she felt was the "right" answer, mentioning cultural exclusion, colonialism, and her own personal identity and cultural history of oppression. However, she also articulated that as much as she wanted to tell and discuss, she felt there was a limit on how much her 9- and 10-year-olds would understand. She expressed worry that conflictual material might harm them:

> Ms. M: I told them that somehow those totem poles were taken from the Haida and that some of them were actually stolen and

> they're trying to get them back …. When the opportunity arises, I discuss people's histories …. I told them that the Inuit children were taken from their homelands and put into residential schools and that's … hard for Grade 4s because there's a limit on how much they'll understand, and it's also hard to see how much you should tell them about it without scarring their little psyches, but you do tell them that people were stolen from their homelands and I've mentioned that Black people were stolen from their homelands too, and that I'm of Caribbean descent, and how that theft of identity causes people to lose their culture and lose themselves …. So they know that different cultures in the world have had conflict, and they know however that Canada is a safe place when it comes to cultural conflict, because we try to resolve issues and we try to get along.

Christina: *(interrupting)* Do …

Ms. M: But these diversity issues, it never comes from the children, it comes from an opportunity within the curriculum, within the lesson.

Christina: OK.

Ms. M: Yep, they don't seem to have any issues, I've never had any issues.

At the time of this interview, Ms. Marlee reiterated her belief that all of her students got along; she did not see conflicts amongst their ethnocultural diversities. Ms. Marlee's conceptions of cross-cultural relations amongst her students appeared to shape how she responded to the religious conflict when it did arise: she tried to reinforce the idea that "Canada is a safe place when it comes to cultural conflict" and that everyone should "try to get along." Her personal beliefs and experiences of marginalization as an African-Canadian also evidently shaped how she interpreted and responded to this religious conflict. Her belief in maintaining peace by "getting along" also apparently contributed to her not interrogating or inviting students to dialogue about Canadian symbols and histories. Overall, while Ms. Marlee was clearly aware of the importance of discussing conflict and issues of diversity, she chose to not entertain certain conflictual topics with her Grade 4 students. Her activities about Canadian symbols and cultural stories genericized some cultural groups, opening up little space for discussion about diversity.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GLOBAL-CANADIAN CITIZENS: BUILDING CHARACTER AND STRENGTHENING VALUES IN A GRADE 5 CLASS

In Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 mathematics, science, and social studies lessons, I observed her implementing a variety of pedagogies. These included teacher-led

recitation, whole-group and small-group discussions, and paired and individual reflections. Mrs. Amrita encouraged all her students to raise their hands whenever she posed a question. She often called on students who didn't have their hands up, reinforcing the participation of all students—they all had to prepare an answer, because all risked being called upon. She often said things like: "Everyone, look at me, I want everyone to participate here, all hands go up," or "Why don't you have your hand up?"

Mrs. Amrita also used a show of hands to poll her class about their experiences. During a discussion on immigration, for example, she asked students to raise their hands if their parents were immigrants. This direct questioning invited students to share their identities. All except three students raised their hands: Qadir, Nimi, and Jamal had themselves immigrated with their parents.

When Mrs. Amrita introduced the Immigration unit she asked her class: "What are some of the reasons to move to Canada?" Jamal, who had recently immigrated from Kenya, readily responded, "War. It's too dangerous." Mrs. Amrita then asked, "What does 'refugees' mean?" Caden, a Chinese male whose mother had initially been denied entry into Canada, responded, "It means they don't feel safe, and then decide to come here as a refugee to live here."

At the beginning of the unit, Mrs. Amrita told her students to question their parents about immigration experiences, such as why people moved to a new country and why they had immigrated to Canada. Using the textbook, Mrs. Amrita also taught rules and laws for immigrating to Canada, discussing the differences between family and refugee classes. Many students in this class were personally familiar with the latter.

In a follow-up lesson, the next day, Mrs. Amrita asked them again, "Why do you think people immigrate to Canada?" Eleven hands immediately went up:

Kate: War.

Niratala: Better job.

Sugriva: Education.

Jesse: Better opportunities.

Qadir: They want peace.

David: They want new things.

Jamal: Maybe the place they live in, the government is not treating them well. *(He raises his hand again right after he says this response, indicating he has more to share.)*

Kate: Freedom to practise their religions.

Jamal: Canada is a free country.

Caden: They want freedom.

Uma: A multicultural country where everyone is respected.

Mrs. A: You know, boys and girls, when you come to Canada they don't ask you to leave your religion or your culture behind: *They want you to bring everything with you* so that you can practise your own religion, culture and beliefs and embrace it within Canada.

Mrs. Amrita reinforced liberal multiculturalism throughout most of this Grade 5 unit. For instance, she proudly told them: "Canada is everyone's country," and she encouraged students to share with each other their stories about their ancestors. None of the students raised their hands in response: perhaps they were unsure of whether they had the right answer (i.e., that Canada was "everyone's country"). Mrs. Amrita then called on Tandir, a Tamil Sri Lankan male, to tell his story and said, "Everyone should listen, because this is interesting."

Tandir: My mom immigrated to Canada as a refugee from Sri Lanka. It was tough for my mom to adjust to the cold weather and to the language, but my mom came here because there was a war in Sri Lanka. *(The other Sri Lankan students smile and nod in acknowledgment.)*

Mrs. Amrita added more details, saying that Tandir's mom had been "pretty young" and faced challenges when she arrived. She then shared some personal challenges she herself had experienced as a new immigrant.

Mrs. A: Do you know that most of the time the education system here in Canada doesn't recognize other education systems of immigrants? And I'm talking from my own experience. When I came here they didn't recognize my education degree, even though I was a teacher back home and had my master's degree as well. I had to go back to university and do the entire teacher education program over again here in Canada for one year. So the immigrants have to face many challenges. Is there anyone else who would like to share what their family told them?

Six other students raised their hands to share their stories. All of them reinforced the idea that newcomer immigrants faced challenges in Canada. One South Asian male said, "When my dad first came to Canada, he had a lot of challenges speaking English …. He wanted to go back." Resonating with this idea, Jesse, a Vietnamese female, said: "My parents came from Vietnam and there was a war there and they came here on a boat across the ocean. They didn't know how to speak English and they missed home." Nitin, whose family was wealthier than most students in this class, shared his family's experience:

Nitin: My grandparents lived in a small town in India, and had some farm land …. It was a long journey. They immigrated to Canada as a family class. They arrived in Montreal and then

took a long bus ride to Ontario. In the beginning it was really tough.

Near the end of this immigration story sharing, Mrs. Amrita asked Qadir to participate, pointing out his newcomer identity: "Qadir, do you want to talk? You are pretty new to the country, right? Go on, go, tell us. No one is judging you here." Qadir, already soft spoken, began speaking in an even softer voice:

Qadir: My family … came here to Canada [two years ago]. Why we came here is a whole other story. So, like, five years ago when I was in Kindergarten, my dad applied to immigrate to Canada and that was because my dad was a scientist, but Canada government gave him a better job.

Mrs. A: *(interrupting)* He must have come on the points system if he came for a job.

Qadir: But to get the job that he wanted, he had to do the job over again for two and half years as a volunteer before he could apply to do the job he was already doing in Pakistan.

Mrs. A: *(interrupting again)* And to think that he had to run and support a household as well. So do you think he could not work a regular job while also doing the practice-volunteer job for two and a half years? No, not possible.

Qadir: *(continuing)* That's how I have immigrated to Canada. I am a Pakistani. I was born in Pakistan. That means I'm an immigrant here.

The class was silent as everyone listened attentively to Qadir's soft, powerful story, which highlighted the unfairness of Canada's immigration points system. This revealed the fallacy of the common assumption that jobs were readily available for professional immigrants. Mrs. Amrita reinforced this perspective by asserting that it was "not possible" to work for free (e.g., as an intern) while also working full-time elsewhere for wages to support a family. Because Mrs. Amrita was aware of many of her students' individual stories, she was able to guide the implemented curriculum to include their identities.

Partway through this same lesson, Jamal started to become disruptive. He showed his disengagement by doing a crossword puzzle in his book and playing with items in his desk while Mrs. Amrita was speaking. Mrs. Amrita reprimanded him, but I wondered whether Jamal's disengagement might indicate that he had a different kind of story, one that was not being shared. When Mrs. Amrita had asked, earlier, why people immigrated to Canada, Jamal had offered (two days in a row) responses such as "war" and "corrupt governments," but he did not share details of his personal story with the class. Jamal was the only Black student in the class. While he shared with his peers the commonality of having immigrant

parents, he also spoke with an Kenyan accent, and perhaps in many ways did not have access to the cultural codes of power in the classroom (i.e., Western and Asian cultural ways of being). Also, he had only recently arrived, and as such was perhaps still attempting to conceptualize the meaning of his immigration story as he and his family were currently experiencing it. Based on my observations and personal interactions with Jamal during our small group interview, he was clearly still habituating to school practices. He was constantly asked to remain on task, stay in his seat, and not to call out answers without first raising his hand.

In assigning students the task of sharing their or their parents' experiences of immigrating to Canada, Mrs. Amrita adapted her usual norms for engagement. She explained that she would not force anyone to share. She would give students a choice whether to share or not, by only calling on those who raised their hands. She asked her students to collect information from a variety of sources (family, peers, and texts), which encouraged their reflective interpretations of the immigration topic, which they found personally relevant.

The process of researching cultural histories in collaboration with students' families and then engaging in sharing with their peers illustrated Mrs. Amrita's views that students' cultural resources were valuable material for discussions about citizenship and integration in Canada. Students heard their peers' diverse perspectives during this period, but did not ask each other questions as they usually did in this class. Instead, Mrs. Amrita provided comments and often related the students' stories to her own experience. Overt conflict did not erupt in this class session.

Mrs. Amrita consistently prompted her Grade 5 students, in her words, to "think about their own experiences, as evidence." She told her students: "It is the knowledge you have in your heart that makes you who you are." In an interview, she also told me about her perspective on the importance of acknowledging personal experiences as valid knowledge:

> Mrs. A: I don't come up with any lesson plan or anything, like I don't say "OK today we're going to talk about diversity." I draw from my own life experiences and I try to give them life messages, life lessons, rather than just teaching them out of a book. I always give them my example, my family's example, of my own experience [as an immigrant] and I always tell them how hard their parents are working. And how they left everything from their own countries and came here and are working so hard.

Mrs. Amrita drew on her personal identity and her students' identities in an attempt to present an integrated perspective on cultural knowledge. This kind of cross-cultural dialogue is designed to encourage the integration of values education, where teachers and students may be empowered to explore more nuanced ways of speaking across cultures and generations, creating tolerant and empathetic classroom environments.

Mrs. Amrita felt the need to present prescribed content in conjunction with students' personal narratives; thus, she encouraged students to read the chapter in their textbook that provided the dominant narrative about immigration in Canada. During the whole-class reading of the text, it appeared that the textbook narrative was perceived by many students to not relate to the experiences shared in the class. Mrs. Amrita responded by modelling and encouraging students to connect the textbook material to their background knowledge. She did this by frequently pausing the read-aloud to reflect aloud on her own experience of immigration, such as how she had obtained landing documents and submitted her citizenship application. For instance, as one of the students read aloud about landing in Canada, Mrs. Amrita interrupted to say:

Mrs. A: I will bring in my landing papers and show all of you. Everyone will have a record of landing. It's a form, and it has my name and when I became Canadian. I had to submit that and my Permanent Resident Card, and you have to surrender that when you become a Canadian citizen.

Mrs. Amrita did not initially introduce the topic of immigration as a controversial or political issue. But an implicit issue was raised: How does the textbook depiction represent or distort immigration histories in Canada? In an interview with two male students of Chinese origin in this class, I asked what they thought about reading about immigration from their textbook.

Jack: I would say that the author should rewrite it just a bit, so she or he could add a bit more to it.

Mike: Also, the sheets that Mrs. Amrita gave us didn't talk about *real people.* They were *fake people.* So it wasn't *real.*

Jack: The book was pretty old. It was written a long time ago and we still use that textbook.

In another interview, a group of girls (mixed East and South Asian) articulated their comfort with the more varied oral and printed texts that had been used through this unit of study:

Uma: *(Tamil Sri Lankan)* Yeah, well, most of the people in the class, their parents, came from a different country to Canada, so it was pretty much easy for our homework [to write about our family] because we could just ask our parents, who actually know and have experienced it. And when Mrs. Amrita was teaching us, we had an idea of what it was about, because of our parents.

Christina: So you thought you understood it more?

Uma: Like one of the immigration stories [in the text] was about *an*

emergency, and that's why my parents came because there was an emergency, like, a war and they were refugees.

Christina: Did you feel uncomfortable when Mrs. Amrita was talking about it?

Uma: No. But I had an idea of what she was talking about.

Christina: So you felt connected to it.

Uma: Yeah.

Kate: *(Chinese)* It's also good because, like, if we needed some background knowledge, we could just ask our parents and we could understand more about it, than someone who was born here.

Typically, Mrs. Amrita openly acknowledged social power structures during classroom discussions. During one of the discussions on immigration, she encouraged the three students in the class who had only recently immigrated to Canada to voice their experiences. These particular newcomers all responded to her invitation. Clearly, they felt safe enough to share this part of their identity.

While many students shared personal stories with me and their peers during small group discussions in interviews, and also shared written reflective stories with their teacher, they were not always as inclined to participate aloud during whole-class discussions. For instance, for another homework activity, Mrs. Amrita asked students to fill out, with their family, a sample immigration points survey. No one in the class said aloud whether their family had "passed" this sample assessment for acceptance into Canada, but a few students whispered to me, when I was walking around the classroom, that their parents had failed the actual Canadian points test. I realized that this had been a particularly sensitive task for students. Even though it was an activity through which Mrs. Amrita intended to encourage discussion about diversity, diverse students were too embarrassed to share sensitive family information with their peers.

Mrs. Amrita also taught her Grade 5 class about the differences between rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens: she promoted the belief that with every right comes a responsibility. During a class discussion on the role of the federal and provincial government in Canada, Arun, a typically boisterous male student, raised his hand to question whether Egypt had a government. This resulted in a brief current events discussion on the uprising in Egypt where both Mrs. Amrita and I explained that the people in Egypt wanted new leaders and were fighting to get that. The conflict was not connected to students' experiences or perceptions, unlike the way it had been discussed in Mr. Hiroshi's class. In an interview, one week after this discussion, I asked some students what their experience had been with this discussion.

Christina: So you know when we were talking about the uprising in

Egypt?

Students: Yeah.

Christina: Well, I'd like to see if you can tell me if you made any self-to-text connections during that conversation we had there.

Uma: Actually, the next day, I saw it [the uprising in Egypt] on the news and I got reminded of what we were talking about. And before, when we were talking about it, I never knew it was happening.

Christina: So you had a better understanding of it the next day, cool.

Nitin: They want to take down the leader [Hosni Mubarak], because he had a lot of power that he misused. It made me think of when I went to visit my grandparents in India and it was really dirty there. Half of the road is dirt and it's an inch of dirt, you can't even see the road. And when I heard about the Egypt thing, it reminded me of that. Like, the Indian government isn't doing anything about all these bad roads, and when they do make roads they do a sloppy job because they're not the ones driving on it.

Mrs. Amrita's choice to respond to Arun's question about a current political conflict illustrated her interest in encouraging her diverse students to think about the curriculum content in relation to their own lives and world. Uma and Nitin showed two different ways they related to learning about the uprisings in Egypt. Uma became aware of the conflict in her personal home world, when she recognized it on the television. Similarly, Nitin recognized the conflict, but extended it by reflecting on his personal understanding of political unrest, which was that governments are unresponsive to the issues that common people raise. That is, he connected to the uprisings in Egypt by reflecting on his and his family's belief that the government of India was not responsible in maintaining safe and modern road structures. Also, within the context of learning about rights and responsibilities, it appeared that more students, such as Uma, who didn't typically participate as much as Nitin, became engaged in learning about how citizens exercised their rights during political unrest.

Mrs. Amrita and many of her students expressed the belief that they were free in this classroom to engage in discussion about conflictual and sensitive issues, such as immigration and current events. The commonality between Mrs. Amrita's identity as a relatively recent immigrant from India and the students' East and South Asian backgrounds seemed to provide a certain level of comfort during discussions about diversity. In most instances, students' evident inclination to share and participate in such discussions illustrated their sense that their social identity was included. Mrs. Amrita often encouraged students to voice their perspectives in classroom discussions. The norms for engagement allowed them to

self-silence when the conflictual issue was sensitive or linked to their identity. The permission to self-silence, within a climate that consistently encourages students' participation, is an integral element for building an inclusive classroom environment that not only encourages diverse students to speak, but also allows them the freedom to feel safe in their silence (Davies, 2004a; Ellsworth, 1989).

Culture and Conflict in Ancient Civilizations

The study of ancient civilizations in Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 class encouraged many students to reflect on their own familial histories, particularly because two of the options were the study of ancient China and ancient India. Religion was an omnipresent issue. Mrs. Amrita set the unit up with a whole-class study of ancient Greece and ancient Egypt, presumably to prepare students how to conduct research by gathering information in textbooks about a civilization. As a class, they studied the ancient Greek alphabet and Egyptian hieroglyphs, what life was like for children, what religious rituals were performed, and other facts about daily life.[8]

Mrs. Amrita put students in groups and gave them the choice of what civilization they wanted to study. In these small groups, students researched and presented on ancient India, ancient China, ancient Rome, the Aztecs, and Mesopotamia. During their small-group discussion, four out of five students in the ancient India group told me: "We get to do Hinduism, and we already know all the Gods." Kate and Jesse expressed similar enthusiasm about being in the ancient China group. While there were some students who felt connected to the study of what they perceived as their own cultural backgrounds, others articulated their feelings about the importance of learning about civilizations different from their own. In my interview with two Indian/Hindu boys, Nitin and Sugriva, Nitin articulated his desire to not study ancient India:

> Nitin: I know about ancient India already, so ancient Greece was more fun because I got to learn something new.

Sugriva said his own preference was to learn more about his own culture at school:

> Sugriva: Even though I already know lots about ancient India, I could learn more. Like with all the gods, there's so much more to know. Like Lord Shiva, Lord Ganesha …

Building connections to students' personal experiences, where they had the option of choosing how they wanted to identify themselves, was one way Mrs. Amrita invited students to participate. This exercise encouraged them to speak from their ethnocultural and religious identities. However, not all students wanted to share their personal, political stands on sensitive, identity-linked issues.

While I never observed any overt conflict about someone being better than someone else, the responses of students in interviews helped me to better understand the importance of student-directed learning, in which they had both exposure and choice to learn about difference. The study of contrasting

civilizations and cultures provided students with opportunities to build tolerance and to practise acceptance of diversity, not only within their classroom, but also within society at large.

The students learned about religious and cultural practices in ancient Egypt, such as worshipping and sacrificing animals to gods. Mrs. Amrita asked the students why people performed such rituals. Some students voiced a concern that such practices were extreme. Others, such as Caden, aware of the dominance of religious values within ancient Egyptian society, responded: "Everyone believed in it." Mrs. Amrita affirmed that they did it "because they feared God."

Mrs. Amrita frequently used the think-pair-share pedagogical approach, where she asked students to independently think about their response to an issue, speak about it with a partner, and then share their responses with the whole class. During one lesson, Mrs. Amrita asked students to speak to the person seated next to them about what they thought was "the most important thing about religion in ancient Egypt." After allowing two minutes for peer-to-peer discussion, Mrs. Amrita invited whole class responses. Nine hands immediately went up and all offered similar responses about fearing God, such as Arun, who said, "If they don't pray they won't have any water in the Nile river." Fear appeared to become a theme to both describe and essentialize religion in ancient Egypt, and Mrs. Amrita affirmed this stance as she said, "Yes, they thought their God would be angry." She then went on to connect the diversity found among different ancient civilizations to the diversity within their classroom: "Different religions coexisted and had different beliefs, just like in this room there are many faiths." By offering this connection, Mrs. Amrita acknowledged and affirmed her students' diverse beliefs.

Mrs. Amrita opened up the space for conflict by further probing the issue of religion in ancient civilizations and present-day societies, asking her students: "Do you agree, boys and girls, that many people don't believe in religions as much now?" Most of the students nodded their heads, which apparently indicated their agreement. Caden raised his hand to offer his perspective: "Back then they didn't know better and they thought they'd be punished." Arun added, "If it didn't rain they thought it was because of God, but now with science we know better." Mrs. Amrita, again, shared her point of view with her students: "People thought that if you prayed for two or three hours a day you would be happy, because they were ignorant." Here despite Mrs. Amrita's commitment to accepting diverse religious practices and beliefs, she also positioned some religious practices as extreme and extinct. Her personal stance apparently encouraged only one point of view, as none of the students disputed the perspective that religious practices are just as important to some cultural groups in present-day societies. Instead, Mrs. Amrita's potentially conflictual question encouraged Arun to rely on science to support his argument that "we know better" now, which indicated that he appeared to follow his teacher's lead, agreeing that religious beliefs and practices do not supersede scientific knowledge.

The same discussion about religious practices evolved as Mrs. Amrita raised the topic of evolution to further probe the tension between religious beliefs in ancient civilizations and new scientific knowledge:

Mrs. A: Anyone know the story of how we were once monkeys and then became humans? What does evolution mean? How did human beings arrive on Earth?

Students responded with silence to Mrs. Amrita's line of questioning and to the topic of evolution. None of the students raised their hand, and Mrs. Amrita quickly decided to refocus the topic: "OK, we won't actually talk about *how* we got here, but what did we *do* when we got here?" This question invited a few students' responses, such as from Tandir who offered the explanation of "People just moved from place to place," to which Jamal added, "They created cultures." Qadir raised his hand to take the risk to revisit the initial topic and asked, "When did it all start?" Mrs. Amrita responded candidly: "Different religions and cultures have different things. No one really knows." Unlike Ms. Marlee, Mrs. Amrita chose to not encourage students to research this issue and present it back to the class. Instead, she avoided what was potentially becoming a heightened controversial discussion and quickly refocused the topic to avoid a discussion on the unsettled issue about evolution. Still, it appeared that students like Qadir were interested in learning more about this conflictual topic.

Raising unsettled issues in the classroom is a risk and for that reason many teachers prefer to refer to fact-based methodologies or "semicontroversial issues" that have a "scientifically approved right answer" (Noddings, 2012, p. 63). The topic of evolution is "scientifically settled" and could be presented as a semi-controversial issue in secular public schools.[9] Mrs. Amrita did not intentionally plan to integrate controversial topics, such as religion or evolution; rather she sought to create the space for such issues to surface in classroom discussions and activities. However, when issues did surface she did not always invite students to critically reflect on them.

In addressing controversial perspectives in her classroom, Mrs. Amrita shared her perspective on how she taught about multiple points of view:

Mrs. A: In our education system we have taught them that there is only one point of view and one answer to every question, so at this point we need to teach them that people can have different points of view about the same thing …. But I need to teach them that it is okay to listen to other people's opinions as well—and that is an important skill, I think.

Even for teachers who carry the intention to engage different perspectives, it is still challenging to find the time, space, or support to nurture critical controversial dialogues. Mrs. Amrita opted to bow out of certain conversations, and engaged with others that apparently felt safer.

Mrs. Amrita's typical norms for engagement were to start the dialogue by posing a question as though she was unsure of the answer and needed students' help to uncover it. This type of questioning strengthened students' positions as knowers, and contributed to a feeling of equitable power relations between students and teacher. For instance, in the story "The Woman Who Outshone the

Sun," by Alejandro Cruz Martinez (*Nelson Literacy 4*, n.d.), the character Lucia gets excluded. Mrs. Amrita asked the class to voice their perspectives on this in the following way:

> Mrs. A: We can tell from this that she is different and they don't like her because she is different. But *I don't know, so tell me*—what else do we know about Lucia?

In the discussion that ensued from Mrs. Amrita's interpretive values questioning, many diverse students quickly identified elements of social exclusion, including bullying and discrimination. To guide her students to make connections, she told them that she inferred the main character to be Mother Nature herself. She explained how she had used her own background knowledge: in Indian Hindu culture, the Mother is worshipped. Many students, who shared the same ethnocultural identity as their teacher, concurred. They also connected the River woman in the story—who had given the river back to the people—to the Hindu river goddess, known as "Maa Ganga" in Hindu folklore. Mrs. Amrita told her students that no answer was wrong, because everyone's background knowledge would influence how they interpreted the material. She continued to stress that everyone was different and that this was OK. However, non-Hindu students did not name alternative cultural knowledge at this time. By acknowledging difference and explicitly eliciting and integrating students' diverse cultural knowledge, Mrs. Amrita guided her students to make connections to their identities and to their peers within their current social and cultural contexts.

DISCUSSION: (DE)CONTEXTUALIZING IDENTITY, CONFLICT, AND CITIZENSHIP IN ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

These three teachers similarly and differently implemented conflict-dialogue pedagogies about social conflicts with classes of similar demographic composition. Their choices contributed to most students sharing their personal, lived experiences at times during open classroom discussions. Students' identities and social status influenced their opportunities and choices to participate in dialogic activities. The ways in which students interpreted curricular subject matter were shaped by their personal identities, histories, and experiences (Banks, 2006a; Delpit, 2006). Like the minority students Dull and Murrow (2008) observed in American high schools, opportunities to participate in issues discussions were limited by their teachers' choices to pose critical, interpretive questions that encouraged students to make connections and invite critical reflection. In Ms. Marlee's Grade 4 class, there was limited discussion and reflection on Canadian symbols, even though some students, such as Swetha, a Tamil Sri Lankan, held alternative views. In Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 class, lower-status students chose not to share their family's personal experience with the immigration points system because they were embarrassed at their parents not having passed the test. Similarly, in Mr. Hiroshi's class, some Grade 7 students chose not to share their allegiance to their home country. In other cases, such as sharing immigration stories in Mrs. Amrita's class,

writing creation stories in Ms. Marlee's class, and discussing the conflict in Egypt in Mr. Hiroshi's class, possibilities for dialogue were opened up when teachers affirmed students' identities and encouraged them to share their personal perspectives. In all three classrooms, the teachers shared their own personal connection and perspectives on the issues—Ms. Marlee disclosed her religious perspective, Mr. Hiroshi shared his allegiance to Canada, and Mrs. Amrita spoke about her challenges in acculturating to Canadian society. While these teacher disclosures prompted some students to participate, the sensitive and controversial topics silenced others.

Where there were differential opportunities to engage in conflict dialogue, some students, such as Tina and Fatima, might have been better mobilized than others for success when discussing religious conflictual issues because of their opportunity to practise such dialogue in their classroom. Other students, such as Sunita and Jawali, might continue to not openly discuss their feelings about the conflict between Tamil Sri Lankans and Canada, because of their minority perspective within their classroom and their sociopolitical context.

Implications of Differential Opportunities for Dialogue

When teachers connect students' identities to the curriculum content, it empowers minority students to participate in democratic dialogue processes (Hemmings, 2000). During the religious conflict follow-up activity on creation stories in Ms. Marlee's class, students who evidently saw their connection to this topic volunteered to participate. Neither Fatima nor Tina shied away from getting up in front of the class to share their different stories. Fatima's stories illustrated her desire to connect with her cultural heritage by using opportunities to speak about Islam with her classmates; a newcomer immigrant, she had arrived from Pakistan to Canada two years previously and at nine years of age she wore a hijab to school. When newcomer immigrants are trying to integrate into mainstream society, they may dissociate themselves from their cultural identities (e.g., by not speaking their language or connecting to their racial or religious identity; Cummins, 2001; C. A. Parker, 2010).

Some students may need to feel explicitly invited to contribute their personal knowledge to discussions, especially when they may be unsure of whether personal religious perspectives are respected in publicly funded, mainstream classrooms. For example, Farat, from Pakistan, did not initially volunteer information about his personal cultural background and experience, but when recruited by a peer who shared his religious identity, he did speak up. Similar incidents occurred in Mrs. Amrita's and Mr. Hiroshi's classes, when they each named students and asked them to share their perspective.

Including diverse identities in curriculum content becomes even more complex when students fear that outing aspects of their identity—such as what language they speak at home—could cause them to be identified as non-Canadian. Almost all of the students in Ms. Marlee's class enthusiastically participated in the recitation activity about Canadian symbols. The students' identification with

Canadianness seemed expected, if not mandated. Nevertheless, their participation illustrated their familiarity with dominant Canadian narratives. Thus, classroom discussions have the potential to encourage diverse, tolerant, and dissenting viewpoints, but they also risk further marginalizing or silencing some diverse students (Hahn, 1998). Swetha and three other Tamil Sri Lankan students in Ms. Marlee's class chose to not share their stories of war and violence back home during this discussion—nor were they invited to do so.

Mrs. Amrita challenged the notion that newcomer or second-generation immigrants should shy away from speaking about their personal backgrounds: she encouraged her students by explicitly naming their experience. She was familiar with most of her students' personal experiences, and she called on students who she felt had interesting stories that supported the narrative of newcomer struggles she had chosen to implement. This critical multicultural approach seemed to also influence how students interpreted Canadian immigration. Mrs. Amrita used her position to give authority to immigration stories (such as Qadir's, Nitin's, and Tandir's) that represented an alternative discourse of struggle and inequity. This strategy appeared to affirm many of Mrs. Amrita's students' experiences, and to develop their sense of inclusion in the curriculum.

In this same episode, however, Jamal (the one African-Canadian boy in the class) displayed his disengagement when Mrs. Amrita asked for students to share their personal familial stories. Although Jamal had enthusiastically offered many examples in response to the general question about why people immigrate to Canada (e.g., the government is corrupt), he never said outright that his family had moved to Canada because the government was corrupt, as this would have implicated him personally.

Other topics in Mrs. Amrita's class, such as the immigration points test, also seemed to discourage many students from sharing their perspectives: Caden chose not to participate because, as he told me, he was embarrassed that his parents had not passed the test at first. Overall, these kinds of situations in both Ms. Marlee's and Mrs. Amrita's classes showed that when students felt that it was too risky, they chose not to participate out loud. Some of these same students overcame their discomfort and did speak up, after they received direct peer or teacher encouragement. Also, in Mrs. Amrita's case, all the students had written out their reflections, so they still had the opportunity to share their stories, albeit just with their teacher.

In both Mrs. Amrita's and Ms. Marlee's classes, divergent perspectives were raised about various texts. Ms. Marlee used an Aboriginal creation story from the class text and Mrs. Amrita used generic, fictitious immigration stories from the text to introduce the topic to students. In both cases, textbook stories conflicted with the students' personal narratives and experiences. When teachers invited exploration of these conflicts and provided time to dialogue about this difference, opportunities opened up for students to reflect on diversity and conflict, and to draw on connections to their personal experiences.

Mr. Hiroshi used a different technique: he often used current events to connect to his students' diversities, and compared and contrasted these with historical

events. In this way, he sought to facilitate discussions about diversity and conflict, inviting further opportunities for learning about divergent or conflicting perspectives. For example, he showed students a newspaper article about the uprising in Egypt, and encouraged students to make self-to-text connections by inviting one student, Mona, who had a personal connection to this conflict, to speak to it and make it real for the other students. By consistently including current events and experiences in relation to historical conflict, he created a safe space for Mona to share her personal connection to a conflict.

Mr. Hiroshi presented and played with conflicts to varying levels. His methods also empowered Tyrone to provoke his peer, Crystal, by comparing her dominant identity in class with a tyrannical historical figure. While the interpersonal conflict between Tyrone and Crystal was not taken up by their teacher at this time, their ability to connect and react to each other shows how he had taught his students to use their personal experiences to interpret conflict in the world.

Conflict is inescapably tied to diversity. In contrast to Hess (2001, 2009), this chapter has shown that any topic, settled or unsettled, can be addressed as a conflictual issue, especially by inviting recognition of diversity. Mrs. Amrita presented Canadian immigration as an unsettled issue, even though it appeared as settled in the text. Her invitation to compare and contrast the dominant Canadian narrative with students' own divergent immigration stories provided opportunities for students to share the economic and cultural adaptation challenges and conflicts that come with immigration. In other units of study, she did not problematize or unsettle the content in the same way. Instead, she avoided conflictual issues—such as evolution—and chose to adopt a liberal multicultural perspective, offering to legitimate various religious practices without encouraging critical reflection on what such a process of acceptance entailed.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Amrita's Ancient Civilizations unit provided students with the opportunity to reflect on their cultural identities: Nitin chose to study ancient Greece to expand his cultural repertoire, whereas Sugriva chose to learn "even more" about his own root culture, ancient India. Sugriva's and Nitin's choices illustrate that teaching students from all backgrounds about diverse cultures is vital: by learning about themselves and each other, it prepares students to develop cross-cultural awareness (Nieto, 1992). While the study of diverse ancient civilizations did not overtly explore conflict, it provided students with the choice to study cultures whose cultural norms and values may have conflicted with their own.

Ms. Marlee at first presented information as uncontested, based on her perspective that religious intolerance was wrong. She then asked students to research their personal stories in collaboration with their families and peers, in order to engage in a meaningful reflection and dialogue about religious difference. She used the initial interpersonal conflict between Tina and Fatima as a teachable moment to create a powerful learning opportunity for diverse students. Similarly, in Mr. Hiroshi's reflection on his personal identity, he toyed with the (presumably settled) belief that immigrants would remain loyal to their ancestral country if Canada were to go to war with that country. While he chose not to engage students

in discussion about this issue, he appeared to invite students to explore their cultural allegiances. This encouraged some students, such as Crystal (from a mixed background), to reinforce their Canadian identity, while some Tamil Sri Lankan students, like Sunita and Jawali, appeared to intensify their anger towards the government in Sri Lanka. All three vignettes highlight the important role of teachers and also more confident peers who sometimes supported diverse students' inclusion: their direct encouragement sometimes enabled quiet students to speak about their personal experiences.

In these three cases, the students' and teachers' identities very much influenced how both groups grappled with and responded to different conflictual issues. Many students' values stemmed from a mixture of cultural influences; learning within a multicultural Canadian context also contributed to shaping and reshaping students' identities, allegiances, and perspectives on settled and unsettled issues. As Cummins (2001) has pointed out, identities influence how issues are interpreted: "Classroom interactions are never neutral with respect to the message communicated in students about the value of their language, culture, intellect, and imagination" (pp. 650–651). Like Mrs. Amrita, Ms. Marlee showed how she might be able to negotiate conflict through emergent issues in the classroom culture and the curriculum. However, overall, Ms. Marlee's implemented curriculum typically avoided potential dialogue about conflict and diversity; she avoided potentially conflictual topics that she worried might scar their young minds.

Mr. Hiroshi's pedagogical approach was closer to Mrs. Amrita's: by always making a point of recognizing and affirming students' diverse identities, he encouraged an open climate in the classroom. However, unlike Mrs. Amrita and Ms. Marlee, Mr. Hiroshi introduced historical conflicts as unsettled topics for discussion, as well as current events. Drawing on their personal cultural resources, his students were able to use their experience to connect with historical and ongoing political and social conflicts. However, across all classes, some students (e.g., Jamal, Uma, and Swetha) had arrived from high-conflict settings, such as war zones or places where government was corrupt. Their willingness to engage and share perspectives in whole-class discussions was not always easy or welcomed.

Mrs. Amrita was clearly aware of her students' immigration histories and she demonstrated an interest in their lives and histories. Therefore, when she gave her students the choice of whether to share their stories, rather than herself choosing who participated, she acknowledged a sensitivity to the students' lived experiences. Some students refused to share; one student asked her to read his story aloud on his behalf, claiming that he was too shy to do so himself. In Ms. Marlee's classroom, the discussion about diversity and religious difference evolved out of one or two students' initial intentions to do harm to an individual (or representative of a cultural group) by asserting the validity of their own religion over another's. This episode showed that implementing activities about students' diverse cultural histories will not always be harmonious, particularly when it is articulated or represented in a way intended to provoke interpersonal conflict.

Some students, like Fatima (Grade 4) and Crystal (Grade 7), who may have felt marginalized, articulated their experiences with learning: their repertoires of

cultural knowledge and understanding were expanded in classroom environments where their peers, of both similar and different cultural backgrounds, sometimes supported their learning. These experiences illustrate what Walter Parker (2011) referred to as "wiggle room," a process that allows for movement within institutional constraints. Wiggle room to infuse dialogue across and about difference can be found in prescribed curriculum content. The classroom teacher carries the important role of continually mediating and leading the positioning of conflict in the classroom. However, in this study, when conflictual talk was closely attached to students' identities, the various students' responses in each context, and their high level of engagement when conflictual talk did closely relate to their identities, were clear indicators of how curricular content can be made to relate and connect to students' past, present, and future experiences in their diverse world.

The three teachers in this study evidently presented issues that they felt comfortable introducing and facilitating: because of this, we can see how various kinds of classroom discussions and activities about conflict and diversity could be approached in different ways. Teachers' experiences and cultural histories also shaped how conflicts were or were not addressed. Ms. Marlee chose to invite conflicting creation stories into her classroom, but not to discuss critical social issues; Mrs. Amrita chose to include her and her students' immigration stories to contrast the dominant immigration discourse within textbooks, but not to critique power and social structures in ancient civilizations. Mr. Hiroshi opted to compare current events to other conflicts past and present, and to invite a global cross-cultural perspective among his diverse students, but not to critique their personal choices and feelings about their allegiances to Canada.

When invited, many diverse students, even the typically quiet ones, appeared to want to discuss conflictual issues, both by sharing their experiences and by expressing their desire to learn and talk more about current events occurring around the world. Teaching explicitly about conflict and diversity through a critical multicultural program invited quiet and diverse students in the classroom to speak. The processes of navigating between the multiple worlds of home, school, and community were softened when the relationships among teachers and peers, and between content and pedagogy, were closely interconnected and related (Phelan et al., 1991). Teachers need to integrate culturally relevant pedagogies into their practice, in order to better support diverse ethnocultural minority students' identities and citizenship, and navigate critical multicultural education programs and discussion-based teaching about conflict and diversity (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004).

These three classroom cases illustrate the similar and different ways ethnocultural minority students were led to grapple with different norms for engagement in dialogue about difference and social conflicts, such as wars, religions, and cultural or social exclusion. All three teachers used a variety of dialogic pedagogies to encourage their diverse students to study how conflicts had historically been approached and could be resolved peacefully by exploring and including multiple perspectives, evident in current events and students' experiences. Overall, all three teachers in this study used diverse pedagogical

processes in conjunction with local, global, and historical content to facilitate culturally sensitive and responsive learning environments for diverse students.

In the next chapter, I explore how these teachers used implicit and hidden curriculum embedded in education to both challenge and maintain the traditional (i.e., elite) power structures in Canadian culture.

NOTES

[1] The answer to this is still contentious among many historians. Americans typically refer to themselves as the winner, while Canadians typically acknowledge the British North American colony (that would later become Canada) as the winner of this war.

[2] Published in 2006, this text was a relatively new classroom textbook. It is renowned for its critical and inclusive perspective on Canadian history and its critical thinking activities to promote historical literacy. The edition also includes an optional Catholic supplement for use in Catholic schools in Canadian provinces (Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan) and territories (Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut) that have separate school systems.

[3] On September 13, 1759, the British (with 4,500 troops) led by Wolfe (1727–1759) and the French (with 3,000 troops) led by Montcalm (1712–1759) engaged in an impulsive and unplanned battle over Quebec. James P. Wolfe has been commemorated as "The Conqueror of Quebec" for his victory over the French in Canada. Louis Joseph de Montcalm-Gozon, Marquis de Saint-Veran, was a French general. He was wounded during the battle on the Plains of Abraham. He lost the battle, and later succumbed to his injuries. The British won the battle and Wolfe died on the battlefield. Mr. Hiroshi used his death to illustrate bravery and heroism in warfare. On each side, 650 troops died.

[4] While Mr. Hiroshi chose to take this position of remaining loyal to Canada in front of his students, he also chose to not mention the history of the Japanese internment in Canada. His avoidance of this historical conflict was even further complicated because Mr. Hiroshi's grandfather, who he referenced in this lesson as being born in Canada, was affected by the internment. During 1941 to 1947 all Japanese people living in Canada, regardless of whether they had even been to Japan in their lifetime, having been born in Canada, were given the choice to either go (back) to Japan or leave their home and relocate to an internment camp. Clearly, in the spirit of promoting dominant Canadian values, he opted to not share this part of his history.

[5] The Acadians were expelled by the British from Acadie—the present-day Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island—in 1755–1764.

[6] Tina wrote her story out on a piece of paper. In capital letters it was titled: "Creation Story!" "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. / God said let there be light, and there was light. He called the light day and the darkness night. / On the second day, God made the sky. / On the third day, God made land, plants, and trees. / On the fourth day, God made light for the day and light for the night. / On the fifth day, God made birds to fly and creatures to swim in the sea. / On the sixth day, God made land animals and made man in his image. / On the seventh day, he rested."

[7] Swetha wrote this story: "This creation story people believed in my religion is that there was one god named Ganapathi. One day he was dancing. That time when Ganapathi was dancing the moon was laughing. The moon laughed because he said that Ganapathi is fat and wondered how he can dance. Ganapathi got mad. He stared at the moon. The moon was falling, falling, and falling. He ended up on Lord Shiva's feet. Lord Shiva is Ganapathi's dad. Lord Shiva felt sad for the moon so he put the moon on his head. So that is when 'day' and 'night' began. By Swetha."

[8] The class textbook, *Early Civilizations* (Waters, 2001), included two sections that were each devoted to the study of different civilizations: ancient Greece and ancient China. Students read sections from the ancient Greece section together during class read-alouds where they consistently reflected on the themes of religion, sports, art, and meeting basic needs in this civilization.

[9] In Canadian, publicly funded Catholic or religious schools, evolution would be an unsettled, controversial topic and would therefore be considered as unsuitable or high-risk (see Chapter 6 for a further discussion of evolution in secular and nonsecular schools in Ontario).

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT CONFLICT AND DIVERSITY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

> The treatment of conflict in the school curriculum can lead to political quiescence and the acceptance by students of a perspective on social and intellectual conflict that acts to maintain the existing distribution of power and rationality in a society.
>
> —Michael Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*

In many ways, processes of schooling are designed for social control: students are immersed in a system that encourages the reproduction of particular knowledges and norms through a socialization process known as the *hidden curriculum* (Apple, 1979/1990; Jackson, 1968). The term was first coined by Jackson (1968). It means teaching through implicit models, practices, rewards, and sanctions; students are taught "appropriate" ways to reason, believe, and interact, often as if these ways were neutral, commonsensical, and based on consensus. However, the process perpetuates inequality, and silences dissenting voices. Making conflict an explicit component of the curriculum can challenge this hegemonic ideology (Apple, 1979/1990).

The *explicit curriculum* is the mandated curriculum. It outlines formal procedures for implementation. The *absent* or *null curriculum* are expectations that are present in the explicit curriculum, but excluded from it, whether intentionally or unintentionally. In this way, they become the "options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about, much less be able to use" (Eisner, 2002, p. 107). For instance, cultural examples that may be relevant to students' lives and potentially increase their learning opportunity are not used. The null curriculum silences conflictual issues (Bickmore, 1999).

In the implemented curriculum, teachers can choose various learning experiences and curricular goals that will contribute to better enabling diverse students opportunities for social inclusion and academic achievement. In this chapter I show how implicit and explicit curriculum that included discussion about conflict and diversity provided opportunities for diverse students to learn about patriarchal and colonial power relations.

Critical scholars, like Apple (1979/1990), have argued that explicitly teaching diverse students how to confront conflict can allow all students, particularly those from lower socioeconomic communities, to secure a "sense of the legitimate means of gaining recourse within unequal societies" (p. 84). Such a positive perspective on conflict can encourage diverse students to engage with and perhaps even challenge political repression and inequality. Still, during my time spent with

teachers who believed they invited conflict dialogue, I consistently found that they missed opportunities for explicitly engaging with difficult topics.

In what follows, I draw on discreet instances of conflict engagement and at times the extensive preparation for such dialogic learning opportunities in order to substantiate the "wiggle room" that exists within classrooms. I discuss critical incidents in three classrooms to show how three teachers taught students to relate to the hierarchal structures they belonged within—namely, school and Canadian society. These cases illustrate how conflict was or was not taken up, and how different pedagogical approaches to conflict in the implemented curriculum influenced opportunities for political engagement.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PERFORMANCES: SEEKING EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ROLES

Dialogic pedagogies invite opportunities for constructive expression and consideration of conflict, and support students' understandings of democracy and citizenship (Haas, 2008; Hahn, 1998; Hess & Posselt, 2002). All three teachers taught civic rights and responsibilities in classrooms containing differential power relations and diversity. They used pedagogies such as role play, simulation, and discussion to create opportunities for their students to learn about Canadian society and develop so-called Canadian values.

Building on the elements and application of conflict dialogue, Table 3 presents a framework and typology for engaging and empathizing with diverse and divergent perspectives. This perspective typology draws on Banks' (2006a) multicultural education continuum and Bickmore and Parker's (2014) elements of conflict dialogue typology to identify principles for the facilitation of various types of perspectives and potential outcomes for how diverse students may respond to and experience different kinds of dialogue about diversity and conflict along this continuum of perspective awareness, engagement, tolerance, acceptance, and empathizing with other perspectives. Even with the implementation of the above principles, there are multiple ways in which diverse students engage with and experience conflict-dialogue processes.

Awareness of different perspectives is an initial step in deepening and broadening one's understanding of difference; through engagement with divergent perspectives, the process of tolerating and acknowledging divergent histories, identities, and experiences is possible. When peer-to-peer dialogue about difference and conflict is consistently offered, opportunities open to develop acceptance and move towards developing empathy and affinity for diverse identities and perspectives (C. A. Parker, 2015).

In the Grade 4 class, Ms. Marlee conducted a simulation, placing students in an inverted hierarchy based on medieval European roles. Some students asked questions about such things as subservience and control in the roles, positions, and privileges of other dominant or lesser groups. Ms. Marlee prepared students for engaging with difference by assigning higher-power roles such as king or princess

Table 3. Perspective Typology

	Perspective awareness	**Perspective engagement**	**Tolerance of divergent perspectives**	**Acceptance of other perspectives**	**Empathize with other perspectives**
Principles of perspective levels	Confronting divergent perspectives through reading or listening to an alternative story and viewpoint	Voicing similar and different perspectives; divergent points of view	Acknowledging other perspectives through cross-(cultural) communication and engagement	Understanding the positions of the other perspective by identifying underlying interests and feelings	Consistent opportunities for dialogue, based on shared understanding and empathy for another
Potential outcomes and behaviour	Observing; listening silently; self-reflective process	Asking questions and engaging through attentive listening	Suspending judgment while engaging with divergent histories and experiences	Peer-to-peer (equitable) dialogue about difference and conflict	Carrying affinity and empathy with individual/group identities (ethnocultural, religious, gender)

to quiet students, and lower-status roles such as peasant or townsperson to vocal students. However, Ms. Marlee did not ask students to engage in conflict or dialogue with each other. As Apple (1979/1990) has argued, such an absence of opportunity to discuss conflict reinforced power positions. Within this constructed medieval society many students subscribed to the roles, rather than challenging them.

Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 students studied Canadian government and citizenship. They identified how their wants and needs sometimes conflicted with their rights in what Mrs. Amrita termed a free and peaceful Canada. In a fictional election campaign, Mrs. Amrita taught students about voting rights while also encouraging them to master their responsibilities as new Canadians. The students took on roles with unequal power, such as candidate, media, or citizen. Mrs. Amrita asked them to reflect on their political beliefs, engaging them in exploring how their diverse voices could make a difference when conflict between governmental parties was enacted. However, in contrast to Mr. Hiroshi's political simulation, Mrs. Amrita, like Ms. Marlee, masked conflict by presenting Canadian government as responsible although it offered little or no room for the dissenting voices of opposition parties.

Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 students participated in a Town Hall simulation of the Rebellions of 1837,[1] which represented differential social status groups within Canadian society at that time. Many students made connections between these issues from the past and objections against governments in their home countries in the present, and reflected on their relation to the contemporary Canadian situation. While playing fictitious, simulated roles, others were invited by this learning activity to express their experiences with marginalization. These activities allowed students to find ways to enact and develop their own power and identity while also empathizing with other perspectives.

Overall, the opportunity to have autonomy during role-play and simulations in all three classes encouraged students to engage with their emotions and to become more aware of their own perspectives and those of their character.

KINGS, QUEENS, AND PEASANTS: HIDDEN AND EXPLICIT CURRICULUM ABOUT SOCIAL HIERARCHIES

In her Medieval Times unit, which lasted three months, Ms. Marlee intentionally planned some implicit curriculum: she planned for her students to experience having more or less power. By purposely assigning lesser- or higher-power roles to students who typically did not hold those positions in the class, she attempted to transform the power structures in her class. Lower-status students were given higher-status positions—for example, the normally quiet Farat was named king, and a quiet girl, Greta, was named princess. Higher-status students were given lower-status positions; for example, Jade, a dominant, high-status girl was named serf. The classification of lower-status or higher-status was based on Ms. Marlee's perceptions of her students.

As researcher, I also identified students who appeared to hold more power in the classroom—that is, those with dominant, influential voices. Ms. Marlee's assessment did not always correlate with my own. For example, Ms. Marlee told me privately how she had assigned her students roles based on their individual personality, perceived social status, and body type. Thus, she assigned Hussain, a quiet student, the role of serf because he was "bigger in size." In this way, Ms. Marlee's role assignment did not uniformly reverse the classroom status hierarchy: this quiet student remained in a lower position, because Ms. Marlee thought it would be "good for him to see how it feels to be someone smaller"—with less power. She did not tell her students that she had purposely inverted their roles based on her perception of their usual classroom hierarchy.

Ms. Marlee told me that she understood Farat to be calm and quiet and in need of more "class power." For instance, during one observation as I took notes, Ms. Marlee came to stand beside me, and told me to take a look at Farat and Fatima: "Fatima is bossing him around as they work on their health project and Farat's just sitting there and not responding to her." To her, this was an indication of his compliance and unflappability—behaviours that marked Farat's suitability for the role of king. She went on to say that she felt she had made the right decision in assigning him this important role, because "he doesn't talk back and he's just calm and usually quiet." Ms. Marlee's view of Farat as quiet was consistent with my observations. However, I disagreed with her analysis that Farat was calm and subordinate. Throughout my observations, I took note of how Farat sometimes engaged in quiet disruptive activity, such as poking his neighbour with his pencil, kicking someone underneath the desk, or being off-task (e.g., colouring or reading under his desk) during teacher-led lessons. Since Ms. Marlee told me that she thought Farat was in need of more "class power," during a student group interview, I asked Farat about his role as King:

Christina: And what did you like about being the king?

Farat: It was fun and I got to *rule over everybody*.

Christina: Is that something that you're used to doing?

Farat: *No.*

Christina: Is that what made it fun? Because it gave you power?

Farat: Yeah.

Christina: What kinds of things did you do?

Farat: I told people what to do.

Farat's "*No*" was an indication that he agreed with Ms. Marlee's analysis, at least verbally. Farat was not used to having overt power in class when he had been just Farat, but this changed when he was assigned the role of king. Farat's acceptance of the role did appear to build his confidence in wielding power over others. With

the opportunity to "rule over everybody," he enjoyed the privilege of his role, as he now felt the power to confidently state that, as king, "I told people what to do."

Throughout the unit, as students engaged with their different roles, Farat, or his peers, did not appear to engage in asking questions concerning the rights or responsibilities of citizens or governing bodies. Ms. Marlee did not discuss constructive or positive power; instead, she focused on teaching her students about traditional, normative hierarchal structures that appeared to reflect how students learn and engage with "codes of power" (Delpit, 1988; Marri, 2005). Some students seemed to find their assigned medieval simulation roles fun and engaging, particularly those whose roles allowed them to experience power (Boler, 1999). For instance, Navpreet, a traditionally dressed Sikh girl, was assigned the role of lady and as such was married to a male fellow student. After researching the duties of her role as lady she jokingly told me that she was in the process of requesting a divorce. Navpreet's personal recognition of her power, as a woman capable of requesting a divorce, illustrated how she interpreted history at that time—which contradicted the normative and hierarchal structures of medieval Europe that Ms. Marlee explicitly taught. While Ms. Marlee echoed traditional beliefs that women served men and had no voice, Navpreet chose to enact what she believed she was able to do in her present-day world: divorce without fear of social reprisal. Thus, Ms. Marlee's purposeful inversion of power was successful in having students connect present-day perspectives with historical ones.

Medieval Times is a customary unit of study for elementary students in Ontario. Because of this, Ms. Marlee had many teaching resources available to her, including lesson plans, teacher guides, books, and online resources. When students were initially assigned their roles, they spent time learning to describe who they were by conducting individual Google searches. Many students were also interested in their peers' roles and often asked, "What are you?" Sometimes, on hearing their peers' role, students would respond, "Well, I'm higher than you." Clearly, this assignment of roles reinforced a competitive dynamic. This was not unfamiliar to the students in the class, where having power (e.g., points) over others reigned supreme. Almost two months into the unit, Ms. Marlee asked the students to think about how their individual, assigned roles had fit into the established hierarchy of the time. In their literacy textbook they read a four-page article called "Knights." Students took summary notes on the content, which described and reinforced ideals about how knights should treat others, particularly women who expected chivalry from them. While this article could have provided the opportunity to reflect on social power structures, Ms. Marlee did not prompt any critical reflection on these unequal social roles, nor on their relevance to contemporary Canadian life. The implicit message was to accept and not challenge social inequality.

Ms. Marlee tested students' knowledge through a game: asking them to determine what places their assigned roles held in medieval society. Ms. Marlee asked them to go to different areas of the room if they thought their role was a "noble," "worker in the field," or "townsperson":

Ms. M: There is actually a hierarchy in medieval times.

Shaun: Am I a noble?

Ms. M: Shaun, stop talking!

Ms. M: So, we're going to look at the hierarchy. If you believe you are noble, line up [here]. *(Students get up and line up, all the while calling out to tell each other who they think belongs to a noble position.)*

Ms. M: If you work in the field go [here].

Swetha: *(to Farat)* You don't work in the field—go back there! You're the king!

With the exception of Farat, students with roles such as queen, lady, baron, and baroness immediately went to the nobles' corner. While Farat enjoyed the privilege of his role, in this moment he seemed to forget that he didn't belong with the "masses." The many students assigned roles as workers and townspeople—such as alchemist, herald, scullery maid, and mason—appeared a little confused. They ended up in another group altogether. Ms. Marlee instructed the rest of the students to find their places either in the town or out in the field. The physical divisions in which Ms. Marlee placed the students allowed them to see that there was a strict social class hierarchy at that time. She did not extend the activity by asking the students to do something in their particular groupings, which left little or no opportunity for dialogue. Thus, the exercise normalized social inequality.

I observed students as they researched their different medieval period roles. The students independently researched these roles online, responding to worksheet questions such as "Who are you?" and "What do you do?" and "Who works for you?" As I walked around the classroom, Farat asked me, "Who serves me directly?" I responded, going along with the mandate of the exercise, "You're the king, so everyone serves you during this period in time." Ms. Marlee reminded all students, as they responded to this question: "Everyone has someone who works for them." A male student, Veeran, clarified this medieval social structure: "Like your family or children?" Ms. Marlee commended him for understanding the hierarchal roles and reiterated the gender norms that she embedded into this history: "Yes, your wife works under you, for example. There will always be someone who serves you—it could be your children, even." This part of the exercise strengthened gender social structure stereotypes and perpetuated competitive social dynamics.

My interviews with the Grade 4 students confirmed that many students had readily subscribed to what they believed was an irrefutable and predetermined hierarchy within their society. For instance, Swetha said: "Ms. Marlee will call us up in groups, in order, and everybody will take turns and she will say 'How would they use these words now today, compared to medieval times?' So, like, a king

would be a prime minister." In other interviews, students also identified social class structures. For instance, one male student said, "I'm a merchant, so I'm above a peasant"—again echoing the competitive power dynamics within this classroom space. While some students, like Navpreet, saw possibilities for pushing role boundaries, most students uncritically subscribed to their roles, reinforcing a contemporary hierarchy of power and privilege, in which each had a predefined place within society. Overall, this class of culturally diverse students embraced the opportunity to learn about the medieval period, even though the implemented lessons were limited to mostly factual knowledge. For instance, in an interview, I asked Navpreet, a quiet female, what she felt she was learning from the Medieval Times unit. She responded that she appreciated the opportunity to learn about other cultures:

> Navpreet: I actually think it would make me happy to learn about other people and their languages …. But I like learning about medieval times because now I know what happened in the past.

For her, knowing about the medieval period was neutral cultural knowledge. "The past" in social studies class did not include learning about diverse other cultures—such as her own, as a Sikh girl who was born in India.

Apple (1979/1990) theorized that schools prepare young people for acting their roles within an already defined, unequal, hierarchical social and economic system. Ms. Marlee's implementation of the medieval system hierarchy showed how easily dominant discourses about hierarchy could be taught uncritically to diverse students. These diverse students were taught to accept unequal access to power without the opportunity to practise dissent from their unequal positions in the world. For young, diverse, newcomer immigrant students, such teaching may contribute to a belief that people such as themselves could not possibly be agents of social change in their new society.

In one class discussion, Ms. Marlee encouraged Tina, who as a Christian was in the minority in this classroom context, to relate her medieval role to her actual religious identity:

> Ms. M: Very few people read, but among the top people who could read were the clergy. Tina, you should know this. What position were you assigned?
>
> Tina: Abbess.
>
> Ms. M: What are you a part of?
>
> Tina: Clergy.
>
> Ms. M: The church controlled a lot of the knowledge and it was to their benefit to have the other people be illiterate, because reading is power and the church just educated people within the clergy. When the Renaissance happened they had access to the printing

press and there were more people reading. If you were rich, what are you doing?

Amit: *(a knight)* Get the minstrels to make music.

Tina: *(an abbess)* Write poetry.

Swetha: *(a lady)* Make dinner.

Ms. M: Yep, the ladies would plan the meals.

As argued by Hemmings (2000) and as I argued in the previous chapter, connecting to students' identities can be a strategy for opening up the possibilities for inclusion and engagement. Ms. Marlee reminded Tina that she "should know" about the church systems and structures, thereby acknowledging Tina as a practising Christian, and affirming her identity and inclusion in the classroom space. This dialogue about the church was also an instance of the way Christianity operated as a dominant discourse in the classroom; it was implicitly constructed as powerful, settled curriculum content. By stimulating Tina to explore the idea that the medieval church controlled knowledge, the lesson presented the idea that unequal social structures were preserved in medieval societies. This was an effort to examine how power operated and how the church controlled that knowledge.

Nonetheless, while this moment provided students with some exposure to the role of the medieval church, I did not observe the issue being raised again by Ms. Marlee or by Tina in the remainder of the unit. As mentioned earlier, Tina had specifically asked her teacher to assign her a role within the church in the medieval simulation. This demonstrated Tina's comfort in speaking in class about her Christian religious identity, which was continuously acknowledged by Ms. Marlee—she often used Tina as an example linked to the Christian church. For the most part, however, in Ms. Marlee's lessons and activities about power positions during the medieval period, her efforts to foster connections to students' ethnocultural identities were otherwise minimal. And, as in Ms. Marlee's study of Canadian symbols, she implicitly taught her Grade 4 students not to critique hierarchies in this historical period.

The interpersonal religious conflict that had erupted between two girls earlier in the school year appeared to demonstrate that different religions were open topics for discussion. Students seemed to be comfortable accepting that religious differences coexisted in their diverse class. Speaking about "God," for instance, was not censored, as might otherwise be expected in a public school system. During a literacy class, Ms. Marlee displayed a picture of Joan of Arc on the class SMART Board and told students that Joan of Arc had gone to war, won lots of battles, and claimed to "hear God." She went on to say that the story didn't end well; that Joan of Arc didn't go home because she was "tried by the church and burned at the stake." In a conflict over how gender expectations influenced equity and justice, Swetha and Shaun reflected about women's roles and how social class intersects with gender:

Swetha: Why do you think they burned her?

Ms. M: Why do you think that?

Students: I don't know.

Ms. M: The charge against her was that she was wearing men's clothes.

Swetha: Well some girls wear guys' clothes *now* and girls wear guys' clothes.

Ms. M: *(with rising intonation)* But we [women] were their shadow and owned by them.

Swetha: *(and other girls)* WHAT!?! (*some boys laugh, mocking some girls)*

Ms. M: You'll see it more [in] medieval times.

Shaun: *(interrupts)* What happens if they're a queen?

Ms. M: If you're a queen you're lucky.

Swetha: I'm happy I'm not living there, then.

Ms. M: OK, we're supposed to be linking this to inferring. *(transitions)*

In this dialogue, Swetha used her identity and her sense of agency as a young Tamil Sri Lankan girl, whose family had immigrated to Canada because of the civil war, to interpret this social studies lesson about medieval gender expectations and Joan of Arc. This discussion about history provided Swetha with the opportunity to affirm her sense of self, saying she was happy "not living there, then" because she enjoyed the right to wear what she wanted. Shaun also drew upon his sociocultural knowledge, and actually deepened the dialogue, by asking an interpretive question: "What happens if they're a queen?" This was important, first because Ms. Marlee used the opportunity to respond to Shaun's question, which she did not always do, and secondly it showed how Shaun critically interpreted gender and social class. Even though Ms. Marlee taught many uncritical lessons across her curriculum, she provided the opportunity for this brief critical dialogue before reminding students that their discussion was constrained by mandated curriculum expectations.

In an interview, Ms. Marlee told me that she wanted to speak in class about the role of Muslims, particularly because Fatima's father had told her he was concerned about how Muslim history would be presented in class. She described her choice to incorporate Muslims by including a mosque in the medieval village that students built at the end of the unit:

Ms. M: Well yeah, there was a Muslim influence and I told them that … they were fighting back and forth …. Muslims had land

that the Christians wanted …. It was all about the land, money, and power.

Christina: And they agreed with you?

Ms. M: Fatima's father was very uncomfortable that we were doing medieval times …. I told him that we would never shut the kids down or teach them a program that wasn't in the curriculum.

Christina: So, he didn't want her to learn about it?

Ms. M: No, I think he thought it would present Muslims in a bad light. But it [the unit] didn't have a focus on Muslims whatsoever …. It's in the curriculum document. You're supposed to talk about it, but I'm sure a lot of teachers skim it over …. But we're building a mosque, so [laughter] that's probably where Fatima will come in handy, because we don't have any pictures of mosques …. I think they called them Moors at the time … some adults are just afraid to discuss these things with them, and I'm not.

Here, Ms. Marlee appeared to view her implementation of conflict and diversity education somewhat differently than I did in interpreting her lessons: she felt that she had overcome her fear of discussing potentially controversial issues such as religious conflicts. I observed how she sometimes used the opportunity to respond to her students when they engaged in these conflicts and raised them as issues. Overall, Ms. Marlee's acknowledgement of conflict and diversity during the medieval period was limited to content and activities that asked students to reproduce the cultural and gender norms of this time in history. However, where possible, these young students tried to find their own ways to critically engage with their roles, by sometimes self-analyzing and reflecting with each other—thereby resisting the silencing of critique in this curriculum.

BUILDING CHARACTER AND STRENGTHENING VALUES: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CANADIAN CITIZENS

Mrs. Amrita's approach to teaching about conflict and diversity was somewhat similar to Ms. Marlee's, in that she also controlled which students were given the opportunity to pose critical questions during her recitation lessons. However, Mrs. Amrita provided much more structured time for individual and small-group activities, which gave students many more opportunities to make their own decisions and come to their own conclusions.

In a Social Studies unit, Mrs. Amrita taught her Grade 5s about rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizens. While her study of ancient civilizations offered many opportunities for students to find cultural and religious connections amongst themselves, she also taught about social hierarchies within and across cultures. She challenged gender dynamics in ancient Greece: "In democracies

today, both men and women are citizens and they're not slaves. Democracy in ancient Greece was in many ways similar to democracy today, but it was limited because only people who were citizens could vote. Women were not citizens." Many of the girls and boys in this Grade 5 class were surprised by this historical fact. Their surprise was further complicated by the ways they interpreted equity and democracy. Many students came from families and countries where female oppression was the norm. However, almost all of their families believed they had migrated to a free, democratic country. Mrs. Amrita spoke highly of this dominant Canadian discourse of freedom and equality, even though some students, particularly those who migrated as refugees, may have carried other types of experiences. Still, the study of ancient Greece served to provide students with the opportunity to see how inequity was historically constructed in other parts of the world; it was not limited to their home countries.

Mrs. Amrita illustrated her patriotism to Canada as she enthusiastically taught her students about the Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal governmental systems. First, students read from their textbook and from various worksheets that she provided, describing the different levels of government in Canada. Similar to what she had done in her Immigration Studies unit, Mrs. Amrita then attempted to connect this knowledge to students' realities by engaging students in a simulated class election. She explicitly acknowledged social power structures as she guided students to take on their electoral roles and positions.

Mrs. Amrita encouraged her students to participate as "citizens capable of making decisions." She solicited leaders for each political party, asking students to raise their hands if they were interested in being a leader. In response, five boys and one girl, Kate (a high-status, academically strong Chinese girl), volunteered. Mrs. Amrita saw this as a gender disparity and aired the possible conflict of having too many male candidates to the entire class, hoping that they would find a resolution together. She asked the boys to line up in front of the classroom, and she and the boys' peers waited to see who would back down. One boy, Arun (a middle-status, academically low Indian boy) decided to go back to his seat. The remaining four stood strong: Nitin (a high-status, academically strong Indian-Hindu boy), Sugriva (a lower-status, academically moderate Indian-Hindu boy), Irtal (a middle-status, academically low Pakistani-Muslim boy), and Qadir (a lower-status, academically low Pakistani-Muslim boy). The diversity among these volunteers' social and academic statuses showed that all (or at least many male) students believed they had the opportunity to volunteer for these potentially powerful roles. Also in front of the class, Mrs. Amrita informed Kate that she would automatically be included as a candidate because she was female.

Mrs. Amrita's prefatory remarks, stating her expectations that all students would participate, appeared to embody the gender equity she believed in: fair representation of both males and females. A few days before the volunteers came forward, Mrs. Amrita described to the class her vision for the class election and reminded students of the importance of emulating Canadian principles and values. She also modelled her patriotism when she praised Canada for having "equal representation" from diverse groups within Canadian political regimes:

> Mrs. A: Our election will be the same way as it is in Canadian elections—there is equal representation, so all the ethnic groups, cultural groups and … the different genders are all allowed to run in the elections. And they [Canadian officials] make sure that people from every community are represented and serve in the government. Sometimes they [ethnic minority candidates] want their own community people there too, so they make sure there is equality.

Mrs. Amrita did what she saw as her duty as a virtuous social studies teacher: she explicitly taught patriotic values and Canadian cultural norms. At the same time, she also echoed and affirmed the false beliefs that many newcomer immigrants and second-generation immigrants carry: that there is equality in Canada among all cultures, genders, and sexes. Mostly White males of European descent represent the Canadian government demographics—a fact clearly overlooked, and unmentioned, in this classroom. This clearly illustrates how the rhetoric of liberal Canadian multiculturalism may be filtered through the school system in ways that support dominant ideologies (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008b). As the many diverse students in the class listened to their visible minority teacher, who spoke with a heavy Indian accent, it appeared that they forgot the numerous stories they had recently shared about their struggles for cultural inclusion in Canada—where equality had not been honoured upon their arrival. Thus, Mrs. Amrita's emergent implemented curriculum (i.e., sharing of personal narratives) contrasted with the prescribed textbook, in which patriotism and equality were uncontested.

Despite Mrs. Amrita's effort to achieve gender equality among the candidates in her class, she decided that she would let all of the five volunteers act in the simulated election campaign as party leaders. Subsequently, students formed five parties under these leaders. Mrs. Amrita later told me privately that she had not been sure if she should have let Qadir and Irtal be political leaders, because they were lower achievers and sometimes disruptive in class. As she reflected with me, she rethought her concern and said, "Well why not? If they want to participate, then I should let them." I concurred with her. The inclusion of Qadir and Irtal, both of Muslim-Pakistani origin and both struggling with the academic curriculum, meant that they had the opportunity to practise their skills for democracy and communication. Also, the process of engaging in a class election had the potential to support positive conflict-learning opportunities, in which students would learn to discuss issues and to state their perspectives. Critical dialogic activities such as this are even more important for students who are marginalized (e.g., through academic or immigration status), and who might not be given many opportunities to hone their communication and conflict skills.

In the class elections, Mrs. Amrita at first offered the student-citizens a choice—to either independently join one of the different parties, or to be assigned to a party. She received these overwhelming cries: "You do it, Mrs. Amrita!" "People will just choose their friends!" "You choose!" As a result, Mrs. Amrita numbered the class off from one through to five to assign each student-citizen to a random

political party. This left students with little or no agency in their political decisions—by their own choice. Students in this class appreciated the teacher's assignment of groups. They saw that this ensured equity and offered an opportunity to work outside of the typical academic groupings to which they were usually assigned.

Mrs. Amrita also asked for volunteer media representatives, who would be in charge of advertising. Two East Asian males, Jack and Mike, confident students with middle to higher social status in the class, volunteered for these positions. They appeared to take on neutral roles within the campaign. And Uma, a Tamil Sri Lankan female, volunteered to be the elections officer. There was no discussion about maintaining gender equity in these additional roles. Because Mrs. Amrita had been so vocal about gender equity when selecting the candidates, her silence in regards to the gender make-up of these nonleadership roles indicated her personal beliefs about the importance of maintaining equitable relations among leadership candidates of public governing bodies.

Mrs. Amrita reminded students to take their participation in an election very seriously; she said that if they did not, her alternate assignment would be for them to read the textbook chapter on elections. However, throughout my observations of this simulated election campaign, all students remained on task during the various steps and activities. They were clearly engaged in this experience, enacting newfound autonomy in their varying roles. In their various roles, Mrs. Amrita's students defined tasks for achieving their goals for winning. They decided upon and crafted their agendas, named their parties, and decided upon their mandates. The student parties, for the most part, advocated for greater student autonomy: they wanted a longer recess, and to have the opportunity to self-select lunch seats, stay in for recess when it was cold, self-select gym activities, have healthier foods for snacks, use paper less, and not be subject to wearing uniforms.[2]

The task of working together to write mandates and agendas provided students with the opportunity of identifying meaningful conflictual issues. This sense of autonomy appeared to increase student engagement. For instance, Faith, typically a quiet girl, enthusiastically assisted her campaign leader in crafting posters and marketing slogans. In general, many of the posters that the students created reflected slogans and images that the students believed were representative of Canadian electoral campaigns, based on what was depicted in their class textbook.

Mrs. Amrita encouraged students to pay attention to everyone else's platforms, as they would all have the opportunity to vote. She asked students to be individual decision makers, as voters in the election, and not simply vote for the political alliances they had been assigned to work for. By encouraging students to independently reflect about which party had presented the best agenda through the campaign process, Mrs. Amrita explicitly reinforced their right to vote for whomever they chose:

> Mrs. A: I want you to pay attention to the different platforms and agendas that each group presents, including your own, and then make a choice about who you would like to represent you.

Qadir, a newcomer from Pakistan, was interested in winning the election. This showed that he believed that he had the potential to win—based on his campaign, and not on his social, immigration, or lower academic status. He was also concerned about his personal social status amongst the competing candidates. He inquired further about the process: "But how do people not vote for their friends?" Mrs. Amrita, also concerned about this possibility, added: "I may ask you all to explain why you are voting for that person." Qadir's slight nod of his head appeared to indicate that Mrs. Amrita's decision satisfied his political concerns. Because Mrs. Amrita typically asked students to explain their answers during most class discussions, across subject areas, her request was taken seriously. Of course, Mrs. Amrita's decision to ask students to prepare for the possibility of disclosing their choice in their private ballot for particular candidates misrepresented the Canadian democratic voting process, where voting is private and anonymous. In the end, she did not ask for their choices to be shared.

During literacy class, the morning after candidates had been approved to run their campaigns, students worked in small groups reading and responding to a variety of short stories. As I walked around to the different tables, I heard Kate encouraging her peers to vote for her, using a hard bargaining technique that illustrated the personal power she felt in the classroom as the sole female candidate. The following discussion ensued among the small group of male and female students and myself:

Kate: *(Chinese female; to her group)* If you vote for me, I'll bring candy for you on Monday.

Christina: *(intervenes)* That is bribery, though, Kate.

Kate: OK, I won't bring it, then.

Christina: Well you could think of other reasons people should vote for you. You are the only female-led political party. Why do you think none of the other girls volunteered?

Kate: I *told* Jesse to do it, but she didn't. *(Jesse looks up and smiles)*

Uma: *(Tamil Sri Lankan female; pointing out her leadership position)* I'm the elections officer.

Christina: Do you think politics would be different if more women were involved?

Kate: Yeah, there was only one female prime minister—we learned that in our textbook.

Christina: Yes, and she was only in power for about three months.

Caden: *(Chinese male)* If women were in politics, there would be no war, only peace. Men only want to fight and women would talk it out.

Kate: *(agrees with Caden)* Women would only promote peace; they don't want to go to war. I'm going to say that in my speech to get people to vote for me.

This glimpse of behind-the-scenes dialogue during a class period sheds light on how students engaged with the election process. Kate was used to winning academically in her class; she was popular and was also a member of the girls' basketball team. While she resorted to suggesting bribery to secure her votes, she and her peers also showed their confidence in her potential as a female leader, who, as Caden pointed out, "would talk it out" and "there would be no war, only peace." For these students, it was important to interpret the meaning of differently gendered leadership and its relationship to conflict. Kate's candidacy as a female may have stimulated students to reflect on gender disparities, as their classroom experience was reminiscent of typical Canadian politics, where there are also not many females in leadership positions. Other students affirmed an essentialist view—namely, that all female leaders perpetuated peace.

In campaigning, the candidates approached all the student-citizens to tell them about their platforms. Mrs. Amrita reminded the student-citizens to think open mindedly, and practice attentive listening—a skill deemed necessary for the engagement of divergent perspectives. She also reminded the candidates to speak positively and with respect. Uma, the elections officer, and I counted the votes and the media representatives announced the winner:

Media: And the winner is *(all students participate in doing drumroll)* 3–2–1 … Kate!!!! *(All scream and clap, and some whisper to each other, "I knew it would be her!")*

Upon hearing that she won, Kate made her way to the front of the classroom, announcing to her citizens: "I'm very happy to represent you all. I will work hard for all of you!" I asked, during small group interviews after the election, about this issue of leadership:

Christina: Kate, could you tell me a little bit about your experience with being the leader?

Kate: Well first of all, it was really fun because I beat the guys.

Girls: *(giggling)*

Kate: Because they underestimated me. So, um, like …

Christina: Do you feel you had support from all the other girls in your class?

Kate: Yeah … because um, like, we're friends and all that. So then, like, usually we support other people, like, our friends … and it was really fun, so yeah.

Uma: The guys started talking about Kate in our group. They were, like, "She's the *only girl* and she's *not going to win*."

As an already popular girl in the class, Kate's win reinforced the pre-existing status hierarchy in the class, and it also challenged traditional Canadian politics in which female leaders are few. Many of the other girls in the class appeared to feel empowered by Kate's win. According to Kate, the other girls supported her. The females in this class revelled in what became a sense of shared victory.

After the winning candidate was announced, Mrs. Amrita engaged the students in an open discussion about the electoral process:

Mrs. A: Can you tell me one thing that you learned?

Caden: Attract the audience who you think will vote for you.

Mrs. A: Yes, what people thought you would bring with your agenda is what made people vote for you, yes.

Uma: You have to be very prepared to get everything ready.

Mrs. A: Yes, and then it is your responsibility to keep your promises as well. What else?

Sugriva: *(a former candidate)* You have to vote based on your agenda.

Kate: You have to work really hard to keep your promises.

Qadir: *(a former candidate)* When you do the hard work and then you don't win all the time.

In Mrs. Amrita's guided reflection on the election process, she explicitly encouraged students to be responsible citizens. As a result, diverse students, including those who had served as candidates, described characteristics of good citizenship and governance. Overall, while Mrs. Amrita guided students to compete and to engage in constructive conflict over the various issues their parties advocated, she also held high expectations for students to do so with respect. She explicitly taught students about the importance of respecting Canadian values and of responsibly enacting their right to vote.

In contrast, many students in the class had witnessed first-hand the violence that comes with election campaigns in different parts of the world. Jamal, for instance, shared that his family had moved from Kenya to Canada due to political uprising and government corruption. Many of the Sri Lankan students spoke both in class and in small group interviews about the civil war violence in their home country, criticizing their government on many levels. With their knowledge that Canada was not at war and their apparent view that Canada represented peace, they seemed

to accept the representation of Canadian elections as peaceful processes. For instance, Arun described how his group supported Kate's platform:

> Arun: So we tried to put down the competition and bring others over to our side …. We had to do it carefully …. Well, not, like [saying things like] "Oh you guys suck" kinda thing, but we just came up with arguments against them. Like, we used questions, like, "Would you actually do that? How would you do that? How is that possible? Can you do that?" All that stuff, you know.

Arun's reflection on the election campaign process clearly demonstrated that in Mrs. Amrita's class, students had the opportunity to have their voices heard and to ask critical and reflective questions.

At the end of the unit, Mrs. Amrita asked students to consider what it would mean for Canada if people did not vote. She passionately told a personal story, to relate to students the importance of contributing to society as responsible citizens:

> Mrs. A: My dad used to tell me this story: A king in a village decided that he would like to have milk in the well. He announced to all of his citizens that everyone had to pour a bowl of milk in that well during the nighttime …. Everyone said, "OK, well, I'm not going to do it, they wouldn't know. If one thousand people are going to go and put milk, then why should I go in the middle of the night to go and put milk there? … Do you think the king would know?" No, because he cannot measure it, the milk mixes with the water, right? So, in the morning, when the king went to check the well, there was absolutely no milk—not even a drop. Each and every one of them, thought that well, "If I don't do it, then no one else would know."
>
> So, boys and girls, there are many people like that, and maybe I am one of them too. If I told you that I'm not going to vote, what would that tell you? It is our responsibility, and we must go out and vote for the right person. We don't go and vote for that person because they are your friend or because they belong to your ethnic group or maybe because you think he looks cool—no. No, just look at his agenda and then decide why you want to vote for him or her …. Because when you think, "Oh, it won't matter if I don't do it," well, we see that it does matter.

As she explained the seriousness of the voting process, students were silent and appeared to be listening attentively. Evidently, this personal anecdote had an impact on the students. As well as being part of her implemented curriculum, Mrs. Amrita's use of personal narratives also reflected her South Asian and Indian heritage, in which narratives usually carry deeper cultural meanings. In this story, she implicitly taught students about their important roles as new Canadians—about

how their political participation and engagement was needed. Her political awareness appeared to increase as she taught this unit to her diverse students; she acknowledged her responsibility, as a new Canadian, to vote. Mrs. Amrita previously had told me privately that she felt embarrassed that she hadn't voted in the recent, actual Canadian election. As a new Canadian citizen herself, she appeared to realize that she had missed an opportunity to participate in a democratic election process. She promised her students that she would be a responsible citizen and vote in the next election, and expressed her hope that the students' parents would do the same. By saying this, she sent a message to both her diverse students and their immigrant parents about their responsibilities as new Canadians in a democracy.

Mrs. Amrita also told me privately that she had expected Nitin to win the mock election. Both Kate and Nitin were popular and their peers looked up to them as role models and leaders in the class. They also had used similar campaigning tactics (coloured photocopied signs, eloquent speeches, and constant reminders to their peers to vote for their parties). The two apparently less popular boys, Qadir and Irtal, did not gather as many votes. Sugriva received only one vote.

In this diverse classroom, where many students were of similar (East Asian and South Asian) ancestry, factors other than ethnocultural origins influenced students' various social status and identity markers. The four male candidates were all South Asian—two Hindu, and two Muslim. However, there was no indication that their religious or cultural identities were seen by their peers as relevant to the election process. Rather, academic status and personal popularity seemed to play a larger role in this campaign: the two top vote-getters were Kate and Nitin. Their academic achievement also appeared to have enabled Kate and Nitin to create stronger campaigns, as they drafted powerful and convincing speeches, and were confident in defending their positions on the issues they raised in their campaigns. During an interview, the two lower-status, typically quiet male candidates expressed their appreciation for having had the opportunity to lead, in a class where they were usually the ones behind:

Christina: I just want you to tell me a little bit about what your experience was like being a candidate.

Irtal: It felt really good. And I felt like I was really part of the election and I felt I was getting more of the people [on my side]. *Like that day I unlocked my confidence*.

Christina: So you felt very confident. What about you, Qadir?

Qadir: Like I wanted to be the boss of the class.

Christina: What was your responsibility of being a leader?

Irtal: To make posters and to make an agenda and tell [people] blah, blah, blah, and why you should vote for me and stuff.

Christina: OK, so what was your responsibility, like, your overall purpose?

Qadir: To help the country.

Christina: So, when the election was happening, what were you thinking?

Irtal: I thought I would get elected.

The class election process appeared to provide a variety of opportunities for various lower and higher academic and social status students to participate and have their voices heard. In the campaign groups, all of the students excitedly worked together to develop neoliberal platforms. The activity allowed for students to reflect on what they wanted to change and what they felt they could change. However, after Kate was elected, there was little or no discussion on what would happen next, such as whether Kate actually planned on putting any of her promises into action. Nonetheless, within weeks of her win, Kate independently gathered some of her peers to put up posters around the school to encourage the use of less paper. This was one of the more easily implementable goals for which she had advocated during her campaign.

All of the students demonstrated active participation in the election campaign. While Mrs. Amrita's threat to impose textbook reading may have influenced them, at that same time, May of 2011, a Canadian federal election campaign was also underway. This actual election campaign seemed to stir the interest of many students. For instance, in small-group interviews some students asked me who I had voted for, and others shared whom their parents had voted for; Janu told me: "My mom voted Liberal. I *told* her to."

To further engage her students' interest, Mrs. Amrita took them on a field trip to a polling station set up in their school gymnasium. Later, I asked the students how their participation in the class election and visit to the polling station had informed their understanding of the Canadian government. Sophi shared her excitement about seeing what an actual voting process looked like: "It helped us to see what's going on," she said, and Malika added: "We got to see how it all looks …. I wanted the NDP to win." The election simulation appeared to engage students in wanting to contribute to Canadian democracy and it provided them with skills and knowledge to do so. Mike said he now planned to vote when he turned 18:

Mike: Now we know how to vote … and [when] we get to 18, we get to see the agendas and what they do for us and see who is the best person to vote for.

Thus, the class election stimulated diverse students' interest and potential for active, engaged citizenship within the actual governing bodies in their communities. While the names of actual Canadian political parties were not assigned to the class's simulated election,[3] students (like Janu and Malika) began referring to these political organizations when discussing the Canadian

government. Clearly, the class activity had stimulated their interest to explore the different parties in the Canadian election occurring at that time.

Mrs. Amrita did not explicitly reflect on power and the responsibilities that come with having particular unequal or powerful status. Instead, as in Ms. Marlee's class, such hierarchies were accepted as the norm. Such socialization limits the potential for students to develop activist or social justice-oriented citizenship identities (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Dialogic activities that invite discussion without critical reflection about conflictual issues evoked in activities such as political campaigns may implicitly invite marginalized students to accept the "often repressive political realities and dynamics of power of their society" (Apple, 1979/1990, p. 84). This may especially apply to diverse students who are new to Canada. Overall, this mock election, engaged diverse students in a role-play that encouraged engagement with other perspectives, and in some cases, the opportunity to identify underlying interests and feelings of opposition parties through peer-to-peer dialogue about difference and conflict. Yet movement towards empathizing with other perspectives was still limited.

REBELLIONS AND THE ARAB SPRING IN A CANADIAN MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT

Mr. Hiroshi introduced his Grade 7 students to various political figures who had shaped the Rebellions of 1837 in the British North American colonies of Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Québec). The historical leaders he explicitly taught about were all White males, which is typical for most traditional, Eurocentric social studies curricula. Mr. Hiroshi attempted to connect this history to his diverse students by dividing them into three political groups, representing how people with different social and political allegiances had reacted at the time to governmental rules and restrictions. He named these groups as the "rebellious" Radicals, the "passive" Moderates, and the "really pompous" government-supporting group known as the Family Compact. In these historical roles, students engaged in a structured debate they called the Town Hall Meeting of 1837.

In the Town Hall, the groups were instructed to argue about an issue of contemporary relevance to them: the question of mandatory uniforms.[4] The next day, he led a discussion on the current political uprising in Egypt. He told students that he wanted to show them how groups of people in different contexts might respond, through rebellion, to conflictual issues. He invited them to reflect on the uprising in Egypt and asked them to acknowledge the different levels of power in this social conflict, and compared it to the Rebellions of 1837. He posted a newspaper article entitled "Arab Awakening" on the class Twitter account and brought in the hard copy of the article for discussion, placing it on the current events bulletin board. Upon seeing a photo of a boy picking up a rock in Tahrir Square, in Cairo, one of the students, Thanjai, pointed out that in the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion, rebels also had picked up whatever was available to fight the British colonial government:

Mr. H: If you're at all concerned about what's going to Egypt, here's an image from the paper.

Sachin: Is that a little kid?

Mr. H: Actually no, it's a person, but there's rubble and debris all around. This is Tahrir Square in Cairo. This is a really beautiful place. But here is a guy walking through and he's picking up a rock. Now, it's unfortunate, but we have to connect this back to what we're doing right now. They didn't have photography then …. In the painting of the Rebellions of 1837 [in the textbook], what were they doing? What were the men doing? What did they have in their hands?

Tyrone: Guns?

Thanjai: Anything they could have picked up.

Mr. H: Look at this guy in this picture; he doesn't have a rifle or anything in his hands. He's just picking up what's around him …. It's years and years later, but here, look, we may think that the Rebellions of 1837 are done and over, but no it's not. Here, the exact same thing is happening on the other side of the world right now. There's a phrase that goes like this: "History repeats itself," and unfortunately it's true.

Mr. Hiroshi initially attempted to assign students to one of the three different political groups he had set up by posing what he believed were unsettled, conflictual questions, such as whether teachers should tell students what to do, whether summer vacation should be longer, and whether students should be forced to wear uniforms. He asked them to respond to these questions, on a three-point opinion spectrum—strongly agree, somewhat agree, disagree—believing that he would be able to divide up the students based on these choices. However, the students generally shared the same opinions on these questions, and thus Mr. Hiroshi had to resort to Plan B: he now asked them to volunteer to be part of one of the three groups. He shared his dilemma:

Mr. H: OK, heads up. So, what became evident is that you guys were all Radical reformers. And you're somewhat divided between Radicals and Moderates. So from this it looks like none of you would be the government. None of you are the arrogant, pompous, "I should have everything" dictator type. And that's OK, but we do need to have a group that is going to be like that. And it is strictly drama. Strictly drama.

Telling the class that he needed volunteers to be part of the government group, despite their overwhelmingly Radical attitudes, Mr. Hiroshi pointed out that he already knew "some people are not as likely to be as aggressive as some of the

other people here." He sent the message that students should choose a political group *somewhat* reflective of their own personal approaches to conflict. He then asked for volunteers to represent the Family Compact. Five boys and one girl, Saba, one of two girls in the class who wore a hijab, raised their hands. However, when Saba saw that she was the only girl, she decided to not join. Mr. Hiroshi commented aloud on her decision:

Mr. H: OK, OK, so Saba has decided not to join. Well, let's make this as accurate as possible—*were women allowed in the government in 1837?*

Students: *(multiple, mostly males)* Noooo.

Mr. H: Yeah, actually no way. You (Saba) were not allowed to be in the government because women were *at home cooking and cleaning.*

Students: *(multiple, mostly males)* Oh yeahhhhh!!!

Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 boys did exactly what Ms. Marlee's Grade 4 boys did when they learned that "women were below men": they cheered. In both instances, the teachers said nothing. Thus disrespecting women's rights, male students were implicitly given the message that it was acceptable for men to retain more power than women. Different from Ms. Marlee's class, however, the intersection of gender and social class was not raised explicitly in Mr. Hiroshi's class. Instead, another message was conveyed: women would be in the less powerful groups—the Moderates or the Radicals.

With the all-male Family Compact secured, Mr. Hiroshi went on to recruit the Radical and Moderate groups, reminding them of who joined these groups in 1837:

Mr. H: So remember, radical reformers are the ones that oppose the government! They're the ones that would pick up the rocks and throw it at the government. Now are you the type of person that would pick up the rock, and throw it or are you the type of person who would be the ones on the sidelines and be, like, "Yeah! Good throw!" and stand by and watch?

He asked students to move to one side of the room if they wanted to get up and fight as Radical reformers: the majority of students raised their hands. Before asking students to volunteer as Moderates, Mr. Hiroshi shared his own political allegiance to the Moderate category: "Moderates are the group that opposes, but doesn't actually fight or get involved. That would actually be me. I don't want to get involved. I'm not a violent person." For Mr. Hiroshi, it seemed that dissent involved violence. Six quiet female students raised their hands, aligning themselves with their teacher. He calmly supported their choice, saying to them, "OK, *we're* going to be the Moderates" and then went on, "How fitting! They are very Moderate!" in response to the fact that all of the quiet girls had volunteered

for this role. While the rest of the students waited to be confirmed as Radical reformers, Mr. Hiroshi spoke out to one of his students: "I know you, Crystal: I know you definitely want to pick up a rock!" Crystal smiled confidently, in response to this attention, and quickly assumed her role as a Radical. Some students cheered her on, yelling "Woooo!" Mr. Hiroshi, impressed by what was then mostly female students' engagement, continued to egg them on: "We need that group that will get up and fight, fight, fight!"

Like Mrs. Amrita, Mr. Hiroshi saw the importance of gender equity and wanted to encourage both his male and female students to volunteer for positions of their choice. However, Mr. Hiroshi also wanted to affirm his students' choices, so when the group of quiet girls positioned themselves as Moderates, he chose to align himself with them, which implied that they were not a weaker group. Crystal, like Kate in Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 class, served as a voice for girls who may have been reluctant to "get up and fight, fight, fight," especially when the boys had already been told that they were in charge in the powerful Family Compact. The remaining boys and girls in the class all got up and went to the Radical reformers corner of the room, making it the biggest group.

In the end, Plan B gave students their choice of social party alignment and thus appeared to provide them with a sense of autonomy; each student seemed to feel connected to choices they had made themselves. In Ms. Marlee's class, where the Grade 4s had had no control over their roles, students passively accepted their positions. Perhaps more importantly, with the exception of Farat the King and Tina the Abbess, most students did not seem to feel personally connected to their medieval simulation roles. Mrs. Amrita also chose groups, but by her students' request, and then, like Mr. Hiroshi, she assigned them a similar task: to create an argument to support the group's mandate. Comparing these cases, it seems that providing students autonomy for working in roles or groups served to increase their engagement, especially when they had the opportunity to make their own decisions, regardless of whether they had joined a group voluntarily.

Mr. Hiroshi encouraged tension between the three simulated social divisions of 1837. He wanted students to engage in a dialogue and come to a decision to rebel, oppose, or agree with the proposition to wear uniforms in the school. These students did wear simple uniforms to school and sometimes expressed their frustrations about having to do so. When not playing his role as a Moderate, Mr. Hiroshi met with all three groups and offered encouragement for each of their positions.

Teachers, even those clearly skilled at managing conflict, may act to reinforce the power of students who already hold a lot of power (Ellsworth, 1989; Hemmings, 2000). For example, Mr. Hiroshi told Tyrone, who had readily volunteered to be part of the Family Compact, that he was in charge. This seemed to give Tyrone an incentive similar to the one Mr. Hiroshi had earlier bestowed upon Crystal. Since Tyrone and Crystal were already dominant, vocal students, Mr. Hiroshi saw merit in encouraging these already strong voices in the classroom as leaders against the opposing groups. He clearly wanted to open up a space for conflict.

Mr. Hiroshi told the Moderates that they were "the wishy-washy people," and that while they were being told what to do by the government, the Radicals were also opposing them for not participating. In this way, Mr. Hiroshi guided the Moderates to argue for and against both sides. As I observed the Moderate group preparing their arguments, Malika, an academically strong, quiet girl, recommended to her fellow Moderates a position of "We neither agree or disagree." Remaining silent, they all seemed to concur.

While the students were still in their initial preparation phase, meeting individually in their small groups, the Radicals and the Family Compact group tended to be very vocal. They often positioned themselves against each other, shouting such put-downs across the room as: "We're the government and we're in charge!" to which the Radicals would respond: "We're going to bring you down!" Mr. Hiroshi reminded the students that they were all friends and that they were simply doing an activity. However, he also continued to stir them up by asking them to align with their conflicting mandates—comparing this to the way the Rebellions had been enacted in 1837:

> Mr. H: You know that we're all friends, but imagine that you hate someone so much that you're willing to take their life. And that's something that everyone, the government, Radicals, and Moderates feel. The government hated the reformers. You guys [the Moderates] would probably not admit it, but you hated them too. You probably didn't agree with what they were going to do either. But you guys [Radicals] were the insane group. You were going to make decisions to not only take someone's life, but you could lose your own life and this would force you to have to leave your family and all your friends behind because you were hunted by these guys. Hunted.

This rather violent incentive appeared to resonate with many of the boys in particular, who cheered and began arguing again, engaging in a debate rather than a dialogue.

In conjunction with the preparation for the Town Hall meeting, Mr. Hiroshi taught more formal, content-based lessons, using both lectures and classroom discussions. For instance, he told the students about key members of the Radical, Moderate, and Family Compact groups. He explained that Sir Francis Bond Head, who led the Family Compact, had originally been a Radical reformer. Mr. Hiroshi and many of his students glorified William Lyon Mackenzie,[5] a Radical reformer who was presented as a political figure who had stimulated progressive change, a value that was implied in Mr. Hiroshi's implemented curriculum. Another Radical Mr. Hiroshi spoke about with great reverence was Robert Gourlay,[6] a Scottish immigrant who had settled in Upper Canada in 1817. When Gourlay realized that a small elite group—the Family Compact—controlled the best land, he began to speak up against the government, and wrote a book to help new immigrants understand the challenges of settling in Upper Canada. Moderate reformers included William Baldwin and his son Robert.[7] During the preparation for the

Town Hall meeting, Mr. Hiroshi assigned various less-outspoken students to play the roles of these historical figures. Using his authority this way (assigning roles to provide more diverse students' voice in the classroom) appeared to tone down the typical dominance of Tyrone and Crystal. Anita (a Muslim-Hindu girl) and Hartol (a quiet Sikh boy) represented Mackenzie and Gourlay. Sunita (a moderately higher social status Hindu girl) was Baldwin and Akmed (a typically quiet and middle social status Muslim boy) was Bond Head. While these students might not have volunteered for these leadership positions, Mr. Hiroshi's assignment of these historical roles gave them power to lead and speak for their conflicting groups.

Based on the above historical information and Tyrone's persistent invitation to all of his classmates to join him "on the dark side," two female students from the Moderate group (Smira and Nira) asked Mr. Hiroshi if they could switch to the Family Compact group. Despite Mr. Hiroshi's earlier intention to make the government group representative of historical times (male only), he agreed to let them "move up" to the Family Compact. For Smira, who was already known to be quiet, even quieter than her friend Nira, her transfer to this more dominant role provided an opportunity to enact a higher-status position.

In the actual Town Hall simulation, students came prepared to engage in structured debate with speeches, props, and attire that they believed represented the characters or groups at the time: the Family Compact representatives wore suits, the Moderates dressed conservatively, and the Radicals wore torn jeans and baggy clothing; some of the girls wore excessive makeup.[8]

During the Town Hall, Smira approached the podium with Nira, her friend/supporter, standing staunchly beside her, and presented her Family Compact speech:

> Smira: Everyone here knows that the government is working hard to make sure that we hear your voices … but we also want to be treated fairly with respect.

Smira appeared to surprise her peers with her powerful voice, as all the different groups listened to her attentively. In contrast, when many of the other Family Compact representatives spoke at the podium, the Radicals made noise with noisemakers, and booed them. Unlike some of the other Family Compact members, who started their speeches with "You rascal Radicals, listen to me," Smira presented an amicable speech that illustrated her desire to open a space for dialogue.

Students' thorough preparation for their participation in the Town Hall simulation demonstrated their evident engagement in this conflict dialogue activity, enacting roles that they may or may not have personally identified with. The Moderates asked the Radicals, "Why is it that you feel that everyone here needs to be in uniform, but you guys don't?" Akmed retorted: "Because we're rich. We can wear whatever we want." Tyrone added: "Rich people buy nice things. Nice clothes, nice things, nice shoes." This discussion about economic class showed that students equated power with having money. This spoke to a sensitive issue within the school community: the school council initially had instituted a

uniform policy to make it easier for the children of poor and working-class families to feel included amongst their peers.

Some students supported their personal arguments with content knowledge, drawing on articles illustrating the contrasting points of view of the Family Compact, the Moderates, and the Radicals that Mr. Hiroshi had asked them to read. He wanted the students to better understand "why the Family Compact was hated"—they had treated the common people badly. Typical of Mr. Hiroshi's style, he further related this historical conflict to the students' lives:

> Mr. H: The Family Compact has all the money; they were the popular group that everyone wanted to be like: "I want to be like them, but if I can't then I'm going to join the Radicals." … Just think about it, though. I mean, I hope that none of you ever experienced this before, where you have one person (and this happened to me when I was in school), where one kid is strutting their stuff and acting like they're all that and some people were outnumbered. And some people really want to be their friends for a little while, but soon enough their heads get so big that they don't have very many friends anymore and they end up bullying people …. So that's what happened here.

To help his students prepare to participate in the whole-class discussion, Mr. Hiroshi asked them to first reflect independently, making notes about their personal experiences. This allowed them to personally and critically consider their roles. Mr. Hiroshi also asked the students to "be a little empathetic" for the other sides' positions. He videotaped the Town Hall meeting and, one week after the simulation, he showed scenes from their reenactment, pausing the film occasionally to invite students to reflect on what had been happening and what they had been feeling. Thus, Mr. Hiroshi encouraged students to think about the implications of the choices they had made during their conflictual dialogue. He began with an open-ended question to the whole class: "Did you guys have a good time with it?" All of the students cheered, shouting, "Yeahhhhh! Yahhhh! It was so much fun!" Then, moving the discussion deeper, building empathy for the opposition, he asked:

> Mr. H: OK, so here's a Family Compact member. *(displaying an image with a male student standing at the podium)* How do you think he's feeling right now? *(Radicals are in the background playing cards, throwing things and overpowering his voice with noisemakers.)*
>
> Sunita: *(FS)* Nervous.
>
> Akmed: *(MS)* Humiliated.
>
> Anita: *(FS)* Horrible.

Crystal: *(FS)* Badly.

Tyrone: *(MS)* Dumb.

Tajinder: *(MS)* Defeated.

Mr. Hiroshi agreed with Tajinder, arguing that the Family Compact speaker could have felt defeated due to the loud, rowdy, and somewhat disrespectful audience. Mr. Hiroshi explicitly guided students to consider what respectful norms for interaction would look like:

Mr. H: Imagine he was just trying to talk to people: how do you think the Moderates feel? Put it in context … that's why I don't talk when you guys are talking. It's so hard to talk over people, especially when you're trying to say something important, so that's something to keep in mind.

Mr. Hiroshi encouraged students to identify the emotions they had felt when they observed intense political conflict that appeared to align with some of the qualities they ascribed to themselves (e.g., aggressive, quiet, powerful). He asked students to pay attention to the different choices they had made, in and out of role, and to what extent they felt that their conflict dialogue strategies, such as disrespectful behaviour, had been appropriate. He paused the video each time there was another instance of disrespectful dialogue to ask students to consider how the other side had felt when they were disrespected:

Student: It has come to my attention that the people of Upper Canada are just filthy, dirty and in need of attention!

Mr. H: *(pauses and asks students)* What was that again? "Filthy …"

Students: *(many)* "Unclean," "Dirty," "Like a dog."

The students responded to Mr. Hiroshi's question by describing the literal meaning for filthy, as opposed to identifying what was wrong with using such a harsh label. Mr. Hiroshi explained that the use of disrespectful language had escalated the conflict and thus encouraged the Radicals to protest. As Mr. Hiroshi encouraged students to reflect on their vocabulary choices when in conflict, he was teaching them to speak with civility instead of harsh or violent words. In this way, he transmitted what he perceived as normative Canadian values and national ideals to his students. Considering that many Canadian parliamentary discussions degenerate into heckling and disrespectful debate, Mr. Hiroshi's prescriptive teaching was conflict avoidant. This was another example of how perspective awareness and engagement can diverge.

Like Mrs. Amrita, Mr. Hiroshi saw the importance of teaching beyond the prescribed curriculum, and wanted to make use of critical incidents to teach cultural values and morals. However, in many ways, these spaces for dialogue could not be engaged without careful examination and critique of lived realities.

Similarly, Ms. Marlee had seen the need to intercede in a religious conflict and used the opportunity to explicitly teach students how to behave in cross-cultural settings. These teachings had important ramifications for diverse immigrant students who were being acculturated to Canadian norms. Spaces do exist for teachers and students to pause the curriculum and reflect on how different values and beliefs stimulate or escalate conflict, and how alternative processes for approaching conflict can facilitate respect and peace.

Mr. Hiroshi's student-centred debriefing of the Town Hall lasted for over 90 minutes and seemed to engage students in deep critical reflection on their roles and positions in the reenactment. Towards the end of the debriefing, and in keeping with the expectations of a debate, the students attempted to decide who had won. Mr. Hiroshi argued that the winners would be those who had made consistent, valid, and respectful points that enhanced the dialogue and moved the issues forward. Many students responded to these reflection questions from perspectives favouring the roles they had played. Extending the discussion, Mr. Hiroshi asked students to compare the simulation to their own lives, asking, "Have any of you ever been part of anything like this before?" Various students responded with, "G20!" "Judge Judy!" "The Sri Lankan protests!" Through this connection to students' personal lives, Mr. Hiroshi again affirmed respectful activism and dialogue. At the same time he shared his personal viewpoint on the G20 protests that had occurred in Toronto in 2011:[9]

> Mr. H: OK, the G20 summit: we had cop cars being burned, we had windows being broken, we had the riot police out. There's been three or four different charges against police, for police brutality. And … it's important to acknowledge that this stuff does happen in real life. Now, I'm not calling the cause of why people were protesting or marching wrong, *but some of the things that happened out of anger and frustration, that's what's wrong.*

In an interview, a Tamil Sri Lankan girl, Reshma, told me that if she and her peers engaged in this kind of conflict in real life, they "wouldn't go that far, … like, we wouldn't be fighting …. We'd talk it out." Jawali confirmed this point of view: "No, it wouldn't be like that," referring to the violence that Mr. Hiroshi had showed them in newspaper clippings. Clearly, Mr. Hiroshi's message of nonviolence in speech and action had filtered through to at least some students. Overall, through this activity Mr. Hiroshi taught the values of respectful dialogue and the importance of peaceful protest. He went on to describe an outcome of the 1837 Upper Canada rebellion: because Radicals had stood up and fought for people who were being treated unfairly (e.g., farmers and newcomer immigrants, mostly from Ireland and Scotland), a more responsible government had been formed. This discussion about historical conflict and contemporary life, such as the civil war in Sri Lanka and the G20 summit, encouraged students to reflect on how violent conflict could be overcome through peaceful and respectful protest.

The teachers in this study used various real or role-played conflicts to encourage dialogue. For example, comparing past historical conflict to present-day conflict sometimes encouraged diverse student voices, by fostering connections to students' own experiences and identities (see Chapter 4). I spoke to two quiet boys, Akmed and Tajinder, in Grade 7, about their experiences of performing conflict while in role:

Christina: So … can you talk a little bit about what it was like being on the government side?

Akmed: It was sorta cool because you get to learn about what the government actually does and how they get to boss around people and how other people don't agree with them sometimes and how it feels to them. Sometimes the government makes decisions and sometimes people don't like those decisions so people come together and try to get rid of it. Like the Radicals.

Tajinder: Well you know they're always talking about the election, right, you know, everything is about the election now. And they have this family plan, saying that they're going to do more for seniors, but they don't actually do it and then after they get elected they boss people around. I don't think that [Prime Minister] Stephen Harper does that much.

Akmed: Yeah, he just takes our taxes.

Akmed and Tajinder's role-play experience in the Family Compact clearly influenced their interpretation and perceptions of modern Canadian politics. Akmed explained how being in a powerful role had boosted his confidence as a marginalized individual:

Akmed: I know that sometimes we disagree with people who are in charge and I know that I have never been one of those people that can be in charge, so I thought I can just take a chance and see what it feels like.

Christina: To be in charge?

Akmed: Yeah.

Christina: And how did it feel?

Akmed: It felt *great*! *(laughing)*

Through the role-play experience, both boys realized that with power comes responsibility to make decisions, and that conflict can arise with those who do not agree with those decisions.

In the teacher-led reflection, Mr. Hiroshi pointed out what he believed were appropriate (nonviolent) and inappropriate (violent) ways to respond to conflict,

such as through nonviolent protest—Town Hall meetings and debates as opposed to rioting. The class exploration of these alternative responses to conflict created opportunities for students to practise conflict through debate and then to reflect on how their choices in that conflict had affected others.

Akmed and Tajinder's experience helped them understand how conflict operates in democracies. Other students' perceptions of government and power influenced how they chose to participate in the larger civic community. In a group interview, the Tamil Sri Lankan/Hindu girls in Mr. Hiroshi's class reflected on why they had chosen to stay within their particular Moderate or Radical roles. It became clear that, through the Town Hall simulation and the open classroom discussions about the Arab Spring rebellions, these students felt more critically aware of the power that governmental bodies had over local and global conflict:

Jawali: I was a Radical and … [as a Radical] you can fight for certain things.

Sunita: *(a Moderate; to Jawali)* But would you risk your life?

Jawali: I would risk my life. I would. It is for my own good and for my country's [Canada's] good. *(laughter)* But I would. I'm trying to help my country and make it a better place. *(The other girls laugh at her enthusiastic speech and Jawali responds to the muffled giggles)* I would! That's not bad. 'Cause you know if you were a Family Compact, you wouldn't think of those things [social issues] because you have a good life already, you are *selfish*.

Here Jawali spoke directly to how she understood her democratic rights in Canada; she believed she could speak back to the government and "fight for certain things." Her peer, Sunita, who had played the role of a Moderate, questioned whether she would risk her life fighting for social and political issues. Sunita's question is similar to the one that Mr. Hiroshi had posed to his class earlier in the term, when he spoke about whether he would fight for Canada or Japan, if they were to go to war (see Chapter 4). Jawali may have been influenced by Mr. Hiroshi and by her experience playing the role of an activist against the government. She confidently defended why she would risk her life for Canada: "I'm trying to help my country and make it a better place." As I continued with this interview, it became apparent that the students' experiences with the Town Hall meeting had provided them with language to understand personally relevant political conflicts that affected their lives. The simulation stimulated political and civic engagement:

Sunita: Me, Mona, and Jawali … had to write a letter and complain to somebody, and so we decided to write a letter to [the Canadian government] to complain about Egypt and about the whole problem.

Christina: Really?

Sunita: Yeah, and for that Mona made a lot of connections because [it's] her background.

As they spoke along these Canadian-national lines, it was interesting that they took the conversation next to the war in their home country, Sri Lanka. The girls related their experience with the simulated rebellion to the conflict in Sri Lanka, and went even further, describing Canada's present-day role in relation to Sri Lanka as characteristic of the Family Compact in 1837. While Jawali would "risk her life" for Canada, she also was angry at the Canadian government for refusing to intervene and provide aid to people in Sri Lanka:[10]

Malika: I did one [letter] to the Sri Lankan government.

Sunita: Yeah, and a lot of my friends, they didn't know about it [the war in Sri Lanka] and then they learned a lot in that too.

Christina: What kinds of things did you write in your letter?

Jawali: Well the Sri Lankan government is *selfish* and I can tell you that.

Sunita: But I really hate the Canadian government right now.

Jawali: 'Cause it's our people who're getting affected.

Students: *(females all enthusiastically talking at once)*

Sunita: Yeah, and if you're Christian or whatever, you just won't know about it.

Jawali: Well, they're like the Family Compact.

Sunita: Like, the Sri Lankan government killed almost 3,000 people, and some of these people were, like, my family.

Jawali: [But because we are in] Canada … I noticed that [even though] … the Singhalese people are the ones that are killing them [Tamils] … that doesn't mean that I have the right to hate every single Singhalese person.

Sunita: Like, some are nice.

The dialogue that occurred in this interview was critical. The focus of this interview was to reflect on the Town Hall simulation. However, they used the opportunity to excitedly share their (new) political views and the steps they knew they could take towards activism. As first- and second-generation immigrants they showed a strong sense of connection to politics in Canada as well as in their homeland. Sunita felt that the mainstream population in Canada (the "Christians") wouldn't be aware of the Sri Lankan conflict. However, in their classroom, where nearly all students were non-Christian South Asians, such cross-cultural conflicts

were openly discussed. The girls' growing awareness of their Canadianness seemed to change their perspective; it allowed them to not "hate every single Singhalese" as they might have done if they were in Sri Lanka. Their empathy for the Singhalese echoed Mr. Hiroshi's plea: to "be a little empathetic" to the other side. While the Town Hall explicitly taught about rebellions and uprisings, it also implicitly stimulated students' understandings of their agency to act in democratic peace.

Many transnational immigrants feel closely connected to their homeland, a feeling that is typically frowned upon by host societies in the world, due to uncertainty and fear about the newcomers' allegiance (Van Den Anker, 2010). For instance, in 1999, some Canadians of Serbian origin participated in the Serbian war in the Balkans—fighting NATO forces, and potentially other Canadians as well (Wong, 2007/2008). Such acts of allegiance would be considered treason under the Criminal Code of Canada. Schools are often places where teachers are expected to model the responsibilities and roles of good citizenship. Mr. Hiroshi did just this. Despite competing national, religious, or ethnic identities, Mr. Hiroshi modelled the importance of primary allegiance to Canada. He affirmed the civic values and responsibilities of all Canadians, including the transnational immigrants who comprised his entire student body. This act of allegiance created some internal conflict among some students, who still felt primary allegiance to their country of ancestry. For other students, it was a moment that solidified deeper acculturation into the Canadian milieu.

The Canadian federal elections took place soon after the 1837 Town Hall simulation. Mr. Hiroshi engaged his students in a parallel campaign, in which they researched the actual candidates and evaluated their mandates. He put up posters on the board that encouraged young people to vote, and statistics that highlighted the low turn-out rate for young voters. He positioned these low voting rates as a problem and encouraged his Grade 7 students to "speak up and be heard." Following his lead, students created posters to encourage young people to vote for the best candidate.

As the students researched the different candidates, they became excited about encouraging youth to become involved with politics. On the day of the Canadian election, Mr. Hiroshi's class held their own class vote. The NDP, led by Jack Layton, won by an overwhelming majority over the Conservatives, led by Stephen Harper.[11] Different from Mrs. Amrita's class, Mr. Hiroshi's students (who were older) spoke knowledgeably about the mandates of the different party leaders. At the time, Jack Layton's campaign had been making a strong effort to connect with young people through his Twitter account. Mr. Hiroshi shared his political preference for the NDP leader and pointed out how Layton seemed to speak young people's language. Clearly, the students' activism and interest in politics flourished when they were given the opportunity to practise not only what it looked like and felt like to make decisions and play roles that perpetuated or fought against oppressive political regimes, but also to vote.

In all three classrooms, some students found ways to state their divergent perspectives when they participated in their assigned roles. These inclusive and democratic classroom activities encouraged authentic dialogue, allowing them the opportunity to share conflictual political viewpoints, mostly without fear of teacher or student reprisal. Still, others may have feared stating their personal point of view in the classroom, regardless of their role assignment, and especially when the issues reflected their cultural identities.

In addition, teachers commonly censor or limit conflictual discussions with young children. Thus, having children present their perspectives through simulations and role-plays may have enabled them to express divergent and dissenting perspectives. It may also have encouraged empathy, and a recognition of what it means to feel power, privilege, and marginalization. Perspective-taking, empathizing with the Other, and finding deeper connections to oneself are all characteristics of what consciousness-raising looks like—and simulations provided the opportunities to put these behaviours into action. Thus, cross-cultural understanding, a crucial engagement with knowing about the Other, and personal insight into what it feels like to both acquire, hold, maintain, and lose power can all be facilitated.

Opportunities to practise conflict allow students to practise roles in democracies—vital for young new Canadians. This process of representing how systems of power are enacted is especially important when students are new to Canada, or children of recent immigrants to Canada. The teachers in the three classrooms in this study implemented activities that provided opportunities for students to learn about how society is constructed, how social roles shape how conflict is taken up, and how decisions are made at various social and political power levels. My findings reflect those of previous studies, which showed how students who express divergent viewpoints through a character or role feel safer to participate (Bickmore & Parker, 2014; Bickmore, Parker, & Larsen, 2011; DeNicolo & Franquiz, 2006; Fain, 2008).

Challenging Dominant Narratives and Engaging Alternative Perspectives

Mrs. Amrita and Mr. Hiroshi both engaged their students in whole-class, reflective discussion on how they had experienced the dialogic activities. As part of this exercise, Mr. Hiroshi also asked his students to reflect on their emotions and to empathize with the opposition parties. In dominant societal norms, "in Western cultures we learn to fear and control emotions" (Boler, 1999, p. 4), because emotions are directly connected to power relations. But Mr. Hiroshi's simulation opened up possibilities for dissent and nonconformity. When students participated in processes of dissent in these classrooms, they appeared to become more engaged. In contrast, during lessons where there were minimal opportunities to voice divergent perspectives, there was less engagement and participation.

I agree with Hess (2009), who argued that discussing controversial political issues in school affects students in three dimensions: democratic values, content knowledge, and political and civic engagement (p. 30). Using varying kinds of conflictual discussions, all three teachers asked students to reflect on their values. By doing so, students learned about how positive democratic values applied in their lives. Through dialogic activities about power and conflict, and through whole-class discussions, all three teachers introduced social studies content and activities that offered opportunities for students to develop skills in conflict communication and critical reflection. Dialogic activities that engaged conflict encouraged diverse students to further reflect on where they fit in their respective democracies. Working within the mandate of preserving and maintaining neutrality, the school curriculum often teaches consensus-based political and social values (Apple, 1979/1990). Mrs. Amrita's lessons on citizenship and government explored responsible social conduct. Like Ms. Marlee, she legitimized the dominant discourse, thus supporting the reproduction and "continual maintenance of an unequal social order" (Apple, 1979/1990, p. 48). Ms. Marlee's case shows how the absence of explicit conflict in the curriculum reinforced consensus-based homogeneous ideologies.

Canadian values were embedded in all three classrooms. This influenced how conflictual issues were raised and discussed, and how students learned, both implicitly and explicitly, about power relations. Of the three, one teacher, Mr. Hiroshi, encouraged political dissent. His class had an inclusive and open climate, encouraging more free speech and democratic decision making than the other two. Even there, some students told me they had felt the need to self-censor their potentially cross-cutting political talk. Mr. Hiroshi used classroom discussions to encourage understanding of contentious topics. However, he typically represented one response as "right" (that is, in keeping with dominant Canadian values and norms).

Mrs. Amrita's implemented curriculum also embedded cultural values. For instance, when teaching about Canadian rights and responsibilities, she represented dominant Canadian norms and values, such as discussing her own responsibility to vote as a new Canadian citizen. Mrs. Amrita's personal identity and cultural background visibly influenced the ways in which she presented and discussed conflictual issues. For her part, Ms. Marlee's interactions with her diverse students allowed only minimal space for conflictual dialogue. Strict adherence to the prescribed curriculum and rigid and exclusionary classroom rules, such as those practised by Ms. Marlee, can limit opportunities for reinforcing students' cultural identities and help reproduce existing patterns of dominance in Canadian society.

These three teachers, with classes of similar demographic compositions, implemented pedagogies about social conflicts in both implicit and explicit curricula. Because of the choices they made, most of their students were able to share their personal lived experiences, and play the roles and positions assigned to them. At times, the teachers were unafraid to voice the differences among the identities represented by students in the class. Through dialogue about difference and conflict, Mrs. Amrita encouraged her students to engage with the Canadian

political system. Ms. Marlee affirmed Tina's religious identity, a minority in this classroom, but dominant in society. By addressing Mona's anxiety about her family in Egypt, linking her experience to the class discussion, Mr. Hiroshi encouraged the other students to also form meaningful connections with this international conflict. Because Mr. Hiroshi acknowledged power and explicitly elicited and integrated students' diverse cultural knowledges, some of his students were able to reflect on their personal identities in relation to their sociopolitical position in the world outside the classroom. Such explicit connections were rare in Ms. Marlee and Mrs. Amrita's classes.

Mr. Hiroshi's students reflected on their own diverse identities as they deconstructed various cross-cultural experiences and values within texts, classroom activities, and discussions (Cummins, 2009). He chose to use multiple texts, such as newspaper articles about current conflicts, thus providing opportunities for his students to critically reflect on the history provided in the textbook. Such explicit inclusion of critical historical thinking, including reflecting on wars and other historical conflicts, helps prepare students to respond to social and political changes in their own society (Osborne, 1995; Tupper, 2012). In addition, when students experience what advocacy looks and feels like, such as through diverse student representation on councils and other governing bodies, they may be empowered to address inequalities or injustices in their society at large (Davies, 2004b). Different forms of critical classroom discussions, including teacher-led, whole-group, and smaller-group student discussions, encouraged students—such as Mona, in Mr. Hiroshi's class—to respond to identity-linked conflict, for example by writing a letter to the government about Egypt. Such individual and small-group reflection tasks created spaces for supporting multiple and diverse identities in these multicultural school contexts; other students later joined in Mona's letter-writing campaign. Students' personal interest and enthusiasm about this issue also facilitated critical literacy engagement as they reflected on power structures while pursuing their writing task (Cummins, 2009, 2011; Guthrie, 2004).

In Ms. Marlee's Grade 4 Medieval Times unit, some students were assigned roles as kings or queens, while others were peasants. In Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 class, only student volunteers ran as candidates in the class election. In Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 Town Hall simulation, the class was divided into upper class government officials, Moderates, and a rebellious group, which students assumed to be from the lower class. While the assignments of various social identities contributed to both the inclusion and exclusion of diverse students, the way conflict was situated also influenced diverse students' engagement in their learning experiences.

The teachers employed pedagogies of discussion about diversity that allowed students to try out different statuses and roles from their usual social power structures. Higher- and lower-status students responded differently to different pedagogical approaches. In Ms. Marlee's medieval simulation, some students' social status roles were inverted in her classroom. In this way, she provided an opportunity for students to reflect on power and hierarchies, but she did not explicitly make the connection for them. Mr. Hiroshi's students' choices of roles in

the 1837 simulation seemed to resonate with the ways students perceived their social identities. Smira and Nira, who switched roles, responded to the implicit curriculum and in the simulation showed that their identities were fluid.

Role plays and whole-class discussions about diversity and social conflict sometimes encouraged quiet students to participate. While some students (such as Nancy, in Ms. Marlee's class) remained relatively quiet, role assignments served to provide them with the opportunity to participate, and even, in Akmed's case, to feel powerful. The social studies and language arts curricula in all three classrooms offered various opportunities for explicitly recognizing social power structures and social conflicts; in discussions, connections were made between various cultural, historical, and social issues.

All three teachers used a variety of pedagogies to encourage their diverse students to study how conflicts could be resolved peacefully by exploring and including multiple perspectives. Ethnocultural minority students grappled in various ways with norms for engagement when volunteering or being selected to speak about conflicts (such as wars, religions, and social exclusion). Some, like Jawali and Sunita in Mr. Hiroshi's class, became politically aware and wanted to speak up about global injustices. Others, such as Swetha in Ms. Marlee's class, chose to not speak about personal familial experiences (in her case, during the war in Sri Lanka).

To varying extents, the teachers sought to encourage and include students' diverse perspectives. Mr. Hiroshi stimulated critical consciousness about power and inequity through a critical comparison of power relations. Yet many of his students appeared to express consensus about social issues, despite their differences in social identity. In instances where conflict was masked, student opportunities to question or to embody different and conflicting beliefs were reduced. Opportunities for students to embody conflict in either preassigned roles or volunteer roles came more easily when students made personal, autonomous decisions in their roles. In contrast, when dialogue about difference was explicitly required, conflict was made explicit and thus provided greater opportunities to engage in conflictual talk. Furthermore, the invitation to engage in conflict through different power roles and to make conflictual decisions based on historical and socially constructed roles and positions gave students a sense of autonomy. They took ownership of shared decision-making processes through conflict and dialogue.

In this chapter, I have explored how each teacher used implicit and hidden curricula to challenge, and sometimes to maintain, existing dominant hegemonic power structures within Canadian culture. Reinforcing the theories of Apple (1979/1990) and Davies (2004a), these cases illustrate how making explicit normally hidden power and social structures may encourage students to politically engage in their society at large. There are powerful ways to teach values, ways that can embody cultural ways of being and knowing. Through implementing various dialogic exercises (such as electoral simulations, role playing, and reflective discussions), many students engaged in representing particular characters and value-laden traits that emulated or challenged their identities across their

differences. In the next chapter, I discuss how the role of religious identities, silence, voice, and groupings influenced students' opportunities for active participation and engagement in their diverse classrooms.

NOTES

[1] These were uprisings in Lower and Upper Canada in 1837 and 1838. In the Lower Canada Rebellion, French and English settlers rebelled against British colonial government. The Upper Canada Rebellion, led by William Lyon Mackenzie, who in 1834 was Toronto's first mayor, focused on the oligarchy known as the Family Compact. The rebels who led the uprisings stimulated governmental and political reform.

[2] At the time of my data collection, the school council had voted to implement simple uniforms for students to wear to school. Like Georgetown, Aria's choice in implementing uniforms was a response to the poorer families who had recently immigrated to the neighbourhood and could not afford to buy their children clothes for school. Students were not told that this was the reason that motivated the decision to have uniforms and they spoke up against it when they were given the opportunity (e.g., through the class election and when they wrote speeches).

[3] Canadian political parties are the New Democratic Party (NDP), Conservative, Liberal, and Green. These are the different political parties that students referred to in class. The NDP and Green Party have leftist political orientations. The Liberals are also considered left-wing, but not as left as the NDP and Green Party. Conservatives are right-wing. Liberals and Conservatives have historically dominated politics in Canada.

[4] See note 2 in this chapter.

[5] William Lyon Mackenzie (March 12, 1795–August 28, 1861) was a Scottish immigrant who led the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion. He had worked in both the United States and Upper Canada, first as a journalist and then as a politician; he was the first mayor of Toronto.

[6] Robert Gourlay (March 24, 1778–August 1, 1863) studied agriculture and worked as both an agriculturist and a political reform writer. He was a strong leader in the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion.

[7] William Baldwin (April 25, 1775–January 8, 1844), a doctor and lawyer, immigrated from Ireland in 1798. He represented York and Simcoe in the 8th Parliament of Upper Canada. His son, Robert Baldwin (May 12, 1804–December 9, 1858), was born in Toronto (then York), and was a moderate reformer who did not support the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion.

[8] Mr. Hiroshi obtained permission from the school principal for students to not wear their school uniforms on the day of the Town Hall simulation. The principal was very strict with the uniform policy; I often observed him visiting classrooms specifically to conduct uniform checks. This was therefore a special day for the students, as they were given the freedom to dress as well as speak as they pleased, in role.

[9] The G20 summit is a yearly meeting of international representatives of the world's economically most powerful countries. In 2011 the summit was held in Toronto. See "Sri Lankan Civil War" (2014) and "2010 G-20 Toronto Summit Protests" (2014).

[10] During an increase in the civil war and intense conflict in Sri Lanka in 2009 and 2010, a large group of Sri Lankans called upon the Canadian government to intervene; when the government refused, large protests were held by the Sri Lankan diaspora across Canada to draw attention to the rampant and escalating violence in Sri Lanka's 25-year civil war. Protests were concentrated in major southern Ontario cities, where a large percentage of the Sri Lankan diaspora resides.

[11] In the actual Canadian election in 2011, the Conservative party won.

CHAPTER 6

CONFLICT, DIVERSITY, AND THE INCLUSION OF STUDENT VOICES

> We humanize what is going on in the world and in ourselves only by speaking of it, and in the course of speaking of it we learn to be human.
>
> —Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*

Dewey (1916/1966) believed that a productive, responsible, and democratic society was founded on an effective educational system. Such a system supported students' learning, doing, and critical thinking. "Consensus," Dewey said, "demands communication," (p. 6) and he added:

> The use of language to convey and acquire ideas is an extension and refinement of the principle that things gain meaning by being used in a shared experience or joint action …. When words do not enter as factors into a shared situation, either overtly or imaginatively, they operate as pure physical stimuli, not as having a meaning or intellectual value. (Dewey, 1916/2005, pp. 12–13)

Through authentic dialogue, meanings may be uncovered and, by connecting ideas to concrete experiences, putting words into action becomes possible.

Today's dominant, mainstream curriculum teaches students "codes" or "cultures of power" (Delpit, 1988). In Delpit's view, these are skills and behaviours that people need to successfully complete school and then succeed in the workplace; they include communication and writing skills, critical thinking, mannerisms, and culturally appropriate behaviour. With them, one has access to power in the culture; without them, one does not. Explicitly teaching these norms to immigrant students is therefore necessary for their academic and economic success in larger society.

Across history and cultures, education has been the primary vessel for promoting nation-state values and ideals (Berlin, 1998; Hargreaves, 1994; Jackson, 2004; Miller & McKenna, 2011; Panjwani, 2005):

> In schools children learn about their rights and responsibilities, forms of government, cultural and religious diversity, conflict resolution practices, and so on. This kind of citizenship education is intended to foster allegiance to a specific way of life. (Pike, 2008, p. 113)

Schools are often expected to maintain national ideals, because state control of schooling practices works to control nations:

> The struggles for the control of the schools are among the bitterest political struggles which now divide the nations …. Wherever two or more groups within a state differ in religion, or in language or nationality, the immediate concern of each group is to use the schools to preserve its own faith and tradition. For it is in the school that the child is drawn towards or drawn away from the religion and the patriotism of its parents. (Lippman, 1928, quoted in W. C. Parker, 2001, p. 421)

Teaching, especially at the elementary school level, thus includes showing young students how to enact moral behaviour that reflects national ideals as well as codes of power (Delpit, 1988; W. C. Parker, 2011).

Secular public schools are expected to maintain a degree of neutrality concerning religious perspectives. Shaping young children's religious perspectives is thought to be the primary responsibility of parents—to be done in the familial environment, at home. At school, students are exposed to different perspectives, and when students' religious practices or beliefs differ from the Christian values that are embedded in most Western school systems, the potential for conflict is exacerbated.

Remaining silent about implicit ideologies supports the culture of power that excludes minority groups. It is no wonder that I observed the saliency of religious conflict at intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup levels in the diverse schools I researched.

RELIGION, IDENTITY, AND EDUCATION: PEDAGOGICAL STRUCTURES FOR INCLUSION

Religion has been used to justify violence and exclusion in many global conflicts, such as those in Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Sudan, Ireland, Iraq, Israel, and Palestine (Sen, 2006). Children who have lived through such conflicts have to find ways to negotiate their experiences and perspectives at school; transnational students who have migrated out of a conflict zone carry memories of such experiences with them. Children with various generations of immigrant ancestry may also carry particular viewpoints about people from different religious or cultural backgrounds.

Current political and social conflicts inevitably influence school and classroom dynamics. Curriculum, both mandated and implemented, may address such social conflicts (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Harris, 2004; Tawil & Harley, 2004). And, as in society at large, cultural symbols and practices in curriculum can reinforce or mitigate ethnic and social conflict (Bekerman, 2009; Funk & Said, 2004; Ross, 1993/2007b).

Bekerman (2007) argued that individual identity is influenced by nation-state ideologies and, thus, possibilities for interaction between students from contested settings (such as Israel and Palestine) must recognize power imbalances and commit to the dialogue process. In an integrated, bilingual Arabic-Hebrew school in Israel for Palestinian and Israeli students, Bekerman (2009) found that many

students generally appeared to overlook ethnic and religious identities; they formed friends across groups. However, identity became a contested issue when parents insisted on having separate cultural lessons and celebrations for the three religions represented at the school (Muslim, Jewish, and Christian), which the school subsequently provided. These rigid identity groupings appeared to create inner conflict for students who identified with more than one group. For example, one student had a Jewish mother and Muslim Palestinian father, and even though he seemed to identify more with Judaism the school identified him as Palestinian.

Hyphenated identifications have increased globally, through intercultural marriage and immigration. In Canada, 42% of the documented population identified with more than one ethnic origin (Statistics Canada, 2011). The trend to honour diversity began in Canada with the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy of 1971 (see Burnet & Driedger, 2014), which was intended to increase Canadians' tolerance of the increasing arrivals of ethnic minorities during the waves of immigration in the 1960s and 1970s. Canada was not alone in developing this kind of policy. Globally, most multicultural policies have attempted to replace multiculturalism policies with civic integration policies, in an attempt to increase new immigrants' integration, and to allay fears that nation-state allegiances would decrease with the increase of hyphenated identities. Such policies include speaking the language and having basic knowledge about the country. However, as immigrant children negotiate their ethnocultural identities they may adopt multiple languages, cultures, and loyalties (Colombo & Rebughini, 2012). Many immigrant groups are still asked to choose their primary identification. Even if they choose "Canadian" as their identity, most visible-minority Canadians will likely still be asked what they really are. However, as has been shown in this text, exploring the multiplicity of identities through safe and inclusive pedagogies often encourages greater understanding of oneself and others—opening up space for healthy acculturation and integration. These multiplicities illustrate how intersectionality operates for transnationals who occupy marginalized and privileged identities in differing cultural contexts—whether "at home" or "abroad."[1]

Research has shown that honouring immigrants' multiple loyalties and identities encourages positive psychological, social, and economic integration (Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2009). It is therefore possible for a liberal approach to civic integration policies to work in conjunction with multiculturalism frameworks, promoting a more nuanced and inclusive acculturation process (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013).

THE COMMON SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

In the province of Ontario, as in many other Canadian provinces and American states, what was once called the "common school" system taught a common curriculum embedded in founding principles based on Judeo-Christian religious beliefs. These guiding principles are still in place for secular public schools in Ontario today.

The concept of the common school was put forward in 1846 by Egerton Ryerson (1847) in Ontario. It was meant to be inclusive of all religions, including Catholicism, yet still reflect Protestant norms and values. Of course, it also served as a medium to suppress the cultural and social differences of the influx of the Irish, and Catholic, immigrants in the 1850s and Eastern Europeans in the late 1800s, who were seen as inferior to the Northern European and British settlers who wanted to maintain their power and control over these new immigrants (Harper, 1997). However, one of Ryerson's (1847) many recommendations for the country's basic education system structure stated:

> Religious differences and divisions should rather be healed than inflamed and the points of agreement and the means of mutual cooperation on the part of different religious persuasions should doubtless be studied and promoted by a wise and beneficent Government, while it sacrifices neither to religious bigotry nor infidelity the cardinal and catholic principles of the Christian religion. (pp. 51–52)

Despite Ryerson's objections, Canada's constitution of 1867 maintained two separate, publicly-funded school systems: one based on Roman Catholicism, and the other on Protestant Judeo-Christianity.[2] The latter is the public, theoretically secular, school system in Canada today.

RELIGIOUS LITERACY, CIVIC LITERACY, AND INTERRUPTIVE DIALOGUE

Educating for religious literacy is a conversational process which facilitates dialogue between secular and religious perspectives (Jackson, 2004). As information is processed, interpreted, and critiqued, religious education engages critical thinking:

> Participation in the relevant debates [about religions] links the social world and the individual, and is a condition for the kind of inter-religious and intercultural communication that is necessary for the health of plural democracies. (p. 18)

Religious literacy education encourages students' awareness of the diversity of religious perspectives, but does not support or promote any particular view. It is "the ability to discern and analyze the intersections of religion with social, political, and cultural life" (American Academy of Religion, 2010, p. 4). Preparing students to have an understanding of different religious practices and perspectives addresses prejudices and discrimination against religions. Peacebuilding education strives for similar goals; it too supports the discernment necessary for addressing comparative perspectives on diverse world religions.

Many of the students I interviewed felt that one aspect of their identity went deeper than others: their religion. For instance, when asked to identify their cultural backgrounds, many students responded by saying, "I'm Muslim," or "I'm Hindu." Other students, like Nitin, found more nuanced ways to define difference;

Nitin shared that although he and his friend were from India, they were "not the same": he was from Delhi, while Sugriva was from Punjab.

The theory of intersectionality is helpful for understanding power dynamics, marginalization, and agency (Zembylas, 2010). It privileges a multitude of social locations and multiple, intersecting, and fluid identities, including race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and nationality (Ozelm & DiAngelo, 2012). Teaching students to acknowledge their multiple social locations and identities addresses issues of essentialism and the isolation of identities, where one may "only" be Buddhist or Hindu or Muslim. The process would affirm and expand the intersection of hyphenated identities, such as Pakistani-English-Christian-Queer or Chinese-Israeli-Jewish or German-Indian-Canadian-Hindu.[3]

Hyphenated identities are not fixed or static. Like any aspect of identity, they are fluid and they change, depending on time, space, and context. Varying levels of power will influence how children may respond and engage with conflict in the classroom. For example, students may rely on the power of their social and cultural capital—friends and allies in their social networks—to determine how they will portray and act on their identity connections (Quach et al., 2009). But newcomer immigrant students may find that their social capital is limited. Their knowledge of cultural codes, such as etiquette and writing and speaking skills, may also be limited. Shame or fear may hold back children who have arrived from conflict zones; they may not wish to voice their religious or cultural identity, if they were persecuted for their cultural practices in their homeland. And anybody's level of social and cultural capital may be influenced by their social and economic class. Clearly, acknowledging multiplicities complicates how people of varying religions or nationalities perceive themselves and others.

Since conflict dialogue—like any dialogue, really—relies on the engagement of divergent points of view, sharing similar perspectives with others who have similar points of view may simply reaffirm one's pre-existing concept of themselves:

> If dialogue succeeds primarily when it appeals to what the participants all already share, then none need revise their opinions or viewpoints in any serious way in order to take account of other interests, opinions or perspectives. Beyond this, even if we understand that we need others to see what we all share, it can easily happen that we each find in the other only a mirror for ourselves. (Young, quoted in Davies, 2014, p. 453)

Through eliciting diverse and critical perspectives that question dominant assumptions, conflict dialogue recognizes and acknowledges difference. As well, including marginalized perspectives challenges and disrupts hegemonic ideologies. "Interruption," in which a challenging or alternative view is presented, invites students to shift their initial tacit beliefs and to form new and potentially counterhegemonic questions or perspectives (Haroutunian-Gordon, 2010). Conflict dialogue pedagogies must include marginalized perspectives in order not to limit the potential for interruptive discussion (Davies, 2004b; Haroutunian-Gordon, 2010). Students therefore need to have opportunities to consistently explore

multiple world views that challenge and expand their perspectives and identity-based differences.

Teachers can choose to position conflicting perspectives as cognitively dissonant teachable moments (Festinger, 1957; Houser, 1996). In cognitive dissonance, one learns to acknowledge alternative beliefs and perspectives, albeit with discomfort. This disequilibrium creates a space where critical self-reflection and conflict learning can be facilitated (Houser, 2008; Shor, 1992). In such an "interruptive democracy" pedagogy (Davies, 2004a), dialogue nurtures dissent, conflict, and discomfort in order to question, challenge, and interpret perspectives that may be different from one's own.

Through conflict dialogue, students practise establishing a perspective. They argue on behalf of this perspective, and ask and respond to specific questions about their initial, and their newer, more nuanced, point of view. This dialogic approach to conflict engages social, global, and civic issues embedded within academic curricula, and helps develop students' communication and literacy skills. I recall the conflict between Tina and Fatima, two female students, one Christian and one Muslim. They argued over whose God was the "real God." They initially chose to self-silence when confronted by their teacher about this interpersonal conflict. Later, they found their voices through a pedagogically inclusive activity—sharing creation stories—which encouraged them to speak from their ethnocultural and religious identities. The students' engagement in researching their viewpoints on creationism heightened when it became a contested and unsettled issue.

Ms. Marlee handled this religious conflict in her Grade 4 class by modelling interruptive democracy (Davies, 2004a). She challenged her diverse students' preconceptions of religious diversity, and they responded by sharing their divergent perspectives about religion and diversity. This sparked an opportunity for Tina's and Fatima's initial perspectives to be interrupted. Tina and Fatima's conflict and subsequent engagement in discussion about their religions may have changed their perspectives on diversity, and the class discussion may also have influenced others, like Irene, who observed it as a process of conflict and reconciliation. Typically quiet Irene, who had immigrated from China, and whose voice was virtually absent in whole-class discussions, told me in an interview: "[Ms. Marlee] said that it doesn't matter what country or culture you come from … as long as you don't make fun of anyone else's culture."

Creating a safe space for dialogue about global and social issues involves acknowledging students' multiple identities and multiple allegiances and how these shape their experiences and perceptions of conflicts (Davies, 2014; Osler & Starkey, 2003; Warwick, 2008). The dominant societal atmosphere, including current events, also shapes how conflict dialogue occurs in schools. In England, Warwick (2008) conducted a citizenship consultation exercise with 415 students aged 12 to 18, in which he identified best practices for listening to the concerns of young people. These included teachers' careful and adequate preparation for dialogue, so as to develop trust, safety, and a commitment to allowing students' diverse perspectives to influence subsequent activities. Such activities would build on issues that students themselves identified as important. Establishing such an

environment would allow students to share personally relevant social and global issues, such as crime and violence at the local level, and war and terrorism on the global level. The issues students raised as important were ultimately influenced by their sense of multiple or transnational identities. For instance, in my study, some students who had family living in Iraq empathized and felt an allegiance with the Iraqi people. Similarly, a group of Tamil Sri Lankan students in Mr. Hiroshi's class felt that they wanted to do something to act on behalf of Tamils who were targeted in Sri Lanka, and felt anger towards the Canadian government for not intervening.

When students begin to identify themselves as activists or concerned citizens, they may persist in raising particular issues of concern in their classrooms, which may include challenging their teacher in an attempt to assert their own power to effect change (Rubin, 2012; Warwick, 2008). Therefore, engaging students in issues they are concerned about is an ongoing commitment and involves sufficient preparation. Teachers interested in integrating "hotter" conflict dialogue must allocate significant time to prepare their students for participating in dialogue on such issues (Bickmore & Parker, 2014).

Opening Spaces for Dialogue about Religious Diversity in Diverse Public School Classrooms

Mrs. Amrita, a practising Hindu, shared her religion with many students in her Grade 5 class. She did not openly discuss issues about Hinduism, but at times she told them that she participated in Hindu holidays and practices, such as Diwali and Shivatri. Her Hindu students appeared to feel comfortable having a teacher who shared the same religious identity. In an interview, two Hindu male students, discussing identity-linked issues, reflected on the privilege and learning advantage that arose from having a teacher who shared similar aspects of their identity:

Nitesh: If we're debating on some kind of [issue], then some of us would bring out our religion to use as evidence … and, like, share ideas from our own religion. And Mrs. [Amrita] would say, "Does anyone else have this kind of practice or do this kind of thing?"

Christina: Do you think it matters that Mrs. [Amrita] is also Hindu?

Both boys: Yeah!

Sugriva: She's a very good source.

Nitesh: Well she's really helpful … like, we're, like, all the Hindus in the class, so having Mrs. [Amrita] as a Hindu teacher it's, like, kinda better.

Sugriva: We learn better.

Nitesh: Like, we could relate more to each other because she's Hindu and we're Hindu.

Even though not all of the students in class were Hindu, these students felt that all students benefited from this religious association. Others in the class felt excluded or unable to develop a similar closeness with her. In another interview, two Muslim males articulated their internal exclusion, based on the identities of their peers and teacher:

Christina: So what do you think about the multiculturalism in your class?

Qadir: Yeah, there's more Chinese, Tamil, and Indian people in our class. Like there's only four Muslims in our class …. So that's why we don't really get to talk about Muslims in class.

Christina: Would you want to talk about it more?

Both: [*Exclaim*] Yeah! [*then sigh*]

Irtal: It depends on the teacher you have.

Qadir: It's good because you meet other kinds of religions and if you're nice to them, they're nice to you. In some places they're mean to us [Muslims].

Irtal: Like with the bombs and stuff. America is, like, terrorizing Pakistan. It makes me mad. We don't talk about it in class.

Qadir: Because they don't live there. They don't know and they just care about their own country. But Canada is good because it's not like America.

Irtal: Yeah, it's peace and all that.

Even though transnationals carry multiple cultural connections, their associations with these identities are, at times, either invisible or dominant (Van Den Anker, 2010). Qadir and Irtal articulated the duality of their transnational identities. While seeking connection to Pakistan they also expressed their gratitude for Canada. At the same time, there was a sense of a lack of belonging in their home country—and their classroom.

These implicit and explicit in-groups and out-groups that were never discussed openly existed in Mrs. Amrita's classroom. This absence of dialogue created underlying, internal tensions; some students appeared to feel acknowledged, safe, and included, while others felt silenced. Religious discussions appeared to be superficial and generic; different perspectives would be aired, but not necessarily discussed, thus limiting the potential for interruptive democracy in this setting. Students raised similar sentiments in other classrooms; they said that their religious identities sometimes influenced their participation and engagement in classroom discussions.

Still, regardless of whether students engage in dialogue about religions they personally identify with or about religions of others, all can benefit from such critical dialogue (O'Grady, 2008). Obviously, the demographic makeup of the classroom will influence what kinds of topics are raised and the depth to which they are discussed. When I asked a group of Grade 5 Tamil Sri Lankan girls whether they believed the diversity in their class influenced their learning, they prophetically exclaimed, "How else would we learn about multiculturalism?" Similarly, their teacher, Mrs. Amrita shared with me during an interview:

> Mrs. A: If I were teaching in a class where they were all Caucasian and only one student out of them is different things would be different then. It wouldn't be the same dynamic in my class. I myself had a really hard time when I was a student teacher and I did my practicum in [Northern Ontario] where all of the students were White.[4] … But it goes both ways, because it depends on the teacher too. Their culture, their religion, their language is reflected in all of the activities that we do. Some Caucasian teachers are so ignorant. They don't know the difference between a temple and a mosque.

Clearly, Mrs. Amrita was more comfortable teaching in a multicultural classroom, although her implemented curriculum embedded Canadian cultural values and codes of power. When teaching about Canadian rights and responsibilities, she represented dominant Canadian norms and values, such as discussing her own responsibility to vote as a new Canadian citizen. Yet her personal identity and cultural background visibly influenced the ways in which she presented and discussed conflictual issues. Through dialogue about difference and conflict, Mrs. Amrita encouraged her students to engage with the Canadian political system by comparing oppressive political systems to what was presented as a relatively peaceful Canadian democracy.

Knowing about religious concepts that reflect students' identities will allow teachers the access and confidence to facilitate the inclusion of these various, and at times controversial, perspectives. Ultimately, learning about religious perspectives that are connected to students' lives, whether abstractly or personally, opens the door for intercultural dialogue among and between students and teachers (Jackson, 2004; O'Grady, 2008). Such intercultural dialogue supports students' development of religious literacy (Wright, 2003) and is crucial for democracy and social development (Davies, 2004).

Wright argued that religious education classes in secular contexts have the potential to remain abstract and distant from students' lives, unless students are engaged in questioning various philosophical and moral dilemmas. Then they may connect with their own and others' perspectives and experiences, and learn to interpret perceptions that may be different from their own (Jackson, 2004; O'Grady, 2008; Simon, 2001; Wright, 2003). Such a stance—which we can name peacebuilding education—would involve a conscious pedagogical shift. In peacebuilding education, teachers purposely implement dialogic pedagogy and

work towards creating a classroom environment where it is safe to engage with conflicting perspectives. In this way, discussion about religious perspectives in secular public school settings can encourage young people to develop and deepen their awareness of religious plurality and critical multiculturalism.

PARTICIPATION AND AUTONOMY IN DIALOGUE

My immersion at the different research sites allowed me to become aware of voices I did not customarily hear during classroom discussions. In particular, my evolved understanding of the less vocal students contradicted the usual beliefs about those who do not speak in class. I myself was often a "quiet" and "shy" student throughout my elementary school years. However, I had my own opinions and always aspired to make known these different points of view. Knowing this, I now made efforts to develop relationships with all the students in the classes I was studying, including the quieter ones. Not surprisingly, I found that many of the quiet students actually had a lot to say. While participating in a talking circle, quieter students, who at first passed the talking piece without speaking, after a few rounds expressed delight when they found the courage to speak. These students helped me to see how quiet students' silence was sometimes a form of participation.

I explored the assumptions that various students, both vocal and quiet, made about their quieter peers by asking them what they thought about these types of students:

Jade: *(F-EA, Grade 4, vocal)* Maybe they don't know English.

Nitin: *(M-SA, Grade 5, vocal)* Maybe they don't have the right answer.

Veeran: *(M-SA, Grade 4, sometimes vocal*) They just don't know.

Aalia: *(F-SA, Grade 7, quiet*) They're afraid.

Caden: *(M-EA, Grade 5, sometimes quiet)* They're immigrants.

Vocal and quiet students alike were obviously aware of their peers' silence. In small- and large-group activities, it was evident how the more vocal students silenced others, and how the less vocal students self-silenced or chose to participate through silence.

My interviews shed more light on how all these diverse students conceptualized classroom discussions and culturally relevant learning activities. Caden, a quiet student, said that he chose not to respond publicly in class to Mrs. Amrita's request to share his parents' migration story, because it was too embarrassing—his mother had initially been denied entry to Canada. Nitin, a vocally dominant student, was clearly aware of his consistent participation during classroom discussions; but he was also aware of his quiet peers. He provided suggestions for how they could be better engaged:

Nitin: Maybe we [vocal people] could help them out. Like, they can stay in for recess and ask the teacher and get help or the teacher could ask them more [directly].

Mrs. Amrita held significant power over classroom participation; she controlled who spoke and who was silent, so that, in this classroom, vocal students could experience what it felt like to be silent. Nitin may have empathized with his quiet peers because of this. In my findings, quiet students appeared to be more confident about participating vocally when they were supported by their peers or the teacher; Nitin's recommendations strengthened this finding.

Silence as a Form of Participation

Some students, especially the Muslim students in all three classes, revealed during small-group interviews that they feared peer reprisal were they to voice dissenting perspectives. Fatima, a vocal newcomer immigrant student in Grade 4, pointed out that because there were only six Muslims in her class of 23, much of the discussion led by Ms. Marlee was "about other religions … like Catholics." When I asked her what she did in those circumstances, she replied, in an uncharacteristically quiet voice:

Fatima: I just be quiet.

Muslim students in Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 class told me similar things. Madia, Aalia, and Akmed described an "internal Muslim-Muslim" dialogue they had in their heads when material they didn't agree with was discussed. Madia and Aalia, quiet students and recent immigrants, felt included when they participated in the Town Hall simulation in their roles as moderates. The two girls exclaimed in the interview, almost simultaneously, that "it felt great!" to give their simulation role speeches to their peers. However, Aalia, a Grade 7 newcomer that year, still felt that she struggled to articulate her points of view during class discussions. She said that she was quiet not because she "didn't know," but because she felt she just couldn't speak aloud using appropriate academic discourse:

Aalia: I did research on [the Rebellions of 1837], but I couldn't just go up and talk. But I knew about [them].

Aalia was representative of many quiet students in the three classrooms. They independently carried out research on social and conflictual issues, but despite being prepared academically they did not feel confident enough to share aloud. At times they felt their religion had been excluded. They said they felt that Muslims had to internalize their beliefs:

Madia: Yeah, because … internally, Muslims talk about "oh they're wrong" and stuff, but we can't talk like that in this class … 'cause they're [Hindus and Christians] worshipping

> this and that and stuff …. We believe in different things, yeah, you know.

When students' perspectives are delegitimized, their inclusion is compromised, especially in discussion of identity-linked narratives (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011). Madia and Aalia's experience illustrated this. To begin with, their lack of confidence with English sometimes impeded them from participating in academic discussions. Perhaps more importantly, their beliefs that they could not "talk like that" about Islam in a class of predominantly Hindus and some Christians contributed to their choices to self-silence when they disagreed with alternative beliefs linked to religious identity expressed by peers or the teacher.

These perspectives were important evidence of the mixed impact of Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 Town Hall simulation pedagogy: while most students (including Madia and Aalia) actively took up and enjoyed their roles, they and others were sometimes timid about sharing their personal beliefs or participating in academic discourse. In the small-group interviews, students in all three classrooms confirmed that not all voices and perspectives had been aired in their classrooms; some perspectives were only expressed internally, in the students' own "silenced dialogue" (Delpit, 1988).

In this study I found that silence, for some students, was a purposeful response. Gordon (2006) wrote:

> Silence often masks pain and disappointments, but can also provide an enabling space where girls can concentrate for example on educational achievement or on their own fantasies. We have used the concept of mental space to refer to this process and have suggested that an apparently passive, immobile girl may exercise agency in her mind, and thus inhabit far wider vistas than the confines of the classroom. (p. 7)

Silence, Gender, Identity, and Autonomy in Dialogue

A range of behaviours exists in typical gender identifications: girls and boys may "switch between scripts to achieve power or agency—sometimes using femininity, sometimes a more 'masculine' aggression with each other or with teachers" (Davies, 2004a, p. 64). In heteronormative contexts (Butler, 2004), gender is performed (Denzin, 1997) in ways that enact power or, alternatively, that reduce incidences of gender violence (Dunne & Leach, 2007). Male and female students, on average, may participate differently in elementary and secondary classrooms (Hahn, 1998; Sadker, Sadker, & Klein, 1991). Gender identities can be reproduced or challenged through conflict education, as students may experience what it means to have the agency to voice their perspectives.

Conflict dialogue learning opportunities are still gendered; for example, masculinity is typically associated with aggressive responses to conflict (Connell, 1993; Davies, 2004a). Students' gender identities, intersecting with their religious, cultural, racial, and class identities, are likely to influence their engagement in classroom discussions about conflictual issues. Hahn's (1998) and Harwood and

Hahn's (1990) cross-national research on students' civic engagement and participation found gender to be a factor in students' attitudes about equitable gender representation in politics. This suggests that students' gender, and gender-equitable climates of classrooms, may influence the ways in which conflicts are interpreted and taken up in classroom dialogue.

I observed many instances of silence in the three classrooms; for the most part, the silent students were female. There were students who chose to not speak during conflictual, identity-linked classroom discussions. For example, Tina and Fatima remained silent when Ms. Marlee first spoke to the whole class about their religious conflict. Typically vocal Crystal, who was half-White and half-South Asian, self-silenced during health class when two Black boys racially targeted her and made fun of the knowledge she had displayed about various drugs in a previous health class. The small group of Moderate females in the Town Hall simulation chose to align with a position that might have reflected their quieter stance.

There were students who chose to not speak at all in the classroom. Nancy, in Grade 4, was known as the girl "who doesn't speak in class, only at recess." Others wanted to speak but were too shy, like Smira and Malika in Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 class. They relied on others to speak for them: "They [Smira and Malika] just tell me and I say it for them," said the vocally confident Crystal. Others waited for a turn to speak that never came: "When I have a good idea and I raise my hand, I really don't get picked," said Sonya, a typically quiet female, in Grade 4.

Generally speaking, students are rewarded for keeping quiet (Jackson, 1968; McNeil, 1986). In Ms. Marlee's class, students' silence earned them power (i.e., they got points): "The group has to do their homework, bring home their tests … and they have to be silent," Jade said. Then there were those who spoke a lot:

Christina: So who talks the most?

Swetha: *Ms. Marlee!*

Jade: The smartest. *(laughter)*

In the three classrooms of my study, exposure to different cultures and religions was designed to expand students' perspectives on diversity; but some students, including Qadir, told me in interviews that their perspectives were not always legitimized by their peers or by the teacher. In dialogic methods of teaching, teachers may learn and relearn with their students (Ellsworth, 1989; Freire, 1970/1994b). If the teacher speaks the most, diverse students' viewpoints have a hard time surfacing, limiting the possibilities for critical dialogue among peers. When oral participation is graded or otherwise extrinsically rewarded, dialogue may be forced. Thus, Ms. Marlee's defensive teaching style imposed a double bind on her students: she rewarded students for keeping quiet, and at times she also rewarded them for their oral participation. Swetha and Jade were among many

students, both vocal and quiet, who told me that, aside from their teacher who spoke the most, the typically vocal students were "the smartest" ones.

Research shows that some students may choose to remain silent to mark their disagreement on a conflictual issue (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011) or to mask how their personal identity connects to the issue (Schultz, 2010). Hemmings (2000) studied two high school classes and showed how social status and power dynamics between students influenced how they participated in discussions. Similarly, White's (2011) interviews of four racial minority students, first-generation undergraduates in a predominantly White university in the western United States, found that their reticence to speak aloud in class discussions was based on fears of being seen as speaking for an entire minority group, as being academically incompetent, and of not being capable of participating in academic discourse. Thus, these students "made conscious decisions not to participate in classes, thereby affecting their academic performance as well as their sense of belonging to the academic community in which they found themselves" (White, 2011, p. 255).

Opening up spaces for classroom discussion and dialogue provided a platform for students in my study to process conflict and seek reconciliation at intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. For example, the dialogue across religious differences in Ms. Marlee's classes was meant to help students develop an affinity with and empathy for others. In a comparative study of different religions in ancient civilizations, Mrs. Amrita's choice to share her own personal anecdotes allowed diverse religious perspectives to be included in the conversation, affirming most students' individual beliefs and practices. Mr. Hiroshi drew on students' diverse religions and on the dominant Canadian discourse to teach the value of a sense of being together in a world comprising differences. Tajinder, an academically strong Sikh male, described himself as "lonely" and "quiet," and yet as feeling included in Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 class:

> Tajinder: This is a multicultural class and we can actually talk about things about our different cultures and religions in our class.

These classroom cases show that such acceptance and openness to difference can be explicitly taught in public schools. Ultimately, using culturally sensitive and responsive pedagogy when facilitating discussions about religions helped students to develop civically engaged, democratic, and culturally inclusive perspectives.

How dialogue takes place and who gets to talk intersects with the kinds of conflictual topics teachers present for dialogue. I observed students' body language when they were engaged, and also how some highly emotional topics influenced some students' willingness to articulate contrasting perspectives. Silence, most often, was not an indicator of disengagement. Engaging in talk about conflict can be empowering, if safe spaces for such risks are opened and nurtured.

INCLUDING DIVERSE VOICES IN DIALOGIC ACTIVITIES

Students' silence can at times indicate their perceived sense of exclusion, and at other times, perhaps, agreement with their peers and/or the teacher (Bekerman &

Zembylas, 2011; Schultz, 2010; Wortham, 2010). Zembylas and Michaelides (2004) argued that students may experience the "silencing of silence"—that is, silence and its subversion. On the other hand, pedagogies that honour silence can open up a space to question or respond in silence, which can allow for teachers to know whether "a student [is] keeping silent as a political stand or as a result of shyness" (Zembylas & Michaelides, 2004, p. 193).

Building connections to students' personal experiences was one way the three teachers invited quiet voices to participate. However, not all students felt comfortable sharing their stands on sensitive, identity-linked issues. In discussions about the War of 1812 and about the expulsion of ethnic groups such as the Acadians, Mr. Hiroshi passionately explained why he would align himself with Canada in a hypothetical war with Japan. Some students in this Grade 7 class chose to not disclose their perspectives on this. Their silence apparently was planned and purposeful. One group in particular felt connected to these expulsions: those who had experienced the civil war in Sri Lanka. Sunita and Jawali, Tamil Sri Lankan girls, shared with me in a later interview their resentment towards Canada in relation to the war in Sri Lanka.

Consistent with my observations and interviews, some researchers found that students' silence at times reflected their choice to keep their identities silent or to not attract attention, particularly when they felt emotionally connected or personally identified with the conflictual issue being discussed (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011; Schultz, 2010; Wortham, 2010). Sunita and Jawali's silence may have reflected this.

The nonvocal participation of minority students during class discussions does not necessarily reflect those students' "lack of interest, knowledge, or desire to participate" (White, 2011, p. 262). Based on his study of undergraduates, White (2011) argued that minority "students' voices were largely silenced or, more appropriately, these students censored themselves, because they recognized that their own culturally significant ways of talking were incongruent with the official discourse of the academy" (p. 257). For some of these diverse elementary students, such as Souhaila (Grade 4) and Madia and Aalia (Grade 7), self-consciousness about participating in academic discourse in the culture of power (Delpit, 1995/2006) begins when young. The research suggests promising possibilities for challenging this barrier at an early age. I found that lower-status students, such as Smira and Akmed (Grade 7) and Qadir and Irtal (Grade 5), participated more frequently and confidently in activities about conflict and diversity when they had peer support or teacher encouragement to share their perspectives.

In Freire's (1970/1994b) theory of critical consciousness, the world is understood from the contrasting perspective of a marginalized position. This is made possible when people engage in reflection and dialogue about their own social position and also take action on it; Freire calls this *praxis*. His theory reinforces my argument, namely: if teachers were to assume that all individuals agree, the dominant voices tend to be empowered. In my study, when a teacher's program aimed at critical consciousness and praxis (such as reflecting on day-to-

day activities and lessons), students' silence could take different shapes and carry different meanings.

Through his lessons on conflictual content in current and historical events, Mr. Hiroshi provided opportunities for a range of diverse students, including quiet ones and those of lower social status, to collectively shape their perceptions and understandings of their world. However, some students still chose to not share their divergent perspectives aloud. Mr. Hiroshi appeared to interpret students' silence as agreement. He presented issues that he found fascinating (war-related games, facts, news articles), and it appeared, from most students' level of engagement, that they agreed with their teacher's position on these issues. All of Mr. Hiroshi's students appeared to look up to him as a role model. For the most part, there was little or no open disagreement about plausible alternative perspectives on some conflictual issues. Mr. Hiroshi expressed this sentiment himself during our interview when he said, "The stuff I didn't agree with, they didn't agree with either."

Some pedagogical processes engaged quiet voices, especially when those students viewed the content as relevant. For example, more diverse students participated more openly in the dialogic class election campaign process in Mrs. Amrita's class. Different norms for engagement prevailed in the classrooms. Ms. Marlee's norms for interaction discouraged open participation, in a dynamic similar to Mrs. Amrita's typical pedagogy. In contrast, Mr. Hiroshi's students were rarely told to not speak, and they typically provided responses without raising their hands. These different norms may be connected to Mrs. Amrita's and Ms. Marlee's traditional, defensive teaching style in which obedient students should not speak until spoken to (Jackson, 1968; McNeil, 1986).

There are multiple ways teachers can choose to engage with different perspectives. Many pedagogical activities support the examination and integration of different points of view, such as the Structured Academic Controversy (Johnson & Johnson, 2009), issues discussions, peacemaking circles, fishbowls, and role-plays or simulations.

POWER AND SOCIAL STATUS: SMALL- AND LARGE-GROUP PEDAGOGICAL STRUCTURES FOR INCLUSION

The students in my research were from predominantly working-class families, and were relatively homogenous, culturally and socioeconomically. However, students' social and academic statuses differed within each class; this appeared to influence their participation patterns.

Every classroom carries with it routines (Jackson, 1968). Routines are organizational patterns that structure students' learning experiences and interactions. Norms for interaction—such as who speaks, who speaks first, who remains silent—are sustained by particular conversational routines and often linked to unequal status. For example, the vocal students in the three classrooms carried on what Horn and Little (2010) called "conversational routines." Students' interactions and participation in the small- and whole-group discussions I observed in all three classrooms were influenced by socially constructed groups of dominant

speakers. Based on their social identities, some students' perspectives (such as Crystal in Grade 7 or Nitin in Grade 5) carried greater power than others.

In all three classrooms, teachers organized their students in small groups of four to six. Ms. Marlee's groups were competitive and constantly changing, as students had the power to vote their peers out of the groups. Mrs. Amrita assigned students with similar academic levels to sit and work together. She only changed the groups twice during the time I spent in her classroom. Mr. Hiroshi changed the groupings and seating every two weeks, usually upon students' request. This frequent change in groups reflected Mr. Hiroshi's understanding of how students' fluid identities and social statuses influenced their vocal participation. In addition, he took students' social status into greater consideration than their academic achievement when formulating his groupings.

As a researcher who occupied these classroom spaces over time, I was able to identify many different social status groups. This included popular class leaders (e.g., Crystal, Anita, and Tyrone) and academically strong, quiet students (e.g., Malika, Smira, Tajinder, and Akmed). Towards the end of the year, Mr. Hiroshi placed Malika in a group with Crystal. My observation notes confirmed what Mr. Hiroshi had told me in a personal interview—group dynamics varied, and Malika started to speak more in class during whole-group discussions when she was sitting beside Crystal, who encouraged her to raise her hand and speak:

> Mr. H: I know sometimes they're [Tyrone and Crystal] overwhelming, you know, because they are so willing to speak up and it's great, like I encourage them to do that …. When Crystal's sitting with a group of quieter people, she forces them to talk. That's why she's sitting with Madia and Malika right now and she talks to them all the time and forces them to talk back [in whole-class discussions] and it's amazing. Especially during math, you could see the difference.

Mr. Hiroshi's conscious attention to breaking social barriers and cliques when crafting his seating plan allowed for other voices be to heard. Challenging the assumption that novice teachers might still be learning how to use conflict dialogue processes (e.g., Parker & Bickmore, 2012), Mr. Hiroshi, who was only in his second year of teaching, consistently implemented conflict dialogue pedagogies. In Ms. Marlee's class, the competitive atmosphere appeared to reinforce unequal social statuses; there, students consistently voted lower-status, frequently disruptive students, like Shaun, out of their groups. Mixed groupings, such as in Mrs. Amrita's elections campaign, hindered groupthink decision-making processes, changing the conversational routines.

The choices made by the three teachers to assign various active roles for students' participation in dialogic activities (e.g., literature circles, role plays, and simulations) influenced opportunities for diverse students to participate. Unlike Ms. Marlee, Mr. Hiroshi explicitly named inequitable group dynamics by "paying attention to the dynamics in the classroom." Like Mrs. Amrita, Mr. Hiroshi used groupings based on academic criteria, but most often he mixed academic and social

groupings. He believed there was greater potential for inclusion of diverse students when he mixed students' groupings in various ways, thus increasing possibilities for constructing healthier, more equitable groups.

In the Town Hall simulation, Mr. Hiroshi gave students the choice to volunteer for different political groups, which provided them with a sense of agency and the opportunity to enact a certain political identity. However, in other classrooms, students preferred their teacher to make choices for them. For instance, when Mrs. Amrita gave her students the choice to choose their own groups for the election campaigns, many students moaned in displeasure, mumbling, "People will just choose their friends." Many marginalized or lower-status students told me in interviews that they preferred when teachers maintained their authority by creating groups.

In both Mr. Hiroshi's and Mrs. Amrita's classes, I observed academic-achievement groupings in which students made efforts to collaborate on the assigned tasks. For instance, during literature circles in Mr. Hiroshi's class, the lower-academic group of boys passed a talking piece to facilitate their lively discussion about the novel they had read. This ensured that no one dominated their discussion: each had an equitable opportunity to participate. In other types of dialogic activities, such as the Town Hall simulation and the structured academic controversy on rural and urban communities, all students actively participated while in mixed academic and social status groups. In these instances, students collaboratively drafted and presented their conflictual points for dialogue. Giving students choices encouraged them to participate in democratic decision making. At the same time, teachers' interventions in group formations often helped ensure inclusive and equitable participation, thus providing students with opportunities to work with a variety of diverse peers and perspectives.

In contrast to whole-class discussions, where the more vocal students dominated, small-group activities and role-play simulations contributed to a wide range of students' engagement and inclusion. Mr. Hiroshi's Town Hall simulation and Mrs. Amrita's election campaigns allowed students from different social and academic statuses to work together, which facilitated the inclusion of lower-status students, such as Qadir and Irtal, who volunteered to be candidates. In contrast, Ms. Marlee's "defensive teaching" style (McNeil, 1986) frequently limited the potential for dialogue and reduced students' opportunities for agency. Overall, marginalized students appeared more confident and included in dialogic classroom activities when peers supported their participation, teachers assigned particular roles, and they had the opportunity to speak.

The ways in which the three teachers encouraged and facilitated sensitive conflicts that related to students' identities reflected the cooperative or competitive dynamics in each classroom. Cooperative contexts seemed to ensure the safety and inclusivity of all students' diverse experiences. Fatima and Tina, who initially self-silenced in the class discussion that had evolved from their interpersonal conflict, later talked about how their interpretations of curricular subject matter (e.g., creation stories, symbols in Canada) were shaped by their personal identities, histories, and experiences. When Mrs. Amrita acknowledged unequal power and

social structures in her implemented curriculum content on immigration and citizenship, some students, like Qadir and Jamal, appeared to experience a strengthened inclination to participate in the whole-class discussion. Such moments supported both Canadian group identities and students' individual cultural identities.

Consistency in implementing dialogic pedagogies supported some quieter students to participate and share their initially tacit beliefs and perspectives. However, at times, teachers' personal perspectives still trumped others. This raises important concerns regarding facilitating classroom dialogue and challenging dominant and more powerful perspectives, apparent in textbooks as well as in teachers' personal perspectives at times. Diverse voices need to be included within various classroom spaces and silent voices also need to be included, to facilitate a balanced democratic dialogue. Silence carries hidden meanings that can be made explicit when teachers integrate dialogic pedagogies supporting students' diverse positions and locations (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011; Wortham, 2010).

EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH DIVERSE CONFLICTUAL ISSUES

Most students appeared to feel safer and more comfortable about voicing dissent during dialogic activities when they participated in role plays. Even though quiet students found their voices this way, silent and silenced students still existed in all the classroom spaces. Similarly, while some team-building activities—such as role plays, debates, and simulations—facilitated the inclusion of some students, others felt excluded. For example, Ms. Marlee eventually invited Fatima and other Muslim students in her Grade 4 class to build a mosque in their medieval model village. Fatima's father, who approached Ms. Marlee about how she planned on representing Muslims in her Medieval Times unit, obviously had a particular perspective on this history. Fatima, in an interview, wanted to speak more about Islam; however, other than providing instructions on how to build a mosque, the opportunity for such a discussion did not occur during the Medieval Times unit.

Silence carries hidden meanings that can be made explicit when teachers integrate dialogic pedagogies supporting students' diverse positions and locations (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011; Wortham, 2010). Even though classroom discussions usually involved the voices of a handful of dominant and confident students, that doesn't necessarily mean that the less vocal were ignorant or invisible. Sometimes, more comfortable students encouraged others to add their voices to discussions, such as when Fatima urged Farat to share his perspective on Islam. Based on my interviews with various quiet and vocal students, I found that students' silences were not typically based on their intellectual capacities. Consistent with Schultz's (2010) study, students' silences sometimes indicated their perceived sense of exclusion and other times, reflected real agreement with their peers and/or teacher.

At times, students refused to participate in whole-class discussions, or were too shy to do so. Small-group activities were an obvious alternative, as most students felt more comfortable speaking in smaller groups. The teachers' assignment of

particular roles for students also encouraged participation in small-group and whole-class activities.

Engaging in talk about conflict can be empowering, if safe spaces for such risks are created and nurtured. Bickmore (2006) illustrated the role of schooling in facilitating such empowerment:

> Citizenship education could equip members of diverse social groups to build paths toward understanding and democratic decision-making—embracing and handling conflict, rather than erasing differences. Schooling is one social institution that simultaneously facilitates, shapes, and impedes such conflict management. (p. 360)

Opportunities for nurturing conflict and dialogue, where they existed, appeared to strengthen students' confidence to participate. Newcomer immigrants and students with lower social statuses appeared to develop a greater inclination to participate when dialogic activities allowed them to enact particular roles. For instance, Irtal, in Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 class, pointed out that when given the opportunity to be a candidate in the election, he "unlocked his confidence." Encouraged by the norms for engagement, many students spoke, whether in assigned roles or as themselves; they represented their various individual and cultural-group identities, engaging critically in dialogue about social conflicts.

The diversity of identities among students motivated the three teachers to use the diverse histories, perspectives, and experiences of students as resources for critical reflection about social conflicts. This contributed to students' inclusion in the classroom. For instance, in Mr. Hiroshi's class of predominantly South Asian students, he asked students to look up natural disasters around the world that were of interest to them and together they engaged in discussion about these events. A number of students in his class were Sri Lankan and so Mr. Hiroshi encouraged his students to research the 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka. They also researched the March 2011 tsunami in Japan; they watched newscasts and posted articles on a designated class bulletin board, making connections about migration of people in relation to natural disasters. In both instances, the research process involved reading various news articles, which stimulated students' engagement in critical reading and literacy and also affirmed students' histories and identities.

CONNECTING TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' IDENTITIES THROUGH CONFLICTUAL ISSUES

Opportunities to practise conflict allow students to rehearse roles in democracies—vital for young new Canadians. This process of representing how systems of power are enacted is especially important when students are new to Canada, or children of recent immigrants to Canada:

> [Schools are] powerful places to give young people the very opportunity that we know many adults do not have—to engage in "cross-cutting" political

> talk. More importantly, schools are places in which young people can be taught *how* to engage in such talk wisely and well. (Hess, 2009, p. 22)

Teachers' identities may influence the classroom climate and discussions, for example in influencing students' engagement in particular kinds of topics; how students perceive their own identities may thus be shaped by these influences. Not all of the students identified personally with Mrs. Amrita's identity on every level. Some students were practising Muslims, others identified as Chinese and Buddhist. However, in this classroom, all of the students shared a *group identity* with their teacher in terms of their immigration histories, as all students were either children of immigrants to Canada, or were new immigrants themselves—and all were a member of a visible minority group. Again, this does not mean that only immigrant or visible minority teachers could or should teach about controversial issues related to students' identities, but what it does mean is that we need to pay careful attention to the intersectionality of identities represented in our classroom space and how these multiple ways of viewing a phenomenon shape our knowledge, perspectives, and values.

Some students and teachers adopt fragile or sensitive identities, either because they are not comfortable with their cultural identity or because they have experienced harm because of various aspects of their identity, such as religious persecution. Too often, conflicts arise because of generalizations and labels placed on an essentialized characterization and perception of particular religious or cultural groups (LeBaron, 1997). Cross-cultural dialogue about issues of diversity encourages both students and teachers to look beyond their cultural boundaries and work together to find a common understanding (Mayer, 2000). While much of teaching involves teaching morals and values (W. C. Parker, 2011; Simon, 2001), many teachers tend to limit their discussions about potentially controversial issues, particularly in connection to religion (Noddings, 2012; Simon, 2001).

In the three public school classrooms I observed, it was clear that religion was not entirely censored. Rather, when it was presented as an unsettled conflictual issue, diverse students became engaged. The saliency of religious beliefs in these classrooms supported the teachers in implementing culturally relevant pedagogies that reflected students' diversities. All three teachers said that they viewed their pedagogical processes—including preparation, planning, and subsequent delivery of lessons, ideas, and topics—as responsive to the cultural backgrounds of the students in their class, albeit at times from an implicit and unconscious perspective.

The inclusion of religious practices and beliefs in the classroom and school community reflected the diverse student population. These teachers chose to include religious perspectives and a religious education that did not always reinforce the dominance of Christian beliefs. Mrs. Amrita's personal Hindu beliefs were implicitly—and at times, explicitly—integrated into the curriculum. Ms. Marlee, a Catholic-turned-atheist, shared with her students that her personal frame of reference was Christianity. At the same time, she invited students of different religions into curriculum exercises. Ms. Marlee did not appear to have the same role-model influence over her students as Mr. Hiroshi. There were a number of

Muslim students in Mr. Hiroshi's class. Mr. Hiroshi, a practising Christian, explicitly invited students to acknowledge diverse religions, wishing students Happy Diwali and discussing in class why Muslims go to Mecca. He never appeared to highlight Christianity as the dominant religion.

The teachers provided examples of the feasibility and importance of inviting discussion of diverse cultural and religious perspectives in public schools. Culturally sensitive classroom discussions and interactions amongst peers and teachers helped teach students about morals and values. Reinforcing previous research, this study found that culturally relevant pedagogy closely connected to character education was integral to building healthy classroom environments (Brown, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1995). It also added to the growing body of research that shows how diverse students' inclusion relies on the engagement of their diverse identities and conflictual perspectives (Cummins, 2001; Delpit, 2006; Howard, 2001).

In the next chapter, I discuss the comparisons of themes across these three classroom cases and conclude with a discussion on the significance of multiculturalism, peace, and citizenship education in Canada, and recommendations for further study.

NOTES

[1] For some second- or multigenerational immigrants, going "abroad" can refer to their parents' home country, since their "home" is the host country where their parents/family settled.

[2] During the constitutional negotiations of the 1860s, many Catholic religious leaders sought to protect separate Catholic and Protestant school systems, and French Canadians argued for provincial control of education. Section 93 of the Constitution Act established exclusive provincial control of education, while also allowing the federal government to intervene to protect religious or minority schools.

[3] In this study I have given particular attention to the ethnic origins and migration experiences of the students and teachers. I acknowledge that these participants carried many different aspects of their identities; some that I may not have been necessarily aware or inclusive of; however, my intention in focusing on ethnicity and race, in conjunction with different aspects of identity, is to better understand how visible minorities negotiate their identity within these particular spaces.

[4] Mrs. Amrita was referring to previously shared experience. She taught a class of all-White students in Northern Ontario. At that school, students and staff members alike made fun of her Indian accent.

CHAPTER 7

TOWARDS AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING EDUCATION

> To understand an event, not to mention a phenomenon, we must encompass the varying experiences of that event, even though we must understand that what we understand is only an approximation. That the approximation departs from the experience of the actors is not a problem; it is the point. How experience is experienced is one topic of importance. But how that experience is formulated, remembered, and retold tells the hearer something beyond "what happened," which we cannot in any case know and which did not in any case happen, since what happened, happened to many different people differently.
>
> —Beth Roy, *Some Trouble with Cows*

MULTICULTURALISM, PEACE, AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN CANADA

All over the world, ease of people's movement has normalized transnationalism. Today, it is common for most children in metropolitan communities to carry transnational identities. These children must constantly negotiate the pushes and pulls of their identities. Having attachment to two or more countries is not necessarily conflictual; however, when attachments to multiple countries do come in conflict with each other, transnational identities can easily become mired or delegitimized.

Many of the young Sri Lankan Canadians who participated in the 2010 protests in Toronto were students in Mr. Hiroshi's classroom. The conflict in Sri Lanka at that time increased their attachment to that aspect of their identity. Their association with their Canadian identity (as citizens, refugees, or landed immigrants) seemed to provide them with the perspective and momentum to gather in protest. They were now Sri Lankans representing Sri Lanka in Canada. Mr. Hiroshi emphasized a different perspective: despite ancestral or ethnic connections (to Japan, in his example), Canadian identity superseded all other allegiances. This explicit message of cultural allegiance shaped and influenced the identities of the transnational children in his classroom.

Some transnationalists maintain close ties with their homeland for several generations, while the cultural histories of others quickly dissipate. Students may shy away from teachers' attempts to include their transnational identities, out of fear of being marked as different. In my personal elementary schooling experience,

I maintained a public school Canadian identity devoid of any transnational belonging. To a small degree, I carried a private transnational identity through cultural idioms, practices, clothing, and food. In my own schooling experience, my transnational identity was confined to the home.

In Canada, multiculturalism was introduced as a concept in the 1970s. Over time, its meaning has changed: bringing people together to share a space, classroom, or community is no longer enough. People also need to dialogue, to interact, and to explore creative tensions. Only through such dialogic interaction can the aim of building resilient and democratic communities be fulfilled.

By exploring the roots of conflict, applying nonviolent solutions to conflict, and promoting inclusive strategies to resolve complex disagreements, peace educators challenge cultural hegemony. In dialogic classroom-based processes, such as peacemaking circles, students learn to listen to each other and resolve conflicts peacefully. Such experiences and participation in nonviolent and inclusive resolution strategies encourage young people to address social injustice. Peace educators do much more than purposely generate conflictual dialogue for transformation.

Without the critical education necessary to respond inclusively and equitably to issues of diversity, however, facilitators can misguide or essentialize experiences of diverse people, and peacebuilding education can also reinforce or mitigate social and ethnic conflict. For instance, in contexts of structural inequality, conditions for violence are exacerbated through poverty and social exclusion. Such cultural violence presents cultural symbols and practices as normalized, which legitimizes structural violence (Galtung, 1969, 1990). If diverse groups are further stigmatized, even under the guise of peacebuilding education, cultural violence is reproduced by alienating other cultures' practices and beliefs. Examples of this include using case studies or activities that misrepresent different ethnic or gender groups and legitimize their structural oppression and marginalization.

Creating a safe space for students who are acculturating to navigate their cultural identities obviously requires careful planning and preparation of the classroom environment. The multicultural rhetoric of the dominant society has sought to define and normalize our perceptions of difference, but critical pedagogical approaches to issues of diversity can provide students with the autonomy to (re)define their own identities. Guiding students to explore social constructions of race, gender, and privilege, for instance, may also contribute to their increased awareness and understanding of power.

Aboriginal Peoples' Identities across Canada

Recognizing the history and experiences of Aboriginal peoples[1] in Canada allows for a more nuanced understanding of the cultural colonization present in Canadian schooling systems. The dominant society's stated goal in sending Aboriginal children to residential schools was to civilize and normalize them. By the late 1800s, residential schooling was compulsory for all Aboriginal children aged 7 to 15 (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Many children in the residential schools died as a

result of illnesses, associated with lack of food and dismal living conditions. Many children in these schools were also abused sexually, emotionally, and physically. These traumas suffered by Aboriginal peoples are often avoided in classroom discussions.

Then as now, the dominant society's rhetoric of multiculturalism renders invisible certain aspects of Canada's history. It seeks to promote national values and ideals based on tolerance, acceptance, and peace. Thus, openly discussing Canada's participation in human rights violations, past and present, is made challenging. The internment of Japanese-Canadians during World War II, the denial of citizenship for Chinese people, and the removal of Aboriginal children from their homes are all examples of an alternative and hidden Canadian history. Overlooking such past violations has allowed them to continue in present-day Canada. They can be seen in the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities in Québec, the extraordinary number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and in Canada's investments in national and global extractive industries that perpetuate human rights violations.

In many ways, our schooling continues to perpetuate a system that seeks to normalize disparate groups by homogenizing them. When conflictual issues are avoided and a curriculum that seeks to homogenize viewpoints is taught, structural inequalities remain unacknowledged. Discussing and acknowledging inequalities and violations can actually create opportunities to nurture and support Canadian values and ideals.

At the same time, teachers' efforts to seek inclusion, through the integration of critical issues, can be overpowered by the structural institution of schooling. Even within classrooms that promote peacebuilding, dominant discourses remain omnipresent. While none of the students in this study identified with any Aboriginal peoples' identities, Ms. Marlee drew on students' cultural knowledges to interpret the Aboriginal creation story, which helped to prepare her students to research and write about their own cultural stories, and provided them with language to question and interpret the diverse identities of their peers and their teacher. Nevertheless, critical discussion about Aboriginal peoples was noticeably absent.

Even though many teachers believe that their presentation of so-called factually based knowledge is neutral, the history of how schooling has been used in Canada to teach *particular* types of values and norms illustrates the ways in which all schooling is far from being politically neutral. In Canada, approximately one million people self-identify as Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2011). Issues such as illiteracy, alcoholism, drug use, and suicide continue to affect many Aboriginal peoples, who have become subject to a spiral of violence. Still, peacebuilding education has benefitted from the integration of Indigenous principles and pedagogies. Connecting to peacebuilding education for Canadian Aboriginal children could potentially address the deep exclusion Aboriginal peoples have been dealt by years of residential schooling and continual social and economic marginalization.

Learning in a context that purposely integrates Aboriginal and visible minority cultures, and engages with their multiple and intersecting identities, histories, and perspectives, may contribute to facilitating the kind of inclusion of marginalized voices that is necessary to address this societal exclusion. An integrative peacebuilding model could challenge normalized violence and provide opportunities to challenge hidden injustices, and promote dialogue and critical reflection about difficult and contentious issues that are directly connected to real and lived experiences. The key is to encourage and give power to the possibility of dialogue to further the exploration of multiple perspectives and histories.

Building Empathy for Social Cohesion

Socially cohesive societies facilitate a strong sense of belonging and allow citizens to feel positive about their sense of belonging and prospects for social mobility. When dissenting voices are permitted, awareness and understanding of alternative histories and experiences—such as immigration, political and social uprisings, and possibilities for governmental reform—can develop. For example, during the Arab Spring of 2011, students identified with the power of citizens' voices and protest, comparing them to how the Canadian Rebellions of 1837 had contested the Family Compact, then the political elite of Upper Canada, challenging inequality among the classes and seeking social change.[2]

Teaching is a political act: it can be used to actively challenge ideologies of neutrality (Marri, 2005; Ross, 2007b). However, simply presenting social or political issues is not enough to accomplish the necessary critical engagement. Critical, dialogic pedagogies are necessary to move towards a culture of peace. They do this by creating space for students to embody and develop affinity with other perspectives, groups, and identities (Danesh, 2006). The critical educator needs to "discuss issues and or simulations that purposefully disrupt oppressive paradigms"; merely "presenting both sides of an issue is not a neutral act" (Urrieta, 2004, p. 453).

Peacebuilding education facilitates dialogue. Such a problem-posing education exposes students to a critical examination of themselves, their history, and the world in which they live. This purposive engagement in critical dialogue "offers greater possibilities for historical contextualization, and actively attempts to alter the current neo-colonial ideology of nationalism and citizenship" (Urrieta, 2004, p. 453). Mr. Hiroshi's pedagogy, overall, provided some clear examples of how to ignite such critical, transformative perspectives. He consistently encouraged students to connect with alternative social-historical conflicts that challenged dominant ideologies and engaged students in confronting structural power and hegemony.

Dialogic pedagogies can be used in classrooms with ethnoculturally diverse, minority immigrant students to invite discussion about diversity and conflictual issues. International research illustrates their value for building democratic citizenship and facilitating peacebuilding education. The teachers described in this book facilitated various levels of connections between classroom content and

students' identities. The students responded when their identities were or were not reflected in the curriculum, for the dialogic activities allowed them to find their voice and express their social identifications. At times, the teachers facilitated identity-linked conflicts among the students, to teach critical consciousness within their different multicultural settings, increasing the effectiveness of the implicit and explicit curriculum for educating diverse students about democracy.

Including differing points of view offers opportunities for critical reflection about social issues, making conflict educational (Bickmore, 2005, 2011b). Critical reflection and dialogue offer empowering possibilities for students to practise democracy and strengthen their skills for civic engagement (Bickmore, 2007; Kahne & Sporte, 2008). A criticism of citizenship education, a component of peacebuilding, is that it sets out to make citizens governable and compliant instead of supporting learners to develop critical perspectives (Pykett, 2007, 2009). Opportunities for conflict dialogue encourage students to participate in the process of holding their governments accountable. Human rights are realized when individuals have opportunities to participate in democratic practices, such as decision making and seeking justice (Osler & Starkey, 2010). Ethnocultural minority students who have experienced oppression would particularly benefit from practising these skills, which can encourage them to find their voice and participate in dissent. There were some commonalities and also many differences among how the teachers in this study chose to implement issues of conflict and diversity in their curriculum. Whatever the teachers' techniques, however, in the end the students clearly learned from the conflict dialogue.

Developing the Courage to Teach and Speak

Teachers sometimes choose to shy away from conflict. They seem to wish that all students would resolve interpersonal conflicts, and that everyone would "get along." They are generally uncomfortable when addressing conflictual subject material in diverse classrooms (Bickmore, 1999, 2005; Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Yamashita, 2006), and, most often, avoid conflicting perspectives rather than invite critical reflection on contesting beliefs (Houser, 1996). But avoidance and wishing only serves to leave underlying tensions and perceptions about conflictual issues untouched and unexamined. Discussing broad, global conflictual issues, such as genocide or human rights, opens the door for sensitive discussions about identity based on race, class, or gender—adding nuance and a helpful complexity to the classroom curriculum. Such discussions also make it easier to pursue a semblance of neutrality.

Teachers need support and guidance to develop the courage to teach about conflict. Some teachers fear getting into conflictual issues because they feel unqualified. They do not want to engage with current events for fear of creating or restimulating ethnic tensions already present in the classroom or community. Palmer (2007) has written that holding a space for conflictual points of view is a crucial step in allowing students to learn more deeply, yet it is still one of the most challenging of tasks for teachers:

> Imagine yourself in a classroom. You ask a well-framed question, and then you wait and wait as the great silence descends. You know you should wait some more, not jump, but your heart pounds, then sinks, and finally feels helpless and out of control. So you answer your own question with an emotional mix of anxiety, anger, and authoritarianism that only makes things worse. Then you watch as the opening to learning offered by the silence vanishes—and teaching becomes more and more like running headlong into walls. (p. 86)

Regardless of tenure or experience, any teacher who attempts to introduce dialogue about conflictual issues may experience such an awkward result. To nurture conflict or paradoxes, we must re-educate our hearts to give students the freedom to speak and think independently: "holding the tension of opposites is about being, not doing" (Palmer, 2007, p. 88). This involves taking a step back from the kind of authoritarian stance that controls and disdains dialogue and, instead, allows it. Nurturing such freedom sustains conflict dialogue. For dialogic inquiry deepens awareness, understanding, and acceptance of various perspectives. It hones critical thinking skills, interpersonal communication, and civic participation. Ultimately, the need for such collaborative and safe spaces for discussions about conflictual issues is necessary to rebuild and restore a healthy, pluralistic, and inclusive democracy.

Power and privilege act to silence divergent and alternative perspectives, with the result that they remain unexamined, allowing dominant systems to maintain and reproduce oppressive structures. When the voices of oppressed students who have been silenced are heard, the tactics of the dominant society are revealed. Thus, teachers need to prepare all their students—both the more confident, dominant students and the quieter, less dominant ones—to engage with alternative perspectives. One way of doing this is by having the students embody roles and perspectives that they might not typically associate with. Role play supports diverse students' inclusion, enables quieter students to express themselves, and facilitates connections between the curriculum and students' personal experiences. Simulations (such as mock elections, for example) can provide students with various experiences allowing them feel what it would be like to be in power or not in power, and how to make decisions from these various positions.

Freedom to speak also involves the freedom to explore and discover. Providing students with access to technology to connect and analyze current events enables them to gain the necessary skills to legitimately evaluate sources and perspectives. By encouraging students to utilize their civic and political skills within the classroom they become better prepared to hone their civic identities and participate actively and constructively in their wider community.

Building Skills to Address Conflict Constructively

Immigrant and visible minority youth represent approximately 20% of all Canadians under the age of 18. This figure is expected to rise to 25% by 2016

(Canadian Council on Social Development, 2006). In high-priority, urban neighbourhoods, these young people (particularly the males) are more susceptible to become involved in criminal or gang activity (Ngo, 2010). Peacebuilding education in these contexts is integral to their healthy development.

Some ethnocultural minority children have experienced deep conflict and trauma. Challenging them to engage in positive conflict learning would equip them with the skills and techniques to address such conflict constructively. The opportunity to reflect on their histories and realities through peacebuilding dialogue could help foster resilience and citizenship. Transformative conflict resolution processes, such as restorative justice, dialogue, peacemaking circles, and opportunities for youth entrepreneurship can repair relationships and build community. This kind of engaged dialogue offers opportunities for transnational students, in particular, to build connection to identity-based topics and issues. Thus supported, they would be able to address specific risk factors, such as attachment to the community or a need for recognition and belonging. These young people could then build prosocial peer and community relationships that would deepen their sense of inclusion within their community.

For ethnocultural minorities or marginalized students, failure at school is directly related to inequitable power relations and a structural violence that perpetuates a devaluing of students' cultural capital (Christensen & Segeritz, 2008; Cummins, 2013). Marginalized students often struggle to have their voices heard and understood (McCluskey, 2014). Participation in conflict dialogue provides them the opportunity to engage openly with underlying causes of violence, and to explicitly acknowledge issues pertaining to ethnocultural difference, such as racism and discrimination. By acknowledging social conflict and injustices, the possibility for inclusion increases. Peacebuilding education offers long-term and sustainable ways of developing human relationships, promoting the well-being of communities, including advocating for social justice (Bickmore, 2014).

Aronson (2000) examined the impact and consequences of school outcasts through an analysis of the school shooting in Columbine, Colorado, in 1999. The two young men who planned the execution of their peers were from White, middle-class families. However, at school they were known as the out-group, whom no one talked to except to make fun of. Aronson provided a detailed account to illustrate how their perpetual exclusion contributed to stimulating their violent attack on their peers. In safe, inclusive, cooperative contexts, Aronson argued, cruel and violent acts are implausible. He therefore proposed cooperative learning pedagogies, such as the jigsaw method,[3] as strategies to address the escalation of conflict based on socially constructed difference and exclusion. When teachers structure group activities that promote equitable roles, students rely on each other in ways that build community and cultivate respect. And communities built on peaceful, democratic, and mutually respectful relationships create environments where students and teachers can learn about one another.

CHAPTER 7

CONFLICTUAL ISSUES IN MULTICULTURAL CONTEXTS: TEACHER AUTHORITY AND STUDENT AGENCY

The three teachers in this study at times reversed the usual reticence of teachers to confront conflict. Fully integrating peacebuilding processes was still in its early stages at the time of this study, so while they used various kinds of pedagogies contributing to the inclusion of diverse students in these classrooms, it was perhaps more comfortable for them to explore "safer" topics and responses during conflictual discussions.

Some of the students also feared stating their personal point of view in the classroom, especially when the issues reflected their cultural identities. Fear of voicing potentially unpopular views in the classroom is typical for most students, regardless of their identity (Hahn, 1998). Traditionally, academic discourse encourages a discursive style of speaking in which personal opinions are extracted from content knowledge and presented as incontestably factual. Hence, it is no wonder that students who hold alternative or dissenting points of view so often feel excluded from some academic discussions (Dei, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Kelly and Brooks (2009) found that it was common for teachers to censor or limit conflictual discussions with young children and, like Houser (1996), believed that students were too young to engage in conflict dialogue. Ms. Marlee's pedagogy reflected these findings;—she said that with young children, "there's a limit on how much they'll understand and it's also hard to see how much you should tell them about it without scarring their little psyches."

None of the three teachers consistently nurtured the many opportunities to contest curriculum topics and issues. More frequently, text-to-self and text-to-teacher connections furthered discussions about current contentious cultural, historical, and political issues, but they were not always positioned as conflictual. However, Mr. Hiroshi did demonstrate an interest in learning, understanding, and emphathizing with his students' social realities, and as a result, his pedagogies better engaged diverse students in critical learning opportunities.

While the three teachers all carried aspects of visible minority identities, I am in no way arguing that only visible minority teachers are capable of doing this kind of work. In fact, Mrs. Amrita was the only teacher who actually shared an ethnocultural South Asian identity with the majority of her students. Mr. Hiroshi was the only person with Japanese ancestry in his class of South Asian students; he shared his half-White heritage with one student, Crystal, who was half White and half South Asian. Similarly, Ms. Marlee shared her ethnocultural identity, as an African-Canadian, with only one student in her class, Tina. These ethnocultural minority teachers each carried their own experiences of marginalization and discrimination. Ms. Marlee and Mrs. Amrita spoke to me personally about their experiences with discrimination: Ms. Marlee felt marginalized as one of the few Black teachers at her school. As such, she carried the responsibility of advocating for the inclusion of Black History Month. Mrs. Amrita spoke about how challenging it had been for her to find work when she arrived in Canada and how, when she repeated her teacher education in Canada, White students openly made

fun of her Indian accent in practicum schools. Mr. Hiroshi spoke to his students about his Japanese grandfather, but he also modelled his loyalty to Canada.

Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg (2011) argued that for "critical pedagogy to work, teachers must understand what is happening in the minds of their students" (p. 166). Some of these students appeared to identify with the historical oppression and marginalization of particular cultural groups, such as the experiences of the Acadians, whereas others did not appear to have deep feelings about how this history was represented in Canadian textbooks. Some students were aware of perspectives from their own familial histories of the conflict, which were different from what was presented in their textbooks. For instance, if students' ethnic origins had been Japanese, they might have felt silenced in classrooms that addressed differing or disconnected historical narratives related to their identity (see also Epstein, 2000). Overall, these teachers had an awareness of what it meant to be marginalized, because of their own cultural-religious-ethnic identities: this may have better prepared them or increased their confidence to respond to issues of marginalization in their implemented pedagogies.

Scaffolding Critical Pedagogies

To feel comfortable discussing highly conflictual issues, students need to be prepared, through safe discussions about conflict (Bickmore & Parker, 2014). Previous theory and research shows that discussion of conflictual issues in open classroom climates engages and informs diverse students (Barton & Levstik, 2003; Bickmore, 2008a; Bickmore et al., 2011; Davies, 2004a; Harwood & Hahn, 1990; Hess, 2009; Hess & Avery, 2008; Rubin, 2012). Empowering conflict dialogue engages diverse students' identities and includes them in democratic peacebuilding education—equipping them to make choices and to reflect on the personal and political consequences of these choices.

Scaffolding is a progressive instructional approach that builds on students' prior knowledge to create deeper opportunities for learning and skill acquisition.[4] Scaffolding and preparing diverse students for conflict dialogue learning can better equip them to engage in a world where coexistence among diverse people is expected (Bickmore et al., 2011; King, 2009). Through studying diverse cultures, in conjunction with reflecting on their own cultural practices and beliefs, the diverse students in this study could learn to strengthen their cultural competency, a necessary skill for democratic citizenship.

Teachers who use a noncritical pedagogical approach may be unconscious of the political messages embedded in their teaching. In most instances, Ms. Marlee chose a less critical pedagogical approach because she felt constrained by having to cover curriculum mandates and by limitations posed by the young age of her students. Ms. Marlee may have also been unconscious of the political, and at times hegemonic, messages that were embedded in her teaching. Transferring facts through authoritarian and defensive teaching (McNeil, 1986) maintains the status quo (Apple, 1979/1990; Freire, 1970/1994b). Defensive teaching promotes fact-

based, teacher-centred approaches that do not open spaces for conflict and dialogue about diversity; it also allows dominant power to act in hidden ways.

By contrast, critical teaching that integrates students' diverse identities encourages self-directed responses and perspectives. Comparing diverse interpretations and experiences, as Mrs. Amrita consistently did in her Citizenship and Immigration unit, gave her students the opportunity to critically reflect on their knowledge. Positioning curriculum material as conflictual clearly offered teachers and students opportunities to discern and express diverse, plausible interpretations of social issues. In fact, Mrs. Amrita's students collectively constructed new knowledge about Canadian immigration that conflicted with the dominant narratives in the textbook.

When children are curious and socially and intellectually stimulated, teaching about democratic decision making and dissent helps them develop their skills for civic engagement (Rubin, 2012; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Enabling participation through creative pedagogies, such as role-play and decision-making exercises, contributes to students' understanding of how to exercise their citizenship. The role playing in Mr. Hiroshi's Town Hall simulation, and to some extent in Mrs. Amrita's and Ms. Marlee's simulations, built upon students' individual personalities. Ms. Marlee attempted to assign roles to her students based on her interpretation of their social status in the classroom. Mrs. Amrita, like Mr. Hiroshi, provided her students with some decision-making opportunities that connected the various assigned positions they held to their personal comfort levels, and strengthened their opportunities for developing communication skills in the context of conflict.

While the various simulation activities in each of these classes encouraged students to stand up and defend diverse positions, they also represented democracy in particular ways. In both Mrs. Amrita's and Mr. Hiroshi's classes, the simulations provided what Davies (2004a) and Bickmore (2008a) would characterize as opportunities for agency and peacebuilding; students made decisions and raised conflictual issues that were important to them. The preparation students received in researching their various roles supported them in understanding how various societal positions operated in relation to power and hierarchy. In Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 class, Akmed chose to be part of the progovernment Family Compact group, not because he believed in their agenda, but because he wanted to experience what it felt like "to be in charge." Akmed's choice to enact a particular role during this simulated conflictual debate illustrated one of the ways students were enabled to perceive their identities.

Students who performed conflicts in role sometimes related their experiences to actual conflicts in their lives or in the world. Mr. Hiroshi related historical conflicts such as the Acadian Expulsion and the Rebellions of 1837 to present-day conflicts such as the G20 summit protests of 2010 in Toronto and the civil war in Sri Lanka. Observations and interviews both showed that in doing so, he facilitated opportunities for deeper student understanding of both past and present conflicts. In the preparation, reenactment, and debriefing of the Town Hall meeting, Mr. Hiroshi encouraged students to reflect on how they had chosen to enact their

different roles. Viewing the video of their simulation, many students laughed at their disrespectful behaviour, while acknowledging that their "silliness" had been permitted within the simulation. Through this structured reflection process, the radicals who had rebelled against the progovernment Family Compact in 1837 discerned a comparison that some found personally relevant between their own behaviour and that of protesters during the G20 meetings in Toronto. Mr. Hiroshi guided this reflection in a way that encouraged many students to identify ways their actions and inactions might stimulate and escalate conflict. Some students in Mrs. Amrita's and Ms. Marlee's classes loosely connected their roles to political figures, but did not discuss how their roles or behaviours might be implicated in the larger society.

Connecting curriculum to diverse students' identities was an integral component of developing inclusive pedagogical and curricular interventions in all three classrooms. To varying extents, all three teachers explicitly taught about dominant, Western ways of knowing in conjunction with diverse multicultural ways of knowing; they took up and explored various cultures, some represented in the students' own identities. When teachers connected conflicts to students' identities, many students responded by critically reflecting on themselves and those around them. Such critical reflection is an important component for developing tolerant, accepting, and democratic citizenship among diverse students, particularly when their own identities are marginalized in the society (Davies, 2004a; Gérin-Lajoie, 2011; Hahn, 1998; Kumashiro, 2000).

In sum, diverse students generally welcomed opportunities to participate in discussions about diversity and conflictual issues, even when those issues were not directly connected to their personal identities. Many differences emerged along with the ethnic similarities in the classes. These reflected not only the students' personal immigration history and social status, but also their experiences and interpretations of conflict and diversity within the sociopolitical contexts of their classrooms. For instance, students who were quiet in classroom activities—such as recitation or lecture-style teaching—were apt to participate in dialogic activities when they were assigned roles that allowed them to develop agency over their perspectives. Students who did not have access to the classroom's language of power and conversational routines relied on support and encouragement from peers and/or teachers to participate in whole-group classroom discussions and other dialogic activities. In the end, all the students were included, through culturally inclusive pedagogy and practices that connected and reflected their diversities in their local, global, and historical contexts.

IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Integrative peace education challenges homogenized perspectives; it encourages diverse participants to share their points of divergence, and acknowledges diverse participants' multiple world views (Danesh, 2006; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013). A peace-based curriculum that integrates psychological, social, political, and

spiritual tenets invites unity, and promotes healing and transformative resolutions for a culture of peace (Danesh, 2006).

Implications of Classroom Dialogue about Conflict and Diversity for Literacy Engagement: A Key to Educational Improvement

Conflict and diversity can serve as resources for critical social and academic engagement in classrooms. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) has identified literacy engagement as a stronger predictor for students' school success than socioeconomic status (Cummins, 2009). Discussions about conflict and diversity, an essential component of peacebuilding education, encourage a critical reading of multiple texts. Such discussions are also essential to school improvement, because conflict dialogue increases the possibility for greater student academic achievement. I found many instances of increased engagement among diverse students when teachers made conflict an explicit topic for discussion, especially when they invited inclusive conversations about conflict and diversity issues.

Conflictual discussions motivated students such as Mona, in Mr. Hiroshi's class, to seek out additional sources. She read newspaper articles about the uprising in Egypt; brought them in to share with her classmates; and posted them publicly on the current events board, thereby reinforcing her own and her peers' literacy engagement. When Jawali, Malika, Sunita, and other students in Mr. Hiroshi's class, worked in groups to write letters of protest to the governments of Sri Lanka and Egypt, and conducted research independently or with their peers, they engaged in critical reading and writing as they gathered information to support their positions. Fatima and Souhaila, in Ms. Marlee's Grade 4 class, independently visited the school library to gather books on Islam. Souhaila, an English language learner, had described herself to me as invisible in her class, but during the creation-story sharing exercise, she chose to select and read passages from these books aloud to her peers, sharing facts about Islamic culture. Ms. Marlee's pedagogical response was an example of how conflict can be used as an opportunity to encourage diverse students to critically read and write about cultural texts.

Throughout this study, classroom discussions about issues of diversity and conflict engaged a broad range of students, and motivated them to do meaningful and critical reading. For instance, in Mrs. Amrita's class, students recorded their family's oral histories of immigration to Canada. Newcomer immigrant students, like Aalia, who often were not comfortable in speaking about their perspectives in traditional academic discourse, researched their arguments for a class debate. In this way, conflictual topics and discussion pedagogies provided the scaffolding necessary to encourage diverse students to seek out additional sources of information. Such processes of independent research encouraged critical reading of multiple texts and thus contributed to literacy engagement, which, as Cummins

(2009, 2011) and Krashen (2004) have argued, is associated with school improvement.

Speaking about controversial and sensitive issues that are also linked with identity (such as religion and war) is risky for both students and teachers (Bickmore, 2005; Zembylas & Kambani, 2012). These teachers approached conflictual issues in ways that did not give rise to negative reactions from administration or parents. Ms. Marlee skilfully minimized any risk when she invited students to speak to their parents and bring their cultural creation stories into the classroom. In so doing, she also situated this task within her literacy program. Such a pedagogical approach is compatible with Cummins' (2009) literacy engagement framework for supporting diverse students, which includes activating students' background knowledge. The approach prepares students for a particular task or discussion, affirms their identities, and extends their academic language.

The social studies curriculum proved to be a space where the teachers felt comfortable to engage their students in discussions of conflictual issues. Although Mrs. Amrita had a master's degree in science and was therefore confident in her knowledge of science, she did not engage in the kind of critical thinking exercises that she did in her literacy/social studies classes. Instead, she taught it, as did Ms. Marlee, through a transmission approach.[5] Language arts and social studies, and history in particular, provided ample opportunities for exploring diversity, culture, and conflict through both content and pedagogy.

Even if teachers are encouraged to teach about conflict and diversity in their implemented curriculum, the central question of multiple/intersecting identities and power relations needs to be addressed in curriculum guidelines. If the power dynamics of the dominant society are made explicit, the hidden curriculum can be challenged. Furthermore, diverse students' identities complexify how historical and conflictual issues can be addressed in the classroom (Fine, 2003; Kim & Markus, 2005).

The opportunity to contest power relations is a critical component of interruptive democratic citizenship education (Barton & Levstik, 2003; Davies, 2004a; Seixas, Peck, & Poyntz, 2011). Curricular guidelines should address social power structures, and more directly encourage discussion about conflictual issues that reflect students' diversities. Such guidelines would better support teachers who feel constrained by the prescribed curriculum. Diverse students would thereby be offered the opportunity to develop their skills for critical reflection and deeper literacy engagement.

Implications of Ethnocultural Diversity for Peacebuilding Education

Throughout this text, potent illustrations of peacebuilding education in action illustrate how critical consciousness was enacted through various critical literacy and social studies initiatives. The hidden curriculum was challenged when teachers made the power dynamics of the dominant society explicit, and diverse students were provided with autonomy—crucial components of educating for democracy.

Obviously, teachers carry a lot of power to influence the process and outcome of classroom activities, including purposely inviting dialogue about conflict and diversity issues (Bekerman et al., 2009; Bickmore, 1999, 2005; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The implications of these teachers' choices, are in sum:

- Teaching and classroom discussion about conflictual issues and diversity are pedagogical approaches that facilitate the inclusion of diverse students.
- Teachers' choices to promote and critique national values and democratic ideals are central to educating for democracy.
- Teachers' choices to connect implemented curriculum to students' identities enable possibilities for engagement and inclusion.

The ethnocultural minority students responded to discussions and activities about conflict and diversity in varying ways. Overall, the study showed that students are empowered when they are given the agency to make and to act upon their decisions, whether in role play or in real life. Teachers need to learn to recognize their students' signals, for diverse students respond to conflictual lesson content in various ways—they may respond out loud, but sometimes they may remain silent. Teachers need to refrain from interpreting these silences negatively, and to respect the importance of dialogic learning processes, letting them unfold organically. These processes are critical for newcomer and second-generation children, whose parents may not be Canadian citizens or who may have been marginalized in Canadian society.

The students' experiences with implemented curriculum encouraged their political, literacy, and identity engagement, and gave them the opportunity to develop critical thinking and analytical skills. The three teachers' pedagogical choices worked best when they assigned roles to students, arranged them in mixed groups, and presented conflictual issues in ways that promoted dialogue and reflection on students' personal experiences. These were the results:

- Attention to social conflict in the implemented curriculum uncovered hidden power structures and encouraged civic engagement in students' sociopolitical contexts.
- Role playing provided opportunities for diverse students to find their voices and play with the fluidity of their identities and social realities.
- Dialogue about social issues and conflict provided diverse students with opportunities to develop their reading, speaking, research, and analytical skills; to build effective arguments; and to critique multiple sources of evidence.

Research on identity-based conflict points to the special importance of the social studies and language arts curricula in helping students to define and transform group identities; the intergroup interactions commonly used in these curricula particularly contribute to peacebuilding (Barton & Levstik, 2003; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2011). Paying attention to how difference is handled—in particular how conflict is taken up, rather than avoided—involves acknowledging difference and

confronting conflict in ways that support and practise equity amongst all students' identities. To prepare students to become upstanding citizens of their democratic pluralist society, many teachers choose to implicitly or explicitly teach values of unity amongst different and similar abilities and diverse beliefs. But many students in Canadian classrooms are visible minority immigrants. To acknowledge and transform structures of power and domination, teachers must address and position discussion about diversity and conflictual issues in these diverse classrooms.

The three teachers in this text taught values through both explicit and implicit curricula. Moral education was at times contentious, given these diverse immigrant students' beliefs in the context of Ontario's Christian-dominated public school system. East Asian and South Asian values flourished in these classrooms. By recognizing these diverse cultural values, Ms. Marlee facilitated safer cultural spaces for her students. In the same way, Mrs. Amrita's classroom activities taught many diverse students how they might integrate themselves into national ideals. Mr. Hiroshi's presentation of implemented curriculum evoked responses from both vocal and quiet students. When the three teachers linked students' identities to conflict, the students sometimes participated more—such as with Madia and Aalia who "felt great" when they presented their speeches. Perhaps they felt more included.

These findings reinforce Pace and Hemmings' (2007) argument that the "character of teacher-student authority relations has great bearing on the quality of students' educational experience and teachers' work" (p. 4). Teacher authority and student agency are indicators for understanding how conflictual issues can be addressed and responded to. Clearly, the teachers' enactment of varying dialogic pedagogies influenced students' participation, social status, development of morals and values, and their overall agency within the classroom.

Cummins (2009) reminded educators that facilitating diverse students' critical engagement with academic learning is socially beneficial: "The entire society benefits when all students are given a realistic chance of contributing to their societies" (p. 9). Teachers' implicit and explicit liberatory praxis offers diverse students opportunities to choose consciousness over dysconsciousness (King, 2004). Maintaining an uncritical stance on any social or conflictual issue fuels dysconsciousness, which does a disservice to both teachers and students, leading them to passively accept the status quo. When social-conflict issues are explicitly discussed and connected to students' diverse identities, even the typically quiet students may find their voice in classroom discussions. In this way, education for democracy supports the engagement of diverse voices: "Young people should be given opportunities to experience this kind of disagreement and the affective commitments that drive it" (Ruitenberg, 2010, p. 52). Ultimately, conflict-dialogue pedagogies allow for promising democratic citizenship learning opportunities that foster inclusion within a critical, multicultural, learning environment.

CHAPTER 7

SITUATIONAL AND RELATIONAL APPLICABILITY OF THIS STUDY

While situated in a Canadian context, my findings are applicable to other diverse contexts that serve diverse and transnational students across the globe. I have presented students' experiences with implemented curriculum about conflict and diversity, from their perspective as ethnocultural minorities living in a diverse, multicultural city in southern Ontario. Do their experiences represent and speak to the experiences of all ethnocultural minorities? Certainly not. The vignettes I have presented are intended to illustrate how different ethnocultural minorities experienced conflictual dialogue pedagogy. As this chapter's epigraph reminds us, participants remember conflictual events differently: "what happened, happened to many different people differently" (Roy, 1994, p. 24). Roy's (1994) examination of Hindu and Muslims rioting over the actions of a Muslim-owned cow showed that while our personal perspectives shape our truth, our attachments and allegiances to our inherent identities often shape our actions. I have therefore included moments of inclusion and exclusion in this book. I wished to illustrate the hope that comes when the voices of quiet ones are heard, and to show the work that remains to be done when moments of exclusion manifest, even within presumed places of safety.

Participation of diverse students, particularly the less confident, quieter ones, is influenced by certain issues of conflict and diversity embedded in implemented curricula. When teachers connected the content to students' identities, their participation was enhanced. The stimulation of cooperative learning activities, open classroom climates, peer support, individual reflection, paired sharing, and academic buddy systems also enhanced their engagement and participation. Relationships among diverse groups of students and between students and teachers were strengthened.

Constructive conflict education, in which opportunities to exercise dissent are encouraged and respected, enhanced the students' ability to learn. While a few studies (Angell, 2004; Beck, 2003) have pointed to the capabilities of younger children to engage in conflict learning, most existing research has focused on students age 14 and over (e.g., Hess, 2001; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Kohlmeier, 2006). This book speaks to the minimal research that exists on how students' ethnocultural identities differentially affect the ways that they do and do not participate in such learning opportunities. In this study, the teachers' inclusion of culturally relevant content encouraged and built upon shared group identity experiences, and many students found meaningful connections through their and their peers' backgrounds and experiences.

Further comparative study on classrooms and schools in contexts with different demographics could shed further light on how societal values are contested and taken up through the conflict that is expected in a pluralistic society. Finally, linking students' identities to particular experiences is complex. Further study on how education about neoliberal, identity-based, settled social conflicts would be useful for furthering our understanding of how dialogue-based pedagogies connect to the multiple layers of students' identities.

PROMISING POSSIBILITIES OF PEACEBUILDING EDUCATION

Culturally relevant curricula and education for democratic peacebuilding encourage diverse students to connect, reflect, and engage in difficult social conflict issues. Explicitly linking content to students' identities and experiences through dialogic pedagogies increases opportunities for seeking alternative and multiple points of view—an essential component of peacebuilding education. Education in a transnational context means that some students will be aware of perspectives from their own families' histories of conflict; these may be different from perspectives offered in their textbooks. Cooperative classroom environments encourage dissent to be expressed and healthy models to be created for diverse immigrant students to practise exercising their agency in a democratic society. Diverse students who fear embarrassment or negative feedback in competitive classrooms may feel safer in inclusive spaces that encourage minority and dissenting viewpoints. Oftentimes, students who are quiet and silent have been silenced due to oppressive structures. Paying attention to diverse voices challenges hegemony and activates otherwise silenced classroom dialogue. Delpit (1988) directed educators to listen to silenced dialogue:

> We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs… . It is not easy, but it is the only way to learn what it might feel like to be someone else and the only way to start the dialogue. (p. 297)

Critical consciousness challenges the culture of silence, and offers the possibility to transform hegemonic classroom cultures. When teachers assign roles to students for their participation in dialogic activities, possibilities increase for greater student engagement and inclusion. Engaging in conflict is not an easy process. It involves time, dedication, and careful scaffolding. Students are not all the same, and drawing on diverse students' cultural resources challenges the hidden curriculum and creates spaces for equitable social relations amongst students and teachers. Such democratic peacebuilding education is a critical, crucial, and necessary process—and through dialogue, it is possible.

NOTES

[1] *Aboriginal people* refers to the entire body of Aboriginal people (Inuit, Métis, and First Nations). *Aboriginal peoples*, as defined in the *Constitution Act, 1982,* includes all Indigenous people of Canada—First Nations, Status Indians, Non-Status Indians, Métis, and Inuit people. The term *Indigenous people* is more inclusive, and is meant to refer to these broader groups. However, I have chosen to use the term *Aboriginal peoples* because it is more commonly used and understood across various sectors in Canada, including in the federal government, to describe Indigenous peoples. *Indigenous peoples* is a term that is more commonly used internationally, while the use of *Aboriginal peoples* is more reflective of work being done specifically in Canada (Joseph & Joseph, 2014; C. Wesley-Esquimaux, personal communication, November 13, 2014).

[2] See chapter 5 for more information on these uprisings and how they were handled in the three classrooms.

[3] Elliot Aronson invented the jigsaw technique in 1971 to address intergroup hostility in recently desegregated schools in Austin, Texas. The racial tension between African-American and Hispanic

youth often erupted into violent altercations at school. Aronson determined that a competitive classroom environment fuelled this tension, as students only worked individually and competed with each other to provide the correct answer to their teacher's questions. The jigsaw method is a cooperative learning strategy in which small groups of students work together to become experts on a piece of the larger puzzle, such as a particular issue, or chapter in a text. In this first phase, the expert group works together to gather information and solidify their points of view. The second phase involves dispersing members of the expert group into new groups, where one representative holds a piece of the puzzle. The group relies on each person for their knowledge and expertise to gain insight into the broader issue. Aronson found that this technique led to a decrease in stereotypes, and students learned to rely on each other for support and collaboration. He also found that students became more confident and engaged in school, which led to greater academic achievement. Further information on the jigsaw technique and process can be found at www.jigsaw.org.

[4] Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) considered how an adult helps a child expand his or her expand zone of proximal development, which distinguishes what a learner can do independently and what a learner may need further support with. Jerome Bruner (1915–), a cognitive psychologist, introduced scaffolding theory in the 1950s. In applying these principles to dialogue, teachers may scaffold students' mundane classroom talk or opinions to form concrete perspectives based on evidence and experience. Modelling or preparing for conflict dialogue through role play are examples of scaffolding critical pedagogies.

[5] Mr. Hiroshi's students had another teacher for science.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

This study is a critical examination of conflictual, issues-based discussions and activities in Grades 4 to 7 classes of diverse students, focusing particularly on implemented social studies, history, and language arts curricula. I examined variations in and among three classroom cultures, each including diverse immigrant and marginalized students, to understand how teachers used (and avoided) curriculum content about conflict and diversity as learning opportunities, and how various diverse students in those classes experienced those conflictual pedagogies. My purpose was to learn when and how those conflict dialogue processes did and did not promote inclusion and facilitated democratic peacebuilding education.

I chose educational ethnography with a critical perspective as a methodological frame, to align with my political purpose to support pedagogical and curricular change for social justice. Educational ethnography is an in-depth study of how participants behave in and experience the classroom space. Classrooms each have their own culture, including participation norms and language (Jackson, 1968, and others). In studying marginalized students such as ethnic minority immigrants, it is necessary to use ethnography with criticality, in order to study how these students' lived experiences are intertwined with power and oppressive systems. The method is therefore uniquely suited to study "the shared patterns of a marginalized group with the aim of advocacy" (Creswell, 2008, p. 475). When ethnography is used with criticality, it facilitates close examination of how power and privilege influence the experiences of diverse and marginalized students. The strength of ethnography is in its aim to study cultures through immersion in a particular space for an extended amount of time. Ethnography was thus an ideal method for this study because engaging students in pedagogies such as issues discussions takes time and occurs unexpectedly.

Various conflict dialogue pedagogies in contemporary social studies and language arts curricula offer opportunities for critical analysis of cultural, historical, and social issues. For example, students may study how societies and citizens make choices, and exploring multiple perspectives can facilitate peaceful and restorative resolution of conflicts. I collected data over multiple units of study throughout the school year to understand how teachers implemented conflict dialogue processes and how students' experiences changed and transformed through various dialogue practices.

I compared practices both within and between three different classrooms in the same school district to show how diverse students' participation was influenced by various conflict dialogue pedagogies, paying particular attention to the experiences of immigrant students. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How did the teachers in three public, urban, diverse classrooms in Grades 4 to 7 classrooms present and facilitate discussion about social conflict

and/or ethnocultural diversity in their implemented curricula, particularly in social studies and language arts? How did these pedagogies shape learning opportunities for their diverse students?

2. How did diverse, ethnocultural minority and newcomer immigrant students experience this curricular content and pedagogy, in relation to their own perspectives, histories, and identities?

QUALITATIVE AND CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH METHODS

In-depth qualitative research is designed to gain a deep understanding of particular phenomena in relation to particular individuals and contexts (Creswell, 2008). Unlike quantitative research, where the purpose is typically to summarize and generalize characteristics of a program or population, qualitative inquiry provides spaces to study particular individuals, often including marginalized or silenced groups of people, up close (Creswell, 2008).

Qualitative methods that have been used in the past to study questions related to conflict dialogue in classrooms have included teacher focus groups (e.g., Kelly & Brooks, 2009; Oulton, Day, Dillon, & Grace, 2004), student focus groups (Schultz, Buck, & Niesz, 2000), teacher observations and interviews (Goldston & Kyzer, 2009; Subedi, 2008), and teacher and student interviews (Yamashita, 2006). Research studies that used ethnographic case study methods (King, 2009; Larson, 2003; Schweber, 2006) to observe and probe the meanings of teacher and student experiences have provided useful insights into how to study issues discussions, but not necessarily in relation to diverse students.

Hess and Posselt (2002) used a mixed-methods design to study students' experiences of controversial issues discussions in a high school classroom. Their quantitative pre- and post-questionnaire examined the ways students felt about participating in discussions. Their qualitative data, from focus groups and interviews, substantiated and explored deeper meanings. Although they recorded basic race and gender categories, they still did not examine differences among diverse learners' participation patterns and experiences. Hahn (1998) also used mixed methods in her cross-national study of social studies classroom climates. In a large-scale (28 countries), cross-national IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) civics study, Torney-Purta et al. (2001) used quantitative survey methods to explore 14-year-old students' self-reported experiences in democratic citizenship education. However, the study's data on student diversity were largely limited to broad categories of gender and country of citizenship. Although valuable, the above studies have not provided much detailed, identity-sensitive insight into how diverse students experience such processes.

Fine's (1993) qualitative phenomenological (descriptive) study provided rich descriptions through observations of teachers' pedagogy and students' participation in conflictual issues discussions, contributing greatly to understanding how diverse students participated in issues discussions. However, unlike ethnography with a critical perspective, phenomenology does not include critical cultural analysis.

Traditional ethnography has its roots in cultural anthropology, where researchers purposely set out to study other, distant cultures. Most educational ethnographers have explored the cultures of classrooms, but typically within their own Western contexts (e.g., Hammersley, 1990; van Manen, 1992; Woods, 1986). Many of these early ethnographers were sociologists from the Chicago School, who were determined to move away from a positivist philosophy (Gérin-Lajoie, 2003). Out of this movement, many branches have evolved, including realist ethnography, autoethnography, life story, feminist ethnography, postmodern ethnography, ethnographic case study, and critical ethnography.

Hammersley (1990) used classroom ethnography to study how classroom order in an downtown urban setting was influenced by students' cultural differences, particularly their race, ethnicity, and class. Like Jackson (1968), Hammersley used in-depth analysis to create a theoretical description of the school's social and cultural characteristics. Jackson, a sociologist, studied classroom life to understand students' experiences there. Jackson's study showed the many complexities of using classroom observations and shed light on issues of marginalization and silencing of students. Both Hammersley and Jackson offered insights into how issues of cultural differences and marginalization can become apparent through observational study, thus offering methodological support for using classroom observations to study diverse students' experiences with conflict dialogue processes.

Early ethnographic approaches sought to maintain neutrality and distance between researcher and research participants. For example, Peter Woods (1986), in his studies of various teaching methods using classroom ethnography, argued that researchers could develop a skewed, nonobjective understanding if they became too personally involved in their research. Instead, nonparticipant observations, also known as the "fly on the wall" approach, were advocated (Woods, 1986, p. 36). However, Woods (1996) later challenged his own early approach. He recognized the importance of acknowledging the ethnographer's self, and in fact argued that it was necessary to become immersed in the role of the Other in order to obtain insider knowledge and understanding of people's diverse life experiences.

Maintaining a subjective position as an ethnographic researcher can allow for a broad and critical perspective, including access to the cultural and social knowledge within the environment (Thomas, 1993; Woods, 1996). For example, Paul Willis's (1977/2003) study of how British working-class boys challenged their school's culture by purposely not responding to expected classroom authority provided insights into how a socioeconomically homogenous group constructed themselves as Other. Some have argued that Willis's ethnographic account in *Learning to Labour* was an ambivalent approach to critical ethnography because, while it spoke to making human agency visible, it presented an uncritical, romanticized view of the Other (Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 2002, p. 192). Willis's study was useful, however, in understanding the importance of studying the behavioural choices that certain (potentially marginalized) groups may adopt, in an attempt to (dis)conform to the their identit(ies).

Hermeneutic phenomenology, another approach, is closely aligned to cultural anthropology and traditional ethnography. Van Manen (1992) advocated human science research that was hermeneutic (i.e., interpretive) and phenomenological (i.e., descriptive). He advocated examining lived experience as people live it and deriving essential themes to further explore the phenomenon while engaging in a process of in-depth study (van Manen, 1992, p. 30). However, van Manen argued that it was necessary for researchers to maintain their objectivity, remaining distant from the lived experience of the humans being studied. The limitation of using such a method for my study is that it assumes objective and true realities, whereas I have applied a subjective and critical lens for gathering and analyzing my data.

Phenomenography is a method that employs graphic media, such as photographic images, to provoke participants' interpretation and discussion about a topic. There are many criticisms of phenomenography (Sandbergh, 1997). However, the strength of its design is in drawing on particular prompts to stimulate participants in discussion. Peck, Sears, and Donaldson (2008) used phenomenographic interviews to study students' conceptions of ethnic diversity in a small, rural community in New Brunswick. The 44 Grade 7 students in their study overwhelmingly identified "ethnic diversity" as "foreign" or "weird," thus identifying Canadian as White (Peck et al., 2008, pp. 75–78). Phenomenography could be a useful method when trying to connect to students' lived experiences, as the stimuli guide what students talk about in interviews (Ashworth & Lucas, 2000). However, as it stems from phenomenology, this method still tends to assume an "immediate experience without being obstructed by preconceptions and theoretical notions" (van Manen, 1992, p. 184). In contrast, I see realities as always contextualized within a particular place and time. While the ethnographic interviews I used in this research study did not formally introduce predetermined media, I still drew on student work samples and activities and referenced instances from my observational data to support the facilitation and discussion of particular issues.

Critical ethnographers collect data from many of the same sources as traditional ethnographers do: observations, interviews, and document analysis (Creswell, 2008; Gérin-Lajoie, 2003). However, there is still a clear difference between the purposes of the two approaches, as Jim Thomas (1993) has pointed out: "Conventional ethnography describes what is; critical ethnography asks what could be" (p. 4). The difference between ethnography and critical ethnography is that critical ethnography pursues a political purpose, by describing and analyzing cultural contexts with the intent to reveal "hidden agendas, power centers, and assumptions that inhibit, repress, and constrain" (Thomas, 1993, p. 2). In this way, critical ethnography encourages exactly what conflict dialogue processes engage: a critical interpretation and discussion of hegemonic assumptions.

Foley and Valenzuela (2005) illustrated the challenges of critical ethnography in their article describing their two different approaches to the method. Foley engaged in what he believed was a cultural critique, within the confines of academia. While Valenzuela also engaged in a similar academic cultural critique, she also purposefully became involved in political movements through her research study.

In this way, a critical ethnographic approach may involve a clear effort towards political and social emancipation for research participants, both within and outside the academy.

Simon and Dippo (1986) argued that critical ethnographic research must study a problem with the intention to grapple with issues of oppression and inequity, in order to engage in a transformative critique of dominant social norms (p. 197). I agree that it is necessary to continually critique the social and cultural practices that may contribute to the marginalization of various groups. However, because of the nature of my research and the diverse population about whom my research was concerned, my advocacy within the context of the school setting was minimal.

This study, therefore, is not a critical ethnography, in the sense that it does not offer an explicit process of emancipation and transformation for the participants, one in which I would be able to show what Simon and Dippo (1986) have argued is participants' development of critical consciousness about their social world. While an awareness of culture, diversity, and equity within the context of conflict and the curriculum may have become more apparent for some participants (e.g., through interview questioning, explanation of research study), it was not the intention of this research to seek social change among the participants or in the research setting, especially because of the age of the students and the confines of the public school classroom.

In sum: I have used an ethnographic method with a critical perspective to conduct my study and I position it as research towards social change, without seeking to prove that social change was achieved among the participants due to their participation in this study. Overall, researchers who use ethnography with a critical perspective show how there can be different levels of criticality and forms of cultural critique, within both academic and public spheres. The limits, form, and extent of using this method for social justice purposes ultimately depends on the context, setting and participants involved in the study.

FURTHER CONTEXTUALIZING MY ROLE AS A RESEARCHER

My intention as a researcher was to develop a deep, critical consciousness of the contexts I studied by engaging in self-reflexive analyses that continually questioned how my privileged position as a researcher shaped my views and interpretations of the data. During the data collection period I wrote 27 personal analytical journal entries, based on field observations and interviews, and conversations with staff, students, and community members. I also kept a research journal that continued beyond the field site journalling that I did during this period. This ongoing reflection through journalling encouraged a continuous process of critical self-reflection.

Using ethnography with a critical perspective provided a framework for my continuous, critical examination of schooling and curriculum at both individual and classroom levels, and encouraged my consideration of the ways in which the identities of my participants and my own history and identity connected and contrasted to form a subjective narrative (Denzin, 1997; Gallagher, 2004). My

research method was intentionally subjective, because my identity helped to shape the design of my study (Britzman, 2002; Fine, 1994; Gallagher, 2007; McCarthy, 1988). Likewise, my interpretations of the data ultimately reflected my own history and culture. Based on my researcher positionality when I interpreted students' actions and behaviours in the classroom, I kept a continuous line of questioning in my head: "who are the primary subjects?"; "who are the informants?"; and "who am I?" In sum, my qualitative ethnography with a critical perspective shaped the way I came to understand and interpret how conflictual-issues discussions created spaces that allowed for a greater or lesser sense of inclusion of diverse identities.

My personal experiences and connections also shaped my relationship to the schools I researched. As shared in the Chapter 1, I attended Aria P.S. from Grades 1 to 8. I lived in the school community and neighbourhood throughout my childhood and into early adulthood. The major difference for me as researcher, however, was the increase in visible minority students that attended the school. At the time of my study, 98% of the students that attended Aria P.S., from Kindergarten through to Grade 8, were visible minorities, coming mostly from East and South Asian backgrounds. Only 48 of the 725 students were White.

I had a different relationship with Georgetown P.S., a newer school in a newly developed part of the same neighbourhood. As an undergraduate student, I volunteered at Georgetown, first as a teacher's assistant in a Grade 5 classroom and then as an in-school mentor at Georgetown in the Grades 2 and 3 classes, as part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

In this period the ethnic backgrounds of the Georgetown P.S. student population were essentially the same as they were when I collected my data. The students were 100% from visible minority groups. There were 746 students at the school; 53 staff members included four caretakers, three secretaries, two administrators, and four educational assistants. The school secretary provided me with a breakdown of the ethnicities of the students, pointing out that they "lost their one White kid last year." Students' backgrounds were predominantly South Asian, from Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. The Indian students were mostly Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim. The languages spoken by students at the school were predominantly Urdu, Tamil, Punjabi, Hindi, and Gujarati. There were 15 Black students, one student from the Philippines, and one from Vietnam.

All the students at Georgetown wore a simple uniform—a white shirt and grey dress pants. The uniform was put into practice one year after the school opened, in response to the lower socioeconomic status of many of the students. Aria was also in the process of instituting a school uniform policy in the year I conducted my data collection.

Both Aria and Georgetown were located in working-class communities where most of the residents were newcomer immigrants and mostly from East Asian and South Asian backgrounds. In many ways I did not feel as though I experienced newcomer immigrant school/community challenges (and opportunities) in the same way that many of my research participants described. Perhaps this was because I was not a newcomer, but a second-generation immigrant, and as such

experienced different kinds of challenges (and opportunities) in what was then a predominantly White school and community.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

Research School Sites

In my study I attended to the ways in which certain diverse immigrant students experienced conflict dialogue pedagogies. Because of my particular interest in newcomer immigrant students, I situated my study in metropolitan areas in southern Ontario, since the majority of visible minority newcomer immigrants to Canada reside there. These schools were located in a community with a large newcomer immigrant population in a large urban area in southern Ontario. Therefore, the ethnic distribution of this area is not representative of the whole school board or urban area. Based on the most recent census data from 2006, in this school board's region 65% of the population were visible minorities, and the top five visible minorities, in descending order, were: Chinese, South Asian (e.g., Indian), West Asian (e.g., Iranian), Black, and Filipino (Statistics Canada, 2006).

This newcomer immigrant population, an important part of visible minority populations in Canada, motivated and enabled me to study one aspect of how diverse students may be equipped for successful integration, acculturation, and inclusion through dialogic and democratic conflict learning opportunities in their classrooms. For this study, I sought to select a school board that supported initiatives for the inclusion of diverse students, including newcomer immigrants. In this way, I hoped my research would contribute to ongoing efforts to improve education in the board I worked with and boards that shared similar mandates.

Teachers

I used purposive sampling to identify three teachers who expressed interest in participating in this research. They worked in classrooms with diverse and recent immigrant students, and believed they were using conflict dialogue processes in their day-to-day pedagogies. One of the benefits of purposive sampling in qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to choose "information-rich" research sites (Patton, 1990, as cited in Creswell, 2008, p. 214). I initially set out to find teachers in elementary classrooms (Grades 5 to 8) in areas of southern Ontario where a high population of visible minority newcomer immigrants resided, as well as where discussion-based pedagogy was being undertaken. However, when a Grade 4 teacher, who was also recommended by the principal, expressed interest in participating, I modified my sampling criteria. The literature on conflictual issues and younger children (see Chapter 2) illustrates not only the necessity of discussing conflictual issues with young diverse students, but also, typically, that younger students want to discuss these issues. For these reasons, I was happy to include a Grade 4 class in my sample.

I worked with classroom teachers who demonstrated some knowledge of conflict dialogue processes and who told me that they used conflict proactively to engage all their students, particularly in the social studies and English language arts curricula. After obtaining permission from the school board I asked principals for their recommendations of teachers who were practising such pedagogy in their classrooms. I followed up with the recommended teachers to seek their approval and permission to participate in the study. All three teachers that I contacted agreed to participate.

I originally intended to select teachers who had been teaching for at least three years, to improve reliability and comparability among research sites; I was working on the assumption that novice teachers might still be learning how to use conflict dialogue processes (e.g., Bickmore & Parker, 2010; Parker & Bickmore, 2012). Thus, Mr. Hiroshi, who was only in his second year of teaching, but implemented conflict dialogue pedagogies, was probably not typical of other novice teachers.

I did not purposively sample for cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the teachers in the various classrooms I studied. However, all three teachers happened to identify (at least partially, in Mr. Hiroshi's case) with a visible minority immigrant group. Attracting diverse teachers to this study, while not intentional, proved to be an enlightening addition to this study of newcomer and diverse immigrant students.

Students

My critical sampling of Grades 4 to 8 elementary classrooms and their particular marginalized populations of visible minority newcomer immigrants was necessary in order to collect the specific data needed to answer my research questions (Creswell, 2008). Comparing the three classrooms and lessons in each over time provided insights into how similar and different conflict dialogue processes were used and how different students responded. The teachers that indicated an interest in participating in the study were from Grades 4, 5, and 7. I did not intentionally omit Grades 6 and 8; however, retrospectively I feel that their omission was in many ways strategic. During my time spent in the staff room or hallways, I found that the Grade 6 teachers at the school often spoke about the time constraints in covering curriculum expectations to prepare their students for the standardized Educational Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) testing that all students in Grades 3 and 6 are legislated to take in Ontario. And many Grade 8 teachers spoke about the pressure of preparing their students for high school curricula content. At a broad, general level, therefore, it was favourable in many ways to have researched Grade levels 4, 5, and 7, where such ongoing tensions or stressors were not as prevalent in teachers' day-to-day curricula planning and pedagogy. Overall, the study was intent on documenting best and inclusive democratic practices and thus, I believe that the grade levels that were both inadvertently and perhaps implicitly secured as research sites did in the end become best-case settings for the study of elementary school students' experiences with conflict dialogue pedagogies.

The study analyzed how teachers' pedagogies influenced diverse students' participation in conflict-infused curricula, by examining how students engaged with their peers and teachers in the classroom. There were 78 students in the three classes that were part of this study, 39 females and 39 males. The racial makeup of students was: 71% South Asian, 22% East Asian, 5% Black, 1% West Asian, and 1% mixed ancestry. All students were either first-generation immigrants (18%) or second-generation immigrants (81.5%) with the exception of 0.5% for a student who was mixed.

All students in each of the three selected classrooms were included as participants. Out of the 78 students, 52 received permission from their parents to participate in the study. Twenty-six students did not provide consent and were aggregated (not identified as individuals) in the observational data.

Out of the 52 students whose parents provided consent to be interviewed, 60% were female and 38% were male. The racial breakdown of the interviewed students was: 65% South Asian, 27% East Asian, 5% Black, and 1% mixed ancestry.

I gathered students' ethnicities through my interactions with students, from activities done in class related to their ethnicity, and during interviews with students. Ethnicities were 26% Indian, 26% Tamil Sri Lankan, 19% Chinese, 15% Pakistani, and 4% Jamaican; the remaining 10% were Guyanese, Trinidadian, Egyptian, Kenyan, Nepalese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, and White Canadian.

I was also able to gather data on the students' religions through my observations and interactions with them: 44.5% were Hindu, all South Asian; 19.5% were Muslim, all South Asian or West Asian; 10% were Buddhist, all East Asian; 9% were Christian, and were a mix of ethnicities; 5% were Sikh, all South Asian; and I did not gather the religious identifications of 12% of students. Overall, while my particular research concern emphasized ethnocultural minority and immigrant students, the comparisons and cultural interaction patterns among all the students in each classroom provided insights into how various diverse students experienced these processes.

DATA SOURCES AND DATA COLLECTION

Various data sources were used to analyze how teachers in three classrooms used processes to stimulate discussion of curricular material and to better understand how this facilitated democratic learning opportunities for diverse students. Using observations, interviews, a personal journal, and documents such as lesson plans, worksheets, and student work samples, I studied how conflict dialogue processes were implemented in three elementary classrooms, and how diverse students, particularly visible minority and first- and second-generation immigrants, experienced these pedagogies.

The study began with classroom observations. During the observation period at each school, I conducted individual and group interviews with students who volunteered and were given parental/guardian consent to participate. I also interviewed each classroom teacher twice, once at the beginning of classroom observations and again towards to the end. With the participants' consent, the

individual teacher and student interviews were audiorecorded, enabling me to be more present as a facilitator during the interviews. I took some handwritten or typed notes during interviews, and in some cases used them to go back and fill in gaps (e.g., muffled voices, inaudible speech) after transcribing the recording. The same research procedure was conducted at each research site.

Classroom Observations

I conducted classroom observations primarily during the language arts and social studies classes. However, I also observed other subject areas, including history, geography, mathematics, physical education and health, visual arts, and science. Observations were an essential component of this ethnographic research because they provided opportunities to see the actions and behaviours of participants. The observations took place over an extended period of time throughout the school year, providing even greater opportunity to notice how differences in participants' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviour changed in different contexts and at different times. Between November 2010 and June 2011, I observed the language arts and social studies classes in each classroom.

Because my research was intended to demonstrate how conflict dialogue processes facilitated inclusive learning environments for diverse students, I focused my observations specifically on curricular areas that previous research had identified as commonly used, workable spaces for conflict learning. While conflict learning can be infused into all curricular areas, my study built on prior research that addressed the complexities of teaching conflictual issues in the social studies and language arts curricula.

My observations revealed critical incidents where conflict was evident, and in which conflict dialogue processes were (or were not) implemented to address that conflict. These incidents, described in observation field notes, were sometimes used to stimulate discussion during group interviews with students and during individual teacher interviews. Alan Sears (2005) has pointed out: "If you look around the classroom, it is worth thinking about what the room itself is designed to teach you" (p. 47). Taking my lead from Sears, I paid attention to how the space and environment of the classroom were set up, particularly when conflict dialogue processes, such as circles, debates, and simulations were used.

My observations were guided by a protocol that documented how various students engaged with conflict dialogue pedagogies. I carefully documented teachers' and students' behaviour during classroom lessons using in-depth observation notes, which are characteristic of ethnographic research with a critical perspective. My observation protocol had a section reserved for reflective comments and questions that arose as I conducted the field observations. These analytical notes aided in facilitating ongoing critical, self-reflexive commentary on the data. I also provided each teacher with a copy of my observation notes and asked for their feedback and reflection.

While I initially set out to be a passive observer, I found that my role evolved to a participant observer in all three classrooms. I assisted teachers in monitoring

students by handing out materials, responding to students' questions, and when invited, sharing my perspective during classroom discussions. I further discuss my role as participant observer in Chapter 3.

Semistructured Student Group Interviews

Group interviews are used to "collect shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people" (Creswell, 2008, p. 226). I conducted semistructured group interviews[1] with students who agreed to participate in each classroom. During each such interview, I asked students about their perceptions and experiences with conflict dialogue processes, discussion, and diversity within their classroom. All the students were invited to participate.

There were two rounds of interviewing, one at the beginning of the data collection period and for a second time towards the end of it. A minimum of two and a maximum of seven students in each group interview was set, to maximize opportunities for diverse students to speak up freely. I conducted nine group interviews in the Grade 4 class, 11 in the Grade 5 class, and nine in the Grade 7 class. For the second set of group interviews, I was able to be more strategic about grouping participants with allies or close friends or others who in most cases appeared to feel more comfortable speaking about their experiences. I was also able to ask more specific questions during the second round of interviews because I drew on classroom observations and I also learned how to better structure my questions and interview techniques based on my experience from the first set of interviews. I informed the students that I would request follow-up interviews with some of them, under three circumstances: if time ran out; if I needed to clarify information that the student shared with me; and/or if the student expressed interest in adding more information to the specific questions or issues raised during the interview. I conducted the interviews during the observation data collection period.

In the Grade 4 class, 14 students received permission to participate in the interviews. In the Grade 5 class, 20 students received permission and in the Grade 7 class, 19 students received permission. I interviewed all students at least once. Each interview lasted between 20 and 60 minutes, depending on time constraints and on what students chose to disclose or speak about at length (e.g., incidents of bullying, familial stories, clarification of information). The amount of time allotted allowed for interviews to be scheduled during recess or lunch. Because of the age range (9 to 13) of student participants, I initially felt that 20 to 30 minutes would be the maximum length of their attention span. However, most students wanted to speak more and often asked to be interviewed again, even after I finished asking all the questions on my interview protocol. It is known that group interviews may encourage students to feel comfortable voicing their perspectives in a small group with some of their peers (Creswell, 2008). Having this kind of small-group dialogue offered a supportive space where students appeared to have the courage to voice and engage deeply in dialogue about their perspectives concerning certain critical classroom incidents. I also used a circle process during the small-group interviews. To encourage dialogue, I sometimes employed a talking piece. This

encouraged all students to speak, knowing that they would each have the opportunity to share when the talking piece was passed to them (Pranis et al., 2003; see also Chapter 2).

Group interviews are used to "collect shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people" (Creswell, 2008, p. 226). I chose not to interview students individually because of the limited time span of my data collection period. Because of the topic and content of the interviews, I felt that the group interviews would provide opportunities to practise and engage in the kind of discussions that I asked students to reflect on through the interview questions. The discussions among the students evolved and they built on each other's perspectives as they responded to the questions.

During these interviews, I encouraged students to speak about their experiences during the classroom lessons. I often prompted them with descriptions from observations of their class. Some prompts I used included: "I noticed that when ____ said ____, you responded by saying ____. Why did you say that? How did that make you feel?" I also encouraged other students to add their perspectives and opinions. Building on each other's ideas helped the students to gain a better understanding of the classroom experience. In order to sustain a democratic space during these group interviews, I acted as a facilitator of the conversation and tried to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to voice their perspective.

Semistructured Individual Interviews

I conducted two individual semistructured interviews with each of the three classroom teachers, once at the beginning and again towards the end of the observation data collection period. These interviews probed teachers' understanding of how and why they used conflict dialogue pedagogies to engage diverse students in democratic learning. With their consent, I audiorecorded the interviews. In the first interview, I asked them to articulate their plans for implementing curriculum about conflict and diversity and to discuss how they had prepared their students for engaging in these discussions. In the second interview, I asked these same questions, in addition to asking them to discuss the various kinds of conflict dialogue processes that I had observed them using, and the ways in which they felt they facilitated the involvement of diverse student learners in these processes. The interviews served as an opportunity for the teachers to voice their reflections on how the curriculum units I observed had progressed throughout the term. The interviews also encouraged teachers to reflect on how they perceived diverse students' engagement in the material had evolved through the use of particular pedagogical tools.

Document Analysis

Documents are useful for qualitative research because they often carry the "advantage of being in the language and words of the participants, who have usually given thoughtful attention to them" (Creswell, 2008, p. 231). I conducted

an analysis of classroom documents to gather contextual information about the teachers, students, and the implemented curriculum. Information from all documents collected was masked as needed to protect the identity of the students, teachers, and schools.

With their permission, I collected documents from students, which included work samples and ungraded written reflections intended for teachers' formative feedback. Also included were student portfolios, online classroom discussion boards on class blogs (Mr. Hiroshi's class), and journals (Mrs. Amrita's class). The students' work samples provided insights into how they perceived and understood certain conflicts and issues related to diversity that arose in the classroom and in the curriculum.

From each teacher I requested a copy of the following documents: classroom schedule, seating plan, curriculum unit or lesson plans, and resources they had consulted. The seating plan provided information on how teachers chose to arrange their students in the classroom (e.g., in small groups, circles, or rows) and also on how diverse students were placed (e.g., in gender groupings). The curriculum unit or lesson plans provided an overview on the ways each teacher planned to cover various topics throughout the year and in what sequence. It also showed whether specific conflictual or potentially controversial topics had been intentionally embedded into the implemented curriculum. The teachers' resources included the textbook and additional materials. These resources provided information on whether teachers prepared for conflict-infused learning opportunities for diverse students.

I also collected documents at the school and board levels, primarily online, including school newsletters and mission statements. This contextual information provided a sense of how the classroom was identified within the larger school community.

Researcher Journal

I kept a detailed personal journal in which I recorded postobservation and postinterview reflections and notes from informal conversations with teachers and students, in addition to those documented in my observation notes taken during class. My personal journal reflections helped to fill in gaps from the observation notes and also guided my own continuous self-reflexivity as I positioned myself in the research. Also, at certain times I found that my role in the classroom or during an interview seemed to influence how a particular discussion or dialogue evolved. By reflecting on these incidents, I became more conscious of my own research strategies and role as a researcher. I wrote analytical memos in my research journal after each observation and interview, as an aid to continuous reflection of what I was experiencing as a researcher and how I was interpreting the experiences of the research sites and participants.

APPENDIX

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

I provided a research project information and consent letter to school administrators and teachers interested in participating in this study, and obtained consent from both administrators and participating teachers at each school. Before I began my classroom data collection, I orally explained my project to students and then sent information and consent letters home to parents/guardians of the students in each class. Students and teachers were reassured that their involvement and participation were completely voluntary and that they held the right to withdraw from the study at any time. None of the participants said they wanted to withdraw from the study.

I intended to secure (and was successful in securing) three classroom sites in two different schools in southern Ontario. The two schools were in urban settings that included diverse immigrant students. The benefit of using different schools in the same region was that it enabled in-depth critical comparison and contrast among diverse students' experiences in these different contexts. The only drawback was that each school and classroom carried its own unique culture and characteristics, meaning that no two (or three) sites were completely comparable.

I observed classes at each school consecutively, spending approximately five or six months in each setting, for a total of 155 hours (see Table 4).

Table 4. Three Classroom Cases

Aria P.S., Board A	**Aria P.S., Board A**	**Georgetown P.S., Board A**
Teacher: Ms. Marlee	Teacher: Mrs. Amrita	Teacher: Mr. Hiroshi
Grade 4 class (23 students) Nov 2010–Apr 2011 35 classroom observations (49 hours)	Grade 5 class (27 students) Jan–Jun 2011 40 classroom observations (51 hours)	Grade 7 class (29 students) Dec 2010–May 2011 42 classroom observations (55 hours)

At Aria, in Ms. Marlee's Grade 4 class, I conducted 35 classroom observations of language arts, social studies, art, health, mathematics, science, and technology classes. I spent between 25 and 100 minutes on each observation, for a total of 49 hours. Also at Aria, in Mrs. Amrita's Grade 5 class, I conducted 40 observations of Mrs. Amrita's social studies, science, language arts, health, art, and mathematics classes. Each observation ranged between 30 and 100 minutes, for a total of 51 hours.

At Georgetown, in Mr. Hiroshi's Grade 7 class, I conducted 41 observations of Mr. Hiroshi's language arts, history, geography, mathematics and health classes, ranging between 40 and 100 minutes for each, for a total of 55 hours.

DATA ANALYSIS

I compared and contrasted my findings with relevant cross-cultural literature, to strengthen and deepen my analysis of conflict dialogue processes in diverse classrooms. Applying my conceptual framework (based primarily on Freire, 1994a, 1994b; Apple, 1990, 2004; Davies, 2004a, 2004b) to my research sites, I paid attention to how diverse students were included and excluded through explicit or implicit conflict learning opportunities.

Comparing and contrasting how different and similar conflict dialogue pedagogies were used by the three teachers and experienced by diverse learners in the different settings, I analyzed my data by discerning the kinds of conflict dialogue processes that were used in these settings. These included circle processes, issues discussions, debates, role plays, and simulations. In my analysis of observations I noted how students participated in these processes and which students were included or excluded. I also analyzed how teachers adapted and presented curricula in the three contexts and how teachers implicitly and explicitly addressed conflict to facilitate students' learning.

Sometimes I wrote or typed my observation field notes while I was in the classroom, typically using a combination of handwritten and laptop computer note taking to enable me to freely move around the classroom space when the students were engaged in small group activities; I then transcribed my notes into electronic format. I used transcription conventions that indicated when speech was stressed. In brackets I also included silences, where possible (indicating a pause) and marked interruptions or laughter.

I first conducted preliminary analysis of my observation notes to reflect on my research questions, and continually compared themes found in the literature to those generated in the preliminary analysis. I looked at similarities and differences among the many diverse students represented in the class. I drew on literature (such as Davies, 2004b; Hahn, 1998; Hess, 2001) to help facilitate a critical interpretation of my observations. Questions I continuously raised included:

- Who is voicing their perspectives and opinions in relation to what, to whom, and when?
- When contesting viewpoints were voiced, who voiced them and who responded with a dissenting point of view?

In individual teacher and student group interviews, I was able to invite participants to discuss and debrief incidents I had observed in the classroom. The interviews contributed to a strengthening of my observational data, by generating insights into how students were prepared for engaging in conflict dialogue processes, and how their learning experiences were facilitated through these processes. I also provided teachers with the opportunity to review transcripts of their interviews and my observation notes of their classes, and encouraged them to provide any additional comments or contextual information. None of the teachers requested changes on the transcripts I shared with them.

I managed my field observation notes, interview transcripts, and personal journal using NVivo qualitative data analysis software and Microsoft Word. Using NVivo, I identified preliminary themes for coding my data. I also employed Word's track changes feature to recode and analyze my data during Levels 2 and 3 of coding. I created a systematized way to work with the large amount of data I collected, by indexing interview transcripts and observation notes. Preliminary codes broadly analyzed how cultural, ethnic, and gendered diversities of students had been represented or excluded in each classroom. I used the documents I had collected to contextualize my analysis of how these diversities were addressed in the curriculum, how diverse students understood their experiences with conflict dialogue processes, and how these processes influenced their learning. For instance, reading students' reflective journal entries or classroom blogs informed how I interpreted their responses during interviews. In the same way, documents such as teachers' unit plans and curricular resources clarified my understanding of their intentions for various conflict dialogue pedagogies. I continuously reviewed the themes, categories, and codes while I was collecting data at each research site, since each form of data informed how I continued to engage in each subsequent stage of data collection. I triangulated the data through constant comparison and contrast among observations, teacher and student interviews, and classroom documents.

I systematized the data very carefully. When reviewing my journal reflections, interviews, and the documents I collected for analysis, I paid attention to how data might have been included or excluded. I reviewed data in my research journal as soon as I began data collection, recording initial impressions and questions that I had begun to grapple with. This process of ongoing formative analysis subsequently furthered my thinking and analysis while I was still in the field, and helped me decide what I would pay attention to as a researcher in the classroom.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND METHOD

While there was much strength to using an ethnographic method with a critical perspective for the purpose of my study, there were some obvious limitations. Any ethnography requires a considerable amount of time spent immersed in the research setting. While the literature does not point out specific minimum or maximum time requirements, five to six months at each of the three research sites was indeed quite limited, for three reasons: The amount of time I could spend at the research sites was limited by the timeline of the school year. Because I gathered data concurrently at each research site, I could not be completely immersed in any one school site. Lastly, the start and end time for each site varied.

I conducted observations with the Grade 5 class at Aria in January of the school year, but in November and December for the Grades 4 and 7 classes. This meant that I observed differences in students' behaviours and changes in interpersonal relationships differently. I noticed, for example, that after the holiday break in December many of the relationships between students and between students and their teacher in the Grades 4 and 7 classes had become more solidified, which

obviously impacted communication and discussion norms in each classroom setting. I still observed the many ways of acknowledging and communicating each other's perspectives in their classroom community at an in-depth level at all research sites, but in the Grade 5 class I did not have the opportunity to observe lessons that Mrs. Amrita might have used to prepare her students for conflict dialogue.

Also, because these particular research settings were closely connected to my own school experience, I may have inadvertently missed details because they were either so much the norm when I myself was a student in this community, or because they became commonplace through my immersion and/or own personal cultural background and history with the research settings.

Another limitation of this research design was the sampling across similar school contexts within a similar region of southern Ontario. I studied three teachers in junior (Grades 4 and 5) and intermediate (Grade 7) grades. While the study illustrates the potential for discussing conflict and diversity with younger students, it was not inclusive of younger primary-age children (i.e., preschool to Grade 3). I conducted small-group interviews only; individual interviews might have presented a more refined understanding of how students experienced particular moments of inclusion or exclusion that they might have been reluctant to speak about in front of their peers.

A final limitation was that while I set out to conduct a comprehensive ethnography with a critical perspective, the criticality and insights of the study are of course challenged and limited by the particular confines and structures I worked with in the classrooms I studied.

Nonetheless, my research plans and procedures were quite extensive. I experienced a cultural immersion in different classrooms over the course of almost an entire school year—a significant period of time. As such, while these limitations are important considerations to recognize, I believe that they did not prevent me from carrying out a comprehensive qualitative research study in the three classroom settings.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the main strengths of using ethnography with a critical perspective to study conflict dialogue processes in diverse classrooms were twofold: first, it encouraged in-depth cultural immersion in the research setting; and second, it facilitated the use of a critical lens to continually question how social norms and dominant assumptions influenced the behaviours of participants. My use of three research sites further enhanced the in-depth, critical nature of this study, by providing opportunities to compare and contrast the ways conflict dialogue processes were used in these different, yet similar, classroom social contexts. Finally, my implementation of this method in these contexts enabled my research to make a significant contribution to the study of conflict dialogue processes and democratic peacebuilding education, which connects with and goes beyond the existing research literature in this area.

APPENDIX

NOTE

[1] I am choosing to use the term “group interviews” rather than the commonly used term “focus groups.”

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