THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY FOR NEWCOMER STUDENTS

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By

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ABSTRACT

The increasing numbers of new immigrants and refugees (newcomers) have changed the ethnic, racial, and cultural landscape of Canadian schools. Stemming from this change, culturally responsive pedagogy has become a subject of interest among teachers, school leaders, and other teaching and learning practitioners. Studies have shown that school leadership significantly influences student outcomes and school success. This qualitative case study examined how school leaders in a selected elementary school in Saskatchewan engaged in practices that support culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) for culturally diverse newcomer students. The study focused on culturally responsive pedagogy as the ability of teachers and leaders to use relevant cultural knowledge, skills, and dispositions to address the learning needs of students.

The study was conducted in a school with a diverse population where most students were newcomers from different cultural backgrounds. An instrumental case study approach was used to gather data from eight participants who held leadership roles in the school. They included three school leaders and five classroom teachers. Data were mainly gathered using semi-structured interviews and observations. All recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, transcripts along with observations and research field notes created the primary data sources. NVIVO 12 was used to sort and analyze transcribed data which were categorized using descriptive and structural coding.

The findings revealed that the school had an English as an additional language (EAL) and a resource program that served students with low English levels; however, more resources were needed to address students' learning needs. Because language was a barrier, some students struggled with reading, grammar, communication, speaking, and writing. With only one EAL teacher, it was challenging for teachers to provide a long-term one-on-one approach for these students. As such, school leaders and teachers were expected to create a learning environment that addressed the learning needs of these culturally diverse students. For the school in this study, connecting with families was a crucial part of its mandate. Hence, the school’s leadership placed great effort in creating opportunities through planned events such as meet the teacher night, conferences, multi-cultural potlucks, and special events such as Christmas concerts. To facilitate this relationship, some parents were named resource persons within the school.

In addition, the school’s leadership created partnerships with different organizations, such as the Open-Door Society that facilitated an after-school sports program, the Hunger Education
Program that provided lunches for needy students, and the support worker in school (SWIS) that provided settlement services geared towards helping the families integrate into their environment. School leaders also planned events to build teacher-student. Although these measures were in place, the findings revealed that culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) was mainly practiced through the lens of First Nation, Inuit, and Metis (FNIM) students and that the practices were deficient in working with culturally diverse newcomer students. The deficiencies were mainly because of the difference in the challenges and barriers faced by FNIM and newcomer students.

The findings further indicated that school leaders and teachers had limited targeted resources to effectively meet the unique needs of culturally diverse newcomer students. A lack of professional development in CRP led teachers to use their initiative or knowledge of FNIM techniques to teach and engage newcomer students. Notably, there was a lack of diversity and student compliment representation among staff.

Based on these findings, recommendations were made with an emphasis on the need for professional development that supports teachers to teach culturally diverse students. There is also the need for a diverse teacher compliment. Research has shown that teacher diversity can influence students’ learning outcomes. Consequently, schools should seek to hire and retain teachers from diverse backgrounds that reflect the students they will teach. In addition, it is crucial for school leaders to implement strategies that enforce training programs that would create an opportunity for teachers to enact culturally responsive pedagogical practices within the teaching and learning community geared towards helping teachers to develop competencies to effectively teach all students regardless of cultural backgrounds. Although these recommendations were highlighted, without support from the central office or school division, these recommendations may not take effect. Therefore, these supporting bodies must do their part in supporting teachers and school leaders to effectively support culturally diverse students to actualize their full potential.
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Embarking on the journey of this doctoral study was one that I took with a great leap of faith. Relocating to a new country, only God’s favour and divine intervention made it possible. On this journey, many persons were strategically placed in my life to provide guidance, direction, prayer, and encouragement, and each of them played their role very well. To show my gratitude, I take great pleasure in writing this acknowledgement.

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express enough gratitude to my family. I am grateful that my daughters observed me during the process and know that hard work brings success.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My husband, Kirk Reid

My daughters Deandra and Juanica Reid

To my mom Edith Gordon and my mother-in-law Sonia Wheatle.
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CHAPTER ONE

School leadership is a salient part of student learning in any educational institution, and its quality can significantly impact teaching, classroom procedures, the school environment, and, eventually, student outcomes (Day et al., 2016; Leithwood et al., 2008). School leaders are uniquely positioned to work with school variables and collaborate with staff to create positive change (Day et al., 2008); they also have the responsibility to enact practices that enhance learning for all students. Therefore, the current demographic changes and increased cultural diversity call for school leaders and teachers to foster school programs, policies, and practices that are inclusive of all school community members from diverse cultural backgrounds (Evans, 2007).

The diverse nature of schools today calls for culturally appropriate measures to meet the needs of students. Thus, cultural responsiveness has become a vital part of the teaching and learning process. This increase beckons teachers and leaders to enact pedagogical practices that support students from all cultural backgrounds (Sun & Leithwood, 2015). To provide this support, teachers and school leaders must acknowledge students' cultural identities and lived experiences while striving to meet their needs. Therefore, culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) has become a critical component of teaching and learning in schools (Blankstein & Noguera, 2015).

In this study, I examined school leaderships’ role in supporting culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in a selected learning environment in Canada. I refer to culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) as the teachers' ability to understand that students’ cultural backgrounds influence how they learn and take steps to address the learning needs of culturally diverse students (Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Diversity in culture can be attributed to students’ language, background, family structure, and social or cultural identity. For effective culturally responsive teaching to occur, teachers need to expand their multicultural skills, knowledge, and professional disposition. In so doing, they can create better educational opportunities that meet culturally diverse students' social and academic needs and contribute to their learning outcomes (Siwatu, 2007; Gay, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teachers who are culturally responsive use the prior knowledge, values, and students' experiences to ensure meaningful learning (Gay, 2000). All in all, for culturally responsive pedagogy to be effective, teachers must learn the
cultures represented in their classrooms and translate this knowledge into instructional practice (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Gay (2010) further explained that although culturally responsive teaching is important, it cannot solve all the challenges that culturally diverse students encounter. Other aspects of the education system, such as funding, policies, and administration, are crucial for CRP. However, CRP is necessary to influence classroom culture, create school relationships that enable trust, and foster positive relationships (Kafele, 2013). CRP also creates an opportunity for students to feel comfortable sharing their experiences. These experiences add to the wealth of knowledge in the teaching and learning environment, thereby allowing classroom practitioners to build bridges that connect students, teachers, and the community (Kafele, 2013).

A school that embraces diverse student cultures and experiences can design instruction that addresses the learning needs of students within the learning community (Darling-Hammond, 2008). According to Ladson-Billings (1992), CRP empowers all students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attributes. When culturally responsive pedagogy is practiced in schools, the possibility of all children doing well becomes more realistic (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

Culturally responsive pedagogy needs to become a regular practice as schools enroll students from diverse cultures (Gay, 2002). As Gay (2002) puts it, the education system should accommodate students from diverse cultures and ensure that they receive a high-quality education free from discrimination. This kind of education can be achieved through leadership practices that foster culturally responsive teaching. School leaders, who see the need for teachers to develop attitudes that promote inclusion, will engage in reflective practices and demonstrate culturally responsive approaches to build relationships within the community and among colleagues and students (Riehl, 2000). Culturally responsive school leaders create structures and foster environments where community members experience freedom and inclusion regardless of their ethnicity as they embrace social change (Davis, 2002).

These culturally responsive school leaders enforce an inclusive curriculum that enhances learning for culturally diverse students by encouraging them to incorporate students’ experiences into their learning. Thus, leaders can provide the necessary support and resources to support an inclusive curriculum (Nieto, 2004). Such leaders also encourage professional development around culturally responsive pedagogy. According to Nieto (2004), this kind of professional
development is vital. It enables teachers to understand what CRP should mean for their practice and informs the necessary steps to pursue the approach effectively (Nieto, 2004).

This study examined the practices enacted by school leaders to foster culturally responsive teaching for newcomer students in an elementary school. These leaders included the school principals, vice-principals, and resource teachers. The remaining section of this chapter discusses the study’s background, problem, purpose and associated research questions. This chapter also highlights the significance of the research and its limitations, delimitations, and definitions. The chapter ends with a description of my position as the researcher and an overview of the dissertation.

**Background to the Problem**

Canada is a nation of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, including Aboriginal peoples and external migration over time (Statistics Canada, 2017). Current Canadian statistics and immigration reports point to a continuing increase of immigrants and refugees in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017). Since the early 1990s, the rise in immigration accounts for substantive growth in Canada’s population (Statistics Canada, 2017). Ferrer et al. (2014) pointed out that Canada welcomes 200,000 to 250,000 immigrants annually, representing approximately 0.8% of its population. Between 2008 and 2012, youths between 15 to 24 years represented about 17% of citizenship and immigration in 2012. The Canadian Council on Social Development (2006) predicted that by 2016, immigrant youth and Canadian-born members of immigrant families would represent 25% of Canada’s population under age 18.

Statistics Canada projected that this increase would continue to 2036 (Statistics Canada, 2017) as more immigrants choose to settle in Canada. Statistics Canada (2017) also suggested that increases in migration provide a portrait of what the Canadian population’s ethnocultural and linguistic diversity could look like up to 2036, based on different scenarios and assumptions. If this prediction proves accurate, educational institutions at all levels will continue to experience growth in the diversity of students and student needs. These projections also signal a growing demand for teachers who reflect the prevailing diversity within the school population, including minoritized students.

Lopez (2016) argued that the “increasing multicultural, multi-faith, multilingual students’ population in the Canadian education system teacher within the field and entering the field do not reflect the level of dynamics” (p. 93) more “minority teachers” are needed in the Canadian
classroom. Auirbach (2007) noted that minority teachers could serve as role models for the minority students they teach as they motivate them to pursue a high level of education. Even with the growing need for more minority teachers, Ryan et al. (2009) and Statistics Canada (2001, 2007) highlighted a lower percentage of minority teachers in Canadian learning institutions than European students. The changing demographics are shifting the teaching and learning environment and causing challenges for teachers who do not have experiences with newcomer (immigrant and refugee) students (McAllister & Irvine, 2002).

Gay (2016) noted that most teachers are not convinced of the importance of multiculturalism geared towards developing academic skills that can influence our united society. These teachers believed that training could be time-consuming, and the already overloaded curricula do not allow them to incorporate multicultural education in their practice. McAllister and Irvine (2002) noted that teachers in multicultural classrooms face challenges. They find it challenging to provide a learning environment that fosters high academic standards and addresses the learning needs of all students. To effectively teach culturally diverse students, teachers must understand and evaluate their cultural biases and ethnic prejudices and begin to value the culture of others (Gay & Howard, 2000; Okoko, 2019). Therefore, educators need to embrace diversity to bring new insights to inform their practices (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998).

Saskatchewan has been experiencing growth in immigrants and refugees (newcomers) choosing to live and study in the province. Most immigrants belong to different linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic groups (Keatings et al., 2012; Okoko, 2019; Pontikes & Garcea, 2006). This increase in immigrants has contributed to the complexity of the city’s effort to deal with the history of colonial relations between Aboriginal Peoples and predominantly white settlers (Cottrell et al., 2012; Keatings et al., 2012). Herreros (2004) claimed that the changing racial and ethnic composition of the population in Saskatoon should promote a vision of unity in the community.

As the population of visible minorities increases in Saskatoon, it creates the need to foster cultural diversity (Anderson, 2005). On this premise, I investigated the practices enacted by school leaders and teachers in a Saskatchewan school to facilitate a better transition for newcomer students. Newcomer students to Saskatchewan come from different cultural backgrounds, and as such, their language, culture, experiences, and social environment differ from the new culture. If school leaders and teachers are ill-equipped to teach these students, their
performance could be impacted negatively (Lopez, 2016). Saskatchewan's school divisions have initiatives and policies to support newcomer students (Okoko, 2019). However, the literature confirms that newcomer students still face challenges as they try to navigate their way through the education system to contribute meaningfully to society (Dei, 2015; Kanu, 2008; Lopez, 2016).

According to Dei (2015), the inability to adequately respond to the increasing diversity in schools has led to minority students underperforming and not meeting required school performance levels and academic milestones. Underperformance is common among students of colour and disengages them from the school system (Dei, 2015). For these diverse students to perform well, there must be meaningful construction of knowledge that reflect their realities (Nieto, 2004). The issue of student underperformance also points to a potential problem with the existing pedagogy and curriculum (Dei & Doyle-Woods, 2009; McMahon & Portelli (2004). Therefore, it is a call for educators to address diverse students' needs by addressing the curriculum and pedagogy that reflect their knowledge, experiences, histories, and struggles (Dei & Doyle-Woods, 2009) in the classroom. Hence, the need for culturally responsive pedagogy that responds to diverse needs. According to McMahon and Portelli (2004), unaddressed students’ needs can lead to high dropout rates in schools and students can become disengaged. Based on a study done in Canadian high schools, Anisef (1994) noted that minority students’ performance and behaviour in culturally diverse schools are below average. Anisef attributed the discriminatory attitudes of some teachers as a contributing factor to the challenges that culturally diverse students face. According to Rummens (2009), discrimination against immigrant children in Canada stems from the differences resulting from their ethnic culture, race, skin colour, language, accent, and religion.

Discrimination can affect students’ educational attainment and performance (Statistics Canada, 2003). Therefore, educational leaders must engage strategies to enforce the need for change; and facilitate the well-being and educational outcomes of culturally diverse students (Bogotch, 2014). School leaders working with diverse students must appreciate the need to engage in leadership practices that challenge approaches that exclude diverse students' voices and experiences. Hence, school leaders should find ways to alleviate these challenges (Lopez, 2014).

Cultural diversity also impacts the integration of newcomer students into the existing teaching and learning environment. Many newcomer students feel isolated and lack a sense of
belonging, making the integration process difficult (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Stemming from the difficulties newcomer students face, the onus is on principals, teachers, and other stakeholders to include their diverse students' needs and experiences in the curriculum to facilitate the growing diversity in the classroom. They also need to recognize that the experience that culturally diverse students bring to the classroom can enhance their learning and that of other students (Richards et al., 2007).

**Statement of the Problem**

The continuing influx of newcomers into Canada, including the province of Saskatchewan, has shifted the demographics from a country dominated by European settlers and Indigenous Peoples to one that is becoming increasingly multicultural. Toure (2008), thus, recommended that educational practitioners and policymakers perform “a re-examination of requirements for leadership perception which currently lack an emphasis on culturally relevant leadership content knowledge or issues of social justice” (p. 20). School leaders and classroom practitioners need to implement strategies to develop the potentials of newcomer students and enhance teaching and learning. According to Banks (2004), diversity, intercultural, and social justice education should be the norm in Canadian schools to sensitize school leaders and teachers about its existence and be practiced. Although there are discussions about race, Khalifa (2016) noted that those conversations should explore the system-level reforms that can be put in place to ensure culturally responsive practices in all aspects of teaching and learning. Therefore, it is incumbent on school leaders to be proactive in improving CRP for diverse students to transform their schools to serve all students effectively. This research explored how leadership enacted practices influenced culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how leaders in a selected elementary school in Saskatoon engaged in practices that support culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students.

**Research Questions**

The study aimed at answering the question:

How do school leaders in a culturally diverse elementary school enact leadership practices that support teachers in using culturally responsive pedagogy?

I used the following sub-questions to guide responses to the central question:
1. How do school leaders influence teachers’ cultural responsiveness to address the needs of culturally diverse newcomer students?
2. What do school leaders do to ensure that teachers have the necessary resources to work effectively with newcomer students in the classroom?
3. How do school leaders support teachers in creating a culturally responsive classroom environment for newcomer students from diverse cultural backgrounds?
4. How do school leaders mobilize professional development strategies to facilitate culturally responsive pedagogy?
5. What are the culturally responsive leadership practices enacted by school leaders to facilitate culturally diverse students?

**Significance of the Study**

According to Petticrew and Roberts (2003), useful research allows researchers to connect research questions to existing problems. The research questions explored how participants' stories impact their experiences in teaching culturally diverse students. The study highlighted the leadership practices that influenced teachers, parents, and students to create and maintain an environment that supported culturally diverse newcomer students. These practices are necessary since culturally responsive leaders are responsible for ensuring that their leadership reflects a culturally responsive environment and all other aspects of the learning community that impact students' lives regardless of their cultural background.

This research affirms the multicultural policy by the Canadian Multicultural Act (1988), allowing persons to learn about other cultures. The policy advocates for an inclusive curriculum and sensitizes educators to address racism (Canadian Multicultural Act, 1988). The policy also enforces the need for parental involvement in school activities as a significant contributing factor to student success (Canadian Multicultural Act, 1988). However, although this act is crucial to multicultural education, Tomlinson (1990) cautioned that multicultural education brings harm when it allows educators to ignore possible changes to the curriculum to facilitate diverse student learning. St. Denis (2010) noted that multiculturalism in schools dismisses or shows less regard for Aboriginal content and perspectives. She argued that with multiculturalism, the focus should not be on one culture. Fleros and Elliot (1992) further noted that multiculturalism was a strategy that encouraged social division. Therefore, this study enriches the knowledge of individuals who serve the education system. It apprises policymakers and practitioners of the importance of
leadership practices for culturally responsive pedagogy, especially for culturally diverse students. It is crucial for school leaders to engage in practices that facilitate culturally responsive practices that contribute to students learning outcomes.

Parental engagement is also a significant factor in culturally responsive pedagogy, especially for immigrant children (Canadian Multicultural Act, 1988). Parental connections with children’s learning create the opportunity for more significant learning outcomes (Bang, 2011). There is a need for culturally responsive pedagogy; however, cultural responsiveness does not happen in a vacuum. Therefore, as Chuang & Alliance, Canadian Immigrants Settlement Sector (2010) purported, “researchers, service providers and social policymakers must investigate the multiple challenges and barriers that newcomer students face as they navigate through their adjustment and settlement processes” (p. 1).

Once school leaders and classroom practitioners enact culturally responsive pedagogical practices, it can contribute to a better transition for newcomer students (Chuang & Alliance, Canadian Immigrants Settlement Sector, 2010). School leaders play a significant role in schools as they influence the development of the entire child. Thus, they can affect positive changes and reforms (Khalifa, 2016). Khalifa further stated that school leaders are strategically placed to ensure that schools become culturally responsive. This statement strongly reinforces the need to examine school leaders’ practices and how these practices influence the teaching and learning process in diverse learning communities. This study reveals that some school leaders influence culturally responsive pedagogical practices that enhance the transition of newcomer students.

The topic of culturally responsive leadership has not been adequately researched and lacks theorization, and as such more research is needed to address these specific areas (Khalifa, 2016). This study expands the limited research about leadership practices for culturally responsive pedagogy specifically to culturally diverse newcomer students. In addition, it looks at the leadership practices that are being enacted for culturally responsive pedagogy. The research questions and sub-questions in this study created the opportunity for researchers to explore literature in relation to culturally responsive practices when teaching culturally diverse newcomer students in Canadian schools.

Through this research, I was able to identify existing gaps in the literature and illuminated the need for educational practitioners to evaluate the need for culturally responsive pedagogical practices that should be enforced to address the learning needs of culturally diverse newcomer
students. This study may inform policy development and school districts of the importance of culturally diverse newcomer students in Canada. The information provided in this research can also enhance emerging literature highlighting the resources needed to positively impact the lives of newcomer students regardless of ethnicity or cultural background.

Limitations

Limitations, according to Wiersma (2000), are constraints that may occur during the study over which the researcher has no control, and these constraints can influence the results or the conclusions of the study. There were several limitations to the strength and integrity of the findings and related conclusions of this study.

The research was conducted in a single school; therefore, the collected data were specific, and generalization of contexts beyond the school will be limited. While I am familiar with the context of teaching and have years of experience as a classroom teacher, my depth of understanding of the meaning of education in Saskatchewan is limited. In the subsequent section, my positionality details the strengths and limitations of my knowledge of education in Saskatchewan.

During the observations, participants may not have provided a true reflection of their behaviour because of social desirability (Bergen & Labonte, 2020). My presence could have shaped the outcome. However, the triangulation process discussed later in this study was meant to offset this limitation.

During the data collection process, I had the opportunity to shadow school leaders; however, I may have missed important data because of the time allotted for this process, as they were all done at different times.

Delimitations

Patton (2015) noted that delimitation refers to the boundaries researchers set when conducting a study. This study was delimited to one province, Saskatchewan, and one elementary school in a Public-School Division in Saskatchewan. Therefore, all categories of participants were from one school. The study was also delimited to teachers of grades pre-K to eight because it was an elementary school. The study was also delimited to teachers with at least two years of experience teaching newcomer students from diverse cultures and school leaders (principal, vice-principal, and EAL teacher) who had at least one year of experience serving in a leadership role. The data collection for this study was delimited to two years as the process took time to enrich
and refine the data to have an in-depth understanding of the practices, which facilitated rich descriptions.

**Assumptions**

According to Tourangeau and Rosinski (1998), responding to a question requires individuals to process the content deeply to formulate an appropriate answer. The context can also affect the individual responses. Tourangeau and Yan (2007) further explained that participants in an interview might provide dishonest responses because of their unwillingness to give undesirable information. One of the assumptions of this study is that all participants provided accurate and honest responses to interview questions.

Participants should display their natural behaviours during observations. Nonetheless, participants may consciously or unconsciously change their behaviour while under observation. This behaviour change can impact the accuracy of the data (Flick, 2006). However, Johnson and Turner (2003) claimed that participants could start acting naturally after the researcher has been observing for a while. I assumed that all participants acted and spoke truthfully.

**Definition of Terms**

This section outlines the definition of significant terms used in this study.

*Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:* Culturally responsive pedagogy is a practical teaching approach in a culturally diverse classroom; teachers “should be responsive to their students by incorporating elements of students’ culture in their teaching” (Irvine & Armento, 2001, p. 4). It “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge and attributes” (Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 382). Culturally responsive pedagogy is also a way of knowing, understanding, and representing different ethnic groups in teaching various subject areas and skills. The teacher uses strategies to help students construct knowledge by building on their own personal and cultural strengths. The curriculum is also examined from different perspectives to create an inclusive classroom relevant and valuable for diverse students (Gay, 2002). Cultural responsiveness also gives school leaders the ability to understand and respond to cultural knowledge, peer experiences, and ethnically diverse students' performance style to make learning encounters meaningful and relevant (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

*Cultural Diversity:* Cultural diversity represents a social system of people with distinct gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, and culture (Fiske & Lee, 2008).


**Culture:** Nieto (2004) defines culture as “the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldviews created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include shared history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion” (p. 48). Culture also indicates a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioural standards, and beliefs practiced worldwide, which helps to give order and meaning to our lives and the lives of others (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991).

**Practices:** According to Newton and Riveros (2015), practice is a meaningful unit of work. It is a meaningful assemblage of human actors (including their intro-subjective and inter-subjective inner world actions, linguistic objects (as utterances and documents) and material objects. It is considered a meaningful unit since the different parts of the practice function together in meaningful ways, and what is done makes sense to those involved. (p. 331)

**Instructional Leadership:** Leithwood (1994) describes instructional leadership “as a series of behaviours that are designed to affect classroom instruction” (p. 3). According to Leithwood, in this environment, “principals are responsible for informing teachers about new educational strategies, technologies and tools that apply to effective instruction” (p. 3).

**School Leader:** A School Leader that designates a principal, assistant principal, or other individuals who are employees or officers of an elementary school or secondary school, local educational agency, or other entity operating an elementary school or secondary school; and are responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operations. (National Association of Elementary School Principals, n.d., para. 1). School leaders can also include senior teachers, community members, other school administrators, and government officials (Spillane et al., 2019; UNESCO 2019).

**Immigrants:** Immigrants are those individuals who have been granted permanent or conditional residence status based on specific familial relationships recognized by law, or a person who migrates to another country, usually for permanent residence (Loue, 2013). Immigrants to Canada are landed in Canada, according to the rules and regulations governing Immigration Canada (Mulholland & Biles, 2004).

**Newcomer:** Newcomer includes individuals who arrive in Canada as immigrants (up to five years before a given census year). This group includes refugees, and those who fall outside of these two groups; those who come on visiting visa, or those who are waiting on a determination of their refugee claims (Mulholland & Biles, 2004).
Positionality of the Researcher

Hauserman and Stick (2013) held that leadership plays a pivotal role in developing effective schools and enhancing student achievement. Serving as an educator at the elementary level, teaching students ages 6-12, for thirteen years and at the tertiary level for four years, I have recognized the potency of leadership in the success of schools or any learning institution. My experiences in the Jamaican education system have inspired me to think about the effects of leadership. The impact of leadership practices is multidimensional, determines a school’s performance, and affects everyone in the teaching and learning community (Fullan, 2007).

I experienced changes in school leadership three times during my seventeen years of teaching in the school system in Jamaica, my country of origin. Each time, the individuals took a different approach to leadership, and each outcome was different. Based on this experience, I always wanted to learn more about school leadership and the best approach to creating a learning environment where teachers and students are comfortable and achieve more remarkable learning outcomes. After I migrated to Canada with my family, I knew that my interest would somehow shift because of the different cultural backgrounds, so I took the time to research the education system in Canada, especially in Saskatchewan, the Province where I live. I later learnt that Canada was a highly diverse country, and so were the schools. However, some provinces had more diversity than others. This new knowledge altered my comprehension of a diverse classroom and contributed to effective learning. Although there were Indigenous students, including First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, most of the schools’ population was white. It was not until recently that schools dealt with diversity within the classroom (Anderson, 2005).

I moved to Canada with my husband and two daughters, ages 17 and 11 at the time. My daughters’ transitioning into high school and elementary school was a brand-new experience as they had to adjust to their new environment. The unfamiliar curriculum, teaching strategies, and diversity level among the student population accounted for their unique and fearful experiences. My decision to migrate to Canada granted me the opportunity to pursue a Ph.D., and it was a quantum leap for my family and me because of a new life prospect.

My youngest daughter was affected the most. She was bullied by her peers and subjected to criticism and ridicule about her appearance. Some of the statements included the following, “you are different, and nobody likes you,” “You look like a burnt potato,” and “a thing.” The verbal abuse made it hard for her to develop friendships at school. It also impacted her self-
esteem and motivation to go to school. As a parent, I was hurt by her treatment, and I tried to erase the negative indoctrinations. As the situation worsened, I cautiously reported the matter to the principal, who never addressed the issue. The silence led me to believe that the principal was not prepared to handle all students' needs in the learning community, regardless of their cultural background; thus, the principal may have limited knowledge of the importance of culturally responsive pedagogical practices.

This experience taught me that the curriculum did not sufficiently integrate or facilitate cultural diversity. The lack of cultural knowledge and awareness of the new culture deprived my daughter of an equitable and accepting learning environment. There were also aspects of the curriculum for which she was ill-prepared as a newcomer student, such as the mandatory learning of French as a new language, and the school was not a French immersion at the time. These experiences motivated me to look at leadership practices that welcome newcomer students and make inclusion in the teaching and learning process possible regardless of their culture and ethnicity.

I understand that newcomers or international students transitioning to a new school in a new country may face difficulties due to distinct differences between cultures. However, school leaders need to implement programs and services to promote all students' success in diverse learning environments. I looked at how school leaders created or facilitated a culturally responsive pedagogical environment that addressed equality in education for all students despite their race or ethnicity.

As a newcomer, I assumed and conducted my study from the privileged position of being both an emic and an etic researcher. Being a newcomer to Canada with children in the teaching and learning environment positions me as emic to these experiences. However, I am also etic to the school community and its environs because I am an immigrant to Canada. At that time, I was unfamiliar with the learning community structure, the leadership structure, and school policies.

Conducting this research allowed me to observe the Canadian education system in action. I interacted with persons at different levels within the learning community through my observations, which provided new experiences and added greater depth and quality to the data collection process. This research was done in an unfamiliar setting; however, I was careful not to allow my personal experience to cloud my thoughts and interfere with my observations and data accuracy. Therefore, as the researcher, I approached this research with an open mind. Thus, I was
careful not to allow preconceived ideas to compromise the study; this was done through reflexivity. I was also aware that my experience and background could influence how I interpret the data, so I utilized the opportunity to reflect on who I am as a researcher.

In doing this research, I observed the teaching and learning process within a specified environment, which gave me first-hand experience of what existed. This research also allowed me to observe non-white students in a learning community while learning the challenges in this environment. It also allowed me to hear from immigrant teachers about the challenges they encounter in the classroom.

I hope this research will help address the need for culturally responsive pedagogy for diverse newcomer students. Although the data collected may or may not support my argument, I researched without bias, refusing to allow my beliefs to interfere with the data.

**Summary**

This chapter provided the context of the study, the problem statement, and the research question: How do school leaders in a culturally diverse elementary school enact leadership practices that support teachers in using culturally responsive pedagogy? I also discussed the study's significance, the researchers’ positionality and motivation to do this study. The relevant terms used throughout the study were also described in this chapter, and the possible limitations and delimitations. The information provided in this chapter was the foundation for the research process.

**Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized into six chapters, beginning with the introductory chapter that provides the study's context, looking at the background to the problem and the research method used. I also explain the study's purpose, the statement of the problem, its delimitations, and its limitations. My positionality in this research describes my experience as a newcomer to Canada. In Chapter Two, I review relevant literature on culturally responsive pedagogical practices that support the research's nature. I highlight the connection between leadership practices and culturally responsive pedagogy through the literature review. At the end of the chapter, I use a conceptual framework to capture and represent the major tenets that guided the research process. Chapter Three provides the research design adapted from Crotty (1998) as it brings together the research methodologies, method, data collection, ethical considerations, and data analysis. Chapter Four presents the data emerging from the participant voices and observations based on
the research questions. In Chapter Five, I discuss the findings of the research. Finally, in Chapter Six, I offer a summary, conclusions, and recommendations from the study.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This literature review captures scholarly work and professional literature related to school leadership practices regarding culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students. Although the topic has been studied widely in places such as the United States, there has been limited research in school leadership practices and their appropriateness in diverse school populations in Canadian education (Johnson 2014; Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012). Moreover, given the increase in diversity in Canadian schools, this type of literature could be timely. As such, I examine the practices enacted by school leaders to facilitate the teaching of culturally diverse newcomer students. The first part of the chapter overviews Canada's history of becoming a multicultural society and explains the increasing diversity. More specifically, the chapter reviews the increased diversity in Saskatchewan and, by extension, provincial schools and classrooms.

The second section examines the relevance of policies; the third section highlights different leadership practices; the fourth section reviews newcomer inclusion and exclusion, the role of parents, and parents' involvement in education. The fifth section reviews Canadian schools' cultural diversity, focusing on culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive leadership, culturally responsive teachers, culturally responsive classrooms, and social justice and leadership for culturally responsive pedagogy. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework illustrated in Figure 2.2 highlighting concepts from four themes significant to this study: culturally responsive leader, teacher practices, culturally responsive classroom, and student experience.

Contributing Factors to Increasing Diversity

Fearon (2003) contended that Canada is one of the world’s most multicultural societies. It is also a nation of increasing diversity with its “7.5 million immigrants representing approximately 200 countries and native languages” (Statistics Canada, 2016). With the influx of immigrants, many coming because of opportunities, and others who fled their home country because their lives were endangered by war or other extreme circumstances, the Canadian population has become diverse (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). A points system that allows immigrants to be selected based on their qualifications, language, aptitude, and skills has also contributed to the increase of immigrants from non-European countries (McIntyre, 2001). This diversity level comes with different challenges, especially for newcomer students who must deal
with unfamiliar societal norms, a unique education system, and language barriers (Coleman, 2006; Okoko, 2011; Palmer-Clarke, 2015; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010).

With the large numbers of immigrants entering Canada, learning institutions will inevitably see an increase in ethnic diversity. A growth in ethnic diversity will require integrating cultural leadership practices to shape students' lives, leading to academic success in the learning institution. This literature review aims to identify the best pedagogical practices for accommodating newcomer students, so the transition period in the learning community will be more manageable as leaders become more responsive to diverse students' needs. Therefore, in subsequent paragraphs, I discuss leadership, newcomer experiences, and culturally responsive teaching and leadership practice.

**Increasing Diversity in Saskatchewan**

The demographics of Saskatchewan began changing about 2004 when the government implemented the Provincial Nominee Program with the hope of encouraging population and economic growth (Garcea, 2008). The initiative's primary purpose was to “enhance global perspective, increase diversity, validity and growth, expand knowledge and innovation, increase business investment and opportunities, and promote a strong labour force” (Government of Saskatchewan, 2014, p. 3). Due to this incentive, Saskatchewan’s population grew, facilitating immigrants and migrants' arrival from other parts of Canada (Garcea, 2006). Saskatoon, the largest urban center in Saskatchewan, has benefited from newcomers (Government of Saskatchewan, 2014). It is projected that the increase of newcomers should reach 388,000 by 2032 and 500,000 by 2050 (Keatings et al., 2012).

Although not as diverse as other Canadian cities, Saskatoon is experiencing increased diversity from mostly white settlers and Aboriginals (Peters, 2013). Additionally, many newcomers come to Saskatchewan from China, South Asia, the Philippines, Africa, and Latin America because of economic prospects (Statistics Canada, 2015). According to Peters (2013) and Statistics Canada (2015), Canada saw an increase of visible minority immigrants from these countries from 3.6% of Saskatoon’s population in 2006 to 6.3% in 2011. Consequently, the city’s ethnic diversity has grown.

Garcea (2013) described how newcomers to Saskatoon experience significant changes and face challenges upon entering the new environment. He argued that many newcomers deal with inadequate and affordable housing, food, furniture, household items and transportation. 

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Garcea (2013) also believed that the integration of these newcomers could be a complicated process, especially when they try to become involved in the local community because they “experience challenges in both processes, beginning with status and entry” (Garcea, 2013, p. 10). Although immigrants experience challenges, their presence benefits the City of Saskatoon culturally and economically through public revenue (Sandeford, 1998; Putnam, 2007). If schools use pedagogy responsive to immigrants’ culture, they may come to accept the City of Saskatoon as a place to live, work and raise their families.

To achieve the goal of culturally responsive pedagogy, Checkoway (2011) noted that leaders could draw from multicultural communities to accommodate the increased diversity in the City of Saskatoon creatively. Checkoway (2011) defined a multicultural urban society as one in which persons recognize and celebrate differences within and among groups. Such communities work to strengthen diversity and challenge discrimination while creating unity. Ultimately, this can create change when people develop or improve their quality of life at the community level (Checkoway, 2011; Nussbaum, 2011). For this change to become a reality, Checkoway (2011) suggested that leaders become “change agents” who motivate others to work towards a multicultural community's success. Leaders who take on transformational attributes will motivate their followers to embrace and endorse change.

These transformational leadership attributes will eventually lead to moral and ethical change for the common good (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). These leaders will educate individuals about their own social identity and others from different cultural backgrounds. In a multicultural society, individuals need to develop new ways of living together to build communities (Sandeford, 2004). Thus, for Saskatoon to have an ideal multicultural community where newcomers can express their culture, language, and heritage, they must work collaboratively.

**Education Policies**

There are many debates around multicultural education and what should be put in place to benefit Canadian society so that the policy can become inclusive and equipped to meet the needs of the global, social, political, and economic climate of Canada's growing diverse population (Ladson-Billings, 2004). These sentiments align with Canada’s multicultural policy, which recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing Canadians' multicultural heritage. The policy considers diversity regarding race, nationality or ethnic origin, colour, and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian Society (The Canadian Multicultural Act, 1998). This
policy provided opportunities for individuals to learn about other cultures through cultural programs. It also advocated for introducing multicultural education in schools during the late 1970s to early 1980s. These programs were to sensitize and foster respect for ethnocultural differences, which would allow the integration of minority students in a more dominant educational framework (The Canadian Multicultural Act, 1998).

Ladson-Billings (2004) suggests that "current ideas about the term multicultural must give way to new expressions of human and social diversity. We must reconceptualize views of differences that are often forced to operate in old social schemes" (p. 50). Most schools have integrated some multicultural, intercultural, or anti-racist approaches to teaching and the curricula (The Canadian Multicultural Act, 1998). These approaches address inclusion and reflective curriculum, teaching material and teachers’ awareness of racism, and strategies to combat racism. They also allow educational practitioners to be more sensitive to the academic achievement of different students (The Canadian Multicultural Act, 1998). Thus, the Canadian curricula incorporate students’ heritage and allows them to express themselves through their food, dress, artistic expressions and religious symbols and practices (The Canadian Multicultural Act, 1998).

Canadian educational policies vary and are supplemented by provincial and municipal policies. Quebec and Ontario, for example, are known to supplement and encourage a multicultural policy. Quebec’s policy, however, looks at inter-culturalism rather than multiculturalism (Barrett, 2014). It supports multiculturalism and diversity under a framework that advances French as the public language (Alain-Gustave & Lacavino, 2008). Under this policy, the federal government provides funding for schools in northern Canada, First Nation reserves, prisons, and post-secondary institutions.

Federal policy concerning education is outlined in two policy papers: Knowledge Matters: Skills and Learning for Canadians and Achieving Excellence, Investing in People, Knowledge and Opportunity. These documents place newcomers at the centre of the Canadian Government’s plan to foster an innovative economy and society. Through “Knowledge Matters,” emphasis is placed on:

1. building a foundation for lifelong learning for children and youth
2. strengthening, accessibility and excellence in post-secondary education
3. building a world-class workforce
4. helping immigrants to achieve their full potential under the theme, “Knowledge Matters,” where the government “set the target for 65% of newcomer students to be equipped with post-secondary education by 2010; meeting this target would show an increase from 58% in 2000” (New Immigrants Act, 2002, pp. 49-50).

Communication is a significant challenge that newcomer students face (Frith, 2003). Therefore “basic language training helps newcomers face the challenge of becoming involved in their communities, participating in their children's schooling and also feeling that Canada is truly their home” (Frith, 2003, p. 36). Developing proficiency in the official language is a priority in the Canadian integration policy, creating programs like the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). The policy also states that “all children regardless of whether their parents are immigrants, refugees’ citizens or foreign nationals have the right to attend public schools” (p. 4). Frith also further that the “Canadian school system also plays a significant role in teaching and modelling active citizenship both for children and for the parents of these children” (p. 35). Based on this universal access to schools across Canada, the government positions schools as influential integration sites for newcomer students. Schools should also remain committed to enhancing all Canadians’ capacity, including newcomer students, through lifelong learning.

Banks (1997) designed a multi-cultural model to show how multicultural education can respond to cultural diversity and cause change. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, Bank’s cultural model identifies five essential elements of multi-cultural education: knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, empowering learning culture, equity pedagogy and content integration. Knowledge construction speaks to how teachers help students determine how cultural perspectives influence knowledge construction in the teaching and learning process. Prejudice reduction highlights and evaluates students' characteristics and how best to modify them using different methods and resources. Empowering learning culture is where staff and students' relationships, practices and social interactions are examined to ensure that the school’s culture empowers students from different cultural backgrounds and gender groups. Equity pedagogy allows teachers to modify teaching to facilitate more significant learning outcomes regardless of race, gender, or ethnic background. Content integration helps teachers within a culturally diverse learning environment use examples and content from various cultures in the teaching and learning process.
Although many researchers see multicultural education as being crucial to the teaching of culturally diverse learners, it is viewed by others as a practice of racism because often, students and educational practitioners are not familiar with the practices of other cultures (Gosin, 2002). Tomlinson (1990) argued that multicultural education is harmful and creates a distraction for educators to ignore possible curricular changes that benefit all students in the learning community. According to Fleras and Elliot (1992), multiculturalism “separates and intensifies misunderstanding and hostility and puts one group against another in the competition for power and resources” (p. 132). Fleras and Elliot (1992) further stated that multiculturalism suppresses the fight for social equality.

Based on the scholarly works of Burns (1978), Avolio and Bass (2004), Harris (2013), Allensworth and Sebastian (2012), Wanzare (2012), Freire (1970, 1998), there are different types of leadership. This literature review explores school leaders, leadership practices, how they are enacted in the school system, and how they influence teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students.

**Leadership**

School leadership seeks to get the best from teachers, students, and other stakeholders connected to the learning community to achieve the institution's goals. As such, their role

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**Figure 2.1**

*Multicultural Model (Banks, 1997)*

- Content integration
- Knowledge construction
- An equity pedagogy
- Prejudice reduction
- An empowering learning culture.
includes setting goals, evaluating teachers, seeing to the day-to-day operations of the school, and overseeing teachers, students and other individuals who work in the learning environment (Day et al., 2016; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2018). Day et al. (2016) and UNESCO (2018) concurred that school leaders should practice transformational or instructional leadership to accomplish the institution’s desired outcomes. These practices will ensure that the institution's vision and structure are enacted while focusing on teaching and learning.

Reviewing the literature on leadership is imperative for this study because its main purpose is school leadership practices and how they are enacted for culturally responsive pedagogy. The first part of this section of the review focuses on leadership models pertinent to this research. Part two examines leadership practices and how they are connected to culturally responsive pedagogy. Part three reviews the increased diversity in Canada.

According to Bass (1990), leadership is a crucial factor that determines the success of an organization. Thus, a good leadership team will work collectively to ensure an institution's success. The types of leadership discussed in this study will give readers a better understanding of leadership practices and how they influence individuals in a learning community. According to Fullan (2006), school leaders are responsible for creating sustainable changes that teachers can appreciate and would take responsibility for implementing. Therefore, once school leaders become culturally responsive and initiate these practices, the teachers' responsibility is to support students to work together towards the institution's common goal. Hosking (2000) noted that leadership arises from social interaction with different individuals who share separate meaning; therefore, leadership may be seen as a “process of social constructivism that focuses not on the makers of the process, but on the processes made within the concurrent undertakings” (p. 198). Alverson and Sveningsson (2003a, 2003b) suggested that leadership could be viewed as an everyday activity as leaders carry out managers' capacity practices.

Burns (1978) asked many questions about leadership that motivated others to question the nature of leadership and the practices of a good leader. Burns theorized that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2). He noted that there had been growing debates about “rulers versus the ruled for centuries” (p. 2). Recent studies proffer varied definitions of leadership. Rost and Smith (1992) posited that leadership is “based on the values and cultural norms of the industrial paradigm. Burns (1978), however, viewed leadership
“as a structure of actions that engage persons to varying degrees, throughout the levels and among the interstices of society” (p. 3).

Furthermore, it is an effort to move an understanding of leadership forward, toward the post-industrial paradigm that will take hold in the twenty-first century” (p.14). Barker (1997) and Klenke (1993) noted that leadership is conflicting, contrary, and contradictory. The following sections outline different leadership practices and how they help to develop effective leaders.

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership developed from value systems that include justice and integrity which cannot be exchanged. Other factors, such as the need for belonging and self-realization, also influence transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). According to Bass and Avolio (1990), this leadership style allows individuals to feel valued and enables them to have a sense of purpose, respect, and trust in their leaders. Transformational leaders ensure that their followers see the need to achieve their desired goals. Antonakis et al. (2003) noted that transformational leaders are influential and wish to see their followers' dreams actualized. Thus, change occurs when individuals connect, and leaders and followers motivate each other.

Burns (1978) argued that leadership could be transformational and transactional, suggesting that both leadership types can produce beneficial outcomes for individuals, groups, and organizations. Transactional leadership uses a reward system, and individuals are awarded based on performance (Antonakis et al., 2003). Transformational leaders aim to “satisfy higher needs and engage the full person or the follower” (Burns, 1978, p. 4). Avolio et al. (1999) noted that transactional and transformational leadership could steer the educational process as leaders can influence followers to embrace school culture. For transactional and transformational leadership to be enacted, both leaders and followers must participate in the school vision (Avolio et al., 1999).

In the educational process, transformational leadership can be an agent of change as transformational leaders can obtain performance beyond expectations by setting challenges or goals to steer and motivate themselves and group members to higher levels of performance (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bass et al., 2003; Masi & Cook, 2000; Northouse, 2010). Transformational leadership in schools also allows for continuous evaluation of teachers and students; it allows teachers to enhance their professional competence and improve students’
performance. Moreover, with this kind of leadership, teachers and students can be more effective in the learning environment (Leithwood & Levin, 2005).

**Distributed Leadership**

Distributed leadership implies a social distribution of leadership. Roles are divided among individuals; therefore, tasks are accomplished through interaction and collaborative actions (Harris, 2013). This “theoretical framing implies that the social context and the interrelationship therein are integral parts of the leadership activity, and the relationship is extended within, across and between organizational boundaries” (Harris, 2013, p. 929). However, Spillane et al. (2001) suggested that in distributed leadership, practices move between formal and informal leadership positions. Once the forces of power have been distributed, inevitably, authority and control are also distributed and shared (Lumby, 2013). Therefore, trust is necessary to achieve success as good relationships are significant to distributed leadership (Jameson et al., 2006).

Distributed leadership is “a way of thinking about leadership” rather than a technique or practice (Bennett et al., 2003, p. 2). Goleman et al. (2002) stated that this type of leadership is collective, and persons develop expertise by working together and allowing different individuals to act as leaders at some point. An individual does not do distributed leadership to others; it is a group effort, where individuals pool their expertise towards a common goal (Spillane et al., 2001). Engaging many people in leadership speaks to the core of distributed leadership. Hopkins and Jackson (2002) suggested that distributed leadership occurs when leaders' and organizations' growth come together and are dispersed or distributed, allowing individuals to assume their role and do so effectively for the institution's benefit. Harris et al. (2013) noted that many educational institutions work towards networking and collaborating to deliver excellent and equitable outcomes.

**Instructional Leadership**

According to Hallinger (2005), instructional leadership merges schools’ mission definitions, manages instructional programs, and creates positive school climate. Timperley (2011) alluded that an “instructional leadership mindset includes an intense moral focus on promoting deep student learning professionalism, having a relationship based on trust and providing evidence through action” (p. 145). Instructional leadership consists of “direct or indirect behaviours that significantly affect teachers’ instruction and impact students’ learning”
Instructional leadership can be challenging; thus, to be effective, school leaders must be competent to carry out this task (Garubo et al., 1998).

Instructional leaders are catalysts for performance improvement and impact students’ outcomes (Allensworth & Sebastian, 2012; Wanzare, 2012). Instructional leaders in schools provide guidance, training, and the right working conditions for teachers, leading to a conducive learning environment (Jensen et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2019a). These leaders increase collaboration among teachers and their sense of purpose in the learning community. These leaders also positively influence students' learning outcomes by developing goals that will impact students to perform at high standards in an instructional atmosphere conducive to learning. The leaders also continue to mentor, coach, and motivate teachers to give their best to the students they teach (Lever et al., 2019).

To improve 21st century schools, Hallinger (2011), Hallinger and Heck (2010) and Leithwood et al. (2008), based on a revision of data over the years, concluded that principals must demonstrate strong skills and expertise in instructional leadership. It is noted that instructional leadership must be established as a crucial part of principals' professional practice and should be integrated to address schools' keen interests in students (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Robinson et al., 2008).

**Transformative Leadership**

Transformative leadership in education aligns with Freire's (1970, 1998) work, which used transformational and transformative words to describe work relating to educational change. Freire saw the need to incorporate personal relationships in education and clarified that “education acts to deform rather than transform” (p. 89). Freire (2000) further pointed out that “each time the “thou” is changed into an object, an “it” dialogue is subverted, and education is changed to deformation” (p. 89). Freire (1998) contended that “education is not the ultimate lever for social transformation, but without it, transformation cannot occur” (p. 37). In the same vein, Shields (2010) noted that transformational leadership begins with the question of social justice and democracy, as it reviews unfair practices and offers promises of higher personal achievement and a better way of living and sharing things in common with others. Therefore, transformational leadership joins education and educational leadership in the broader social context within which transformative leadership is embedded.
Shields (2010) also emphasized that transformative leadership “has the potential to meet the academic and social justice needs of a diverse educational system that is beleaguered and complex” (p. 562). This type of leadership seeks to improve organizational quality by analyzing situations that are taken for granted that can promote equity and justice for all. Burns (1978) argued that “naked power-wielding could be neither transactional nor transforming; only leadership can be” (p. 20). Here Burns highlighted how power and power relationships are critical elements in comprehending leadership’s true nature.

Based on Burns’ theory, transformational leadership and transformative leadership have similarities. Burns (1978) noted that:

“Transformational leadership recognizes and exploits an existing need or element of potential followers; looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full potential of the follower, all in all, transformational leadership looks at the end values, including liberty, justice, and equality” (p. 4).

Therefore, the moral purpose of leadership is both transformational and transformative.

A transformative approach speaks to the need for change and is evident in authors such as Keddie (2006) and King and Biro (2000). They saw the need for social improvement to enforce equity and reshape knowledge and belief structures. Weiner (2003) highlighted that transformative leader always experience the challenges of having “a strong will that showcases power and authority” (p. 4) as they attempt to create change. Transformative educational leaders should exercise sufficient oppositional power, be courageous, let their voices be heard, and be agents of change. Foster (1986) stated that educational leadership must critically evaluate the education system by looking at what exists and how best they can implement strategies that will bring about change to improve the system. The transformative approach fueled Mezirow’s transformative learning theory (1991, 1996) and created a scope for transformative teaching and learning curricula and materials (Duncan & Clayburn, 1997; Miettinen, 2006).

Transformative leaders take risks, create unity among people or groups, are flexible in what they learn or unlearn, and surpass the fear of authority. These leaders will be better able to deal with challenges within the learning community (Weiner, 2003). Shields (2003b) argued that transformative leaders must practice addressing power, control, and inequity, setting guidelines that will set a path for the development of socially just education. These leaders look at current practices and develop a pedagogical environment to enhance students’ lived experiences.
McKenzie et al. (2008) maintained that leaders need to build “a critical consciousness about social justice” and also have an understanding of “inclusive practices” to implement areas of support that will maximize students’ learning (p. 128).

How leaders approach leadership can influence how they lead (Bass, 1985). Leaders should ensure that tasks are accomplished, maintain focus, and facilitate teamwork as they accept persons from different ethnic groups and exhibit tolerance to deviation (Bass et al., 2003). An effective school leader in a culturally responsive environment takes responsibility for leading schools in rethinking goals, practices, curricula, pedagogies, learning resources and assessment methods (Levine, 2005). These CRP leaders must design environments that allow learners to appreciate the appropriate skills to address the critical challenges they encounter in daily practice (Senge et al., 2000). The leadership style practiced can determine how influential leaders are in maximizing performance (Bass et al., 2003).

**Leadership Practices**

Leadership as a practice looks at leadership as an ongoing and evolving phenomenon. It is less about what individuals think or do, but it focuses on achieving desired learning outcomes through collaborative and cooperative work (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001). A practice perspective focuses on the praxis and actions that allow individuals to understand how people produce and reproduce within organizations and society (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2003a, 2003b; Carroll et al., 2008; Knights & Wilmott, 1992; Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001). Anderson and Newman (2012) argued that “practices are a part of an ontology, or a catalogue of what is said to exist in the world” (p. 466).

Schatzki (2005) explained that practices are social sites where people and meaning complement each other. Thus, practices are ongoing encounters with individuals through social interactions (Raelin, 2007). In terms of leadership, practices can be viewed as “routinized types of behaviour displayed by individuals or collectives to produce governance (Reckwitz, 2002). According to Leithwood (2012), leaders’ practices are bundles of activities applied by a person or group of persons that influence students’ achievements. Leithwood pointed out that these practices are expected of school principals. Still, in most cases, they are distributed among individuals who may be informal leaders operating in the school system or in the various communities in which these individuals are located.
Practices influence individuals working towards institutional goals. When exhibited by leaders, practices could be “dimensions and the cluster or group of dimensions as domains” (Leithwood, 2006, p. 5). Leadership practices allow leaders to become facilitators in their teachers' growth and development instead of mere practice implementers. Marks and Printy (2003) noted that the principals’ roles in schools could be redefined once they view leadership as shared instructional leadership. This shared instructional leadership model enables principals and teachers to work together to examine effective practices and conduct action research to ascertain how best to improve practices and create and maintain an active learning community (Marks & Printy, 2003).

According to Marks and Printy (2003), effective principals work “simultaneously at transformational and instructional tasks” (p. 377). These authors suggested that leadership combines transformational and shared leadership and consists of collaborative curriculum instruction and assessment, contributing to higher pedagogical quality. Marks and Printy (2003) also held that when principals can acquire and elicit high levels of commitment and professionalism from teachers and work interactively with them in a shared instructional leadership capacity, schools benefit from integrated leadership. The result is that these organizations usually learn and perform at high levels.

Goals are essential for effective organizational leadership because they provide purpose and clarify goals and how to accomplish them (Harris & Lambert, 2003; Latham & Locke, 2006; Silins & Mulford, 2002). Robinson et al. (2008) clarified that “for leading to be effective, one has to exercise a positive influence towards the attainment of beneficial goals” (p. 545). Therefore, it is not recommended for leaders to decide on organizational goals in isolation; they should work together with staff and stakeholders to achieve the desired goals, especially when different individuals are involved (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Thus, all stakeholders should be involved in forming these mutually beneficial goals. When stakeholders are involved in goal setting, they will need to support the institution's vision or goal. Once this is done, the leader's responsibility is to update stakeholders regularly. This practice adds credibility to the vision and gains the support of all parties involved, thereby ensuring its realization (Leithwood, 2012).

An institution that seeks to achieve its goals with stakeholder support will require leading by example; therefore, leaders should model the behaviour they would like to see in their teachers by changing their practices (Leithwood, 2012). Jacobson et al. (2007) believed that influential
leaders understand that modelling desired behaviour can encourage individual and organizational improvement. Leading by example is a powerful tool. Teachers will perceive their leaders as supporting change and enacting their practice for the institution's common goal (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Good leadership practice within a learning environment needs to be data-driven. Such leadership uses student data to look at ways to improve learning (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Porter et al., 2006). This practice influences a school's mission and vision, the curricular and instructional programs, and teacher evaluation. This practice also creates the scope for teachers to have departmental meetings, subject and grade level teams and individual exchanges to discuss strengths and weaknesses and put plans in place for further development (Porter et al., 2006).

According to Robinson et al. (2009), data-driven decision-making facilitates teacher self-evaluation and notes whether they are carrying out their tasks effectively and allows teachers to be accountable as it. Thereby, educators are motivated to work harder to meet the institution's required target or the relevant bodies that set goals for institutions (Robinson et al., 2009). However, the leader must ensure that teachers do not feel pressured in the process and find ways to motivate them and limit selfishness (Leithwood et al., 2002).

Leaders can also think of ways to improve themselves, encourage teachers to do the same, and be equipped to deal with changes in the teaching and learning process. Porter et al. (2006) asserted that the art of side-by-side learning is three-fold in its benefit. It allows leaders to become knowledgeable about the curriculum, instruction, and assessment and builds a relationship with teachers as they view and hold their leaders in high esteem. Once teachers perceive their leaders as skilled, fluent, and competent in their teaching practices, they will be motivated to ask for advice to improve their practices (Friedkin & Slater, 1994).

Leithwood (2012) argued that a critical role of school leaders is to ensure that teachers develop proficiency in the needed skills and knowledge individually or as a group. He believed that this proficiency level would benefit the wider learning community (Leithwood, 2012). Good leadership practice also sees the need to protect teachers’ instructional and work time to prevent them from losing sight of the mission, vision, and goal attainment. Endorsing this practice can positively influence students’ performance and teacher efficacy (Francera & Bliss, 2011).

An effective leader sees what needs empowerment and supports and reinforces practices that contribute to success (Leithwood, 2012). Louis (2007) argued that acceptable leadership
practices could be useful in the learning environment if teachers are willing to improve and change. Bishop (1999) noted that when teachers lose trust in their school leaders, they can become fearful, alienated, and become less collaborative, leading to them becoming ineffective. Bishop mentioned that school leaders could encounter many challenges as they develop and maintain trust with their teacher; however, some of these challenges can be addressed through individual and organizational learning while others may require more work and co-operation on the employer’s part (Bishop, 1999). Menges et al. (2011) noted that when teachers know that leaders acknowledge them individually, they develop trust, strengthening the community geared towards accountability and teamwork to achieve the common goal.

Haines et al. (2015) also claimed that relationships must be built on trust for good school relationships. These attributes of trust, community building, teamwork, and accountability can influence student outcomes. Mulford et al. (2008) noted that successful school leaders see accountability contributing to students obtaining greater learning outcomes. However, combining evaluation with accountability are two crucial components that can influence trust, respect, and empowerment. These also allow practitioners in the teaching and learning community to become more focused on the institution’s vision. If these practices are to be enforced positively, they foster more favourable results. These positive supports allow teachers to feel more comfortable working in the learning community, thus, leading to increased productivity. Leaders who practice giving their teachers formative feedback will give them the feeling that they are both supported and expected to accomplish their daily tasks effectively.

**Leadership and School Culture**

Success can also be attained by leaders who support school culture, a practice that promotes collegiality, collaborative support, and trust (Gurr et al., 2005; Mulford et al., 2009). These practices build relationships among teachers within and across schools and boost confidence and morale (Bell et al., 2007; Harris & Muiys, 2004). Leaders who encourage teacher collaboration can help in developing effective practices. According to Zapeda (2003), this collaboration allows teachers to share promising practices in developing their teaching. It also allows leaders to identify teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and provide help or mentorship to bridge existing gaps. Hayes et al. (2004) advised that student outcomes could determine which pedagogies become the priority in school culture.
Goleman et al. (2002) argued that leadership practices could be strengthened if leaders consider distributed leadership to help teachers develop the expertise needed to navigate the various challenges they face and positively affect student outcomes. Distributed leadership endorses collaboration, which improves the quality of teaching and allows teachers to teach and learn concurrently (Lieberman, 2000). Hopkins and Jackson (2002) cautioned that although the practice of distributed leadership facilitates collaboration, for it to be effective, proper conditions must be in place. Formal leadership usually sets these conditions to achieve the desired goal or pathways to support an institution’s vision.

Spillane et al. (2001) argued that distributed practices allow group members to pool their expertise, mobilize and guide teachers towards instructional change. Harris and Lambert (2003) endorsed Spillane's argument and added that it extends the boundaries of leadership. The extension facilitates a high level of teacher involvement that allows teachers to share their expertise and give input that can be beneficial to all stakeholders. Administrative leadership practices, especially principal leadership, are critical in creating and sustaining family and committee members (Auerbach, 2010; Ferguson, 2005; Sanders, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). School leaders will build school culture and encourage community members to feel connected to the school family as they collaborate for school success. For this to become an effective leadership practice, trust must be adequately maintained. Adams and Forsyth (2013) argued that trust among families, community members, and school staff is essential in developing an effective partnership. Families who feel connected with this level of trust will be more connected to their children’s school, leading to a “positive culture” of achievement and increased students performance (Leonard, 2011, p. 999).

In developing and implementing the practices to implement change, administrators can “encourage social justice” and practice “transformative leadership, which can transcend the intellectual bias in democratic schooling to the benefit of all student and staff” (Cooper, 2009, p. 5). Weiner (2003) contended that principals need to understand their roles as educational leaders and work from within a dominant social formation, enabling them to stand firm in their beliefs and become agents of change.

**Newcomer Students’ Inclusion/Exclusion**

Children’s experiences matter and they should be provided opportunities to share these experiences as they interact in their learning space. The United Nations Human Rights Charter
contended that “all children are capable of expressing their views in all matters affecting them and these views should be taken seriously based on their age and maturity” (McIntyre, 2001, p. 4). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom (1982) clearly supports equal rights for everyone; as such, all persons should be treated with respect, dignity and without discrimination. Hence, there should be no discrimination based on race, nationality or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, residency, marital status, citizenship, sexual orientation, or physical disability (Section 15:1). Although the Charter of Rights stipulates that these rights should be enforced, many immigrants and refugees still experience discrimination in various areas of their lives. This discrimination constitutes a challenge for immigrant parents and students as they seek to integrate into the school system and a new society (McIntyre, 2001).

The migration experience comes with many socio-cultural and physical uncertainties for immigrant children. The roles that newcomer youth play in society will depend on how well they integrate into the new culturally diverse learning community. Therefore, effective culturally responsive pedagogy within schools plays a vital role in helping students during the adjustment period. This practice does not happen in a vacuum, but newcomer students can transition smoother if school leaders and classroom practitioners enact culturally responsive pedagogical practices. Thus, culturally relevant teaching experiences will help students adapt mentally to the changes as they seek a sense of belonging in the new social setting.

Immigrant children need to be socially engaged and included in the learning community to feel belonging. Frazee (2003) noted that youths see social inclusion as being accepted, understood, and involved in activities, working together to give them a feeling of belonging. Anderman (2002) highlighted that “self-esteem and a sense of belonging can foster academic success and allow children to become active participants in the community and the development of pluricultural competence” (p. 4). Belonging is a social need, and the lack thereof can lead to adverse outcomes (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Achieving a sense of belonging allows students to develop integrity, which constitutes a significant part of children’s development and lays the foundation for how they view themselves (Broderick & Blewitt, 2006).

**The Role of School in the Lives of Immigrant Students**

School plays a vital role in the lives of immigrant children because of the significant developments and social interactions that occur therein. Students learn to adapt by developing new cultural knowledge, building social connections, and participating in learning communities
Newcomer children, however, encounter challenges within the new educational setting as they try to adapt and adjust. These issues are often grounded in culture and language (Duffy, 2003; Rummens et al., 2008).

What is more, newcomer students encounter challenges building relationships with peers and or teachers. These relationships help children adapt to and develop requisite skills in the new learning environment. Relationships play an essential role in personal development as immigrant children gain a sense of belonging through their connections with members of different social groups. It gives them a feeling of security (Fuligni, 1998; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). According to Chen et al. (2005), participating in social groups helps children develop the pro-social skills needed to acquire new values and skills.

For effective learning to occur, newcomer children need to connect with peers in the learning environment and with teachers and other adults. This connection provides newcomer children with critical encouragement for attachment and provides better opportunities to learn new cultural norms and practices that create the foundation for school success (Roffman et al., 2003; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008, 2009). Once teachers help students adjust to the learning environment, they will have higher self-esteem and better health and learning outcomes (Dubois & Silverton, 2005).

Discrimination is one of the most significant stressors newcomer students face as they try to adapt to their new environment (Berry et al., 2006). Students who feel rejected by teachers become disengaged from school, impacting how well they adjust emotionally and academically (LaRusso et al., 2008; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009). According to Suarez-Orozco et al. (2010), students of ethnic minority groups experience negative stereotyping. Teachers and other adults sometimes diminish their academic achievements because of their ethnic background. This statement was supported by Eccles and Roeser (2003) who argued that if immigrant students' educational experiences are inferiorized, teachers' expectations are also low, leading to disengagement and poor learning outcomes. Mansouri and Kamp (2007) also noted that some newcomer students experience perceived discrimination from teachers, which may lead to low student performance and negative academic self-concept.

**Parental Involvement in Education for Newcomer Students**

Although newcomer students may face challenges that may bring about negative results, it does not influence how immigrant parents view and value their children’s education (Garcia et
Parents' involvement in the lives of immigrant children has resulted in high academic successes for many such children, from kindergarten through high school (Bang, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Turney & Kao, 2009). The many academic successes of immigrant students often stem from their parents’ prior educational backgrounds and their social engagements. O’Connor and McCartney (2007) noted that maternal education is essential, shaping children's academic outcomes and development. Educated parents can better guide their children in accessing learning materials to assist in learning and help in the study process.

Suarez-Orozco et al. (2008) highlighted that educated immigrant parents see it as their duty to become knowledgeable of the education system in their children's new learning community. However, parents with limited education are often too scared to take these critical approaches and are often misunderstood by school authorities; thus, they become less resourceful in effectively helping their children navigate the learning community. Bitew and Ferguson (2010) pointed out that less-educated parents show less support in their children's academic success. They are not equipped with the necessary skills to support and facilitate learning but will help in other ways in alignment with studies. The elementary years are critical and contribute significantly to long-term educational outcomes. Therefore, parents' involvement, especially at this level, helps lay the foundation for newcomer students' academic success and educational outcomes (Turney & Kao, 2009).

Turney and Kao (2009) argued that sometimes parents become less involved in school and their children’s education. Many parents experience exclusion from school activities, have communication problems with school staff and sometimes feel that their contribution is not valued. If this connection with parents is not maintained, it can increase disengagement, negatively influencing children’s psychosocial and academic adjustment (Carreon et al., 2005; Ramirez, 2003). Immigrant parents who negatively perceive school may attribute their children’s emotional distress and physical aggression to their lack of adjustment (Hamilton et al., 2011).

With all the challenges of parental involvement, some schools in Canada have realized that partnership with families can impact students’ achievement. Thus, to help students, parents are encouraged to get involved in school and community activities. (Epstein, 1996; Henderson & Mapp, 2012; Jeynes, 2007). This partnership allows families to feel connected to their children’s schools. Allowing parents to volunteer, support students’ school programs, and work on
committees are some ways through which parents become involved in their children’s academic lives. Because of the lasting impact of parental involvement, many ministries of education have included this initiative in their policies, using Epstein (2010) as their reference. These ministries include Alberta Education (2011), Ontario Ministry of Education (2010), and Saskatchewan Learning (2005).

Harvey and Houle (2006) argued that policies are needed to help migrant minority parents and students integrate socially and economically. These writers added that it should be “the society’s responsibility to ensure that various institutions are free from any form of systematic bias” (pp. 111-112). According to Harvey and Houle (2006), schools need to acknowledge and respond to the changing population and connect and collaborate with families and their children.

Integration of Newcomer Students

Newcomer students face challenges with integration in different ways. If practiced, community development could help establish support groups that scaffold new students during integration to combat these challenges. Community development plays a critical role in communities and aims to help people develop strategies to improve their quality of life (Checkoway, 2011; Nussbaum, 2011). Communities prevent public education systems from becoming “socially disconnected from other key social institution groupings” (p. 114). In 2001, The Saskatchewan Education Ministry developed the concept of fostering new relationships and educational attainment through the School Plus curriculum. This curriculum points to a vision for children and youth calling for public education. This concept is not to “invest in the lives of children and youth,” but for the role of schools to be seen “in a new way” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 40). “School Plus is a mechanism that supports diversity and fosters equality of educational opportunities as a locus for holistically meeting the needs of children” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 4).

Tymchak (2001) argued that the School Plus initiative aimed to foster learning for all students, to empower students to make a greater sense of learning environments, and to use their learning experiences to promote growth. Tymchak (2001) concluded that using School Plus, recognized that:

The sheer diversity of the needs represented by children and youth… affirming and accepting all children… (and) the need to eliminate vestiges of prejudice and
discrimination and overcome barriers of understanding created by difference and cultural backgrounds and life experiences (p. 58).

Therefore, to have a multicultural society, where individuals are comfortable and experience social belonging, regardless of their ethnicity, it is necessary to develop new communities (Sandercock, 2004). Putnam (2007) postulated that there is a need for social capital, which includes “features of social life, network norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (p. 34). In doing so, relationships can be built with people from different groups, which will enhance the community's well-being as it relates to diversity.

According to Checkoway (2011), leaders can also become agents of change as they commit themselves to motivate others to engage in the success of multicultural community development. These advocates for change would ensure that they become more knowledgeable about their own social identities and the social identities of others. They would analyze the challenges these groups encounter, such as the institutional structure that affects the intragroup relationship and try to implement strategies to alleviate these challenges (Dessel & Rogge, 2008).

Anisef and Kilbride (2003) and Lamba and Krahn (2003) argued that participation in prosocial engagements is a healthy initiative that helps newcomer children adjust to the new society. These activities may be a network with friends, family, and faith community, involved in community-related activities, such as cultural programmes, playing sports, or other social activities with friends from their ethnic group. Furthermore, participating in these events and activities helps them foster resilience and adapt to the new environment (Este & Ngo, 2011). Besides, schools can facilitate school buddy or mentor programs, clubs, and recreational activities to involve newcomer children. Schools can also suggest ways in which students can volunteer with different organizations. Through volunteering, immigrants and newcomer students can develop leadership skills, improve their language, gain Canadian experience, and add increased meaning to their lives (Ngo et al., 2013; Chuang & CISSA, 2009, 2010).

Teachers and schools are critical to newcomer students’ adjustment to the mainstream learning environment (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003). It has been mentioned earlier that one of the most significant challenges immigrant students faces is the language barrier. Consequently, teachers must first understand other barriers that prevent students’ educational success to plan effectively. Once they are identified, instructions can improve as teachers become educated in
ways that accommodate differences in all students' learning styles, especially the challenged minority students (Miller & Endo, 2004).

**Cultural Diversity in Canadian Schools**

Canada is a diverse nation with over 30 million inhabitants representing diverse cultural ethnicities, religious and linguistic compositions (Heritage, 2004). Canada’s diversity has grown over the years and has impacted the country’s economic growth. It has become the place of choice for many immigrants due to the quality of life. It has earned the reputation of being a peaceful society showing care and respect to newcomers and valuing ethnicity (Heritage, 2004). The increase of diverse populations is one that Canada can utilize to create a culturally responsive environment where learning can be helpful.

According to Statistics Canada (2017), “Canada can be described as a nation of ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity” (p. 1). Cultural diversity can be viewed as the difference between lived experiences, and how individuals react to or interpret these experiences will determine how populations differ from each other (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Marshall, 2002). Diversity, therefore, is based on culture. Statistics Canada's (2013) projection suggests that immigrants to Canada could continue to increase until 2036, and it will be at least twice as high as it were during 1871. This increase could result in the country’s language and ethnocultural composition changing in all areas, including schools at the K-12 levels; therefore, the country will become more culturally diverse.

According to Sweet et al. (2010), immigrant students experience socio-political barriers and multiple other challenges individually, with family, school, and the community. Often, immigrant students encounter challenges, such as language barriers, maladjustment to the new school system, and placement in mismatched grade levels. These challenges can lead to low self-esteem and a lack of belonging. These factors often contribute to students becoming detached and violent (Cooper & Cooper, 2006; Prueggger et al., 2009).

In alignment, many parents also experience language barriers, unemployment and underemployment, social isolation, and discrimination leading to different views of the relationship between school and parents. When faced with these complications, many parents do not see the need to connect with their child and the learning environment (Cooper & Cooper, 2008; Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2013; Ngo, 2010). While discrimination, in these cases, may not be pinned to anything specific, Reitz and Banerjee (2007) concluded that individuals who are “white
with greater experience in Canada are better integrated into society than are visible minorities” (p. 32). Based on the trend of discrimination among visible minorities, Reitz and Banerjee (2007) also registered a need for more research on visible minority children.

Ongoing research supports integrating students’ cultural background into schooling (Dei, 1992; Henry, 1994; Solomon, 1992). Schick and Denis (2005) maintained that public education is “reflective of white western Eurocentric interests” (p. 298). Thus, students who are not white often do not see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Rummens (2009) posited that the “performance of immigrant children in Canada varies based on several factors such as age, sex, time of arrival in Canada, ethnocultural background, with visible minority status being an important factor in educational trajectory and attainment” (p. 377). Furthermore, Anisef (1994) found that visible minority students performed poorly on in-school assignment tasks and struggled with behavioural issues because of the discrimination experienced by their teachers and peers. These children also experience challenges with integration in schools, feelings of isolation and a weak sense of belonging to Canada (Anisef, 1994). These link to cultural differences and experiences of discrimination and racism (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).

When it is all said and done, there should be measures to help students function effectively. These steps should address the need for culturally diverse schools and culturally diverse teachers in these institutions. Ultimately, when hiring teachers to teach diverse students, it is necessary to hire teachers from diverse, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds similar to the students they will teach to ensure student success (Ryan et al., 2009; Solomon, 1997; Thiessen et al., 1996). Diverse students bring unique perspectives to the classroom based on their personal experiences (Norton, 2013; Quicho & Rias, 2000). These experiences can be shared to address diversity within the learning environment. However, Ladson-Billings (2000) highlighted those diverse cultural practices and norms are often unacknowledged or viewed as valuable in the school system.

Once teachers can connect with culturally diverse students, Villegas and Lucas (2004) argued that these teachers are positioned to develop positive relationships. Making cultural connections is one strategy that can influence positive learning among diverse students. Ryan et al. (2009) noted that students of colour face challenges relating to or understanding white teachers, which creates a learning barrier for many students. It is believed that non-native English-speaking teachers can better connect with students than their native English-speaking
counterparts (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Barratt & Kontra, 2000). The school body that can embrace diverse students acknowledges that students' cultural background brings their value systems, such as dress and appearance, work and play, health and hygiene, and school rituals to the learning environment. Therefore, the institution to which these students belong should accommodate and address values effectively so that students can feel comfortable (Diaz-Rico, 2012). Once students are comfortable, learning will likely be more productive.

Teacher self-efficacy is connected to the goals they set out to achieve, how they evaluate their instructional practice and activities, and how they engage students (Bandura, 1997; Riggs & Enochs, 1990; Soodak & Podell, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Teachers must believe they can accomplish given tasks within specific contexts. Bandura (1986) contended that self-efficacy is the “strongest predictor of motivation and action for individuals” (p. 243). Concerning diverse students, it is essential to explore teacher efficacy beliefs so that they can be examined, to be able to deal with specific teaching tasks in specific contexts so that they can cater to the needs of diverse students (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Bong, 2006; Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008). When teacher self-efficacy exists within the classroom, students will feel more comfortable and motivated to achieve (Bandura et al., 1997).

Self-efficacy is also critical for immigrant populations, which may comprise professionally trained teachers who experience challenges in the educational system for several reasons (Walsh & Brigham, 2007). A survey done by Galabuzi (2006) reported that in 2001 70% of highly trained professionals had challenges gaining jobs in the Canadian school system. These are diverse teachers who have much to contribute to the learning community. The lack of such diversity creates a challenge for students transitioning into the new educational landscape.

Discrimination affects students’ self-esteem and academic performance (Duffy, 2003). According to Ryan et al. (2009), it is not accidental that minority students do not function effectively in the education system or that minority teachers are seldom employed because they are marginalized locally and globally by communities and institutions in which they wish to become members. School systems push certain racialized students out of institutions and discriminate against minority teachers from abroad (Dei, 2006). This practice contributes to students' lack of motivation to learn and teachers becoming discouraged from teaching, thereby searching for employment in other areas. Students fail to perform because of the treatment they encounter from the dominant group.
To eliminate existing prejudices within the education system, students, school leaders, and teachers must embrace multiculturalism and multicultural education while respecting the rights of ethnic and culturally diverse groups. According to McGlynn (2008), if multiculturalism is to be implemented in the learning community, it depends on leaders and their leadership practices. Thus, school leaders must transform the school’s culture, pedagogical practices, and priorities to benefit culturally diverse students. This section of the research highlights the multiculturalism act, as all stakeholders in the education system must become aware of its importance in the learning community.

The multiculturalism policy was developed in 1971 and guides Canadians to embrace all cultures. The policy's primary objectives were to assist cultural groups in fostering their identity, overcoming barriers as they integrate into Canadian society, integrating cultural groups, and learning the language (Dewing, 2013). Kymlicka (2001) argued that the multiculturalism policy forces all ethnic groups to take the necessary steps to integrate into Canadian society. Kymlicka further contended that the multiculturalism policy's implementation allows ethnic groups to participate effectively in Canada's political activities. More individuals have shown interest in learning English and French as second languages. According to Kymlicka, Canada creates the right environment and respect of ethnicity more than any other country. Kymlicka believed that integration occurs over time. It is a gradual process that can be long and painful; however, it is there to maintain a societal culture and facilitate the integration of ethnic groups into society.

Other researchers, such as Bissoondath (1994) and Gwyn (1981, 1997), asserted that the multiculturalism policy aims to undermine the core values and traditions. It creates uncertainty of the interpretation and the identity of being Canadian. The multiculturalism policy also creates an opportunity for isolation and separation among ethnic groups. Bissoondath (1994) believed that multiculturalism practices should not preserve differences but allow for integration regardless of ethnicity. Multiculturalism in Canada is a movement beyond "the integration of population growths, marginalized by national, racial, religious or ethnic building as a whole" (Hyman et al., 2011, p. 2). Based on Hyman et al.’s explanation of the policy, these ideas can be incorporated in schools and classrooms so that education can reduce the level of exclusion and allow all Canadians to participate fully within the learning community.

Multicultural education focuses on how equity can be practiced facilitating all students. However, multiculturalism is essential to culture in the teaching and learning process; it also
allows students to feel comfortable achieving academic excellence, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background (Bennett, 2001). When individuals acknowledge that all students in the teaching and learning environment come with diverse needs, they will adapt the curriculum to facilitate their needs. For this to be possible, one must consider curriculum reform focussed on intercultural competence and finding strategies to deal with prejudice, discrimination, and racism (Bennett, 2004).

Multiculturalism will also prepare students to live in a pluralistic and diverse society and embrace different values and traditions. Although the multicultural policy from inception seemed to have all good intentions, Ghosh and Abdi (2004) noted that the multicultural clause for education is vague. Multiculturalism is interpreted differently by province, mainly because education in Canada is a provincial responsibility. Thus, stakeholders in education are the ones who influence educational policies, which limits federal abilities to interfere with the decisions made at the provincial level. Kehoe and Masfield (1997) also asserted that the multicultural education policy aimed to provide "equivalency in achievement, more positive intergroup activities and develop pride in heritage" (p. 3).

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Culturally responsive pedagogy can be attributed to Ladson-Billing's (1992) and Gay's (2000) works, who saw the need for education reform. They described how classroom teachers could address the unique learning needs of minoritized students. Ladson-Billings (1992) argued that culturally responsive pedagogy “empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge and attributes” (p. 382). Gay (2000) defined culturally responsive pedagogy as knowing, understanding, and representing various ethnic and cultural groups in teaching different subject areas and skills. Culturally responsive pedagogy impacts instruction at the classroom level and strives to create a more socially just learning environment by addressing the needs of all learners. It also urges collective action and allows individuals to understand cultural experiences and the world's ways (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

Shujae (1995) asserted that the purpose of culturally responsive pedagogy is to increase students’ achievement and develop students’ skills to become self-sufficient. He maintained that it also develops students’ citizenship skills based on their understanding of the political system (p. 200). Culturally responsive pedagogy aims to help students from marginalized areas focus on
their academic achievement and political and economic access (Shujae, 1995). Gay (2000) maintained that culturally responsive pedagogy uses diverse students' cultural knowledge, background experiences, and behaviours to build their learning. Gay (2000) further asserted that culturally responsive pedagogy analyses contextual factors or aspects when developing a program, considering what students value or know already from their cultural backgrounds. Doing so allows individuals to share life experiences, influencing how they behave in that environment.

Culturally responsive pedagogy creates vibrant teaching practices, multi-cultural content with student-based experiences, and different assessment approaches (Howard, 2010). Heath (1993) and Ladson-Billings (1994) claimed that culturally responsive pedagogy facilitates and supports all students, allowing them to excel through their experiences. Teachers can identify and build on these experiences, using these experiences to promote learning (Heath, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Three dimensions make up culturally responsive pedagogy. These include:

1. Instructional – these are material strategies and activities that assist in instruction.
2. Institutional – these concern administration, including policies and values.
3. Personnel – these deal with the cognitive and emotional process that teachers engage to become culturally responsive (Heath, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Leadership**

School leaders play a crucial role in administering educational goals and practices. Thus, they play a primary role in applying effective culturally responsive pedagogy (Leithwood et al., 2004). With this in mind, school leaders should first see the need to recruit and retain teachers who can facilitate students’ learning needs. Teachers with a culturally responsive background are better prepared to work with students from diverse backgrounds (Clolfelter et al., 2006). Leaders should use their expertise to create an environment that attracts teachers willing to work in a culturally responsive environment. Culturally responsive pedagogical leaders include school leaders whose philosophies, practices and policies create a school environment that accommodates families from diverse backgrounds (Johnson, 2007). To foster such family relationships, Doucet (2011) suggested that leaders consider parents' cultural perspectives and seek to incorporate these cultures in the learning environment, thereby contributing to better relationships between immigrant families and schools.
School leaders should foster a strong relationship between instruction and student learning. They are also the most accountable for the success or failure of the institution they lead (Branch et al., 2013). Therefore, school leaders must evaluate their values, assumptions, and beliefs about individuals whose cultures differ from their own. To practice effective leadership, especially within a culturally diverse student population, leaders should support cultural responsiveness and implement reliable culturally responsive pedagogy in their schools (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Johnson, 2006; Khalifa, 2010; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). Hence, principals should know about available resources, which will place them in positions to promote and support school reforms (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990).

Although leaders should attend to the students’ issues and needs, having policies to address academics and discipline is not enough to resolve these problems when they occur. In most cases, when the policies are not enforced, racial issues within institutions worsen (Ford & Moore, 2013; Gregory et al., 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2006). Therefore, stakeholders must enforce the necessary policies to improve teaching and learning and provide equity for all.

According to Johnson & Fuller (2014), culturally responsive leadership derives from culturally responsive teaching, highlighting leadership philosophies, policies, and practices that help create an inclusive learning environment that supports students and their families from culturally diverse backgrounds. Johnson and fuller further explained that standard practices of leaders include having high expectations for students’ achievement and highlighting students’ histories, cultures, and values in the teaching and learning process. These leaders also impress upon students and teachers the critical consciousness to address diverse qualities while creating an organizational structure that will empower culturally diverse students and their families (Johnson & Fuller, 2014). According to Agosto et al. (2013), a culturally responsive leadership approach encourages teachers, school principals, and district leaders to lead diversity. Culturally responsive leaders work with teachers, parents, and the community to develop a curriculum framework, pedagogical practices, and organizational structures consistent with students' cultural practices and orientations from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

According to Khalifa (2013), culturally responsive leaders should also develop strategies for working with teachers who resist culturally responsive training because such teachers could hamper the teaching and learning process. Culturally responsive leaders should use their influence in acquiring the needed resources to foster a cultural environment that addresses
students’ needs. Once these resources are in place, it creates the opportunity for students to relate well to the learning environment (Ainscow, 2005; Riehl, 2000).

Cultural diversity will continue to increase; therefore, all teachers and school leaders must have pedagogical skills responsive to all students. School leadership is essential to a successful school and is also responsible for school accountability (Sergis et al., 2008). Raelin (2016) recognized that leadership as a practice is needed for the effectiveness of schools and can be influenced directly and indirectly. Mulford’s (2003) study, as was cited in Vrcelj (2018), mentioned that pedagogical leaders must provide support and the necessary opportunity for their teachers and students to grow and succeed. Educational opportunities are not evenly distributed, especially for newcomer students.

**Culturally Responsive Teachers**

The need for culturally diverse pedagogies is now more urgent as the nation’s diversity increases. The high rate of increase should encourage leaders and other stakeholders within the education system to embrace changes in how the children’s needs are addressed, especially children categorized as minorities. Richards et al. (2007) noted that teachers should educate students through various cultures and languages and focus on students’ abilities. Ethnicity and race can influence teaching and learning, impacting how students react to curriculum and instruction. They also shape teachers’ notions of students and their learning capacity (Hawley & Nieto, 2010).

Teachers are sometimes unaware of their own beliefs, and as such, they cannot recognize the biases they display towards students who are not from similar backgrounds (Ayres, 2001). To combat prejudices, Hawley and Nieto (2010) posited that “school-based professional learning communities can find ways to improve the teaching and learning process which can motivate teachers and bring about change in the level of work that teachers bring to the classroom” (p. 70). Ford (2010) pointed out that:

*When we are responsive, we feel an obligation, a sense of urgency, to address a need so that students experience success. When teachers are culturally responsive, they are student-centred; they eliminate barriers to learning and achievement and, thereby, open doors for culturally different students to reach their potential. When culturally responsive, teachers, proactively and assertively, work to understand, respect, and meet students’ needs who come from a cultural background different from their own.* (p. 50)
Robins et al. (2006) proposed the term “cultural blindness,” which they defined as “any policy, practice, or behaviour that ignores existing cultural differences or considers such differences inconsequential” (p. 89). Cultural blindness can be the cause of unintended harm to minority students. Teachers should recognize that cultural blindness is an actual condition and create ways to alleviate the problem. If students continue to be othered and viewed as invisible because of their differences, their feelings of empowerment or belonging will be eroded. Once minority students detect that teachers do not accept them, it can contribute to their lacking the will to succeed in school (Banks et al., 2001; Howard-Hamilton, 2000; Nieto, 2004). Teachers who are culturally responsive use learners' experiences to introduce or clarify new concepts (Banks, 1996; Irvine, 1992). Culturally responsive teachers also allow students to critically analyze the curriculum, giving their opinions about different texts, allowing their voices to be heard, and expanding their ways of thinking (Banks, 1991, 1996; Cochran-Smith, 1997).

Effective teachers must first evaluate their own beliefs about other cultures be willing to change these views based on their experience with culturally diverse students. These teachers should also understand that based on the nature of society and racism; there could be myths about cultural groups and, therefore, should learn about the cultures represented in the classroom to avoid preconceived ideas (Grant & Asimeng-Boahane, 2006; Nieto 2004). If teachers cannot believe in their students' backgrounds, becoming multicultural will be a great challenge (Nieto, 2004).

Culturally responsive teachers should design lessons based on their students’ cultural backgrounds to increase students' success (Irvine, 2010). Culturally responsive pedagogy provides strategies to support students’ cultural knowledge, experiences and learning styles. This pedagogical practice allows students to collaborate with other groups in their social setting, creating community building and ensuring a sense of belonging as they learn (Ford, 2010). For these strategies to be effective, Allen and Boykin (1992) posited that teachers should help students bridge the cultural gaps between the home and school to increase their success and achievement. Nykiel-Herbert (2010) highlighted that “one of the significant reasons minority students in general, and immigrant newcomers, perform poorly in schools is that their home culture, while being “celebrated” is not sufficiently utilized as a resource for their learning” (p. 2). Culturally responsive teachers have a deep understanding of the content necessary to connect
with diverse students and the experience they gain from the home, community, and society (Irvine, 2010).

Based on the understanding of the traits of an effective teacher, the question of whether these traits are enough for a teacher to be deemed culturally responsive may arise. Teaching and learning can become difficult if teachers are ill-equipped to deal with these diversity levels. Thus, teachers need to become culturally competent to effectively work with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Ladson-Billings (1995) noted that cultural competence is culturally sensitive or proficient. Once teachers develop those attributes, the teaching of culturally diverse students will be more effective. Kirkland (2008) argued that practicing good multicultural education identifies diverse cultures and ethnic experiences and contributions, and students will feel comfortable sharing in the learning experience. Teachers should be aware of and appreciate the cultural differences that students bring to the classroom and should use their experiences to enhance teaching for active learning. For example, teachers who show interest in students and their academic achievements and well-being are typically more responsive. These teachers allow students to have a feeling of belonging and to feel comfortable in their environment. In this context, learning will increase, and students are more likely to flourish.

According to Morrison et al. (2008), teachers should create a learning environment that provides equitable opportunities for all children to learn. Morrison et al. (2008) further expressed that teachers need to identify curricular biases to avoid limiting opportunities for specific groups based on students' abilities or potential. With this in mind, teachers should continue to improve their practices to address the increased diversity in schools. Teachers should also continue to evaluate their practice to address the changing demographic of the students they teach (Schleicher, 2018). Schleicher (2018) noted that teacher development should be ongoing based on the rapid societal changes reflected in schools. Steen and Scheerens (2010) expressed that this ongoing development can occur through professional development, and this can change how teachers learn, work, and influence the value they place on their jobs.

**Culturally Responsive Classroom**

According to Alismail (2016), a culturally responsive classroom complements culturally responsive teachers. It is, therefore, vital for teachers to become knowledgeable of multiculturalism and create a culturally responsive classroom to provide equal education for all students regardless of their ethnicity. The culturally responsive classroom is a learning space with
a blend of teachers and students from various cultures, races, and religious backgrounds (Hooseein, 2014; Nada, 2017). Montgomery (2001) defined culturally responsive classrooms as spaces that “specially acknowledge the presence of culturally diverse students and the needs for these students to find connections among themselves and the subject matter, and the tasks the teacher asks them to perform” (p. 4). In addition, Gay (2000) postulated that culturally diverse classrooms are no longer about the “what,” of the curriculum but “the who” referring to the student as the consumer. Classroom teachers have a responsibility to help students attain their full potential. Therefore, they must find ways to adapt the curriculum to match students’ academic needs and provide opportunities for more significant learning outcomes. Montgomery (2001) put forward five guidelines for teachers to consider when working towards attaining a culturally responsive classroom:

1. Find the time to evaluate themselves and find out what they know about others' cultures that could be common within the school community.
2. Have a variety of culturally related instructional materials in the classroom.
3. Create the right classroom environment that shows respect for the culture.
4. Be able to establish interactive lessons involving cultural topics that will enhance learning.
5. Employ ongoing cultural assessments. (p. 4)

According to Villegas and Lucas (2002), instructions in the classroom are more meaningful when students can add what they know. This act is an essential part of their learning since students’ background knowledge reflects their experiences. If they do not have the opportunity to share their stories, it can hinder the knowledge construction process. Freire (1970) argued that “teachers rather than seeing a student as an empty vessel to be filled with the knowledge; should allow students to make their meanings as they must be producers of knowledge themselves” (p. 89). Teachers should be open to accepting each child’s contribution as a meaningful piece of the puzzle of learning as they become co-creators of knowledge. Ambrosio (2003) suggested that teachers commit to creating classrooms with cultural democracy, facilitating students from culturally diverse groups. Students will see themselves and their cultures reflected within the curriculum, the teaching and learning process, and the school climate.
Montgomery (2001) proposed that teachers foster an interactive classroom by creating cooperative learning groups. These learning groups create an opportunity for all students to benefit from other students' ideas as they work together to solve tasks. This strategy can also lead to higher learning outcomes (Montgomery, 2001). Culturally responsive teacher practices should create an environment where all students are encouraged to construct knowledge to understand their world. They can do this by making sense of their ideas. Once students can explore interesting topics, they are more motivated to learn (Moll & Diaz, 1987). Creating a culturally responsive classroom that reflects students' culture is vital to students' learning. Teachers should take the time to ensure that all students are open to discussions about their cultural experiences. These discussions will give students a sense of belonging. Montgomery (2001) recommended that teachers display relevant bulletin boards highlighting cultural events to create a positive classroom environment. The classroom space should have a book corner that reflects diverse cultures. Having a book nook will motivate students they observe their cultures being valued in classroom discussions and activities.

**Social Justice and Leadership for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

There is a need for school leaders in a culturally diverse learning community to be conscious of the social justice approach. Thus, this section looks at social justice, which is significant when serving a highly diverse learning community. School leaders and other stakeholders within a culturally diverse learning community must appreciate equity, inclusion, and social justice as these are vital to the population they serve (Bogotch & Shields, 2014). Within highly diverse learning settings, students may experience inequality. School leaders must be equipped to address such issues. Learning to address these challenges will empower school leaders to meet students' learning needs regardless of ethnicity (Gooden, 2015).

Once social justice becomes a necessary practice in the classroom, an opportunity would have been created for each student, regardless of their cultural background. Thus, students will have an equal voice and a sense of belonging (Bogotch & Shields 2014; Gooden, 2015). Bogotch (2002) noted that social justice occurs through social construction and that “there are no fixed or predictable meanings of social justice prior to engaging in educational leadership practices” (p. 153). Bogotch further argued that educational leadership and social justice practices complement each other and cannot be separated. According to Theoharis (2007), social justice leaders are crucial to a diverse learning community. School leaders must ensure that social inclusion and
multiculturalism, including race, class, gender, disability, and any other condition that marginalizes students, become the priority. These issues impact their leadership practices and vision for the learning community.

Theoharis, 2007 argued that “social justice leaders advocate, lead, and ensure that issues of race, culture, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions central to effective leadership practice and vision” (p. 223). This definition centers on addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools. Theoharis also mentioned that these “leaders challenge, examine, and influence staff negative beliefs about diverse students, families, and communities. Once they can accomplish this, then the turn of values will occur” (p. 223).

Classroom practitioners believe that students learn and practice social justice by acknowledging diversity. They will develop an open mind as they learn to appreciate equity by changing their thought processes. They begin to embrace the unique experience of individual expression in the learning community (Brooks & Thompson, 2005). Darling-Hammond (2002) suggested that socially just teachers need to understand their identity, others' backgrounds, and worldviews. These teachers should also be sensitive to diverse student needs. These practices, once enacted within the learning environment, will influence the lives of students positively. Bell (2004) posited that once educational leaders promote social justice, they will provide the resources to meet their students' needs and provide all students with an educationally just learning environment.

Teachers who believe in social justice must be aware of the need to help students have equal access to the opportunities for their success (Chubbuck, 2010; Wise, 2005). These teachers need to be empathetic and caring (Gay, 2002; Irvine, 2010; Irvine & McAllister, 2002; Lindsey et al., 2006; Nieto, 2004). In showing empathy, a teacher can identify underachieving students and find ways to elevate their performance. Teachers can show care by developing a relationship with each student, thus making students feel comfortable.

According to Shields (2013), a socially just education does not begin with students’ formal curriculum. It allows students to understand themselves in the wider community, teaching them about the world they live in and preparing them for justice, equity, dignity, and human rights. Cochran-Smith (2004) noted that moving the social justice agenda forward requires culturally responsive teaching that will maintain high academic standards while being a strong
advocate for equity. Teaching for social justice is not just transmitting knowledge. However, it should encourage students to “develop critical habits of understanding and sorting out multiple perspectives and learning to participate and contribute to a democratic society by developing both skills and the inclination for civic engagement” (p. 159). In congruence, a socially just environment is necessary for all students to achieve their full potential to ensure a high-quality education (Shields, 2013). Shields also noted that once social justice becomes a focus for all students, it will help students make sense of the content they are learning and find themselves in the world they seek equity and inclusion. A social justice education provides similar opportunities for all students despite their colour, class, political or social power.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework in Figure 2.2 illustrates the relationship between the concepts upon which the study is based. According to Smyth (2004), conceptual frameworks help clarify research. It is often based on the existing theory related to the inquiry; the key concepts are extracted from related literature and create a logical framework for the study (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). The framework for this study used concepts from four theories that were considered significant to culturally responsive pedagogy, namely, culturally responsive leaders, teacher practices, students' experience, and culturally responsive classrooms. Culturally responsive leaders develop and support school staff and sustain a relationship with teachers, students, and the community, enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and school climate (Khalifa et al., 2016). Teachers within culturally responsive classrooms will incorporate students’ real-life experiences into more effective learning outcomes (Montgomery, 2001). Teachers bring these practices to the classroom to build on students' learning experience as they interact and build relationships (Wells et al., 2016; Hollie, 2016). Therefore, effective leadership practice for CRP must be enacted to benefit all students regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, as illustrated in the framework (see Figure 2.2). These four concepts and the associated attributes identify interrelated dimensions for enhancing school leadership practice that promotes CRP. These theoretical concepts provide a lens through which data were collected, analyzed and interpreted.
Culturally Responsive Leaders

- Self-reflection
- Build relationship with community, colleagues, and students.
- Promote culturally responsive and inclusive school environments.
- Support culturally responsive curriculum and instruction.
- Develop culturally responsive teachers.
- Promote school climate that support minoritized students, especially those who are marginalized within the school context. (Khalifa et al., 2016)

Students’ Experiences

- Students learning outcomes are enhanced.
- Increased knowledge, understanding and empathy.
- Teacher student interaction.
- Students feel safe and appreciate the learning environment.
- Students learn to work in groups. (Wells, Fox & Cordova-Cobo, 2016)
- Trust and acceptance for cultural differences
- Greater civic participation. (Mickelson & Nkomo, 2012)

Leadership Practices for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Teacher Practices

- Use students’ real-life experiences to connect school learning.
- Incorporation of differentiated instructions.
- Encourage peer support for academic achievement.
- Displays work from students’ heritage, language, by using pictures or visuals.
- Ensure that instructional materials reflects students racial, ethnic, and cultural background.
- Arrange classroom to accommodate discussion.
- Promote equality and mutual respect among students. (Montgomery, 2001)

Culturally Responsive Classroom

- Displays meaningful bulletin board that shows cultural images that enhance students’ sense of culture.
- Flexible seating to match lesson purpose.
- Reflecting a variety of learning materials relevant to various cultures.
- Resource material that is used in curriculum that facilitates all experiences and cultures of students. (Emmer-Everston & Worsham, 2003; Hollie, 2017)
Summary

The first part of this chapter gave an overview of the history of Canada becoming a multicultural society as they welcome an increase in diversity due to immigrants; it also provided the reason for the increased diversity. The subsequent section highlighted the increase in diversity in Saskatchewan. The second section of the chapter explored the relevance of places, highlighting the multicultural act of 1988 concerning diversity and education in Canada; this section also explained how the policies differ according to the different provinces.

The third section of the chapter examined several authors' work relating to leadership. Transactional leadership, distributed leadership, instructional leadership, and transformative leadership were discussed. The literature also reviewed leadership practices that are critical to learning. This section also highlighted leadership and school culture. The fourth section of this chapter examined newcomer students' inclusion and exclusion, the role of school in the lives of immigrants, and parents' involvement in education for newcomer students. These highlighted the importance of newcomer students' sense of belonging and how each area plays a significant role in creating a feeling of belonging.

The fifth section reviewed cultural diversity in Canadian schools. It also explored other aspects of teaching and learning such as culturally responsive pedagogy, culturally responsive leadership, cultural responsivity teacher, culturally responsive classroom, and social justice leadership for culturally responsive pedagogy. This section, additionally, expounded on the practices of practitioners in the teaching and learning environment and the need to facilitate the teaching of culturally diverse students. To close the chapter, a conceptual framework captured concepts from the different themes essential to culturally responsive pedagogy.

Culturally responsive pedagogy has become an area of concern in education, especially regarding the education of immigrants. Researchers and practitioners continue to look for better ways to provide equity for all students, including newcomer students. For culturally responsive pedagogy to be effective in schools, all stakeholders must embrace it. It is understood that all students are entitled to quality education regardless of race, colour, ethnicity, or physical abilities. Therefore, it is incumbent upon leaders, teachers, students, and other persons who are part of the teaching and learning process to be culturally responsive. Leaders who embrace a culturally responsive pedagogy need to ensure that all the resources are in place to facilitate the process.
They will enable students from diverse backgrounds to share their rich experiences and cultures in a welcoming environment.

The increase in diversity requires a change in the curriculum and practices in the learning environment towards addressing the learning needs of culturally diverse newcomer students. Therefore, researchers need to explore new areas that provide knowledge that enforce culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students to facilitate their transitioning and enhance learning. Hence, this study sought to explore leadership practices that improve the teaching and learning for all students regardless of ethnicity.
CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to examine school leadership practices and how leaders engage teachers in culturally responsive pedagogy to support newcomer students in an elementary school. The research aimed to understand how school leadership practices influenced teachers’ culturally responsive pedagogy. It was driven by the overarching question: How do school leaders in the selected culturally diverse elementary school enact leadership practices that support teachers in using culturally responsive pedagogy?

The following sub-questions were used to guide an examination of the overarching question:

1. How do school leaders influence teachers’ cultural responsiveness in addressing the needs of culturally diverse newcomer students?
2. What do school leaders do to ensure that teachers have the necessary resources to work effectively with culturally diverse newcomer students in the classroom?
3. How do school leaders support teachers in creating a culturally responsive classroom environment for newcomer students from diverse cultural backgrounds?
4. How do school leaders mobilize professional development strategies to facilitate culturally responsive pedagogy?
5. What leadership practices are used to facilitate culturally responsive teaching?

Using Crotty’s qualitative research framework, this chapter describes my epistemological and theoretical stance, the methodology and methods used to carry out the study. The chapter is organized into six sections starting with the research framework, which includes the choices I made with regard to the design, philosophical perspective, methodology, and methods. The methods include the procedure I used to select tools for data collection, the site, participants, data analysis and the measure for quality assurance and ethical consideration.

Research Framework

Using a qualitative approach allowed me to explore leadership practices that support newcomer students in a natural setting and interpret the phenomenon based on its meaning and participants' experiences (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research aims to understand how individuals’ experiences impact their world and the meaning they derive from their experience (Merriam, 2009). A qualitative approach was most fitting to investigate the phenomenon of school leadership practices for CRP because it created the opportunity for me to observe how individuals
engaged in the teaching and learning community and interpret their lived experiences. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research begins with assumptions and interpretive frameworks that support the research problem while interpreting the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to these experiences. The key components of a qualitative researcher are that it occurs in a natural setting, the researcher is a key instrument, it is done using an inductive approach, and reflexivity is a pertinent aspect of the process (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2002 & Patton 2015).

**Natural Setting**

Patton (2015) noted that qualitative research takes place in “real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to affect, control or manipulate what is unfolding naturally” (p. 48). I, as the researcher, engaged in face-to-face interactions with participants in their working environments while collecting data. The time spent in the environment allowed me to share in this learning community and being present in space allowed me to connect with the teachers, school leaders, and students, which contributed significantly to relationship building, which was crucial to the smooth process of the data collection. Due to this connection, participants felt comfortable sharing their stories.

**Researcher as a Key Instrument**

Patton (2002) highlighted that “in qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument” (p. 14) and is responsible for the research outcomes to ascertain the credibility of the research. The data collected through interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts provide relevant information about the phenomenon being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Thus, the researcher, as the key instrument, according to Owens (2006), should create a conversational space where participants feel safe to share their stories and experiences. In this study, I was the key data collection and analysis instrument. I used an inductive approach to analyze the data. I collected data using different methods such as document analysis, observations, interviews.

**Using the Inductive Approach**

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), in the inductive approach, “the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (p. 12). This approach allowed me to read the data to derive concepts, themes, or categories. In applying this approach, I “first prepared the raw data, identified the specific text, labelled the segments of the text to create
categories, reduced overlapping and redundancy among categories, and created a model to incorporate the most important categories” (Creswell, 2002, p. 266).

Using the inductive approach, I reviewed the interview transcripts, field notes from observation to deduce patterns and themes. I took the time to go back and forth with the data to generate and compile themes that added value to the research.

**Reflexivity**

According to Alex and Hammerstrom (2018), researcher positioning adds value to qualitative research. It is also about being honest and displaying ethical maturity in the research practice (Alex & Hammerstrom, 2018). Researcher positioning also allows researchers to highlight their backgrounds, cultural experiences, history, and how these factors impact the study. In chapter one of this research, I outlined my position, stating the reason for selecting the topic, the participant selection process, and the research location. In this qualitative research, I, as the researcher, needed to position myself in writing. By doing this, I acknowledged the experiences, values, and barriers that I brought to the qualitative research (Alex & Hammerstrom, 2018).

To support this phenomenon, I used Crotty's (1998) framework. Crotty held that qualitative research is guided by four main elements: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. Epistemology provides a philosophical grounding that helps the researcher to decide about the assumptions which one makes about “the very bases of knowledge, its nature and form, how it can be acquired and how communicated to other human beings” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.7). Crotty’s further explained that epistemology refers to “the nature of knowledge, its possibilities, scopes and general basis” that helps researchers understand or explain “how they know what they know” (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). This statement further reinforces my epistemological stance that reality is influenced by experience that individuals gain from their social environment. Understanding leadership practice for CRP is best understood from participants' expressions, actions, interactions, and engagement in the learning environment. On the other hand, the theoretical perspective is a “philosophical stance informing the methodology” and guides researchers to choose the most appropriate methodology for conducting the research (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). Primarily, the theoretical perspectives speak to the researcher’s assumptions as they try to understand, interpret, and explain the human world around them (Crotty, 1998). The same view is shared by Caelli et al. (2003) and Morse and Richards (2013), who asserted that to have quality research, one must choose the methodology that aligns
with their assumptions and interpretive lens. On this basis, I assumed a constructivist stance as I understood the phenomenon from the participants’ meaning to their experiences. Affirming the method is the final step in Crotty’s framework. It outlines the techniques or procedures used to collect and analyze the data relating to the research questions. Figure 3.1 illustrates the research design adapted from Crotty (1998).

**Figure 3.1**

*The Research Design adapted from Crotty (1998)*

The Epistemological Basis for the Research

Qualitative researchers aim at unearthing the meaning of a phenomenon through the lens of those who experience it. Based on this premise, I approached this research believing that knowledge is embedded in experiences, and how individuals view their experiences influences what they hold as reality. This research is viewed through the constructivist lens. Hein (2007) contended that constructivism refers to the idea that individuals construct knowledge through interactions with what they already know and from different events in their social world. Crotty (1998) further maintained that “all knowledge and meaningful realities is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of integration between human beings and their world which is developed and transmitted within an essential social interest” (pp. 42-43). These perspectives of constructivism further strengthen my epistemological stance that experiences shape reality.
Hays and Singh (2012) argued that knowledge shapes experiences and interactions between the knower and known. Khalifa et al. (2016) supported Crotty's explanation that a culturally diverse population comprises persons from different cultural backgrounds and experiences, and hence people have multiple realities based on their cultural backgrounds and unique experiences. Since the research focused on a culturally diverse school, multiple perspectives emerged from participants as they shared their views and lived experiences; therefore, I needed to consider those perspectives and their realities concerning culturally responsive pedagogy.

**Theoretical Perspective**

This study was geared towards understanding leadership practices from the participants' lens as they interpret and give meaning to their experiences while living and operating in the world around them. I adopted interpretivism as a theoretical perspective whereby reality is socially constructed through individuals' lived experiences within their social world (Koro-Ljungberg et al., 2009). Interpretivist views reality from human experiences and consider these experiences as differing in many ways and influence how reality is interpreted (Black, 2006; Rayan, 2018).

To support this research, I employed an interpretive paradigm. According to Enc (1999), “a paradigm is a set of scientific and metaphysical beliefs that forms a theoretical framework within which scientific theories can be tested, evaluated and if necessary revised” (p. 642). Interpretive researchers do not see the world as something that stands on its own; instead, it allows researchers and participants to understand each other through direct communication and experiences. In keeping with this philosophy, I assumed an observer's role, participating in the research process through taking notes, facilitating dialogue and recording events without disturbing the teaching and learning process (Bernard & Bernard, 2012). In this way, I honoured the connection between myself and the participants.

An interpretive researcher explores multiple realities and how people socially construct these realities. Thus, it is difficult to conclude that there are fixed realities as realities are ever-changing (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). The interpretive stance enabled me to understand how participants interpreted their world and how their experiences shaped their reality. The interpretive framing enabled me to recognize that the elements that constitute human experiences
involve several realities that can sometimes conflict or create a relationship between researcher and participants (Thorne, 2008).

According to Morris et al. (1999), a researcher can understand the phenomenon of interest from a predominantly etic or emic perspective. The emic or insider views are constructs drawn from the insider. Understanding this method allows for a broader range of observation of one setting or a few settings. The etic perspective provides an outsider view through brief and narrow observations at more than one sitting. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that the etic researcher has no experience with the research phenomenon. In this study, I assumed an etic perspective to understand the phenomenon from the participants’ point of view. I assumed this role because I am not from Saskatchewan and have not practiced as a teacher or school leader in the Canadian elementary system. From an etic perspective, I examined leadership practices for CRP, looking at how specific teaching and learning activities informed practice. Despite being an etic researcher, I acknowledged that several aspects of my background and positionality could have influenced how I interpreted the data.

Methodology

Crotty (1998) defined methodology as the research design that determines the specific methods used to accomplish the desired outcome. Crotty saw methodology as a middle ground that creates discussion about the method and decisions about other elements of the research. Crotty (1998) further noted that a description of the methodology is vital to the research, but it is also necessary to record the rationale for its use. Moreover, Carter and Little (2007) maintained that methodology impacts the objectives, questions, and design, shaping the research. These works and writings of these authors undergirded my understanding of the methodology and guided my plan of action and the choice of a method that would yield the desired outcomes.

Research Design

The elements of the research design are the key premises embedded in the interpretive framework (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) noted that the research design helps the researcher to create a plan that guides the research. Moreover, as Crotty (1998) noted, the four elements, epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods, influence how the research design is constructed, and each element plays a supporting role. Creswell (2013) also based his research design on Crotty’s four elements: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. Based on the nature and setting of my study, I chose a case study as the design for
my study (Creswell, 2007). Crotty (1998) classifies a case study as a method; authors like Cohen et al. (2018) argue that a case study can be a method and a methodology. Creswell affirmed that a case study can be a methodology for research and a type of object of the study or the type of design in qualitative research. The research design focuses on the “aims, purpose, intentions and plans with the practical constraints of location, time, money” (Hakim, 2001, p. 1). Bogdan and Biklen (2011) also noted that the research design refers to the entire research process, including identifying the problem. In the current study, I chose a qualitative case study approach adapted from Crotty (1998) to conduct this study.

Case Study

According to Yin (2014), “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident and the investigator has little control over events” (p. 16). Yin further pointed out that case studies provide a unique situation for researchers to interact with individuals who share their experiences; therefore, researchers can understand how participants’ thoughts, observations, and principles fit together (Yin, 2014). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argued that the case is the unit, entity, or phenomenon that defined the boundaries of the research. A case study allowed me to closely examine the data within a specific context, work with a small group of participants, and investigate real-life experiences through events or conditions and how participants related to them (Merriam, 1998).

I used an instrumental case study in my inquiry to unearth the leadership practices of CRP for newcomer students. With this design, I focused on the specific issue rather than the actual case; thus, the case became the vehicle that helped me better understand the issue (Stake, 1995). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further explained that the case is the unit entity or the phenomenon that defines the boundaries necessary for the study. Merriam (1998) noted that a case study helps researchers examine the data within a specific context. Thus, I was able to work with a small group of participants, investigating their real-life experiences through events or conditions.

Research Methods

Research methods focus on the activities used to collect and analyze data (Crotty, 1998). These activities could include questionnaires, observations, interviews, document analysis or focus groups. Patton (2002), however, highlighted that observations, interviews and focus groups are typical for qualitative research. Carter and Little (2007) noted that it is important to choose
the correct method for research because it can affect the data collection and analysis. Carter and Little (2007) contended that the appropriate research method will be chosen once the researcher understands the methodological and epistemological decision.

Crotty (1998) described research methods as “the techniques are procedures used to gather or analyze data related to the research questions” (p. 3). Crotty believed that once the researcher decides on the study’s technique or procedure, the selected method should be described as precisely as possible. Patton (2015) also noted that the qualitative method should provide rich and detailed information about small groups and cases, thus increasing understanding of the cases and the issues under study.

Data Collection

According to Merriam and Tisdel (2016), data collection is bits and pieces of information found in an environment. However, for these pieces of information to become data in research depends on the researcher’s perspective. Creswell (2013) argued that the data collection process involves more than just focusing on the types of data and how we use them to collect data. Creswell (2013) noted that the data collection process involves several activities such as “locate the site and the individuals, gaining access to the site and making the connection, sampling purposively, collecting data, recording information, exploring the fixed issue and storing the data” (p. 45). On this note, I used Creswell's (2013) guidelines to inform the structure of my data collection.

Participants and the Sampling Process

The purpose of the study was to examine how leaders in a selected elementary school in Saskatoon engaged in practices that support culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students. The participants included school leaders, those in formal positions such as the principal and the vice-principal, and those who held other leadership roles such as resource teachers and classroom teachers.

I used purposive sampling to select school leaders, principals, vice-principals, or resource teachers who had duties within culturally diverse schools and teachers possessing the competence, knowledge, and experience working with diverse immigrant students. Purposeful sampling is a non-random method, where researchers select “information-rich” cases to learn about the issues most relevant to the case (Patton, 2015). Patton further argued that “the logic and power of purposive sampling is derived from the emphasis on an in-depth understanding of
specific cases” (p. 52). Thus, I used this method because these individuals were familiar with or had the lived experience of the research problem and could relate to the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2013).

**Criteria for Purposeful Sampling**

This research targeted school leaders, including the principal, vice-principal, and individuals that held administrative duties. Considering that the study was in one school, the principal, vice-principal, teachers, and the resource teacher were purposefully selected to participate in the study. Purposeful sampling was also used to select the classroom teachers and other individuals who held leadership positions. Besides the principal and the vice-principal, all the other leaders were required to have at least one year of experience working with diverse populations. The classroom teachers were required to have at least three years of experience teaching diverse students, especially culturally diverse newcomer students, were also included.

**Overview of Participants**

I was interested in the lived experiences of school leaders and teachers within the teaching and learning environment, the practices they engaged in supporting culturally diverse newcomers and their understanding of how these practices influenced the learning of the newcomer students. I interviewed eight participants who included (i) three (3) school leaders, the principal, and vice-principal who held a split position and doubled as a grade six teacher and an EAL teacher who operated in a managerial position. (ii) five (5) teachers; one taught French and Art to grades one to eight students, and others taught grades one, three, four, six and eight, respectively.

Participants’ demographic data is highlighted in Table 3.1. All participants held degrees ranging from a bachelor’s degree to a master's degree. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, I assigned participants the pseudonyms: Ruby, Rebecca, Terry, Abigail, Ruth, Pauline, Kerry, and Alex. The school also assumed the alias Sunberry Elementary School.
Table 3.1
Participants Demographics Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Taught</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Cultural Heritage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruby</td>
<td>Grade 1-8</td>
<td>11 yrs. as classroom teacher</td>
<td>Master of Education</td>
<td>Prairie Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>11 yrs. as classroom teacher, 8 yrs. as principal</td>
<td>Master of Education</td>
<td>Northern Saskatchewan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry</td>
<td>Grade 1-8</td>
<td>23 yrs.</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts and Education</td>
<td>Prairie Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EAL teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>Grades 6-8</td>
<td>26 yrs. three months in the role of vice principal</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education</td>
<td>Prairie Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>classroom teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>26 yrs.</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education</td>
<td>Prairie Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>Grade 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>7 yrs. as a classroom teacher</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education</td>
<td>Prairie Canadian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>8 yrs. as a classroom teacher</td>
<td>Bachelor of Education</td>
<td>Prairie Canadian privilege English and Danish background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and kindergarten</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>EAL for 3 yrs., grades 2 and 4</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Bachelor of Arts in Drama, Bachelor in Education</td>
<td>Prairie Canadian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants' teaching experience ranged from six to twenty-six years. They also met the study criteria of having taught students with diverse backgrounds who were newcomers to Canada and still worked within similar portfolios. All participants were native to Saskatchewan and obtained their education from various institutions in and out of the province.
Site Selection

Once I received permission from the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Board and the School Division, I approached a school with a student population with a higher diversity regarding culturally diverse newcomer students to Canada. The school was within relative proximity to the University. The school leader served at the school for more than one year in the leadership capacity, and teachers had at least two years of experience working with a diverse population.

The site was identified with assistance from my research supervisor and Saskatoon Public-School Division central office. Both email and telephone contacts were used to reach out to the relevant official in the Public Schools Division. The written email was used to introduce the research team and convey the purpose of the study and the expectations, whereas the telephone provided more clarity and sought information that informed the researcher about the school that best fit the research criteria (See the letter of invitation is in Appendix J).

Participants were selected from the Sunberry Elementary School (Pseudo name) in Western Canada. The school was part of the Public-School Division. The school was culturally diverse, with students whose ages ranged from 4 to 13 years. A diverse population, including newcomer students, was necessary because I wanted to determine how to help students learn in a culturally diverse space. The school did not have a diverse group of teachers; however, the information received provided rich data. Participants provided answers to research questions and contributed to the data as I documented their experiences working with culturally diverse newcomer students.

The School

According to the school principal, Sunberry Elementary School (pseudonym name) was opened in the 1990s. It was not seen as a community school until the community population changed. The school now serves as a community of families from various economic statuses. The school is public and is always open to hosting community activities and addressing the social needs of all age groups. It has a diverse population of approximately 236 students, primarily newcomers to Canada. Besides a kindergarten to grade eight program, the school has a Before and After School Program, a Language Learning Pre-school that hosts children with hearing loss and language difficulties. The schools also offer English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming for students who need additional support with English and a pre-K program
privately funded by a group known as the Cooperative. There is also a resource room where guided learning can be facilitated to small groups of students. The Preschool is part of the School Division Program and operates three days per week. Students are admitted by referrals only.

The school has a staff of approximately 42 individuals. These include 17 full-time teachers, 14 educational associates, a library technician who serves in a half-time capacity, and a 0.1 Teacher Librarian who serves one half of a week in that capacity. There is also a building operator, caretaker fireman, one vice-principal, who is also a class teacher, and the principal. Sunberry is equipped with a computer lab and two resource rooms with sensory resources, swings, computers, audiovisual materials, and bulletin boards that reflect students' work and learning corners that facilitate different learning activities that help address students’ learning needs.

The school is supported by the School Community Council (SCC), whose main task is to support each child's learning priorities and well-being; they support and facilitate fundraising activities. This body comprises parents/guardians, students, community members, and school staff. The SCC was introduced in Saskatchewan in 2006, and it forms a part of all schools in Saskatchewan, and its primary duty is to help advance the school's educational objectives. The Government of Saskatchewan was interested in “maintaining a strong local voice within newly restructured school divisions, representative of the diversity of the school community, and focused on improved student achievement” (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, 2018, p. 15). The school also has a home and school parents council, whose mandate is to help to fundraise for initiatives that support students' learning. The school also hosts a Before and After School Program operated privately at the parents’ expense. However, it is subsidized for those who cannot afford the fees.

The increasing diversity at Sunberry Elementary has prompted the school to engage more with the community and forge partnerships with non-governmental organizations that serve this vulnerable demographic such as the Open-Door Society and Child Hunger Education. The Open-Door Society facilitates an after-school sports program that caters to all students, and they are also the point of connection for newcomer families. The Child Hunger Education Program (CHEP) provides lunches for needy students twice a week.
Data Collection Process

I adhered to the qualitative research characteristics during the collection and interpretation of the data for this study. These included collecting data within the natural setting, assuming the role of the researcher as a key instrument, using the inductive nature of the approach to data analysis, and applying researcher reflexivity throughout (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Each school leader and teacher received a letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the study and participants’ roles (see Appendix E).

The data collection period lasted three months; I was in the learning community for three days each week for the duration. Over the period, I observed how learning experiences were created and shared as I gathered substantive evidence for the research. I observed how teachers displayed cultural responsiveness among diverse students within the classroom environment and reflected in the teaching and learning process. I observed the culturally related instructional materials in the classroom based on the environmental reflection of the diverse cultures. I also observed how interactive lessons were to cultural topics that enhanced learning and how ongoing cultural assessments were employed. This observation allowed me, as the researcher, to compare prior knowledge to what I learned from the research. The primary data collection procedures were interviews and observations.

On this premise, I used interviews and observations to collect data from participants. The use of multiple data collection methods allowed me to develop a broad and diverse understanding of leadership practices and how these practices helped teachers to teach culturally diverse newcomer students. Using these methods also allowed for data validation through the convergence of multiple data sources referred to as triangulation (Patton, 2015).

Interviews

According to Kvale (1996, 2003), interviews are a potent means of eliciting narrative data that allows researchers to investigate people’s views in greater depth. Cohen (2007) also maintained that interviewing is “a valuable method for exploring the construction and negotiation of meaning in a natural setting” (p. 29). Interviews also allow individuals to voice their thoughts and feelings (Berg, 2007). Specifically, I used semi-structured interviews, which provided greater flexibility and freedom because I could plan, implement, and organize the content and questions with my participants (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Dornyei (2007) also noted that semi-structured
interviews allow the interviewer to be more “keen to follow up interesting development and to let the interviewee elaborate on various issues” (p. 136).

Using semi-structured interviews, I captured participants’ stories and their interpretation of culturally responsive pedagogy and how they enact these practices for culturally diverse students. This method also allowed me to probe deeper depending on the participants’ responses (Creswell, 2013). I used semi-structured interviews, which allowed me to meet participants face to face. They shared their stories about culturally responsive pedagogy and how they enacted those practices for culturally diverse students. I effectively gathered in-depth data from school leaders in their natural settings through interviews. Interviews enabled me to explore leadership practices related to CRP for culturally diverse newcomer students.

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that researchers engage several interview procedures as a guide. These include determining the research questions, identifying the interviewees, determining the type of interviews, adequate recording procedure, discussing an interview guide, obtaining all signed documents adhering to the research questions, and deciding how the data was to be transcribed. I conducted the interviews over three months; thus, there was time to build trust and rapport between myself and the participants to enhance the data collection process. The participants signed a consent form agreeing to participate in the research (see Consent Form in Appendix E). Interviews were done at a time and date convenient to the participants.

I used pre-set open-ended questions to guide the interviews (see Appendix B). I constructed the interview guide carefully considering the research questions to ensure that they would elicit responses that would unearth rich data. All interviews, except for one, were conducted at the school because participants found it more convenient, safe and comfortable. The interview guide for teachers addressed teachers' professional development, the support given from leadership, parents and colleagues, and how cultural responsiveness was fostered in the classroom. There was also an interview guide for principals with possible questions (see Appendix A). These questions included probes for context and demographics, leadership for CRP, professional training development, fostering CRP, and approaches taken to hire teachers.

Interviews lasted fifty minutes to one hour and were conducted during the first and second months of the research period. I interviewed teachers first so they would not be absent from classes during the teaching time. These teachers provided information about what they understood CRP and how they saw their school leaders enact these policies within the learning
community. The interviews with school leaders lasted at least one hour. They provided background information about what was in place for CRP, what was done around professional development, and what they believe could be implemented to help them effectively support teachers in addressing the learning needs of culturally diverse students. As a final step in the interview process, I provided copies of the transcript to each participant to review, retract, add, delete, and sign. If participants agreed that the transcript adequately represented their experiences, they signed a transcript release form (see Appendix G).

The interview was an effective data collection method for this research because it helped me capture participants’ thoughts and feelings about leadership practices for culturally diverse newcomer students. I recorded all interviews using multiple recorders to ensure that all the information was captured and backed up.

Although semi-structured interviews were excellent for this research, they also had limitations. According to Szombatová (2016), their reliability is questionable as the participants may give misleading responses if they misunderstand a question or choose not to speak the truth. As such, Cook (2008) suggested that other data collection forms should be used to enhance reliability. With this understanding, triangulation of multiple research methods, including observation, interviews, and discussions, alleviated the limitation.

Observation

Besides semi-structured interviews, I carried out classroom observations using a checklist (see appendix D). This approach allowed me to observe the school leaders and teachers in their daily routines. According to Creswell (2013), observation is one of the key tools for collecting qualitative data. The observation process allowed me to examine the physical settings, participant activities and interactions and my behaviour during the process. The observation process also allowed for flexibility and helped me monitor all aspects of the phenomenon (Mahl, 2002). These aspects included observing the interaction of teachers in the staff room, school activities, the teaching and learning process, and teacher-student reactions.

Angrosino (2007) noted that observation is a critical tool for data collection and creates opportunities for researchers to examine the phenomenon through notetaking or recording. I observed participants’ activities, interactions, or conversations in the classroom. Creswell and Poth (2018) outlined five procedures for observation. These include selecting the site to observe with the required permissions to access the site, identity who or what you will observe,
determining the type of observation, designing, and using an observational guide, recording aspects such as a description of the informant, physical setting, specific clients, build initial rapport displays a positive and friendly personality limiting the objectives in the first weeks. (p. 168).

Following a similar procedure to Creswell and Poth’s (2018) outline, I observed both teachers and school leaders during my time in the field. During the teaching and learning process, I observed teachers noting how well students’ work reflected what was taught and how the school environment promoted and included CRP. I also observed social interactions among teachers, especially as they planned activities, such as special celebrations, teacher-student indoor games, and solved learning-related issues by sharing successful practices. I aimed to identify practices that demonstrated and supported cultural responsiveness. I captured observation data using field notes guided by an observational checklist (see Appendix F for the Observational Checklist). I was actively involved in the research and observed the day-to-day exchanges. I was in the learning environment at least three days per week over three months.

I shadowed the principal and was present in situations that did not require confidentiality. I observed her interacting with staff during lunch and break periods, and I also viewed her interaction with students as she addressed their needs and concerns. Because the other two school leaders were also classroom teachers, I observed them in their classrooms only at their convenience.

In addition, I observed the general learning spaces. My observation of the space included a walkthrough of the school, noting display areas, walls, bulletin boards in the general areas and the staff room. In so doing, I observed if there were materials or information associated with creating a culturally responsive environment and how relevant these were for students. I captured these observations using memos to revisit specific areas as the need arose. Sometimes, I noted record observations as events occurred, but I sought to record my thoughts soon after completing the observation. I used field notes during classroom observations to describe the school context and highlight the participants. To maintain the participants' confidentiality, I used pseudonyms to represent the participants' names and workplaces.

**Data Analysis**

Qualitative research allows researchers to use an emerging inquiry approach to collect data in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013). Themes and patterns are deductively or inductively
identified from the data (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, in qualitative research, data is presented using recorded notes of participant voices as the researcher interprets data and contributes to the literature. The process of data analysis, as described by Flick (2014), is the “classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning in the material and what is represented in it” (p. 5).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that the best way to analyze qualitative data is simultaneous with data collection. The data analysis for this study commenced after the first interview and observation. All the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and both the interview transcripts and the participant observation notes constituted the primary data for the analysis. The preparation and organization of data further led me to narrow the information into themes through coding.

**Coding**

Saldana (2015) noted that coding is “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). All the interview transcripts were uploaded into NVIVO 12 software to facilitate the analysis process; each was carefully read and reread, which helped me interpret the data. NVIVO is a data management and analysis software used to sort and analyze data. The data analysis involved coding the transcripts through several processes to derive categories and themes that responded to the research questions. The data were analyzed using structural and descriptive coding as Saldana (2000, 2013) described. Thus, before uploading the transcripts into the NVIVO software, I read the transcripts and made notes in the margins to organize the data and identify keywords and emerging themes. During the coding process, I visited and revisited the data multiple times to make new connections that helped me understand the categories and the participants' perspectives.

After uploading the transcripts to NVIVO, I used Saldana’s (2016) descriptive and structured coding approach to categorize the data. According to Saldana (2013), both coding methods work well with various data forms, including interview transcription, field notes, journals, documents, diaries, and correspondence. Descriptive coding, according to Saldana, helps to categorize and organize the data using words or short phrases. This method was effective in summarizing the data collected (Saldana, 2009). I read through the data and coded passages based on the framework and concepts guiding the research. This approach enabled me to develop
an index of words or phrases such as *leadership, practices, culture, relationships, family connections, teaching, challenges, and language*. Once this index was created, I worked through the data, grouping all like sections together for further coding and further aggregating them into broader themes to build the foundation and to make sense of the data. The structural coding approach allowed me to identify a huge amount of text on broad topics, creating the opportunity for an in-depth data analysis. Using this approach allowed me to directly identify the data areas that addressed the research questions used to structure the interview. This type of coding was more suitable for semi-structured interviews and multiple participants, making this approach compatible with the data analysis process (Saldana, 2013).

**Searching for the Themes**

According to Creswell (2015), themes are broad units of information made up of several codes grouped to form a common idea. The process of searching for the themes led me to read and re-read the transcript to become familiar with the data and generate themes and sub-themes. I also used this opportunity to make notes and highlight different areas relevant to the data. Using structural coding, I identified common themes, differences, and relationships based on the participants' responses to the research questions. I revisited the raw data several times during the coding process. I carefully combined the data that spoke to the research topic into themes to make sense of the data collected. I developed several major themes from this procedure as codes were combined into categories and themes in NVIVO. In creating the categories (nodes), I reviewed the research questions to organize the data patterns into categories that responded to the research questions (Merriam, 1998).

**Defining and Naming the Themes**

Once I identified the themes, I refined them, narrowed them down, noted differences and similarities, and grouped them accordingly. This process led to six main themes, which include: (a) framing and defining cultural responsiveness; (b) creating a culturally responsive school; (c) enacting culturally responsive leadership; (d) barriers to culturally responsive teaching and learning; (e) the impact of the research; and (f) suggestions from participants. These themes captured participants' stories of how leadership practices were enacted for culturally responsive pedagogy for culturally diverse newcomer students. These themes are highlighted in Chapter Four and further discussed in Chapter Five. To reach this level, I carefully examined all the codes to note the essential ones to form the themes. The themes were further reduced as I aligned them
to the research questions designed for the research. Due to the small sample size in this research, the responses were directed to the questions asked; however, there was a response from one participant that highlighted the negative behaviour of some colleagues toward culturally diverse students. Because this was not the focus of the research, I noted the response as a possible area for further research.

**Ensuring Trustworthiness of the Data**

Trustworthiness is ensuring that the method used in the research accurately supports the findings. Thus, researchers should consider the research concept, collect, analyze, and interpret data, and how findings are presented (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Creswell (2013) argued that qualitative researchers must practice validation strategies to ensure accuracy for their study. There are several ways through which trustworthiness can be obtained. These include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility speaks to the findings' truth; transferability indicates that the findings apply to other contexts; dependability shows that findings are consistent and could be repeated, and confirmability demonstrates how the findings result from participants’ responses and not the beliefs of the researcher. Below, I discuss these issues extensively and how I applied them in my research.

**Credibility**

Wolcott (2005) suggested that qualitative researchers can increase the credibility of the research by “increasing the correspondence between the researcher and the real world” (p. 160). Patton (2015) argued that credibility is connected to the integrity of the researcher. To enhance credibility, Patton (2015) suggested that researchers “look for data that supports alternative explanation” (p. 53). I used member checking to ensure the study's credibility, which allowed all the participants to view transcribed documents. Member checking also allowed me to read and withdraw any sensitive matter or inaccuracies. Re/checking with participants further helped to eliminate my bias. Besides, I reviewed the analysis and interpretation of the data against the documents used in data collection to ensure accuracy before submitting a final manuscript (Schwandt, Lincoln & Guba, 2007).

**Transferability**

Transferability refers to how the research context can be transferred to other times, people, or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Le and Cobb (1985) posited that it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide a thick description of the participants and the research
process. It should be sufficient so that readers can decide whether findings apply to their specific settings. I used detailed descriptions to provide readers with contextual information about the research, the criteria for participants, the number of participants, the method of data collection, and how the data was analyzed. This process will help readers determine if the findings apply to similar cases, populations, or settings.

**Dependability**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), dependability is somewhat like credibility. To ensure the study’s dependability, researchers should detail the investigation process that if the research is repeated, it will provide similar results. However, Shenton (2004) argued that dependability is challenging to measure as “researchers need to facilitate a further investigation to get a consistency of their study” (p. 63). If the work were repeated in the same context using the same participants and applying the same method, similar results would be possible (Shenton, 2004). To increase the study’s dependability, I followed a step-by-step procedure that delineated my research process. These included the research design, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data, and precise documentation of all research activities.

**Confirmability**

Shenton (2004) described confirmability as how another researcher can validate the research results. In further support, Tobin and Begley (2004) noted that the research findings should not be what the researcher imagines but should reflect the data. I used a reflective journal to document all field events to establish my research confirmability. My journal also highlighted my reflection on issues that arose during the investigation of the phenomenon (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989).

In this qualitative study, trustworthiness was evaluated using triangulation, which captures evidence from independent sources to determine consistency (Yin, 2004). Triangulation allows researchers to draw on several data sources, methods, themes, and theoretical schemes to clarify a study (Lather, 1991). Different data collection sources, such as interviews and observations, were used to confirm the findings and ensure trust by filling the gap or the limitation of the other. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim; documentation was done for observations in field notes. The process included the date and time of each transcription and was validated by participants. I used Peer review strategies that involved
committee members or persons new to the research. This process helped assess the findings to ascertain that they were realistically based on the data collected.

**Ethical Procedures**

I obtained ethical approval to conduct this research from the Behavioral Research Ethics Board of the University of Saskatchewan, the Public-Schools Division within the selected area, and the prospective school (see Appendices H and I).

When conducting a case study, there are ethical codes to protect participants' rights such as “voluntary informed consent, liberty of withdrawal from research, protection from physical or mental harm, suffering or death” (Burns, 2005, p. 2). The participants were required to sign a consent form; informing them of their right to withdraw at any point during the interview process. Participants had the right to remain anonymous and not be exposed to any risks (Mugenda, 2003). In ensuring confidentiality anonymity, I assigned pseudonyms to participants. Thus, their identity and information will be protected from the public. According to the research policy, all audio recordings, original transcripts, and typed notes will be stored for five years at the University of Saskatchewan.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the research design and methodology. In doing this, I gave a brief introduction to outline the purpose of this research, how the site selection was made, and an overview of the participants. Data collection and participant selection were explained using purposive sampling to select participants for this study. The analysis process, including the use of NVIVO 12, was described. An instrumental case study was used to help understand the phenomenon researched. The study's design was based on Crotty’s (1998) framework, which outlined the epistemology, the theoretical framework, methodology, and method. An instrumental case study was used to help understand the phenomenon researched. In closing this chapter, the level of trustworthiness that added value to the research was also discussed.
CHAPTER FOUR  
Presentation of Findings

Culturally responsive pedagogical practices can create an educational environment where all students succeed. The number of diverse students within the Canadian school population has been increasing; thus, there is a critical need for culturally responsive teaching. School leaders are expected to facilitate pedagogical practices that support all students regardless of their diverse backgrounds (Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how school leadership practice in a culturally diverse elementary school facilitated teachers in using culturally responsive pedagogy that supports newcomer students. The following research questions guided the study:

How do school leaders enact leadership practices that support teachers in using culturally responsive pedagogy?

Specifically, the study responded to the following questions:

1. How do school leaders influence teachers' cultural responsiveness to address the needs of culturally diverse newcomer students?
2. What do school leaders do to ensure that teachers have the necessary resources to work effectively with newcomer students?
3. How do school leaders support teachers in creating a culturally responsive environment that caters to newcomer students from diverse cultural backgrounds?
4. How do school leaders mobilize professional development opportunities to facilitate culturally responsive pedagogy?
5. What are the culturally responsive leadership practices enacted by school leaders to facilitate culturally diverse newcomer students’ learning?

This chapter presents the research findings from data collected using extensive face-to-face semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. As the researcher, I used interviews and observations to identify and describe culturally responsive pedagogical practices that participants engaged in supporting newcomer students. Furthermore, participant voices gave meaning to their experiences of the phenomenon. Besides the interview, data were also derived from my researcher's field notes.

The findings are organized around themes derived from the commonalities found in participants’ responses during the interviews and observations. The themes that emerged from
interviews and observations addressed teachers’ and school leaders' perspectives on enacting culturally responsive pedagogy among newcomer students. The themes covered were (a) framing and defining cultural responsiveness; (b) creating a culturally responsive school; (c) enacting culturally responsive leadership practices; (d) barriers to culturally responsive teaching and learning; (e) the impact of the study and the understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy; and finally, (f) participants’ suggestions for improving culturally responsive teaching for newcomer students.

**Framing and Defining Cultural Responsiveness**

This section explores school leaders' and teachers’ definitions of cultural responsiveness. In the absence of a clear policy about cultural responsiveness regarding newcomer students, participants were asked how they experienced cultural responsiveness with newcomer students. Four participants referred to what they believed culturally responsive teaching was and how it was enacted in their learning spaces.

From their responses, the following subthemes were generated: (a) focusing on First Nation, Inuit, and Metis (FNIM); (b) supporting students; (c) being sensitive to the challenges newcomer and their families face; (d) building socio-cultural and education-related bridges with and among students, families, and the broader communication; and (e) promoting a safe space by showing respect for cultural diversity.

**Focus on FNIM**

In relation to culturally responsive pedagogy, participants’ responses indicated that the focus was on First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. According to Alex, “cultural responsiveness is limited to Indigenous as the goal is to help First Nations achieve success and have greater learning outcomes as previous data shows First Nations students are not achieving the success they can.” For instance, Alex reflected that:

I know that many of the strategies we were taught have to do with our First Nation Indigenous communities because they are also like our most at-risk group. Our board is currently pushing us to get some changes regarding the graduation rates and success in elementary. Thus, many of those strategies for cultural responsiveness have surrounded them, ensuring that we are respectful in the way we treat the curriculum and how it is designed. It is embedded in all the subject areas, focusing on making sure we are inclusive and respectfully inclusive. Moreover, there is not too much about newcomers;
there are no strategies. I feel like we are all winging it because there are different cultures represented here. (Alex)

Participants described how focusing on FNIM as the lens through which they view cultural responsiveness helped them provide limited pedagogical support toward CRT for newcomer students.

During the interviews, some participants expressed that cultural responsiveness was discussed in the division, but it was primarily centred around FNIM students. The needs of students from other cultures were not addressed, yet the school was highly diverse. The lack of resources, including pedagogical support for teachers, prevented teachers from effectively addressing the culturally diverse learning needs of students. For instance, Abigail mentioned that becoming culturally responsive and teaching newcomer students are sparse. On the other hand, as it relates to teaching First Nations, Inuit and Metis students, there are resources to address their learning needs and outcomes.

Besides the focus on FNIM as the medium through which teachers and school leaders define and frame cultural responsiveness at this school, school leaders and teachers also highlighted that there had been a shift in the school’s demographics which now consisted of newcomers from different cultural backgrounds. With this understanding, some participants recommended that it would be suitable for the teachers and school leaders to learn how to implement strategies to support newcomer students, similar to how First Nation students were being supported.

Participants seemed to have limited knowledge and understanding of cultural responsiveness in that context. This ignorance was concerning because some participants were unaware of the supporting body that would help them tackle this problem. It was clear from the responses that teachers and school leaders understood that the fabric of schools' had changed over the years based on the increase in newcomer students. These students have peculiar learning needs to be addressed. One participant referred to newcomer students as “a new group of people.” Some participants also shared that there is support from the FNIM unit downtown, but they have limited knowledge of whom to approach for support as it relates to newcomer students. One participant noted:

An FNIM worker was placed with us, and she did different work with different classes; therefore, we had that support, but having different cultures represented and having
someone from a different culture coming to our school to represent culturally diverse students that do not exist unless it is a parent volunteer. I am not aware of any; if it is happening, I am not aware of it. Our division is very focused on FNIM right now, as the First Nations Inuit and Métis. Moreover, I feel like that is the big push that our newcomers are just not even there. They are not even in the realm; to be honest, like to access resources for others for FNIM culture, yes, but for cultures outside of that spectrum, no, to be honest. (Ruby)

Recognizing the diverse student population and the need to broaden the framing of cultural responsiveness beyond FNIM, Ruby expressed her views as she explained that the focus is on what is being put in place to facilitate FNIM students. However, she expressed how she was unaware of these initiatives for other cultures represented in the school, demonstrating a low awareness and understanding of what culturally responsive means concerning newcomers.

While several participants shared their experiences and understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy, Ruth mentioned that she is aware that CRP is vital to the diverse learning community. She believes that it should not be geared to special groups but should address the learning needs of all students in the learning environment:

I understand a hundred percent where our School Division has invested all the time, energy, and money into the First Nations, Inuit and Métis content, and it is very relevant and imperative work. Having you come in with a different perspective of our newcomers has broadened my idea of what culturally responsive teaching is, the pedagogy that comes with that and what this entails for me; thus, CRP is needed for all FNIM students. (Ruth)

**Supporting Newcomer Students**

Abigail and Pauline noted that because newcomers are confronted with many challenges within and outside the school, cultural responsiveness for them would mean recognizing the challenges and putting in place measures to make newcomer students feel welcome and settled. Some of these challenges include the fact that many newcomer students are responsible for caring for younger siblings, do not have provisions for lunch, lack proper gear for the seasons, especially winter, or have challenges with English. The participants shared that although they cannot address all the students’ personal needs, once the students were in the learning environment, addressing their learning needs and other needs that affected them in the learning community meant teachers were culturally responsive. Rebecca mentioned that approximately 46
percent of the students spoke a language other than English; thus, the need for English as an Additional Language (EAL) support is very high. Language is one of the most significant challenges that often contribute to misunderstanding and poor communication. However, for teachers to support culturally diverse newcomer students, it takes commitment from the teacher and the students, which can be frustrating for both parties.

According to Terry, some newcomer students are self-sufficient and can manage well independently related to speaking English; however, many of these students still need EAL support. Terry believed that it was imperative to provide the necessary support to newcomer students to help them learn the language so that the integration process would be faster and learning could be more meaningful. Terry also believed that being culturally responsive could support all students in the learning community regardless of their ethnicity.

**Being Sensitive to Cultural Needs**

Pauline expressed that she understood cultural responsiveness as sensitive to newcomer students' culture and needs. She expressed that it was her responsibility to get to know each child, and once a connection is made, enhance the teaching and learning process. Pauline believed that once a level of sensitivity is shown, it will help in the integration process and allow students to develop a sense of belonging. Thus, she would be more familiar with students, which would enhance her communication with students. Rebecca mentioned that newcomer students arrive at different times during the school year. Thus, it was necessary to ensure that students felt comfortable and welcomed in the learning environment. Thus, teachers and leaders call to respond to their needs, differences, and unique experiences. Rebecca provided one example and noted that teachers sometimes complained that newcomer students were always late for class. However, she suggested teachers take the time to find out why they were late and help these students improve their situations. She believed this initiative is part of being culturally responsive. According to Rebecca, many families sometimes find it challenging to fit in and navigate their new environment, which takes a long time for some more than others. She echoed that:

Understanding that the families coming with many skills their job here may not be indicative of that. The fact that I know most likely in the country they are coming from, their jobs were of a higher standard than they are here and recognizing what that does to a person's individuality when they come here, their skills are not recognized here has to be
hard on them, not just the women but on the men too. It is difficult for them because they possibly came from a very affluent life to be here. And then just to understand the process of what they had to go through to get here. The sacrifices they have made for their children; I do not think we can ever lose sight of that, and to be able to do this as a teacher, I believe that is being culturally responsive. (Rebecca)

Participants agreed that it is crucial to recognize students' and their families' cultural backgrounds influence the teaching and learning process. Rebecca, for example, expressed that recognizing and understanding a student's background and family also facilitates better communication and connection and creates the opportunity for building relationships. She maintained that understanding students' backgrounds are essential to being culturally responsive. For instance, it can be significant to have better communication with the parents and students, understand each learner, and find ways to support their learning styles. Abigail noted that some of her colleagues had used the expression, “I do not see colour when I teach; I just see kids.” She, too, held that thought for a while until she realized that being culturally responsive is not about colour rather knowing the history and understanding the experiences of the students she teaches.

Promoting a Safe Space

Promoting a safe space and respecting culture was another way some participants defined and framed cultural responsiveness. For instance, Ruby, a school leader, shared that it is vital to promote a safe space for students from different cultural backgrounds, especially if certain customs are practiced in their community. She shared how she created an opportunity for students who celebrate different religious customs:

Last year, during Eid, when the students were fasting, they could not participate in strenuous activities. Therefore, if they did not want to participate in Phys Ed because they are not eating or drinking, they do not have to, and they were allowed to go into the library and go on the computer or whatever during Eid. I know we did talk to our kids about being responsive peers about not taunting kids who are not eating or, you know, waving something in their face or just making fun of them, you do not want them to feel bad or to feel ashamed, so I sent information out on purpose to educate our staff and also like tell your class about this because there are lots of kids in your class that are participating. (Ruby)
Some participants expressed that acknowledging students' cultural norms is another example of displaying culturally responsive practices. Some teachers tried to accommodate newcomer students in the learning environment. However, one participant expressed that this was not always the case as some colleagues working with newcomer students were not as accommodating. She felt that if students did not have the right to hold onto their culture, this could cause a disconnection.

Alex shared her experience of her colleagues judging students because of what they eat, what they wear or sometimes how they communicate. To her, that approach was wrong. Alex further highlighted that “newcomers are children too, and I would die a thousand deaths to let them know how welcomed they are in our school.” For Alex, it was hard to watch her colleagues make fun of the children, especially when they try to communicate and do not know or cannot find the right English words to express themselves. Alex testified that students often became frustrated when expressing themselves, especially if they were very new to Canada. They will ask to speak their language during these times, and other students will help by translating to English. These students supported their classmates who struggled with English until they gradually became better.

Participants viewed cultural responsiveness as being “good teachers” and focusing on First Nations students. Being a good teacher is interpreted as teaching all students and doing an excellent job. However, recognizing that the learning community has become more diverse, the participants aimed to use their knowledge of cultural responsiveness to create a positive learning environment. Although these measures were implemented, the participants expressed that working with a diverse population was challenging because of limited training about being culturally responsive to newcomer students.

**Creating a Culturally Responsive School**

Exploring the participants' perspectives regarding a culturally responsive school, from the data they provided, revealed that many participants considered the learning environment a supportive community. One participant expressed that one of the advantages of the school being a supportive community was the small population. She contended that the small space allows teachers, school leaders, caretakers, parents and students to forge unique connections. It was interesting to note that almost everyone addressed each other by their names. However, for them to have a learning community that supports cultural responsiveness, some areas were highlighted
which they believed were essential for them to maintain and support a culturally responsive school: (a) culturally responsive classrooms; (b) teacher-student ratio; (c) symbolic gestures; (d) enacting culturally responsive teaching; (e) connecting with students, their culture and their families; (f) peer to peer learning, and; (g) resources for newcomer students and developing partnerships with external organizations.

**Culturally Responsive Classroom**

Observation data revealed adequate space in each classroom that allowed teachers to move around freely to support students in their learning. Some teachers expressed that removing individual desks and chairs and replacing them with tables and chairs allowed them to seat at least four students adequately per table. Students from different backgrounds had the opportunity to sit and work in groups. According to the participants, this arrangement allowed students to collaborate effectively in groups as the need arose. The participants expressed that moving away from the desk and chairs was well appreciated, especially for the younger children. It created the opportunity to work together as a community within the learning space.

There was no display of students' work in the classroom. Participants explained that they were not allowed to hang things on the wall due to the rules implemented on the instruction of the Ministry of Education. However, students' work was kept in binders. As I observed, there was no evidence of the hidden curriculum. One participant expressed that not displaying instructional resources on the wall was a huge piece missing from her classroom because students would always take the time to review those content. She believed that information reinforced content that is being taught indirectly.

**Teacher-Student Ratio**

Terry, Rebecca and Abigail pointed to the importance of the teacher-student ratio in supporting a culturally responsive learning environment. These participants expressed that the teacher-student ratio in the school was 16 to one, although by ministry standard, it should be at least 25 to one. Based on this student-teacher ratio, teachers could provide one-on-one support for the students, especially students from different cultural backgrounds who may have challenges mastering the content being taught. Furthermore, it allows for flexibility when students need to work in groups. Participants noted that the school leaders continue to advocate for additional staff as the need arises to help focus on the curriculum and effectively teach students, especially culturally diverse newcomer students.
**Symbolic Gestures**

The school leaders in the study mentioned the importance of having symbolic gestures displayed, so students could see themselves reflected in the school environment. They considered this crucial to a culturally diverse school. Some participants noted that the school occasionally displays flags of different countries on specific bulletin boards and encourages teachers to have the word “welcome” written in different languages as students enter their classrooms. According to Ruby, using symbolic gestures is a method that allows newcomer students to have that sense of belonging, as they can see themselves in the learning community:

> I think having those flags in the school was lovely and having different greetings and stuff like that. I think having that cultural piece present at the front of the school is welcoming, making people feel welcome and in different ways; I think that is important. Nevertheless, if we had some flags or some greetings or maybe every day on announcements or a greeting in a different language, that would be cool. (Ruby)

During the time spent in the learning community, I did not observe any evidence of these symbolic gestures. However, the teachers explained that a new policy implemented by the Ministry of Education limits what they can hang or display on the walls; thus, these representations were not present:

> You are here the odd time with the fire marshal, and everything is being ripped down and moved around, but we did have, you know, in the foyer, we had flags of different countries and things like that, and we had that sort of the first welcome that represents different cultures, and we have had different classrooms that had welcome in a different language, but that has been changed. (Abigail)

**Enacting Culturally Responsive Teaching**

As the classroom population increases in diversity, participants recognize the need to incorporate effective ways of teaching. However, they explained that this could be challenging because they have limited knowledge of how to be culturally responsive to newcomer students. Thus, using the limited resources, they work with the students in the best possible way to address their learning needs.

When asked what school leaders do to help teachers enact culturally responsive teaching, the responses only reflected their understanding of culturally responsive teaching (CRT) based on their training. However, it is essential to state that participants explained that in terms of
culturally responsive teaching, the general emphasis was placed on FNIM students mainly because it is the official policy promoted at the school division level. Therefore, there is a lack of or no awareness of CRT among newcomer students.

**Connecting with Students, their Culture, and their Families**

Participants acknowledged that maintaining relationships with students and their families was essential to the learning community. They argued that it was crucial to recognize that students' familial and cultural backgrounds influence teaching and learning. A connection with home and school helped students feel safe and become more excited about learning. Participants explained that these relationships were initiated mainly through cultural events, social events, and in-class activities that help develop students' skills. Some of these events created opportunities for newcomer students to showcase their cultures, including their food, traditional dresses, dances, and languages. These events and activities were, and participants thought it good to acknowledge students' cultural backgrounds because it strengthens teaching and learning. The participants also noted that it promotes learning and broadens their cultural understanding, creating a sense of belonging and acceptance. For this reason, Ruby stated that it was the teacher’s responsibility to educate the students about other cultures so they understand what it is to live and function within a multicultural society. She argued:

> Teachers need to discuss culturally appropriate teaching and incorporate it into our lessons and keep it continuous throughout the year, connecting a culture. Who are you? What do you mean when you talk about clothing in French? What kind of traditional outfit is it? What are some Ukrainian outfits, outfits of India? What do you wear in Africa? What are you wearing on Chinese New Year and just always bringing that in? And I think if the kids hear and see that part of culture being talked about. It is accepted; we are raising kids who will be more culturally responsive and are willing to accept different cultures in the future when they start running the world. I think it starts now, it starts in your classroom, and it is continuous and not just for First Nations, Inuit and Metis but also for other cultures. *(Ruby)*

Abigail believed that building connections with parents and students while helping them understand Canadian school culture builds trust, thereby giving newcomer families a better understanding of the Canadian ways of knowing and doing. Using this strategy is one way of being culturally responsive because cultures differ. Some things practiced in the home school
system are done differently in the Canadian school system. Abigail expressed that she tries to help parents understand that sometimes students do not need to do schoolwork at home, which is a concern of many immigrant parents because of what is practiced in their culture. Abigail noted that these parental concerns often lead to misconceptions about the Canadian education system:

I am trying to make those connections with families and say, you know what? Some things are done at school, are just for school, home is for home, and it is okay to have a differentiating line there. This is a tough one for some teachers who have been in this system for 25 years to reassure the families that just because we are not giving homework, it does not mean that our education system is less. It does not mean that the outcomes are any less, it is just a different way of teaching them, and I think that is a big eye-opener for me. (Abigail)

Participants noted that although students' culture should be highlighted, teachers also need to become culturally aware and see the need to accept culturally responsive practices. Abigail believed that students must be educated about diversity and ethnicity because, in a diverse environment, it is possible to have racism issues. However, this knowledge can limit these misunderstandings once students become educated in the area. Abigail, therefore, maintained that if the learning environment is to be culturally responsive, there should be conversations around oppression or racism and how to address these issues if they arise with students, parents, or teachers. However, Abigail believed that more could be highlighted in this area:

Addressing racism and other related issues, we have some things in place; we have an anti-racist, anti-oppressive information that starts to come out to us as school administrators passing down to our teachers. We have gone through a checklist with our staff of being culturally aware of where you are on this continuum of being culturally responsive. Thus, just by having those conversations with our staff, the reflection piece is automatically built into that, and it lets us see where we need to go and what we are comfortable with. A lot of that culturally responsive teaching that we have been taught has not been for newcomers, and that is an entirely different system for learning than our First Nations, Inuit and Métis kids. Often, we lump them all together, whereas the newcomers have categorically different challenges, whether the language or adapting to our country's physical environment, whether it is racism issues. Some practices in place come from the administration, from our downtown central office asking staff how they
are doing this. This is on the culturally responsive continuum; I think it needs to be embedded a little more into our practice as administrators and our practice. (Abigail)

One method that the school leaders used to support this initiative was creating opportunities for teachers to meet with families. Ruby provided the following explanation for an approach that could be used:

Finding ways to make authentic connections with our families to make them feel comfortable is one of our priorities; these connections typically happen through school events; however, we often have those. I know now that there is a new framework to look through a new lens and something that I think we need to work on. We have made some gains for sure, but I think there is a wealth of knowledge that we have not tapped into yet from families to make them feel that they have value to share with us. (Ruby)

Abigail also noted that newcomer families are interested in their children’s learning, which was displayed at meetings or special events. Abigail expressed that newcomer families are supportive and willing to find ways to contribute to and complement their children’s learning at home.

Abigail beamed, “I think that is amazing because those students are often very focused, and their families are very focused on education. To have those kids come with their families shows that they are very interested in a good education.” Rebecca and Pauline shared that teachers would attempt to connect with parents and families in different ways, such as asking them to share in their children’s learning by presenting specific topics; however, this was sometimes challenging because of the language barrier.

Pauline also highlighted that the school leaders encouraged staff to make those connections, which helped students feel welcome and included in the learning environment. She explained that the school leaders respectfully asked teachers to build relationships with students, especially during the first few weeks of school. Pauline believed this initiative was crucial as the interaction and connections between students and teachers will be more meaningful as they develop a sense of belonging, and learning will be more effective:

Leaders very respectfully push that for the first month of school type thing, first two to three weeks should be spent trying to build relationships, and I think if you ask any teacher probably in here, what do you do for the first month of school? Many of them will say getting to know my students or assessing them, finding out where they are at, building
relationships with them, seeing which kids work well with other kids and all the things that make a classroom successful. *(Pauline)*

Teacher participants expressed that school leaders kept them updated by providing necessary information about new students joining the school population, especially those coming from extreme conditions, such as those who may hold refugee status. Alex expressed that she appreciated the information as it helped her prepare for the new students regardless of their ethnicity or cultural background:

Rebecca, one of our school leaders, supports us very much by keeping us up to date on some of the stories of the families that are coming so that we know what to expect, affording us some time to get ready for the students, and you know, a certain amount of days to wrap our heads around the information about whom we are receiving and what they might need. She does a lot with some of the new families who do have very limited English. She makes many conversations with them more than we do. If we need to contact parents about something, she is the person who takes the lead on that many times. Not that we are not trying or avoiding it, but sometimes just in that leadership role, she is willing to assist teachers with that, helping us to build that gap so that we can gain a family's trust, so the family knows that we have your best interest. *(Alex)*

**Drawing on Students’ Real-life Experience**

Participants identified ways to connect with newcomer students to ensure learning becomes more meaningful. Drawing on students’ real-life experiences and stories helps to build connections with students *(Montgomery 2001)*. Kerry mentioned that to accomplish this level of connection, she allowed students to share their unique experiences and stories and linked those stories to classroom lessons as best as possible. According to Kerry:

This method brings them out of their shell, and they become more willing and want to start sharing in discussions. I guess tying that into our pedagogy is like essentially taking the time to honour every person as an individual and have that time to share their story. *(Kerry)*

Ruth also acknowledged that students' cultural knowledge of the classroom was centred around the special holidays and events that some students and their families celebrate. She tried to integrate students’ diverse cultural knowledge by using words or terms related to these specific customs. She gave an example:
If I am going to do a math lesson about multiplication or something in math, in celebration of Diwali, I could say this person has 72 candles lit on their ledge; how many groups of eight do they have. Connecting the lesson, I can make a real-life example or make something authentic that ties in somebody's cultural component instead of just doing something completely isolated. **(Ruth)**

Participants were able to use students’ stories to connect to classroom content and activities. However, the data also reflects that being sensitive to students from different cultural backgrounds is essential. Ruth noted that sharing their stories will depend on the topic discussed, which could negatively affect them. “I think that it has been a considerable growth for me to incorporate different worldviews of the different cultural sensitivities and weave it through the curriculum and programs.” Relating to Ruth’s statement Abigail noted:

We have to be careful when we are talking about Remembrance Day, for example, or things like that because they are from a war society and some of the things that we might specifically say to the Canadian kids who are used to living in a place of freedom. Maybe we sometimes try to shock them into what happens in other places, like you are so lucky to live here. Instead of having that kind of attitude, we have to be careful because we have got kids in our class who have seen war, have seen people shot in front of them and have that kind of lens when we are talking about things. So, the instructional piece, I think, comes in both ways for the student making sure that they feel comfortable and safe and welcomed, not putting them on the spot to ask them questions, not doing any of those sorts of things. However, as a teacher in relation to the curriculum, I also choose to represent the curriculum not to be offensive or hurtful or bring up bad memories. I also think with instruction, just knowing that not everybody has the same shared experiences. Thus, sometimes we have to go back and make our own new experiences that we can draw on as a group that everyone feels like they are part of. **(Abigail)**

However, Pauline explained how she took a different approach to connect with her students. She took the time to know the students in her class and build a relationship because she deemed it very important. In doing this, she mentioned that she could find out about her students’ background and how willing they were to share their stories when the need arose; in developing that one-on-one, she gained their trust. She further shared:
Not all of them have a positive culture back home, I guess, or positive life experiences back home. I have had some students in the past from refugee families that have had some very traumatic experiences in their life. I would not want to use this experience in any way with their learning. In that way, I would use that in the opposite direction where I would know their background. I would try and support that child in a more positive direction, and I would not use anything that they experienced for learning perse. Once I know their background, I would support them better. (Pauline)

Peer to Peer Learning

Recognizing the importance of connecting with students in the learning community, participants engaged students in peer sharing. Abigail mentioned that moving away from a teacher-centred approach and using strategies that encourage students to peer-share enhanced her teaching practice and allowed students to connect as they worked in groups. She noted:

A lot of the instruction is not always just teacher-centred; it is students centred. It is about inquiry and finding a way to communicate with others. So, as far as instruction goes, I think we must do purposeful pairings that make the student feel comfortable, making them aware of their learning. We need to ensure that students understand that expectations are adapted and will be for the first while and maybe even longer, specifically, for some new students. I think it comes in both ways from the student and making sure they feel comfortable, safe, and welcomed. (Abigail)

The purposeful pairing method was used throughout the school as teachers taught their lessons. Although it was practiced in individual grades, it was also being practiced among students from grades three to eight (3-8). There was a specific peer-to-peer group where older students were paired with younger students. Participants explained that this practice is beneficial, especially with newcomer students. Thus, often these students are paired with students who speak the same language to make them feel more comfortable communicating with and responding to each other. I noticed that the purposeful pairing across grades was among students experiencing challenges in specific subject areas students, and students were taken from classes during regular contact periods. Participants expressed that this method was successful as the students were learning from each other.
**Resources for Newcomer Students**

Teaching and learning resources to facilitate newcomer students’ learning were essential to supporting culturally responsive teaching. Participants highlighted that there are no programs designed to support newcomer students. However, these teachers identified the EAL teacher, Resource Room teacher and the materials provided in the classroom libraries as supports. Sometimes they relied on the EAL teacher support because of her years of experience working with culturally diverse groups. Teachers would often ask for help in communicating with parents, resolving issues that may contribute to conflicts or bridging a gap if there was a language barrier. She did not speak all the languages represented in the learning community; however, she was familiar with some or knew how to get the necessary support. It is worth noting that all participants expressed the unavailability of resources to help teach newcomer students. Thus, they relied on the EAL teacher's support:

> There are just not many resources. I cannot think of one resource that I could use in my classroom besides peer teaching and having an interpreter if I needed one; having the support of our EAL teacher is vast. That is a considerable contribution. Moreover, we need to make sure that our schools have that, but other than that, we do not have the resources needed to help these students succeed where they need to be. *(Pauline)*

Alex also expressed that she was unaware of available resources that facilitated culturally responsive teaching. Most of what she believed might be available were internet sources, which, for her, was not an excellent channel to access resources:

> I do not know if we are ever really received resources specifically for our classrooms. I am not sure what kind of ready resources are even out there, to be honest, at this point. I think that is a work in progress because I do not think our board has anything available like a loan, and we have never had any. I do not know of any available materials; I know there is no curriculum for EAL teachers. Thus, I think many of the resources that we are looking for are just teachers on their own time going through the internet and trying to see something that is culturally responsive that is accurate and would be useful. However, it is hard on the world wide web because you can get lost there, and it is not always authentic, or it is not always respectful of what you are finding for culturally responsive. *(Alex)*

Because of the unavailability of resources, some teachers improvised to support students. For instance, Ruby improvised by creating resources to facilitate learning in her class. She argued
that there were few resources for culturally diverse new newcomer students unless she made them herself. Ruby noted that she made everything she used in her teaching while adapting the content to incorporate her cultural resources to address the learning needs of her students:

There is not a lot there that represents the newcomer's perspective unless it is self-created. So, I cannot speak of resources in that regard being provided by leaders and for my subject area, and we are kind of like needles in the haystack. I made everything I used to like my whole book is like all my own creation. I created the program for my specific subject area. So, there is not a lot developed and because the program's different, it is levelled. It is like level 1 to 8. It is not by the grade they were level 1, but all level 1 resources are made for the grade, so my resources have all been self-created regarding cultural resources. (Ruby)

Finally, participants also shared the importance of having classroom libraries as a literacy tool. It is also a way for students to make connections based on the material provided:

So, whether we have posters up on our wall, whether we have books in our library, we want to make sure that everybody has something they can relate to. Wherever they are coming from, we have some dual language books in our library like the story of Cinderella and then the story of Cinderella in Urdu and so they can read it in Urdu and then start to learn the words that would go along with it in English or things like that. So, there have been supports, books bought for libraries and things like that, but I think that the leaders trust us. As much as we trust our students, they build trust with us and build our trust with our students; it has been a unique tool. (Ruth)

Rebecca also highlighted that the library resources helped with the literacy program. The school community council provides funding for this initiative; money is allotted per class for teachers to purchase materials to replenish their classroom libraries. I observed the frequent use of multimedia; this seemed to be the most common resource material available to facilitate the teaching and learning process. However, this method did not allow students to access resources; therefore, it was more teacher centred.

**Developing Partnerships with External Organizations**

The school leaders had created partnerships with organizations, such as the Open Door Society and The SWIS support worker. The Open Door Society creates an opportunity for newcomers to settle, integrate into the Canadian culture, and develop a sense of belonging in their
new environment. The SWIS support worker works alongside Open Door and other settlement service providers to help newcomers and their families through the integration process; they also focus on student academic achievement and work closely with different schools. Participants viewed these organizations as beneficial because they helped connect with newcomer families and their children. Kerry expressed that having newcomer centers as partners with the school helped integrate families because they are the liaisons between families and the help services that may be needed. Participants also highlighted that the school leaders also sourced interpreters to help teachers communicate with parents and students with limited English abilities. This initiative helped build relationships between the school and families and help parents understand that educating their children is a priority. According to Alex, having access to this type of resource created trust between the teacher, students, and families.

**Parental Involvement in the Developing of Students’ Skills**

Some participants expressed that student activities centred around developing their skills and were very rewarding as they learn and have fun simultaneously. According to the participants, this initiative helped build relationships with students and their families. Rebecca noted that activities included participating in cross country marathons, engaging in sewing clubs, taking on leadership roles, and learning how to care for a baby chick. A parent from Syria, a farmer, guided them by caring for a chick. Rebecca touted these activities as important and relevant to connecting families while developing students’ skills. Rebecca also noted that “this way the students can see themselves in our building and see themselves as important and part of our group of people.”

Within the context of this research, students, teachers, and school leaders had forged impressive connections. I observed students exchanging high fives with leaders and teachers. Teachers and school leaders would also take the time to stop what they were doing to listen to students. They planned events that allowed students, leaders, and teachers to engage in social activities such as teacher-student basketball games. This connection helped students build trust within a safe space. This connection also extended to families, allowing them to feel comfortable that their children were a part of a safe community and learning can be more productive. I observed school leaders trying to create an environment that welcomed parents or caregivers by extending an open-door policy. The leaders connected with each student regardless of their
ethnicity addressed each student by name. Through these initiatives, students could make more significant connections which afforded them a sense of belonging.

School leaders tried to address students' personal needs as best as possible. They took the necessary procedures to ensure that the children were developing holistically, thereby helping students accomplish more excellent learning outcomes. In so doing, if it meant providing lunch or even snacks to make students comfortable. I witnessed leaders supporting teachers by helping them deal with disruptive behaviours and finding individuals in the learning space to help with translations. All this was done to understand students better or even help with the teaching and learning process.

The leaders used different strategies to build relationships with teachers. This time created an opportunity for teachers to communicate in a social setting. These teachers also felt their school leaders' presence as they did their regular learning walks; teachers also capitalized on this opportunity to get on-the-spot answers to their questions. Although the school leaders had limited understanding of cultural responsiveness relating to newcomer students, they applied what they knew school leaders should be doing to address students' learning needs regardless of their ethnicity.

Participants maintained that their school leaders worked assiduously with teachers to meet students' learning needs. Although they often say during the interviews, “there is more to be done.” Participants shared that school leaders tried to model the desired behaviours and encouraged them to connect with students and their families and create relationships to enhance students' learning outcomes.

**Enacting Culturally Responsive Leadership**

Creating a supportive learning community was one way participants expressed their understanding of making their learning environment culturally responsive. Participants shared that the school leaders played an essential role in helping them to create such a learning environment as they used the limited resources to connect with all stakeholders aiming to meet the learning needs of all students. As such, the data reflected several areas in which school leaders scaffolded them and provided the necessary support for their practice.

The data highlighted several areas in response to the question regarding leadership practices and how these practices were enacted to facilitate culturally responsive teaching. School leaders support teachers in the learning community by (a) sharing successful practices and
learning from peers; (b) collaboration and teamwork; (c) the flexibility given to staff and mentoring students; (d) helping students understand equity and respect; (e) professional development initiatives; (f) purposeful pairing; (g) fostering relationship with newcomer families; and (h) social events.

**Sharing Successful Practices and Learning from Peers**

Teacher participants expressed the leadership practices they thought were essential to the teaching and learning process as they worked with newcomer students. They maintained that the support received from colleagues, as they shared successful practices, allowed them to understand culturally responsive teaching better. Hence, they could make better connections as they address the teaching needs of culturally diverse students. Ruth pointed out that working together with peers allowed her to share successful practices and fostered a level of comfort and freedom while doing so. Ruth contended:

I think the leaders have given us an opportunity for that discussion to happen to learn from each other. Our leaders have allowed us to make mistakes and, it is okay to make mistakes. One of the leaders I worked with a long time ago, we talked a lot about First Nations equity back then. He said it is worth trying and making a mistake than not trying at all, and that has stuck with me because with our newcomers, there are many things I do not know about their lives, where they were at, or about things. So, by the leaders permitting us to see what works and giving us the freedom to feel comfortable with ourselves, we can figure things out. They trust us enough to try something and re-adjust if we need to, make those connections with kids, or get the curriculum connections made.

*(Ruth)*

**Collaboration and Teamwork**

Ruby and Abigail mentioned that by sharing effective practices through collaboration and teamwork, they could scaffold the work and activities of the other to create resources that may enhance their teaching. They expressed that it is an effective strategy that the administration used to support teachers as they worked with newcomer students who need EAL and Resource Room support:

Suppose we have a child who is immensely struggling when we go for support to our admin team. They work as a team with our EAL teacher or our resource teacher to develop some programming to help that child succeed. Sometimes, with some EAL
families, they can understand more if they speak English at a higher level. However, they may be struggling with reading, then that is when we would offer to put them into a resource program where they would do an intense intervention for a short time to get them to where their reading level needs to be. So that is a conversation that we have with our intervention team before going to our resource teachers' support system to help guide us in the right direction? What steps do we need to take? What data have you collected to support this child that needs extra support in the classroom or outside the classroom? answers to these questions would be beneficial. (Pauline)

**Flexibility and Opportunity to Mentor Students**

Based on the data, participants were encouraged to become mentors to newcomer students and provide direct support to help them during the transition. Terry held that school leaders should be flexible, which encourages teachers to try new things. He advised that teachers should find out what works well and what does not and put strategies in place and resources to effectively address students' learning needs. Participants noted that they were aware of some of the challenges newcomer students face in the learning community, especially in English. Therefore, teachers expressed that having the flexibility to use what works best is advantageous. According to Terry, “I am grateful that Rebecca, one of our school leaders, is so accommodating and supportive of me and what I do with the students, and so she has allowed me to decide on strategies to help the students to perform at their best.”

**Equity and Respect**

Different participants echoed the point that equity and respect were essential in the teaching and learning process. Participants intimated that exhibiting equitable and respectful practice is vital for students' growth and development. All students should be given the resources or the support they need to become successful, and this should be the aim of teachers for all their students. However, Ruth shared that when meetings were held about the practice of equity, it was usually viewed through First Nations' lens. Based on their experiences and the concepts developed from the interpretation of those experiences, she claimed:

When we go to equity meetings, it is often only with the First Nations' lens. Thus, I do; I value that because I have taught in schools that have been mostly First Nations kids. They struggle with the concept of school, they have been hurt by so many generations of
negativity with school, so building trust with them looks completely different than building trust with our newcomers. \textit{(Ruth)}

Other participants shared how they understood or tried to reinforce equity in the learning environment by helping students understand equity while modelling the desired behaviours. Alex noted that equity and respect are topics that she discussed with students at the beginning of the school year. She tried to set the tone for students to understand how to operate by displaying appropriate behaviours.

Pauline also shared that when students clearly understood equity and respect, it became the norm for them to exhibit this behaviour, thereby building relationships. She believed in talking to the students about treating others and how they wanted to be treated. Pauline tried to reinforce this practice, reminding her students that equity and respect are crucial in their learning despite their skin colour or cultural backgrounds.

However, Ruth contended that students must understand that equity does not always mean equality. She used an example to explain her views, noting that:

So, for us to raise those kids with the traits that everyone is to be respected, trusted, and valued, I hope they will teach their parents about it; that is where I am coming from. I hope to share the equity piece with the kids and explain that equity does not mean equal; everybody does not get the same. One of the best ways to do that, I think, is a cartoon that has three people that are looking over a fence at a baseball game, and only one of them is tall enough to see, but each one of them gets a box to stand on. The box makes one guy taller, barely able to see, and the other guy still cannot see. By giving the kids a visual like that and saying, you know what? It is not precisely equal. That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about making sure that everybody has an opportunity, right? Thus, I think that is a super important one. I do not know precisely how I would promote equity; I think it is just done daily. \textit{(Ruth)}

Ruby expressed that modelling would help students understand the importance of this practice in the learning community. This behaviour is reciprocal and should be practiced among everyone. Ruby shared that much of it is just modelling the behaviour, allowing students to understand their role as peers with friends and others, understanding that respect is mutual regardless of who they are.
Although Ruby shared her views on how students can effectively learn equity and respect, Ruth mentioned that it is essential for teaching these values in the learning environment, especially when there is so much discussion around this topic. However, despite what is being done to help students understand the importance of this practice, even if through modelling, these behaviours could conflict with home practices, which might be challenging to overcome. She noted that:

Equity and respect are a huge piece about trust with the student and the teacher, setting a very firm bar of accepted or tolerated behaviours. This is how I operate, and things that some people might let go of, I cannot let go. We must be accountable for everything that we say, and it is an excellent opportunity for a learning experience for everyone because sometimes equity, for me, includes a broader spectrum like gender equity or things like that. From our First Nations perspective, many equity discussions are happening from our gender’s perspective and our newcomer’s perspective. We need to have trust and respect across the board, it does not matter what kind of equity we talk about, and that can be tough for parents of other students to understand. It is probably one of the most significant challenges because, as a classroom teacher, I can help model and encourage respectful behaviours. However, when they go home, sometimes their parents may have things that they say that are completely disrespectful of a culture or very stereotypical or things like that, and so for us as teachers to counteract that is essential. However, it is hard because we are in our bubble at school, and we do what we can, but when they go home, sometimes the behaviours that we are trying to teach them in class are not supported at home. (Ruby)

The level of respect was evident among teachers, students, and leaders; it was reciprocal and extended to everyone. I observed that individuals exhibited that behaviour, whether visitors to the school or a part of the school community. One of the participants mentioned that some students are trained to behave that way from home. This practice was further reinforced in the learning environment as teachers and school leaders aimed to instill this behaviour in students to align students’ behaviour to the school motto that each child is "known, valued and believed in."

**Culturally Responsive Professional Development Initiatives**

While there was no opportunity to observe a professional development activity, participants were asked to share what was done around professional development concerning
cultural responsiveness, whether from the school or the division. I found out that teachers and school leaders within the school environment or the division level had access to professional development to support culturally responsive teaching for FNIM students. However, in response to the question asked about professional development done for newcomer students, the participants noted that the professional development workshop did not include culturally responsive practices for culturally diverse newcomer students since the focus has been on FNIM students. For instance, when Terry was asked this question, she responded, “Through professional development, I am sorry, nothing.” Rebecca, one of the school leaders, further reinforced Terry’s statement about professional development for newcomer students:

Honesty, K, there is no PD. There is no PD offered in our division for teachers or CRP. There is treaty education, and I see such value in that, so I do not want this to sound like I do not see value in that and because our province has mandated us to increase the graduation rates, especially when it comes to our First Nations students. However, we are under the gun to raise those percentages so that kids finish on time. Simultaneously, when we look at the last ten years, there is an increased number of immigrants in our province; we need to support teachers in managing and working with that increase for all our learners. Nevertheless, at our school division, we need to be asking some questions.

(Rebecca)

Participants stated that some form of professional development was provided through the Collaboration Inquiry Team (CIT). For instance, Rebecca echoed that professional development was done through the CIT, which provided teachers with the opportunity to work collaboratively on common goals; this was mostly done around the division's goals or relating to the curriculum. Rebecca explained how CIT works in their learning community and effectively uses this channel to work with all students:

Well, I think that is where those PD days come into play, ordering our CIT time-sort collaborative inquiry team to look at literacy and ways of improving students' literacy levels in our classrooms. Working closely with our EAL teachers because they have the backgrounds and skills in teaching kids how to read and write in English would be beneficial. I think we need to tap into those resources within our school and see them as valuable instructional leaders. I believe our teachers have a lot of prep time; we must figure out a way to use it more effectively. (Rebecca)
Rebecca recalled having done professional development at the divisional level centred around cultural competence inventory and Indigenous students. However, again, she noted that that PD was a few years back and it was still not geared towards culturally diverse students:

We did this thing in our school division a few years ago, a cultural competency inventory. Moreover, I have tried to weave some of that into our past professional development and have teachers closely examine their own beliefs. We did much work, not around newcomer families, but we did much work around our indigenous students. I think we must make ourselves uncomfortable to make a change. Furthermore, I do not think that we are there; not everybody is willing to go there. (Rebecca)

**Collaborating with other Teachers**

Once teachers can collaborate and share ideas, resources, and effective practices, they can develop their practice and become more equipped to address students’ learning needs. Participants had opportunities to collaborate with other teachers and school leaders as part of their professional development; one of these arranged meetings was through the North End Collaborative Group. Participants also expressed that although they had professional development with the North End Group, there were also opportunities to collaborate in their regular staff meetings. However, the North End Group provided the opportunity for all school leaders and teachers within that cluster to get together and share promising practices on selected topics:

This kind of design was called the North End Collaborative, where they set aside some of our PD days, our planning days, half days, and some of our staff meeting times where we get together. We all meet, and then we get into our grade-like groups. We have a chance to sit down and share what we have been doing in the teaching and learning process so that not everyone is not reinventing the wheel. Every time we try to get the conversation going, it is interesting to see what they know, what they are finding with the teaching they are doing in their school, and some of the areas kids are struggling with, or we are just sharing resources. (Alex)

In response to collaboration between other school leaders or leadership teams that support culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students. One school leader responded that there were suggestions to have this practice in place, but this was not a priority; therefore, these plans were not put forward:
I have asked to be on a committee, and I never heard anything. So, I do not know if it exists, or it could be such a small piece. I would think we would collaborate as a team of Administrators in schools with high numbers that would include Sunberry. Half of our kids are newcomers, but I do not think that there is anything that supports that currently, honestly. As I said, we have got much work to do; indeed, I can pick up the phone, and I can call down to the Newcomer Center and talk to Charmaine Brown, a coordinator or Melissa Wright, who is a coordinator. However, I know those are the only two people who would be an expert in the whole division, which just hit me. I need to talk about that we need to talk about culturally responsive professional development and cultural responsiveness as it pertains to our newcomer families. Moreover, I need to organize that because I think my school is a bit of an anomaly in the North End. (Rebecca)

Purposeful Pairing

Abigail explained that having a conversation around culturally responsive pedagogy must be purposefully planned because such a topic was not discussed often, and it was seen as courageous conversations:

The opportunity to discuss a specific topic about cultural responsiveness with our leaders is built into their role. However, it is indeed an opportunity to discuss some of the questions or concerns that you might have as a leader talking about courageous conversations and how we can serve as leaders, given the framework to have those conversations with teachers that are struggling in different areas, whether it is culturally responsive or whatever area it might be. So, we are given the framework to learn to have those difficult conversations; I have that opportunity, but not within the lens of cultural responsiveness. (Abigail)

Abigail mentioned that although the North End cluster allowed both teacher and school leaders to meet with colleagues from other high and elementary schools, they still encountered nominal issues, such as representing diverse cultures. She contended that discussions were not centred around culturally responsive pedagogy, and if that happened, it was usually initiated by teachers in small groups instead of a divisional approach.

I could not observe any of the meetings that supported the collaboration, whether at the school level or a ministry's workshop. These opportunities explicitly discussed the curriculum and excluded cultural responsiveness towards newcomer students. However, as the conversation
developed around the questions relating to collaboration for culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students, some participants expressed a lack of interest in discussing and sharing successful practices related to the teaching of newcomer students.

**Social Events**

Participants echoed that school leaders hosted many social events geared towards teachers connecting with families. Through these events, students and families were able to showcase their culture, including food, traditional dresses, or dances. Pauline shared that these events aimed to create a safe learning community for students. Pauline supported Ruby’s views and noted that having potlucks at the beginning of the school year was an excellent way to have parents make that first connection and familiarize themselves with the teachers and the school environment. She felt that people connect well when eating food. As she put it, “you break bread together and at the beginning of the year.” It also creates an opportunity for parents to connect.

The data revealed that school leaders encouraged connection with families by asking them to volunteer in the learning community. When asked how often this happened, Rebecca noted that “these parents are more than willing to give the support where needed, and this opportunity engages the parents and connects them to their child’s/children learning.” Rebecca further stated that “this is an excellent opportunity for students to see their parents getting involved in the learning community and contributing to their learning.” She believed that it added value to the students' learning and gave them a feeling of belonging and pride. However, Rebecca mentioned that some members of staff think otherwise. She noted that “we have staff that are unwilling to tap into the skills of the parents in a meaningful way and then get annoyed when parents do not come to conferences; however, that is the minority of our staff, the majority find ways to do that.”

Social events at the school had the primary goal of connecting with families. Nevertheless, Rebecca noted that it took great effort from school leaders and teachers to pull these off. She recognized the significance of parental involvement because they are one of the leading partners in the education system. Therefore, she echoed this concern:

I think parents are as involved as teachers asked them to be, or as they can be, we do have some moms and dads that will come and help when asked. Some of our teachers are good about asking for help, and they will find the key people they know are available and give adequate support in the school. However, some of our teachers are unwilling to reach out
and ask parents to help, and I do not understand that, but I think it is about engagement. Most of our families are very engaged in their child’s education because they want to know what I can do at home. Is there something that we can do together? What kind of homework should they be working on? (Rebecca)

Data also showed that some events were not open to the entire school but on a class level where teachers plan cultural events, and students could share their diverse cultural knowledge in their classroom. School leaders created the opportunity for teachers to have students participating in cultural events so that students from different cultural backgrounds could showcase things that represent their culture. Teachers who had the chance to work with students and organized these activities noted it was a great experience, and they learned and bonded with students at the same time. Kerry shared an example:

One of the roles that I have taken on it with a few other teachers is to put on a school talent show. So, we have students in grades five or four to eight who are invited to audition and share whatever talent. It might be anything that they feel talented in, and no one gets cut; everyone performs. No matter how polished it is or not, and so with our newcomer population, we do get much cultural exhibit. I think it encourages many kids as they see their friends participating, and they want to do it too. I think every teacher does that on their own, but it may not always be made a big school-wide thing. (Kerry)

Participants recalled that students introduced their peers to the cultural games they played. Through these games, students taught other students, and in the process, they made connections and developed relationships. This type of engagement was another way of sharing students’ diverse cultural knowledge with the broader community. Ruth spoke to this, specifically, based on the experiences she had with the students:

Newcomers from India would play soccer every recess, and it is always Pakistan vs India, and they would never meet, and it is like the lines were drawn. As a staff, we had to help them understand that they are in Canada now, and we wanted to mix it up, play with different people and do things like that. Thus, this year, it was super exciting, cricket came out, and I was like, wow, we have never had cricket here before; it is impressive. For the most part, some people played cricket before; but others who joined in are curious about it, like what is this game about? How do you play this? What are the rules? Starting conversations between someone who may play baseball and making those honest
connections with kids on the playground, having staff involved in that, and being excited about it helps build those relationships between kids and having that sense of belonging with those activities. (Ruth)

The school leaders used different strategies to build relationships with teachers. I observed that, except for the teachers on supervision duties for recess or lunch periods, teachers took the time to gather in the staff room. This time created an opportunity for teachers to communicate in a social setting. The teachers also felt their school leaders' presence as they did their regular learning walks; teachers also capitalized on this opportunity to get on-the-spot answers to their questions. Although the school leaders expressed their limited understanding of cultural responsiveness regarding newcomer students, they applied what they knew school leaders should do to address students' learning needs regardless of their ethnicity.

The school leaders worked assiduously with teachers to meet students' learning needs to the participants. Although they often said during the interviews, “there is more to be done,” participants shared that school leaders tried to model the desired behaviours and encouraged them to connect with students and their families, thereby creating relationships to enhance students' learning outcomes.

**Barriers to Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning**

During the interviews, several participants shared their views about the barriers in teaching culturally diverse students. They explained how these barriers created a challenge in the teaching and learning of newcomer students. Eleven main barriers that affect effective, culturally responsive teaching were extracted from the data. These barriers are: (a) curriculum that was not reflective of culturally diverse students; (b) differentiation in instruction as teachers develop different learning instruction according to the student's ability one-and-one was also given to students with these challenges; (c) expectation from parents -parents approach education differently than what is expected in Canadian schools; (d) assessment of newcomer students because of the language barrier students find it challenging to complete assessments effectively the delivery of the content could have been done differently; (e) lack of teacher support some teachers are not supportive of newcomer students as they are not willing to adapt to change; (f) training and diversity among staff teachers are not receiving training in culturally responsive pedagogy for culturally diverse students, the teaching population is not reflective of the diverse school; (g) lack of funding can affect teachers teaching effectively because resources become
less; (h) cultural differences can contribute to misunderstandings; (i) learning outcomes of newcomer students once students learning needs are not effectively addressed then it will influence their learning outcomes; (j) language barriers make it harder to communication; and (k) lack of external support and resources can hamper effective teaching and learning.

**The Curriculum not Reflective of Culturally Diverse Students**

Pauline, Ruby and Abigail mentioned that the curriculum was not designed to incorporate newcomer students. Based on the increase in newcomer students in the learning community, they must use the existing curriculum and the resources and skills they have developed to teach all students effectively. Pauline noted:

> There is nothing in the Saskatchewan curriculum that would support Immigrant families; our curriculum is centred on First Nations, Inuit and Métis people based on Canadian culture and Canadian history. Their focus is on that right now, with a lot of more newcomer families coming in. I think they are trying to include as much as they can but not at the government level. (Pauline)

Participants shared that there is not much to do with the existing curriculum because it was developed at the provincial level. The following excerpt highlighted Rebecca's perspectives.

> I guess our curriculum is developed at the provincial level through a committee; I am not quite sure, honestly. However, I believe it is at the provincial level through a committee, and they look, change, edit, and revamp what they see as desired learning outcomes at the different grades. Within that curriculum, they give some examples of indicators of success for students to reach. Those outcomes, and precisely the indicators, are woven into each of those outcomes. Some indicators center around indigenous ways of knowing; it is not specific to my knowledge that is inherently built into those that deal with cultural responsiveness except a few years ago with citizenship education. (Rebecca)

**Differentiation In Instruction**

According to Terry, how culturally newcomer students are taught may differ depending on their cultural backgrounds and the delivery methods. She explained that this is a barrier as she finds it challenging to help students learn different strategies concerning how the curriculum is taught in Canadian classrooms. Students learning styles may differ depending on their cultural backgrounds, which is a barrier. She noted for some students, trying to learn the content differently is sometimes challenging:
These children do not know how to decode and spell words by listening to the sounds. They are memorizing everything. So, it is a very different way of looking at the language and learning a new language. The other thing is that many kids come from a background of memorization. Therefore, they are not used to learning to manipulate things to look at it differently; their understanding is that you memorize what the teacher says and give it back to them on the test. So, some of my students believe that there is only one way to do things. Thus, they are confused initially, so it takes a while to understand their learning style and develop effective teaching methods. (Terry)

**Expectations from Newcomer Parents**

Working with families from different cultural backgrounds has contributed to teachers facing challenging parental demands related to the teaching and learning process. However, Ruth believed it is essential to help parents and their children make the transition. Still, sometimes it can be challenging, as parents have different expectations of schools based on their cultural background, which is different from what is practiced in the new learning community. Although these practices are not necessarily a given rule in Saskatchewan, finding ways to help parents understand is not always easy.

These experiences are new to some teachers as they expressed that parents can be demanding, and sometimes it creates some level of discomfort and uncertainty. Some participants expressed that they are unsure how to address some parental requests. As such, Rebecca echoed her perspective:

One challenge is that our school systems are often different from the kids come from; I have also experienced it. Families from other countries where the school system is different may sometimes cause these parents to speak quite demanding, not that people who have been here for generations are not demanding, but differently. I think it is just because of how the school systems are in their countries, and possibly they are often highly educated people, so they feel they have more of a say in how things operate in the school, curriculum, reporting, assessments, and in their child's education and all of those things. Therefore, they may demand more because they feel it is their right as parents. (Rebecca)
Ruby also talked about the teaching style being different in Canada; newcomer parents often require some grading structure which they use to track their child/children’s progress as such, Ruby noted this as a challenge and expressed concerns:

I sometimes find that teaching styles are a challenge too when I meet newcomer parents, they are super open and super happy and very supportive, but I think I teach differently. I do not like written tests and homework all the time, I teach differently, and I find that is sometimes a challenge; they want to see hard marks. What are they getting? What is 80%? What can I do? Which is great because they support their kids. This is just a general statement, but I find that I do not teach in that way. So, I do project-based, have a checklist, and do not give homework unless they do not finish their work in class; we just teach differently. That is sometimes a challenge when I meet with parents, and they want to know the exact percentages on the tests and those things. (Ruby)

Assessment of Newcomer Students

Assessment for students is essential when tracking their progress but assessing newcomer students can be challenging. Some participants mentioned that they sometimes had to seek advice from the administration team regarding assessing newcomer students. This collaboration afforded teachers to be fair to students. Some participants felt that newcomer students who lacked English competency levels would always have challenges meeting the required assessment levels. Alex thought that this was unfair to newcomer students:

I just think it is a disservice to that child to have them participate in this. Moreover, I feel it is frustrating because my newcomers are some of the hardest working students, but their assessments do not show that; the assessments we have do not always afford them success because they are not designed. These kids are doing better than some of our Canadians born here who have English as their first language; they are hardworking, working double-time, but it is hard to communicate that to others. I know that these newcomers will be our new Canadians who are going to keep things going here. So, I hope that people put in a lot more to help them. I guess I have hope and belief in them, I feel a little bit humbled now that I am sharing this with you; that is why I am crying. However, I am passionate about it, and I feel more can be done. There is so much more to being here and being a learner. (Alex)
Participants stated that newcomer students are tested to ascertain their performance levels. However, because of their limited English, it can be challenging to carry out those tests. Ruth noted that the students are sometimes slow because they have not mastered English, and because of this, it is hard to determine if a student with a different cultural background should receive EAL support or help from the resource teachers. Thus, the real challenge is as a result of their limited English.

**Lack of Support for Teachers**

Rebecca pointed out that teachers lack the support to teach culturally diverse newcomer students effectively. Furthermore, some teachers are unwilling to change. She noted that as far as instruction, teachers are locked into the thinking that,

this is how I learned, this is what I know, this is how I know kids learned. I think when we looked at some best practice methods over the last few years, of how students can show their learning making sure that kids, first of all, see themselves in some of the things that we are doing in our classrooms; letting them show their learning in different ways is critical. *(Rebecca)*

Rebecca further shared that with the increase in diversity within the schools, teachers perspectives needed to change. She believes:

Our teachers have made that shift with our First Nations and Métis because we have had PD. After all, we have had expectations, but with our newcomers, I feel that most teachers, I think, just expect them to come in, sit down, do the math, be all right and just make those first tiny steps to try to learn. Are there ways of learning, ways of knowing, different worldviews, and different expectations? So, I think our teachers have a long way to go, and I think our School Division has a long way to go to help our teachers feel comfortable with that. *(Rebecca)*

**Lack of Training and Diversity among Staff**

Rebecca noted that there was no diversity among staff in the learning community. She explained that having a diverse teaching staff can be vital to the teaching and learning process, especially with a highly diverse student population. According to Rebecca, training staff might be helpful:

We are not there yet; first, when I look at our teachers, a culturally responsive, culturally diverse representative workforce, we do not have that. I do not have that I would say in
our building; I do not think we even have an Indigenous or representation in our workforce with some of our EAs; one of our EAs, in particular, is from Iran; I am always asking her how do you do this? However, I hear time and time again; I do not treat my students any differently. I treat them all the same, which is not right; they are not all the same. Moreover, they have different values. There are certainly ways to incorporate different ways of knowing, so I think we need to do some training. (Rebecca)

Lack of Funding for some programs

Terry, Ruby, Rebecca and Alex explained that some school programs have become less effective because of the cutbacks in funding. For instance, the lack of funding has affected areas such as EAL support and cultural programs. Several participants referred to the EAL teacher's help in addressing the learning needs of culturally diverse students. However, with the ministry's cutbacks, they are now receiving less support, and they are finding it challenging to address all students who need EAL support effectively.

Terry stated that this had been a challenge for her as the EAL teacher. Sharing her views; she pointed out that,

I am only supposed to serve grade one students if they have very little English. They may not even know all the letters of the alphabet. Those are the only students that I am supposed to serve, but the reality is that the other kids need the support, and the sooner we get them going, the faster they are going to proceed through to a point where they do not need EAL support at all. This year, there have been many cutbacks, and we cannot supply all the EAL support. (Terry)

Terry also shared another challenge that sometimes hinders the delivery of her content area, noting that students who attended EAL classes are usually time-tabled and scheduled for different times during the day. The fallout is that when students leave classes for EAL, they miss out on core subjects. Not all the students require EAL; however, the ones assigned to EAL classes were the ones who had difficulties mastering other subject areas. Therefore, some participants shared that they found themselves reteaching some content area when newly arrived culturally diverse students are pulled from classrooms to support EAL. Terry noted that the growing population of newcomer students requires that they must receive EAL support to function and learn.

Abigail also shared that the limited EAL support assigned to different schools has contributed to the burnout of EAL teachers because they must serve multiple schools. Thus, their
time and knowledge are split depending on the amount of work allotted to them. The limited access to EAL support has led subject teachers to help newcomer students. Abigail opined,

I think that our teachers are just being told to do what a good teacher does, and a good teacher adapts to every student, and a good teacher knows about every student, and if we think about our saying, I am known, believed in and valued that can encompass every kid. (Abigail)

**Cultural Differences**

Terry and Rebecca mentioned that teachers encountered numerous challenges based on the cultural differences of newcomer students. These challenges they proffered were based on the beliefs, practices, and socialization of newcomer students. Terry related that because of the socialization of males in some cultures, some female teachers and female staff experience difficulties when giving instructions to boys. This behaviour is based on the fact that, in some cultures, males are considered superior to females; thus, they should not take instructions from females. To combat this problem, Rebecca sought out information about the cultures of students represented in the building. This information allowed her to understand better some practices and norms that students bring to the learning community. She then used this knowledge to sensitize students to the Canadian classroom culture and the expectations of students regardless of their ethnicity. Therefore, if a male student displays this behaviour, the situation would be addressed appropriately.

**Addressing the Learning Outcomes of Newcomer Students**

Participants also shared the need to seek the help of school leaders to address newcomer students’ learning outcomes. The aim is to work with newcomers to improve their learning outcomes. To help students learn more effectively, creating flexibility within the teaching and learning process would help the teachers to work more effectively with students to identify and address their challenges. Ruth revealed that the leadership team analyzed the learning goals and helped teachers differentiate instruction as much as possible:

Finding out where they are in their learning have sort of a baseline where our learning goals will be, and then we will keep building on those learning goals. Thus, that is why I think the leadership around here is making us feel comfortable to differentiate enough for them to learn where they are and to keep building on it. (Abigail).
The participants shared that school leaders also ensured that the students needing support to improve their learning outcomes were not rushed through the program. Hence, students must attain some level of English proficiency before being transferred to other support groups. Pauline expressed that:

If they are EAL lots of times, they will not allow the children to cross over and do EAL support and resource support simultaneously. Because there could still be a little bit of language barrier there, once they know that language barrier is no longer. Once they understand English enough, but they are still low or struggling, that child can get resource support where they do an intervention such as reading programs, writing programs, letter sounds, letter recognition depending on where they are with their learning. They can work one-on-one or in a small group with that teacher for a set amount of time each day to try and get them to where they need to be successful in that grade that they are in. (Pauline)

Language Barrier

This specific school is highly diverse, and participants noted that students speak approximately twenty languages. In addition to the numerous languages spoken, some newcomers also spoke little or no English. The limitations students encounter based on their English proficiency contributed to barriers such as teachers comprehending and appreciating students and their needs. Participants also expressed that the language barrier affected communicating with families, leading to frustration for all parties. Abigail claimed:

Communicating is a big one with families and students themselves. I think that communicating with them is finding an effective way to get our message across; conversations seem to take a lot longer with our newcomer families because of their limited English. However, if you look at our staff, not many representations from other cultures, which is a big piece that I think we, as a division, need to work on. The Communication piece with the English language is a problem. Terry's great at finding people who can interpret for us for report cards and things like that, but those services are not free, and people are not readily available. If we have a student who has wet their pants, how can families help when they do not understand, you need to come to school because your child needs new clothes, and then do they hear new clothing thinking that they are not dressing them appropriately and they need to go out and buy new things it just means you need fresh clothing, or what does fresh mean, you know. So, I think that
those kinds of communication pieces, sometimes there is a miscommunication that happens. Thus, that is one of our areas where it would be nice to have more people in the building that speak many different languages, and we are familiar with different cultures. (Abigail)

Despite the challenges with language, Abigail pointed to an initiative she used to help alleviate the problem. In her teaching, she tried not to push too much literature for newcomers to avoid frustration for the students because it can negatively impact their learning. She detailed:

Sometimes, if English is weak, I will use a translator app. I had a few students who did not speak any English at all, and I had them write, but write in their language and then translate that so that I could figure out what they could tell me about their family, tell me about their history, tell me about those sorts of things.”

Lack of External Support and Resources for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Participants identified the lack of resources and support for culturally responsive teaching as barriers in the learning environment. This lack, they claimed, hindered the delivery of culturally responsive learning opportunities for students. They further argued that they could find possible solutions to improve their teaching practice with the necessary resources. The participants held that the school leaders' input outside of the school environment is vital to addressing the needs of culturally diverse newcomer students.

Ruth theorized that leaders outside the learning institution should understand that the school population is different from that of approximately 15 years ago. Therefore, leaders need to see the change occurring and support teachers' needs to teach these students effectively.

The more we can encourage our downtown leaders to understand that the school is different from what it was ten years ago and that equity looks different. As a School Division, we need to encompass all forms of equity and culturally responsive actions. I think it does need to start downtown as well; I think it is starting in the schools, but it needs to be coming from downtown as well because there are some people in the leadership role in other buildings who do not see things the same way we do. Their staff's expectation is a little bit different; they believe that teachers should be curriculum focused, and they should get those outcomes met, and it does not matter how. (Ruth)

Ruth explained that leaders need to be proactive and provide the necessary resources to address specific challenges as the need arises. In her thinking, the leaders from the central office
downtown need to inform school leaders of the resources available to help newcomer children who had little English language abilities. She further intimated that there is no substantial support for instructional materials to facilitate newcomer students; most of the support students received came from EAL classes. Because of the limited resources available to teachers, Ruth expressed that the teachers could not do their jobs effectively. Therefore, it should be a concern, and it should be addressed from the school division level.

Another participant argued that more could be done for newcomer students, but there is not much she could do with the lack of resources. She acknowledged that it was hard to attempt this task all by herself, not knowing what to do or how far she was permitted to go. There was also a concern with how many teachers would be willing to support her if she decided to implement her initiative. Ruth also admitted that she could not teach culturally responsively because of the lack of support. She maintained that she had done everything a good teacher would do, and she tried her best to help her students achieve their learning outcomes. However, cultural responsiveness is a lens that she had not examined, especially for newcomer students.

Abigail was also convinced that teachers did not know where to find the support needed to address the learning needs of newcomer students. Thus, having someone to point them in the right direction would be helpful, especially when situations call for expertise beyond the classroom and school. She conceded that:

The only support that we would have is that it is not on an educational basis or a family basis. There is no one downtown to address newcomers in this way like we have a First Nations Inuit and Métis unit. I know of four people downtown who deals with FNIM matters at the school board office, but we do not have a newcomer unit. We have the newcomer assessment place where people come in to be assessed and figure out their English proficiency level. Hopefully, the supports lack discussions like this one and the continuation of new immigrant families coming in; this will be placed at a higher priority with our board. When our superintendent comes, we do have those conversations like a quarter of our kids are here from a different country. How are you going to help us with that? (Abigail)

Pauline suggested that professional development geared towards cultural responsiveness is needed for teachers to effectively work with culturally diverse newcomer students. She pointed out that:
There is not enough support in all directions, and I do not think that is their fault. It is a fact that there is not enough support from the division to be able to support us in that area. I know that as teachers, we have the opportunity to do professional development. So, there are always workshops that we can attend to enhance our learning as a professional and return to the school and make sure that our students are successful. However, the workshops are mostly curriculum, math or social science based. There is not much on cultural responsiveness; it is based on First Nation, Inuit and Metis students that we teach. (Pauline)

School leaders highlighted that some teachers are frustrated with the lack of external support, which hampered the teachers’ ability to function effectively:

We have all had our frustrations, whether we are classroom teachers or leaders, with the support we are not getting when dealing with newcomers. Thus, it is hard for us to be leaders in an area where we still feel that we are not really at a level that we need to be at ourselves. So, I think that these people are all a hundred percent aware of the differences in teaching students with other worldviews. A student with a different history different background, but I also think that we as a School Division need to support our people better, give better professional development opportunities and understand how we can effect change in our schools. (Abigail)

Although participants shared that they were working with limited resources to address their highly diverse population's learning needs, several other barriers affected how they taught culturally diverse students. As much as they identified those barriers, the participants noted that there was not much they could do outside their learning environment. Some teachers were willing to address those barriers; however, not knowing whom to talk with directly, the approach to take, or how far they could go were barriers to addressing the learning needs of culturally diverse students.

The Impact of the Research and the Understanding of Cultural Responsiveness

Pauline, Abigail, Terry, Rebecca and Ruth thought that being a part of the study allowed them to reflect on their practices and what cultural responsiveness might look like concerning newcomer students. They highlighted areas such as reflection on practice and curriculum review. The opportunity was created for them to review ways in which they teach students from different cultural backgrounds. It was noted that the curriculum is limited to the knowledge and experience
of culturally diverse students; as such, learning how to adapt the curriculum to address to learning needs of students from different cultural backgrounds so that teaching and learning can be more effective.

**Reflection on Practices**

Abigail admitted that, in teaching and learning, it is always necessary to do self-reflection to evaluate your practice, to analyze what is working well, and what areas need improvement. For Abigail, she disclosed that being a part of the research motivated her to think about different worldviews relating to culturally diverse newcomer students. She recounted, in these few words, “I would have taught very much that one-size-fits-all” where she taught everyone the same and did not pay much attention to the fact that all students are different, and their stories help to define what they hold or see as reality.

Abigail, who was in a leadership role, always sought ways to help her teachers to evaluate their practices and take different approaches that would benefit students regardless of ethnicity. She added:

> Because of your research, I am looking at things a little bit differently for my newcomers with our First Nations kids, and I have been very concerned about them in my class. However, this has opened my eyes to seeing them in the school and helping other teachers if they have any questions or just listening to their concerns. We do not necessarily have answers at this point; moreover, that is a big thing with this study that you are doing. I think it has opened our eyes, my eyes as an administrator and a lot more work needs to be done. I feel that classroom teachers are generally somewhat adaptable, welcoming, but I think that piece we are good at, but how can we incorporate worldviews? How can we incorporate those kinds of pieces as an administrator? I am hoping to be able to help with that, and I am certainly not there yet. I need much learning on my part before I can help the other teachers. *(Abigail)*

Other participants verbalized that participating in this research allowed them to self-reflect and looked at ways to improve their practices to serve the students they work for, as this is part of the teaching and learning process.

**Reviewing the Curriculum**

Pauline, Abigail, Terry, and Rebecca contended that the curriculum does not reflect culturally diverse students. As such, they have to adapt the curriculum to meet the learning needs
of these culturally diverse newcomer students. Pauline clearly stated that there was nothing in the Saskatchewan curriculum that supports newcomer families; it is more geared to First Nations Inuit and Metis, which could have resulted from the history and culture of Canada. She affirmed:

    Some of our teachers are more welcoming, more easily adapting their curriculum and adapting the way they teach others, while some are more staunch about what they want, this is how you teach, this is how it has been, this is how it is going to be. These problems are simply in our school, but I think the school division is trying to create the best opportunity for culturally diverse newcomer students. We can certainly do more and should have done more for our newcomer families, and talking with our staff that seems to have some struggles wanting to adapt to the curriculum has been very challenging.

    I had a conversation with a staff member who wants to teach one thing to everyone, which does not work in the best-case scenario. It does not matter if we are all privileged white people sitting in there. It still does not work. We seriously need to understand where people are coming from, their history and expectations of their family and how their world view is entirely different from ours and trying to make that work together is so important. (Pauline)

Despite the many barriers that the participants encountered, they held that the researchers created an opportunity to reflect on their practice to work more effectively with students from different cultural backgrounds. They highlighted the need for change in the curriculum; however, the participants also noted that those changes could only be made at the provincial level. The participants are concerned about the curriculum not reflecting students’ diverse cultural backgrounds, thus making it harder to connect with students while teaching different content areas.

**Participants Suggestions on Culturally Responsive Improvement for Newcomer Students**

    During the interviews, participants shared their opinions about different initiatives that school leaders and leaders at the ministerial level could implement to facilitate culturally diverse newcomer students. Based on what the participants shared, they believed teachers could be more effective in addressing newcomer students' learning needs if the measures listed below were implemented. If these learning needs were to be addressed, it would eventually lead to higher learning outcomes. Understanding how to make the necessary connections would create a learning environment where newcomer students feel safe, and learning would be effective.
Participants highlighted several areas and offered suggestions. These areas are: (a) professional development, (b) documents or manuals that can guide teachers, and (c) resources from the Ministry.

**Professional Development**

Most of what was done around professional development, as expressed by teachers, was geared towards FNIM. This professional development was seen as also vital for newcomer students:

I see PD a lot with the FNIM; there are many resources the treaty Catalyst training where they are smudges that were invited to, we have done PD, FNIM based professional development, which is excellent. However, then I think we also need a voice from an immigrant, immigration perspective to be part of like we have an FNIM unit downtown, I think to have a unit or one person that we can represent where other people are coming from, and it could be Germany, it could be anywhere outside of Canada, even though there are that budget cut and whatnot. Someone hired by the division focuses on culturally responsive education and getting knowledge out to the schools. I think that would be beneficial, like a document and a person, even one person to represent and help educators and leaders deliver content and information for people outside of the FNIM spectrum and who came to Canada within the last five years. We do not have that. *(Ruby)*

**Documents or Manuals as a Guide for Teachers**

Ruby and Abigail shared that they wish they had some written document for newcomer students to refer to for guidance as they teach these diverse groups:

Like a useful document, a protocol, what do we follow? What do we do? Like, I think that needs to be integrated like when we come back to school at the end of summer, and just teachers are here talk about the newcomers and new faces coming here. What is our school look like this coming year? What can we do? We can do some things to make these people feel welcome when we know the families coming in, and if they have any needs, we will have to address those? Like I think that needs to be discussed at the beginning of every year and every staff, we need to bring in those workers to teach the staff. *(Ruby)*

Abigail reflected on the binder she received at a professional development workshop titled “Leading to Learn.” She remembered that the document specifically spoke to FNIM
student’s outcomes. Abigail asked the question: “How can we do this for our newcomers? The fabric of our schools has changed so much that we also need to understand that there is a whole new group of people the newcomer needs to be addressed, and maybe a binder would be helpful for us.”

**Curriculum Changes**

Abigail spoke about curriculum changes that could impact newcomer students learning. She posited that:

I think we view things as teachers as we have to adapt to change, but it is a new idea. When we think about curriculum changes, we have done an excellent job incorporating our First Nations and Métis content into everything, and I think that wherever possible, through inquiry and through having children represent their knowledge differently, we can make it authentic and make sense to each student as a learner. Thus, if we are all doing a novel study on one novel, how they share their learning with us could be completely different. It might have a component to culture and their history that we do not know about, and giving those sort of freedom of choice is undoubtedly one way as teachers as curriculum planners that we can make sure that those opportunities are there for those newcomers students to express themselves in the best way that they can thus the need for a change in the curriculum is vital at this point. *(Abigail)*

During the interviews, several participants made suggestions concerning initiatives that could be put in place to equip teachers to become more culturally responsive. They were aware that the school’s population was becoming more diverse; thus, they appealed to the stakeholders responsible for making significant changes within a learning environment to listen to their voices and respond to their identified needs. Once these needs are addressed, they will become more culturally aware, culturally responsive and perform better at the task given to them to teach all students effectively regardless of their cultural background.

**Summary**

This study examined the influence of school leadership practices on culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students. The findings of the study were placed in categories and further broken down into themes. The themes that emerged from the interviews and classroom observation addressed the perspectives of teachers and leaders around what was done in the learning environment to enact culturally responsive teaching for newcomer students. This study
revealed the participants’ individual experiences, perceptions and beliefs that helped to add meaning to the research. The emerging themes indicated that leadership practices were being enacted to support teachers for culturally responsive teaching based on their knowledge and understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy. As participants understood it, culturally responsive teaching is geared towards the teaching of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis students. However, to have a detailed understanding of the participant's perspective, the following chapter presents the findings and interpretation through the lens of related literature. These findings could reveal necessary components to incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices to address newcomer students' diverse learning needs in Canada.


CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion of Themes on Leadership Practices for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Chapter five discusses the research's findings and highlights the influence of school leadership practices on CRP for newcomer students. The chapter captures (a) how teachers and school leaders interpreted culturally responsive pedagogy, (b) creating a culturally responsive school, (c) the leadership practices that leaders exhibited to facilitate culturally responsive teaching, (d) the barriers or challenges that impeded the delivery of culturally responsive teaching, (e) the impact of the research and participants’ suggestions on improving culturally responsive teaching for newcomer students. The chapter concludes with a diagram highlighting the major themes and outlines how principals enact these practices to ensure CRP for culturally diverse newcomer students.

In this study, an instrumental case study was conducted to explore the culturally responsive leadership practices in pedagogy for newcomer students. School leaders and teachers within a selected school were the primary sources of data. The overarching research question that guided the study was: How do school leaders in a culturally diverse elementary school enact leadership practices that support teachers’ culturally responsive pedagogy?

The data collected in the study were analyzed to answer the following sub-research questions:

1. How do school leaders influence teachers’ cultural responsiveness to address the needs of culturally diverse newcomer students?
2. What do school leaders do to ensure that teachers have the necessary resources to work effectively with newcomer students in the classroom?
3. How do school leaders support teachers in creating a culturally responsive classroom environment for newcomer students from diverse cultural backgrounds?
4. How do school leaders mobilize professional development strategies to facilitate culturally responsive pedagogy?
5. What are the culturally responsive leadership practices enacted by school leaders to facilitate culturally diverse students?

Interpretation of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Analysis of the data provided insights into leadership practices for culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students. Participants interpreted culturally responsive pedagogy solely
concerning First Nation, Inuit, and Metis (FNIM) students. The participants, including school leaders, considered FNIM students to be the most at-risk students. Because of this, the Ministry of Education's mandate was to have these students achieve the required level of competencies to improve their learning and graduation rates. Bishop et al. (2014) noted that FNIM students are considered low achievers or underachievers due to poverty, lack of familial support, and the unavailability of other support systems. To close this gap, Singer (2015) suggested that educators continue to seek ways to solve these problems to recognize and address students' needs.

From the data analyzed, participants confirmed that culturally responsive pedagogy focused on FNIM and not newcomer students. For instance, in Saskatchewan, the Provincial Education Sector Plan (2015) suggested that the collaboration between non FNIM partners and FNIM partners should improve students' learning outcomes and increase graduation rates. Thus, educators who undertake professional development geared towards FNIM are vital to enhancing and helping to create equity and cultural responsiveness. The mandate of Saskatchewan schools is to create a learning community and an environment that supports equity and culturally responsive pedagogy geared towards FNIM students while providing teachers and school leaders the necessary skills to teach these students.

The increasing numbers of immigrant students entering Canadian schools have changed the landscape from what they were in the last fifteen to twenty years. Although the findings suggested that cultural responsiveness was geared only towards FNIM students, because of the increased diversity, school leaders and teachers have had to navigate their way into teaching white and FNIM students and newcomer students from other cultural backgrounds. While the focus on FNIM is understandable, emerging evidence suggests that educators should also address the learning needs of other culturally diverse groups in Canada. An analysis of the data revealed that teachers and school leaders in this study used their knowledge on culturally responsive teaching for FNIM students to support culturally diverse newcomer students in the classroom. Thus, teachers ensured cultural responsiveness to newcomer students in four ways: supporting newcomer students to feel comfortable, being sensitive to the challenges newcomer students and families face, building connections with parents and students, and promoting a safe space.

**Supporting Newcomer Students**

Participants highlighted that it was critical that newcomer students feel a sense of belonging for teaching and learning to be more meaningful and effective. These sentiments are
consistent with contemporary literature suggesting that educators interested in newcomer students’ academic achievements and well-being motivate students to be more participative in-class activities (Gay & Nieto, 2000). Notably, the literature also indicates that once newcomer students know they have support in the learning community, they do not feel connected, contributing to feeling safe, socializing and developing meaningful relationships (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

**Being Sensitive to Newcomer Students**

According to Gay (2000), challenges to students, including newcomer students, could stem from race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, languages, sexual orientation, or academic levels. Gay believed that to create an environment conducive to learning; teachers must be sensitive to the challenges of culturally diverse students. If they are not sensitive and equipped to address these challenges, the teaching and learning process could become complicated. Although I did not observe a situation where participants displayed sensitivity to newcomer students, based on the participants’ interpretation of cultural responsiveness, being sensitive to students was a constant practice in the learning community.

**Building Connections**

Building connections with newcomer students is crucial to their integration and finding a sense of belonging in the new social setting. The findings revealed that teachers build relationships with students in two ways. First, teachers directly connect with students, and second, with their families. Regarding making connections with students, teachers believed that when students share their experiences in the learning process and connect to their previous knowledge, they feel valued. Freeze (2003) noted that newcomer students need to be socially engaged for a sense of belonging to be actualized. One way to do this was to get them involved in school activities and create opportunities to interact with other students.

Having a sense of belonging can optimize student performance. Anderman (2002) argued that a sense of belonging contributes to students’ academic success as they engage in different activities in the social environment. Engagement in these events helps students to develop integrity, build relationships, solve problems, and develop a sense of empathy. It also allows them to share their ideas, feelings, and experiences, contributing to their self-worth and security (Broderick & Blewitt, 2009).
Concerning how schools build connections through social activities, the participants agreed that connecting with students and families is critical. Building connections through school activities is one initiative that school leaders and teachers use to maintain that connection with the students and their families throughout the school year. Making connections help students and their families feel valued and appreciated. The participants shared that they connected with families and students through social events such as potlucks, concerts, meet the teacher night and student-teacher games. Teachers used these opportunities to get to know the students and their parents while making connections and building relationships. Some participants pointed out that meaningful connections created opportunities for learners to develop trust and feel comfortable sharing their unique experiences as they became engaged in the learning community.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that illustrated how social activities aimed at connecting with students and their families could contribute to low students’ drop-out, higher students’ achievements, and motivate students to have more excellent work attitudes (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Weiss et al., 2009). However, creating connections with diverse families can be challenging because of a mismatch between family expectations and the extent to which the school can accommodate cultural differences (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Ferguson, 2008). The data revealed that the school often used fundraising activities and newsletters to build connections with families; however, some participants expressed that sometimes these did not create significant relationships with families. Hence, if schools want to have a stable connection with diverse families and students, they must think of creative ways to engage families that could be more meaningful.

**Promoting a Safe Space**

Creating a safe space for students is one way that some participants achieved cultural responsiveness. These participants believed that promoting a safe space for newcomer students was crucial to their learning. When students feel safe, they are more willing to share, allowing them to connect their previous knowledge and experiences, thereby creating more significant learning outcomes. Moreover, the participants indicated that creating an inclusive classroom that respected students’ culture made students feel valued, safe, and welcomed. In line with this argument, Berry et al. (2006) noted that if newcomer students' cultures are accepted and maintained in the learning community, it will lessen the integration period for newcomers.
In addition, a positive school climate where students feel safe is vital. Some participants opined that teachers and school leaders should achieve a positive school climate because many students come from homes where they might be experiencing financial, cultural or social difficulties. Some participants believed that building trust among students would enhance their feelings of safety in the learning community for this to happen. Steele and Cohn-Vargas (2013) argued that once a school climate provides an atmosphere where students’ abilities are valued and nurtured, students will feel safe, and learning will be sufficient. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2009) noted that school climate norms, values, interpersonal relations, teaching and learning practices and actors in the learning community influence these behaviours. All stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, and principals, play a vital role in shaping a school climate where students are safe and learning can be optimized (Cohen et al., 2009).

A Culturally Responsive School

The culturally responsive school is highlighted in this section, as I examined different areas in which school leaders and teachers created a learning space conducive for learning. The findings highlighted several ways teachers and school leaders enacted culturally responsive practices, such as through culturally responsive classrooms, teacher-student ratio, and symbolic gestures.

Culturally Responsive Classroom

Findings revealed that creating a classroom environment that facilitated newcomer students’ engagement was vital to creating a culturally responsive classroom. In this research, the absence of individual desks in the classroom created opportunities for teachers to seat students in groups, allowing students to collaborate and work in groups. This way, they could share their cultural backgrounds and experiences as they integrated into the learning community.

With more space in the classroom, teachers moved around freely while assisting students with learning tasks. While observing the teaching and learning process, I witnessed some teachers using different activities, such as card games, show and tell activities. Students were also assigned to help their classmates, especially if they had challenges completing tasks; these activities encouraged student-centred learning. Teachers were engaged in the activities as they guided students in making connections.

Montgomery (2001) stated that having students working in groups provides a comprehensive perspective based on diverse student input. Saunders (1999) and Saunders and
Goldenberg (1999) also found that student-centred practices allow students to engage in dialogues that facilitate conversations around academic content. While this is happening, students are creating connections to personal, cultural, family and community knowledge.

**Teacher-Student Ratio**

The participants also highlighted improvements in the teacher-student ratio to enhance the classroom environment and facilitate newcomer students' easy integration into the class. As indicated in the findings, participants expressed that the increase in newcomer students contributed to crowded classrooms, which hinders the ability of teachers to enact CRP. Thus, school leaders lobbied for additional teachers to create a conducive learning space. Culturally responsive leaders must acquire the necessary resources to foster a culturally responsive environment that addresses students' needs (Ainscow, 2005; Reihl, 2000).

**Symbolic Gestures**

The study also suggested that students saw themselves mirrored in the learning environment through symbolic gestures in the school and classrooms, thus maintaining a culturally responsive school. School leaders and teachers highlighted that displaying symbolic gestures, such as flags representing the countries students came from, the word “welcome” in different languages, was an essential way of making newcomers feel more welcome, valued and respected. Gay (2002) intimated that these symbolic gestures could also be seen as an extended curriculum as they depict the school's skills, morals, and core values and the population they serve. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Nieto (2000), McIntyre et al. (2001), and Gay (2002) that emphasized the critical role of cultural representation in achieving an inclusive learning environment.

For instance, Nieto (2000) noted that a lack of culturally appropriate pictures, posters, and other instructional material in a diverse learning space could contribute to an environment that enhances learning for culturally diverse learners. For McIntyre et al. (2001), the learning environment should represent diverse students' lives through connections with the home, school and community. Gay (2002) noted that once the message of diversity is communicated through symbolic gestures, students will learn from them and understand that they are valued community members. Gay (2002) held that a positive display of symbolic gestures should motivate and educate students, especially images that depict success and students' culture. These gestures help create an atmosphere conducive to learning.
Enacting Culturally Responsive Teaching

As explained in previous sections, culturally responsive teaching was viewed through the lens of helping FNIM students. Nonetheless, participants were able to enact culturally responsive teaching for newcomer students. These were enacted through various strategies such as connecting students with their backgrounds by drawing on real-life student experience, making connections with family, peer-to-peer learning and sharing promising practices.

First, participants maintained that connecting with newcomer students’ backgrounds helped them to integrate more readily. Students felt a sense of belonging through these connections, which made them more comfortable sharing their experiences. This sentiment is in line with Baumeister and Leary’s (1995) thoughts. They noted that having a sense of belonging is essential to human beings; therefore, it could lead to adverse outcomes when a connection is lacking. Once teachers can effectively connect with students, they can create opportunities for positive relationships and more significant learning outcomes (Villegas & Lucas, 2004).

Second, a number of the participants saw the need to allow students to share their stories to connect with the learning process. They believed that learning would be more effective in sharing their stories because students could talk about their experiences, which differed based on their cultural backgrounds and worldviews. Findings were consistent with Quicho and Rias (2000) and Norton (2013), who suggested that students with diverse backgrounds can bring unique information to the learning environment because of the experience they have acquired. These experiences shape their realities. Teachers can create opportunities for diverse students by posting work-related material to express themselves, such as poems, songs, and pictures. Students could also be encouraged to engage in storytelling or freewriting exercises, which would allow them to connect with the school community (Lundsman, 2016). Gay (2000) noted that culturally responsive teachers use diverse students’ experiences and behaviours to build their learning. Moreover, Gay explained that it is necessary to consider what they know based on their cultural backgrounds to teach these students effectively. If students can share their experiences, it would influence their behaviour and change the learning environment.

Nonetheless, it is essential to state that not all participants believed drawing on students' background experience is ideal for classroom learning. Participants noted that some students might have experienced adverse situations that impacted their lives, such as war, living in refugee camps or child abuse. This practice confirmed Ladson-Billings' (2000) findings that diverse
students’ cultural norms and practices are often not considered important or valuable in the learning space. Hence, students with these experiences were not asked to share their stories.

Third, the participants also enacted culturally responsive teaching with newcomers by making connections with families. Participants made connections with newcomer students by encouraging them to participate in after-school activities such as sports initiated by the Open-Door Society and clubs, such as knitting. It was clear from the data that newcomer families’ involvement confirmed their interest in their children’s education and made them comfortable. At this stage, parental involvement is necessary to contribute to the academic success of newcomer students (Bang, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Tunung & Kao, 2009).

Fourth, participants shared that using peer-to-peer methods helped in culturally responsive teaching as it provided opportunities for students to collaborate. Participants expressed that the opportunity is there for diverse students from a similar background who spoke the same language and were more comfortable relating to each other. It also allowed teachers to group them with these students so that they can learn from each other. According to Johnson and Johnson (2000), information acquired about different cultures and ethnicities often comes not from textbooks but through interactions with individuals from diverse groups. Therefore, having students peer share in the learning environment created opportunities to value diversity, use their abilities to solve problems creatively, build their skills, and effectively work with diverse peers. Because of the cooperative strategy, social interaction is encouraged, which leads to a cross-ethnic relationship, which can reduce racial stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice (McLemore & Romo, 1998).

**Becoming Culturally Aware**

During the interviews, one participant intimated that teachers and school leaders must become culturally aware for culturally responsive teaching to be effective. The participant recommended that administrators, many of whom are school leaders, could man the initiative. Currently, promoting cultural awareness happens only with FNIM students. Nevertheless, based on the participant's experience, FNIM and immigrant students have varied learning needs. Thus, more needed to be done to promote cultural awareness concerning newcomer students. Milner (2007) and Ayres (2001) stated that many educators harbour inaccurate perceptions concerning culturally diverse students, and as such, their beliefs can impact students’ success. Therefore, teachers must be exposed and engaged in interactive opportunities that will allow them to teach
students from culturally diverse backgrounds effectively. Ford (2010) alluded that culturally responsive teachers seek to address diverse students’ needs to succeed. Ford further elaborated that these teachers should understand, respect, and meet diverse students’ needs from different cultural backgrounds.

It is also necessary for school leaders to receive training in becoming culturally responsive. Spring (2014) noted that emerging school leaders are ill-prepared to deal with the demographic shift in the learning environment and, as such, lack the knowledge and experiences to advocate for a learning environment that provides an equitable education for all students. If school leaders are untrained in cultural responsiveness, they cannot effect change.

**Lack of Resources**

From the data analysis, it was revealed that there were limited resources to teach newcomer students. As such, some teachers relied heavily on the EAL teacher to help them acquire resources. However, Levine (2005) and Riehl (2000) noted it is the responsibility of school leaders to equip teachers with the resources and professional learning to teach students from culturally diverse backgrounds. If teachers are not equipped, teaching culturally diverse students can be challenging and lead to teacher burnout. If resources are in place to teach newcomer students, they will feel more comfortable learning in their new environment. Having resources in place fosters a culturally responsive environment which is paramount to culturally diverse students learning outcomes (Ainscow, 2005 & Riehl, 2000).

**Use of Classroom Libraries**

Classroom libraries were a part of all the classrooms observed. These areas provided the opportunity for students to build their readings skills. Notedly, books in the classroom libraries were written in different languages and cultures with English translations that reflected some students’ cultures. Teachers shared that the availability of books in the classroom helped students see themselves as a part of the learning community. Hughes-Hasell and Cox (2010) asserted that authentic material in a classroom library portraying the diversity of languages and cultures within could positively contribute to children’s self-image and develop their cultural understanding, which will create an opportunity for cultural bridges. Hughes-Hasell and Cox (2010) further expressed that material in classroom libraries that reflects diversity allows students to meet people like themselves and come to appreciate their culture and the culture of others. Moreover, books can also be a map that guides children into making decisions about their world. They
develop relationships with others and decide on the destination they will take as they navigate their way throughout society (Myers, 2014).

**Enacting Culturally Responsive Leadership**

Leadership practices can entail varied activities exercised by a person or a group that influence students’ development (Leithwood, 2012). The participants shared how the practices of school leaders influenced their teaching, especially for newcomer students or students with diverse backgrounds. These school leaders created opportunities for teachers to share successful practices. They facilitated collaboration and teamwork, encouraged flexibility and mentoring of students, promoted equity and respect among students and urged teachers to model the behaviours they desired. The school leaders also took the initiative to ensure that calendar events included ones that would engage families, students and staff. These events are geared at creating the opportunity to build relationships and become more connected to their child’s learning. Riehl (2000) noted that school leaders are responsible for developing new perspectives about diversity to promote inclusive practices within the school they lead. These practices will build better connections between the school and the community in which they serve.

**Sharing Successful Practices**

Participants suggested sharing successful practices to teach culturally diverse students, and school leaders should facilitate this opportunity. When teachers can share their best teaching practices, it positively influences the whole school community and enhances teachers' expertise and effectiveness (Hattie, 2015). Participants expressed that some colleagues had more experience working with students from different cultural backgrounds and shared a lot. It was also an opportunity for them to build a relationship while learning from their peers simultaneously. Zapeda (2003) noted that school leaders who encouraged teachers to share successful practices created opportunities to highlight teachers’ strengths and weaknesses. It also allowed leaders to provide the necessary resources to support the teachers for higher academic performance.

**Collaboration and Teamwork**

The findings indicated that school leaders supported teachers’ needs by fostering collaboration and teamwork. The participants expressed that the school leader would point them in the direction necessary to address the newcomers’ needs. Marks and Printy (2003) asserted that school leaders and teachers should work together to examine efficient practices to create and
maintain an excellent learning community and positively influence students learning. Participants expressed that through collaborative efforts, they made decisions that were beneficial to students’ performance. Essentially, they ensured that the students received the necessary help to perform at the highest level of their potential.

*Flexibility and Mentoring Students*

The school leaders’ role in promoting and encouraging flexibility among teachers emerged as very important to culturally responsive teaching. For instance, one participant pointed out that the school leaders allowed her to be flexible with teaching newcomer students. She recalled that having that level of support helped her support newcomer students as they integrated into their new learning space. Rosenblatt (2004) described flexibility as a skill that educators need to acquire and use as it is required to change pedagogical and administrative demands within the learning environment, and this will influence social reforms. Rosenblatt (2004) further explained that schools need to be flexible and develop the skills necessary to propose organizational strategies while facing different changes. In adapting to changes, teachers will have to make quick decisions and take on new roles within short periods based on the situation; therefore, leaders should be flexible to provide the necessary support.

The participants also intimated that school leaders encouraged them to be mentors for newcomer students. This practice helped students to integrate and feel safe in the learning environment. Deneef (2002) noted that mentoring could provide academic guidance, along with a sense of belonging. Mentorship also provides advice and assistance that can be done formally or informally and can lead to developed relationships (Ferman, 2002). During the mentorship process, teachers connected with students and create opportunities for newcomer students to feel comfortable relating to them as they adapted to their new learning environment.

*Equity and Respect*

Participants held that equity and respect were necessary for teaching and learning. Thus, they took the time to help students understand the importance of this practice. They also highlighted that school leaders encouraged such practice and reinforced it through professional development workshops. In the literature, Shields (2010) argued that transformative leadership seeks to improve the quality of institutions, and in doing so, they also promote equity and justice for all. Gay (2000) mentioned that promoting equity and respect among students will allow all students to feel fairly treated regardless of their cultural backgrounds. If this practice is not
reinforced among students, it can lead to anger, frustration, and unworthiness. All these contribute to low performance in school. Equity and respect should be the responsibility of all schools. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), once this is practiced, it affords all students academic success. For this to be actualized, all stakeholders must address inequitable power structures in the learning environment, acknowledge students’ learning styles and how best to work with them, practice differentiated instruction, and build on students’ prior knowledge and diverse experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Participants agreed that modelling desired behaviours were useful in the learning community. Hence, when teachers lead by example, students will adopt such behaviours. Banks and Banks (2004), Gay (2000), Ladson-billings (1994), and Nieto (1999) argued that teachers are role models, and by demonstrating behaviours that highlight fairness and respect, they can also use teaching moments to remind students that it is reasonable to be different and unique. Teachers who continuously do this will also see the need to monitor students’ behaviours, and they will congratulate and validate students who learn and have academic success.

**Availability of Professional Development**

Participants highlighted that the school division prepared and implemented professional development activities within the school environment. However, these events were geared towards FNIM students and not newcomers. Thus, there was no official training that addressed the learning needs of newcomer students. Participants noted that most of what they do regarding teaching newcomer students is based on their teaching experience and knowledge gained from FNIM workshops. Several participants argued that each student is different; therefore, learning how to teach newcomer students would be helpful, especially with the growing diversity of the school. The collaborative inquiry team led professional development through the North End collaborative group in the school where this study was conducted. However, culturally responsive teaching for newcomer students was never a topic. One participant indicated that conversations about addressing the needs of newcomer students had to be purposefully planned, and it should take place from the school leadership’s perspective.

Although there is professional development geared toward other student groups represented in the learning community, the challenges of newcomer students are different. Therefore, teachers need to appreciate these challenges and work with these students for higher learning outcomes. According to Au (2009) and Cummings (2007), addressing students’ learning
needs has become a significant challenge because teachers are ill-equipped to effectively teach students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This inadequacy can create a cultural gap between teachers and students, eventually leading to educators’ inability to choose appropriate curricula material to effectively execute instructional practices (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Thus, if teachers do not acquire the necessary skills to work with newcomer students learning will not be effective. One participant commented, “one size does not fit all.”

According to Kea and Trent (2013), teachers’ lack of proficiency in being culturally responsive can be attributed to the traditional teacher model, which limits exposure or the significance of culturally responsive teaching in field placement and student teaching. However, policymakers and education systems should revise their policy to incorporate culturally responsive teaching for culturally diverse newcomer students with the demographic shift in the learning environment. If this were done, teachers would be better equipped to teach all students while being culturally responsive.

Despite the policymakers’ input, Forghani-Arani et al. (2019) noted that teachers should be the driving force behind system change, with the support of school leaders. Leithwood et al. (2004) indicated that the school leaders’ role is crucial to the teaching and learning process; thus, they are the primary facilitator for culturally responsive pedagogy. If teachers are left to act independently, without the school leaders’ support, they are often reluctant to change, especially if they believe their teaching practices were already rewarding (Martin & Hand, 2009).

Although Drago-Sevenson (2012) argued that school leaders often struggle to create a supportive climate for teachers, school leaders must seek strategies that will create opportunities for teachers to be fully equipped to address the learning needs of all students regardless of ethnicity. It is, therefore, necessary for teachers to appreciate different cultures, cultural norms and behaviours, and how teachers can adapt classroom instruction and interaction to facilitate and embrace the differences among students (Orosco & O’Connor, 2011).

**Relationship between School Leaders, Teachers, Students and Newcomer Families**

According to Brewers and MaCeba (2014), school plays an essential role in the lives of newcomer students as they learn to adapt to the new learning environment and develop a sense of belonging through these social interactions. Building connections with families and students also create opportunities for higher academic success among newcomer students, as noted by Bang (2011), Henderson and Mapp (2002), Turney and Kao (2009). Participants expressed that based
on the connection with families and students, they could develop different skills based on their engagement in activities. Participants also shared that they could connect with students while they learn lifelong skills. Lundsman (2006) noted that teachers could build on activities outside of academics to make classroom connections for students while they acquire different skills. He also proposed that teachers recognize students’ work outside of the classroom to highlight acquired skills.

Wilson (2004), Khalifa (2010), and Epstein (2010) intimated that collaboration between school and communities serves to strengthen family engagement, which is vital to bridging the gap between the home and school cultures. These partnerships build trust with families, students and teachers and help to maintain student connectedness and a sense of belonging. Connecting with families and students through social events and partnerships, according to participants, were effective ways in which school leaders fostered these relationships.

The participants shared that school leaders created different opportunities to build relationships with all stakeholders in the learning community. This practice was evident in their partnerships through social events, cultural events and developing students’ skills. Participants further agreed that the school leaders encouraged partnerships with different organizations to connect with students and their learning. Ford (2002) noted that effective partnerships benefit all students, and they are also helpful as they create educational opportunities for students from multicultural backgrounds.

**Barriers to Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning**

From the data analysis, the participants outlined some barriers that impacted newcomer students’ learning. There were school-related barriers, language barriers, and external barriers. School-related barriers included the curriculum, differing learning styles, parent expectations, assessment, lack of teacher support for culturally responsive teaching, and staff diversity. These barriers are discussed below.

**Curriculum**

Boske (2014a), Greene (2004) and Pinar (2011) noted that a curriculum helps learners to understand who they are in the world. Participants, however, articulated that the curriculum did not reflect newcomer students' needs, so teachers found it challenging to use it as a guide to teaching newcomer students. One participant voiced that she tried to do what a good teacher would do, drawing on her years of experience working with students from different cultural
backgrounds. Regarding the curriculum, the Canadian Multicultural Act (1998) noted that for the curriculum to be valid for newcomer students, it must create the opportunity to highlight these students’ heritage.

Schick and Dennis (2005) argued that public education is based on Western perspectives, and non-white students are often not reflected in the curriculum. Gay (2000) believed that although the curriculum does not reflect the background of culturally diverse students, teachers should adapt the curriculum to address the learning needs of students to actualize their true potential and create opportunities for them to attain higher learning outcomes. Based on the data, some teachers were reluctant to change, which could be because they were unaware of the right approach when teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds. One participant intimated that searching the internet for culturally diverse teaching resources was daunting, and sometimes the results were unpleasant. Nonetheless, Neito (2000) and Sleeter (2012) contended that newcomer students could construct new realities by connecting course content to their prior knowledge through culturally responsive teaching. Furthermore, Gollinik and Chin (2017) posited that culturally diverse students would be more motivated to learn and feel more valued if the types of resource materials used in the learning environment, such as books, films or learning activities, represented their communities.

Nieto (2004) postulated that school leaders should enforce an inclusive curriculum that fosters learning for culturally diverse students. Nieto also believed that school leaders should provide the support and necessary resources to create higher learning outcomes. An inclusive curriculum will allow culturally diverse learners to construct and broaden their knowledge as they share and relate in the learning community (Nieto, 2004).

**Differing Learning Styles**

Gay (2002) argued that it is necessary to prepare teachers with culturally responsive knowledge, skills, and attitude. If teachers were to receive training in these areas, they could help bridge the gap between the delivery of instruction and students’ diverse learning styles. With the different cultural backgrounds represented in the learning community, it is safe to imply that students' learning styles differ. The variances in learning styles are grounded in the students' cultural and prior learning experiences. Participants conceded that they find it challenging to help students adjust to the new way of learning. Thus, teachers must acquire the appropriate skills to assess students’ learning styles. These skills will allow teachers to understand students’
differences based on their cultural backgrounds, problem-solving, communication, and working with others (Saphier & Gower, 1997). This knowledge will provide teachers with a better understanding of how culturally diverse students learn and communicate and the best approach to teaching and learning.

**Expectation from Parents**

The findings indicated that parents’ expectations were very high. Participants noted that it could be grounded in their ethnicity, cultural beliefs or their worldviews. Many immigrant parents expect their children to become prominent representatives in society and encourage them to reach a high level of professionalism. Carpenter (2008) contended that parental expectation is how parents view their children's success; their expectations can be fueled by ethnicity, social constraints, gender, and previous achievements. Parents who see school as a means of social achievement will push their children to pursue education, and these parents usually have high expectations of their children (Carreon et al., 2005). The literature demonstrated that children whose parents have high expectations achieve higher grades and are more likely to pursue higher education (Rutckick et al., 2009). For instance, one participant mentioned that children need an education, but the degree to which newcomer parents push their children to be successful would not “push” them as much.

Parental expectations influence the support they give to students at school and at home, such as helping with homework to create a supportive environment that fosters learning (Mistry et al., 2009). However, participants expressed that high parental expectation was one of the challenges they encountered with newcomer families because they believed this approach was overbearing. Epstein (2016) argued that this approach effectively builds a relationship between parents and their children while contributing to higher learning outcomes for students.

**Assessment of Newcomer Students**

Assessing newcomer students is another barrier participants encountered in establishing and maintaining culturally responsive protocols. They believed that the existing assessments were not designed for newcomer students, and as such, the result did not always reflect their true potential, especially if their English is limited. Assessing students’ ability and achievement, according to Banks and Banks (2004), Gay (2000), Ladson-Billings (1994) and Nieto (1999), should be accurately done in the best possible way because it will impact the instructional program for culturally diverse students. According to these researchers, the only way the
assessment can be accurate is if the instrument and the procedures are valid for the student population assessed.

A culturally diverse school population has students from different cultural backgrounds; thus, their communication, practices, language, and ways of testing might differ. Most times, the formal education system ignores or underutilizes the knowledge and experiences students with different ethnic backgrounds bring to schools (Cummins, 2000). Therefore, these components should be considered when assessing students (Richards et al., 2007). If sensitivity is not shown to students’ cultural backgrounds, an assessment will not reflect their true potential, and the opportunity to evaluate and build on the knowledge would be lost (Richards et al., 2007).

The literature highlights that students from different ethnic backgrounds may perform at a lower level, even though there is no challenge with their mental ability to perform (Law & Nelson, 2016). However, Law and Nelson (2017) further noted that teachers often misjudge students from culturally diverse backgrounds because of their inability to speak English fluently. Thus, such students are usually placed in EAL programs. Studies examining bilingual education report that it could be difficult for students to learn languages other than their mother tongue (Law & Nelson, 2016). This challenge can influence how quickly they grasp the new knowledge and skills. During this process, students may feel pressurized to learn the language, leading to alienation. Further, students’ alienation may be interpreted as a lack of learning ability (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay, 2010; Neito, 2010). Although these students may struggle to speak the language, they do not necessarily perform at low academic levels.

Gilborn (2008) argued that the perceived gap is not because students cannot perform; rather, the assessment procedures limit students from actualizing their true education potential. Although assessments could be structured to fit dominant school cultures, stakeholders must think of ways to restructure assessments to incorporate the beliefs, values and understanding of students who are different and representative of the dominant cultures within the Saskatchewan learning environment over the last twenty years (Gilborn, 2008). According to Vassallo (2008), schools should create a learning environment that connects students learning and considers other students from different cultural backgrounds. Schools should cultivate learning, whether formally or informally and address students' learning needs in their classroom or public-school population.

Statistics Canada (2013) forecasted that, in the foreseeable future, schools would continue to see increases in culturally diverse students. Blankstein and Noguera (2015) highlighted that
children have different experiences, and their identities differ. However, these children’s learning needs must be met if they are to be successful in school and life. Therefore, all stakeholders, school leaders and teachers must rise to the challenge and ensure that all students, regardless of their gender, race, culture, or status, have access to fair assessments to promote equity. Gay (2013) and Klingner et al. (2005) recommended that culturally responsive assessment practices require teachers to select formal measures appropriate for the population being assessed. By doing this, teachers can tap into students’ strengths, integrate appropriate ongoing curriculum-based assessments and involve trained individuals from students’ cultural groups when developing the assessments. Teachers should also recognize that learning is measured by a continuum of performances rather than an assessment done at a designated time.

**Lack of Teacher Support**

The data revealed that some teachers refused to modify their teaching strategies to address the learning needs of culturally diverse students. When teaching diverse students, teachers must become culturally responsive by offering support through the curriculum to scaffold students learning, building on their strengths, and ensuring that they take responsibility for students’ success while creating a respectful, safe and inclusive learning space (Dixon et al., 2015). For teachers to master the practice, they will need the support of culturally responsive leaders who should develop different strategies to work with teachers who may resist culturally responsive alternatives (Khalifa, 2013). To assist teachers in becoming culturally responsive, Howley and Nieto (2010) argued that school-based professional learning communities should create opportunities to motivate teachers to maximize their potential and contribute to classroom growth.

**Lack of Teacher Preparedness and Diversity among Staff**

Participants contended that the staff was not reflective of the schools’ population. Furthermore, they commented that there was a general lack of training for staff as it relates to diversity among newcomer students. The lack of these attributes among teachers impacts how effectively they practice cultural responsiveness. According to Au (2009) and Cummings (2007), students from diverse cultural backgrounds have unique needs and addressing these needs has become a significant challenge. Many teachers are ill-equipped, lacking the relevant content, knowledge, experience and training to address students’ learning needs. This inadequacy could
create a gap between teachers and students and restrict teachers’ ability to execute effective instructional practices. Thus, they make poor curricula choices to address learners' needs.

According to Ryan et al. (2009), Canada has seen an increasing number of immigrants, and there is an apparent mismatch in the teaching profession, especially in elementary and secondary schools. This mismatch could be attributed to what Schmidt (2010) described as systematic discrimination that limits the opportunities for minority teachers to become a part of the workforce. As classrooms become more diverse, teaching staff should also change to match the needs of students. A staff with teachers from different ethnic and racial backgrounds will provide numerous educational benefits. Nieto (1999) stated that culturally diverse students feel more comfortable with teachers that look like them. Nieto believed that the resemblance provided stability for students as they transitioned into the new learning space. Therefore, a teaching staff that reflects the school population’s demographics will motivate students to see themselves accomplish their dreams and meet their career expectations (Branch & Kristsonis, 2006; Dee, 2005).

Ryan et al. (2009) further argued that teachers of diverse backgrounds represent students' cultural diversity in the Canadian classroom. Teachers from diverse backgrounds can help effect change as they act as role models. This way, they aim to build relationships with students of diverse backgrounds, and they help deliver relevant pedagogy that leads to positive student achievement.

**Lack of Funding**

The participants expressed that lack of funding is one of the barriers they encountered, and it prevented them from having different activities that allow student involvement. They also expressed that the EAL support has been reduced because of a lack of funding; therefore, only students deemed critical received support while other students who may need help in some areas were denied EAL opportunities. The K-12 education system in Canada is governed provincially and focuses on schools' priorities and needs. Herman (2013) reported that adopting an equitable funding system will not provide equal educational opportunities. Fair school funding creates opportunities for all students to maximize the chance to obtain a high-quality education, which will foster student success. Teachers shared that sometimes fundraising activities provided some funding; however, that was inadequate to fill the gap. Therefore, the school had to work with the
funding provided and implement other strategies to effectively fill the gap as the need arose (Herman, 2013).

**Cultural Differences**

Based on the findings presented, few teachers experienced challenges with cultural differences. They acknowledged that it was harder for them to communicate and connect with students because of the cultural differences. These cultural differences might have caused teachers to believe that students were resentful or lacked respect. The data revealed that some newcomer students did not respect female teachers in positions of authority and did not believe that they should be receiving instruction from a female teacher. As such, having the school population consisting of mostly female teachers, some teachers found it challenging communicating with these students.

Gay (2006) noted that teachers should be aware of students’ cultural differences and appreciate them. Once teachers are conscious of the cultural differences, they should find effective ways to work with students and help them to connect with the learning community. Gay further intimated that students from different cultural backgrounds are socialized differently based on their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, language, sexual orientation, and academic level. Therefore, teaching and learning will be challenging if teachers do not equip themselves to tackle these differences.

According to Grant and Aseming-Boahane (2006) and Nieto (2004), teachers must evaluate their beliefs of other cultures; taking the time to know about students’ culture alleviates preconceived ideas. Based on challenges, such as cultural differences, Nieto (2014), Banks et al. (2001) and Howard-Hamilton (2000) argued that if this situation is left unaddressed, it can lead to cultural blindness. Teachers may ignore the problem and pretend that these students are invisible. If this happens, students’ feelings of empowerment and sense of belonging will slowly deteriorate and can decrease the level of student enthusiasm towards work and the desire to become successful (Banks et al., 2001; Howard-Hamilton, 2000; Nieto, 2014).

**Addressing Learning Outcomes**

According to four of the participants, not all newcomer students met the standards of the desired learning outcomes. This challenge can only be addressed as teachers seek advice and guidance from school leaders on improving students’ performance. As participants mentioned,
the curriculum was not designed to facilitate newcomer students, and as such, students' true potential was not being actualized, thus impeding their learning outcomes.

Not knowing how to teach culturally diverse students could challenge culturally diverse learners' learning outcomes. Gay (2010, 2013) noted that teachers might have pedagogical challenges if ill-equipped to support culturally diverse students' learning needs. Gay (2010) further explained that culturally diverse students bring unique knowledge and experience to the classroom. If these experiences are not recognized, it can impact how engaged they become in the learning environment, leading to poor learning outcomes.

For culturally diverse learning outcomes to improve, teachers must create a culturally supportive and learner-centred classroom where culturally diverse students' unique experiences are recognized, highlighted, and nurtured. This practice can effectively influence students' positive learning outcomes and higher academic achievement (Gay 2010). Gay (2002), Richard et al. (2007), and Ginberg and Woldkoski (2009) advised that it is the responsibility of educators to find ways to acknowledge the individual gifts and skills of culturally diverse learners. They can also create ways to strengthen these attributes by connecting their prior knowledge and social experiences to the teaching and learning process.

**Language Barriers and Teacher Frustration**

Another of the participants' critical challenges in this story was students’ language competency. The finding also showed that it impacted students’ performance, connections with families, and willingness to participate in the learning community. Because of this challenge, teachers used different strategies to communicate with learners, such as language applications and other students with higher English proficiency, to help students understand class concepts. Kuo and Lai (2006) argue that language and culture complement each other as a language represents the culture in the mind of those who speak it. Thus, if learners become fluent in English, they must also become familiar with the language's culture. Coelho (2012) argued that EAL students and families who continue to develop their first language achieve a higher level of academic achievement than those who lost it at the beginning of school. Therefore, schools must provide dual-language material so that students and families can feel welcomed and learning English would not pose a challenge.

Teachers also need to understand that newcomer students learning English may go through a period where they do not speak, but learning may still occur, according to Coelho
Teachers must support these students during this period because they will be more likely to participate once they have mastered the language. One way of helping students is incorporating their cultural backgrounds. Doing so helps develop the newcomer students’ language skills. When they are encouraged to talk about their cultural experiences, students may experience greater engagement and more connections among students and their peers (Coelho, 2012).

**Lack of External Support and Resource for Culturally Responsive Teaching**

The participating teachers' effort to work with newcomer students was evident from the data presented. However, the lack of support and resources available made it harder for them to do an adequate job. These teachers believed that the ministry could support teachers working within a highly diverse learning environment. With the limited resources, teachers expressed that they could only do what a good teacher should do. As they tried to improve their teaching, they used their time and experiences to compile resources to teach culturally diverse students within their classes. Gay (2010) described this practice as the transformative characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy as teachers expressed that they were good teachers when teaching culturally diverse groups. However, this is generic to good teaching practice because teaching and learning are culturally situated, and sometimes teachers ignore that.

Leithwood (2012) talks about stakeholders getting involved in goal setting, and once it is happening, they will see the need to support the institution's vision or goal. It is, therefore, necessary for educational stakeholders and leaders to support schools by equipping them with the required resources and support teams needed to effectively teach culturally diverse learners to ensure that equity is practiced. Therefore, all students will achieve and actualize academic excellence (Leithwood, 2012). The participants echoed the need for more EAL teachers to help address the needs of culturally diverse students. With the cutback of EAL teachers and the increase in culturally diverse students, these teachers are beginning to suffer “burnt out” as they work twice as hard to address students' needs.

However, while these teachers try to work with limited resources and support, the school system's hierarchical nature controls the classroom. Therefore, decisions made at that level may not allow teachers to have a voice. As one participant mentioned, more could be done. Still, without resources and support from the ministry or other stakeholders in education, it is hard to effectively support the diverse learners as there is limited guidance or direction to the approach.
The participant is also sensitive to her colleagues' feedback because she believed that her colleagues might not support her if she expressed her opinion in an outright manner.

**Influence of the Research**

Participants expressed that this study changed how they viewed culturally responsive pedagogy concerning newcomer students. Notably, the participants highlighted areas such as reflection on practice and reviewing the curriculum. Based on the study findings, participants expressed that they were able to view culturally responsive pedagogy from a different perspective as they view culturally responsive pedagogy concerning newcomer students. This new knowledge created the opportunity for them to appreciate different worldviews.

Newcomer students come from different cultural backgrounds and experiences, and one size does not fit all. A part of being culturally responsive is the teachers’ ability to reflect on the ethical moment of what is morally or politically right about their practice (Gay, 2003; Nieto, 2000). Teachers’ self-reflection is vital to practice as they reflect on the cultural biases that can affect culturally diverse students. Practicing reflection allows teachers to create opportunities to improve the academic achievement of culturally diverse students (Gay, 2013). Howard (2003) argued that these reflections also facilitate an opportunity for teachers to examine how their racial and critical identities connect with the identities and experiences of students.

Becoming culturally responsive is an ongoing process through which teachers develop refined attributes relating to teaching newcomer students. Ladson-Billings (1994) offered that for teachers to become culturally responsive, they need to engage in honest critical reflection, which challenges their thinking about how students are influenced by their personality, whether positively or negatively. Ladson-Billings further held that teachers should reflect and understand how students’ race, culture, social class, and experiences impact their learning.

**Review of the Curriculum**

Because of this study, one participant shared that she thought about the existing curriculum and its relevance to culturally diverse newcomer students. Some participants expressed that the Saskatchewan curriculum does not support culturally diverse students or their families. Hamachek (1999) noted that “teachers teach not only a curriculum of study; they also become part of it, the subject matter they teach is mixed with the content of their personality” (p. 208). Ayers (2001) observed that “greatness in teaching requires a serious encounter with the autobiography because teachers, whatever else they teach, teach themselves” (p. 122). Therefore,
the curriculum must reflect cultural diversity, which impacts how teachers teach culturally diverse students.

For culturally relevant teaching to be effective, the curriculum must reflect multicultural content (Klump & McNeir, 2005). For this to happen, School Districts should appreciate the need to shift their priorities and policies to impact students’ lives by building on their knowledge and skills. Cultural relevant teaching allows students to improve the cultural relationships that will benefit them in the learning community and the wider society (Scott, 2000). Schools are becoming more and more diverse; thus, the need to reform the curriculum is crucial to help students learn about their cultural identity and that of others (Gay, 2000). Taylor and Whittaker (2003) noted that a reformed curriculum motivates students to support a society promoting truth, equality, and inclusion.

Suggestions from Participants to Improve Cultural Responsiveness for Newcomers

During the interviews, several participants suggested ways to address students’ learning needs more effectively. Notably, participants addressed the need to establish professional development resources and a manual or guide to facilitate culturally responsive teaching and curriculum changes. First, in terms of professional development, the participants provided insights about the types of professional development available to them, primarily geared towards FNIM students and not newcomer students. With this understanding, participants expressed the need for professional development around culturally responsive pedagogy for diverse learners as this would better equip them to address students’ diverse learning needs. Thus, for teachers to appreciate and use the relevant pedagogical approaches when teaching these diverse learners, there is the need for ongoing professional development.

One participant pointed out that leaders outside the learning institution should be made aware of the diversity within the learning space. Therefore, the school division needs to provide more support and better professional development for teachers to effect change within the learning space. The participant reiterated that preparing teachers through professional development is one step in the right direction to teachers becoming more culturally responsive.

Leeman and Van Koeven (2018) also noted that professional development emphasizes cognitive development, which is geared towards expanding teachers’ knowledge and providing facts about people, culture, language, and theories related to diversity. Professional development around culturally responsive pedagogy aims to transform an integrated critical reflection and
support teachers to find pedagogical responses. Therefore, professional development is crucial to the teaching and learning process and should be ongoing to meet the learning needs of the student population.

The data revealed that this school's teaching population was predominantly white and did not generally reflect in the school population. Carter and Goodwin (1994) and Irving (1990) argue that such teachers tend to have low expectations of students from other ethnic groups. Therefore, researchers such as Darling-Hammond (2002, 2006), Ladson-Billings (1999) and Sleeter (2008) saw the need to have training institutions for teachers to address the challenges of preparing a predominantly white middle-class female teaching workforce to work effectively with culturally diverse students. This training will equip teachers with the necessary skills to teach newcomer students regardless of their ethnicity.

Second, along with the request for professional development geared towards culturally diverse students, participants shared the desire to have a manual that acts as a guide to understanding how to address culturally diverse students' learning needs. It is evident from the data analysis that teachers needed guidance related to working with culturally diverse students, and they did not know to whom they should turn for guidance. Although the participants shared that the school leaders provided support, they were not always equipped to effectively provide the support needed for teachers to address students' learning needs.

Teachers also referred to other cultures represented in the school and the necessary resources that were in place to facilitate their learning. The data revealed unanswered questions, such as, what is in place for newcomer students? Although these participants acknowledged that there were some resources online, this information would be useless without proper training. During the interviews, one participant presented a binder that guided teachers on teaching First Nations Students. Having a guide that speaks specifically to newcomers or even a unit representing newcomers with trained individuals strategically positioned to provide information that would facilitate the teaching and learning process would prove useful.

The participants also suggested that having a culturally diverse unit would allow professional development focusing on newcomer students. Although there is no step-by-step manual designed for this institution, teachers and school leaders would have to tailor the information to fit the learning community. It is also necessary for training institutions to train student teachers, pre-service and in-service teachers. This training will increase these
professionals' capabilities and improve their cultural knowledge to work effectively with students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2010).

Lindsey et al. (2003) noted that cultural competence is vital for teachers who teach in a culturally diverse environment; however, cultural competence is a process that involves knowledge of several elements such as race, culture, language, and ethnicity. Teachers need to understand these components to address the needs of culturally diverse students effectively.

Third, some participants suggested that if there were to be a change in the curriculum to reflect students from culturally diverse backgrounds, culturally responsive teaching would be more effective. However, the data revealed that this change could only be done from the provincial level as teachers do not control the curriculum's development. Teachers can only use the existing curriculum to address the learning needs and create the best opportunities for newcomer students. Although participants mentioned that they tried to use the existing curriculum to address the learning needs of students, according to Royal and Gibson (2017), this can be very challenging, especially when the resources provided blend diverse information and lead to the rejection of different perspectives and worldviews. The curriculum and pedagogy should be diversified to design and facilitate culturally responsive teaching. In addition, teachers should master the content and know students individually (Royal & Gibson, 2017).

Teachers lack the knowledge of practicing culturally responsive teaching, which can be attributed to the lack of high-quality, culturally relevant curriculum and resources (Bianchiri, Cavazos, 2001; Borrero et al., 2018). If teachers teach culturally diverse students, they must have a culturally relevant curriculum that provides a roadmap for these learners. A culturally relevant curriculum creates the opportunity for teachers to lay a foundation to learn by reflecting on their practice (Royal & Gibson, 2017). To facilitate relevant and rigorous instruction, teachers must become familiar with the social or political issues students and their families encounter. This knowledge is vital to developing or adapting the curriculum lessons and tasks to provide the support they need to deal with critical issues directly affecting their lives (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Curriculum changes to facilitate culturally responsive pedagogy are a much-needed initiative because classrooms are becoming more diverse. To effectively respond to the diverse learning needs, stakeholders must consider what is best for the students in the learning community to actualize their true potential.
Figure 5.1

A Summary of the Themes and Sub-themes

- Support for newcomer students
- Sensitivity to newcomer students
- Build connections with newcomer family
- Promote a safe space

- Culturally responsive classroom
- Teacher-student ratio
- Symbolic gestures
- Enacting culturally responsive teaching
- Becoming culturally aware
- Support for EAL
- Use of classroom libraries

- Sharing promising practices
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Flexibility and mentoring students
- Equity and respect
- Professional development
- Relationship building with leaders, teachers, and

- Curriculum
- Learning styles
- Expectation from parents
- Assessment
- Teacher support
- Diversity training for staff
- Lack of funding
- Language barriers
- Learning outcomes
- External support

- Opportunity to reflect on current practices
- Revision of curriculum

- Professional development
- Guided manual for culturally responsive pedagogy
- Curriculum changes

Students learning needs and outcomes
Summary

In this chapter, I highlighted the significant themes that emerged from the study. The discussion stressed the participants' perspectives of leadership practices for CRP for culturally diverse newcomer students and how previous literature supported these areas. Table 5.1 summarises the themes discussed in this chapter. The chapter also stressed subheadings highlighted by the participants as they shared their stories relating to (a) the framing of culturally responsive pedagogy, (b) culturally responsive school, (c) leadership practices for culturally responsive pedagogy, (d) barriers that influence culturally responsive pedagogy, (e) impacts of the research, and (f) suggestions for further research. These reflect the experiences of the participants in a culturally diverse learning community.

The upcoming chapter offers a summary, conclusion, and recommendations for further studies.
CHAPTER SIX
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This final chapter summarizes the study and reemphasizes the overview of the study, its implications, theory, practice, policy, and recommendations for further research. Specifically, the chapter provides an overview of the research design, the main finding and conclusions based on the data presented. It also highlights the study's purpose and research questions.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined school leadership practices for culturally responsive pedagogy and how these practices were enacted among teachers to teach culturally diverse newcomer students. The study was guided by the premise that if culturally responsive practices were enacted in schools, they would address newcomer students' learning needs as they navigate their new learning environments.

The overarching research question that guided the study was How do school leaders in a culturally diverse elementary school enact leadership practices that support teachers in using culturally responsive pedagogy? Specifically, the research sought to answer the following sub-questions:

1. How do school leaders influence teachers’ cultural responsiveness to address the needs of culturally diverse newcomer students?
2. What do school leaders do to ensure that teachers have the necessary resources to work effectively with newcomer students in the classroom?
3. How do school leaders support teachers in creating a culturally responsive classroom environment for newcomer students from diverse cultural backgrounds?
4. How do school leaders mobilize professional development strategies to facilitate culturally responsive pedagogy?
5. What are the culturally responsive leadership practices enacted by school leaders to facilitate culturally diverse students?

I used these questions to investigate the leadership practices enacted within an elementary school. I used a qualitative case study to elicit responses from eight participants, including three school leaders and five classroom teachers. The school leaders comprised the principal, vice-principal and EAL teachers. I elicited responses through semi-structured interviews and observations. The data derived from the answers were in the form of descriptions of participants'
understanding of CRP, their CRP experiences, and how the leaders (principals, vice-principal and EAL teacher) enacted practices that supported CRP for culturally diverse newcomer students. These participants were ideal for sharing cultural responsiveness because the school population was culturally diverse, and their experiences helped shape their responses. The participants provided the rich insights highlighted and discussed in this chapter. They also detailed issues they thought needed to be addressed to realize and support effective pedagogical practices towards culturally diverse newcomer students. The section below reviews the methodology, data collection and data analysis of the research.

**Overview of the Research Design**

In this study, I wanted to investigate school leadership practices for culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students. I used an instrumental case study of one elementary school in Saskatchewan to gain insight into this phenomenon. I used semi-structured interviews and observations as the primary research instruments. Using these data collection methods helped me capture what was unique about the school as a learning community and the participants' lived experiences. The study engaged a total of eight participants, involving three school leaders and five classroom teachers.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Before the data analysis, I provided an in-depth transcription of the interviews for the participants to review and amend if necessary. The study’s theoretical framework guided the data analysis. I used descriptive and structural coding to derive appropriate themes from the interviews (Saldana 2009). I used the NVIVO 12 software to facilitate the assigning of codes and categories. From the data analysis, I delineated six main themes concerning practices for culturally responsive pedagogy for culturally diverse newcomer students. The six themes are *the framing and definition of culturally responsive pedagogy, creating a culturally responsive school, enacting culturally responsive leadership, barriers to culturally responsive pedagogy, the impact of the research and participants’ suggestions for improving culturally responsive teaching for newcomer students*. These themes also laid the foundation for the discussion in Chapter Five.

**Summary of the Findings**

Drawing on the data, culturally responsive pedagogy was viewed through the lens of FNIM students. Participants found this challenging and expressed concerns about effectively addressing the learning needs of culturally diverse newcomer students. As indicated in the
diagram above, participants shared their vision of what culturally responsive pedagogy and a culturally responsive school should look like. However, they highlighted the barriers that contributed to their inability to effectively address the learning needs of their diverse students. The participants also reflected on their own practices while giving suggestions that could improve practice. Participants also expressed some areas of concern as they responded to questions regarding how well they were equipped with the necessary resources to support newcomer students. Their responses highlighted some challenges which they believed if addressed, they would be more equipped to handle the learning needs of culturally diverse newcomer students. These areas were (a) teacher preparation and staffing of culturally responsive teachers, (b) professional development for teachers on culturally responsive pedagogy for diverse students, (c) curriculum reflecting content for culturally diverse students, (d) assessment for culturally diverse learners, and (e) Ministry of Education’s support for cultural responsiveness. These are described below.

**Teacher Preparation and Staffing**

Analysis of the data revealed that teachers lacked knowledge of teaching culturally diverse students. This finding suggests that teachers need training on culturally diverse teaching approaches. Participants acknowledged that they did what good teachers would do, drew on their knowledge and experiences, and used the available resources to teach newcomer students. However, being culturally responsive is more than being a good teacher (Gay, 2002). If teachers were adequately prepared and acquired the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to teach culturally diverse students, it would bridge the gap between teaching and applying culturally responsive practices. Teachers would also better understand how diverse learners learn and communicate.

The findings also revealed that the teaching staff at the research site was not culturally diverse, although the school’s population was. Although the school leaders desired to have a diverse teacher representation within the school, they could control the composition of the staff within the schools' teaching faculty. Thus, based on the school population's diversity, there was a need for diversity among the teaching staff. Diversity among staff would allow students to relate and identify with individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, diversity within the teaching staff could benefit students by developing a sense of belonging. Through this connection, students would understand that social and political importance can be achieved by motivating a culturally diverse learning community (Williams,
2000). Besides, a diverse staff could support students from diverse backgrounds as they grow and learn (Antonio, 2003).

**Professional Development for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

This study's findings showed limited professional development on culturally responsive teaching available to teachers to address the learning needs of newcomer students. Specifically, this study's findings revealed that teachers lacked the necessary guidance and knowledge to work with culturally diverse students. Hence, the participants expressed the need for professional development on culturally responsive pedagogy to teach newcomer students effectively.

To practice culturally responsive pedagogy within a culturally diverse school, teachers must have ongoing professional development training. These programs will help them perform their tasks effectively and address the changes in the learning community. Understandably, newcomer students are not the only student group with special needs. However, with professional development training already in place to address the needs of other student groups, there should be measures to facilitate effective learning for culturally diverse newcomer students.

**Curriculum Relevance**

The data analysis also revealed that the schools' curriculum did not reflect diverse students’ cultural and ethnic backgrounds; thus, not lending itself to culturally responsive teaching. The curriculum failed to connect with diverse students learning needs and limited students' ability to perform and exhibit their true potential in the learning community. Because of the Education Ministry’s mandate, teachers found it challenging to teach differently from the targeted approach. The teachers’ limited knowledge about cultural responsiveness towards newcomer students made it difficult to plan and implement equitable lessons for all students. In this case, stakeholders must analyze the level of equity of resources for culturally diverse newcomer students. When the tool that guides teaching and learning is not structured to connect with students’ previous knowledge, build on their experiences, and hold as their reality, students encounter challenges in learning. Ultimately, students will feel disempowered to function effectively in their new social setting. It is then incumbent on school leaders to become empowered to advocate for a curriculum that reflects culturally diverse students. Empowerment could be through finding ways to adapt the curriculum to students learning needs and encouraging teachers to revisit how they teach and value newcomer students.
**Assessment**

The study's findings showed that the assessment of culturally diverse newcomer students sometimes did not give a true reflection of their academic potential. One participant shared that a significant contributing factor to this phenomenon is the language barrier. If students come into the learning community with limited English, the resulting lack of proper communication and interpretation could negatively reflect their assessment. The findings also showed that the Ministry's assessment did not reflect culturally diverse students; therefore, students struggle to meet the standard requirement. Some teachers also had to seek advice from school leaders on adapting the assessment model to accommodate culturally diverse newcomer students.

**School Division Support**

The findings indicated that support from the provincial ministry of education is needed to set up a culturally responsive unit staffed with individuals with the expertise in addressing culturally diverse newcomer students' issues. These participants believed that if they supported these bodies, they could deliver content that reflects newcomer students. The school leaders averred that they did what they could to help culturally diverse newcomer students; however, there were limitations in what they could do without the School Division's support.

The teachers indicated that with the ministry of education as the lead policy implementing agency, school leaders should liaise to explore opportunities to support culturally diverse newcomer students. Due to the lack of support, the participants relied on the EAL teacher when dealing with newcomer students. However, this is additional unpaid work for the EAL teacher and can sometimes lead to frustration. As much as teachers want to give their best to students, teachers and school leaders are unaware of the right channel or approach. Moreover, if the support is not available, then more challenging to be effective, especially when these educators are aware of their limited knowledge in cultural responsiveness. Some participants were even afraid to speak out, fearing that they would not support colleagues or the public because it involves culturally diverse newcomer students.

Researchers such as Marshall and Ward (2014) argued that stakeholders outside the learning community are often aware of the lack of support. Still, this need is usually ignored based on genuine concern and caution to please its constituency. Marshall and Ward (2014) further believed that support for culturally diverse students would only be practical when
stakeholders “believe, forcefully articulate and make decisions under the assumption that promoting social justice is a major part of the job description of administration” (p. 558).

**Figure 6.1**

*Summary of Findings to Create an Inclusive Learning Environment*

Drawing on the literature on CRP and my own findings, I developed a new framework for improving the effective implementation of CRP for newcomer students (Figure 6.1). The framework comprises two main components. The first is the challenges faced in creating CRP, and the second is how to address those challenges. The framework enables readers to focus on the multiple factors for creating CRP.

**The Implications of the Study**

Throughout this study, some implications were discussed subtly. This section details how the influence of school leadership practice on culturally responsive pedagogy for culturally diverse newcomer students may inform theory, practice, policy and the implications for further research.
**Implications for Theory**

The theory of culturally responsive pedagogy focuses on three functional dimensions: the institutional (how to reform the cultural factors affecting the organization of schools, school policies and procedures), the personal (this involves the necessary steps that should be taken for teachers to become culturally responsive), and the instructional (this reflects the challenges associated with how culturally responsive pedagogy is implemented in the learning community) (Richard et al., 2006). Once these dimensions of CRP are effectively practiced within the learning community, school leaders and teachers will be one step closer to addressing the challenges they encounter when teaching culturally diverse newcomer students. It will also create an opportunity to address the literature gap for culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students in Canada, specifically Saskatchewan.

This case study improves our understanding of school leaders’ practices within the school environment. It also highlights the support and resources school leaders provide their teachers to enact CRP for diverse newcomer students. Thus, the research contributes to enhancing the framing of culturally responsive pedagogy. However, with the limited institutional support for culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students, teachers faced many hurdles that influenced culturally diverse newcomer students' learning.

Khalifa et al. (2016) highlighted several practices describing culturally responsive leaders. However, based on the limited knowledge and resources, school leaders could not effectively implement these practices. As such, there is the need for school leaders to become culturally responsive and push to create an environment to address the learning needs of culturally diverse students. Once the initiative is taken from this level, it will also influence the practices of culturally responsive teachers, as was highlighted by Montgomery (2001). These practices are crucial to the learning outcomes of culturally diverse students.

Based on the data collected for this research, the participants' stories are highlighted in the themes and sub-themes of how they view and enact culturally responsive pedagogy. Although these themes reflect the literature around leadership practices for culturally responsive pedagogy and what should be in place to effectively address the learning needs of these students, CRP was only viewed through the lens of FNIM students, as such this impacted the teaching and learning process of culturally diverse newcomer students because of their differing experiences. Through this research, the participants highlighted the barriers they encounter teaching culturally diverse
students. It also created an opportunity for teachers and school leaders to reflect on their practices and offer suggestions crucial to the learning outcomes of culturally diverse newcomer students.

**Recommendations for Practice**

The research explored how leadership practices are enacted through culturally responsive pedagogy for diverse newcomer students. From the data captured, the school leaders in the institution acknowledged that CRP was crucial to developing and addressing the diverse learning needs of the learning community. However, based on their understanding of CRP, as seen through the lens of FNIM students, they realized that culturally diverse students were not the same, and the challenges and barriers impact them in different ways. Therefore, school leaders and teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively contribute to the lives of culturally diverse students in ways they can actualize their true potential.

Cultural responsiveness cannot be effective without practitioners being culturally aware and equipped with the tools, support, and resources to impact students' learning. This research demonstrated that several areas limited the ability of school leaders and teachers to promote equity with culturally diverse students. Some of these limitations include lack of professional development on CRP focused on newcomer students, lack of training for school leaders and teachers for cultural responsiveness, lack of diversity among staff, and the lack of school division support for CRP for newcomer students. Below, I discuss these implications for enhancing CRP for culturally diverse newcomer students.

**Professional Development**

Although teachers benefitted from professional development activities, these were not focused or geared towards teaching newcomer students. The lack of professional development on CRP for newcomer students can affect teachers' skills and confidence to work successfully with diverse newcomer students. Thus, school administrators must invest in new training programs that focus explicitly on developing teachers' competencies in meeting the needs of diverse students both in and out of the classroom.

School leaders can support professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to create welcoming and positive relationships with newcomer students and their families. Such training would benefit the learning community as students observe these relationships and understand that their families are connected to their learning environment. From the findings, parents were disconnected from the learning community. Therefore, sensitizing
teachers to the ways and approaches of creating this relationship can help them become more culturally responsive.

**Training for Teachers and School Leaders**

Davy (2016) demonstrated that culturally responsive teaching is applied in some Canadian schools where the population of ethnic minority groups is increasing. Yet, the province of Saskatchewan, which has experienced an increase in newcomer students from diverse populations within the last 15 to 20 years, has done very little to build the capacity of teachers in CRP specific to newcomer students. As such, teachers and school leaders are ill-prepared to address the diverse academic needs of students. In which case, recognizing diversity in the student population and developing training to meet these needs is essential to addressing the learning needs of culturally diverse students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Ladson-Billings (1999) argues that “multicultural teacher education continues to suffer from a thin, poorly developed, fragmented literature that provides an inaccurate picture of the kind of preparation teachers receive to teach culturally diverse classrooms” (p. 114).

Herrity and Glasman (2010) noted that learning institutions must equip school leaders through different programs with the required skill and knowledge to show that they can be adequately prepared to work with newcomer students. Therefore, the need for in-service and preservice teachers’ training is crucial and is needed to equip teachers and school leaders to be fully prepared to be effective in the teaching and learning process to benefit students regardless of their ethnic, cultural backgrounds (Gay & Howard, 2010).

**Diversity among Staff**

Based on the shift in the schools’ demographics, there was a need for teacher demographics to reflect the diversity within the school. However, the findings revealed a lack of diversity among the teaching community of the school. Even though school leaders desire a diverse staff, the choice about whom they work with or who gets hired is out of their control; the school division staffs schools. It is vital to recognize that teachers from diverse backgrounds have specific knowledge and experience to contribute to the effective teaching of newcomers and the learning process. Studies have shown that if the teaching population does not reflect the diversity within the learning community, it can impact students learning outcomes (Villegas et al., 2012). Diversity among staff also helps integrate newcomer students by creating a sense of belonging.
Villegas et al. (2012) further noted that diverse school leaders and teaching staff benefit culturally diverse students and other students in the learning community; they are exposed to different perspectives and the level of ethnicity within the teaching force. Thus, multicultural schools, such as this school in Saskatchewan, need diverse representation among the teaching staff so that students may see a reflection of themselves and develop a better understanding that diversity exists within the student population and with their teachers. One school leader expressed that having a diverse teaching staff is crucial to the school community because their knowledge and experience add meaning to the teaching and learning process.

**School Division Support**

This study revealed that there was also the need for support from the central offices. This support is crucial, especially in teaching culturally diverse students, yet the division's mandate did not focus on newcomer students. At the same time, teachers and school leaders were not aware of dealing with the increased culturally diverse student population. Some participants expressed that they often felt lost as they did not know whom to turn, or where to go for support as leaders in the educational realm did not provide the necessary guidance and support to effectively address students' learning needs. Thus, it is incumbent on leaders at the highest hierarchical level to recognize the increase in diversity of the student population and develop initiatives in schools to effectively support school leaders and teachers to address students' learning needs regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

Finally, schools function best when all stakeholders are involved and supportive. Therefore, it takes a collaborative effort for teachers and school leaders to effectively support culturally diverse newcomer students to actualize their true potential. Participants noted that they had limited support for culturally diverse newcomer students. Without that support, they could only do what good leaders and teachers would do; they believed that was not enough. For this reason, it is necessary for stakeholders at the division level to be involved and interested in the increasing number of culturally diverse students changing the learning communities’ face. Bringing everyone on board will ensure that practices are geared towards making the school an inclusive space for all students, particularly culturally diverse newcomer students.

**Implications for Policy**

The findings of this study highlighted that the practitioners, that is, teachers and school leaders, have no control over the learning structure, such as the curriculum and assessments for
students, including newcomer students, learning outcomes. However, to have a school that promotes culturally responsive pedagogy to newcomer students, there should be policies to provide opportunities for educators to teach and assess culturally diverse newcomer students based on their unique circumstances. Hence, there is the need to provide the opportunities for teachers to have the flexibility to adjust the curriculum to reflect the needs of culturally diverse students, such as the opportunity to connect their experiences and previous knowledge to enhance learning outcomes. Also, the policy relating to student assessment could be revised to look at other initiatives that could be put in place to assess culturally diverse newcomer students, especially when they have not yet mastered the English language. Besides, policies are needed to create room for diversity in school staff. Hence, stakeholders in education policy and administration responsible for hiring could make a case for hiring staff from minority groups.

Implications for Further Research

Although the study set out to look at leadership practices enacted for culturally responsive teaching for newcomers’ students, the findings revealed that there are specific barriers that affect culturally diverse teaching. These restrictions include language barriers, lack of teacher training, lack of resources, and the curriculum not reflecting culturally diverse content. Hence, future research could explore these barriers and opportunities. This study could provide more insights for educators, school leaders, school divisions, and other stakeholders to support CRP effectively. This support could also enable culturally diverse newcomer students to actualize their true potential in the learning community.

There needs to be further research to understand the specific challenges faced by newcomer students in the province and how best to address them. Previous studies have shown that some schools within Canada and the United States have a high level of diversity and provide examples of different initiatives to address these challenges. Thus, further studies could build on what exists in other Canadian schools to address gaps in the teaching and learning of students from diverse cultures in Saskatchewan schools. More research is essential because the province has experienced increased diversity over the past fifteen to twenty years. Further research can highlight the extent and level of diversity in Saskatchewan schools and how school leaders should address the learning needs of diverse newcomer students. Such studies could provide insight for school divisions, school leaders, and teachers to understand the challenges newcomer students face as they integrate into their learning environment. Once educators become aware of
these challenges, then the mandate of these stakeholders should be that they develop and facilitate promising practices of culturally responsive pedagogy for culturally diverse newcomer students.

There is also the need for further research about the assessment models used to assess culturally diverse students. Generally, the assessment of students within a learning community reflects significantly on their learning outcomes, as it provides a picture of how well these students master the content taught. However, the findings demonstrated that the current assessment model is not designed for culturally diverse newcomer students. It fails to consider students’ knowledge and background and how it affects their learning. Therefore, it does not provide a true reflection of students’ potential. According to Gilborn (2008), a poor assessment design can limit culturally diverse students from advancing to more significant learning outcomes, although they can perform and showcase their true potential. For instance, more research could be done to understand how assessment models could be adjusted to facilitate culturally diverse students learning experiences.

In addition to assessing the effectiveness of assessment models, the efficacy of current curricular models also needs to be examined. The study's findings demonstrated that the standard curriculum did not address newcomer students’ specific learning needs. However, because the teachers had no control over the curriculum design, they struggled to integrate diverse newcomer students’ learning needs. These observations were consistent with previous findings as outlined by Bianchirli and Cavazos (2001), Borrero et al. (2018); teachers lack how to practice culturally responsive teaching. One of the contributing factors is the lack of a culturally relevant curriculum. Thus, there is a need for research on designing a curriculum that supports the learning needs of diverse newcomer students.

Participants echoed the challenges that school leaders face to support them in addressing the learning needs in their highly diverse population. However, there is limited literature for culturally responsive leadership which indicates the need for more research to inform leaders how to demonstrate effective culturally responsive leadership practices in culturally diverse learning communities.

Further research could be done to investigate newcomer students’ stories to serve as a foundation for creating a connection with the school and culturally diverse students. In most cases, the students have one-to-one experience with teachers, school leaders, and peers where cultural responsiveness is needed to facilitate effective communication and integration. In this
context, cultural responsiveness also filters into their social setting; therefore, students’ voices could make a difference. This study was conducted in an elementary school; therefore, further studies could be done examining the leadership practices for culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students at other education levels.

**Concluding Statement**

The research examined the leadership practices enacted for culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students, drawing on the knowledge and experiences of five teachers and three school leaders. Through interviews and observations, the data’s findings revealed that teachers and school leaders were ill-prepared to implement effective strategies to enhance the teaching and learning of culturally diverse newcomer students. Nevertheless, the face of Canadian schools’ is changing, and this is not just a temporary event, but it reflects what classrooms will look like in the years to come. Thus, all stakeholders in education need to ensure that schools are equipped to deal with these changes. For culturally responsive pedagogy to be actualized, school leaders need support to help teachers function in a culturally responsive manner.

Currently, teachers and school leaders face significant challenges to effectively integrate culturally diverse newcomer students because of insufficient policies and programs. Thus, in the absence of any direct and specific policy and program support, teachers and school leaders need to push beyond challenges to address students’ learning needs regardless of ethnicity. Transforming the education system can be a long-term process and will not happen overnight; however, if school leaders desire to influence change, they must be agents of that change. With firm determination and the right attitude, it is possible to create a school environment where cultural responsiveness is not only represented in school mantras or writings in black and white but practiced in a deliberate and targeted manner.

Culturally responsive pedagogy within the classroom allows educators to become responsible for the diverse population they interact with daily. Educators, thus, should be held accountable for culturally responsive pedagogical practices to be effective. Nash (2011) noted that determining where you and your students are and “that nothing happens unless something happens” for the sake of the growth and changes is at the core of positive reflective practice (p. 31). Although teachers and school leaders may face challenges and barriers when enacting practices that support culturally diverse newcomer students, it is incumbent that school leaders
support teacher development and effective teaching by taking charge of instructional programs (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Leaders must be the driving force behind the practice of cultural responsiveness in schools. Fullan (2014) also noted that principals have the responsibility to manage and effectively organize schools and meet the demands of their students for more significant learning outcomes. School leaders then should exercise their power to ensure that professional development and capacity building opportunities are available to teachers (Johnson, 2007). Cohen-Vogel (2011) endorsed Johnson’s notion and contended that school leaders should create training opportunities and be held accountable to ensure that their teachers become culturally responsive. In every learning community, it is expected that practitioners perform their task effectively as their first responsibility is towards the students they teach; therefore, Villegas and Lucas (2003) noted that it should be the responsibility of teachers to build on students’ knowledge and experiences while stretching them beyond what they already know.

Teachers must recognize students’ strengths and use these strengths to facilitate instructions (Gay, 2010). Freire (2001) endorsed what Gay noted: teachers should respect what students know to use their knowledge to help formulate themes that could influence what is taught in the curriculum. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom (1982) noted that educators are responsible for integrating different cultures in the classroom as they aim to build previous knowledge and experiences to provide equitable education for each student regardless of their cultural background. All students are unique, and they all have some level of experience and knowledge that help shape their realities. Practitioners must help create opportunities for these students to explore that knowledge so that learning can be more meaningful and effective.

**Reflection on the Research Process**

In approaching this research, so many questions led to fear and anxiety. However, these feelings gradually changed as I began to embrace the challenges that could have contributed to my feelings. As I listened to the participants’ stories and observed them in the learning community, my thought process changed gradually, and I began to take a more objective approach as I realized how other people’s reality could positively or negatively impact my own.

The research process was a great experience, and this could only be possible with the support I received from the school community members. I found this research relevant as it impacted my development as a researcher and an educator. I now have a better understanding of
how crucial culturally responsive pedagogy is to diverse learning communities, and I believe that the data shared by these actors were shared out of love and care for their colleagues and students. They also created an atmosphere for me to feel I belonged for the duration of the data collection. I observed leaders and teachers in the teaching and learning process and how they connected with students and their families. The data collected helped me to understand the reality that exists among culturally diverse newcomer students. Although the research was limited to one school, it is possible that these findings could apply to other learning institutions that are highly diverse.

Through this research, I also developed a deeper appreciation of qualitative studies because through these stories, I understood participants' lived experiences and the desires they had for the students they teach regardless of ethnicity.

I am happy that I was allowed to contribute to the literature through this work. However, I would do further studies that would focus on the stories of the students who have the direct experiences of these challenges they encounter in the classroom as they integrate into a new culture.
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Appendix “A” – Interview Guide for School Leaders


Interview guide for school leaders (principal, vice-principal EAL teacher)

**Purpose:** The purpose of the research is to explore school leadership practices and how these practices engage teachers for culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) for newcomer students.

The study will focus on what is done around culturally responsive pedagogy that supports students from different cultural backgrounds, especially newcomer students to Canada. Thus, the research will seek to answer the following questions: (1) How do school leaders in a selected culturally diverse elementary school to enact leadership practices that support teachers in the use of culturally responsive pedagogy? To answer the main question, the following sub-questions will be addressed: (a) How do school leaders influence teachers’ competence to cater to the needs of culturally diverse students? (b) What do school leaders do to ensure teachers are equipped to engage newcomer students in the classroom? (c) How do school leaders create a culturally responsive environment that supports newcomer students from diverse cultural backgrounds? (d) How do school leaders mobilize professional development strategies to facilitate CRP? (e) What are the leadership practices used to facilitate inclusion for all culturally diverse students?

**Instructions:** introduce to interviewees the purpose and background of the study, explain contents of the consent form and get consent to use the audio recording from them before seeking answers to the following questions.

1. Tell me about your education and professional background.
   - Education (degree, institution)
   - How long have you been serving in the field of education? and in what position (s)?
   - What was your experience like in the classroom?
2. Tell me about your journey toward becoming the principal/ (vice principal)/(administrative role) of this institution. How long have you been in this leadership role?

3. What are your school demographics like?
   - General population
   - Teacher-student ratio
   - Faculty and staff
   - The cultural background of students (eg. ethnicity)
   - Newcomer students to this school, where are they from?

4. Can you tell me about the number of newcomer students in your school? What are the statistics within the last five years?

5. Who are the persons that make up your leadership team? What is their role?

6. How does each of these individuals support culturally responsive pedagogy for diverse newcomer students?

7. What is your understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy?

8. What are your views about cultural responsiveness to newcomer students to Canada as it relates to?
   - Instruction
   - Teachers
   - School environment

9. Explain how the learning environment in this school promotes culturally responsive pedagogy for newcomer students.

10. Does the curriculum support diverse newcomer students, (explain how)?

11. Explain some practices that are in place for culturally responsive teaching and learning for diverse newcomer students to this school.

12. What is your experience (expectation, challenge) with newcomer students?
   - Is the communication level effective?
   - Are there activities that are planned by you to support the transition of these culturally diverse newcomer students? (if yes what are they)

13. Explain how your experiences working with diverse newcomer students influence the decision making around instruction for culturally diverse newcomer students?

14. What is the teaching-related barriers you and newcomer families encounter in your interaction?
15. Describe how you are helping to make teaching more responsive to culturally diverse newcomer students through:

- Professional development
- Curriculum changes
- Instructional preparedness and
- Awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy among staff

16. Tell me about the support that is given for you to effectively support instructional strategies for culturally responsive pedagogy? who are the support groups?

17. Do you network with other principal, vice-principal/school leaders, is it helpful in the decision making about culturally responsive pedagogy for diverse newcomer students?

18. How do you support the culturally responsive practices of teachers as they teach culturally diverse newcomer students?

19. What is the most rewarding experience working with diverse groups especially culturally diverse newcomer students to this school?

20. Are there any other comments/experiences you would like to share about working with diverse groups and newcomer students?
Appendix “B” – Interview Guide for Teachers

Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan


Interview guide for teachers

Introduction: The purpose of the research is to explore school leadership practices and how these practices engage teachers for culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) for newcomer students. This will be conducted in an elementary school.

The aim of this research is to seek to answer the following questions: (1) How do school leaders in a selected culturally diverse elementary school to enact leadership practices that support teachers in the use of culturally responsive pedagogy? To answer the main question, the following sub-questions are addressed? (a) How do school leaders influence teachers’ competence to cater to the needs of culturally diverse students? (b) What do school leaders do to ensure teachers are equipped to engage newcomer students in the classroom? (c) How do school leaders create a culturally responsive environment that supports newcomer students from diverse cultural backgrounds? (d) How do school leaders mobilize professional development strategies to facilitate CRP? (e) What leadership practices are used to facilitate inclusion for all culturally diverse students?

Instructions: introduce to interviewees the purpose and background of the study, explain contents of the consent form and get consent to use the audio recording from them before seeking answers to the following questions.

Context

1. Tell me about your background
   - Education
   - How long have you been teaching at this school?
   - What is the experience like?
2. How long have you been working with diverse groups, especially involving newcomer students to Canada?
3. Explain how you use newcomer student’s experiences to connect learning for culturally responsive pedagogy.
4. Do you encounter challenges working with newcomer students, if any, what are they?
5. What are some supports given by the school leader/leaders to deal with these challenges that you encounter with diverse newcomer students?
6. What are some ways in which you encourage peer support among students to facilitate culturally responsive teaching? Does school leader/leaders help to facilitate this practice?
7. Tell me a little about the learning outcomes of diverse newcomer students.
8. Explain how school leader/leaders help you to access and use instructional material that reflects diverse newcomer students' ethnic and cultural backgrounds?
9. What are some strategies you use to help culturally diverse students to participate in discussions? (probe for the support they receive from leadership)
10. What are some things that school leader/leaders do to ensure that the necessary resources are available in the classroom to support the teaching of culturally diverse newcomer students?
11. How do you promote equity and mutual respect among students in this learning environment? How do school leader/leaders help to reinforce such behaviours?
12. What does school leader/leaders do to encourage the support of parents of diverse newcomer students in the teaching and learning process?
13. Explain the strategies that are used by school leader/leaders to develop culturally responsive pedagogical practices among teachers in your school.
14. What are some opportunities that school leader/leaders facilitate that allow teachers to collaborate with other colleagues outside of this learning community?
15. How would you describe the support you receive from school leader/leaders in addressing the learning needs of culturally diverse newcomer students?
16. What are some activities that take place in this school to celebrate multicultural events to exhibit the heritage and culture of diverse newcomer students? Who are the coordinators of these events? What are some supports you receive from school leader/leaders?
17. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experience working with culturally diverse newcomer students?
Appendix “C” – Observation Guide for School Leaders

Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

Observation guide for school leaders

Date of observation: ________________________________
Observer name: ____________________________________
School type: _______________________________________

Position of school leader: Principal ________ Vice Principal ________ EAL ________

Time started: ______________________________________
Time observation ended: ____________________________

Title: The influence of school Leadership Practices for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for newcomer students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for culturally responsive school leaders</th>
<th>No evidence</th>
<th>Some evidence</th>
<th>Limited evidence</th>
<th>Strong evidence</th>
<th>Observations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Responsive Leader</td>
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</table>

Build relationships with community

- Activities or events that encourage community involvement

Events:
- Parent night
- Activities that are planned around special holidays
| Criteria for culturally responsive school leaders | No evidence | Some evidence | Limited evidence | Strong evidence | Observations |
| Build relationships with colleagues and students | | | | | |
| • Interactions with colleagues | | | | | |
| • Interactions with students | | | | | |
| Promote a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment | | | | | |
| • Representation of students work, how students’ heritage and culture is highlighted | | | | | |
| • Support culturally responsive curriculum and instruction | | | | | |
| Criteria for culturally responsive school leaders | No evidence | Some evidence | Limited evidence | Strong evidence | Observations |
| Develop culturally responsive teachers | | | | | |
| • What is done around PD to help teachers become culturally responsive | | | | |
- How do school leader/leaders model culturally responsiveness?
  
  Promotes school climate that supports culturally responsive pedagogy
  
  - What do the artifacts on the walls represent?

- How school leader build relationships with teachers and students.

- How does school leaders build relationships with each other?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for culturally responsive school leaders</th>
<th>No evidence</th>
<th>Some evidence</th>
<th>Limited evidence</th>
<th>Strong evidence</th>
<th>Observations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Culturally Responsive Teacher</td>
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<td>How do the school leaders help teachers use students’ real-life</td>
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experiences to connect school learning to students' lives?

- Activities that are put in place by the school leaders to support this practice.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorporation of differentiated instructions</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Children with language barriers</td>
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<tr>
<th>Encourage peer support for academic achievement</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Are students placed in groups for peer share learning?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Displays work from students’ heritage, language, by using pictures of visuals</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Display students’ work that reflects their heritage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria for culturally responsive school leaders</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote equality and mutual respect among students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sensitizing students of the importance of their culture and equity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally Responsive Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays meaningful bulletin board that shows cultural images that enhance students’ sense of culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage teachers to have flexible seating arrangement in their classes to match lesson purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource material that is used in the curriculum that facilitates all experiences and culture of students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- *How do school leader/leaders help to provide material to support the different cultures?*

Open End
Appendix “D” - Observation Guide for School Teacher

Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

Observation guide for schoolteacher

Date of observation: ________________________________
Observer name: ________________________________

School type: Elementary _____ High _____ Tertiary ________

Time started: ________________________________
Time observation ended: ________________________________

Title: The influence of school Leadership Practices for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for newcomer students

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<tr>
<th>Criteria for culturally responsive school teachers</th>
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<td>Culturally Responsive Teacher</td>
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<td>Support culturally responsive curriculum and instruction</td>
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<td>• What resources are in place to enhance students’ learning</td>
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<td>• How students use these resources</td>
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<td>Criteria for culturally responsive school teachers</td>
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<td>Use students’ experiences to connect learning.</td>
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<td>• Guided/formal and informal group discussion</td>
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<td>• Journal writing</td>
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<td>Incorporation of differentiated instructions</td>
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<td>• How do the teachers support students’ with different learning styles?</td>
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<td>• Peer share opportunities</td>
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- **One and one approach**

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<td>- <strong>Display of students’ work</strong></td>
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<td>Ensure that instructional material reflects students’ racial, ethnic and cultural background</td>
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<td>Arrange classroom to accommodate discussion</td>
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<td>Promote equality and mutual respect among students’</td>
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<td>- <strong>Educating students’ about culture, equity</strong></td>
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and its importance

- Provide equal opportunities among students’ to participate in classroom activities

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<th>Criteria for culturally responsive school teachers</th>
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<th>Limited evidence</th>
<th>Strong evidence</th>
<th>Observations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Displays meaningful bulletin board that shows cultural images that enhance students’ sense of culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Newspaper articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The student-made poster that depicts cultural events</td>
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</table>
- Stories and poem that depicts culturally diverse themes

Flexible seating arrangement to match lesson purpose

- How students work with different groups to complete a given task.

- How students use group work skills for group outcomes.

- How students show respect for each other’s opinions.

Classroom reflecting a variety of material
relevant to the various cultures

- What is displayed in the classroom that reflects students’ culture?

Resource material that is used in the curriculum that facilitates all experiences and culture of students.

- How students use resource material to share their stories.

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<tr>
<th>Students Experiences</th>
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<tr>
<td>Increased teacher-student relationships</td>
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- Teacher relationships with students’
- students’ relationship with the teachers

Students reactions in the learning environment.

- The willingness of students’ to participate in in-class activities.

- How students’ interact with each other.

Open End
Appendix “E” – Participants Consent Form for Individual Interview

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: The influence of School Leadership Practices on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Newcomer Students

Researcher:
Kareen Reid
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1
Email: kkr167@mail.usask.ca

Supervisor:
Dr. Janet Okoko
Associate Professor Educational Administration
Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1
Email: janet.okoko@usask.ca
Tel: 306-966-7611

Purpose and objective of the research:
The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine school leadership practices and how they engage teachers for culturally responsive pedagogy that supports newcomer students. The aim of the study is to seek answers to the following question: How do school leaders enact practices that support
culturally responsive pedagogy? To answer the main question, the following sub-questions will be addressed:

- How do school leaders influence teachers’ competence to cater to the needs of culturally diverse newcomer students?
- What do school leaders do to ensure teachers are equipped to engage newcomer students in the classroom?
- How do school leaders create a culturally responsive environment that support newcomer students from diverse cultural background?
- How do school leaders mobilize professional development strategies to facilitate CRP?
- What are the leadership practices used to facilitate inclusion for all culturally diverse students?

Procedure:

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to take part in at least two interviews for approximately ninety minutes each time; the duration of the interviews will be over a three-months period. I will do semi-structured interviews at a date, time and place convenient to you, each interview will be audio taped. The participants can request for the recording device be turned off at any time during the interview process without giving reasons for that request. I will transcribe all interviews ensuring confidentiality at all stages. The semi-structured interviews will allow me to ask follow-up questions relating to the participant’s responses. These follow-up questions are intended to seek more information as the need arise. The interviews are aimed at providing answers to the research questions. Prior to the data analysis process, you will be given the opportunity to review transcript of your interview. This review will give you an opportunity to add, alter or delete information from the transcribed information as you see fit. A transcript release form will be provided for each participant to sign, once you have reviewed the transcript, you will begin two weeks to return the document.

The findings from the study will form the basis for my dissertation, as this is a requirement for the completion of my degree. This information may also be used for conference presentations and journal articles.

Funded by:

This research is not funded.

Potential risk:

There are no known or anticipated risks to you participating in this research. However, if there are any risk, they will be no more than what you encounter in the everyday context of your work. If you
choose to participate in the study, you are encouraged to respond to only questions that you are comfortable answering. You will also have the opportunity to review transcript of your interview, you may withdraw from the research project for any reason without penalty.

**Potential Benefits:**

I cannot guarantee that you will receive personal benefit from participating in this study; however, you may experience greater awareness of cultural diversity as you take the journey of creating a comfortable learning environment for all students. Your contribution will be used to establish aspects that could enhance cultural leadership practices by promoting a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment, inclusive instructional practices, building relationships that encourage collaborations between school and community. This study can also provide you with an opportunity to contribute to recommendations for improving school leadership practices that are geared to support culturally diverse students as they continue to navigate their way through the education system.

**Confidentiality:**

Your personal details will be kept in the strictest confidence to show respect for your privacy and confidentiality. To maintain such privacy your name will not appear in the report, or any articles resulting from the study because pseudonyms will be used to replace your names. Notes or any other record that are gathered from this study will not include your name. All information that you share will be treated with the strictest confidence.

The consent forms will be stored separately from the transcripts or any other data or information received from participants. This safety procedure will help to avoid the possibility of your name being associated with different responses. The school or the division will not be identified at anytime during or after the data has been collected. This data collected will be reported in aggregate form to avoid the possibility of individual being identified. The data collected will be retained for five years in a secured office at the University of Saskatchewan, only myself and my supervisor will be privy to such information.

Participants’ confidentiality will be limited due to the nature of group activities as my research will include interaction with participants in the learning community. The research will be done in one school; therefore, the sample size will be small, I will do my best to ensure strict confidentiality by using pseudonyms. Interview transcript will be stored separately from field notes and consent forms. I will be the only one collecting data and I will not be working with any other team member. Participants’ confidentiality can also be limited because other members of the learning community may know who
they are once they observe my interaction during the data collection process. However, I will ensure confidentiality as much as possible, assuring the participants that their names will not appear on any document, and the school will not be identified. I will also respect the participants privacy and the data will be stored using the secure cabinet in PAWS at the University of Saskatchewan and will be destroyed after 5 years. The use of an electronic device to store data that is collected will be a password protected computer.

Right to withdraw:

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time or choose to answer only those questions with which you are comfortable. If you choose to withdraw from the study, the data you have given to this point will be deleted and this will not influence or affect your position, employment or how you will be treated. Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply only until fifteen days after you have signed the data release form. After this, it is possible that some form of research dissemination would have taken place and you may not be able to withdraw your data. The data obtained from the interviews will be used in an anonymous and confidential manner. After the transcription of the data into electronic format the participants will view the data and sign a data release form, your confidentiality will not be compromised. The electronic device that will be used to store the data will be a password protected computer and the data will be securely stored at the University of Saskatchewan for a minimum of five years.

Follow Up:

Participants who are interested in the progress of the study will be fully informed throughout the research process and the results of the study will also be posted on the University of Saskatchewan College of Education, Educational Administration website.

Questions or Concerns:

For any questions or concerns please contact the researcher or the supervisor using the information at the top of page 1. This research has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975.

Personal information:

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like any additional information, please contact: Kareen Reid, Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan at
kkr167@mail.usask.ca, Dr. Janet Okoko, Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan at (306-966-7611) or (janet.okoko@usask.ca).

By signing below, you indicate that you understand the procedures for this study and the consent form indicating your agreement to participate. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Signature</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher’s Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Appendix “F” – Participants Consent Form for Observation

Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

Participants Consent Form for observation

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: The influence of School Leadership Practices on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Newcomer Students

Researcher:
Kareen Reid
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1
Email: kkr167@mail.usask.ca

Supervisor:
Dr. Janet Okoko
Associate Professor Educational Administration
Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1
Email: janet.okoko@usask.ca
Tel: 306-966-7611

Purpose and objective of the research:
The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine school leadership practices and how they engage teachers for culturally responsive pedagogy that supports newcomer students. The aim of the study is to seek answers to the following question: How do school leaders enact practices that support
culturally responsive pedagogy? To answer the main question, the following sub-questions will be addressed:

1. How do school leaders influence teachers’ competence to cater to the needs of culturally diverse newcomer students?
2. What do school leaders do to ensure teachers are equipped to engage newcomer students in the classroom?
3. How do school leaders create a culturally responsive environment that support newcomer students from diverse cultural background?
4. How do school leaders mobilize professional development strategies to facilitate CRP?
5. What are the leadership practices used to facilitate inclusion for all culturally diverse students?

Procedure:

If you choose to participate in this study, I would like to carry out an observational activity where you will be observed while engaging in various activities related to leadership and culturally responsive pedagogy that is reflected in the learning environment. An observation checklist will be used as a guide for the observational process. The observations are aimed at providing answers to the research questions. The findings from the study will form the basis for my dissertation, as this is a requirement for the completion of my degree. This information may also be used for conference presentations and journal articles.

Funded by:

This research is not funded.

Potential risk:

There are no known or anticipated risks to you participating in this research. However, if there are any risk, they will be no more than what you encounter in the everyday context of your work.

Potential Benefits:

I cannot guarantee that you will receive personal benefit from participating in this study; however, you may experience greater awareness of cultural diversity as you take the journey of creating a comfortable learning environment for all students. Your contribution will be used to establish aspects that could enhance cultural leadership practices by promoting a culturally responsive and inclusive school environment, inclusive instructional practices, building relationships that encourage collaborations between school and community. This study can also provide you with an opportunity to
contribute to recommendations for improving school leadership practices that are geared to support culturally diverse students as they continue to navigate their way through the education system.

Confidentiality:

Your personal details will be kept in the strictest confidence to show respect for your privacy and confidentiality. Participants’ confidentiality will be limited due to the nature of group activities since my research will include interaction with participants in the learning community. The research will be done in one school; therefore, the sample size will be small, I will do my best to ensure strict confidentiality for all participants. To maintain such privacy, your name will not appear in the report, or any articles resulting from the study instead, pseudonyms will be used. Notes or any other recorded data that are gathered from this study will not include your name. All information that you share will be treated with the strictest confidence.

The consent forms will be stored separately from the transcripts, or any other data received from participants. This safety procedure will help to avoid the possibility of your name being associated with different responses. The school or the division will not be identified at anytime during or after the data has been collected, I will collect data for the observation using field notes. This data collected will be reported in aggregate form to avoid the possibility of individual being identified. The data collected will be retained for five years in a secured office at the University of Saskatchewan, only myself and my supervisor will be privy to such information. I will also use the secure cabinet in PAWS as a backup for data collected.

Right to withdraw:

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time or choose to answer only those questions with which you are comfortable. If you choose to withdraw from the study, the data collected at this point will be deleted and this will not influence or affect your position, employment or how you will be treated. Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply fifteen days after observation data is collected. The data obtained from the observation will be used in an anonymous and confidential manner. The data will be securely stored at the University of Saskatchewan for a minimum of five years.

Follow Up:

Participants who are interested in the progress of the study will be fully informed throughout the research process and the results of the study will also be posted on the University of Saskatchewan College Of Education, Educational Administration website.
Questions or Concerns:

For any questions or concerns please contact the researcher or the supervisor using the information at the top of page 1. This research has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975.

Personal information:

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like any additional information, please contact: Kareen Reid, Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan at kkr167@mail.usask.ca, Dr. Janet Okoko, Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan at (306-966-7611) or (janet.okoko@usask.ca).

By signing below, you indicate that you understand the procedures for this study and the consent form indicating your agreement to participate. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

_________________________________  _________________________  ___________________
Name of Participant                  Signature                  Date

_________________________________  _________________________  ___________________
Researcher’s Signature               Date
Appendix “G” - Transcript Release Form

Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

Transcript Release Form

The influence of School Leadership Practices on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Newcomer Students

I, _________________________________, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Kareen Reid. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Kareen Reid to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

_____________________________  _______________________
Name of Participant                 Date

_____________________________  _______________________
Signature of Participant            Signature of Researcher
Appendix “H” – Certificate of Approval

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 15-Aug-2019

Certificate of Approval

Application ID: 1268

Principal Investigator: Janet Okoko

Department: Department of Educational Administration

Locations Where Research Activities are Conducted: Saskatoon Public-School Division, Canada

Student(s): Kareen Reid

Funder(s):

Sponsor:

Title: The Influence of School Leadership Practices on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Newcomer Students

Approved On: 15/08/2019

Expiry Date: 14/08/2020

Approval Of: Interview guide for school leaders

Letter of introduction

Master-list template

Behavioural Research Ethics Application

Observation guides (school leaders, teachers)

Participant consent forms (interviews, observations)

Recruitment letters (teachers, school leaders)

Interview guides (teachers, school leaders)

Transcript release form

Acknowledgment Of:

Review Type: Delegated Review
CERTIFICATION
The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2 2014). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS
In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php.

Digitally Approved by Patricia Simonson, Vice Chair
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan
Appendix “I” – Certificate of Re-approval

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 20-Aug-2020

Certificate of Re-Approval

Application ID: 1268
Principal Investigator: Janet Okoko
Department: Department of Educational Administration

Locations Where Research Activities are Conducted: Saskatoon Public-School Division, Canada

Student(s): Kareen Reid
Funder(s):
Sponsor:

Title: The Influence of School Leadership Practices on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Newcomer Students

Approval Effective Date: 04/08/2020
Expire Date: 04/08/2021

Acknowledgment Of: none

Review Type: Delegated Review
Meeting Date: 09/09/2020

* This study, inclusive of all previously approved documents, has been re-approved until the expiry date noted above

CERTIFICATION
The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TPCS 2 2018). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project, this proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS
In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php.

Digitally Approved by Diane Martz
Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan
Appendix “J” – Certificate of Re-approval

Certificate of Re-Approval

Application ID: 1268
Principal Investigator: Janet Okoko
Department: Department of Educational Administration

Locations Where Research Activities are Conducted: Saskatoon Public-School Division, Canada
Student(s): Karen Reid
Funder(s): 
Sponsor: 
Title: The Influence of School Leadership Practices on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for Newcomer Students

Approval Effective Date: 04-Aug-2021
Expiry Date: 04-Aug-2022
Acknowledgment Of: N/A

Review Type: Delegated Review

* This study, inclusive of all previously approved documents, has been re-approved until the expiry date noted above

CERTIFICATION
The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2 2014). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS
In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php.

Digitally Approved by Diane Martz
Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan