

**CROSSING BORDERS: TEACHER/PRINCIPALS' UNDERSTANDINGS RELATED TO
THEIR TEACHING AND PRINCIPAL ROLES IN A
CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative multiple site case study was to explore Hutterite colony teacher/principals' understandings related to their teaching and principal roles in a cross-cultural context. A constructivist epistemology framed an examination of issues and experiences of teacher/principals, drawing out patterns and trends regarding influences on their cultural understandings, focusing attention on their interactions with students and colony members, and illuminating their attitudes towards their previous and emergent work environment.

The study investigated four teacher/principals' understandings of how their cultural identity impacted their work, the understandings of the teacher/principals regarding similarities and differences between their culture and Hutterite colony culture, and their utilization of their knowledge of Hutterite culture to maintain positive student relations. Four Hutterite colony schools comprised the research sites. The teacher/principals, two females and two males, shared 28 years of colony school experience.

This multiple site case study utilized qualitative techniques: data were gathered from four teacher/principals through pre-interviews, semi-structured interviews, on-site observations, and the examination of administrative processes. From the data, sense-making capacity, order-making ability, and intuition, also referred to as recognition-producing capability, four broad themes emerged: (a) the idiosyncratic effects of personality and cross-cultural connections, (b) the catalytic effect of similarities and differences, (c) the emphasis on the primacy of teaching, and (d) the tension between the roles of teacher/principal and principal/teacher.

The study's findings add to the existing theory and research on being a teacher and a principal in a cross-cultural context, specifically a monocultural setting. Policy makers, educational leaders, principals, and teachers may well reflect on the roles of life experience,

personal origin and interests, belief system, educational and administrative skills, world view, temperament, and personal and professional commitment when considering school appointments.

The study increases the understanding of the role and the effects of a non-Hutterite teacher and principal on Hutterite students. Ideas for further research generated from this study include a multiple site case study of Hutterite teachers, a qualitative analysis between non-Hutterite teachers and Hutterite teachers, and a mixed methods study in a colony-rich region. Within the professional domain, understanding how pre-service teachers and working teachers are prepared for teaching in diverse classrooms would be beneficial. What is being done, and what could be done, in the preparation and delivery of professional development for presently serving colony teachers are questions meriting further consideration.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

A child's life is like a piece of paper upon which every passerby leaves a mark.

Chinese proverb

1.1 Context

As Canada continues on a path of increasing cultural diversity, schools are challenged to make their programs relevant and accessible to a multiplicity of students and communities. The diversity may range from the multicultural setting of an urban elementary school with 48 first languages represented (B. Braybrook, personal communication, December, 2012), to the relatively monocultural settings of Hutterite colony schools, faith-based schools, Independent schools, and schools providing for minority populations (e.g., Islamic, Jewish, and bilingual schools).

The purpose of this qualitative multiple site case study was to explore teacher/principals' understandings related to their teaching and principal roles in a cross-cultural context. Cross-cultural denotes the relationship between and among people from a different culture or cultures; "cross-cultural studies are complex" (Janzen & Stanton, 2010, p. xvi). In this study, the cross-cultural settings were four Hutterite colony schools.

Hutterite society involves a religious community. The people live communally and they attempt to remain as physically, socially, and politically disengaged as feasible. Although part of the national fabric, and except for the economic sphere, Hutterites' relatively isolationistic choices attempt to counteract the pressures of globalization. However, as producers and consumers many colonies are connected to local, regional, national, and international economies.

Globalization has, according to Kaplan (2012, p. 50), “erased borders, regions, and cultural distinctions.”

Although globalization stresses and economic perspectives may unify humankind, Hutterites choose to remain separate and such is the educational setting for their non-Hutterite teachers. Redekop and Shafir (1987), described the Hutterites as an “agricultural and cultural enclave system with the express purpose of guarding them from being influenced and corrupted by the world. This is defined as the ‘two kingdoms’ and the Hutterite colony is where the divine law can be expressed” (p. 350). Hutterite colony schools are unique because of their efforts to remain set apart from the greater community. In this study, the students attended one-room, multi-graded schools, and the teacher was a non-Hutterite. The colony setting presented dilemmas and paradoxes to the teacher/principals.

1.2 The Hutterites and Their Education

The Hutterites are the oldest family communal group in the Western world (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2005). As observed by Katz and Lehr (2012), “after the Israeli kibbutz the Hutterites are the second largest communal-agricultural community in the world” (p. xi). The Hutterite beliefs of community and self-surrender to the will of God are fundamental characteristics of their culture and help to explain their society’s longevity, often under adverse social and political conditions, and their exceptional level of social organization. Working and living for the common good is attributable to Hutterian religious beliefs (Huffman, 2000).

The education of their children is very important to the Hutterites (Hostetler, 1997; Janzen & Stanton, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012). Katz and Lehr (2012) reported that “through education Hutterite doctrine is instilled and a significant part of the Hutterian socialization process is achieved” (p. 116). On the Hutterite colony, pressures to be effective and succeed in

school were guided by their society, the Hutterite colony governance structure and families, the school division, and the Ministry of Education. It was essential that the colony teacher/principal demonstrated leadership as well as maintaining and strengthening his or her role as the teacher/principal (*The Education Act, 1995*).

The long history of the value of education in early schools systems organized by the Hutterites was described by Friedmann (2010):

Among the various Anabaptist groups of the sixteenth century, perhaps none had so much opportunity for a systematic Christian upbringing of the youth as the Hutterites, who on their large collective *Bruderhofs* in Moravia could organize and systematically take care of the entire education from the nursery school to kindergarten and through the grades. (p. 146)

Katz and Lehr (2012) stated that “the Hutterites’ educational principles, established in the sixteenth century, have been largely retained” (p. 117). There are at least two basic principles of Hutterite education: “The purposes of Hutterite education is to know the Lord, follow him and fulfill his commandments; Hutterite education is fully independent, it is separated from the general educational system which it does not allow its children to join” (Katz & Lehr, 2012, p. 117).

Due to the relatively low enrolment of a colony school, the classroom teacher is also assigned the leadership and administrative duties of the principalship. The teacher/principals receive a principal’s basic administrative allowance (\$7 164.00 for the 2012-2013 school year) as stipulated in the teachers’ provincial collective agreement between the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation and the Ministry of Education, with duties as outlined by school division policy and the Ministry of Education. Concurrently, colony teacher/principals are required to develop

competencies for the environments specific to their assigned Hutterite colony, conditions that may not be found in off-colony schools or in other colony schools.

1.3 Hutterian Prospects: Economic and Social

The Hutterites are a growing economic and social force in western Canada, particularly on the prairies, and the delivery and administration of their education often has been attention-getting among rural school divisions and rural communities. According to the Canadian federal government's Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (2011), Canada's projected 2011 population growth rate (a combination of net migration and natural increase) was 0.9 percent. At about 3.5 percent (Janzen & Stanton, 2010), the projected rate of population growth on Hutterite colonies was almost four times greater than that of Canada's general population. According to Peter (1986), "Hutterites are world champions in having maintained one of the highest reliably recorded rate of natural [population] increase in the world for nearly one hundred years" (p. xv). However, challenges to the Hutterite way of life exist: during the years 2003-2005, colony defections exceeded births (Katz & Lehr, 2012). Contradicting the federal government's growth-related figures, Katz and Lehr (2012) contend that the growth rate of colonies has decreased due to apostasy, desertion, and birth control, and that the number of children per family has decreased to between three and five.

Statistics Canada (2011) reported that at the time of the 2006 census 5775 Hutterites lived in Saskatchewan. In Alberta in 2006, a total of 153 Hutterite colony schools educated 3109 students with a class average of 20.3 students per school (Hiemstra & Brink, 2006). According to The Hutterian Brethren Schmiedeleut Conference (2010), Hutterites were settled in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. There were 9425 living in Manitoba, 14 995 living in Alberta, 5110 in Saskatchewan, and 475 living in British Columbia. (Statistics Canada,

2006). As per Hutterite tradition, if you did not live on a colony you were not defined or considered a Hutterite.

The education of Hutterite children is being subjected to change forces internally and externally (Hostetler, 1997; Janzen & Stanton, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012). Internally, curricular and instructional pressures exist (e.g., teacher and resources availability, distance education, and colony support/conflict) as Hutterite students advance their education. Externally, colonies are subjected to economic and technological changes that affect agriculture, manufacturing, and small communities worldwide (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). The agricultural economy demands greater knowledge and expertise from colony members if they are to survive in an environment of narrow profit margins (C. Grosse, personal communication, September, 2003). Out of necessity, to guarantee their survival, some colonies have lessened their dependence on agriculture and are moving into manufacturing enterprises, for example domestic and office furniture production (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). One of the study's colonies operates a construction company as a means of diversifying their economy. Rural school and community challenges, such as out-migration, poverty, and declining student enrollments (Stelmach, 2011), were less significant issues on the colonies. However, other factors, such as gender inequity, staffing of teachers, and remoteness (Stelmach, 2011) have exerted pressure on rural children's education.

Failing to adapt to a changing economic, technological, and agricultural environment contributed to the bankruptcy of a Hardisty, Alberta colony in 2003 after 21 years of existence. A number of colonies in western Canada absorbed some of the displaced people, or they were absorbed into the Hardisty community as farmhands or other workers (*The Record*, 2003). A

willingness to adopt certain technologies has supported the Hutterites to maintain their traditions and to exist.

1.4 Preserving, Modernizing, Growing, and Sustaining the Hutterite Culture

The state of affairs among colonies and their ambition to continue and to expand their presence is well represented by Fukuyama's (2011) comment that "political decay occurs when political systems fail to adjust to changing circumstances" (p. 7). Fukuyama (2011) observed that "when the surrounding environment changes and new challenges arise, there is often a disjunction between existing institutions and present needs. Those institutions are supported by legions of stakeholders who oppose any fundamental change" (p. 7). Individuals, perhaps those with a vested interest, may be reluctant to introduce innovation and other changes.

Contemporary society and its "technological advances threaten one of the basic tenets of Hutterian life: isolation" (Morgan, 1997, p. iv). According to Shimazaki (2000), "preservation of the Hutterian way of life has been possible largely because of the ability of Hutterites to remain true to their fundamental beliefs while at the same time adopting those elements of the outside world that are necessary for their economic and social well-being" (p. 16). Postman (1993) used the term *technopoly* to describe a culture that loses its sense of purpose as a result of surrendering to technology. Hutterites may face challenges as to what extent of change they will endorse. Too much introduced technology may undermine their traditional lifestyle.

Ingoldsby and Smith (2005) noted that colonies are modernizing, though at a slower rate than the rest of society. Some Hutterite colonies have rejected all contemporary technology and advances including hybrid wheat and other genetically modified field crops (Tobe, 2007).

Of necessity, for example, due to narrow profit margins in agriculture and transformative technology, a number of colonies are adopting some of the technological practices (e.g., internet banking and accounting software) of the larger Canadian culture. Concurrently, Janzen and

Stanton (2010) stated that “Hutterite progressives are interested in post-elementary and post-secondary education for at least some of their members” (p. 180). This attitude has enabled colony children to better contend with a technological world that impacts their lifestyle, desired or not.

Some colonies have modernized and adapted to the external world faster than others. An example of this characteristic was demonstrated in the contrast between two Alberta colonies: the conservative Wilson Siding Colony, and the less conservative Viking Colony. Both colonies are Dariusleut sect members. Wilson Siding Colony members took their complaint concerning mandatory photographs on drivers’ licenses to the Supreme Court of Canada. According to a story by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2009), Wilson Siding Colony members believed that the Second Commandment in the Bible, ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,’ prohibits them from willingly having their picture taken. In 2009, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled four to three that a Hutterite must conform to provincial rules and abide by the law, making a photo compulsory for all new drivers’ licences. According to the Supreme Court, driving a vehicle was not a right and pictures on the license dissuades identity theft, the primary reason the Alberta government implemented the law.

In contrast to the Wilson Siding Colony, the Wipf brothers of Viking Colony acted as “poster boys” in full-page magazine advertisements for Alberta Milk. As reported by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2009), “Kurt Wipf, who is in the advertisement, said the men agreed to pose because it promotes their industry without conflicting with any religious or traditional aspects of their culture” (para. 8). As examples of diversity, here were two Hutterite colonies with distinct views regarding having their pictures taken and distributed. The example

highlighted the difficulty of making comparative generalizations of the Hutterites. It is misleading to assume that Hutterite colonies, even colonies of the same sect, are the same.

1.5 The Teacher/Principal of a Hutterite Colony School

It is incumbent upon the teacher/principals to ensure familiarity and comfort with the colony ethos if they wished to develop a career on the colony. Teachers assigned to colony schools in the province of Saskatchewan, as teacher/principals, are assigned the specific duties and responsibilities of a principal as defined by the provincial *Education Act, 1995*, Section 175. Furthermore, according to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Collective Agreement, 2010-2013, "a teacher in a one-room school shall be deemed to be a principal" (2010, Article 4.1).

Traditionally, the colony's teacher/principal has provided education for colony children in a one-room school setting. Predominantly, the grades range from kindergarten to grade eight and students often leave school at the age of fifteen, or after completing grade eight; few continue through to graduation (Hostetler, 1997a; Janzen & Stanton, 2010, Katz & Lehr, 2012). In recent years, the expectations of some colonies have changed and the role of teachers has subsequently expanded (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010). There exists an increasing interest among colonies keen to have their children attain high school graduation and to address the educational requirements of students with exceptionalities (Janzen & Stanton, 2010).

The teacher/principals of colony schools are engaged in an educational environment characterized by striving toward the features of an effective school. According to Pawlus (1997), "The key components of a strong effective school culture comprises shared values, humour, storytelling, empowerment, a communication system for spreading information, rituals and ceremonies, and collegiality" (p. 119). Life and education on a Hutterite colony requires the expression of these qualities by the teacher/principal. The teacher/principals cross cultural

borders as a result of their interactions with the children and the colony members. Their professional setting is unique from their own home and community and there are “bridges” of norms, beliefs, and world views to be crossed.

1.6 Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple site case study was to explore Hutterite colony teacher/principals’ understandings related to their teaching and principal roles in a cross-cultural context. I examined issues and experiences that: influenced their understandings, focused attention on their interactions with the students and colony members, and shaped their attitudes toward their work environment.

A teacher/principal’s character is reflected in the classroom by a demonstration of their understanding of the students and their way of life. In what ways did Hutterite colony teacher/principals reflect on their ability to have constructive effects on their students’ education? Do the teacher/principals’ personalities and professional philosophies reflect an understanding of the dynamics and culture of Hutterites? Teacher/principals on a Hutterite colony require “*cross-cultural adaptability*, the capacity to move back and forth between different worldviews” (Wilson, 2003, p. 272). Do teacher/principals empathize with their colony and its culture? Do they see their current position as a platform to another school; or, is it a long-term professional commitment? Are teacher/principals sympathetic to the Hutterite mission and to the prejudice and discrimination Hutterites have experienced and may yet encounter in the future? These are questions that emerge and evolve as the teacher/principals cross the borders between two cultures.

To be cognizant of cultural differences among groups, teacher/principals’ self-awareness of their cultural identity, their values, and biases facilitate their role (Connerley & Pedersen,

2005; Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998). This may be challenging for a teacher/principal or a staff member because, as observed by Cushner and Mahon (2009), “concepts related to cross-cultural understanding remain on the margins” (p. 304) of the educational mission. This may be true not only with staff but also with students.

Developing cross-cultural understandings may be realized through experience, discussions with Hutterites, and professional development with other colony teachers. As proposed by Cushner and Mahon (2009), the selection of teachers who learn and integrate appropriate cross-cultural understandings, strategies, and attitudes facilitate the education of students from different cultures. The colony teacher/principal’s position is unique in the mix of educational administrative roles and duties because they are often geographically, personally, culturally, socially, and professionally isolated from other educational settings.

1.7 Research Question

What are Hutterite colony teacher/principals' understandings related to their teaching and principal roles in a cross-cultural context?

1.8 Significance of the Study

Walker (2002) reported an existing “absence of research on principals’ dilemmas in different cultural contexts” (p. 208). Often, according to Walker (2002), there are attempts to extrapolate Western findings to other cultures, a naïve presumption. Walker stated that unless there were studies done in non-Western and atypical Western cultures and settings, “there is likelihood that the all-too-prevalent assumptions that Western-generated research findings are applicable to all settings will be made” (Walker, 2002, p. 208).

The presence and level of cross-cultural understandings possessed by a non-Hutterite teacher/principal in a Hutterite colony school and community was studied. As described by Tao

(2009), in the Teach for America (TFA) program in the United States, part of the TFA teachers' aim was to socialize, assimilate, and acculturate their students into a mainstream cultural environment. Was this a similar goal for colony teachers? Did the teacher/principals regard colony life as a cultural setting in which they influenced students' acculturation? A consideration of this perspective was that Hutterites were concerned about public schooling's efforts to assimilate Hutterite children into the greater society's social, political, and economic life (Janzen & Stanton, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012).

The teacher's role in student socialization is a contentious issue among Hutterites. Although colonies may be satisfied overall with the teacher/principal assigned to their colony, an example of one controversial curriculum and colony school-related issue was how much nationalism and militarism was emphasized, particularly as described in some of the contemporary textbooks and curriculum guides (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). It is not uncommon for the colony school community council (SCC) to review the curricular materials used by their children. The purpose of the analysis was to ensure appropriateness for Hutterite values and norms (Janzen & Stanton, 2010).

This study describes and examines job performance, rewards, frustrations, and constraints. With respect to the nature of teachers and the colony community, according to Jacob (2005), "what needs to be done is to see the complex interplay between culture and management in terms of a constantly evolving dynamic, because both are constantly evolving" (p. 515).

This study has the potential to contribute to a greater understanding of the Hutterite colony teacher/principals' perceptions related to their teaching and principal roles. In particular it can provide insights into teaching from a cultural perspective different from one's own. Redekop and Shaffir (1987) described how changing local demographics, technology, distance

education, academic upgrading, and the challenge of teaching and leading in geographic and symbolic separation have been found to impact educators.

This study adds to the literature on cross-cultural teaching and administrative duties and responsibilities related to educational processes on Hutterite colonies. It offers the possibility of the consideration of educational issues instruction and management in other colony settings and situations.

1.9 Definitions

The following operational definitions were used in this study:

Hutterites: They are the largest communal society in the world (Katz & Lehr, 2012). Hutterites are a religious group that believes in voluntary adult baptism (Anabaptism) and the separation of church and state. They are pacifists and they share heritages with the Mennonites and the Amish (Kraybill, 2010).

The Hutterites believe in communal living, and hold that there is no private property in heaven; therefore, there should be none on earth (Janzen, 2005). This belief has its source in the *Bible, Book of Acts*: “Those who believed shared all things common.” Further clarification of the Hutterian cultural perspective was provided by Rauterberg (2010): “For the Hutterite, the colony may be thought of as a communal ark . . . that leads to eternal life in heaven, while the rest of the world is drowning on the flood of temporary selfish pride and pleasure leading to death” (p. 113). Members of the colony are provided for equitably, and they do not hold personal bank accounts. Their houses are private (built and provided by the colony but belonging to the church) and many household items are considered personal (Peter, 1986).

The Hutterites wear a distinctive style of clothing. According to a student at Riverview Colony School in Saskatchewan (www.spiritsd.ca/riverview, 2011):

Our clothing symbolizes that we are different and it is our tradition. The tradition came from our ancestors. Also, the dark colors suggest that we try to be modest and not show off. We always have to cover our head when we go outside but when we sweat lots we can take it off. But the women can't. We can't wear pockets on your pants that have a curved opening. The opening of the pocket on the pants has to be cut straight. (para. 6)

Colony: The colony is “a domestic group consisting of all persons of Hutterite parentage or persuasion residing on the premises. It is the biologic, economic, ceremonial, and self-sustaining unit meeting the needs of its members through the activities of communal living,” (Hostetler & Huntington, 1996, p. 34).

A colony is a community. Amit (2002) provided the following criteria for an effective community: “People care because they associate the idea of community with people they know, with whom they share experiences, activities, places, and histories. A community arises out of interaction between the imagination of solidarity and its realisation through social relations” (p. 18). The Hutterites' colony/community setting consists of approximately 150 members, but there may be fewer. Upon reaching 150 residents, a new colony is formed and the colony population is divided by lot and distributed between the two colonies. The newly formed colony is known as the “daughter” colony, and the established colony is the “mother” colony.

Ethnicity: A group identity "composed of people who share a unique cultural background or social heritage that is passed from one generation to another. Distinction is usually based on such cultural criteria as a common ancestry, shared history, a common place of origin, language, dress, food preferences, and participation in rituals, networks, clubs or activities" (Drew, 2000, pp. 118-119).

Teacher/principal: In Saskatchewan, teacher/principals on colonies are not Hutterites; they are employees of the local school division, not the colony. The principal/teacher is responsible for the education and the administration of the colony school, as per school division policies and the Ministry of Education, as described in *The Education Act, 1995*, Section 175. The teacher/principal is accountable for the general organization, administration, and supervision of the school. In an e-mail survey, part of the pre-interview process of eight colony teacher/principals for this study, five of eight potential participants preferred the term principal/teacher over the term teacher/principal. The teacher/principals preferred this label because it best reflected the increasing administrative responsibilities, duties, and time commitment to the “principal” component of their work (V. Lepp, personal communication, April, 2010).

Colony school: The colony school is the site for Hutterite children’s education. The schools are generally K-8, but a number of schools offer an education (or are in the process of doing so) up to and including Grade 12. The number of students in each of the study’s schools ranges from six to 31.

Cross-cultural: Cross-cultural relations among groups involve an understanding of role and behaviour patterns. It was incumbent upon the teacher to overcome the vagaries of cross-cultural complexities and predicaments. As described by Hofstede (1986):

When teacher and student come from different cultures many perplexities can arise.

These can be due to different social positions of teachers and students in the two societies, to differences in the relevance of the curriculum for the two societies, or to differences in expected teacher/student and student/student interaction. The burden of adaptation in cross-cultural learning situations should be primarily on the teachers. (p. 1)

Cultural competence: Diller and Moule (2005) described cultural competence as the ability for an individual to effectively work (e.g., teach, provide services, interact with constituents) cross-culturally. Moule (2011) provided the following definition: “The ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than your own. It entails mastering complex awarenesses and sensitivities, various bodies of knowledge, and a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching” (p. 11).

Cross-cultural communication: This is well described as a process “whereby individuals from different cultural backgrounds attempt to share meaning” (Harris & Moran, 2000, p. 32).

Cultural intelligence: Thomas (2006) described cultural intelligence as “the ability to interact effectively with people who are culturally different” (p. 80). A person’s cultural intelligence is an amalgam of their mindfulness, knowledge, and behaviour.

1.10 Delimitations, Limitations, Assumptions

1.10.1 Delimitations

The following delimitations applied to my research:

1. The study was delimited to four Hutterite colonies’ teacher/principals who taught at a colony school in the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years.
2. The study was conducted from January 2012 to April 2012.
3. The study was delimited to cross-cultural contexts from the perspective of the teacher/principal’s role on a Hutterite colony.
4. This study was not an evaluation of teacher/principals’ roles; it was an examination of their understandings of their roles and impacting forces.

1.10.2 Limitations

It could be argued that this study was limited by my perspective as a former middle years and high school program coordinator in the school division under study. Though I had significant interaction with colony schools in my administrative role, the study was nevertheless limited by my lack of experience as a teacher/principal on a Hutterite colony. This study was also dependent upon the nature and issues of cross-cultural teaching, and possibly by the participants' ability to reflect and recall phenomena related to colony values, skills, and knowledge. As well, the reality of this dissertation being a public document, and that the participants would be known, means that they may be less likely to report any negative challenges or experiences.

In the field of educational leadership and administration, the currency of the literature was a limitation: there is a dearth of literature examining the position, duties, community status, and responsibilities of the school division-employed teacher/principals working in colony schools and relating to Hutterites generally. The body of literature related to cross-cultural interaction and competence primarily focuses on heterogeneous cultural groups and cultural inter- and intra-group dynamics. With respect to the currency of the literature (i.e., research, theory, and advocacy) associated with the Hutterites, the observations of Ingoldsby and Smith (2005) are noteworthy. According to the authors:

Change where it is not expected sometimes goes unnoticed. This may be especially true for the Hutterian Brethren. Because of this, many of the major writers have not looked closely at Hutterite practices since their original fieldwork. For example, Peter's 1987 discussion of the Hutterite family is essentially the same as his 1971 publication with

virtually no references beyond 1980, and Hostetler's 1997 *Hutterite Society* is simply a reprint of his 1974 classic. (p. 249)

Janzen and Stanton (2010) wrote and published *The Hutterites in North America.*, and Katz and Lehr (2012) wrote and published *Inside the Ark: The Hutterites in Canada and the United States.* These new contributions to the Hutterite literature are welcome additions to the literature survey on the culture and content body of Hutterite history.

1.10.3 Assumptions

My study was based on the following assumptions:

1. The teacher/principals in this study were able to recall perceptions of activities, time, relationships, and characterizations.
2. Responses received in the interviews as part of the information gathering were honestly reported by the respondents.
3. The study assumed a climate of trust and conviction between the researcher and the participants.

1.10.4 The Researcher

I was an educator in Saskatchewan and Alberta for 31 years prior to superannuating in June, 2010. I had held a number of different positions in schools and school divisions: a substitute teacher in one of western Canada's largest urban school divisions, a junior high school classroom teacher in an urban school division, a junior high school vice-principal and then principal in an urban school division, a principal of a Grades 6-12 school in a rural/suburban school division, and a division office middle years and high school programs coordinator in a rural/suburban school division. As a "teaching principal," at no time during my school administrative career did I teach less than 30% of the school day. I am not a Mennonite and I

have no connection with the Hutterites other than I have described in these pages. As a child, I attended the United Church of Canada.

During my eight-year term as a division office program coordinator, I worked as a middle years and secondary programs facilitator with the teacher/principals in eight Hutterite schools. One of my responsibilities was to provide logistical support to the teacher/principals as the colony schools implemented Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. I assisted the colony teacher/principals with general administrative and curricular responsibilities, particularly related to high school programming. With respect to professional duties, a growing number of their administrative responsibilities were computer-related and they were spending an increasing part of the day on high school curricula. In the course of that time, the first Hutterite high school students started to graduate from colony schools.

I developed a strong interest in the role of the teacher/principal on a Hutterite colony and in the lives of the Hutterite children and their families. My cognizance of the influence the teacher/principal had on the lives of the children, the colony community, and vice versa increased. The teacher/principal (more than any other individual in the off-colony world) has the longest sustained interaction with colony members. As described by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), professional experiences affected my interpretations of what I observed, discussed, examined, and concluded.

1.11 Organization of the Study

The first chapter of this dissertation has provided the introduction, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, its delimitations and limitations, assumptions, and definitions. Chapter Two is comprised of a review of the relevant literature dealing with the historical and cultural contexts of Saskatchewan's Hutterites; elements

of schooling and school-based management, including the supervision of colony teacher/principals; the role of technology; colony/teacher relations; and a summary.

Chapter Three is a description of the implications, methods, and procedures used to select the participants and to acquire and analyze the data. Chapter Four analyzes the results of the collected data. The colonies, their schools, and the teacher/principals are described. Chapter Five identifies and discusses the four themes that emerged from the data. Chapter Six contains a summary, discussion, and an examination of the implications of the study. Contributions to theory, policy, practice, recommendations for further research, and my personal reflections conclude my dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To develop a comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural education and its implications for teacher/principals educating Hutterite children, this chapter examines the roots of Canada's Hutterites, their place within traditional schooling and school-based management, and the cross-cultural and educational implications for the colony community and the teaching profession. The implied and required sensitivity that must be possessed by colony teachers will be discussed.

Chapter Two is comprised of three primary sections. The first section, The Hutterites in a Canadian Context, provides a context for the presence and reinforcement of the role of Hutterites in Canadian culture. The goal is to provide an introduction to the context within which the teacher/principals worked. The second section focuses on elements of schooling and school-based management, important precepts for teacher/principals. Next, four educational influences are examined: (a) organizational structures, (b) leadership and management, (c) curriculum, and (d) teaching and learning. Each of the four topics is supplemented with relevant information appropriate to its mandate. Chapter Two concludes with an examination of the role of educational technology in the colony schools and suggests a number of the areas of potentiality for the new technology.

2.1 The Hutterites in a Canadian Context: Major Hutterite Cultural Groups

In North America, there are four main cultural Hutterite sub-groups: *Schmiedeleut* (*Group 1*), *Schmiedeleut* (*Group 2*) (blacksmith people), *Dariusleut* (established by Reverend Darius Walter in 1860), and *Lehrerleut* (teacher people). The four main branches of the Hutterites have many common elements, but there are significant differences among the sects

and between colonies (Katz & Lehr, 2012). As reported by Hostetler and Huntington (1997), the four Hutterite groups share a broad, common body of doctrine, language, and social patterns, but each has its own senior elder and *ordnung* (discipline).

Although the original dogma of all Hutterite groups is similar, there are differences among contemporary Hutterite groups. These distinctions comprise such characteristics as manner of clothing and local government structure. Many of the differences reflect the diverse locations of the colonies and their distinct local histories. The Schmiedeleut groups are considered the most progressive of the Hutterite sects. The two Schmiedeleut groups “have a more unified governance structure and pay greater attention to colony aesthetics. There are piano lessons and theatrical productions, an increased use of media, and a loosening of clothing regulations” (Janzen, 2005, p. 23).

2.1.1 A Historical and Cultural Context of Saskatchewan’s Hutterites

To create a context for the study of teacher/principals on a Hutterite colony, there is relevance in a brief review of the Hutterites and how they came to be in Canada and the western provinces. Hutterite origins, the major cultural groups (particularly as relevant to Saskatchewan), immigration to North America, how and where the Hutterites chose to establish colonies, and a description of obstacles to Hutterite settlement are described. According to Eisner (1991):

The historical antecedents of a context provide a background against which particular episodes acquire meaning. Humans learn; they bring with them memories and interpretations of past events. What they experience is, in part, shaped by their personal history. (p. 36)

The Hutterites share a history of persecution, displacement, resilience, and agricultural success. Despite efforts to extinguish Hutterite culture and persecute them for their religious beliefs, Hutterites have managed to sustain, develop, and strengthen their culture, first in Europe and subsequently in North America.

The Hutterites encountered local and national hostility for their pacifist beliefs, German language, and communal lifestyle. Their population and colony growth and the ensuing purchase of land for colony expansion, farming, and manufacturing visited persecution and disparagement upon the colonies.

2.1.2 Hutterite Beginnings

The Hutterites originated in central Europe in the early 1500s, during the Protestant Reformation (Hostetler, 1997a; Ingoldsby, 2005; Janzen & Stanton, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012; Peter, 1986). Unlike most Anabaptist sects, the Hutterites believe that true Christians should live communally (Janzen, 2005, p. 1). “Community is considered to be more important than the individual or the family,” asserted Ingoldsby and Smith (2005, p. 251). As described by Hostetler (1997a), “Anabaptism (adult baptism) was a revolt against duly constituted political and religious authority, and its adherents were society’s worst enemies” (p. 6). Further, as indicated by Hostetler (1997), “Socialists have seen the movement as the religious counterpart of class struggle or as a renewed attempt at Christian communism” (p. 6).

The year 1528 is considered by Hutterites to be their founding year (Hostetler & Huntington, 1996; Janzen & Stanton, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012). According to Janzen and Stanton (2010), it was in “1528 that Anabaptist leaders Jacob Wiedemann and Philip Jager first inaugurated ‘community of goods’ with a group of two hundred followers” (p. 19). Stated Janzen and Stanton, (2010): “The goal was to create a colony of heaven on earth, a foretaste of life

beyond the grave” (p. 3). Although present-day Hutterites trace the foundations of their beliefs to Jakob Hutter (he was executed for his beliefs in 1536 by being burnt at the stake), Hutter was not responsible for the genesis of the Hutterian way of life. Hutter was impressed by the lifestyle of the group soon-to-be-called Hutterites and he influenced the course of development of the Hutterian culture.

With reference to their spirituality, according to Crummett (2003):

Hutterites believe that mankind was created as an integral component of a complex, divinely conceived and orchestrated natural universe to worship the all-loving, all-powerful creator. They see human beings as selfish, weak, and sinful . . . and in desperate need of God’s glory, guidance, gifts, and grace. By having faith in the Heavenly Father, accepting the Bible as his divinely inspired Word, and repenting to Him for their wrong-doings, Hutterites can be redeemed, renewed, and ultimately resurrected. (p. 7)

As described by Ingoldsby and Smith, (2005), “all Hutterites are descended from eighteen families; five names have since died out so there are only thirteen traditional Hutterite names” (p. 251). Tschetter, Gross, and Wollman are common Hutterite surnames in central Saskatchewan.

Hutterites believe strongly in pacifism. When universal military training was introduced in the Ukraine in 1872, repealing all previous Hutterian exemptions from military duty and service, the Hutterites (about 440 of them) left Europe and migrated to South Dakota (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2005).

2.1.3 Hutterite Migration to Canada

Early cultural development in the United States, and continuing to this day, was influenced by the political philosophy of John Locke (Nevins, 2010). “Locke’s political philosophy has been constructed upon a foundation that recognizes and envisions only solitary selves. A concept of the whole, what we owe to one another as citizens, is largely missing from American public discourse” (Nevins, 2010, p. 191). Locke’s philosophy and the cultural direction of the United States ran counter to the communitarian principles of the Hutterites, a position that may have bred ill will towards the Hutterites and reinforced disassociation from America’s national goals. Ajzenstat (2007) observed that many historians maintain that Canada’s pre-Confederation development was influenced by an anti-Lockean perspective. The Fathers of Confederation perhaps endorsed a philosophy that embraced a perspective favouring the common good (Ajzenstat, 2007).

Apart from what Locke’s national philosophy may have contributed to the development of a national spirit, Hutterites had begun to face difficulties in the United States over their use of the German language and for refusing military service during the First World War (Hiemstra & Brink, 2006, p. 1167). After the First World War, Hutterites started moving to Canada from the United States. “Canada wanted the Hutterites to help develop the agricultural potential of the Prairies. The government gave the Hutterites assurances that they would not be forced to do military service, and they were also assured religious freedom,” according to the *Hutterite Brethren* website at the University of Alberta (2013, para. 9).

The Hutterites would not always receive a warmer welcome in Canada than in the United States. For example, some early immigrant groups, including the Hutterites, were keen to provide a bilingual education to their children. These efforts were often strongly opposed by

Anglophone Protestants determined to define the appearance of society in western Canada. In 1918, Saskatchewan eliminated instruction in all languages other than English beyond the first grade; a blow to the French-Canadian, Polish, Ukrainian, and Mennonite communities (Finkel, Conrad, & Strong-Boag, 1993). Migrating Hutterites were affected by this English-only spirit. The *Hutterite Brethren* website at the University of Alberta (2013) provides the following account:

From early summer 1918 on, there were occasional reports of "Germans" entering the prairies from the U.S. It was reported that the Hutterites were buying up huge tracts of fertile farmland in the south. These Germans, the Hutterites, were met with hostility because of their anti-war convictions, their land purchases, and their clannishness and refusal to integrate into Canadian society. After the establishment of six colonies in Manitoba and four colonies in Alberta, the government, under pressure from the local population, withdrew its promise and stopped further immigration of Hutterites. (para. 10)

2.1.4 The Cultural Homogeneity of the Hutterites

While there have been programs and policies to support and sustain an increasingly diverse school and classroom population, taking into account differences in religion, language, dress, customs, and values, a contrasting process was developing in parts of the Canadian West. The Hutterites, a European religious sect, were establishing relatively homogeneous settlements. It is a common misconception to assume, however, that all Hutterites are the "same." There are different sects within the Hutterite community and there are diversities among families and colonies of the same sect, even those located within a few kilometres from one another.

A Hutterite colony consists of a few family surnames, increasing to eventually yield a total colony population of approximately 150. The belief is that as a population approaches 150,

the group becomes much harder to manage and begins to lack cohesiveness (Gladwell, 2002). As described by a Hutterite elder, “In smaller groups people are a lot closer. They’re knit together, which is very important if you want to be successful at community life. What happens when you get that big is that the group starts to . . . form . . . two or three groups within the larger group” (Gladwell, 2002, p. 181). Katz and Lehr (2012) reported that the typical size of a colony in 2012 was 105 to 115 people. There is strong local agreement on cultural values, religious dogma, language, dress, and other characteristics that comprise a colony culture.

According to its principal, one elementary school in the city of Saskatoon, SK, is represented by 48 first languages other than English (B. Braybrook, personal communication, December, 2012). Teachers are hard-pressed to be cognizant of the variety of traditions, customs, mores, and values of such an eclectic student body. Due to the relative cultural homogeneity of the colony, it may be considered less arduous for the teacher/principal to be cognizant of the cultural blend within their classroom.

Apart from a knowledge of the idiosyncrasies and familiarities of the Hutterite culture required to teach and subsist on a colony, a principal/teacher willing to become familiar with the individual families would function well. Although not all characteristics apply to the same magnitude, and there are other characteristics distinguishing them from the larger culture, Hutterite culture is well described as a *monoculture*. Monoculture is a term primarily used in the area of agriculture; however, it does have an application to societal issues. The societal characteristics of a monoculture are (a) a common heritage, (b) a shared belief structure, (c) an inward-looking psyche, (d) a suspicion of foreigners, (e) a common religious structure, (f) tribalism, and (g) common purchasing of goods (Mukhtar, 1996; Medley, 2010).

2.1.5 Settlement and Distribution of the Hutterites

In the United States, Hutterites are in Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, and Washington. Schmiedeleut Groups 1 and 2 Hutterites reside in Manitoba, Minnesota, and North and South Dakota. Dariusleut and Lehrerleut live in western North America: Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Washington, and Montana. As well as in Canada and the United States, there are Hutterite colonies in Japan, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Germany (Janzen & Stanton, 2010).

Notwithstanding the differences among the sects, there are characteristics that qualify the Hutterites to stand as a *cultural community*. According to Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003), a cultural community is “a coordinated group of people with some traditions and understandings in common, extending across several generations, with varied roles and practices and continual change among participants as well as transformation in the community’s practices” (p. 21).

Some of the early hostility directed toward the Hutterites was partly based upon the development of their settlements. The chosen lifestyle of the Hutterites was contrary to the development of North America, particularly the United States. The United States, and Canada somewhat, had as one of its foundational building blocks the belief, as expressed by the Protestant Reformation, Thomas Hobbes, and Enlightenment thinker John Locke that humankind was, by nature, individualistic (Nevins, 2010).

Hobbes’ notion of freedom proposed that humankind was naturally individualistic, covetous, and bellicose, and Locke held that humankind was acquisitive, competitive, and violence-prone (Nevins, 2010). These are characteristics antithetical to Hutterite culture, particularly their foundational societal beliefs. The Hutterites’ beliefs in living communally, the importance of interdependence, and the rejection of individualism struck a conflicting note with

many of the early settlers in the West and the other immigrant residents of North America. The Hutterites' accumulation of large shared land holdings, communal dining practices, pacifism, lack of personal property, conformity in dress, and self-imposed isolation (geographical, political, and social) attracted negative attention due to a differing position relative to the rest of immigrant society.

2.1.5.1 Impediments to settlement.

As stated in the article *Religions in Canada: Hutterian Brotherhood*, written and distributed by Canada's National Defence (2009), "Hutterites faced further difficulties in their desire to establish colonies in western Canada. They encountered provincial restrictions on sizes and locations of communal farms, severely inhibiting a colony's ability to grow. Federal legislative and constitutional change has eliminated such obstacles" (p. 1).

Prejudice and discrimination were experienced by the Hutterites and residual sentiments may exist in some communities. However, the negative responses have lessened with time.

According to the *Hutterite Brethren* website (University of Alberta, 2004):

The Hutterites were criticized for staying aloof from the surrounding community, for buying supplies in large quantities wherever prices were lowest, not necessarily in the surrounding communities, their ostensibly tax-free status, and they were accused of providing only inferior education to their children. (para. 12)

The hostility toward the Hutterites is not a rare occurrence. It can occur when the situational variables are present. Wessler (2011), in his research, observed that "when communities change demographically based on race, religion, and ethnicity, particularly when change occurs quickly, tension almost always surfaces" (p. 36). The setting for that tension to appear is most often the school because "the school is often the only place where people from

different racial, ethnic, national, and religious backgrounds spend time together” (Wessler, 2011, p. 36).

As the Hutterites started to accumulate land for their colonies, local farmers and merchants were concerned about such huge blocks of land being controlled by one group. Some of the local discomfort was perhaps a result of the strong work ethic and the agricultural success of the Hutterite colonies in their ventures (Hostetler, 1997). Concern and envy over the size and extent of the Hutterite colonies was present, as described by the Hutterite Brethren website (University of Alberta, 2004):

In 2000, the MLA from Little Bow in southern Alberta introduced—unsuccessfully—a private bill which would make it illegal for anyone to own in excess of 15 per cent of the total amount of arable farmland in any municipal district or county. At that time, a spokesman for the Hutterites defended their colonies saying that they were family farms just like everyone else's; the colonies just happened to have more families living on them. Each colony is, after all, a separate legal identity. (para. 13)

2.1.6 Hutterite Tradition and Gender-Role Construction

Communal living is a foundational principle Hutterite tradition and culture. Critical to their beliefs are the following premises, summarized by Katz and Lehr (2012):

God created the world not for one man only, but for all human beings together. . . . The fact that man cannot take anything with him after his death shows that property should not be accumulated. . . . The Hutterite community is one family, where brotherly love, mutual sharing and giving should exist. . . . Equality in the community finds its actual expression in the rule “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” (pp. 7-8).

Katz and Lehr (2012) observed, however, that “even among the Hutterites, total equality cannot exist: Women have no voting rights, and because work is strictly gendered the number of tasks they are allowed to perform is limited” (p. 8). Other factors affect one’s place in the community, for example age and ranking within the Hutterite philosophy (e.g., baptized or not yet baptized), and some community members have supervisory positions on the colony (Katz & Lehr, 2012). Kraybill (2010) identified the source of the man/woman connection: “The understanding of the husband’s dominant leadership role in the affairs of the family is based on I Corinthians 11:3-12, where the Apostle Paul spells out a divine order of headship authority: God, Christ, man, woman” (p. 95). The role of women in the Hutterite community has been described in an historical context by Kraybill (2010):

In the 1500s, Anabaptist women held roles as teachers, evangelists, elders, and prophets more frequently than women in Catholic and Protestant groups. However, after the 1500s most Anabaptist churches began to restrict the church leadership roles of women. As Anabaptist groups were forced into more rural and agricultural settings, motherhood and homemaking eventually constituted the sphere of women’s work. (p. 94)

In a study of gender-role development of Hutterite children, Wang, Eberhard, and Bernas (2005) observed that efforts by adults to control the direction of gender-role development (through modelling, direct instruction, and the generation of gender-role activities, among others) may be thwarted by the actions and interactions of the children themselves: “They [the adults] could not completely control the direction of gender-role interactions” (Wang, Eberhard, & Bernas, 2005, p. 2). Wang, Eberhard, and Bernas, 2005) stated the following:

In fact, most of the gender-role related interactions between the adults and the children departed from their original themes and were carried on by the circumstance of the

interaction process. This study suggests that when examining gender-role development, we need to focus on the process rather than on either the adults or children. (p. 2)

The authors noted that the adults took a determined role in their efforts at gender identification and reinforcement. Some of the gender identification directions from the parents included: “Walk like a woman. You stand at the corner and think why you shouted like a boy. Boys go help clean the hog barn. Girls go to the vegetable garden.” (Wang, Eberhard, & Bernas (2005, p. 20). Children expressed gender-role themes as teasing, questions, or playing: “Ryan is a girl. Women work in the kitchen, right? I’m Mary, the cook” (p. 21). According to Wang, Eberhard, and Bernas (2005):

Sixty-five percent of the gender-role related episodes initiated by the adults and 86% of the episodes initiated by the children departed from their original intentions and evolved throughout the process of the interactions. At the end of the interactive episode, one can no longer see who was responsible for the interactions, the adult or the children. Both the adult and the children were involved in and contributing to the process that carried them both. (p. 14)

2.2 Hutterite Schools: Elements of Schooling and School-based Management

To facilitate the review of literature relating to Hutterite schools, a framework consisting of four elements common to all school contexts, identified by Walker and Dimmock (2002), is employed. The four elements are (a) organizational structures, (b) leadership and management, (c) curriculum, and (d) teaching and learning.

2.2.1 Organizational Structures of Hutterite Schools

As outlined by Ryan (2003), cross-cultural education refers primarily to the education and learning that takes place in a heterogeneous community, for example, a school and its

classrooms. Diverse school communities have consequences for school administrators and the school's staff. The variety of languages, customs, parental roles, and religion can have an effect on the learning in school. The school administrator, depending on experience, may be required to devote a great deal of time and effort to develop a familiarity with the different perspectives and world views manifested by students, parents, and community (Ryan, 2003).

A Hutterite colony school is distinctive from a school with a culturally, economically, and socially diverse student body. The student population of a Hutterite colony school is more culturally homogeneous than the vast majority of schools in any community or country (Hostetler, 1997; Hofer, 2009; Janzen, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012). Other schools demonstrating a high degree of homogeneity may consist of students from a geographical region, or a particular religion, socio-economic, or language group.

The most striking cultural disparity existing in the school and on the Hutterite colony will be the presence of the non-Hutterite teacher at the "English school." As described by Rebecca Hofer (2009), a former Hutterite, "we had little contact with non-Hutterites" (p. 25). The interactions and relationships among the students, who may come from a few families only, and the teacher are without parallel in the rest of the colony. Most often the non-Hutterite teacher is hired, paid, and supervised by the local school division. Respecting the presence of the non-Hutterite teacher, as suggested by Hostetler (1997), "the teacher becomes an informal source of worldly knowledge to colony people and, if not properly controlled, a disruptive force" (p. 218).

In a study of non-Aboriginal teachers working in an Aboriginal community in Alaska, Kleinfeld (1988) concluded that "teachers in a culturally-different community must decide to what extent they should participate in community affairs, how they should respond to various community factions, and to what extent they should accept or attempt to alter the situations in

which they find themselves” (p. 1). According to Beachum and McCray (2011), “the dispositions and beliefs of pre-service educational professionals are of extreme importance” (p. 30). Pre-service teachers could be surveyed using cross-cultural and cultural assessment instruments such as the *Cultural Competency Organizational Self-assessment Question Bank* (Lessard, 2006), or the *Cultural Competence Self-assessment Instrument* (Mason, 1995) to gauge their attitudes in this area and their aptitude for suitability to teach on a colony.

2.2.1.1 Teaching cross-culturally in a Hutterite classroom.

Due to a scarcity of Hutterite teachers and/or sect beliefs, Hutterite children’s education is often delivered by teachers who do not share their culture (Beachum & McCray, 2011). A culturally competent teacher/principal familiar with, and sympathetic to, colony culture would apply “curriculum content and teaching strategies through [Hutterian] cultural frames of reference to make the content more meaningful” (Gay, 2000, p. 24).

Often, colony elders prefer older, married individuals rather than young, single teachers. With older teachers there is a belief that the young colony members are less likely to be led astray, negatively influenced, and perhaps leave the colony than if they had a young, single teacher (Katz & Lehr, 2012). “It is the place where the ideologies of the world and the colony compete with each other over the loyalty of the children,” according to Katz and Lehr (2012, p. 128).

Janzen and Stanton (2010) asserted that “many Hutterites believe that English teachers prepare children’s minds for rebellious thought and behaviour because they often provide subtle rationalizations for what Hutterites consider ‘sinful’ behaviour” (p. 181). The mainstream cultural training of teachers may be evident because they want, and encourage, their students to achieve and to be competitive.

Teachers may attempt, overtly and/or covertly, to instil an English ethos within their students. By the unintentional nature of their clothing, the outside teacher demonstrates his or her independence and this can be unsettling for the colony and the students (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). As described by Katz and Lehr (2012), relationships involving “the teacher and a student might lead to defection, and indeed, in some cases children ran away with the English teacher; or, teachers helped the young people find work outside the colony as part of their preparations for defection” (p. 129).

The organizational structure of a colony school consists of those things that provide the framework and setting (often physical) for learning to occur. “Normally the colony supplies the building, the heating, and the maintenance costs,” stated Hostetler (1997, p. 218). Very often the school is used as another colony facility, for example the church. In some colonies the teacher is required to remove or mask any examples of student work or other educational aids when school is not in session so as not to interfere with the church rituals (Hostetler, 1997).

2.2.1.2 The need for cultural intelligence in a Hutterite classroom.

Colony teacher/principals require a “knowledge of culture and of the fundamental principles of cross-cultural interactions: know what culture is, how cultures vary, and how culture affects behaviour” (Thomas, 2006, p. 81). This characteristic is referred to as *cultural intelligence* (Thomas, 2006, p. 81). A measure of an individual’s cross-cultural understanding is their aptitude and ability to adjust to the environs of a different culture. Thomas (2006) defined cultural intelligence as “the ability to interact effectively with people who are culturally different. Cultural intelligence, the ability to generate appropriate behaviour in a new cultural setting, makes cultural intelligence unique” (p. 80). A person’s cultural intelligence is an amalgam of their mindfulness, knowledge, and behaviour (Thomas, 2006).

The effects of interactions between the teacher/principal and colony students may be interpreted through the perspective described by Palincsar (1998). Palincsar (1998), drawing on the constructivist proposals of Vygotsky, maintained that human activities take place and an individual's identity is formed within social and cultural contexts. Table 1, Characteristics of Cultural Intelligence (Earley & Masokowski, (2004), illustrates the characteristics of cultural intelligence as organized according to cognitive, emotional, and physical processes.

As well, Table 1, Characteristics of Cultural Intelligence, demonstrates how “some outsiders have a seemingly natural ability to interpret someone’s unfamiliar and ambiguous gestures in just the way that person’s compatriots and colleagues would, even to mirror them. According to Earley and Mosakowski (2004), “we call that ‘cultural intelligence’” (p. 1). In a world where crossing borders is routine, cultural intelligence becomes a vitally important aptitude and skill.

Table 1. Characteristics of Cultural Intelligence

Cultural Intelligence		
<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Physical</i>
Declarative	Efficacy	Repertoire
Procedural	Persistence	Practices/Rituals
Analogical	Goals	Habits

Cultural intelligence, connected to emotional intelligence, is a learned skill, or at least it can be learned. According to Earley and Mosokowski (2004):

Cultural intelligence is related to emotional intelligence, but it picks up where emotional intelligence leaves off. A person with high emotional intelligence grasps what makes us human and at the same time what makes each of us different from one another. A person with high cultural intelligence can somehow tease out of a person’s or group’s behavior

those features that would be true of all people and all groups, those peculiar to this person or this group, and those that are neither universal nor idiosyncratic. (p. 1)

Thomas (2006) referred to the importance of *mindfulness* in the make-up of cultural intelligence; mindfulness' origins are in Buddhism. According to Thomas (2006), mindfulness is a "heightened awareness of and enhanced attention to current experience or present reality" (p. 84). In the development and utilization cultural intelligence, a person is assisted by the mindfulness of their thoughts, actions, motives, and external stimuli. Asserted Thomas (2006): "Mindfulness means adopting a particular active approach to cognitive processing, which involves the creation of new categories in memory and the seeking of multiple perspectives" (p. 84). Teacher/principals on a colony are advised to recognize that their adaptation to the colony setting is a conscious process facilitated by attention to their surroundings, language, rituals, customs, and local values.

2.2.1.3 The development of a teacher's professional identity.

Respecting the development of a professional identity, according to Beijaard Meijer, Verloop (2004), "it is not a stable entity; it cannot be interpreted as fixed or unitary. Professional identity is a complex and dynamic equilibrium where professional self-image balances a variety of roles teachers feel that they have to play" (p. 115). Cooper and Olson (1996) indicated the fact that professional identity is complex. Historical, sociological, psychological, and cultural factors may all influence the teacher's sense of self as a teacher. Professional identity is influenced by one's personal identity and how one sees one self. Being a teacher is a matter of being seen as a teacher by oneself and by others; one must accept themselves as such in the teacher role and as a member of the profession. It is a matter of arguing and then redefining an

identity that is socially legitimated. Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) described a quality of teacher professional identity:

It is important to pay attention to the personal part of teachers' professional identity.

What is found relevant to the profession, especially in light of the many educational changes currently taking place, may conflict with what teachers personally desire and experience as good. Such a conflict can lead to friction in teachers' professional identity in cases in which the "personal" and the "professional" are too far removed from each other. (p. 108)

For teachers, how they see themselves professionally and personally can be influenced by the nature of the place where they are located. Self-perception can be malleable and can be shaped to provide a fit to the community; this principle was described by Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004). For example, Trent (2013), in a study of teacher educators in Hong Kong, observed how the teachers assumed different identities whether in or out of the classroom and/or school. The self can develop through transactions with the environment. Self can arise in a social setting where there is social communication; in communicating, we can learn to assume the roles of others, a characteristic of empathy, and monitor our actions.

2.2.2 Leadership and Management in a Hutterite Colony School

Serving in a school leadership role on a Hutterite colony, where a unique religious setting exists and German is the first language, requires inimitable skills. In her characterization of the interculturally competent "global leader," Pusch (2009) identified education and experience as two strategies for developing the necessary attributes. As explained by Pusch (2009), "dealing with new methods of organizational management and leadership, leaders must discover how to fit into the community agency to which they were assigned and assume a productive role" (p.

80). Further, as emphasized by Pusch (2009) in the concluding comments of her analysis of culturally astute leaders, there is a “need to develop in leaders the attitudes that go beyond tolerance toward embracing difference and living constructively and compassionately in a multicultural world critical to the survival of humankind and the planet” (p. 81).

A characteristic of leadership and management impacting on the colony teacher/principal is motivation. Internal motivation, not necessarily money or material rewards, is what inspires individuals to do their best work (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The tasks or projects that the individuals are involved in must be intrinsically engaging. Illustrating this premise shared by Kouzes and Posner (2012, it is not “what gets rewarded gets done” it is “what is rewarding gets done.” (pp. 173-174)

2.2.2.1 Site-based management and school-based decision-making.

Site-based management/school-based decision-making is a contemporary model for principals, colony-based or otherwise. The practice is stated by Guthrie and Schuermann (2010) as “an approach to school management that shifts responsibility for the governance and control of schools from the central school district authorities into the hands of administrators, teachers, community members, and others at the level of the individual school” (p. 43). The teacher/principal has the colony members and leadership to frame and share decision-making.

There has been a declining interest of the school principalship as a career (Phillips, Rahm, & Renihan. 2003). Inappropriate or an absence of effective professional development and role preparation is a factor in this decline (Phillips, Rahm, & Renihan, 2003). As described by Tirozzi (2004), the former executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP):

The problem we face is a shortage of qualified candidates with the will to do the job, and it is magnified in many cases by a minimal amount of support, resources, development opportunities and compensation for the principals and aspiring principals. (para. 10)

Communications technology has been one factor that has provided greater opportunities for teacher/principals to interact, thereby contributing to a diminution of professional separation (Ferriter, 2009; Martinez & Harper, 2008).

2.2.2.2 The rural principalship: Some commonalities.

Hutterite colony schools are rural schools, and distinctive personal and professional attributes may be required to succeed as a teacher and/or principal in the rural setting. In a study of the rural principalship (Chalker, 2002), fourteen principals provided their motivation for the choice as a career move. The principals, according to the author of the study, spoke about the need to build positive relationships with the people in the rural community. This is not dissimilar to the advice given to a principal and/or teacher in a school in any setting. As highlighted by Chalker (2002), the principals' "suggestions can be divided into four categories: (a) become part of the community, (b) focus on people and relationships, (c) move sincerely but slowly, and (d) expect to work hard" (p. 154). According to Yan and Hunt (2005), as revealed in their study of management techniques and strategies in differing cultures, "to be cross-culturally effective, leaders need to understand the leadership perceptual orientation of the local people and make necessary adaptations in the way they lead" (p. 63).

Leading a rural school, concluded Hilty (2002), required "teachers to provide leadership by respecting the consciousness and culture of their students and creating communities where students and parents can express the relationship of educational institutions to their needs and aspirations" (p. 168). These conditions would be important in a colony school.

While providing leadership on a Hutterite colony, teacher/principals may perceive their roles differently than the teacher in a non-colony school, and the colony teacher/principals may feel they are rewarded in return. A colony teacher who had taught on a number of different colonies stated:

The students and families at the colony where I have taught were very appreciative of every little thing I did for the students or the colony members. They show their appreciation for things that I would never get a ‘thank you’ for from anyone outside the colony. (Stahl, 2003, p. 38)

Planning is an integral component of a teacher/principal’s activities, and it is an important facet of effective leadership, teaching, and management. In a multi-graded colony classroom, with perhaps as many as nine or more separate grade levels and differentiated student ability within grades, planning is paramount. According to Yinger (1980), careful teacher planning is necessitated by “the instructional materials available, the emphasis on meeting the objectives of the school division and the curricula, and the wide range of students to be found in the classroom” (p. 107).

2.2.2.3 The “one-room” school.

A not all-together unique characteristic of a colony school, due to the presence of one-room-type schools in rural areas of North America and other parts of the world, is its “one-room school” identity. In an article on the myths and realities of the one-room school, Stortz and Panayotidis (2004) described the one-room school as a “marker of civilization; it bespoke a desire to spread the merits of education to the rugged labourers and their families in even the most remote areas of Canada” (p. 51).

The *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* (2005) states:

The first one-room schools began when a community of Aboriginal people or early settlers had enough children to qualify for a grant for a school. After receiving the necessary government approvals, they selected a site. Regulations stipulated that such a school should be far from a slough; it should also be built on ground high enough that it would not flood, but low enough that the grass would grow. It was to be centrally located and readily accessible by the whole community. (para. 1)

In 1918 there were 4,020 organized school districts in Saskatchewan, each with the purpose of providing an education to the children of the district (Foght, 1918). As of 2013, there are 28 (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2013). Presently, Saskatchewan has 66 Hutterite colonies, 35 Dariusleut and 31 Lehrerleut (Cedrontech, 2012) and each is eligible to have its own school. Janzen and Stanton (2010) observed that it is an unusual Canadian concession to have schools that are “faith-based” public entities attended by Hutterite students only.

As characterized by Stortz and Panayotidis (2004), “the one-room school remains an integral vestige of our heritage” (p. 54). Swidler (2004) reported that “students in smaller schools tend to have greater opportunity and greater motivation to become involved in school life than students in larger schools” (p. 7).

Few teachers, if any, would be found to live on the colony nowadays. “In the early years, colonies were responsible for dwellings for teachers either on the colony itself or in the immediate vicinity” (Katz & Lehr, 2012, p. 122). Some teacher/principals experience a commute of significant distances (often on gravel roads) because some colonies may be geographically distant from highways. The one-room school and small schools have some advantages that can be utilized by the teacher/principal to provide a quality education to the students, at least one equivalent to the education larger schools provides. More than 70 years

ago, Wofford (1938) described the challenges of instructing and leading in a one-room school.

The teacher/principal principal/teacher dichotomy of the Hutterite colony is illustrated in

Wofford's (1938) description of a teacher's duties in a one-room school:

[There] are legal relations; problems arising from managing all the grades together; problems arising from the necessity of adjusting teaching methods to fit the rural setting; problems arising from difficult living conditions to which the teacher is unaccustomed; problems arising from the necessity for assuming professional, social, and economic leadership in the community. (p. 73)

The perceived difficulties can be categorized into two groups: those related to the duties of a teacher and those related to the duties of a principal (Wofford, 1938). In the context of the colony school, apart from the limited number of staff working in the school, it is difficult for the colony teacher/principal to develop meaningful professional relations with fellow principals, contrary to their colleagues in the greater school division. Respecting professional separation, teacher/principals may interact with other school administrators once a month at the regular administrative council meeting or at an inservice with other teachers and/or administrators present. The multi-faceted nature of their role may lead to conflicted decision-making when choosing which professional development clinics and workshops to attend. Similar to the situation for numerous schools, computer and telecommunications technology is diminishing the sense of separation. Through e-mail, social media, "Skyping," school division websites, and discussion boards, teachers are potentially more connected to colleagues.

If a teacher were professionally isolated because they have few connections to other teachers and specialists, their teaching may be affected. Silver (2012) observed that some "teachers working in isolation tend to repeat practices that they feel comfortable with. Because

they have fewer opportunities to witness alternative teaching methods, they remain unaware of different ways to teach and are unmotivated to implement innovative techniques” (p. 1).

2.2.2.4 The “one-room” school ethos on a Hutterite colony.

The Hutterite colony teacher/principal has a position not generally found in a contemporary and mainstream school or school system: a one-room school ethos. An educational strategy established by Salman Kahn and assisted financially by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation used an approach to “recreate the environment of a one-room schoolhouse, where students of all ages and levels learn independently but together, and have plenty of time left over to express their creativity through music or art” (Wente, 2011, p. 5). The Salman Kahn strategies emphasized computer-based instruction, but highlighted how the one-room school ethos is valued in present-day education.

It is not uncommon to find the colony teacher/principal working alone in a multi-graded one-room school setting, usually K-8; this was the pattern for many years (Hostetler & Huntington, 1996; Janzen & Stanton, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012). However, with the increasing recognition and attention to student exceptionalities it has become necessary and commonplace to utilize an educational assistant or another teacher, or both, working in the colony school collaboratively with the teacher/principal.

Some school districts are attempting to create one-room school settings and climates in their regular school. Through favourable logistic strategies in the school, or the construction of new schools, pods have been created as separate wings of the school and permit the concentration of a specific age/group in the area. The class enjoys relative seclusion from the other grade groups and the corresponding distractions that may occur. Concurrently, the close proximity and fluidity of the pod allows students to utilize the benefits of strategies such as the

multilevel classroom approach introduced during the past ten years in the province of Manitoba (Manitoba Ministry of Education, 2003).

2.2.2.5 Strategies for professional learning communities and mentoring in a Hutterite school.

Professional learning communities are a strategy to increase teacher collaboration and diminish teacher feelings of separation. However, horizontal professional learning communities (e.g., all teachers of a particular grade in a school or district) are challenging due to the small number of teachers on a colony. Vertical professional learning communities (e.g., all math teachers in a school or district) among other colony teachers are possible but distance may be an issue. A colony teacher, often responsible for all grades and subjects faces difficult choices, faces a dilemma when selecting where they fit in professional communities. Professional development via technology could contribute to diminishing the physical, cultural, and professional isolation of teachers working on colonies (Barnett, 2002). Barnett's (2002) perspective is countered by Gray (1996): "That technology has cancelled geography contains just enough merit to be called a plausible fallacy" (p. 216). Merryfield (2003), who conducted a study on the effects of teachers' online cross-cultural experiential learning, is "convinced that online technologies are important tools for teacher educators who value cross-cultural experiences, skills, and knowledge in local, national, and global contexts" (p. 147).

With tele-mentoring, teachers are assigned mentors and they communicate via e-mail. This would be an appropriate strategy for colony teachers. A study by Heider (2005) at the University of Texas, Austin, discovered the following three benefits for teachers involved in the tele-mentoring process:

The participants preferred online mentoring support because they were embarrassed to ask for help from teachers or supervisors in their own districts. Second, the new teachers were pleased with the amount of professional and personal support they received from their tele-mentors. Not only did they get practical teaching tips and pointers on assimilation into school culture, but the beginning teachers received care, empathy, and optimism. In fact, seven of the ten mentoring relationships grew into collaboratively reflective professional-development exchanges. Finally, division office staff members were instrumental in keeping an open line of communication between new teachers and their mentors by providing much-needed technical support. (p. 2)

The present-day one-room school is more of an archetype than a physical reality. It connotes a small allotment of staff and extensive multi-grading, perhaps kindergarten to grade eight in a setting with one teacher and one support staff, as is frequently the situation in a colony school. The implications for curricula and its delivery may be extensive.

Parents, teachers, and principals have found small schools “better able to engage the intellectual and emotional lives of students and to improve students' academic performance” (Wasley & Lear, 2001, p. 1). Vander Ark (2002) found that “small schools have higher attendance rates and lower dropout rates, their students have higher grade point averages, and students and teachers report greater satisfaction with the school experience” (p. 55). In a policy brief published by WestEd (2001), it was stated that (a) students learned well and often better, (b) behaviour problems diminished, (c) students developed strong personal bonds with others, (d) parent and community involvement increased, (e) curricula demonstrated enhanced simplicity, (f) teacher working conditions and job satisfaction improved, and (g) students, teachers, and

parents developed increased accountability. This created a culture of trust, rigour, and an expectation that all will succeed.

In a study by Leight and Rinehart (1999) of the experiences of 47 individuals who had attended a one-room, one-teacher school, the advantages and disadvantages of the one-room school were discussed:

The main advantages were the family-like closeness and atmosphere among the students and in the school, individual instruction, learning from older students, and the responsibility that comes from having to rely upon one another. Some of the disadvantages listed included the possibility of having a poor teacher for many years, lack of socialization in large groups, and poor plumbing and heating. (p.1)

Stortz and Panayotidis (2004) studied small schools and observed that with a wide range of students and one or two teachers in the school, conservative educational measures were adopted by the teacher. A colony school teacher/principal may view a few students spread among a range of grades as requiring a great deal of preparation time. Consequently, there may be traditionalist measures adopted by the teacher, for example, workbook-based and textbook-based assignments (Stortz & Panayotidis, 2004). This is a coping mechanism supporting the teacher through the curriculum.

“There is no broad-based research that offers evidence that instruction in small, rural schools is, or ever has been, any more ambitious than it is in large, graded town schools” (Swidler, 2005, p. 14). There are opportunities and strategies to make a one-room school an enriching experience and such opportunities need not be manifested by inservice, reform initiatives, or teacher education. Educational value can develop from a teacher’s own excitement

and attachment to his or her position in the school and the relationships developed with their students and the community (Swidler, 2005).

A study of small schools in Sweden determined that there are “no indications that small rural schools do not provide an equally good education as other schools, but the higher expenditures per pupil and decreasing population in sparsely populated areas increases the risk of school closures” (Aberg-Bengtsson, 2009, p. 1). At a colony school budget items may be diminished because the colony owns the school building, provides caretaking services, and bus transportation is not required; therefore, the colony school could be less affected from the fall-out of higher costs affecting the resources of rural schools. The population growth of colonies is substantial compared to the population decline of some rural areas. School population may be affected due to the Hutterite practice of creating a daughter colony when the population approaches 150 members. Colony schools, in many cases, are looking to expand their program and grade offerings to include secondary program offerings as some students stay in school beyond grade eight and the age of fifteen.

Vander Ark (2002) found no study that demonstrated higher achievement in large schools when compared with small schools. A study by Muse, Hite, Randall, and Jensen (1998) indicated that existing small schools were adequately staffed, community support was high, and the students did well academically. Identified benefits of a one-room school included feasibility of democratic practices, accountability of staff, and individualized attention for the students. The learning environment was safe and orderly, there was parental access to school leadership and the school, and a high-quality curriculum had been developed (Swidler, 2005). In small rural schools, same-grade and mixed-grade groups are characterized by a high level of teacher-student

interaction and conversation. According to Swidler (2005), the one-room school setting provides the manner of progressive instruction that present-day educational reformers desire.

A study of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) schools, schools with strong church connections and influences, outlined a number of the curricular advantages and disadvantages of the one-room school educational setting (Leight & Rinehart, 1999). According to four teachers interviewed and the data collected, teachers had greater autonomy, younger students learned from older students, there was increased responsibility that came from helping each other, the teachers had multiple years to work with the students, and they had the ability to create heterogeneous groups best suited to the needs of the students (Leight & Rinehart, 1999). Concerns from the teachers included scheduling difficulties, time constraints, and supervision demands. Unlike most colony teachers, the SDA teachers shared the students' religious beliefs and were guided by a strong spiritual commitment (Leight & Rinehart, 1999).

School administrator/teacher on a colony will be expected to demonstrate recognizable leadership attributes. As described by Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010, the twenty-first century teacher on a Hutterite colony will be expected to: (a) be an organizational person, (b) be a motivator of others; (c) have the ability to adapt to a changing world, on and off the colony; (d) be a technological expert; (e) be a budget manager; and (f) be an effective developer of strong community-school relations.

Collaboration and participation are integral components of professional growth, leadership, and management in the school setting. It is valuable for a staff and/or a community to build a shared vision of what the school is aiming to achieve for its students (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010). This is applicable to a Hutterite colony; however, there may be different goals for the school and the students compared to English schools.

Within the context of vision development for the school and its constituents, the colony leaders have an important role. The teacher possesses a somewhat lesser role, perhaps strictly receiving directions from the colony leaders (Hostetler, 1996). “Teachers who have never taught in a colony are typically given a ‘lecture’ by the preacher at the start. The preacher outlines the colony’s expectation of the teacher and sets the limits for practices which are ‘against our religion’,” reported Hostetler (1996, p. 108) and Katz and Lehr (2012). A grievous offense for the colony teacher is to go against the wishes and practices of the German teacher (often the assistant minister) or the colony’s minister.

In the broader context of professional community, the value of teachers collaborating and participating professionally with other teachers is well known and accepted (Bennis, 2003; Connerly & Pederson, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Lambert, 2000; Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 2000). Examples of positive collaboration and professional participation included trusting others, sharing information and resources, developing cooperative goals and roles, supporting norms of reciprocity, structuring projects to promote joint effort, supporting face-to-face interactions, saying “we,” asking questions, listening, and being open to advice (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

2.2.2.6 The professional supervision of colony teacher/principals.

Teacher supervision resides within a different context for a colony teacher compared to teachers in traditionally staffed and situated schools. Physically distant from the informal appraisals of colleagues and the informal/formal supervision of school administrators, colony principal/teachers rely upon the visits of the superintendent for supervision and appraisal. Similar to teachers in non-colony schools, colony teacher/principals are subject to the informal appraisals of community members. Teacher supervision, evaluation, and support, as carried out

by senior educational leaders in the school division, can be intermittent if the colony school is geographically isolated. An absence of rigorous evaluation of the school principal was identified as a variable in the difficulty of filling administrative positions in the schools (Phillips, Rahm, & Renihan. 2003, p. 30).

If teachers are to be evaluated, and if hiring is to occur on the basis of appraisal results and teacher characteristics, what qualities should a colony teacher/principal possess? Although some colony teacher characteristics have been described, these are features commonly found or being developed in effective teachers, regardless of setting. The first language for Hutterite children is German. “During their school years (and even before that in kindergarten), they learn English,” stated Katz and Lehr (2012, p. 120). Therefore, many of the students may arrive at the school lacking age-appropriate English competence. An understanding of strategies for teaching English language learners would be crucial. A commitment to teach in a culturally and linguistically diverse setting is desirable (Gomez, Strage, Knutson-Miller, & Garcia-Nevarez, 2009).

A disadvantage for the colony teacher is the diminished interaction with district office administrators/supervisors. This is often due to the distance from other schools and the division office, the workload and priorities of the division office personnel, and the abilities of the teacher/principal. Colony teacher/principals want recognition for the work they do and an understanding of the unique challenges and difficulties they encounter; however, as described by Nolan (1998), they may not wish the district office supervisors to be “staring over their shoulder” or mandating curricular policy and practice for which a colony teacher/principal may believe the superintendent does not understand

2.2.2.7 Colony/teacher relations.

Colony school teachers have access to and an understanding of Hutterite culture rarely equalled by other outsiders. They teach the children and visit with the parents every day for years and are like participant-observers in an ethnographic setting. If the colony is to appraise their teacher, what characteristics do they find desirable? Is it imperative for students in the earlier grades to attend school because it is valuable for them to learn English and mathematics? Among some colony members “the further the child goes in school, the less he is said to learn” observed Hostetler and Huntington (1997, p. 110). Once the child has learned basic skills, much of the school curriculum has little significance in colony life, according to some colony members (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). Prolonged schooling might be a concern because the children may learn more of the worldly ways (Hostetler & Huntington, 1997).

The colony can be accepting and tolerant of less-than-stellar teachers, if the English learning is not valued by the community. Hostetler and Huntington (1997) suggested that “teachers with cooperative attitudes, including the poorer teachers, are more readily absorbed into the environment of the colony than teachers who are aggressively competent by outside standards and demand independent thinking of their students” (pp. 109-110). This perspective can be colony-specific. If colonies are going to have their children learn how to operate complex agricultural equipment and market colony products in a competitive economy with narrow profit margins, children will need to be equipped to function within that environment.

2.2.2.8 Teacher/student relations, roles, and the school.

Cross-cultural relations may lead to cultural discord among groups. The discord is primarily due to misunderstandings of role and behaviour patterns. Corrective measures to remediate this situation have been tried by teacher/instructors. In a study of pre-service teachers,

Kang and Hyatt (2010) discovered that “engagement in multicultural narratives enriched and improved pre-service teachers’ learning experiences as they strive to become culturally knowledgeable and transformative practitioners” (p. 49). Related results were observed in a study by Gere, Buehler, Dallavis, and Haviland (2009), where findings suggested that the “incorporation of multicultural literary texts, continual interrogation of attitudes toward race and racism, and explicit engagement with [ethnic] consciousness fosters learning about how beginning teachers take up cultural responsiveness” (p. 816). As described by Hofstede (1986):

When teacher and student come from different cultures many perplexities can arise.

These can be due to different social positions of teachers and students in the two societies, to differences in the relevance of the curriculum for the two societies, or to differences in expected teacher/student and student/student interaction. The burden of adaptation in cross-cultural learning situations should be primarily on the teachers. (p. 1)

Goddard and Foster (2002) indicated that “the school ought to recognize and address aspects of the community environment in which the children live” (p. 10). It is held to be not enough for schools to have curricular achievement; they need to concentrate on the community’s social aspects. Addressing community participation may be partially addressed by encouraging parental involvement. In a study at a school with a diverse student body, Halford (1996) described a program that was put into place allowing parents to serve in the school; some were in a paid position. The parents involved reported that positive relationships developed as a result of their presence in the school and led them to view the school as a community centre. Family contacts with the teachers increased 300%, according to Halford (1996).

Teachers are often viewed as the keystones of schools; proficient teachers can make the difference between smooth- and ill-functioning schools (Glickman, 2002; Ryan, 2003). A colony school, or any school, may desire the qualities described by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983):

[Teacher] satisfaction is critical to the tone and smooth functioning of the school. Their nurturance is critical to the nurturance of students. Each school interprets teacher rewards differently, but all of them search for a balance between the expression of teacher autonomy, initiative, and adulthood on the one hand, and the requirements of conformity, discipline, and commitments to school life on the other. (p. 341)

2.2.3 Curriculum Issues at a Colony School

There are no curriculum guides written specifically for Hutterite schools in Saskatchewan. The colony schools follow the approved Saskatchewan curriculum during the regular school day. The children are taught the basics such as math, language arts, social studies, and science. Due to increased sophistication in livestock production, farming, and manufacturing, many Hutterites have realized that a complete secondary education and beyond, perhaps, is an increasing necessity.

The colony is entitled to receive support in all the curricular areas from the school division, including driver education and services for students with exceptionalities. There are no stated educational or curricular exceptions or expectations for Hutterites in *The Education Act, 1995*. However, local consideration and discretion may influence the teaching of evolutionary biology and sex education (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). A concern of the Hutterites has been the emphasis on nationalism and militarism in social studies and some issues (e.g., family education and evolutionary biology) that are part of the curricula (Janzen & Stanton, 2010).

Schools are allowed to provide two and a half hours of religious instruction per week, if they wish (*The Education Act, 1995*). However, there is a provincially determined religious instruction curriculum if the program occurs during the legislated school day. Colony children receive daily culturally relevant instruction from the colony's German teacher along with their German language instruction. The instruction occurs before and/or after the regular school day and for lengths of times dependent on the wishes of the specific colony and its leaders. One hour of instruction before school and one hour after school is not unusual.

An effort to make curriculum more community-relevant was observed at a small school on an island in the Bering Strait of Alaska. The school moved to more project-based instruction centred on the small island where they lived (Rowe & Probst, 1995). The instruction was relevant to the students and it was action-oriented. The students lobbied the elders for certain materials and assistance and they were successful. Improved attendance and an increase in self-esteem were two effects of the program. As described by Larmer and Mergendoller (2013), "Project-based learning builds skills in critical thinking, collaboration, and especially in making presentations" (p. 75). Hutterite colonies could adopt a parallel program for their students. This would allow for greater knowledge of the colony community and its residents.

2.2.4 Teaching and Learning

The teacher/principal may or may not have specialized training for the colony setting. Although an extensive body of research identified the need for specialized pre-service training for teachers going to colonies, "the implementation of such programs by teacher training institutions has been sparse, lacking in cohesion and in many cases non-existent" (Yarrow, Ballantyne, Hansford, Herschell, & Millwater, 1999, p. 1). It is important that the teacher be sympathetic to the Hutterite way of life (Janzen & Stanton, 2010).

The teacher/principal hybrid is not an uncommon professional position in rural Saskatchewan. According to the Saskatchewan Education Indicators Report (2010), in the 2009-10 school year there were 362 rural schools; 86 had enrollments of between 0 and 50 students and 59 had enrollments of 51-100 (p. 22). Within a small-school setting, teachers who think like principals and principals who think like teachers are needed because the principal is often a teacher with classroom and instructional responsibilities. According to Fahey (2013), “to lead [students and staff] toward greater success, principals need to place both student and adult learning at the center” (p. 66). For the benefit of the schools and its constituents, states Fahey (2013), principals who think like teachers possess four qualities: “purpose, eagerness for learning, clarity about who they are as learners and courage” (p. 68).

2.2.4.1 The multilevel classroom.

The multi-graded/multi-aged classroom is a conventional structure for the colony schools, and it may be found elsewhere depending on circumstances. The province of Manitoba has extended the multi-graded/multi-aged classroom, a practice often initially instituted for the sake of expediency, and they have implemented a practice referred to as the *multilevel classroom*. Outlined by Manitoba Education (2003), “multilevel classrooms may be utilized for reasons related to pedagogy and/or demography. Regardless, they can be seen as assets that promote quality learning” (p. 13). According to Manitoba Education and Youth (2003):

Multilevel classrooms are ones in which one teacher is responsible for students of a broader age-range than is generally found in the traditional single-grade classroom. It provides pedagogical and practical supports to assist the learning community (students, teachers, administrators, and parents) in taking advantage of the unique opportunities multilevel classrooms provide. (p. 1.3)

Manitoba's strategy is supported by research reviewed by the Ministry of Education and Youth (2003): Students benefit from being assigned the same teacher for an extended number of grades, older students can assist younger students, and there is evidence highlighting the benefits to students in the areas of language and reading. Given the English Language Learner status of many of the colony students, the benefits of a multilevel classroom may be relevant and can assist in the delivery of educational programs.

2.2.4.2 Community-centred education.

An educational option for colonies' multi-grade, multi-age classrooms and school may be *community-centred education* (Umphrey, 2007, p. xiv). Community-centred education was developed around such questions as "What does it take to build community?" and "What does it take to sustain community?" (Umphrey, 2007, p. xiv). These questions work toward connecting school to life in the community, or the colony, an opportunity for the colony school to mirror the community (Fettes, 1999). *Pedagogy of place* is associated with community-centred education, and provides an educational context to learn about community in-depth (Ludick, 2001).

Relevant to the delivery of colony education, a rural school district in Montana implemented components of pedagogy of place and it developed a program of community-centred education. The program relied heavily on student-centred learning through narrative and history (Umphrey, 2007). "Narrative is a way of talking about events that are causally related in time, as opposed to other ways of talking about things," and "all stories are narratives but not all narratives are stories" (Umphrey, 2007, p. 10). For example, according to Umphrey (2007):

We've all had the experience of listening to someone who narrates endlessly without quite getting to story. The talk goes on and on without a point—and then this happened, and then I said this, and then he said that, and then this happened. (p. 10)

Within schools, one example of a “way to improve and increase narrative is for the students to engage in researching and telling stories drawn from the histories of their communities and families” (Umphrey, 2007, p. 12).

Umphrey (2007) identified eight teaching practices of community-centred teachers. One characteristic is that “*teachers use the community as the subject of serious study*” (p. 93). There were two reasons for this perspective: The community and the study were important. Students discover that there was a community prior to their presence and they learn to participate in their community. This perspective was an opportunity to link teaching to real-life issues. The second characteristic is that “*teachers will look for chances for students to do real work*” (Umphrey, 2007, p. 98). Community-based education provides students with the opportunity to work with community members who are “*not rich, or powerful, or famous*” (Umphrey, 2007, p. 100). The community-based education projects and their examination of the community, according to Umphrey (2007), “*are to be considered ‘gifts’ to the community*” (p. 102). The projects are not a challenge to the status quo. Community-centred education can be beneficial for the students and the community (Umphrey, 2007) because “*teachers incorporate intergenerational research into every project*” (p.103). An emphasis on local history, and the development of language through the use of oral interviews, relate to students’ meaning-making through “*Teachers focusing on history and folklore, helping students to see and understand change, continuity, and conflict bringing the past to bear on contemporary issues*” (Umphrey, 2007, p. 106). Teachers “*insist upon education and scholarship as the primary focus of education*” (Umphrey, 2007, p. 107). The strategies and methods used by the teacher integrate community-centered education into the basic academic subjects and learnings.

Community-centred education and pedagogy of place include characteristics of *project-based learning*. A third strategy, project-based learning, is similar to community-centred education and pedagogy of place. Project-based learning could work well for the colony school's one-teacher, multi-grade structure. Students at different grade levels and abilities contribute to the process at a level relevant to their abilities and needs and they work interdependently. Rather than the school-day divided into periods of subjects, project-based learning focuses on an issue, a big idea, questions, or a conundrum (Goyal, 2012). One example, utilized with success by one school, divides the school day into three phases (Goyal, 2012). The first phase is *exploration*. The children approach their project by examining a variety of perspectives and eventually develop a statement of what they intend to accomplish in the second phase, *expression*. During the expression phase, mixed grade teams collaborate, demonstrating and using their age-appropriate skills. The group or groups work to a deadline. The final phase is *exposition*; where (similar to community-centred education) the community views the students' project or projects (Goyal, 2012).

Student activities and strategies paramount in a community-centred approach include rigour. Teachers ensure the academic validity of student activities. Communities, education, and stories are linked together and reflect the past and present, and delve into the future. Educational activities and strategies, such as community-centred education, may alleviate school-leaving practices among Hutterite students if the strategies are considered meaningful by the community members.

2.2.4.3 Hutterian school-leaving practices.

According to Janzen (2005), “until the last two decades, North American Hutterites did not emphasize the importance of formal education. Young people in Hutterite colonies typically attended school only as long as state and provincial governments required them to do so” (p. 18). Fewer students, in the four colonies studied, were planning to leave school prior to graduation. Hutterite children attend school until at least the age of fifteen; this is the age they are considered adults by the colony (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). Some Hutterites are starting to go on to complete the upper grades and high school matriculation. In Saskatchewan’s *The Education Act, 1995* (1995), compulsory school age means having attained the age of seven years but not having attained the age of sixteen years. The rationale for many Hutterite children leaving school at age fifteen, and not being required to stay until age sixteen as stipulated by provincial legislation, was described to me by a senior member of Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Education:

This is the million dollar question that no one has the answer to. Even the Hutterites do not know who to ask or whether there is actual formal documentation. There was an historic promise, maybe even with a handshake, but I do not know if there is anything in legislation or on paper. I even asked publicly at a Saskatchewan Hutterian Educators Association conference. An answer was given but it was in “code” that I did not understand. The question was received with a small bit of defensiveness, as I recall, as if their religion and historic beliefs were being challenged and not as a request for verification of facts. Good luck on this one. (*Anonymous*, personal communication, 2010)

The answer might be that the rite of passage from child to an adult occurs at age 15 in the Hutterite culture (Stahl, 2003). This may influence decisions for students to leave school at the age of 15. However, some students have left school on their 15th birthday regardless of the time

of year and their progress in school. At the age of 15, the young person moves from eating with the children to sitting with the adults in the dining hall and no longer has to work as a babysitter. Boys receive their personal tools (e.g., a saw and a hammer) and girls receive personal articles (e.g., kitchen knives, knitting needles, a hoe, and other items) and each receives a small locked storage area, perhaps a cupboard or drawer, for personal items (Katz & Lehr, 2012). A personal Bible is a gift from the colony members.

Another rationale for Hutterian children leaving school at age 15 rather than graduating, is the belief of some colonies that high school and post-secondary training “focus on individual achievement which is considered to be contrary to the communal way of life” (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2005, p. 252). “The formal objections to public education are based on religious precepts such as ‘The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God,’” according to Hostetler (1997, p. 164). “*Je Gehrleter, Je Ferkehrter*, means the more educated you are, the more mixed up you are” (Hofer, 2009, p. 22). Young people may enter a colony-based apprenticeship program and learn the skills needed as functioning and contributing colony adults (Ingoldsby & Smith, 2005; Katz & Lehr, 2012). Traditional Hutterian beliefs about formal English school education held that “the further the child goes in school, the less he learns” (Hostetler & Huntington, 1996, p. 110). The rationale is that once the child has learned the basic skills, much of the rest is irrelevant to their daily lives and tasks on the colony. According to Hostetler and Huntington (1996), there is a distinction between what is learned in the English school and what is learned in the German school:

The colony German school teaches the children how to live, and the English school teaches facts, many of which are of little use to them. German school teaches proper ritual, the English school teaches worldly knowledge. The schools are clearly different,

and both are regarded as necessary. In the ideal colony, there is little conflict between the two schools and the normal child receives an integrated learning experience from the viewpoint of his culture. (p. 110)

However, these community perspectives are being revised because “the introduction of advanced machinery and technology . . . brought about dramatic changes in education” (Katz & Lehr, 2012, p. 194).

Katz and Lehr (2012) described “the central role of the German teacher in the process of indoctrination and socialization of Hutterites, and today it is an extremely important role on the colony” (p. 123). Janzen and Stanton (2010) explained the role of the German teacher: “The German teacher is responsible for [the young people’s] understanding of Hutterite history and beliefs as well as their general behaviour and moral development” (p. 188). The teaching methods of the German teacher are often traditional and might be considered old-fashioned, but his perspectives and methods are changing and the German teacher’s role is considered valued (Katz & Lehr, 2012).

A teacher/principal on a Hutterite colony needs to be cognizant of their biases and their worldview, and whether it is appropriate to teach on a colony if their view is at odds with the Hutterian culture. In a study of two First Nations schools in northern Alberta, the researchers determined that “there was a tendency in both schools to support the status quo and attempt to provide what the southern educational system would describe as a suitable educational experience” (Goddard & Foster, 2002, p. 16). Teacher/principals on a colony may describe part of their role as respecting local norms and teaching the provincial curriculum, including computer literacy. In the past, at present, and continuing into the future, technology has been something that causes both advantages and problems for the Hutterites.

2.3 Technology in the Colony School

By the beginning of the 21st Century, Hutterites were well established on the prairies and plains of central North America, and in parts of British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington. To maintain their culture, Hutterites faced challenges in their social and economic evolution. As described by Crummett (2003), Hutterites are “paradoxically, as contemporary as they are traditional” (p. 2). Many colonies realize that technology can increase the efficiency and production of the colony and its revenue stream. Kraybill and Bowman (2001) reported a conversation with one colony member, “The church accepts technologies [computers] that aid members in their work” (p. 168). Technology can be beneficial to the colonies if it can support their culture, not for it to supersede the way of life and diminish traditional culture (Postman, 1992). The Hutterites “typically support change if it is economically profitable and there is no foreseeable adverse effects on religious beliefs,” stated Janzen and Stanton (2010, p. 262). One of Postman’s (1993) basic assumptions and concerns is that the unrestrained growth of technology can negatively impact the fundamental foundations of our humanity. According to Jungwirth and Bruce (2002,), technology “may create a culture without moral foundation” (p. 91).

The adoption and influence of technology brings Hutterite culture closer to mainstream society and diminishes their isolation. Welcomed or not, it has influenced the Hutterites’ *two-kingdom* belief structure, defined by Kraybill (2010) as “a sharp line of separation between church and government” (p. 202). Educational technology may challenge the beliefs and culture of the colony because the presence of internet-linked computers in the colony classroom provides access to the outside world far beyond the borders of the colony and the local rural and urban centres. On less conservative colonies, older children are taught through computer-based distance education, teleconferencing, and virtual high schools. Technological resources, or their absence, on the colony can be a source of tension, not present in the other schools in the school

division. Depending on the perspective of the colony, there may or may not be a technological presence in the school for the purposes of student learning. However, many colonies have accepted technology in the schools as they have embraced it in their daily operations to increase agricultural and manufacturing production and marketing.

Some colony schools contain computers, audio-visual equipment, and other technologies commonplace in classrooms in mainstream schools. The situation in Hutterite schools is colony-specific, however. A colony school may be fully functional with respect to technology and computers; however, one could travel fifteen kilometres down the highway to another Hutterite colony (of the same sect) and there may be few technological learning resources in the school. Equipment such as the photocopy machine, fax machine, and computers may be under the strict control of the teacher.

2.3.1 Computer-assisted Instruction and New Technology in Colony Schools

Online education programs are providing a new source of education delivery. In 2009, the Saskatoon Catholic School Division Cyber School, the largest cyber school in Saskatchewan, offered 37 courses to choose from and enrollment in the high school courses had reached nearly 2000 students each school year (Saskatoon Cyber School, 2009). Colony schools are currently benefiting from the offerings of distance education delivered via the internet. In Poplar Grove Colony School, one of the four schools in my study, students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve received some of their courses through on-line distance education.

The delivery of educational courses through distance learning technology has allowed colony students to increase their educational opportunities without leaving the colony. In South Dakota, according to Whitlach and Fischer (2001), distance learning technology transformed high school completion for Hutterite students. As shared by the authors, young people at 25 of

the 54 Hutterite colonies in South Dakota received a high school education. The students utilized a controlled *intranet* to limit internet surfing. The Chester Area Cyber School in South Dakota graduated its first class of 27 Hutterites in May, 2009 (Whitlach & Fischer, 2010). According to Hill (2010), director of Credenda Cyber School in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan uses the cyber-school model to deliver distance education courses and many Hutterite students are enrolled in Credenda's classes. As well, given that many colony teachers are not able to provide an all-inclusive education to students from K-12, access to distance education classes provide colony students with courses otherwise unavailable (Tapscott, 2012).

Technology is an effective manner to deliver professional development courses and content to colony teacher/principals, and to staff in other locales. Clark and Thornam (2002) concluded that "technologies offer exciting opportunities to teach intensely interpersonal, cross-cultural communication and assessment skills" (p. 119).

Social networking (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Skype, blogs, and wikis) can be utilized by educators. As reported by Jacobs (2010), "the new power of social media and networking technologies to teach is perhaps the least leveraged technology in formal educational systems today" (p. 86). How well would the colonies and their students adapt to social networking as part of their educational growth? The distances that often exist between colonies emphasize the value of this technology. The access to the outside world may diminish the enthusiasm of the elders and the parents on the colony. However, similar to South Dakota's intranet for distance education, a restricted intranet service dedicated to social networking among the various inhabitants of the colonies could be provided. Technology use may increase the enrollment of colony students. Saskatchewan has graduated colony students and other students with the assistance of distance education, often computer-based.

2.3.2 The Application and Utilization of Technology in Colony Schools

Technology impacts education delivery in colony schools, as it has in many schools (Bonk, 2010). Prior to the adoption of computer-based distance education, colony students (if they were to continue beyond grade eight) relied on the ability of the colony teacher, or on paper-based correspondence school lessons. The paper-based courses were reading-extensive, intensive, and self-paced. These characteristics often affected a student's ability to complete the courses, particularly if students also experienced other challenges to their learning (Hill, 2010). Hill (2010) observed that the course completion rate of the Ministry of Education's paper-based correspondence school academic high school courses in Saskatchewan in 2008-2009 school year was 23%. Courses delivered synchronously through computer-based distance education, in comparison, had a completion rate of 83% in the 2008-2009 school year (Hill, 2010). Hill (2010) believed the one factor for the improvement was due to the courses being delivered live. According to a curriculum developer at Credenda Cyber School, the paper-based courses required a student to do much of the work independently, either at school or at home, or the student might have only the assistance of school personnel unfamiliar with the high school course material (T. German, personal communication, April, 2013).

Greenfield (2010) described a recent innovation that may assuage some of the apprehensions of Hutterite colony schools concerning technology. The non-profit One Laptop per Child organization designed a laptop computer that can be operated without electricity (they are hand-cranked, or you can use a foot-pump attachment, to generate power). The computer has many capabilities suitable for some Hutterite colonies because software can be used on the machine. As an attractive option for some colonies, the laptop has no modem or

communications capabilities and connecting to the internet is not possible. Concurrently, however, the school would not have access to synchronous distance education school courses.

Colony schools' perspectives are diverse respecting the applicability, permissibility, and/or utility of computers in the classroom, or their use in the delivery of synchronous or asynchronous instruction. The incorporation of this strategy by the teacher/principal will depend on the colony. Whereas some colonies' students do not advance beyond grade eight, others may continue their education but without the use of computers and/or computer-based instruction at any grade.

Nielsen and Nashon (2007), in a study of small rural schools in British Columbia, described the barriers students and schools faced accessing senior science and mathematics courses. A survey of the staff, students, and principals of the schools identified the following barriers: "staffing at the school, availability of specialist teachers, trusting relationships between students and teachers, and the school and local culture" (Nielsen & Nashon, 2007, p. 174). In a survey of a school in rural Alaska, Silvis (2000) identified the benefits of information technology to rural students: (a) access to courses not locally available, (b) opportunities for collaborative work with other schools, and (c) access to professional development for the staff. The benefits, as listed by Silvis (2000), included a concern shared by some colonies for the continued and future maintenance of their culture: collaboration with other schools. However, some of the collaboration has been among colonies, with students taking the same courses. By accessing computer-delivered courses, many colonies (and off-colony schools) have overcome the once-present dilemma in their schools of having limited access to the school courses they wanted.

2.3.3 Distance Learning and Its Implications for Colony Life

In recent times, for Hutterite high school-aged children and students in other schools nation-wide, computer-based distance education has increased formal learning opportunities. This is the situation for colony students and for off-colony students attending remote schools (Whitlach & Fischer, 2010). Apprehensive about unrestricted access to the internet, many colonies and/or school divisions utilize powerful computer management software to restrict student internet access (Whitlach & Fischer, 2010). A benefit of internet access is evident in Saskatchewan: An increasing number of Hutterite students are graduating from high school as a result of distance education technology (Whitlach & Fischer, 2010). Colony parents can provide their children an education past grade eight without them leaving the colony, an obstacle in earlier years (Hostetler & Huntington, 1996). Distance education allows students to discard any adolescent concern of physical appearance and this may be an asset for Hutterite children who are concerned about the impression they make to the outside (Gunawardena, Wilson, & Nola, 2003). As an example, a student at Poplar Grove Colony was reluctant to enroll in a synchronous distance education course because she was concerned about her accent and how she would sound to the other students. She discussed and absolved her concerns with her teacher and the distance education teacher and subsequently enrolled in the course.

The interest in recent years on the interaction between culture and educational technology is growing. In the *Handbook of Distance Education* (Moore & Anderson, 2003), a chapter is dedicated to “culture and online education.” The chapter’s conclusion, with respect to different cultural contexts in distance education, emphasizes “flexibility, variety, and the consideration of multiple cultural perspectives” (Gunawardena, Wilson, & Nola, 2003, p. 771)

Rogers, Graham, and Mayes' (2007) study surveyed the cultural competence of twelve professionals developing and delivering distance education courses to students in different cultures. The twelve professionals had to evaluate their assumptions and beliefs about the students and the cultures in which they lived. The professionals acknowledged their shortcomings in meeting the educational needs of the students. There is a need for online course teachers and distance education instructional materials developers to develop cultural proficiency if they are to continue working with Hutterite students. According to Rogers, Graham, and Mayes (2007): "More research needs to be done concerning the cultural aspects of online instructional design" (p. 214).

At present, distance education in Saskatchewan has impacted the high school grades. There are few, if any, courses available for students in kindergarten through to grade nine. However, this is not true for other jurisdictions, Alberta for example. Alberta presently offers a broad selection of courses and instruction for all grades primary, elementary, and secondary. According to information provided by the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC), a government department:

ADLC offers 21st Century learning opportunities in print, online, and blended formats for Grades 1 to 12 students and adult learners across Alberta. We offer core and complementary courses as outlined in Alberta Education's programs of study. More than 800 educational partners choose ADLC because we offer flexibility for students working from home, abroad, or in the traditional school environment, and we provide adaptable resources for teachers. (para. 1)

There will be opportunities, perhaps pressures, for Saskatchewan to provide a commensurate level of academics. Colonies may have the option to take advantage of these opportunities in the future.

To identify two examples, technology has improved many of the methods utilized by the Hutterites. Respecting education, technology can provide options for colony members, if they choose to utilize it. The effects of technology on Hutterite culture can be better predicted by respecting the past, possessing an understanding of Hutterite history, endorsing the wisdom of the colony elders, and respecting the methods used by Hutterites (Taleb, 2012).

2.4 Summary

This literature review examined the cross-cultural context of Hutterian experiences upon migrating to Canada, the elements of schooling and school-based management in the Hutterite school setting, the organization of colony schools, and the positionality of teaching cross-culturally. The value of a teacher's cultural intelligence applicable to teaching and interacting in a cross-cultural context was reviewed. Leadership, management, and decision-making in the one-room colony school context, the rural principalship persona, colony relations, and the foundational issues of curriculum, teaching, and learning were described. Applicable educational strategies, for example multilevel classrooms and community-centred education, and their relevance on the colony were discussed as appropriate models for colony schools. The role of technology and its impact on the delivery of education to colony schools was described.

The colony teacher/principal's cognizance and respect of colony traditions and institutions, parental, and colony expectations aids and abets the educational mission. The nuances of personal and professional behaviour in the school, and utilizing appropriate teaching

methods reflecting community life, require observation and practice. This is not altogether different from the expected behaviour in any school.

A number of matters affect the position of Hutterite colony teacher/principal. Three issues are: (a) the value of teachers being empathetic and supportive of children from different cultures in their education and their learning; (b) the history of Hutterite settlement in Europe and North America and their struggle to develop a sustainable culture in the present and for the future; and (c) the comparison of the elements of schooling and school-based teaching and management related to schools in the broader society.

An important aspect of a teacher's presence on the colony relates to the manner in which teachers demonstrate cross-cultural sensitivity. Components of cross-cultural sensitivity consist of (a) recognizing the existence of cultural differences and valuing diverse world views; (b) emphasizing our common humanity, develop cultural self-awareness, and acceptance; (c) and integrating differences through the development of reciprocal relationships (Bennett, Zubrzycki, & Bacon, 2011).

A matter of interest for some colony teachers is the geographic, professional, social, and cultural isolation some staff may experience in a religious community setting. Technology is one strategy for reducing the teachers' perceptions of separation. As well, the communitarian worldview of the Hutterites can encourage the teacher/principals to become comfortable allies in the colony community.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate educators' understandings of their roles as teachers and as principals of a Hutterite colony school. The intent of the study was to explore the effects perceived by non-Hutterite teacher/principals of their influence on the students, school, and community and the influence of the students, school, and community on the teacher/principals. In this chapter, the foundations and procedures upon which the research was accomplished are described.

3.1 Research Rationale and Design

The research was conducted as a multiple site case study. Multiple case studies, or *collective case study*, are utilized to provide insight into an issue (Creswell, 2007). Case studies are a conventional and time-honoured method for doing qualitative research (Stake, 2005). "Much qualitative research examines a single 'case,' some phenomenon embedded in a single social setting" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27); however, my study was from a multiple site case study perspective. My epistemological understandings and foundations as a student and researcher influenced my decision to include four school teacher/principals as data sources: "We cannot understand a given case without knowing about other cases" (Stake, 1995, p. 121). A reason for utilizing the multiple site case study approach was my interest and "abiding concern" (Creswell, 2007, p. 59) in the non-Hutterite educator's role at a Hutterite colony and its school.

My research focused on four participants; each was the teacher/principal of a Hutterite colony school. The colonies were of the *Dariusleut* sect, diverse in their geographic and cultural settings, distant from a major population centre and each other, and intent on maintaining a

minimal degree of integration and interdependence with Saskatchewan society (i.e., only as necessary).

3.1.1 The Constructivist Epistemology

This study was based upon a constructivist epistemology; it concentrated on the lives and experiences in which the teacher/principals acted (Wilson & Liepot, 2004). Adhering to the recommendations of Creswell (2007), the historical and traditional settings of the culture were respected (i.e., the Hutterites and their colonies). Aligned with the recommendations of Charmaz (2005), the constructivist approach focused on the participants rather than the manner by which they were studied. The use of four teachers was supported by central tenets of constructivism: “Reality is socially constructed, that individuals develop subjective meanings of their own personal experiences, and that this gives way to multiple meanings” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p. 9), and “there is no fixed and unchanging Truth” (Etherington, 2004, p. 27). Creswell (2007) stated that in the application of this approach the “questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation. The more open-ended the questioning the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do” (p. 21). The researcher is required to analyze their own approach and understandings. Charmaz (2005) captured this essential aspect of my research with respect to the colonies and their principal/teachers because:

[The constructivist approach did not] assume that impartial observers enter the research scene without an interpretive frame of reference. Instead, what observers see and hear depends on prior interpretive frames, biographies, and interests as well as the research context, their relationships with research participants, concrete field experiences, and modes of generating and recording empirical materials. (p. 509)

This research fashioned an understanding of the participants' considerations of their place and impact at a colony school. Guba and Lincoln (1998) suggested that "constructivism (knowledge that is constructed individually and collectively) is relativism; realities are locally and specifically constructed and co-constructed, and the observer is in the role of participant" (p. 106). A further perspective on realities was related by Guba and Lincoln (1998): "Realities are in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature" (p. 110). My interpretation of Guba and Lincoln's (1998) perspective was strengthened by demonstrating the subjective nature of the teacher/principals' understandings.

3.1.2 Orientation of the Study

A qualitative perspective, based upon the constructivist epistemology and utilizing the multiple site case study method, was adopted. As suggested by Sandelowski (2004), "the emphasis in . . . qualitative research is on *naturalism*, observing and describing events as they unfold without manipulating any conditions" (p. 894). Qualitative analysis endeavours to summarize from multiple sources in a reliable and true manner (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Qualitative research is multi-method in its approach and it utilizes an interpretive, naturalistic methodological approach. Studies occur in their natural settings, endeavouring to make sense of phenomena in terms of the implications people assign to them.

Qualitative methods require adept interpretations of the data. Because human behaviour is complex and is demarcated by its setting, it is pertinent to investigate and observe the idiosyncratic settings where the behaviour occurs: Hutterite colonies and their practices are good examples of these particular settings. They are culturally isolated from towns, villages, and other settled areas. However, they may be close to other farms and relationships with their neighbours

can be mutually beneficial. The multiple site case study approach provided an opportunity to view the similarities and differences of a group of people often assumed to be alike regardless of colony and location.

The orientation of this study followed qualitative study characteristics, as itemized by Merriam (2009):

- I focused on meaning, understanding, and process.
- I derived a purposeful sample: the representation of both experienced males and females.
- Data collection occurred via semi-structured and informal interviews, discussions, participatory observations, and process examination: the four teacher/principals were observed teaching and completing school-related routines.
- Data analysis was inductive (I arrived at conclusions and generalizations based on my observations).
- The findings are described and presented as themes.

I made a concerted effort to provide “richly and relevantly detailed descriptions and particularized interpretations of people and the social, linguistic, material, and other practices and events that shape and are shaped by them,” as recommended by Sandelowski (2004, p. 893).

Following guidelines of qualitative research as outlined by Merriam (2009), I was interested in understanding how the teacher/principals interpreted their experiences, how they constructed their domains, and what meanings they attributed to their experiences. Building upon Stake’s (2006) observations about qualitative research, the study focused on relationships connecting ordinary practice in natural habitats. I reflected on the process, my experiences, and my influence on the material, adding what Staller, Block, and Horner, (2008) noted as texture

and richness to this study. This study has qualitative value, and it will be interesting and pertinent to others engaged with Hutterites and the education of colony children, a growing demographic in Canada.

3.1.3 Site and Participant Selection

Four Hutterite colony schools situated in a rural/suburban school division in central Saskatchewan comprised the research sites. The school division had eight Hutterite colonies, each with a teacher/principal. Four teacher/principals were selected, as per the description in my application to the University of Saskatchewan's Behavioural Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A). Each colony was a member of the Dariusleut discipline (established by Reverend Darius Walter in 1860; "leut" means people), although ideological differences exist among them. The four colonies are well-spaced geographically, generally in the north-west, north-east, and south-west quadrants of the school division. Two colonies were in the north-west quadrant and two were in the south-east quadrant. The north-west and south-east colonies were approximately 150 kilometres apart.

Each of the eight colonies had a school, and enrolments ranged from six to thirty students (2011-2012 school year enrolments). Colony teacher/principals may be male or female and they are employees of the local school division; none are Hutterites. The eight teacher/principals were of varying ages and career stages. Some of the teacher/principals had never taught in a school other than a colony school, and others had varied experiences working at different schools, teaching various grade levels, and working concurrently as a teacher and school administrator. Two of the eight teacher/principals had been assigned to a Hutterite colony as their first full-time teaching assignment after graduating as teachers. Teachers are not required

to be experienced, or to be specifically licensed (other than possessing a Saskatchewan Teacher Certificate), to be appointed as the teacher/principal of a Hutterite colony school.

There appeared to be no designated gender assignment to a colony school, either as a request from the colony leaders or as part of the staffing practices of the school division. The colonies appeared to be indifferent to the gender of their school's teacher/principal. Although colonies are religious communities, one's religious identity did not seem to be a factor in teacher placement; two of the selected teachers had Catholic upbringings and two had Protestant backgrounds.

3.1.4 Participant Selection

The eight colonies were well distributed across the school division. The schools varied in the number of students enrolled, the grades varied from kindergarten to grade eight and from kindergarten to grade twelve, and the teachers had an assortment of teaching experiences. To assist in selecting the colony schools, I was guided by attributes identified by Stake (2008): "(a) the nature of the case or cases, particularly its activity and functioning; (b) its historical background; and (c) its physical setting" (p. 125).

During the spring of 2010, I pre-interviewed each of the eight teacher/principals. We met at their school and we discussed my proposed research into the cross-cultural understandings and educational roles of colony educators. The participants were to be selected based on three broad criteria: (a) their willingness and ability to participate, (b) colony teaching experience, (c) and their gender.

The eight colony schools had a total of three male and five female teacher/principals. For an equal representation of the genders, two male teacher/principals and two female teacher/principals was preferred. As a minimum requirement, the principal/teacher was required

to have taught at a colony school in the year of the study and the preceding school year. This ensured that teacher/principals were familiar with the colony teaching experience and had garnered some knowledge of the Hutterite colony culture prior to my research. Due to one teacher beginning a leave, another teacher returning from a leave, and a third teacher who was new to the position, three of eight teacher/principals were eliminated from the selection process. Therefore, five were left to choose from. I decided that I also wanted teacher/principals with at least one full year of experience in the Hutterite colony setting. Having said that, a first-year teacher as part of the study would have provided insights from a unique perspective, and they would have been interesting given the school setting. Why was it considered that only teachers with at least one year of experience be chosen for the study, and not the first-year teacher?

Castro, Kelly, and Shih (2010) in a survey of literature on first-year teachers discovered that:

Teachers who were likely to leave the profession reported feeling that the workload was unreasonable or unmanageable, that their efforts were futile, that their needs were not being met, or that choosing teaching was a compromise rather than the career of choice. Researchers pinpointed the school context, which may lack resources, professional-development opportunities, parent involvement, and community support systems, as a major culprit in teacher attrition. (p. 622)

It was believed that a first-year teacher may feel added pressure and stress if expected to participate in a research study in their first year in a school, particularly a school lacking an on-site mentor. In the interest of balance, I did ultimately involve four teacher/principals, two female and two male. I overtly chose the four individuals to fulfill the subject requirements, a process referred to as “purposive sampling” (Silverman, 2004, p. 250). Purposive sampling is similar to criterion-based sampling whereby a list of the attributes required is constructed and

then you look for those matching your specifications (Merriam, 2009). Purposive sampling was appropriate because my objective “was not to generalize the findings of my study to the broad population but to maximize discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems occurring” on the four colonies (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 82).

3.1.4.1 Gaining access.

A discussion of the purpose and goals of my study was held with a school division superintendent and a program coordinator. After meeting and attaining school division permission, each potential participant was contacted to confirm their willingness to participate in the project (See Appendix A). Each of the four nominated teacher/principals was e-mailed and confirmed their willingness to participate. A recruiting letter was sent to each of the candidates and their participation was confirmed (see Appendix A).

I believed I fulfilled the criteria according to Silverman’s (2004, p. 250) precept that purposive sampling “allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature in which we are interested. Purposive sampling requires us to think critically about the population we are interested in and choose our sample carefully on this basis” (p. 250). My process was affirmed by Krathwohl (2009): “Purposive sampling is often used in qualitative research to select those individuals or behaviours that will better inform the researcher regarding the current focus of the investigation” (p. 172).

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The collection of data and its appropriate analysis are foundational strategies of qualitative research. Three strategies of data collection are observation, interviews, and the examination of documents. Data were gathered by listening, reflecting, observing, recording, and questioning. With respect to the collection and analysis of data, I researched information

about each colony (e.g., origins, date of establishment and its history, background on the colony and the Hutterite culture) and its school (e.g., physical plant, equipment, and resources). As part of the data analysis, I organized, transcribed, coded, summarized, and interpreted the data.

3.2.1 Observations

Respecting observations, I found the following to be helpful: (a) my reflection on what was important to record and why, (b) behaviours occurring at the time of the observation, (c) my ideas or hypotheses as to what was happening and why, (d) my notes on suggestions for further examination, and (e) my perception of questions to explore in subsequent discussions with the teacher/principals. Knowing it was imperative that my observations were recorded as soon as possible, I ensured this task was completed within 24 hours, as recommended by Krathwohl (2009). Most often observations were recorded as I left the colony at the end of the day. Upon leaving the colony, within the first two or three kilometres, I recorded my initial observations by speaking into an Olympus digital recorder. Prepared for a problem with a recorder, I had purchased two of them and carried extra batteries.

“Direct observation is preferred by most researchers” stated Krathwohl (2009, p. 262). For my study, direct observation was a valued strategy because it was thought to provide an accurate account of the observee (Tedlock, 2008; Yin, 2003). Tedlock (2008) stated that “participant observation was created during the late 19th century as an ethnographic field method for the study of small, homogeneous cultures” (p. 151). Therefore, I believe the use of participant observation a valid strategy because the Hutterite colonies are small, relatively homogeneous cultures/settings. According to Krathwohl (2009, p. 262), “*unconcealed participant observation* allows the researcher access to important places while remaining ‘in character’” (p. 262).

DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) defined participant observation as “a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their routines and culture” (p. 1). As a participant in classroom activities, I assisted the staff and the students in their work and classes; I helped supervise the students before school, at recess, and during the lunch hour. Before school, during the school day and at breaks, recess, and lunch, the teacher/principal and I held on-going discussions about what was occurring in the school, the colony, and issues related to education and schooling. Being a former teacher, I was comfortable in this role and felt relatively at ease with the students and staff. My extended professional commitment with the colony teacher/principals over an eight year period assisted me in building rapport and becoming familiar with their practices and perspectives. The initial awkwardness, caution, and restraint in the presence of an unfamiliar person were diminished, I believed.

3.2.1.1 Tensions and limitations of the participant observer role.

A condition that is a concern for the researcher is to act in a manner that respects the teachers’ anonymity and dignity and to be diplomatic in the reporting of comments, background information, and incidents that may cause embarrassment at a later date. During my association with the teachers, prior to my study, discussions with them had revealed teaching and school incidents they had experienced. Their willingness to confide was conceivably due to my non-supervisory, non-evaluative position. A past relationship with study participants may signal an overly sympathetic view of the observed. This dilemma did not arise as an issue because even though I knew the teachers, I believed I was not that familiar with them and their lives that I had a vested interest in their representation in the study.

My participation in the activities of the classroom, rather than sitting in a corner of the classroom, was intentional. My actions followed Etherington's (2004) observation of ensuring that "it was a means to an end and not an end in itself" (p. 31). A participant/observer perspective was consistent with my constructivist perspective; "one is invited outward to the fuller realm of shared language" (Etherington, 2004, p. 31). Researchers inevitably influence the kind of data that are collected and they assist in co-creating and shaping meanings when responding to participants (Etherington, 2004). According to Etherington (2004), "it seems to me that 'war' is perhaps a good word to describe the feelings of outrage that are sometimes expressed on both sides of the arguments for and against the use of ourselves in research" (p. 33).

As characteristics of naturalistic inquiry, emphasizing the role of the participant/observer, Lincoln and Guba (1985) observed the role of the observer:

- The study takes place in a natural setting in which the researcher develops a rich understanding of participant perspectives/realities in the original context.
- The researcher assumes the role of a highly adaptable data collection instrument while observing and interacting with participants.
- The researcher ensures that both his [sic] intuition and observations help develop a rich understanding about participants in a natural setting.
- The researcher engages in an emergent research design and lets data collection processes emerge as participants' experiences in the colony setting become increasingly familiar. (p. 64)

Following Steinmetz's (1997) recommendations, I recorded as much as I could. I speculated that at a later date the information may be required to be used as prompts and

reminders of what was occurring at the time of my observations and interviewing. Data gathering and documenting takes a lot of time because most individuals are able to keep only a few things in their minds at one time (Stake, 2008).

3.2.2 Interviews

The interview is a primary method to gather qualitative data (Yin, 2003). The purpose of interviews in qualitative studies is “to get an authentic understanding of people’s experiences, and it is believed that open-ended questions are the most effective” (Silverman, 2001, p. 13).

Seidman (2006) stated that it is:

Not to get answers to questions, not to test hypotheses and not to ‘evaluate’ as the term is normally used. It is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that existence. (p. 9)

Within this qualitative study, due to the distinctive nature of the teachers and the colonies, I believed that it was imperative to maintain authenticity and verisimilitude at all times. Semi-structured interview questions and discussions facilitated that process (See Appendix C).

Interviewing the teacher/principals was an essential feature of the information gathering process. It was an opportunity to delve into the considerations and experiences of the teachers. I found the teachers to be cooperative and engaged. The participants’ contexts dovetailed with Fontana and Frey’s (2000) description of gathering qualitative data through interviewing: “Interviewing and interviewers must necessarily be creative, forget how-to rules, and adapt themselves to the ever-changing environments they face” (p. 657). It was crucial that the teacher/principals and I were comfortable in our roles as interviewer and interviewees.

A minimum of three interviews, a combination of formal and informal, was scheduled with each participant. It was invaluable to hold a number of interviews with them as we became

familiar with each other in our roles. The first two interviews occurred at the school during my period of observations. I spent one week at each school in my role as researcher. The first interview, approximately one hour in length, established a record of the participant's experience and the nature of the school setting and it introduced the purpose of the research. The second interview, approximately one hour long, provided an opportunity for the teacher/principal to describe the students, the nature of the colony. We clarified issues about the school and the students, resources, budget, setting, future enrollment, and we clarified any open-ended issues specific to the school and colony. The third interview occurred a week to ten days later. It was approximately 90 minutes long, off-site, not during school hours, and it permitted the participants to reflect on their experiences and details of their position on the colony. Approximately fourteen hours was spent interviewing the teacher/principals. Not accounted for in this number are the informal discussions we had during class, recess, before school, and at other times during the school day.

The 90 minute off-site interview was recorded by a digital audio recorder and I transcribed the data at the earliest opportunity utilizing the public domain software *Express Scribe*. Supplementing the face-to-face interviews, often for clarification of a question or a response, a total of 31 (7, 13, 4, 7 to the four teachers) e-mails were sent by me to the participants. There were no group e-mails to the teacher/principals.

Face-to-face contact enhanced the interviews. An appropriate method for some research and researchers, e-mail and phone calls were also employed to clarify a point or to ask a pertinent question. The interviewing time and place arrangements were done collaboratively with the teacher/principals. At the teacher/principals' suggestion, two were interviewed in their homes (one was actually the home of the teacher/principal's friend, and the interviewee's spouse

and child were in the house at the other interview), and two were interviewed in a public library. The interview questions were reviewed beforehand and they understood that their contribution was important to the data collection and processes of the study. Short, informal interviews took place at the school. Whether to have interviews before school, during lunch, or after school was an issue. The colony teachers had limited time, if any, to be interviewed during the school day. They had no administrative time, about one hour of preparation time per week, and they had no on-site administrative support; therefore, some interviewing was done during non-school hours.

Data collection occurred over a period of four months and a variety of strategies was utilized. To examine the work of the teacher/principal, I observed, participated, and interacted with the teacher/principal in the classroom; I informally and formally interviewed the teacher/principals; and I considered their processes and procedures related to school administration, student management, and leadership. According to Krathwohl (2009), “qualitative data may be gathered in as many ways as the researcher’s creativity permits. Although the most widely used sources are observation and interviewing, the analysis of records, documents, photos, and videos is also common” (p. 249). All of the preceding methodologies were utilized except the analysis of photos and videos, which can be met with disapproval by some colonies. To supplement my observations and interactions on the colony, I had dedicated time to discover information about the colony (e.g., origins, date of establishment and its history, background on the colony and the Hutterite culture) and its school (e.g., physical plant, relationship with the church and the German teacher, equipment and other resources).

3.2.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis provided “a detailed description of the case and its setting,” and the Hutterite colony setting was particularly relevant (Creswell, 2007, p. 163). As part of the

analysis to derive themes and patterns, I organized, transcribed, coded, and summarized the data, as recommended by McMillan (2004). Data were gathered through practices such as listening, reflecting, and questioning (Waks, 2007). Field notes from my classroom observations and the transcribed interview data were examined, organized, and summarized, as described by Waks (2007).

Stake's (1995) recommended three steps for analysis contributed to my examination and interpretation of the data. In what Stake (1995) described as *categorical aggregation*, I categorized (referred to by NVivo9 software as "coding") data and collected instances from which meanings may emerge; *direct interpretation* was used to illustrate meaning based on my observations and the teachers' comments; I *drew patterns* by examining the connection between two or more categories or codes.

Guiding my exploration of the analysis of the data, I reflected on the proposals of Creswell (2012): "The process of data analysis involves organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them" (p. 179). Creswell's (2012) recommendations of sketching ideas, taking notes, working with words, identifying codes, reducing codes to themes, and counting frequencies of codes contributed to the development and emergence of themes.

3.2.3.1 Qualitative document analysis (QDA).

As discussed by Bowen (2009), "document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet transmitted) material" (p. 27). Hesse-Biber (2008) identified a document for qualitative purposes as "any symbolic representation that can be recorded or retrieved for description and analysis" (p. 127). With reference to analyzing some present-day documents, "an increasing amount of the

material is in digital form and it is contained in computer files” (Hesse-Biber, 2008, p. 28). Often these materials are primary documents, (e.g., student registration information, student attendance, timetables, and courses offered at the school), and they can provide a window and another perspective to the study. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). The value of document analysis is its role in the triangulation and/or crystallization process of the research methodology (Bowen, 2009). The analysis of documents “requires data selection rather than data collection” (Bowen, 2009, p. 31).

Documents that may be used for systematic evaluation, and that will be analyzed in this study as part of an examination of a classroom, students, teacher, or a school, take a variety of forms. They include student and commercial work posted on the bulletin boards and timetables posted on the wall of the classroom; agendas, timelines, registers and manuals; teacher lesson planning books; lesson and unit plans; books and brochures; demographic information, past and present; event programs (i.e., printed outlines); memoranda; maps and charts; newspapers; organizational or institutional reports; survey data; and various public records. Permission to review the material was always requested, where required. Summarized by Bowen (2009), “documents provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings from other sources.” One may not adhere strictly to the examination of just documents in the classroom and school setting. Observations and reviews of the age and type of supportive teaching equipment, the carpet and/or linoleum on the floor, and the cleanliness of the room are artifacts more than documents, but they do provide information about the site being studied.

3.2.3.2 Coding and theming.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) stated that “the development of emergent themes reflects the [researcher’s] first efforts to bring interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order to the collection of data” (p. 185). Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) endorsed collating the dialogue and actions of the participants, looking for rich metaphors used by the teacher/principals, linking the metaphors to the participants, and utilizing crystallization to strengthen the analysis. As well, according to Tesch (1987), themes can “‘emerge,’ or they ‘appear,’ ‘occur,’ ‘stand out,’ ‘arise,’ or ‘reveal themselves’” (p. 230) Across my data collecting activities, aspects of themes appeared as a whole or as a segment of a theme.

Tesch (1987) described how patterns and themes in the data could emerge as a result of a researcher’s efforts in (a) *sense-making capacity*, (b) *order-making ability*, and (c) *intuition*, also referred to as *recognition-producing capability*. In my *sense-making* observations, insights, interactions, and dialogue, I observed how the teacher/principals made sense of their schools, their roles, and the setting of their colony environments.

Regarding the second capacity, *order-making ability*, each of the teachers in my study had a predominant aptitude and orientation (e.g., two had religious connections, one had a community connection, and one had a mechanical/tradesperson connection) linking them to the colony. These dimensions influenced the contexts in which the participants defined their professional involvement and aspirations.

Intuition was the third context I utilized for identifying emerging themes. Sadler-Smith (2012) described the use of intuition by experienced school and educational practitioners. According to Sadler-Smith (2012), in uncertain and complex situations, intuition was a critical aspect of decision-making. Rather than contradicting, intuition complements data-based

decision- making.

Coding has a role in the qualitative data analytic process (Saldana, 2009). The purpose of coding is to develop themes. Saldana (2009) provided a definition of a code: “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often 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). Saldana (2009) described the procedures of effective coding, to take the abstract and make it concrete as the identification of themes proceeds:

First Cycle coding methods describe the initial coding of data and is divided into seven subcategories: Grammatical, Elemental, Affective, Literary/Language, Exploratory, Procedural, and Theming the Data. Second Cycle coding methods involve classifying, prioritizing, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing, and theory building. (p. 45)

As a former educator with 31 years of experience as a teacher, vice-principal, junior high school principal, high school principal, and program coordinator, I believed I had developed some insight into colony schools and teacher/principals. I had worked with schools and teachers, colony and off-colony, at the curriculum implementation and program level for eight years.

My study of the participants, and my examination of the data, was influenced by what Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) termed my “autobiographical journey” (p. 185). She stated that “familial, cultural, developmental, and educational background . . . can relate (either consciously or unconsciously) to the intellectual themes of the work” (p. 185).

The recognition of the emergence of the themes was influenced and facilitated through a process of intuition and my experiences in the education sector. Some coding categories appeared while I was collecting data, as per the observations made by Bogdan and Bilken,

(2007). As I interviewed and interacted with the teacher/principals, and reviewed the data, a sense of their perspectives on their work and the setting was developed; features of themes would emerge and coalesce. The participants and I contributed to this process. Upon hearing and observing the teacher/principals speak and interact with their students and the colony members, a code and/or theme, or the thread of a theme, would emerge from the data that had been collected during the interviews.

3.2.3.3 Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

NVivo9 software, a program that supports the categorization of subjects' responses, was utilized. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis and study (CAQDAS) assisted in the classification of the interview transcripts. At the time of my data analysis, the most recent edition of *NVivo9* software was utilized. Along with my perceptions and observations, this process supported the identification of emerging themes among the participants: Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) indicated that "computer software can be of great assistance in classifying, sorting, and filing data." (p. 106). Supportively, (Fielding, 2008) commented that "qualitative software [can be used] to support case study research and case-based reasoning" (p. 683).

NVivo9 assisted in the management, profiling, and sense-making of unstructured data. As a specific program developed for classifying, sorting, and arranging information, qualitative research software supported the analysis of materials, identifying themes, gleaning insight, pondering observations and perceptions, and developing meaningful conclusions. *NVivo9* software was utilized in my study according to five broad purposes, as established by Bazeley (2007): (a) it assisted in the management of data by keeping track of the records that comprised the case studies, (b) it assisted in the management of ideas by organizing and providing access to conceptual and theoretical knowledge generated by the case studies, (c) it organized data by

organizing questions of the data and drawing the responses from the developed database, and (e) it reported from the data by drawing upon the contents of the database.

NVivo9, considered one of the best options among CAQDAS, is critiqued as “not able to retrieve all the responses because it only takes into account the frequency of searched words but not meaning or synonyms” (Ozkan, 2004, p. 2). It was paramount in my mind, and demonstrated in my work, that a software program such as *NVivo9* assisted in the organization and management of data supported the representation of coding in a well-ordered manner. A misperception is that CAQDAS “can do the work for you” or that “it will take over the project” (Fielding, 2008, p. 683). On the contrary, as noted by Ozkan (2004): “It is still the researcher who will make the decisions for their data organization, coding, or analysis” (p. 2). CAQDAS aided the labour-intensive process of qualitative data analysis, for example sorting and connecting information.

Creswell (2005) described several steps in coding data and I utilized those in my queries. Creswell (2005) recommended developing a sense of the whole by reading the transcripts thoroughly and asking oneself to reflect on what the person is talking about. I considered a statement in the context of searching for an underlying meaning, if any. I was following the steps of *first-cycle coding* utilizing a process referred to as *structural coding* (Saldana, 2009): “Structural coding applies a content-based or conceptual phrase representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that relates to a specific research question” (p. 66).

In my study, interview questions (see Appendix C) were open-ended and related to the teachers’ teaching and principal roles. According to Saldana (2009), the process of structured coding was appropriate when an unrestricted response was provided by an interviewee. As I reviewed the interview transcripts and reflected on my note-taking, I memoed patterns and regularities and such common information was separated from other data.

Wherever appropriate or needed, I utilized *second-cycle coding*. This strategy consisted

of further examination of the data and it assisted in the organization of themes. Saldana (2009) suggested that “second cycle coding methods, if needed, are advanced ways of reorganizing and reanalyzing data coded through first cycle methods.” (p. 149). Data was coded into categories, and occasionally designated into more than one category. “The primary goal of second cycle coding, if needed, is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from your array of first cycle codes,” stated Saldana (2009, p. 149). The categories were reduced after the second cycle of coding and the process because “some codes will be merged together because they are conceptually familiar” (Saldana, 2009, p. 149). Saldana (2009) observed that as this process occurs, parts of the coding process may be repeated, or some codes will be eliminated because they “were deemed ‘marginal’ or ‘redundant’” (p. 149).

3.3.1 Establishing Trustworthiness

To establish the trustworthiness of this qualitative research, credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability were addressed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Sinkovics, Penz, & Ghauri, 2008). To contribute to the trustworthiness of qualitative data, Sinkovics, Penz, and Ghauri (2008) advocated “formalised procedures of gathering, analyzing and interpreting qualitative data and discussing these issues in view of the emergence of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software” (p. 1). These were factors that contributed to the verisimilitude of this research, as well. Guba & Lincoln (1985) described the criticism directed toward naturalistic and qualitative research:

The naturalistic inquirer soon becomes accustomed to hearing charges that naturalistic studies are undisciplined; that he or she is guilty of “sloppy” research, engaging in “merely subjective” observations, responding indiscriminately to the “loudest bangs or

brightest lights.” Rigour, it is asserted, is not the hallmark of naturalism. Is the naturalist inevitably defenseless against such charges? Worse, are they true? (pp. 289-290)

Contrasting the observations above, Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) provided a defence of the naturalistic perspective: “Qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher wants to promote a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants. This approach implies an emphasis on exploration, discovery, and description” (pp. 7-8).

3.3.2 Credibility

One strategy to address credibility was achieved by recording semi-structured interview sessions with the teacher/principals. They received a copy of the transcripts and read the notes to ensure they reflected what was said in the interview, and to ensure that they reflected what the teacher/principal intended. I listened carefully to the participants as they spoke, I observed them as they moved among the students and taught in their classroom, and I made field notes.

I modelled my approach to credibility, along the lines of the five activities outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985):

(a) activities that increase the probability that credible findings will be produced, for example prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation; (b) activities that provide a check of the inquiry process, for example debriefing; (c) activities aimed at refining working hypotheses; (d) activities for checking preliminary findings and interpretations against raw data; (e) activities providing for the direct test of findings and interpretations with the sources, for example member checks of those sources from which the data was originally collected. (p. 301)

3.3.3 Verisimilitude

While generalizations are naturally limited by the multiple site case study method, the study aims to deepen the understanding of teaching in a cross-cultural context. *Verisimilitude* is a deliberate and important element of this research. Augmenting the fidelity of the research and sustaining credible data, I maintained verisimilitude of the interviews and my observations with the assistance of a digital audio recorder, memoing, and note-taking, three strategies recommended by Creswell and Miller (2000).

The participants reviewed the verbatim transcripts of our interviews and, if they were concerned about the implications or connotations, they were at liberty to edit and/or clarify the material. Tampolo (2011) described the “truthlikeness” of a study: to come as close to the perceived truth as possible through the use of appropriate methods; I attempted this through the methods used. Implications, connotations, perceptions, and perspectives are open to interpretation based on such factors as worldview, culture, and beliefs. As stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), “the interpretive practice of making sense of one’s findings is both artistic and political” (p. 26).

3.3.4 Transferability

Because they are small and purposive rather than representative, case studies limit the degree of generalizability and transferability to other settings and situations. Krathwohl (2009) asserted that an *inferential leap* is required. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), it would not be the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that the findings were transferable. It is a privilege of the audience to construct any generalizations. Nevertheless, the key issue was more attuned to verisimilitude than transferability. The strength of the findings may be gauged by whether they

resonate and ring true with others (e.g., other colony teacher/principals). The researcher's duty was to ensure that the tools to facilitate transferability were available for future researchers

3.3.5 Dependability and Confirmability

A researcher may safeguard the dependability and confirmability of their research through the use of audits, if necessary (Joniak, 2002). An auditor examines the dependability of the process and the confirmability of the product. There are methods that I utilized that were contingent upon the nature of the work done and data gathered. For the sake of confirmability and verisimilitude, I provided data to the participants to review and to confirm that the data accurately reflected their sentiments and statements (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Creswell (2005,) referred to this process as *member checking*: “a process in which the researcher asks one or more of the participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account” (p. 252). I received feedback from students in my doctoral program cohort and my supervisor at the university to ensure that I followed the correct procedures in my data collection.

3.3.6 Ethical Considerations

With respect to ethical considerations, according to du Toit (2006), “issues in qualitative research are often more subtle than issues in survey or experimental research” (p. 1). My qualitative study involved close contact for one week with each of the teacher/principals and, therefore, guidelines were required that defined the relationship. As described by du Toit (2006), “there are different stances regarding ethical issues in qualitative research” (p. 1). The most common position, and the one I followed in my study, is the absolutist position. “The absolutist stance addresses four areas of ethical concern, namely: (a) protection of participants from harm (physical and psychological), (b) the prevention of deception, (c) protection of privacy and (d)

informed consent” (du Toit, 2006, p. 1). The absolutist stance maintains that I respect the professionalism and privacy of the teacher/principals.

I received informed consent from the participants. This consent required informing the participants about the purpose of the research. The subjects were informed of the risks and benefits of the study, if any. For example, although the desire for anonymity is respected, others may be able to determine the identity of the participants. Each teacher/participant submitted written permission. Within the study documents and post-study, I followed du Toit’s (2006) recommendations:

The investigator may not report private data that identifies participants. One of the safest ways to ensure anonymity is not to record the names of the participants at all and to provide an information sheet that asks for verbal rather than signed consent. Participants should receive feedback on research results. This is a form of recognition and gratitude to participants for their participation. (p. 1)

3.4 Toward a Crystallization Mindset

There are methods to combine various observers and observations, theories, procedures, and sources of data to avoid one-method procedures and studies and to broaden the range of qualitative information. One of these methods is triangulation, a strategy “wherein two or three measurement points enable convergence on a site” and increases the “credibility of your findings” (Merriam, 2009, p. 215). A post-modernist perspective respecting the validation of qualitative data, and arguably more accurate than triangulation, is *crystallization* (Merriam, 2009).

Crystallization recognizes that there are a variety of ways to approach a research project. Richardson and Adam St. Pierre (2005) stated that “crystals exhibit an infinite variety of shapes,

substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach” (p. 963). Furthermore, according to Richardson and St. Pierre (2005), “crystals grow, change, and are altered, but they are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns and arrays casting off in different directions” (p. 963). Apart from methods, data, or theories, I relied on my professional experience, considerations of the experiences I had observed in off-colony and other colony schools, and reflection upon non-fiction accounts of colony life, for example *I Am Hutterite* by Kirkby (2010) and *My Hutterite Life* by Stahl (2003). These strategies provided part of the variety of interpretive tools offered by a mind-set of crystallization.

3.5 Cross-cultural Contact: An Ethical Issue

I took particular care when I interacted with Hutterite colony members. In this study, while not interviewing Hutterites or having them assume a direct role, there were exchanges during my visits to the school and when I was invited for lunch. Gestures, posture, and language may be misunderstood or perceived incorrectly by the colony members and the teacher/principals. “Ethical principles to consider and be wary of include respect for persons, deception, coercion, confidentiality, safety, privacy, justice, beneficence, and nonmaleficence” (Aronson Fontes, 2009, p. 7).

3.6 Summary

This chapter described the research design and methodology of my study. A multiple site case study schema, together with a constructivist perspective, with four Hutterite colony educators was utilized. The research process provided sufficient data and it was synthesised inductively. Consequently, any generalizations that may be construed will provide new

understandings and theories to be developed from the ground up, as suggested by the inductive approach.

A description of primary topic areas was provided: (a) design of the research process, (b) site and participant selection, (c) data collection methods, (d) data analysis and interpretation, (e) how I established and maintained trustworthiness, and (f) ethical considerations. The case study approach used qualitative methods as the research design for examining the cross-cultural understandings of the colony teacher/principals. Data-gathering was accomplished through semi-structured and informal interviews, observation, and the consideration of educational and administrative processes and procedures. My notes and the recordings collected from observation and interviews were studied, coded, and organized into themes. The subsequent information provided insight to the course of my work and contributed to a meaningful study.

CHAPTER 4

THE COLONIES AND THEIR TEACHER/PRINCIPALS

The purpose of this qualitative multiple site case study was to explore Hutterite colony teacher/principals' understandings related to their teaching and principal roles in a cross-cultural context. Four selected colony teacher/principals, two females and two males, were the participants. They were experienced colony teacher/principals, a consideration in the development of insight and reflection. To establish patterns, retrospectives, and expectations of the experiences of these colony teacher/principals, it was necessary for each teacher/principal to have taught in a colony school the previous school year. This consideration allowed for reflection on the teacher/principalship from the perspective of an experienced colony teacher. The base line for experience was not an issue in the study. The teacher/principals exceeded the minimum years desired: the least years of colony experience was five and the cumulative years of colony experience of the four was 28.

An exploration of the colony teachers' teaching and administrative experiences provided an understanding of what comprised a successful colony teacher/principal, how to enhance inservice for teachers who wish to teach on a Hutterite colony, and how to support colony school teachers. To provide for the data collection, a constructivist perspective was utilized. The teacher/principals reported their settings and experiences as they perceived them, and constructed their understanding and knowledge based upon their own previous teaching, life, and cultural experiences.

Three primary methods of data collection were employed. The first method consisted of observing and interacting with the subjects in their classroom and school for five days per subject, using participatory observer strategies. During the time I spent on the colony, the

schools, and the classrooms, I assisted the students and teacher and I had recess and lunch with the school and staff. I sang O Canada and recited the Lord's Prayer along with the staff and the students each morning and I assisted the students with their desk work. I took notes of comments and thoughts. I also noted the physical layout and construction of the building and the classroom, materials displayed, resources, discussions between the staff and I, and remarks related to the students.

The second method, semi-structured interviews, was utilized to encourage and assist each participant to explain their personal and teaching perspectives and how their cross-cultural experiences in their schools affected their teaching and relations with colony members, students and their families, and the colonies' governance structure. As well, there were opportunities during the school day to engage in school-related dialogue with the teacher/principals, staff, students, and community members. These situations often dealt with an immediate issue that had arisen, or a more esoteric discussion related to education, school, the colony, and associated topics. I communicated by e-mail and telephone with the participants for clarification, follow-up, or to address additional questions that had arisen.

A third method, document analysis, was used. Documents related to instruction and record-keeping management were examined and discussed with the participants. These included, but were not exclusive to, processes and documents related to school administration, student management, and leadership (e.g., teacher daily and unit planning, timetables, assessment and evaluation, the delegation of duties to other staff, student duties and registration, newsletters to the community, and interactions and relationships with the Division Office).

4.1 The Colonies and Their Teacher/Principals

Four Hutterite colonies and their teacher/principals provided the sources for the data for this study. The colonies and their teacher/principals were given the following pseudonyms: (a) Valley Creek, Bill; (b) Poplar Grove, Margaret; (c) Big Hill, Shirley; and (d) Mara Valley, Daniel. The four colonies are members of the Dariusleut sect, one of the four primary Hutterite sects in western Canada. The teacher/principals of these four schools were observed and interviewed over a three month period. Each colony, the schools, and the teacher/principals will be described.

4.2 Mara Valley Hutterite Colony

Mara Valley Hutterite Colony, which appeared to be a prosperous colony, was the home of approximately 150 people. Of the four colonies, it was the least geographically isolated from a settlement, a village of approximately 250 people. The colony was situated on the scenic crest of a long hill with a generous view of the surrounding aspen parkland countryside. Sunsets would be spectacular when viewed from Mara Valley Colony. The colony was located on a gravel road approximately three kilometres off a major highway and a further ten kilometres from town. The colony was in plain view of anyone driving by on the grid road; the Hutterites made no effort to hide or shield their presence.

In my February visit, fresh snow from the night before blocked the staff parking lot. I noticed six relatively new yellow combines parked in a tidy row near the colony entrance. At the cost of \$500,000 to \$750,000 each when new, the combines represented a financial investment by the colony of over \$3,000,000. That financial investment did not include such items as tractors, quads, swathers, barns, shop buildings, fertilizer, trucks, and fuel used by this large agricultural operation.

I was greeted by the colony members with a smile and a friendly wave when I drove onto the colony. I approached the school along a twisty gravel road, and passed dormant raspberry bushes and Saskatoon berry trees. Had I not known the location of the school, there being no signs marking the directions, it may have been difficult to find.

To its dismay, Mara Valley Colony had received some negative publicity in the past few years. There were concerns from a nearby acreage community that the effluent and run-off from Mara Valley's cattle operation affected the acreage community's water supply. The issue received coverage in the city media and was a worry for both the colony and the local acreage community. Getting along with neighbours was a priority for Hutterite colonies, and remediative steps were taken to rectify the drainage concerns and placate the feelings that had arisen.

The living accommodations of the colony were light grey in colour and their size appeared substantial. The houses were duplex, triplex, and fourplex bungalows with basements. Similar to what I observed in other colonies, the houses were constructed in an open quadrangle format facing a large common yard. The houses, kitchen/cafeteria, and the school/church were connected by well-constructed, straight concrete sidewalks. In each of the four colonies the church and the school were in the same building. The church/school arrangement was purposeful and was a testimony to the importance Hutterites placed on religion and education (Katz & Lehr, 2012).

During the winter months the sidewalks were cleared of snow quickly by colony members. They used a small tractor to do this work. As well, house stoops and steps were cleared of snow. Inside the quadrangle were trees, flower beds, shrubs, and other plants. The landscaping was not austere, strictly utilitarian, or Spartan. I have observed clothes hanging outside to dry regardless of the temperature. I did not observe clotheslines. A carousel-type

drying apparatus common in other backyards was employed. The women used well-constructed metal wagons with pneumatic tires to move their laundry from the washing machines back to their homes. These same wagons were often used for carrying other items, notably babies and small children.

4.2.1 Mara Valley Colony School

Mara Valley School had 30 students from kindergarten to grade nine, and the colony planned that the students would continue their education past grade nine. When I arrived at the school at 8:15 a.m. the teachers and the two educational assistants were present, but the students had not arrived. The school building was a large albeit unimposing structure. It was relatively new, or renovated, with contemporary windows and siding. The school was in the basement and the church occupied the main floor. In the four colonies, I never observed the children utilizing the church as part of their schooling, for example for small group work or for rehearsing the lines of a poem.

There was an antechamber/utility room where outside clothing and boots were left. I entered the main classroom directly from this area and it was approximately one and a half times larger than what I knew as the typical classroom size. The classroom was well lit and warm. Student writing, motivational posters, and artwork covered the walls and the bulletin boards. This was the classroom of the teacher/principal, Daniel. Students' desks, a couch, and a table and chairs for group or individual work were in the room. Two computers were in the classroom and one was in the principal's office. The office/storage area was attached to the classroom and could be viewed through large windows. Across the hall from the teacher/principal's classroom was the younger children's classroom. It, too, was a room of substantial size for the 15 students whose classroom it was. Compared to the cramped quarters that some students experience in

English schools, the colony students were taught in a spacious setting. Of the four schools, Mara Valley was the only one physically separating its students into lower and upper elementary grades.

A library and a small gymnasium were down the hall from the two classrooms. To the credit of the people of Mara Valley Colony, this was the only gymnasium I observed at a colony school. It was a multi-purpose facility for colony members. The gym was convenient given Saskatchewan's winter climate. The students bounced basketballs and volleyballs, and played games of their own devising during recess and the noon hour. It was what I would expect to see in any K-9 school during school recesses and noon hours.

Although welcome, the school staff did not eat lunch with the colony members each day. Because no other release time or on-site support was provided, the time was often used as administrative and preparation time by the staff. As well, the staff told me that they were gaining too much weight and spoiling their supper when they ate with the colony. However, the teachers and educational assistants did attend lunch at least once a week. They viewed their attendance as an opportunity to maintain contact with the adults and to be sociable with the students' families.

4.2.1.1 Mara Valley Colony teacher/principal.

Daniel, the teacher/principal of Mara Valley Colony School, had taught for 23 years and had been the teacher/principal at Mara Valley for eight of those years. Daniel had begun his career as a classroom teacher in an English school and had served as a vice-principal in a K-12 school. Of the four teacher/principals, only Daniel had previous school administrative experience. Daniel described himself as a "late starter" because his teaching career began when he was thirty years old. Prior to teaching, Daniel earned a master's degree in divinity from a

California university and he had served as a youth pastor and a church minister, in a church that is related to the Anabaptist traditions, as are the Hutterites, in the nearby city. Daniel's church background was a source of inspiration to him in his interactions with the students and the colony members. I observed that Daniel was proud of his theological background and experience.

Daniel had not abandoned his church-based perceptions upon becoming a colony teacher. He commented that he frequently discussed theological questions and issues with the colony's adult males; sometimes they asked him questions, and sometimes Daniel queried the Hutterites. Bill, Margaret, and Shirley were not as keen to delve into a discussion of religion and religious values in their colony communities; Daniel sought out and relished the conversations.

Daniel reflected on the interview question, "How would you describe your ability to communicate cross-culturally? Provide a couple of examples." He described himself as committed to his work, to the children, and to the community. He recognized a connection between himself and the colony. There was an authentic ancestral link and a spiritual connection to the work he was doing. Daniel described the kinship between his family and the Wollman family, a common Hutterite surname. The association dated to earlier days in the Ukraine. Daniel believed that he was a cousin, a number of times removed from the Hutterites presently living on Mara Valley colony, and the colony members believed it too. This unique association endeared him to the colony. These attributes provided a strong community connection for Daniel

Daniel was married and had three children. His children had been home-schooled for a large portion of their school career. Daniels' family and home environment were very important to the family, and the children would have been somewhat insulated from many of the

elementary and middle years issues that prevail in a school. They attended public high schools in later years and had continued to university. Daniel spoke German and had studied German at university (and had received university scholarships for his language proficiency), further strengthening his connection with the colony:

I heard the German language when I was growing up; it was a different kind of German.

I studied German in high school and university and did very well. At university I won a scholarship due to my proficiency in German. There are aspects of their language that I understand and I can speak back to them as well.

Three years earlier, another teacher was added to the colony and two educational assistants shared a 1.5 full-time equivalency. Daniel taught 100% of the school day; he had a class of 12 students from Grades 5-9. The three grade nine students would continue their schooling in grade ten in the 2012-2013 school year. The other teacher and the educational assistants spent the majority of their time with the K-4 grades. Consequently, Daniel had supervisory authority over the three individuals, one being a teacher. Not atypically with respect to the classroom setting, the K-4 teacher worked most closely with the two educational assistants. There was time during the day, as indicated on the timetable, when some of Daniel's students received assistance from an educational assistant. This information was also contained in Daniel's planning book. I observed, and it was confirmed by Daniel and the other teacher, that the number and range of students served by two educational assistant and another teacher, required proficiency in planning. Daniel had a structured day book of the grades and subjects he taught. There was a posted class timetable in his classroom depicting the time, length, and subject. The timetable was actually in two parts. To provide instruction in all the subjects

according to the required number of minutes mandated by the Ministry of Education, there was a Day One and a Day Two.

4.3 Big Hill Colony

The out-buildings, residences, school, kitchen, playground, and church at Big Hill Colony were situated on the banks of a river. The colony had been a family farm and was purchased by Big Hill Colony members in 1955. The colony members built additional housing, the church, a school, and the kitchen as some of their first projects. Fortunately for the colony members, when they purchased the farm it already had a number of barns and other out-buildings on site. They added farmland, buildings, and houses over the years as the need and opportunity arose. The houses were bungalows and were in an open quadrangle format with a large common yard; similar to what I observed on the other colonies. The presence of new houses on the colony grounds was evidence that Big Valley Colony was growing. Similar to two of the other colonies, well-constructed concrete sidewalks connected the homes, buildings, kitchen, school, and church. One could deduce that there were similarities among the colonies.

The riverside location of the colony situated it near a new acreage-type housing development. Many of the houses and properties were worth one million dollars and more, and a lot of them had spectacular views of the river and the river valley (overlooking the Hutterite colony from the river's other side). Shirley, the teacher/principal, and I were standing outside the school during recess one day. We were regarding the expensive homes looking down upon the colony and Shirley commented, "I wonder who is happier, the people living in those houses or the people living on the colony?" Shirley thought that the colony members were happier. Her comment, I felt, reflected Shirley's world view.

Because the colony was located on the banks of a river, there were gently sloping valley walls nearby. A hill behind the school was well utilized in the winter months: during recess and lunch hour the students slid down the hill on toboggans, plastic sleds, and small riding skis called Lazars. The school had complete sets of cross-country skis, poles, and boots, enough for all students and staff. During the winter the students often spent their physical education time cross-country skiing around the colony and along the banks of the river. The students told me that they swam in the river during the summer months.

As an example of contrasts among colonies, even of the same sect, the children at Mara Valley colony, approximately 80 kilometres away, were not allowed to cross-country ski. At Mara Valley, where the students were not allowed to ride bicycles either (allowed at Poplar Grove Colony), cross-country skiing and bicycling were considered “worldly.” Worldly denotes a preoccupation with the temporal rather than the spiritual world; such a person was devoted to this world and its pursuits rather than to religion or their spiritual affairs (Kraybill & Bowman, 2001). Such activities as cross-country skiing were considered methods of detaching oneself from the colony, even symbolically, and colony members were discouraged from participating in certain activities, according to Daniel from Mara Valley School. Even though the distance ventured on the skis was within the colony, the actions were considered to diminish the colony members’ chosen isolation and separateness. Daniel and I discussed whether this perspective was at odds with the visits to the cities and towns made by members of the colony, including many of the children.

On one of the days I observed and participated with the class, I stayed for lunch at the colony and, abiding by colony tradition, I sat on the men's side. This was not the case at all colonies. At Poplar Grove Colony the teacher, the educational assistant (EA), and the German

teacher ate with the children in a dining area separate from the main eating hall. There was an expectation that the school teacher and the German teacher supervised the children, informally at least. At another colony the teacher and the staff ate at a table alone, separated from the children. At two other colonies I visited, the teachers and educational assistants ate intermittently with the colony members, usually on Friday. They were welcome to eat on any school days they wished, but the teacher/principal often used the noon hour to prepare lessons and attend to school affairs. Traditionally, informally at least, Friday lunch at the colonies was fried chicken. The colony members referred to it as “Tucky Fried Chicken.” The entire group of teacher/principals and educational assistants often received gifts of fresh bread and buns, desserts, preserves such as pickles and salsa, and meat (e.g., poultry, beef, and lamb raised on the colony). I had developed a reputation on one of the colonies of showing up at opportune times. One day, as I walked into the classroom, one of the boys commented, “It must be lunch time. Mr. Rodger is here!”

I spoke with a substitute teacher who had taught at one of the four colonies. She said that she was politely invited by one of the students to join the class and colony members for lunch. The teacher was led to the cafeteria by the students and made to feel welcome. She was introduced to and greeted by a number of the adults; they made a special effort to approach and say hello. Upon leaving the colony at the end of the day, the substitute teacher went home with fresh baking and some preserves.

During my lunch at Big Hill Colony I had a conversation with a bachelor gentleman who was kind enough to come and sit with me. We talked about the weather, and we discussed the one year anniversary of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami and its effects on the Japanese nuclear power stations. The gentleman mentioned how the Japanese had the atomic bomb

dropped on them twice in 1945 and how this contributed to the end of the Second World War, and how the Japanese have had an unlucky relationship with things nuclear. I recognized that he had a strong general historical knowledge of world affairs. He referred to reading the city newspaper that morning; reading the newspaper is permitted in all communities.

4.3.1 Big Hill Colony School

Big Hill Colony School had 11 students ranging from K-8, nine girls and two boys. As per tradition, the nine girls will probably marry outside the colony and take up residence in their husband's colony. The two boys will stay, leaving a diminished population at Big Hill. When the two boys marry they will bring two wives to the colony but nine females may have left to live on their husband's colony, a net loss of adults to the colony. This marriage pattern favours the preservation of the colony's traditional hierarchical male structure and protects the status quo from the competition of incoming males in the role of husbands (Peter, 1986).

The classroom was well-stocked with visual displays. Student work graced the walls and bulletin boards. Art and handicrafts were done on a regular basis and to a certain degree of excellence due to Shirley's skill, interest, and training. There were numerous resources, library, curricular, and a small room to the side of the classroom where small-group instruction occurred.

The students had the use of a computer and an iPad. The computer and the iPad contained various math and language arts game-like activities. The school did not have a practical internet connection, due its valley location. The school had a photocopier and Shirley had a laptop computer that belonged to the school division.

The morning started with the students standing and facing the Canadian flag and singing O Canada. After the Lord's Prayer, the students commenced work. The school day began with all students doing language arts for an hour and then all moved into mathematics. I observed

Shirley getting along well with the children and she balanced disciplined and informal approaches in the management of her classroom and the students. The children spoke German among themselves on occasion, and I do not recall hearing Shirley reminding them to speak English.

A diversity of activities occurred concurrently due to the age/grade differences of the students. While the older girls spent time going through the newspaper, the younger children continued their seat work. The girls were interested in the sports pages, particularly the progress of the Edmonton Oilers hockey team, as well as the news items.

According to Shirley, and from my observations of documents such as her school's timetable, programming for a diverse student body was a challenge. The subject timetable was often the same for all students but each student, and often a group of students, worked on individualized grade/ability appropriate programs. The students worked collaboratively and the older students tutored the younger ones. The students demonstrated familiarity with the daily schedule and they transitioned smoothly from one activity or subject to another.

Shirley had four students who struggled academically and socially. This was a concern, but not one of such deep consequence and concern as might be found in some English schools and homes. All residents were taken care of for their entire lives regardless of ability or condition. Suitable places on the colony would be found for all members.

Big Hill Colony had a 0.75 time educational assistant for the younger children and children with exceptionalities. The educational assistant worked well under Shirley's supervision and I observed her to be a conscientious student-centred employee. She told me that her sister and brother-in-law were teachers in the school division. I observed her follow a structured daily plan detailing time, resources, and tasks with her assigned students, similar to

what a teacher did. One morning the educational assistant was upset because she had left her day-plan at home. During my career as a school teacher and school administrator, I had not known many educational assistants who created a written daily plan.

One Saturday the educational assistant brought her fifteen year old son and his friend to the colony so they could toboggan and play on the hill behind the school. The presence of the two boys caused quite a stir among the older school girls. They and their brothers and cousins joined the two English boys on the hill and they spent an exciting and fun day together. The two English boys and a number of the girls were now “friends” on Facebook and there had been some cell phone texting going on between the two groups since that Saturday. Some of the texting was occurring during class time to the delight of the texting girls. This type of activity is not congruent with the Hutterite wish for isolation.

4.3.1.1 Big Hill Colony teacher/principal.

Shirley was the teacher/principal of Big Hill Colony School. Shirley had 13 siblings and she was raised on a farm in rural Saskatchewan. Speaking and reflecting on Shirley’s cultural identity and its influences on her teaching were insightful, particularly as to how they mesh with the colony and school settings. She had strong religious convictions and was active in her Laestadian church community. Listening to the manner by which Shirley described her religious background, it shared similar themes as the Hutterites, allowing for her a greater degree of connection with the colony structure. Early members of the Laestadian church community had settled in organized settlements in, what was then, a physically isolated area of Saskatchewan. Time and generations passed, and the spread of population in Saskatchewan had diminished the settlements’ isolation, not unlike what is occurring to the Hutterites. Shirley taught kindergarten

for five years at a rural school prior to her seven years at Big Hill Colony, and she had taught overseas for one year.

When we discussed the question, “Describe two or three ways you think you have grown or developed (or not) as a result of teaching on a Hutterite colony? Can you provide an example?” Shirley reflected upon the personal and professional growth she had experienced as a result of teaching on a Hutterite colony:

If I think about growing as a teacher, I think I have grown as a teacher by leaps and bounds because there have been so many experiences that I have gone through now: so many grades, so many curriculums, learning disabilities, and teaching from kindergarten up to grade nine. There are all these many, many parts of education that I haven't experienced before, so that is a big thing. Then, of course, there are the administrative duties and functions that come with the position, so that is a different look at education than I have had as a teacher. Certain situations that have arisen are interesting.

Shirley's religious background influences her comments on the Hutterites. She spoke of the job, but not of the culture. Shirley arrived at school before 8:00 a.m. and often did not leave until 4:30 p.m., or later. After leaving the paved highway she drove on 15 kilometres of gravel grid road to the colony, which was at the dead end of the road. During the winter months the grid road could be quite treacherous, and on many mornings after a snowfall she was the first person to travel on the road. On more than one occasion, Shirley phoned the colony on her cell phone because her vehicle had slid off the road and into the ditch. Somebody would come and pull her vehicle out of the ditch with one of the colony tractors.

As another example of the support she received from the colony residents, Shirley described an incident when she had mechanical trouble with her vehicle. The colony men took

her car into the shop for the day and fixed the problem and a few other automotive issues as well. There were many occasions when the Hutterites supplied food to Shirley, all fresh from the colony farm. Other colony teacher/principals had similar experiences. The Hutterites often asked them to get a piece of equipment or drop something off in the city. For their troubles they were “repaid” in favours that were complimentary and supportive and made their life easier. For one of the teacher/principals, it meant the unlimited use of the colony’s tools and equipment, even on the weekend, and rent-free Quonset space on the colony to house and work on his vintage vehicles and 13 motorcycles.

Shirley was busy and focused during school hours. During the days that I observed and assisted in her classroom, I did not see Shirley sit down to rest. For example, during one day’s recess, rather than staying inside the school and having a cup of coffee and chatting with me and the educational assistant, Shirley took the students on a walk around the sidewalks of the colony. She continued her role as a teacher and supervisor during this break time. However, if it was not Shirley and/or the educational assistant doing this supervisory work, there would be no supervision of the students during recess and that would be perilous and undesirable; supervisory arrangements were required. In larger schools, employees or contractors supervised students at recess and at lunch. For Shirley, student supervision was an everyday/all day duty.

4.4 Valley Creek Colony

Valley Creek Colony was situated ten kilometres down a grid road that branched off a secondary paved highway. Similar to Big Hill, the colony was originally a family farm and the former owner’s two houses and some out-buildings were visible from the road. The sign announcing its presence was the only visual evidence that a Hutterite colony existed at this site. The nearest town was approximately 15 kilometres from the colony, down a gravel road. The

town was predominantly Roman Catholic, many residents spoke both French and English, and a First Nations reserve was located approximately 50 kilometres from the colony. The nearest city was 80 kilometres distant.

The colony was relatively new; it was established in 1997. Fifty-seven people lived on Valley Creek Colony. It was not a daughter colony of another colony where the houses, barns, kitchen, church, and school were built prior to the group's arrival, although it was a member of the Dariusleut sect. The colony members left their previous colony, located in another western province, under unusual circumstances and the colony was established quickly.

The first colony homes were mobile homes/trailers moved onto the farm site. Valley Creek had no quadrangle with a large common grassed area and concrete sidewalks, at least not yet; dirt roads and paths criss-crossed the colony. The colony lacked the organized and tidy appearance of the other three colonies due to the circumstances of its hasty origin. It was gradually becoming more settled and the new construction was evident. Compared to my visits in previous years, I observed that the mobile homes were being transformed into bungalows through room additions, new siding, and new windows.

During a previous visit to Valley Creek Colony, I observed a group of boys taking turns attempting to ride an old bicycle. It had no tires on the wheels, and it looked like it may have been pulled out of a ditch or slough. The boys experienced minimal success. In the course of a later visit to the colony, I asked the teacher/principal about the boys and the bicycle I observed that day. It was taken away from the boys, I was told. The bicycle was not allowed: "too worldly," was the response.

Because the men stayed when married and the women often married outside their home colony, the number of males on the colony affected future colony growth and sustainability, as

was described in reference to Big Hill Colony. Concurrently, the state of your colony affected the judgment of the women being courted by the men. The better the colony the easier it was for the men to attract women as spouses. A new, an impoverished, or a poorly maintained colony may find itself with a surplus of single men, who ordinarily should not and/or need not be single. As a result of the difficulty attracting women, the future of the colony was affected due to the shortage of marriages and the subsequent scarcity of children.

4.4.1 Valley Creek Colony School

The school at Valley Creek was approximately 10 years old. When the school was built it would have been the finest building on the colony. Similar to the other three colonies in my study, the building also contained the church. The school had a large classroom, an office and supply room, a smaller room that served as the library, and a room for small-group instruction.

The classroom was presented similarly as other classrooms with seasonal displays, pictures, and exhibition of the students' work. Due to the uncarpeted linoleum floor and the absence of acoustical ceiling tiles, the classroom and school could be noisy. The students and the staff members amplified the noise. This linoleum floor and the drywall ceiling was a common arrangement in colony schools due to the ease of cleaning. One colony school, Poplar Grove, had carpet and that had its own problems (e.g., dirt, allergens, off-gassing, and the presence of now-banned materials in older carpets).

Similar to the other colony schools, the school day started with the Lord's Prayer. For no particular reason other than teacher choice, it did not include the singing of O Canada. There was a Canadian flag hanging in the classroom next to a picture of Queen Elizabeth II. In none of the schools did I observe the presence of religious or Hutterian cultural artifacts. Yet, a picture of Queen Elizabeth II and the Canadian flag were prominently displayed.

The boys started the day doing math, followed by recess and story time. Language arts followed the story. There were six students from grades one to four registered in Valley Creek School, all boys. Within the next nine years the school population will increase from six to thirteen students, based upon the estimates of the teacher/principal. With the low number of students, a great deal of personal attention was provided. The 2012-13 school year would have been an interesting one for the school because a girl will be registered for the first time in a number of years.

The 0.75 time educational assistant was proficient and she got along well with the students. She had assigned duties with the group she worked with. I observed that she was capable and patient and required little direction. She had left a job with the provincial government and chose to take this lower-paying job because of the opportunity to be close to her home. The working conditions and the hours were favourable to someone with school-age children.

I was usually in the school office when students came and stood outside the classroom door; the classroom door was locked before school and after lunch. In the school office, Bill had a filing cabinet for student and related educational documents from the school division and the Ministry of Education, a photocopier, and a computer. Bill utilized a teacher's planning book. I observed that it had a separate instructional plan for each student, with instructions pertaining to the work of the educational assistant, a benefit of such a small enrollment.

Prior to 9:00 a.m., Bill, the teacher/principal, joked and chatted with the boys. The gentle teasing among the group was also directed at Bill by the students. Some of the boys were outside playing hockey and having fun with the colony's two dogs. Playing hockey is an example of the compromises and the relaxation of rules being made by colony elders. On some

colonies, hockey is not allowed, yet other colonies will travel to distant colonies for inter-colony hockey games and tournaments (J. Stevens, personal communication, 2012).

The bell rang at 9:00 a.m. and the boys and a Golden Retriever puppy ran to the door and entered the school. With minimal prompting the students stood next to their desks and we recited the Lord's Prayer; we did not sing O Canada. I observed that Valley Creek's students' accents were hardly detectable. Further testimony to Bill's organization, I observed a degree of structure in the classroom, regardless of its small size and opportunity for informality. Adherence to a schedule was apparent by the students' admission to the school at the bell's ringing and the posted timetable, as well as Bill's planning and documentation.

The dog, a Golden Retriever puppy named Rusty, belonged to one of the boys. However, perhaps consistent with Hutterite philosophy, he appeared to be shared by the students. Rusty spent his classroom time visiting students and staff, and sleeping. Rusty slept under a counter, next to his master's desk, on a cushion from an old chesterfield. Occasionally Rusty woke up and walked around the room visiting and sniffing everybody and getting petted. During story hour the students sat on risers in one corner of the classroom. Rusty always stretched out on the very top one.

Bill had a "school dog" at his previous colony school and it had a similar role as Rusty: stress reliever, class clown, an opportunity for teachable moments (e.g., providing care to others and being kind to animals). He too was the devoted companion of all the students. I suspected Rusty or his ilk would not be welcomed in a public school due to health regulations, but that was not a concern to the colony members. I came away from my observations and participation at Valley Creek School convinced that every classroom, or school, should have a resident dog or two.

4.4.1.1 Valley Creek Colony teacher/principal.

This was Bill's first year teaching at Valley Creek Colony; however, he was an experienced Hutterite colony teacher. Bill had been the teacher/principal for seven years at another Hutterite colony, a school with 31 students, before transferring to Valley Creek. Bill's developed organizational skills and record-keeping had been instilled in him partly from working with a large number of students at his previous school. Similar to Daniel, Bill's facility in German supported him in the colony setting. Bill had taught in two small rural kindergarten to grade twelve schools preceding his first colony teaching position.

Bill was 48 years old; like Daniel he had not started teaching until he was 30 years old. Besides teaching he had many other skills and hobbies; for example, he owned 13 motorcycles and he restored vintage automobiles. Bill was a skilled mechanic and carpenter and he ran a successful part-time business doing house renovations and constructing basements and garages. Bill stated that he did not really need the teaching job, but he loved the work. He received a great deal of satisfaction as a result of the impact he had on young people in his role as a teacher.

Bill requested a transfer from the other colony because he had purchased five acres of undeveloped lakefront property within driving distance of Valley Creek. The land was next to a similar-sized property owned by his brother. The two families were developing their properties concurrently and planned to move to their acreages as soon as possible. Bill lived in a nearby town during the week and went home on the weekend, and sometimes during the week. After school he spent time at his acreage developing the property and building his new house. The colony operated a cement company as one of their non-agricultural ventures, and they had assisted with the construction and pouring of the house's concrete foundation. It was not unusual for some of the men to come out to the acreage after school and work with Bill on his project.

4.5 Poplar Grove Colony

Poplar Grove Colony was situated within an agricultural region of aspen parkland that contained a variety of different cultural groups. Within an approximate 30 kilometre radius of the colony, there were two First Nations reserves, another Hutterite colony (although of the same sect, they had little interaction), a town of predominantly French-speaking Roman Catholics, and another town that served as a shopping and agricultural centre for the area. Doukhobors had arrived in the area in the area in 1899 and they have maintained a strong cultural presence in the region (McLennan, 2006). The colony had a population of 78 residents and the school had an enrollment of 21 students. Poplar Grove Colony raised cattle, sheep, chickens, ducks, and pigs, as well as having a grain operation.

When I arrived at Poplar Grove Colony, prior to the commencement of the school day, the colony adults were outside one of the barns running an assembly line slaughtering chickens; the ground was covered in blood and feathers. Students stood around and watched and some assisted in the slaughtering. I received smiles, waves, and some humorous pointing and hand gestures toward the slaughtering area from the students and the adults. The bulk of the work in the slaughtering process was done by the women. I had observed a similar process and division of labour at Mara Valley Colony on an earlier occasion.

The housing of the colony members was functional looking, primarily one-and-a-half story dwellings. Some of the houses were joined together in a row of four units and some appeared to be single family dwellings. Three mobile homes had been moved onto the colony due to its increasing population. The original colony was built in an open-quadrangle around a large common yard configuration with the kitchen and eating area at one end and the school and church at the other. A row of housing on two other sides faced the quadrangle. This

configuration was similar to the Hutterite colonies at Mara Valley and Big Hill, a quadrangle built around a large common yard. I could have been at Mara Valley or Big Hill if not for the change of setting. Similar to Mara Valley and Big Colony, a network of concrete sidewalks connected the buildings, and bedding plant areas and trees dominated the quadrangle. There was a grassed area which included a large playground for the children that contained swings, a trampoline, tetherball, volleyball nets, slides, hockey goals, and a baseball backstop.

Some of the children had bicycles, not a common site on a colony. I was told that the bicycles were hidden when the bishops visited. The bicycles I saw were not utilitarian stock models or purchased at garage sales. One boy had a fairly new bicycle fancy enough to make him the envy of any child. Although the boy, Richard, was pleased with his bicycle he was overjoyed that his father was getting him a horse. Richard regaled me in great detail about all the advantages and disadvantages of a horse and how he was going to care for it. Richard had new black cowboy boots waiting for the arrival of the horse.

4.5.1 Poplar Grove Colony School

The school was a one-story building on a concrete slab foundation and half the building was the church. The school/church formed one side of the open quadrangle of the colony settlement. Unlike the other three colony schools, the school and the classroom were furnished with indoor/outdoor-type carpet. The carpet was acoustically friendly, but it was harder to keep clean than the linoleum floors of the other three schools. The colony did not provide janitorial service for the school. However, similar to the other three colonies, the school had a rotating schedule of duties and chores. The schedule was posted on the wall and it had each student doing different chores in the class, for example maintaining cleanliness and organization in the classroom.

Testimonies to the students' connection to the popular culture world outside Poplar Grove Colony, and the decreasing isolation of the colony, were visible in the school, particularly related to the personalization of their desk area. One of the students had a sticker of Justin Bieber on her desk; one of the school computers had a Harry Potter screen saver. A younger girl, Vanessa, had a Hannah Montana lunch kit for her morning and afternoon snacks. These were examples of the young people's knowledge of popular culture. One Hutterite girl told me that she enjoyed watching the reality television show *Ice Road Truckers*. "Did you watch it on TV," I asked. "No, we are not allowed to watch TV," she said, "We watched it on the DVD. We got them at the library in town."

Within their domain, the students were contemporary and fashion conscious; just like their English school counterparts. They wore top-of-the-line shoes and glasses along with their traditional attire. I noticed that one of the girls was wearing black Keene clogs (\$150), and that her cousin was wearing black Skechers running shoes (\$125). The children, regardless of age or gender, wore fashionable glasses that could have been purchased at any optical dispensary in the province.

Subtle personalization did occur, often playfully. For a few days, the girls were colouring the sticky white circles from a package of loose-leaf paper reinforcements. Once coloured with markers or crayons, the girls stuck the circles on their ear lobes to resemble earrings. Two of the girls had jute ankle bracelets, and any number of the students on a given day had stick-on temporary tattoos on their arms (boys and girls). Orthodontic work-in-progress was visible. Although I am not familiar enough to recognize it on a daily basis, I cannot say that the older girls were or were not wearing make-up. However, lipstick-type products for chapped lips were popular among the girls regardless of age. I attended grade twelve graduations at

Poplar Grove Colony School where the older colony girls were wearing make-up, including eye-liner, lipstick, and other products.

With respect to some of the other artifacts present, I noticed modern puzzles, some mainstream novels, and contemporary board games. I visited with two students creating computer-graphic compact disc covers. The students, as illustrated by their work, appeared intrigued by the universal adolescent themes of loneliness, isolation, and angst. The assignment was part of their high school Practical and Applied Arts 10 course, a required course for high school matriculation.

For the 2011-2012 school year, the school was comprised of six boys and fifteen girls. Similar to the predicament of some of the other colonies, the disproportionate number of girls and boys had implications for the future of the colony. For about ten years, the colony school had offered high school programming to its students. During that time, three students had graduated from Grade 12, two girls and one boy.

The Poplar Grove students were expected to complete their high school education. During the 2011-12 school calendar the school had students in K-10. An itinerant part-time high school teacher worked with students in grades eight, nine, and ten. The school had an educational assistant who worked full time with the early grades (K-2) and with a number of students with exceptionalities. When the grade ten students move to grade eleven and subsequently to grade twelve, a program will be provided for them by the high school teacher. About half of the courses taken by the grade ten students were computer-delivered. The computer-delivered classes were synchronous and the students interacted with students around the province (a concern for some of the colony parents), not just Hutterites. The students' marks were high compared to the rest of the on-line class and they scored well in the mandated

departmental exams administered in certain Grade 12 subjects (i.e., English, the academic sciences, and the academic maths).

Interestingly, more girls than boys had graduated from Poplar Grove Colony. A number of the boys had left the school, the girls had stayed. At fifteen the boys are considered men (not adults) and they may be anxious to join the men working in the fields, the barns, and on the equipment.

The students started the day with the singing of O Canada and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer. At the beginning of that day, each student had an orange on top of their desk and the colony women brought fresh muffins from the kitchen for the staff. At 9:45 one of the mothers came to the school with a large container of hot chocolate from the kitchen and the students and the staff enjoyed this treat.

4.5.1.1 Poplar Grove Colony teacher/principal.

Margaret had been the teacher/principal at Poplar Grove Colony for five years; it was her first full-time teaching position. Prior to coming to Poplar Grove, Margaret was a substitute teacher for the school division. When I walked into the school on the first morning of my course of observations and participation, Margaret was vacuuming the classroom. She did this on a daily basis due to the lack of regular janitorial service.

Alluding to the question of "What are your understandings about the lives and culture of Hutterites," Margaret was well acquainted with the setting, demography, and the climate on the colony nearest her town. Margaret grew up in the shadow of Poplar Grove Colony. She was Métis and her home, past and present, has been a small village five kilometres from the colony. For many years, Margaret's parents owned a business in a nearby village and they developed long-standing relationships and friendships with colony members. When a boy was earning

work experience hours in a Practical and Applied Arts course, Margaret's father assisted the student in the area of carpentry. He was trusted by the colony members and played a role in the lives of the children. Margaret was the only participant who had spent her childhood (and continued to reside in the village) near the colony where she worked. Her background had a strong influence on her teaching and her relations with the children and other colony members. The other teacher/principals commuted to their schools and some travelled a considerable distance.

Margaret encouraged the use of English in the classroom, and she frequently reminded the students when she heard German used. She spoke little German, just what bit she had acquired since teaching at Poplar Grove. Margaret possessed respected qualities of personal cultural awareness attributable to her knowledge of the colony culture, and she possessed a sense of cultural pride and a strong understanding of her own Métis and rural identity.

As the teacher and the principal, and with no on-site clerical assistance, Margaret was responsible for the students' academic records. This task is particularly acute in the high school grades as the students take the appropriate courses and accumulate the required 24 credits for graduation. The Ministry of Education has a database and website called the Student Demographic System (SDS). The purpose of SDS is to keep the K-12 school records of all the students in Saskatchewan, for example school registration information, attendance at school, and academic progress through the grades up to and including graduation from high school. As well as the records of the students on SDS (for which the colony teacher/principals are responsible for entering appropriate information and maintaining the status as current), Margaret kept careful paper documentation for each of her high school students; paper copies were kept in the classroom and she preserved student information in the computer on her desk. Records included

an outline illustrating the courses and academic paths taken by students as they moved toward graduation. Margaret had each student's progress mapped and it served as an essential part of planning for the timetabling of courses for her students. Margaret met often with the itinerant high school teacher to discuss the students' progress.

Margaret was responsible for ordering and ensuring that the correct resources were available in the school. Not only did she interface with the high school teacher, she was in contact with the high school curriculum coordinators in the division office to ensure that she was on the right track. Her training, similar to many Hutterite colony teachers, focused on the primary, elementary, and middle years grades. Margaret admitted to being on a steep curve as she learned which courses were required for high school graduation. Properly entering that information on SDS and completing the necessary documents recording the students' high school courses required diligence, according to Margaret.

This chapter has included descriptions of the four Hutterite colonies, the colony schools, and the teacher/principal participants. The colonies and the schools are the contexts within which the teacher/principals worked.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF DATA

In this chapter, the data from the pre-interviews, semi-structured interviews, observations, participation and note-taking, are provided. These data yielded four broad themes. To provide indicators of the participants' motivations and predispositions, I sought insight into the teacher/principals' understandings of their roles as teachers and principals working in a cross-cultural context. Coexisting with those understandings are cultural identity and self-awareness of the similarities and differences between their culture and Hutterite culture. Delving into how the participants used their knowledge of Hutterite culture to develop and maintain relations with their students was of interest to me.

Table 2 contains a summary of the common topics emerging from the initial qualitative analysis of the interview data conducted through the use of the NVivo9 software. The detailed complement of topics and frequencies is provided for each teacher in Appendices D and E.

Table 2.
Participants' Topics and Frequency

Topics	<i>f</i>
Self-reflection	81
Teaching-related	79
Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.	47
Administrative duties and functions-related	44
Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.	41
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity	36
Background-related	29
One must take risks in life.	27
Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.	21
Socializing with Hutterites-related	16
Pride in one's own cultural group.	13

As illustrated in Table 2, the most frequently recurring topics concerned self-reflection, teaching-related topics, the ability to see things from multiple perspectives, and aspects of administrative duties and functions.

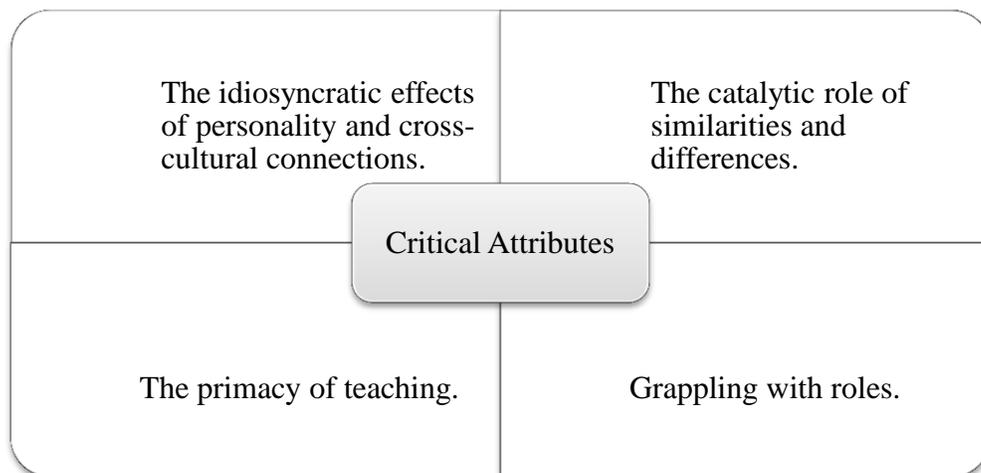
Emerged themes pertaining to participant understandings of their roles in a cross-cultural context were considered by means of the comments and responses of the participants and their applicability to behaviour and characteristics represented as a named concept or category (referred to by NVivo9 as “nodes”). The process was assisted through a review and analysis of the data collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and discussions.

To facilitate theme identification, Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1997) analysis strategy was adopted: (a) I collated the dialogue and the actions of the participants; for example the teacher/principals frequently spoke of their religious or agricultural connections to a colony, the community where they grew up, and their educational interests; (b) The emerged themes were characterized by the rich metaphors the teacher/principals expressed: one teacher/principal referred to how “the farmer in me” influenced his teaching and his relations with the students; (c) The metaphors often reflected the customs and practices of the participants; (d) Analysis was assisted by the crystallization of data from a number of sources, for example rich descriptions of the schools and the colonies, the observations of the researcher, and the comments and deeds of the teacher/principals.

Commitment of each participant to their vocation and the settings within which they worked was expressed through their behaviour, for example building relationships (e.g., playing volleyball with the women after school hours and attending colony celebrations). This observation reflected Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1997) stated emphasis on searching for the positive aspects of relationship-building.

Thomas (2006) described the value of possessing a “knowledge of culture and of the fundamental principles of cross-cultural interactions: what culture is, how cultures vary, and how cultures affect behaviour” (p. 81). My efforts to engage, to be receptive, and to co-operate with the participants facilitated the recognition of emerging themes, I believe. Through questioning, interviewing, observing, discussing, participating, coding, and note-taking, four themes emerged through the teachers’ understandings of their cross-cultural interactions. These were: (a) the idiosyncratic effects of personality and cross-cultural connections, (b) the catalytic role of similarities and differences, (c) an emphasis on the primacy of teaching, and (d) grappling with role identification. These four themes are represented in Figure 1 as Critical Attributes in a Cross-cultural Context. The Figure characterizes a summary of the critical attributes manifested by the teacher/principals’ understandings related to their teaching roles and principal roles in a cross-cultural context. The Figure does not represent a ranking of the attributes.

Figure 1. Critical Attributes in a Cross-cultural Context



Each of the broad themes represented in Figure 1 is elaborated through the reflections of the participants in the sections that follow.

5.1 Theme One: The Idiosyncratic Effects of Personality and Cross-cultural Connections

The distinctive, individual, and personal characteristics of each teacher/participant influenced the development and condition of relationships among the colony members, students, and others. The teachers were connected to the colony; they became staunch supporters of the colonies. They strived for that connection; they were not bystanders, doing a job and hastily leaving at the end of the day. Not only did they impart their professional responsibilities, they learned from and cared about the community members.

The Hutterites are a religious community, one of the longest-lived communal societies in North America (Katz & Lehr, 2012; Janzen & Stanton, 2010). Christianity and “community of goods” are philosophical and cultural tenets of the Hutterites (Janzen & Stanton, 2010, p. 76). Their history, past and present, emphasizes the themes of isolation, community, humility, suffering, stewardship, work, and devotion to God (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). What characteristics would the teacher/principals possess? As an outsider and non-member of the culture, how does one abide in a setting that does “not recognize generally agreed-upon standards of success” (Janzen & Stanton, 2010, p. xvii).

Because the teacher/principals worked in a context of relative isolation, it was essential to work well with the students and colony members. The personality and background of the teacher/principal were key considerations and indicators of success at a colony school. There are thematic distinctions between Hutterite and non-Hutterite culture and the teachers aligned with both cultures on a number of measures. Tensions, cultural and educational, may arise due to the distinctions between the two groups and their aspirations for education and socialization of the children. However, a connection was made to the essences of a colony (e.g., religious,

technical/skilled, and/or a shared past), and the teachers made an effort to connect with the colony's values and to develop partnerships with them.

5.1.1 The Role and Circumstance of Gender

In Hutterite culture, the role and place of gender are well-defined. Hutterite adults are ardent about gender-role socialization (Hostetler, 1997; Wang, Eberhard, & Bernas, R., 2005). Teachers are expected to reinforce the distinct roles in their teaching. Reluctance or failure to do so may result in a transfer to an off-colony school, or at least the teacher will have created an uncomfortable working environment. Bill described an incident: "The boys came to me because they were going to have a big building built and they said 'Can we learn how to measure?'" It was the boys who came to see Bill; this was not an activity that included the girls. Shirley described her approach to the theme of gender when she was working with the girls and how she related it to her math instruction:

I tell the girls, "When you're in the kitchen you have to know how to prepare a recipe."

Sometimes we will get recipes as examples and we will increase them by twelve.

Recognizing what we are training them for is important. I know these girls won't go to university. I see my job as a teacher is to prepare them for their life on the colony after they are done with school.

Boys and girls sit separately in communal settings such as the church service, classroom, and dining hall, and they are often given gender-defined chores (e.g., hog, beef, chicken, grain-related duties for the boys and gardening, cooking, and babysitting for the girls). Colony women have rights and obligations that some may consider incongruent with greater Canadian culture. The women do not directly participate in the governance structure, and vocational obligations and opportunities are inscribed in tradition. One of the interview questions asked, "What, if

anything, have you observed that may be responsible for bringing about change on the colony?”

The participants identified that due to the passing of time and the advent of technology, some duties are changing. Innovations in the area of domestic responsibilities and the time required to complete tasks have provided the women with opportunities.

The teacher/principals described a social phenomenon that affected colony life. When the colony men married wives from away, for example Alberta, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, and South Dakota, the women brought new ideas and different perspectives to the colony. Families' practices changed because of the newly-arrived women. Margaret and Daniel said that an outsider may believe that the colony was a male-dominated society, which they believed to be not necessarily true. Many women exercised informal power, often referred to as referent power (Northouse, 2012), the participants explained. They had a great deal of influence in their homes and, therefore, how the colony was run. All four teachers had observed this state of affairs. According to Margaret, “I thought that it was a male-dominated society, which I discovered it isn't so much. Many of the women run the show in the background. They have a great deal of influence on their husbands and, therefore, how the colony is run.” However, for example the colony German teacher was always a male. Whether or not they were indifferent, agreed, or disagreed with a paternalistic perspective, the teachers recognized the perspective.

Depending on one's worldview, the colony setting may be disconcerting to some teachers. Regardless of the distinctions, the four teachers' characteristics matched well with the colonies. The teachers had observed the power and influence of male elders, for example in the churches they attended as youths and, in three of the cases, continued to attend. It might be supposed that if a teacher was uncomfortable with Hutterite culture, they would not teach at a

colony school, or they would apply for a transfer to another school when they understood themselves to be at odds with the colony culture.

5.1.2 The Influence of a Rural Background

Reflecting on the posed question about their cultural identity and its influences on their teaching, one measure was their shared rural backgrounds. Rural life or farming was a predominant theme in some of the teachers' personalities and subsequently in their approaches to instruction and their relations with colony members. Three of the teachers were raised on farms. The fourth, Margaret, was raised in a village of fewer than 300 people bordering the Hutterite colony where she taught. Her parents' business was economically integrated with the colonies and farms in the area. They "lived and died," described Margaret, according to the health of the agricultural community. One construct of personality emphasizes the effect of experience in personal development. As Kirkendall (1984) observed, life on a family farm shaped the personality and identity of an individual toward an agricultural perspective and understanding. These learned skills increased opportunities for the four teacher/principals' cross-cultural success.

During an interview session, when he was requested to talk about his own cultural identity and its influences on his teaching, Daniel described how well he had connected with the colony members:

I have a farm background and I am able to talk to the men in particular and to connect with them. I have an Anabaptist background, as do the Hutterites. I studied German in high school and in university, so there are aspects of their own speech that I can understand, and that I can speak back to them as well. I think [colony teachers] talk about reaching students and trying to make a connection to them, to be able to talk in their

language and in their metaphors, to connect what they are saying about cattle or equipment, or anything else that goes on in the colony. The examples I use can go right out to something they are familiar with. It's quite easy to build a bridge to new knowledge if I can start at a point they are familiar with.

Daniel was self-aware and proud of his background. He had done genealogical investigations and had traced his family's roots to Europe. His ancestors and the ancestors of the Hutterites had been persecuted and martyred in early Europe. Daniel connected with the philosophy and aspirations of the Hutterites and shared a history with the colony members. He empathized with their cultural metaphors:

My forefathers were chased through Europe like the Hutterites were. In my own understanding of self I can understand the kinds of things they are talking about, for example the culture of martyrdom, the culture of persecution, being set apart, being the minority, protecting something that may be something of larger cultural background. That is something that I grew up with too. It is not unnatural for me to be working among the Hutterites.

Enhancing his cross-cultural connections and strengthening his association with the colony, Daniel related well to the colony members (and it was directed behaviour on his part). To the interview query, "Describe one, two, or three ways you think you have grown or developed (or not) as a result of teaching on a Hutterite colony? Can you provide examples?" Daniel reflects upon how much he had learned from the Hutterites, and how much they appeared to learn from him:

With the men, I've been in their combines; I've been in their shops. I talk agriculture with them. I talk grain prices and the Wheat Board. They bring up stories, they tell me jokes,

they bring up theological questions, they want to tell me things from the *Bible*, and they want to tell me about things that have happened in church. There is no end of things that they want to talk to me about. They push me on stuff that I believe. I listen to their stories.

Due to his Anabaptist background and his theological learnings and leanings, Daniel developed a strong understanding of, and was connected to, the lives and the culture of the Hutterites, past and present. He was cognizant of how the Hutterites were viewed by others and how they viewed others:

I think Hutterites have a tremendous sense of ego and they actually pity and feel sorry for people in the English world. They think the people in the English world are poor and they are rich. They think they dress classy, they have nice clothes, and the English people don't have very nice clothes. They believe they are very privileged.

Strong connections to the colony extended beyond the teachers' educational mission.

The multi-faceted role of the teachers was evident in their ties to the community.

5.1.2.1 Bill: "The farmer in me has to do with my teaching more than anything."

Bill's cultural identity and its influences on his teaching on a colony reflected his interest in the rural setting. The role of religion, contrary to the profiles of Daniel and Shirley, was not an important occupational factor although he had a sound knowledge of his faith. Agriculture, mechanics, and carpentry were evident in Bill's character, and although he was not of a religious nature, he had created a link to the Hutterites.

In his present school, similar to the colony school where he had taught for seven years, Bill had connected with the colony members due to his technical abilities and experience. Bill grew up in a religious setting, and he could empathize with its value in the lives of the Hutterites:

“I was born and raised on a farm in a fairly religious family: Roman Catholic. [However,] I am one of those Roman Catholics who have fallen by the wayside.” Unlike Shirley, Margaret, and Daniel, Bill diminished his religious connections, and the efforts to establish religious connections, to the Hutterites: “I just say there are too many other things to talk about.” He described himself as “pretty non-religious,” and he acknowledged his reluctance to discuss religious matters with colony members: “I make sure that I don't ever mention religion, which has nothing to do with me. If they ask me anything, I say No, I don't answer anything about religion.” Bill said, “I don't question you, you don't question me; maybe if I went to church.” Bill's connection to the colony, expressed within the context of the theme of agriculture, was clear in his mind and he expressed it as such:

The farmer in me has more to do with my teaching than anything else and that's why it has always been nice teaching in a small town, teaching a lot of farm kids. That really works on the colony because you get to relate to their lifestyle and things like that. I guess that is the biggest influence on my teaching and is my strongest connection to the colony.

It was valuable to ascertain how well the teachers could communicate with their students. Bill's language proficiency forged a strong link with his students. According to Bill, “the boys don't speak much German in the classroom because they know that I understand a lot of it. They can't try to trick me or anything.” During the time I spent in Bill's classroom, I never heard the six boys speak German.

Daniel and Bill were proficient in German; Shirley and Margaret were not. German was regularly spoken by the students in Daniel's class, and I witnessed him occasionally responding to them in their first language. From my observations, approximately a quarter to a third of the

students' personal conversations was in German. The students were supposed to speak English in class, but Daniel was not concerned. Because of his German proficiency and his insight, he had a good sense of the dynamics and the conversations occurring. Daniel did concede that speaking German in class may hinder the students' English language development. However, Cummins and Swain's (1986) observed that students' cognitive processing increased significantly if they were permitted to use English and their first language in the classroom. Cummins and Swain's (1986) findings could temper Margaret's wish that the children speak English in class.

5.1.2.2 Shirley: "My belief structure allows me to connect."

Shirley described her identity and self-awareness as being enshrined in her religious beliefs and her rural background. In response to the interview question, "How would you describe your ability to communicate cross-culturally? Provide a couple of examples," Shirley highlighted, along with the influence of her farm background and agricultural understandings, how she related and connected to the community and to the children. Perhaps strengthening her understanding and connection to the communal nature of the colony, Shirley grew up in a house with 13 siblings. Regardless of her strong beliefs and her worldview, unlike Daniel but not as adamant as Bill, Shirley was not eager to speak of theology, religious issues, and related matters with colony members. However, Shirley recognized that she was influenced by the religious and farm setting of her home and community, and her religious perspective remained with her as a teacher/principal. Some of her religious beliefs were similar to the Hutterites', thus creating an empathetic connection between the colony members and her. Shirley was familiar with the nature and vagaries of farm life, and aspects of her community reflected social and political characteristics not unlike the colonies.

The colony minister, Abraham, told me that he considered Shirley "the right person for the job." Similar to Daniel, Shirley had an understanding of Hutterite culture, for example

community, gender roles, and attitudes toward children. Shirley's comment, "I can use their beliefs to strengthen their actions," reflected a strategy used by the other teachers. Developing an awareness of colony culture provided another vehicle for education.

Shirley spoke to the relevance of her own religious background as a significant source of connection in this cross-cultural context:

I have a strong religious identity which I found is helpful teaching on a Hutterite colony because they are quite religious in their daily lives. I have strong religious beliefs that may help to bridge the cultural gap. Some of our beliefs are very similar. I don't go so deep that I would have Biblical discussions with the people. I agree with a lot of things that they are doing, so I can support that and they can see that I have something that is similar to them. Their conviction is their belief in God. How does this conviction, if we truly believe this, and without proof or evidence we truly believe this, then how does that base how our behaviour is? In that case, I can get through it like that with these kids. I can use their beliefs to strengthen their actions. In another school, a public school, I couldn't start like that. We can base all of that on their strong beliefs.

Frequently in our conversations, Daniel referred to his connections to the Hutterites and his familiarity with their culture and rural lifestyle. He was aware that a "kinship" existed between the colony residents and him. Daniel stressed similarities between the colony culture and the English world, and he addressed universal truths rather than differences in his interactions with the students and colony members.

5.1.3 Communicating Cross-culturally

Recognizing the experience the teacher/principals had accumulated, they believed they communicated effectively. An awareness of who they were, where they were, and an

understanding of colony culture characterized the participants. Margaret had the unique advantage of growing up “next door” to Poplar Grove Colony. She had developed relationships early in life with the Hutterites (a number of her students’ parents were her childhood friends) and she connected to the colony years before her appearance as their teacher. She explained, “When I went to the colony as a teacher I knew the Hutterite way, and many of them knew me and where I came from family-wise.”

The participants had personal insights to the Hutterites and their colony culture. Margaret’s comment emphasized one aspect of her understanding: “One of the things that you have to be aware of when you are teaching on a colony is that there are different worldviews between our culture and theirs.”

Margaret’s self-awareness and earlier relationships with the Hutterites, and the attitudes shaped during her formative years, allowed her to empathize with and understand Hutterite ways of doing things, and she described the subsequent influences on her teaching:

My background is kind of a melting pot. My family is French, Métis, we’re everything. My town is a small French-speaking community, primarily Roman Catholic. The church dominates the town, its horizon, and the lives of the people who live there. We were raised similarly to the children on the colony: our community and church had a great influence in our upbringing. A lot of the people in my town spoke French, also a minority language. Similar to the Hutterites, there are a lot of traditions with the church.

Teaching on the colony is a lot like a community that I’m very used to. They’re Christian, so it’s easier for me to do the daily prayer and to talk about God and Jesus and subjects like that in class without any discomfort. I have no problems disciplining the students in the classroom because I was raised to believe that it’s okay to discipline other

people's children. It's a sign of protection and caring. I remember being young and riding my bike downtown. I was not allowed to be downtown; people knew that. I would be grounded before I got home because my mom would get a phone call from a friend in town who saw me. When we were messing around where we weren't supposed to with my friends, people would give you heck. You were being disciplined by people who weren't your family at all. Likewise, there is shared parenting among the Hutterites because the role of the community is so important.

It has definitely influenced my teaching. Growing up in the shadow of the Hutterite colony had an impact on me. My grandfather knew the Hutterites and was friendly with them and my great-grandparents did as well. Especially my great-grandfather; he would help the colony members. They were neighbours on the farm. My grandpa had a talent with farm animals; so, he would come over and help the Hutterites with any veterinary work that needed to be done. Back at the colony, some of the men would sneak over to his house and listen to the radio with my grandpa and then watch TV when that came into the house. Before the colony split, my grandfather was friends with the minister. Some of my great-aunts still go and visit the women and they will stay for tea. One of my grandmothers goes and visits the Hutterite women regularly.

Margaret's five years of colony teaching facilitated the development of her knowledge about Hutterites, an emotional base related to the Hutterites, and substantiation of a cross-cultural perspective and a strong connection to the colony. Margaret had been exposed to a number of cultures over her lifetime and that experience had influenced her and supported her teaching. Margaret's comments, similar to the other three teachers, demonstrated a frank approach to the Hutterites. Family background, upbringing, and the development of one's self

contributed to the depth of the relationships of the four participants. Religion, farming, location, culture, self-awareness, and the components of identity were themes that influenced the interactions between the teachers and the colony. Shirley's background influenced her connections to other cultural groups in her regional neighbourhood:

It has always come quite easily just because in my own family we're very diverse culturally. Consequently, going to the colony was a lot easier. It's been a natural thing for me to be able to get along with the colony members and their children.

As an expression of their self-awareness, the teachers espoused the value of cross-cultural communication, connections, and interactions for their personal and professional lives, but they stressed also its importance in their relationships with colony members. They described the occasionally awkward interactions between the Hutterite and some members of the greater society. As explained by Bill:

I think even the elders realize there's value to introducing another culture to theirs. They realize that when they go to the doctor, they're not talking to another Hutterite. When they go to buy their groceries they need to know how to communicate and how to approach people. Some of the old guys have no couth, no manners; they're so stuck in the old ways. They go to a restaurant and they're banging their spoon against their coffee cup for the waitress to come because that's what happens in the kitchen. You need milk, you just bang. I just hate it when they do that. I say "thank you" to the girls and the old guys will never do that. The kids will order you around. It's just what they know. But they need to know that our world is different and you will offend people talking like that. No one is going to cut you any slack because you're wearing Hutterite clothes.

I love my job, the people are great, and the kids are awesome. But the Hutterites definitely need that cultural awareness. You ask them what they did on the summer holidays and there are some kids that never left the colony. There are some kids that wouldn't leave the colony for a year if their teeth were healthy. They're not going to have any interaction, and I tell those kids that when they're older they're judged when they come to town or to the city. They see your clothes, you're a Hutterite. You talk properly, you use your manners, and all of a sudden things are going to go better. We're judged by how we speak and how we interact with people and they have a big sign right on them. I feel badly for some of them because there are lots of negative stereotypes about Hutterites and being socially inept won't help. It's going to reinforce those ideas.

Margaret was thankful that her initial professional assignment was to a school close to her home, and it was a community that she and her family were connected to. It was valuable to know the colony members and "put yourself out there," she said, with respect to being comfortable and forthright, asking questions, and socializing with Hutterites. Margaret recommended caution when allocating time among the adults and demonstrating your connection to the community:

The Hutterites love sharing their culture; they love sharing, sometimes too much, their views. With the colony parents, just stay open-minded. Realize that I came from a small town near a colony and it was easier for me. Appreciate that there are cliques within every colony. One of the suggestions I always make is not to go visiting, go for coffee let's say, at a specific parent's place. Jealousies and suspicions can arise as a result. Always have the parents and/or grandparents come and visit you at the school. That

makes for a happier colony. It keeps the parents happy; it keeps the colony administration happy.

5.1.4 What One Expects; What One Gets

From the comments of the teacher/principals, positive and negative disparities between their expectations and realities existed. Despite her proximity and connection to Poplar Grove Colony as a child and adolescent, Margaret was taken aback somewhat upon her immersion as its teacher/principal. I was surprised that Margaret had these sentiments, having interacted with the colony for so many years. Some of Margaret's misconceptions resemble those in the greater community. "Because of the uniform-type clothing of the children, I expected that they would act in a particular manner, like little soldiers," said Margaret. Bill, too, expressed how the Hutterites behaved and what they did and did not know about the world outside the colony fences. Shirley expressed the need for her to prepare the students for the lives they were going to live as Hutterites, on and off the colony. Margaret, having been raised in the shadow of the Hutterite colony, admitted to the how much she had learned. During one of the interview sessions, Margaret provided her insight to the following question: Describe two or three ways you think you have grown or developed (or not) as a result of teaching on a Hutterite colony? Please provide an example, if you can:

I expected them to be totally well-behaved children, like "Stepford" children: little robots, well disciplined, and to not have much of an individual personality. That is not what it is at all. They're very individualistic. They do need to be disciplined, however; they're kids. It doesn't matter whether they're Hutterites or not. They speak another language, so they can get away with a little bit more as a result because I don't understand a lot of what they might be saying. However, this is my first full-time

teaching assignment. I have only been in two or three other schools subbing. My internship was done in a small town, so there were similarities to my own upbringing.

The parents of the kids knew each other.

New and relatively recent teachers may be susceptible to “burn-out” (Larrivee, 2012). As Poplar Grove was Margaret’s first regular teaching position, she was concerned about “burning out” due to the demands of her new position and the relative professional isolation she experienced on the colony. According to Schlicte, Yssel, and Merbler (2010), a nearby teacher-mentor may reduce a teacher’s professional and personal feelings of isolation. However, as Margaret was raised in close proximity to the colony and continued to reside nearby, and many of the colony members were long-time family acquaintances, her feelings of isolation were partially assuaged. Her identity, her self-awareness, and her connection to the colony were professionally beneficial. Daniel believed that his colony ties were important, perhaps more significant than ties to his community, in the determination of who he was as an individual. Shirley described how her strong social community and family connections reduced feelings of disconnect on the colony. Plus, she developed strong colony relationships.

Strong connections to the lifestyle of the Hutterites provided avenues to reach out to the children and utilize teachable moments, particularly as mechanisms for preparing the children for the changes that may occur during their lifetimes. An acceptance of the Hutterite way of life enhanced the teachers’ credibility among the students and the community. Similar to Shirley’s perspective, Daniel’s insight into colony culture provided an opportunity to keep the students accountable for their behaviour:

Because I know what they believe with respect to character, there is an element of accountability that I can hold students to. I sometimes hold them accountable to their

own standards when their behaviour is inappropriate. I am not sure that's fair but I say, "You believe in this and yet I'm seeing this." We do this all the time when we agree to some kind of social contract in schools and teach values and virtues. Maybe I can be more specific. In this school, since we are almost like a family, one example would be how to do conflict resolution. As well, I try to give my students as much exposure to other cultures as possible because I think a lot of them are quite naive when it comes to understanding other peoples.

The teacher/principals developed insights into the running of the colonies, the issues that existed on the colonies and between the cultures, the dynamics of the different families, and the teacher's role. Recognizing who they were as people and as educators, and the effect on their teaching and colony relations, each teacher valued their position and felt welcome. Bill's comments captured an essence of what was expressed by the teacher/principals:

To get the most out of teaching at a Hutterite colony you embrace the opportunity you're given. Do not go there with the idea that you're there to change anybody's culture.

You're there to accentuate what they are doing and to bolster their lifestyle, not to change it. You have to really embrace their lifestyle and realize that is a given and you're a guest, not really their employee. The Hutterites like the fact that you are bringing in another culture and developing some sense of the English world. Once you're here they take you in.

In summary, the participants brought their own unique personalities, skills and backgrounds to their cross-cultural contexts, and they utilized these in various ways to make connections to the community and to their specific roles. Theme Two provides additional perspectives on connections: specifically on how similarities and differences facilitate them.

5.2 Theme Two: The Catalytic Role of Similarities and Differences

For the teacher/principals, the similarities and differences between themselves and the colony members acted as catalysts for cross-cultural effectiveness. A catalyst can be an action, an ingredient, or a characteristic that facilitates change. For example, in a classroom the introduction of new technologies was a catalyst for change in the delivery of education. With respect to the teacher/principals and their interactions with the students and community, similarities and differences between them and the two cultures acted as catalysts, promoting and facilitating change.

The four colony schools had distinct identities, regardless of their cultural similarities and physical sites. In terms of similarities and differences, the participants believed they taught in a school like and unlike any other. They were conscious of the responsibility entrusted to them as they prepared students for their future as community members. The teacher/principals reflected on what challenged the students and their Hutterite culture.

Shirley's comments demonstrated her responsibility by means of its occupational context. When Shirley spoke of her colony teaching position, she referred to how much planning was required, the work she did, the diversity of the children, resources she utilized for teaching, and the vagaries of a multi-grade classroom in a school with no internet connection. That the children were members of a somewhat unique culture played a minor part in her beliefs and comments about the nature of her position. Shirley had few expectations about the job. She was happy to be working:

I never had any expectations about this teaching position because I was thrown in so quickly that I didn't have any time to think or even know how this should be. It was just really fast. Basically, I was called one day and they said "Can you teach in that school?"

I showed up the next day and I taught, and I just stayed. I had subbed out there a few times.

Shirley reflected on her role and the characteristics of teaching on a Hutterite colony. Her apprehensions were not the difficulties of teaching English language learners or dealing with parents, elders, and the colony minister. She was comfortable with those aspects. Shirley was concerned with the responsibilities of implementing fast-tracked new curricula, teaching strategies, planning, and the challenge of reinventing herself annually after teaching grade three for five years. Concurrently, Shirley valued the unique qualities of a colony position.

Bill reflected on the similarities and differences between the two cultures and his role as a colony teacher/principal. Comparable to other teaching assignments “you’re all things to everyone out there,” and one of the striking differences to an English school position “was the great flexibility it gives you.” Bill described a characteristic of colony teaching: “I think I stepped back one hundred years and I am teaching the three Rs.”

There were issues among the students that are applicable to all manner of student, and there were occupational commonalities for the colony teacher, described Bill: “Because everything goes home, as it does in any school, to get the most out of it you have to respect their culture and sit back.” Bill believed that a laissez-faire attitude worked best for him when reconciling cultural differences with the colony. He allowed the climate of the school to emerge based on the students, the setting, and his worldview.

When contemplating perceived disadvantages, and what might be considered deterrents to other teachers, the four participants described the professional, personal, and geographical separation of teaching in a colony school. However, the disconnection aligned the teachers to the community and students. All were within this domain of isolation. The four schools were

part of the church and physically close to the residences. Despite their perceived isolation, they were in close proximity to the community. The nearness of parents and elders increased the frequency of contacts between the community and the teacher compared to what might be experienced in an off-colony school. In some respects, this provided a diminution of the relative isolation, professional and geographical, expressed by the teachers.

In addition to Daniel, Mara Valley had another teacher on staff. As well, there was an educational assistant for at least part of the school day in each of the four colony schools. At Poplar Grove, a high school teacher spent two mornings a week at the school. Three of the teachers (with the exception of Shirley) reported missing the professional and personal associations and relationships that developed on an off-colony school staff. There was no one at lunch hour or before or after school with whom to discuss and reflect on school issues or have a professional conversation, as they would in an off-colony school. The colonies were too distant geographically to go to a restaurant for lunch with a colleague on a Friday; there was no staff Christmas party. For some of the participants, these attributes made a colony teaching position less desirable than they would have liked. Others may not care and may even welcome it and, therefore, the colony school was a preferred environment. As shared by Shirley, not everyone needed a large staff to keep themselves occupied during the school day, or wanted to go out for lunch on a Friday:

I don't miss one bit not being around the other people that would be on a school staff. It makes me sound like I'm unsociable, but I'm not. I have such a busy other life besides school. So school is a huge part of my life, but I have this other huge part of my life that takes up so much of my time outside of school. I have lots of friends and family, I have 13 siblings, so I find that my social needs are met outside of school life.

Depending on one's personality, the relative detachment of the colony school could be an ideal setting. The colony provided a setting where, as individuals, the teacher/principal was influential. As well, there was independence, autonomy, and seclusion with few visits from others to interrupt you. Although some individuals might find themselves in an employment netherworld if they spent the work day and week with one other adult, if it worked it was the perfect situation. As Shirley reflected, the colony was a wonderful location:

I kind of just love it that we have a little cocoon that we work in and there are so many different opportunities for trying different methods and being a risk taker as a teacher and experimenting with different ideas and things like that. I love the freedom and the flexibility in the school that I can take and do those kinds of things, and the educational assistant I'm working with is amazing. It really works well between the two of us. We are a really good team of two. The educational assistant is very good because she always keeps me up to date with what she is doing and we discuss what she is doing.

Reflecting on her role, Shirley said she derived personal and professional satisfaction from teaching on the colony. On more than one occasion during our interactions, she expressed an uncertainty about adapting to a regular school setting after the colony experience, or whether she would want to.

Coupled with her thankfulness for a job, Shirley admired and respected Hutterite culture. She commented often that her strong religious background and commitment aided in adjusting to the professional and geographical setting of the school. The sense of community she experienced was welcome in her life. Not developing community ties may lead to deleterious results, according to two of the teacher/principals in this study. A previous colony teacher did not have a strong religious background. The teacher was considered a non-Christian by some of

the colony members: the teacher was not in favour of religious-based practices in the school, such as the recitation of the Lord's Prayer each morning. This caused mild confrontations between the teacher, the colony minister, and the rest of the community. Perhaps an important contributor to the teacher's frustrations, an elementary school teaching background was lacking. The teacher's worldview and training acted as a catalyst evoking complications with the colony members and his eventual request for a transfer to another school and community.

Shirley believed that her formal and informal community connections to the Hutterites acted as catalysts in the development of the school environment she enjoyed. Due to the relationships she developed on the colony, Shirley emphasized that she did not feel socially isolated. However, she affirmed the feelings of professional isolation that may occur for some teachers working in a one-room school setting. For her, the life of a colony teacher/principal was an engaged one. According to Shirley, a teacher needed to reflect on their character and what kind of professional and personal life they desired prior to accepting a teacher/principal position on a colony. "Are you willing to embrace the community, or not?" asked Shirley.

5.2.1 Shirley: "It has brought a whole new dimension to my life."

Contemplating one's unique role within the community, the teacher/principals believed that a professional objective was to relate to the colony students in a manner that aided and abetted the educational process and complemented the Hutterites and their communal culture. Daniel recognized the appeal of the process, how his actions affected the lives of the children, and he was intent on sustaining it:

When we talk about reaching students and trying to make a connection to them, to be able to talk in their language and in their metaphors, to connect what they are saying

about cattle or equipment or anything else that goes on in the colony, the examples I use can be something they are familiar with.

Thinking about his role as a teacher, Daniel was contemplative. He shared that he viewed his position as more than a job. For Daniel, his teaching position entailed personal expectations and an element of self-critique:

When a person is growing up and given certain types of feedback of what is expected of you and what kind of success you will have, you develop an expectation that things are going to go well for you because of what people tell you.

Daniel's expectations imbued a measure of self-criticism respecting his role on the colony, and his impact on the lives of the children. As an example of his meditative nature, he commented that "At various stages of a career one may feel you are not living up to your expectations, or things are not going so well."

The depth of Daniel's commitment to the community and the children was conveyed by his feelings and expressions of personal and professional responsibility. His self-reflection characterized a teacher who was strongly committed and connected to his school community:

I have a great deal of latitude on the colony. It's made me feel like I have come alive to work in a role that provides for teaching and administration and connecting with the community. I feel that I am also working with adults and doing professional development for adults in relationship to educational and parenting goals.

Shirley believed she had a wonderful career as a colony teacher. Her life was enriched by her participation in the life of the community, she said. Akin to Daniel, Shirley supported the beliefs and goals of Hutterite culture, and she endorsed and encouraged the essence of its effects on the lives of her students. Shirley highlighted the feelings of community, the reciprocity of

good deeds, and the satisfaction she received from her work. She credited Daniel for providing an aphorism that guided her colony teaching and enhanced her life. She reflected on its essence daily, she said:

I got a good piece of advice from another colony teacher when I first started: If you bless them, they will bless you. That means that if I can embrace their culture and be a help to them in some way, I will find that they will also embrace me and be a help to me. I took that advice and I really found it helpful. Sometimes they can ask frustrating little favours and I'm thinking that I really don't have time to do something like this. Then on the other hand, I'll think that I'll just do it. It's not going to take that long. Then I find on the turnaround that I need some help from somebody else and they help me, and so I find that what goes around comes around.

Shirley acknowledged her appreciation for different cultures and locations. She had taught in New Zealand for one year. In one of our conversations, we discussed how teaching was an easy job in which to “bury” yourself. Shirley reflected upon the implications of this for her life and her position, particularly because she was single. Consequently, she ensured that she had interests outside her teaching:

I feel very close to the colony community and I consider it to have enhanced my life. It's brought a whole new dimension to my life that I didn't even realize could exist. I think that it is just respecting each other's culture and learning to do that. The Hutterite community is unique and it is a closed community, but they still have many interactions with the outside community. It's good for me to share what our cultural beliefs are, or what my cultural beliefs are. How do we go about these types of things in our society so that Hutterites can manage themselves gracefully and in a way that people can respect

them and they can manage themselves outside their community? It is really rewarding to teach at a colony. What I have learned over the years is that I have to contemplate what I am doing here and learn how to balance my work life with my personal life because the work life could be consuming.

One of the bonds, along with her strong religious convictions, between Shirley and the Hutterite community was with the group of older single women living on the colony. Shirley had discovered a connection between herself and the women:

When you are talking about identifying with the Hutterites, I believe that I identify quite a bit with a number of the women. They have some older single women, and I am friends with a number of them. We don't socialize off the colony too much, as far as them coming over to my house to visit. But in the summer I will drop by the colony for a cup of coffee. I will go to some of their weddings and celebrations. I don't go for all of it, but I will go for part of it. Sometimes in the evening I have stayed to play volleyball with them and things like that.

There was evidence of an extension of the relationships that Shirley developed on the colony, and they were personal not professional. The colony women had attended school until grade eight, but Shirley had not been their teacher. Therefore, the friendships had been made outside the school and the classroom setting. It reflected well on the commitment and presence of Shirley, a teacher who did not just show up, teach, and leave quickly at the end of the day.

Each school had characteristics distinguishing it from the others, regardless of the colony's location. It was pertinent for the teacher/principal to find his or her place in the unique culture of the colony and the school.

5.2.2 Fitting into Colony Culture

Daniel repeatedly demonstrated a personal commitment to the colony community and the Hutterite culture. He commented to me that he was “very Hutterite-like.” He said that this was due to his Mennonite and family background, his theological training and experiences, and his admiration of the Hutterites. When Daniel arrived at the colony in the morning, he said that he consciously abandoned his worldview and “cloaked” himself in the Hutterite culture. Daniel had strong regard for the Hutterites and the colony way of life: “I accept their interests, so I don't let on too much personally that they live in a very different reality than what I live in.”

Bill professed that there were similarities and differences between him and the colony members, and teachers should consider these realities prior to teaching on a colony. A teacher should reflect on how they are going to make the effort, and perhaps the adaptations, to flourish in the colony's communal, relatively out-of-the-way environment and how they and the students will be affected by the similarities and the differences of their cultures:

You have to relate the best way you can and it might be talking about the kids if you're a woman invited to a home. For me it's talking about farming, construction, and mechanics, usually with the men. You have to communicate with them, find common ground like you would with anybody else. People want to talk about themselves, talk about what they're interested in.

Margaret pondered the personal development that had resulted from her colony teaching. Although Margaret thought she knew a great deal about the colony and the similarities and differences between cultures, she was cognizant of the personal growth she had experienced. Influencing the role she had on the colony and in the school, Margaret had much in common with the colony residents:

It's been quite a natural thing for me to go and be able to get along with the colony members and their children. Most of my students have cell phones; a lot of the parents are my "friends" on Facebook. They take pictures; they watch movies.

Daniel reflected on his job in a manner that articulated how pleased he was to be in his teaching position and how his job affected his personal development. He revealed that "it helps me see who I am by working there," a reference to his development as a person aside from the educational sphere. Not only had Daniel derived personal and professional satisfaction as a colony teacher/principal, he was intrigued by the reactions from others when they discovered that he taught on a Hutterite colony:

It is a rich resource for conversation with other people in professional and social circles. People really want to know what it is like. They find it intriguing and even with challenging experiences along the way and an immense workload, those of us who work in these contexts stay awhile for many reasons. It also provides a foil for my own identity as it helps me see who I am by working there. Overall it's one of the best things that has ever happened to me, to have these experiences on the colony.

The teachers acknowledged the importance of adaptation in the classroom, whether it was curriculum, teaching strategies, learning resources, behaviour, or attitude. Sensitivity was contingent upon an understanding of the similarities and differences of the culture and setting of the students and their community. The teachers expressed an awareness of their potential and actual impact on the development of the children. In this respect, the Hutterite community parallels the similarities and differences often found in other neighbourhoods, villages, towns, and cities.

5.2.2.1 Understanding the lives of the Hutterites.

The teachers described the value of being sensitive to religious and cultural similarities and differences when they planned student programs and implemented the provincial curriculum. A part of the “informal curriculum” was to support the community’s culture. A significant part of this was to be sensitive to the Hutterites’ worldview. The participants managed their professional perspectives in a variety of ways. On occasion there were curriculum areas contrary to the beliefs of the Hutterites, and these issues could present a professional challenge. Consequently, the teachers reflected on the task, and they either presented a different activity or explained the background of the material to the students as a result of their questions.

Shirley described issues pertaining to Big Hill Colony that were not within the scope of her role. This was an expression of the sensitivity and the self-check utilized by other classroom teachers. She made an effort to handle the issue in a culturally sensitive, non-condescending, and non-patronizing manner:

I certainly know what they wouldn't want me to teach. So certain things I don't teach about; we don't talk about. There was a time when we were going through some timelines about the ice ages. I taught about how Saskatchewan was a shallow sea and the glaciers and such. I could see how when we went through a timeline that the students were very skeptical. They were looking at me like, “This isn’t possible.” I realized then that there was a bit of an issue. What it ended up being was that they didn't believe those dates that the scientific community has given, for example that the earth has been around this long and the glaciers were at this particular time. What we did, we compromised in that situation. I said, “This is what scientists believe. If you believe differently then that's fair and you can understand what you believe about this guy talking, and with your friends, and this is just one viewpoint of it.” But regardless, we can still talk about the

glacial period and the ice ages and those things that scientists have proven and are a part of Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan's natural history represented one of the areas of sensitivity to which Shirley was referring. However, Shirley believed it was important for children to have some knowledge and understanding of life outside the colony's fences. Regardless of their self-imposed separation, the vagaries of the larger community and the world affected daily living, particularly in the area of economics, production, marketing, and consumption. Shirley believed an understanding of cultural similarities and differences was valuable to her students:

I explain how things work in my life compared to their life. For example, we're talking about mortgages and loans in math because they're learning about percentages and rates of interest. I'll give them an example of my life. Let's say if I buy this car it's going to have a percentage of interest that I'm going to need to pay. I make examples that way so they can better understand why we need these things and why it's good to be aware of what people outside the colony are doing. Today we had an example about the old age security pension and how those problems are coming to light. The students don't necessarily see the impact on their colony. They say, "But we're taken care of." Yet it is good for them to see that they are connected to the outside world because if we go into a recession they're going to feel it as well. Consequently, I try to relate that how we live and they live here on the colony, and how sometimes it is different and sometimes it is similar but we have an impact on each other. They have to sell their farm products somewhere.

Upon contemplation, Shirley identified one of her teaching goals: to provide relevant life skills to the students, reflective of their community. She had an understanding of her students'

lives, and preparation was worthwhile. Hutterite reality differed from Shirley's, she knew. It was incumbent upon Shirley's ability to communicate cross-culturally with her students and the members of the colony:

When you talk about people working together, the whole basis of their community is to work together. It is important for the teacher to recognize and act upon that. I can do that by having students work together or combining grades for certain subjects. Right now I am teaching the girls from grades six to nine together. We are learning about the same issues and the girls discuss how those issues relate to their community. We try to bring that into their community, their community involvement. In math we're learning about fractions, and they're asking, as so many students do, "Why do we have to learn about multiplying fractions?" I tell them that when you're in the kitchen you have to know how to prepare a recipe. Sometimes we will get recipes as examples and we will increase them by twelve. Recognizing what we are training them for is important. I know these girls won't go to university. I see my job as a teacher is to prepare them for their life on the colony after they are done with school. It is to make them quick with their mental math skills, to get them to be the best spellers they can be so when they are writing letters to their friends they're spelling properly. I always keep in mind what our end-goal is and that I'm teaching to that end-goal and still giving them some knowledge of what the rest of the world is like.

The teacher/principals created numerous instructional perspectives and strategies that blended with colony culture. Concurrently, according to the participants, they had not received a great deal of direct instructions from the colony and its administration. Common sense, trial and error were often the teachers' guides. How they approached issues reflected similarities and

differences between the groups. The colonies, typically with a message delivered by the colony minister, would intervene if issues arose.

Shirley believed that she had a sound knowledge of Hutterite community and culture. It was not her place to judge or attempt to change their beliefs. She was there to support their beliefs and lifestyle. She recognized the similarities between herself and the Hutterites. There was a connection, a community, and an affiliation between herself and the colony. Shirley believed that that no one cultural group was better than another:

It's not my place to go in there and say you should believe like this, or you are doing this wrong, or you should be doing this differently. It's my place to teach the kids and to respect their beliefs and to make sure that they are supportive of my teaching, but that I am also supportive of what their beliefs are in their community. It's their community; it's not my community, although I feel like they have embraced me in that community.

5.2.2.2 Similarities and differences between the two cultures.

Margaret perceived similarities and differences between the two cultures and this influenced her role on the colony. She had grown up and had spent years of her life in the proximity of Hutterites, and now she was teaching their children. Margaret's cross-cultural appreciation, in her opinion, developed as a result of the multi-cultural area where she was raised and presently resided. Margaret exclaimed, "It's been quite a natural thing for me to go and be able to get along with the colony members and their children." Her social and economic life included frequent interactions among her family and the members of Poplar Grove colony:

As far as the colony is concerned, we're English people. It doesn't matter if you are really English or not. All outsiders are referred to in that manner. I think I have a great ability to communicate cross-culturally because I grew up beside two First Nations reserves and

a Hutterite colony. I went to school with most of the kids from the nearby reserve, and when the First Nation bought the local school I went to their school for a year, for grade ten.

Margaret was able to capitalize on her prior experiences of cultural similarities and differences. For others, religious identity was important. Unlike Daniel, who searched out and enjoyed theological discussions with the adult colony members, Shirley, even though many of her beliefs dovetailed with the Hutterites, was somewhat reticent to participate in such conversations:

I have a strong identity; a religious identity which I found is helpful teaching on a Hutterite colony. They are quite religious in their daily lives and some of our beliefs are similar. I found that it is quite easy to relate to a lot of what they are doing. That's probably the biggest thing we share. I don't go so deep that I have Biblical and religious discussions with the people. I agree with a lot of things that they are doing, so I can support that and they can see that I have something that is similar to them.

According to the teacher/principals, their goal was to assist and empathize with the students and their way of life. Daniel recognized the appeal of those practices and he was intent on following those processes with the colony children. Assisting and empathizing with the students and their way of life were not always easy perspectives to employ, and frustration occurred. On occasion, the teacher/principals wanted to lead the school, and the community, in the direction they thought it should be headed. Daniel admitted being frustrated with his inability to pursue educational goals that he believed would enrich the colony students' lives. Although Daniel desired a greater catalytic role in the school and the lives of the children, he articulated a sense of acknowledgement and acceptance: the colony culture was greater than his

designs:

There are times where you just say that that is the “colony way.” You can’t really impose English school structures on this. Sometimes I have had really big dreams of doing certain things and then I was told that it was not possible here. We are not allowed to leave the colony for certain field trips, or we’re not allowed to have a high school, or we’re not allowed unlimited media access.

Shirley communicated various cultural similarities and differences with the children in a sensitive manner. She perceived a trust between the students and herself. The students’ demonstrated their willingness to share the similarities and the differences that existed between the two cultures:

The kids are very free in telling me things such as “We can’t read that book,” or “We shouldn’t be doing this.” As the years have gone on, I feel that I could tell you what they believe and what their culture is. But certainly I know that there are things that I’m not privy to. It’s not really my place, or my business, to be a part of that. I haven’t felt shy to ask about things and kind of share with them: “You believe this and I believe this.” Sometimes we will have discussions about the similarities and differences between ourselves.

Bill reflected on the similarities and differences among society, Hutterite life, and his life. He accepted the differences: “There may never be a true meeting of the two cultures due to their worldview.” He believed that his relationship with the colony members was not negatively affected by cultural differences:

We’re in such different worlds that they will never know how we live. We’ll never really know how they live. You don’t know any different, that’s life. They are always curious

about what our lives are like. How much money do you make? How much does this cost? What did you pay? What do you pay for rent? How can you spend that kind of money? Stuff like that. It's so foreign to them you might as well be talking to somebody from rural China. Our lives are as foreign to them as theirs are to us and going for coffee or meeting the boys in the shop isn't going to tell you what they're actually thinking.

Bill endorsed an "open book" philosophy with the Hutterites. He expressed his opinions to the Hutterites about the similarities and differences that he observed among the colony residents and him. Bill was honest in his beliefs about colony life and he believed he was respected by the Hutterites for his candour. Bill stated that Hutterites were curious about the outside world and he described it to them truthfully:

They're very interested in our culture and I'm just straight with them. They want to know stuff, I tell them. They want to know what things cost, I tell them. They want to know how much money I make, I tell them. They'll tell me what they make. And so, I just let them know. They cannot believe that I would leave school and drive into the city and work another four hours at another job, and then work all weekend and drive back out to the colony to teach; because at five they shut down. I say, "Look, it's expensive to live out there. You don't know what it costs." There are differences, they're curious.

They're not shy about asking anything.

Bill was not excessively interested in asking questions about the Hutterites' religion and cultural issues. However, he knew a great deal about their faith. He had taught a unit of Hutterite history to the students at his previous colony school. Bill was not ill-informed about the topic, just discreet:

I don't answer or ask anything about religion. It's partly because I'm not religious.

Maybe if I went to church. But I just say to them, there are too many other things for us to talk about. How interested are you in what I don't do on Sunday?

5.2.3 Margaret: "Don't go in there and try to change things."

The teacher/principals' acceptance of cultural differences and similarities between the colony and themselves was a persistent assertion. One of the interview questions asked, what suggestions would you give other teachers on getting the most out teaching on a Hutterite colony? Margaret's advice to teachers was: "Just go in there and do a good job. Don't go in there and try to change things because that is just going to cause problems, and I know that people have told me that too."

Shirley's colony friendships cut across cultural comparisons. Away from the school, Shirley had her family and her social group. However, she considered the single Hutterite women her friends and she was a part of their informal community, a situation that superseded anything that happened in the school.

Bill's mechanical ability elicited respect from the colony members. His technical skills diminished many of the differences between Bill and the colony men and boys. He felt he was linked to their community, and there were incidents that demonstrated the connection: "We look after each other," said Bill. The colony minister worked in the machine shop and he and Bill got along well because of their similar non-religious interests:

They realized I'm quite mechanically inclined and I can talk their talk, and so I was able to do anything at the shop. I could go anywhere in the shop and I could ask them anything just because. And they would ask, "What do you think about this?" The minister works there and any questions or issues I had about school or otherwise I could

go speak to him on common turf. One time they needed a water tank and they called me Saturday morning and said, “OK, we need an eighty gallon water tank and it’s got to be no more than thirty inches long and this deep and this wide.” I thought to myself, I don’t know this stuff off-hand. So I’d say, “I’ll call you back in ten minutes.” I’d go and figure it out, phone them back and we’d talk about their problem. We looked after each other.

When Shirley reflected on her colony teaching position, she spoke of how much planning was required, the hard work she did, student diversity, and the multi-graded classroom. She had certain expectations about the job, and she was pleased to be working as a teacher. Shirley’s concerns focused on the challenges of new curricula, planning, resources, and the professional and personal challenge of reinventing herself each year. The position was unique, particularly compared to her earlier position:

I thought that after five years you might have a turn-around on what you've planned, and to some extent I have. But then you start getting new curricula, strategies, and programs coming in and so now you got this turnaround. You’ve got this curriculum guide saying you need to do this now in this year instead of this in this year, and there are no resources to match up with what you’re supposed to be doing. Sometimes those things have caused the workload to be increased more than I would have thought. I guess that was something I didn’t expect; that it is still so busy. I had thought that after teaching for this long and I had this experience that you would come to a comfort zone which I found when I taught public elementary school. In my previous position, I taught one grade in one school for five years and it was becoming very much a comfortable routine for me.

Bill held that his success with the colony members aligned with his farming and mechanical background; the colony had similar interests. Although he considered himself non-religious at this point in his life, he was brought up in a religious home. He remarked that he was raised in a “fairly strict religious family.” His family’s religion had rites, foundations, practices, and dogma that had been institutionalized over the generations. The Hutterites’ cultural and religious beliefs and practices, on a broad spectrum, had similar characteristics.

The importance of Bill’s position as a teacher, even in a school where he had only six students, affected him (e.g., teaching his students to read and do math). Bill shared his appreciation of the seriousness of his colleagues’ responsibilities. Teaching a child to read was awe-inspiring:

I used to say that I had taught all grades from one to twelve but most of that time was spent teaching PE. The actual content classes that I instructed were above that level and so it’s definitely been eye-opening working with these younger students.

Daniel stressed, too, that similarities existed between teaching on a Hutterite colony and teaching in an off-colony school. Similar to Margaret’s observation, the external conformist and uniform appearances of the Hutterites in their clothing and hairstyles should not lead to thinking that there is a lack of diversity and individuality. As one of the teacher/principals described, parallels existed between the English culture and Hutterite culture and they supported or diminished the educational mission:

They are children and one should expect they are going to behave like your children and other people's children. There is a great deal of diversity in the classes. Children are curious and interesting. I suppose the differences are lifestyle and at the administrative level there are no extra-curricular activities for the students. One does not interact in the

same way as other schools. In English schools, others create impositions in your day.

For example, initiatives that may be going on in the school, pep rallies, or visitors coming to the school and all the classes go down to the gym to do something or hear a speaker.

The teachers believed that there were differences in how the Hutterite culture was perceived by mainstream society. While the primary belief was that they were peaceful people, evoking images of quiet negotiation, compromise, and mediation, these characteristics were less often observed among the children in the school, according to Daniel:

I don't see a lot of cooperation and pacifism in school. I think that they are very competitive. It almost feels as if they are trying to find their own place because the colony levels everybody, and so they counteract that and they are trying to find their own sense of place, being ahead of the line. They do not appear to have really sophisticated conflict resolution skills. The pacifism one would expect is not there at the micro level, it may be at the macro level in terms of how they relate to government, but certainly they solve problems in a blunt manner. I guess I expect some disappointments because there are certain things on the colony that just cannot be overcome. Their view of education, their view of male/female roles, the limitations of birth order. Anybody who is older can boss around anybody who is younger.

Regardless of the differences that existed, the human condition and a sense of community trumped all else. According to Daniel, "It's similar in that there is a great deal of diversity among the families and among the children in the midst of the superficial homogeneity." The Hutterite community had distinctive characteristics, according to the teacher/principals. Shirley commented: "It is a closed community, but they still have many interactions with the outside

community in a way that people can respect them and they can manage themselves outside their own community.”

The teacher/principals considered it to be their duty to articulate to the Hutterite students the similarities and differences between colony life and the culture outside the colony fences. They shared with the children the many ways Hutterites were perceived by community members and merchants and vice versa, and they taught socialization skills.

5.3 Theme Three: The Primacy of Teaching

Regardless of the setting, the teacher/principals were dedicated to the educational objective. Teaching was their first priority; it was the reason why they were on the colony. The critical role of teaching was palpable in the school and the demeanor of the teacher/principals. The implementation of new curricula and of other provincial and local initiatives were not only significant in numbers and scope, they were considered important. The teachers described their attention to education, to the teaching process, and to the minutiae and daily routines required to work with colony students and the community. The primacy of teaching and its relevance on a colony emerged from the participants’ data through their comments, my observations of their interactions, and their attention to the daily details of a classroom. Although the teachers were not preparing their students for post-secondary training, or even graduating from high school perhaps, there was a concerted effort and an earnestness to encourage the students to do excellent work and to prepare them for their future roles in the community. The teacher/principals expressed a desire for their students to be life-long learners and to be able to adapt to a changing Hutterite and outside world.

The teacher/principals described the Hutterite colony, first and foremost, as a religious community. If they lacked sympathy, empathy, or a willingness to understand the community’s

religious nature, fulfilling their professional responsibilities would be a challenge and perhaps not possible. For example, affirming her community connection, Shirley's religious nature facilitated her sense of belonging and empathetic ability: "I have a strong religious identity which I found is helpful teaching on a Hutterite colony because they are quite religious in their daily lives."

Daniel's sense of commitment related to teaching and to his presence on the colony. Daniel's teaching position on the Hutterite colony was "the best thing that has ever happened to me professionally," he said. Daniel regarded his work as more than just a job:

Having come to the colony I think it's tied together a whole bunch of things about who I am. It has given me a feeling of competence, and a feeling that I am who I am supposed to be. At other points in my career, whether I've been in leadership or not, one is often typecast or boxed in or restricted or controlled by other factors, for instance teaching [certain] courses from year to year. One may be teaching different grades from year to year or you may be seen as the English teacher, the history teacher, the grade seven teacher, or something like that. However, in this role I don't have to see myself in any particular way but only as a principal and teacher who is responsible for the whole school. I get to work with students of all ages, I get to work with adults, I get to teach all the subjects, and I have a great sense of responsibility, which gives me a great feeling of reward because I'm in control of so many things.

Daniel described how teaching in the colony school brought richness to his life. He was pleased with the contributions he made to the lives of the Hutterite children and their community. He expressed that he sometimes felt he had more in common with the Hutterites than with people in his own community:

I feel a great deal of kinship with the people. In some ways, I know there is a culture gap, and there are things that I have to forgive and forget, but in some ways there are larger cultural gaps for me than being in this culture. Different parts of urban life might seem more remote for me than being part of the colony life during the school day.

Bill described his first experiences teaching on a Hutterite colony and the necessary adjustments and adaptations to his teaching style:

I know that in the first six months my head was spinning because I was trying to teach like at a regular school, trying to fit all these subjects in and stuff. Like, hold it, how do I teach even after grouping them into three or four groups and you try to get them all going on science and stuff? It is like, “This is not working.” It was my job and in the end a lot more rewarding. I had 25 kids and [I was] so stressed.

Bill was being challenged as a teacher because he was teaching primary grade students rather than the older ones he was used to:

I have a new respect for the lower grades elementary teachers, but it has added a different dimension to my teaching. Working with that younger age group and taking them right from grade one like I have this year, you definitely get a well-rounded experience out there.

The colony teacher/principals wrestled with issues similar to those of teachers in other schools, for example the variations in family interest in the educational process. The teacher/principals believed that their students should do homework to advance their learning or to complete assignments, yet this expectation was supplanted by colony beliefs. Generally, the colonies did not expect the children to do homework. After school and into the evening, colony children were busy completing chores, attending church, and attending to other colony-related

activities. Colony commitments trumped school. The schedule of the school was required to dovetail with the colony's schedule. This allowed the students to eat their meals with their families and the rest of the colony. A student was not expected to stay in school at lunch time or after school (e.g., the student has a detention), and colony tasks or commitments took priority over student-related duties. The teachers did what a flexible, sensitive, and adaptive teacher would do: no homework or detentions were given.

The teacher/principals accepted the colonies' approach to school. However, they believed attitudes were changing due to technology and its challenges to the colony. Summer and other holiday experiences varied from family to family. Some families travelled to visit relatives in the summer or during holidays, others stayed on the colony. According to Margaret:

They don't do homework, so they don't progress as quickly even though they are as bright as other kids. It varies from home to home as to what kind of drop-off there is over the summer holiday. Some homes aren't much enriched over the summer and you have to go back quite a few steps. But in some homes they make quite a few gains, even during the summer.

For a teacher/principal, the multi-graded one-room setting of the colony school presented challenges in planning, educational resources, and strategies. Schooling was complicated by the children's English proficiency; they were designated English Language Learners (ELL). The primacy of teaching was vital due to the challenges faced by the children and the school. It was considered a professional development experience, and for the participants it was an interesting environment in which to work. Daniel shared his perspective:

One should see the role as great professional development for managing a multi-grade classroom and organizing yourself. Instruction and the administrative tasks take a great

deal of organization and planning. However, I think there is nothing like it, even for its own sake, or for what you may do later on in your career. You have to learn to teach at so many different levels, so many different subjects, to reach across barriers that you didn't know existed, to try to connect with kids and to try to help them learn a new language. Professionally, being a Hutterite principal/teacher is just about the best thing one could do to become a great teacher.

The participants were of the mind that teaching in a one-room school environment was taxing. They were responsible for all students all subjects, grades, and contingencies. The teacher taught each subject for each grade, unless the students were registered in an on-line course or had an itinerant teacher offering high school courses. Organizational and classroom management skills were paramount, and a new teacher to the colony school would find the role challenging.

5.3.1 Bill: “The first year was hell.”

Adapting to the style of teaching required to succeed on a colony school had been a challenge, according to Bill. In his first colony school, Bill had 31 students from kindergarten to grade eight and he had little guidance to support him. The demands had been great, he said. Aside from the number, the variety of students, the individual learning needs of the students, and the language issue had made the classroom environment complex:

I thought this was a chance to go back in time to a one-room school house. It probably met my expectations. It's more work than I thought it would be. During the first six months my head was spinning because I was trying to teach like at a regular school, trying to fit all these subjects in. [The work] was in the end a lot more rewarding, but I know the first year was hell out there.

Bill was a gregarious individual with a droll sense of humour and he indicated to me that he got along well with the community. I observed Bill's relationship with the six boys. I observed that he personified a "big brother" or an indulgent uncle-type when he was with the boys. The students idolized him, I thought. They gave him a lot of attention and they demanded the same.

According to Margaret, "Kids are kids and it would be a mistake to misjudge their culture and their personal characteristics if you are expecting them to act differently in the classroom." Classroom observations and discussions with the staff confirmed that Hutterite children are as likely to get into arguments and tease one another, pass notes back and forth, and detail their clothing and person with subtle personal accessories. According to Margaret:

Hutterite students are children and one should expect that they are going to behave like your children and other people's children. Children are curious and interesting, so one should not be threatened by going cross-culturally to teach these children. They are just somebody else's kids.

For some, an attraction of the colony teaching position was the independence. Although some of the disadvantages of this setting have been identified, the teachers were content: they were in charge, nobody was "looking over their shoulder" or interrupting their day, and they relished the responsibility. According to Margaret:

I'm in control of so many things about my teaching day, year, and role. I have a sense of autonomy and I am not being told what to do all the time or being moved from one assignment to the next from year to year. I can do music, sports, teach various subjects, spend time with all ages, and do a lot of things I'm broadly interested in. There's a sense of comfort from the breadth of the work I do.

Margaret, a new teacher when she came to Poplar Grove Colony five years ago, described how she grew personally and professionally as a result of teaching at Poplar Grove Colony:

This is my first teaching assignment. My student teaching was done in an inner city school, so that was very different from colony teaching. In the city, I saw a lot of hardship, a lot of kids going hungry. Kids here are not going hungry and they have clean clothes. Multi-tasking is a skill I have honed from teaching on the colony, being able to deal with different age and grade groups at one time. My planning has developed immensely because of it.

For some colony teacher/principals, a deficiency of appropriate educational resources and multiple grades and subjects was balanced by the absence of the added demands and events characteristic of an off-colony school. There were no staff or grade meetings, few school-wide interruptions, and a predictable community environment. As described by Daniel, “The differences are first of all a lifestyle, and there is no extra-curricular.”

5.3.2 “There is a lot of learning by trial and error.”

Shirley commented that there were disadvantages and an essence of the unexpected with respect to the multi-graded setting:

It was a lot of hard work and I think that I expected it was going to be so, but I didn't expect that it was going to continue. There are few resources to match up with what you're supposed to be doing, colony-appropriate or otherwise. There are so many grades, so many subjects, and a lot of learning disabilities, from kindergarten up to grade nine. There are all these many, many parts of education that I haven't experienced before; so, that is a big thing.

Shirley held that her personal beliefs and biases did not affect her approach to teaching the colony students. For Shirley, when posed the questions, “What suggestions would you give other teachers on getting the most out teaching on a Hutterite colony?” and “How do your understandings about the Hutterites influence your teaching? Give some examples of how these understandings are incorporated in your teaching,” she responded: “It’s my place to teach the kids and to respect their beliefs and to make sure that they are supportive of my teaching.” On occasion, it was necessary to adapt and modify the curriculum due to cultural sensitivities. With respect to worldview and the queries and puzzled looks and comments that were sometimes voiced by students, Shirley did not attempt to contradict their beliefs. She supported and endorsed them.

Similar to Shirley’s situation, with reference to getting the most out of teaching, Daniel described how he exercised caution around topic areas like family life education and evolution. He respected colony culture, regardless of what the provincial curriculum prescribed for that grade and subject:

I know there are certain subjects that are taboo. For example, dinosaurs would be one of them, a huge one. However, my colony allows me to talk about dinosaurs but not about calendar dates. Not about eras because of their belief that the earth is approximately 6000 years old, nor to speak of anything prehistoric. Many colonies won’t allow the teacher to bring in music or any teaching games that use technology, such as math and language arts drills that can be done on the computer. My colony is different about things like that. They’re much more open to it.

The participants admitted that a lot of their learning occurred by experience, trial, and error. The communities varied greatly. It would be difficult to create a universal teaching guide for colonies. You learned by experience, as Margaret noted:

As a teacher, you're always thinking in the back of your mind, "Is this appropriate? Am I going to get in trouble for this?" When I was pregnant a lot of the students didn't have a real understanding about the development of the baby. They might think that the stork brings the baby to the hospital and the mother goes to pick it up. I got into a little bit of hot water, not much, because I said I was going "to have the baby" instead of saying I was "going to pick up the baby." You really have to watch what you say.

Bill, who had taught at another colony and at English schools, described the teaching challenges he was confronted with when he transferred to Valley Creek School:

At my previous colony school I had an educational assistant who was a former teacher, so she did a lot of the teaching with grades one and two. But at this colony I have them to myself and so I am definitely dealing with the younger kids and teaching the kids to read, which I never actually did even with my own kids. It has been a bit of an eye-opener and definitely broadens my experience.

A similar perspective was echoed by Daniel:

At other points in my career, whether I've been in leadership or not, one is often typecast or boxed in or restricted or controlled by other factors. For instance, one may be known as the English teacher, the history teacher, or the grade seven teacher and not simply as an educator. The focus is on the grade or subject and not on the relationships.

Some teachers develop a level of comfort and expertise if they have taught one grade for a period of time. Shirley compared her present job to her previous position in an off-colony

school:

I taught one grade in one school for five years and it was becoming very much a comfortable routine for me. I never had any expectations about this teaching position because I was thrown in so quickly that I didn't have any time to think or even know how this should be. It's a lot of work, but it is very rewarding.

Effective teachers aspire to involve the community in the life of the school, and this was evident in the four colony schools. The schools had characteristics that facilitated community connections. The colony community was culturally homogeneous, and families were accessible due to their physical proximity to the school. The community had clear expectations about what they wanted the school to do.

5.3.3 Connecting the School with the Community

Bill expressed his perception of the community's connection to the colony school. He appreciated the trust that existed toward the school and the teacher among the community members. He aptly described a conversation with one father:

If I take care of the mechanics shop, don't come in and tell me how to do that and I won't tell you how to run the school. Just tell me if my kid is causing you any grief and I will settle that. We can deal with that. The teaching part is not our department.

It's very refreshing to know that they have that faith in you and I suppose they do in the other colony schools as well.

Similar to Shirley's strategy, Bill avoided controversy in the community by encouraging the students' attempts to answer their own questions when a potentially awkward or controversial topic or question surfaced:

There are differences when teaching science, let's say. They ask you about dinosaurs and stuff like that. You have to tread softly there, but then you get an idea. Sometimes I'll throw it back at them and say, "I don't know? What do you think?" Because you want to know, "What do they hear at home?" and stuff. Sometimes the kid will say, "My dad and the preacher say that years were different back then. They were longer. What we call a year was maybe like a really long time." So there are some pretty progressive ideas because you know that's treating that issue like the fact that there is an idea of dinosaurs out there, there not just denying it. Maybe they call it a day in the Bible that God made things. But that day may have been like a hundred million years long.

Daniel felt connected to the colony community, particularly to the colony's administration. He believed that the key to running an effective colony school was to develop positive relationships with the colony administrators, the other adults of the colony, the students, and the parents:

The parents are less pushy than parents in other schools in that they really trust the professionals that are all busy working. They have a great deal of interest in their children's education but not quite in the same way as other parents might.

The high degree of acceptance by the community permitted Daniel to teach without fear of rebuke from its members, and he possessed an understanding of his limitations:

Because I am really implicitly trusted by the leadership of the colony, I don't worry too much about the four walls of the school and what I do to get them to think in a way that I am familiar with. I think there is a lot of critical thinking in the school, lots of discussion, deep debate about all kinds of things. I allow them to express their argument for why they believe, for what they do, and we have all kinds of very rich conversations. There

are only a couple of exceptions of things I don't bring up. Maybe things like evolution or sex education or things like that are some of the things I might be cautious about. I have a great deal of latitude. It's made me feel like I have come alive to work in a role that provides for teaching and administration and connecting with the community.

Daniel was confident in his ability to teach critical thinking skills to the students. Daniel was trusted by the colony leadership in his approaches to schooling, he believed. Bill, with extensive teaching experience, compared dealing with English school parents and his experiences dealing with Hutterite parents:

You deal with the parents if there is ever anything that comes up but it is so rare. The parents are very close physically to the school and they know what is going on. Plus their worldview is different from that of the parents whose children I taught in the English school. I felt that was the biggest thing for me personally.

I got interested in taking this job because I was so tired of coaching everybody's kid and you get no appreciation for it and you're missing out on your own kids' stuff. I was dragging my four year old and six year old around to the gym all the time, and these parents [complained] because they need more practices. There I am; I have over 300 hours of extra-curricular in and I'm not getting paid for it. I don't even get paid my gas money for driving these kids all over the place and I said, "Forget it." And that's what got me out of there.

With respect to the role of the parents, based on the experiences gained on his previous colony position and his experiences at Valley Creek, Bill felt that the children's parents were similar to parents elsewhere. They were concerned about the progress and behaviour of their

children. Often their concern often focused on their children's social behaviour more than their academic progress, according to Bill:

The parents of the colony are really focussing on how their child behaves in school. How much respect do they give? How well behaved are they? Are they listening? They really have very little in terms of questions or concerns about the actual academic issues. The teacher/principals held that the community had faith and confidence in the ability of the teacher to do the right thing and to do their job properly.

Bill was refreshed that he could do his job without what he described as “the bothersome, chronic oversight of the parents”:

The parents trust that you know how to do your job, and unlike some parents in the English world, they don't tell you how to do your job. They think that that is your job, and they have their job on the colony, and they don't step into other people's business on the colony.

5.3.3.1 Daniel: “We are trying to make a connection.”

Supporting the primacy of teaching, it was vital to make connections with the colony through teaching strategies and examples. To connect with the students, it was incumbent upon the teacher to empathize with the Hutterite worldview, community, and experiences. The teacher/principals stressed integrating the Hutterite perspective into their examples and their discussions with students. Daniel expressed insight into this perspective:

I think when we talk about reaching students we are trying to make a connection to them, to be able to talk in their language, in their metaphors, to connect what they are saying about cattle or equipment, or anything else that goes on in the colony. The examples I

use can go right out to something they are familiar with so it is quite easy to create a bridge to new knowledge if I can start at a point they are familiar with.

Making a connection in an off-colony school may be complicated by the socio-economic diversity and structure of the families and the community. In some respects, English parents have a limited and uncertain idea of their children's future. As Daniel noted, many aspects were beyond their control. The colony parents possessed a greater certainty of their children's future:

They have a great deal of interest in their children's education but not quite in the same way as other parents might where post-secondary education is at stake. Parents here say that the children we see at school are the same ones they see at home. My experience was that in the English world, either more parents were in denial about their kids, or the children really were different when away from home. These children are totally themselves and do not put on a school face. However, I have observed that the children are very egocentric and consider their reality the only reality in some ways.

Many Hutterite children started school with a limited knowledge of English and, along with the cultural differences, their learning was impacted. According to Daniel:

Because English is their third language one has to expect that they are going to be language-delayed, at least early on. The language of their home is Low German. When they are five years old they start learning High German in German school and they also hear High German in their church. They don't really fully understand it until well into school. They start learning High German and English at the same time. So they are delayed in their vocabulary and they don't really get a lot of reinforcement at home. Things are changing because of the adoption of so much technology and things they can cover on their own. They do a lot of broad reading. They have library cards and they

sign out a lot of books. Things are changing; they are not quite as sheltered as they used to be.

The colony teacher/principal's relationship with the community may be more prescriptive than an English school teacher's public relationship. English school teachers organized field trips and expeditions, outdoor education activities, and perhaps invited controversial speakers to the school or the classroom, but this was rarely the case in a colony school. Concurrently, knowing in advance what was allowed, the colony teacher/principals felt less risk than an English school teacher for using an inappropriate resource.

5.3.4 “There are so many opportunities for trying different methods.”

Daniel described a lack of constraint and oversight when doing his job: “There are so many different opportunities for trying different methods and being a risk taker as a teacher and experimenting with different ideas and things like that.” Daniel was confident of his relationship with the community, and he believed he was given broad license to do as he thought best. None of the teachers expressed a concern about how they were perceived by the community. Among the four teacher/principals, there was no expression of tension between the teacher and the colony.

This confidence also applied to the teachers' relationships with the German teacher, often the assistant minister, who instructed the school children before and after regular school hours. His instruction encompassed the speaking and writing of German, and the teaching of Hutterite culture and history. Traditionally, the German teacher was the school's disciplinarian and chronic issues with students were referred to him. None of the participants mentioned the existence of any strain between the roles of the English teacher and the German teacher. However, there appeared to be minimal collaboration between the two teachers. When I

observed the two communicating there was a high degree of cordiality and shared humour about the students' schooling. The German teachers I spoke with shared what their role was, its importance, and they discussed the general education of students on and off the colony.

On one day of the week, there was an early dismissal of the students for other schools in the Division to start their staff meetings. Because they did not have staff meetings, during this time the colony teacher/principals received one hour of preparation time after their students were dismissed. With respect to their daily interactions with the community, Bill and the educational assistant did not eat daily in the kitchen with the rest of the colony. The opportunity to be in their school for that hour gave them a chance to do preparation work for the students and school. They tried to be present for lunch on Fridays, or at least one day of the week, to be sociable and to speak to the parents about the progress of their children.

Daniel described his school as "learning-resources rich," although few of the resources were specifically Hutterite-appropriate. The participants discussed the curricular materials allowed for colony education and whether the resources complemented and supported the culture. Few dollars and minimal effort appeared to be put into developing materials and a curriculum that met the needs of Hutterite students, according to Daniel. He believed that there were limited educational agencies to adequately serve this need.

Cooper (2000) described the challenge of finding and using "literature that is meaningful to children who live in rural isolation and have little knowledge of the outside 'English' world, and who come to school speaking and understanding only German." (p. iv). There are organizations (e.g., www.hutterites.org) producing and distributing applicable materials, for example young adult novels with a Hutterian theme.

A variety of books with a Hutterite theme have been written by Hutterites no longer

living on the colony and, therefore, not considered Hutterites by the colony members. Some authors' perspectives may be considered unfriendly by the colony members and not permitted in the schools. Whether an appropriate example or not, I did not see a copy of Mary-Ann Kirkby's non-fiction book, *I Am Hutterite: The Fascinating True Story of a Young Woman's Journey to Reclaim Her Heritage*. It is a story that has an oft-critical perspective on aspects of colony life. Although I did not see it in schools, it may be in homes. One of the Hutterite girls said that she had read it and when I asked her what she thought of it, she shrugged. *My Hutterite Life*, by Lisa Marie Stahl, is a first-person non-fiction account of Hutterite life and the book reflects a positive tone. Stahl lived on the colony when she wrote the newspaper articles that became the book. I did see a copy of Stahl's book in one of the schools. Samuel Hofer, who has written a number of fiction and non-fiction books with a Hutterite theme, is a former Hutterite. Hofer's books have a generally positive view of the Hutterites. On a book review web site, Hutterites present and former expressed mixed feelings about his perspectives on colony life (*Anonymous*, 2012). I did see Hofer's books in colony schools.

5.3.5 Bill: "You're raising little farmers."

Bill communicated his awareness of what the future held for his students and where he needed to focus his teaching. Perhaps none of the students would be a doctor, lawyer, or bus driver, but they might be a mechanic, carpenter, or an electrician, and they would probably be involved in agriculture. The participants acknowledged that their students were to be involved in agriculture, and perhaps some manufacturing, for the duration of their lives. The world of agriculture was changing, and the Hutterites were adapting to the changes. Bill focused on the basics and attempted to keep the students' futures and the required skills paramount:

A lot of those things that are a big push, big concerns in other schools, are not quite as pressing in ours. These kids have a heavy schedule and if I can jam in some three R's in the morning and then we do things like the other stuff, for example social studies, health and PE in the afternoon for a couple of hours, that's great. But I am really here to get them to read, write, and do math and if they leave here doing that competently they will do all right. The parents are thrilled because you're raising little farmers and that's what you're producing. The parents want them to learn English. When I do things like science I put a heavy emphasis on farming, animals, types of weeds, and crop science. We've had stuff from Saskatchewan Agriculture like crop samples and things like that and they go home and tell their parents. I know that the parents are pleased with this.

Bill's efforts, and mirrored by the other three participants, to "put a heavy emphasis on farming, animals, types of weeds, and crop science" were consistent with the precept that a culturally sensitive teacher used meaningful content and methods in the community where they taught (Gay, 2000). The teacher/principals attempted to maintain relevance. Therefore, school would be considered worthwhile to the community. Rather than teaching material that was covered in the math curriculum only, Bill and Shirley ensured that the students learned about issues relevant to their lives, such as measuring the length of a board (the boys), the amount of sugar needed for a recipe (the girls), or writing a letter to a cousin in a distant colony. Bill described a successful teaching experience that fit well thematically into colony culture, and is consistent with community-centred education:

The boys came to me because they were going to have a big building built and they said "Can we learn how to measure?" And I told them "We do measuring," and they said "No, like building measurement because they are going to want us to saw stuff and things

like that.” They came to school with measuring tapes and we measured everything we could find. We did area and stuff like that and they just ate it up. I showed them how to square a corner using just a measuring tape and they went home and none of their parents knew how to do that, and they were heroes out there. It’s important to keep our teaching and the school relevant to their lifestyle and culture. What is relevant to our children and what is relevant to theirs is quite different. That to me is the key. I do know that teaching on the colony is to keep things relevant to their lifestyle and their future role in the world.

During language arts and story reading, Bill and Shirley frequently used relevant examples, allusions, and references to Hutterite culture. This connectedness, achieved through the emphasis placed by these teachers on culturally relevant teaching, was enhanced by the belief that they may teach these children throughout their entire years of schooling.

5.3.6 Bill: “You have these kids forever.”

Bill considered it valuable to have one group of students for an extended period of time, consistent with the colony model. He said he knew his students well and believed he had identified their academic, social, and emotional needs. The participants agreed that there was merit in not advancing lock-step through a curriculum and a grade, particularly when students were not learning the material. The colony teachers had the students for their entire school career, and there were educational advantages to that arrangement. According to Bill:

You’re all things to everyone out here and the great thing is the flexibility it gives you.

In other schools everybody is so worried about getting through the curriculum. I still get along okay and you have these kids forever, until they leave. If you don’t get something the first go-around you have them next year, and the next, and the next year. You don’t

have to be worried that you didn't cover this or that material and their new teacher is going to think I didn't do my job.

The teacher/principals were undivided on their perceptions of the value of teaching. Good teaching strategies, goals, activities, inclusion, and appropriateness highlighted the role of the participants. There was no mention of "cutting corners" due to the students' future or the perceived value of education transmitted by colony members.

5.4 Theme Four: Grappling with Roles

A common reflection of the teacher/principals was one relevant to their perceived incompatible professional roles. Though their written role descriptions and expectations were nominal, there were a variety of aspects and issues related to the matter. Whether it was debated that the participants were to be referred to as teacher/principals or principal/teachers, there was no disagreement among the participants that their administrative roles and responsibilities were increasing. This development was responsible for both excitement and trepidation among the participants. The teacher/principals' responses resonated clearly when reacting to the question, "How is the administrative role different from what you would find in another school?" The participants were able to provide a number of significant examples comparing and contrasting the two roles. In every school in the Division, except the colony schools, the principal received a minimum of 10% administrative time, for example.

Colony teacher/principals described feeling harried because of the amount of time, and the expectations, devoted to administrative and other non-instructional duties. Adding to their feeling of professional disconnection and frustration, they worked in a one-room school setting with no on-site administrative support. Facets of their frustration were related to a number of the technological introductions and innovations of the Division Office and the Ministry of

Education. For example, prior to relatively recent policy and practice changes, colony schools kept students' school records and documents in a filing cabinet in the classroom or in the school's office. A new policy and practice implemented by the provincial government required each student to be directly registered with the Ministry of Education. The student received a life-long student number upon school enrollment. Prior to the policy's introduction students received a student number and were registered with the Ministry of Education when they reached grade ten, and it was primarily used to record high school credits for matriculation. The difficulty for these teacher/principals was that this process was to be completed by them using a computer, and they felt their skills and resources were inadequate. Shirley, whose school did not have an appropriate internet connection, did this work at home in the evenings or on the weekend.

The present system was accessed by the teacher/principals through a computer process and database known as the Student Demographic System (SDS). SDS was user-friendly if you utilized it on a regular basis, such as would be the case with a school's administrative assistant. However, the Hutterite teachers used the SDS once or twice a month perhaps during the school year. Because of the software's complexity, and because the program changed periodically with upgrades and innovations, re-education was required practically each time they used SDS, the teacher/principals declared. Shirley echoed the comments of the other teacher/principals respecting the completion of administrative tasks that utilized School Division or Ministry of Education software:

I wouldn't feel that I'm oppressed by my administrative duties, but sometimes the other colony teachers and I are frustrated because we don't have a secretary that can enter SDS or Navision [a school division management and maintenance software program]. In another school the administrative assistant is entering SDS and Navision for many

teachers and she's very familiar with what's going on. But I was running SDS and Navision and doing it once a month for one or two days, and maybe for a month or two I wasn't doing it at all. I would forget what I needed to do from this month to the next month, or the software was changed. It's like, "Oh goodness, what step do I follow now?" That was a little bit frustrating and that can be exasperating because I don't have any support behind me in my building, although I do call the Division Office for help.

The participants' frustration was not the Ministry of Education's use of SDS as a means of tracking student progress and the recording of this information. In English schools this clerical activity is done during the regular school day, and often it is not done by the school administrators. The situation was described by Margaret:

I'm an administrator by default, I tell people. I'm a teacher 99% of the time and an administrator only when things go wrong, which doesn't happen very often. I guess you're basically a teacher. You get to wear the hat of an administrator and you end up having to do some of the things that the other administrators don't do because the secretaries at their schools do it. You get to do the paperwork and the paper-shuffling. You deal with the parents if there is ever anything that comes up.

As was the case in the other colonies, Daniel had no administrative release time and there was no administrative assistant supporting the clerical demands and responsibilities of the school, the colony, the Division Office, and the Ministry of Education. Daniel described the frustration of completing administrative duties and supervising staff while teaching 100% of the school day:

As an administrator on a colony you're teaching full time, so although your responsibilities are substantial in the administrative sense, your day is spent mostly in

consideration of the instruction and management of the students in your class, in the school, and their issues. The administration almost fully is done after hours in the evening or after school, and there is no administrative assistant. All that work that has to be done is not done in instructional time. I suppose other administrators do not have to do administrative assistant work, so there is a great range of things that one learns to do that falls into completely different occupational categories. The phone is rarely answered, unless by a student. It goes to voice mail and I catch up on it later.

5.4.1 Shirley: “If something needs to be done, I have to do it.”

Another tension associated with the dual role of teacher/principal was that of the multiple responsibilities that sometimes clashed. It was noted that, on numerous occasions, nobody was available to answer the phone when it was ringing; all were working. Sometimes an older student would answer the phone, if any were in the school. Rather, the phone call went to an answering machine and one of the staff members listened to the message later, usually at recess, noon hour, or at the end of the school day. According to Shirley:

One has to learn all the roles of the administrative assistant as well. There may be less administrative tasks of some kinds, like work experience or high school credits, at least at this time. That could change in the future and it already has on some of the colonies in our school division.

The participants supervised their staff and coached instruction, assigned tasks, and completed numerous other administrative duties. All of the colony schools had at least one other school staff member requiring support and some colony schools had more than one person. Expectations compounded the administrative work load and duties, as described by Daniel:

I have three other staff. I am responsible for them and I am teaching full time. I can't go and walk around and see what is going on in every classroom. However, I try to break away as much as I can to find out what is going on. Because we are in a small building we are always having conversations about all the students and what is going on in the other classrooms. I am still very aware of what occurs in the whole school even if I am not doing formal observations. There is less support in certain areas like daily janitorial work. We do our own chores except on the weekend when the girls come in and do some of it.

Margaret recognized from her observations that larger schools had greater responsibilities, more staff and students, but she had necessities too:

Quite often I am visiting another school that is nearby and I see the administrators there doing a lot of work. They have a great deal more responsibility because they have more staff. They have a lot more students. There are students with diverse needs in their school; however, I have students with diverse needs in my school.

A similar refrain with respect to administrative duties, staff supervision, and other expectations was voiced by Shirley: she did them. As compensation for the duties of principal, each colony teacher/principal received the principal's basic administrative allowance as stipulated in the teachers' provincial collective agreement (\$7 164 for the 2012-2013 school year). Shirley completed her administrative duties herself and on her own time, and she did not have many issues with that arrangement:

If things need to be done, these are duties that need to go to the administrator. In other schools, a lot of those duties can go to the vice-principal or the administrative assistant, but that doesn't happen in our situation. If something needs to be done, I have to do it. I

don't feel like it takes a lot of time and I feel that I'm fairly compensated with the basic principal's administrative allowance I receive.

Apart from Daniel, none of the teacher/principals had school administrative experience prior to their colony appointment. "Time as a vice-principal may have assisted the teacher/principals for what lay ahead," said Daniel. Working on the colony as a neophyte teacher, having no full-time teaching experience or any administrative experience, Margaret had adapted to her setting:

I have never been in an administrative position, although this one is not huge. Having a few confrontations, conflict resolution, dealing with people and even dealing with people who have more experience than I have is not too much of a burden.

Big Hill had limited internet access and doing on-line work from school was not an option; therefore, this was another reason why Shirley had to complete her computer-based administrative duties at home rather than before school, noon hour, or after school:

I don't have internet at school, so any of those things that need to be done are going to be done at home. All my administrative work is done on my own time at home, after school hours or on a Saturday or something like that. We have an internet USB stick at the colony, but it is so slow that it is not worth waiting for it to work. That's why I do anything at home where I have a regular internet connection.

Common concerns (not ranked) articulated by the four teacher/principals were (a) the lack of time to complete administrative tasks, (b) the limited administrative technical support, (c) the increasing administrative expectations as a result of greater accountability and responsibility, including an increase in student progress reporting methods, (d) the increasing number of senior administrative and other staff at the Division Office, and (e) the growing use of technology in

administration, curriculum, and instruction. “I don’t have an administrative assistant to assist with all the administrative expectations. I am the administrative assistant; I am the janitor, the water carrier. I am everything and everybody,” exclaimed Margaret.

The colony schools were a unique entity in the school division. Educationally, their role was evolving with the introduction of computer-based initiatives related to curriculum and instruction. The colony members, due to their values, beliefs, and norms, differed in their expectations of what the educational future entailed. It may be challenging for the Division Office to accurately gauge the expectations of the colonies.

5.4.2 School Division Relations

Due to the colonies’ relative geographic isolation, and the presence of so few staff at the school, it would take dedicated Division Office administrators to regularly visit a colony, particularly with their busy schedules. The colony teachers, however, viewed the lack of visitation and supervision as a “back-handed” compliment that sublimely indicated satisfaction with their work. The teacher/principals were less disappointed with the limited visits if the needs of the school and staff were met through attention to budget, staffing, and resources.

The participants believed that an educational keystone was an awareness that the colony schools were different from those in the suburbs and small towns, and the aspirations of the students and their families differed from those in the greater society. According to Margaret:

There has been leeway from the Division Office in recognizing that we are a different educational setting and teaching situation. Sometimes they give us the flexibility we need to adapt whatever the Division expectations are for some of those initiatives. I really do appreciate when they give us the discretion to adjust but there are times, too,

when they don't really understand that what they are asking of us isn't something that works well in our schools.

Often at an Administrative Leadership Team [ALT] meeting in the Division Office, three-quarters of the day doesn't have any application to our schools. But the quarter of the day that does is valuable. It more or less gives us a big picture of what is happening in the school division, which is important because we don't want to be part of a division that we don't understand.

During my attendance at ALT meetings, the eight colony teacher/principals often sat together at the same table during the day's proceedings and at lunch. The day provided an opportunity to network, plan together, share ideas, and discuss teaching strategies, frustrations, and other issues applicable to colony teaching and administration.

The unique cultural setting of the colony schools necessitated a unique relationship between the school division and the colony administration. Concerns may arise related to the physical plant of the school and its contents, input on hiring by the colony elders, accommodating students with exceptionalities, computers and internet access, and the placement of high school teachers in the colony school when the students enter the secondary grades.

According to Shirley:

I know that the colony has put up with a lot from some teachers and some teaching situations and they have not felt that they had any voice to express that. But I think now they have made it clear. The Division Office has made it clear to the colony that they have a say about things as long as it is done in a fair manner. Things need to go back to the teacher and the colony. The teacher needs to work out problems if they possibly can, but there needs to be some back-up for both the teacher and the colony.

The participants expressed a desire for the Division Office personnel to attend to the colony schools more often. However, there was an acknowledgement of the busy nature of the school system administrators and the difficulty for them to be all things to all people. It may be a common matter that schools and teachers perceive a lack of attention from the senior staff.

5.4.2.1 Margaret: “I think we just float under some people’s radar most of the time.”

When interviewed about their perceptions of the Division Office, an attitude of benign disregard of the colony schools was perceived by the teacher/principals. Purposeful visits from the Division Office occurred (e.g., budgeting and staffing discussions). If the teacher encountered a serious issue, the proper authority appeared at the school or communicated with the teacher through phone or e-mail. However, the participants believed that few of the school division senior administrators had a comprehensive knowledge of the idiosyncrasies and related needs of colony teacher/principals:

The Division Office has good intentions. I really do appreciate when they give us the flexibility to adapt. I think some people there have good intentions, but I think some people don’t pay much attention. I think we just float under some people’s radar most of the time. I know that their intentions are good, but I don’t feel that people in the Division Office are out in the schools enough to understand what goes on in a colony school on a daily basis.

As a survival strategy in an age of increasing responsibility, accountability, sophisticated reporting methods, expectations, and limited authority within a context of relative isolation, the teacher/principals developed a somewhat laissez-faire approach and relationship with the Division Office staff and its initiatives:

As long as our monetary needs and any educational supports are being met, we're fine just being left alone. Not many of the Division Office employees appreciate the colony culture. They don't understand what colony teachers have to do to make it work. They just lack the experience of having taught and been an administrator on a colony. With respect to Division Office expectations, there are things that I just try to ignore. I'm sure that nobody at the Division has many years of experience on a colony. Sometimes it's a juggling act, and unless they were to spend a day or a week with us the Division Office people don't get it. Sometimes the Hutterian teachers get overlooked by the Division Office. They can provide supports, and that is what the colony teachers need and want most of all. As I mentioned, under the radar is a good place to be.

With the increasing responsibilities of school administration and the time required to complete these tasks, the future role of the colony teacher/principal is uncertain. Funding and recognition of the formal and informal duties challenge the dynamics of the colony educators' positions. Tensions between the roles of teacher/principal and principal/teacher due to increasing educational responsibilities, expectations, and accountability may create an ambiguous professional climate.

Analysis of the data revealed four themes central to the teacher/principals' understandings related to their teaching and principal roles in a cross-cultural context: (a) the idiosyncratic effects of personality and cross-cultural connections, (b) the catalytic role of similarities and differences, (c) the consistent emphasis on the primacy of teaching, and (d) grappling with role identification.

In summary, the participants were committed to the education of their students and the leadership of their schools, within the context of the setting of a school on a Hutterite colony.

The teacher/principals provided instruction and there was a commitment to a school climate that was congruent with the present and future educational needs of the students. In many respects, the participants were able to facilitate and lead changes in the school. As teachers, they communicated through numerous actions and interactions with their students, parents, the colony community, and their staff that their goal was to provide a supportive and relevant educational environment in their schools. As principals, the participants were involved in the life of the community, the students, staff, and families. They demonstrated compassion and they were supportive of the Hutterites' mission and worldview. The participants were frustrated with the increasing administrative duties and responsibilities without the concomitant support and resources that countenanced the effective accomplishment of legislated and assigned tasks.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative site multiple site case study was to explore Hutterite colony teacher/principals' understandings related to their teaching and principal roles in a cross-cultural context. I examined issues and experiences that influenced their understandings, focused attention on their interactions with the students and colony members, and shaped their relationships with their work environment. The study investigated four teacher/principals' understandings of how their cultural background impacted their work, their understandings regarding similarities and differences between their culture and Hutterite colony culture, and their utilization of their knowledge of Hutterite culture to maintain positive student relations.

In this chapter, a brief summary of the study and its findings is provided; the findings are discussed as they pertain to the literature described in Chapter Two. Areas of interest that are examined include: bridging cultural differences and maintaining cultural relevance through instruction, an examination of the possibilities and sensitivities regarding the use of technology, issues of working at the cultural interface, and the more general concern among teacher/principals for developing and maintaining cultural reciprocity in their teaching and in the broader community.

Following these discussions, implications of this cross-cultural study are examined as they relate to four priorities that emerged: tapping the voices of the Hutterite community; identifying the essential qualities for colony teacher/principals; strategies for facilitating the dual role of teacher/principal; and the argument for embracing the culture. The final sections of this Chapter contain my reflections on the research process as they relate to the impact of prior

relationships with the participants; the participant-observer role, the interview process, the dynamics of the settings and the case, and on the constructivist orientation more generally.

I conclude the study with a commentary on this research journey.

6.1 Summary

A constructivist epistemology and a qualitative, multiple site case study research design was utilized. Four Hutterite colony schools comprised the research sites, and four teacher/principals (two females and two males) were selected. All four were experienced colony educators, and they shared 28 years of colony school experience.

I explored the teacher/principals' cross-cultural journeys in relation to their work in a Hutterian colony school context. I observed and participated in their classrooms, conducted pre-interviews, semi-structured interviews and discussions, collected field notes of my observations and perceptions, and observed the educational and administrative products and processes employed in the schools.

Four broad themes emerged to an understanding of the teacher/principals' concurrent roles in a cross-cultural setting. The first focused on *the idiosyncratic effects of personality and cross-cultural connections*. Each participant, in their own unique way, found areas of their background that enabled them to connect with the Hutterite culture. The teachers communicated and connected with the colony in a manner that extended beyond their role in the classroom. Across the group, Daniel, Shirley, Bill, and Margaret acknowledged the influence of heritage, upbringing, and uniqueness on their roles as teachers and as administrators.

Complementing their farm and rural upbringings, insight to the influence of identity was revealed in a variety of ways: participating in theological and cultural discussions, mechanical and carpentry partnerships, and/or socializing with colony members. No teacher expressed a

desire to transfer to an off-colony school. One of the teachers confided to me, after the consideration of another teaching assignment, “I became very keenly aware of how much I appreciate my current work and how much I now feel at peace about staying longer at [my current school].” Concurrent with their instructional responsibilities, the teacher/principals imparted life skills to the students through modeling, their participation in community activities, and by direct instruction. They spoke of the effects of the colonies’ metaphors on their work and relationships in the community. My observations of the participants’ actions, self-expressed strong beliefs, and insights demonstrated and reflected their connection to the colony and its children.

The second theme, *the catalytic role of similarities and differences*, emerged from discussions with the teachers and my observations of their work and interactions. They embraced the similarities and differences between themselves and the colony members and this attitude facilitated positive relations with the colony. The teacher/principals described the process of supporting Hutterite culture and the colony in various ways, and how they were accepted by the colony.

The teachers recognized cultural differences as well as similarities, but they were often downplayed. However, mindfulness of cultural similarities and differences between themselves and the colony culture provided the teachers with the opportunity to focus on this in their teaching. The teachers were not reluctant to describe to the students how similarities and differences were apparent beyond the colony fences. Who we are as people was paramount, and this was the lesson the teachers strived to teach.

The third theme to emerge was the teacher/principals’ consistently strong emphasis on *the primacy of teaching*, demonstrated by these participants through personal and professional

attention to the students and staff. The students were English language learners, and the multi-graded one-room setting of the colony school had its limitations. These presented challenges and opportunities for planning, resources, and strategies. Across all activities, teaching emerged in the comments and actions of the teacher/principals as the single, most important priority.

The value of skilled teaching was underscored by the sense of urgency created by the phenomenon of a student possibly leaving school at age fifteen or at the end of grade eight. This was the tradition because at age fifteen students were considered “adults” by the colony members. Changes were occurring on these colonies, however, and the number of students leaving school was diminishing. Greater numbers of students enrolled in school created other tensions because the school was now providing education to students past the eighth grade. Teacher resourcefulness and adaptability was necessary because there were few Hutterite-specific policies, guidelines, resources, or curricula available from the Ministry of Education. As competent and perceptive teachers, curriculum content and teaching strategies used by these teachers were applicable to the students’ cultural frames of reference.

The fourth theme, *grappling with often incompatible professional roles*, pertained to tensions between the dual roles of teacher and principal performed by the participants. The phenomena of educational responsibilities, expectations, and accountability generated, at times, some confusion in the minds of these educators. Were they teacher/principals or principal/teachers? Frustration was pronounced due to the lack of administrative time and lack of Division-level and on-site clerical support. Changes in the registration and tracking of students had increased their administrative tasks and workload, decentralized their responsibilities and subsequently increased the levels of accountability expected of them.

The participants conveyed a sense of unease with changes occurring beyond their school. Technological strategies initiated by the Ministry of Education and the School Division coupled with a fast-tracked provincial elementary and middle years curriculum revision and implementation process, greater accountability and responsibility, changing grade structures as the students moved through the school, and the introduction of standardized testing proved to be sources of stress. Though they were not affronted by the required tasks, the participants felt ill-equipped to deal with the dilemmas and pressures of time and priorities.

6.2 Discussion

The teacher/principals demonstrated Rueda and Stillman's (2012) "culturally responsive, 'assets' approach. Culture and cultural practices are useful resources, which can be used to design instruction" (p. 248). These researchers revealed a culturally responsive approach through demonstrating the attributes, skills, knowledge, and temperaments that are culturally appropriate and responsive to the community and its setting. Complementary to their roles as teachers, and the characteristics of multiculturalism, the teacher/principals embraced colony culture, supported the local status quo, were proactive in their relations with colony members, recognized the significance of developing positive social relations with their students, and were keen to provide a relevant educational experience. The teacher/principals promoted two characteristics of inter-cultural instruction and learning that were suggested by Palincsar (1998): "Maintenance of continuity between the culture (values, attitudes, and beliefs) of the home and school" and "a shared sense of identification between the teacher and the learner" (p. 368).

In the sections that follow, the main findings of this study are discussed in the light of related research and my reflections on the significance and application of the ideas that emerged from the discussions with the participating teacher/principals.

6.2.1 Bridging Cultural and Linguistic Differences through Instruction

As the statement of purpose of this study suggests, the manner in which the Teacher/Principals accommodated and reflected upon the cultural and linguistic differences they encountered was a central consideration for them in working cross-culturally. Though they commented at some length about the impacts of these differences in the broader context of the Colony, they placed considerable emphasis on the implications of these differences for their instructional role and their interactions with their students. On the colonies, German was the students' first language, and there were, naturally, variations among students in their levels of facility with the English language. Related issues relating to the learning process and students' age/grade readiness stemmed in part from these considerations.

The participating teachers varied in their attitudes and approaches concerning the use of German by students in the classroom. Comments about the instructional tensions associated with the students' use of German and English in the classroom ranged from Daniel's assertion that "I don't care when they speak German" to Margaret's comment that "they should speak English during the school day." For Bill, this was not an issue because of his German proficiency, as (in his words) the students were not able to "fool" him by speaking their first language. In light of these comments, I pondered the extent to which the teacher/principals should be concerned about their students' use of their own German language in their colony classrooms. I realized the level of sensitivity required when mandating English usage by students in what is essentially an *English immersion* instructional context. Western Canadian history and literature are replete with examples of student frustrations caused when they are compelled to speak a "foreign" language in school.

As suggested above, just as students varied in their levels of English literacy, teacher facility with the German language also varied: some lacked German proficiency- a lack that was predominantly acute in the case of Shirley and Margaret who described their understanding of German as “minimal.” Given the limited use and understanding of German among the teachers, it may well have proven beneficial had the four colony schools employed Hutterite educational assistants or expanded the use of colony parent volunteers. On one of the colonies participating in my research, there had been queries made about having one of the matriculated students, a female, employed as an educational assistant at the school. Unfortunately, the inquiries went unheeded by the colony elders and this was interpreted by the teacher/principals as a lack of support for the idea.

The value of employing native speakers as support workers has been underscored by research in other settings. For example, it was found that a number of Australian Aboriginal schools utilize the children’s home language as the language of instruction, rather than insisting they speak English. The use of English was extended gradually as students progressed through the grades. Although the teachers were predominantly English-speaking, the educational assistants were from the local community and served as a bridge between the language domains (Lowell and Devlin, 1999).

6.2.2 Maintaining Cultural Relevance

As revealed by St. Jacques (1987, p. 123), “Teachers, knowledgeable, and familiar with Hutterian culture, particularly those acquainted with the culture prior to their employment, are generally pedagogically successful teaching in Hutterite schools.” This trait is a factor and particularly apparent in the comments and behaviours of the participating teachers: Daniel with respect to his theological and family background, and Margaret (who wholly characterizes this

attribute), raised and continued to reside in near proximity of Poplar Grove Colony. Shirley described the similarities between her upbringing, her religious beliefs and understandings, and those of the Hutterites. Bill was further supported by his previous experience teaching at a colony school and teaching in other rural settings.

The availability and utilization of appropriate and culturally relevant instructional materials for colony students is imperative, and, according to the participating teacher/principals, it was not happening at the time of this study. In fact, the resources contributed to student confusion. While I was in the classroom of one of the schools, the teacher led the students through a language arts exercise on *homophones*, words that are spelled the same but sound differently. In the lesson, they studied the word “putting.” *Putting* and *putting* in the paragraph in the workbook was about a group of people “putting” during a golf game and then “putting” their golf clubs in the trunk of their car at the end of the game. This sentence was met with furrowed brows and quizzical looks from the students due to their lack of exposure to the game of golf and its associated concepts. The students were unfamiliar with golf and the action of putting, and the commensurate distinctions between letter sounds characterizing the homophones.

Reflecting on the above instance, examples used during instruction, or contained within supporting materials, may well fall outside the realm of student contexts, experiences, setting, and culture. When planning for instruction, particularly in a cross-cultural context, knowledge of the students and their culture is paramount. As Cooper, He and Levin (2011) pointed out, “Looking at data is not enough. We have to know who our students are.” (p. xv). In short, bridging cultural and linguistic differences, particularly between what is done at home and what

is done at school, is an issue in cultural intelligence and competence (Connerley & Pedersen, 2005; Cooper, He, & Levin, 2011; Diller & Moule, 2005; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999).

6.2.3 Educational Technology: Progress and Sensitivities

Technology has a facilitative effect on the colony and its culture, particularly related to the adoption and application of agricultural and industrial machinery and methods; transportation; technical aids for education and the school; and domestic appliances such as central vacuum cleaners and microwave ovens. Concurrently and paradoxically, technology generates conflicts and tensions and challenges the teacher/principal role. Yet it serves to enhance efficiencies and perhaps lessen isolation among individuals and groups.

The relationships the teachers cultivated with the colonies seemed to influence attitudes toward the educational value and use of technological innovations. Plans to locate high-speed internet network receivers on some of the colonies would not have occurred without the endorsement of the elders and colony administration, and they had consulted the teachers to gauge its worth to the school. Illustrative of the changes in attitude and practices occurring over time, each colony school had experienced periods when record players, photocopiers, and overhead projectors were prohibited. At the time of study, in the four schools, they were conventional classroom aids. One of the teacher/principals referred to the diffusion of technology in colony schools as “creeping incrementalism.”

On the colony, there seemed to be a high level of technological implementation in the agricultural area and a low level of implementation in the school. Ostensibly this appears as a paradox: the promotion of an attribute in one area and its diminution in another. Some colonies envisage dissolution if they do not adopt and adapt to technologies, for example on-line banking and bill payment; accounting and productivity software; and educational training. Increasingly,

colony members are confident that technology can be integrated into their lives without jeopardizing cultural and societal values (Gross, personal communication, September, 2002).

Postman's (1993) concept of *technopoly resonates somewhat with* the unease experienced on some colonies with the implications and use of technology. Technopoly describes the process by which technology erodes and displaces a culture's values and social institutions and, in turn subjugates it. The Hutterites were aware of, and vulnerable to, this phenomenon. Numerous colonies thrive due to technology; some languish or fail due to their aversion to it. The relative isolation of colony schools has been somewhat reduced by technology and teaching practices that combine to connect colony students with the wider world. However, as observed by Silvis, the implementation of information technology on the colony and in the school without overly negative influences is a challenge to the teachers and the education community (Silvis, 2000).

The teacher/principals valued the level of educational technology the colony permitted. They described how educational change was promoted: they lobbied for newer resources, better equipment, and more programs. Respecting high school courses, for example, the colonies contributed to and cooperated with the teachers' recommendations. Over time, the colony teachers and the school division had introduced more technology. The teachers perceived themselves as diplomatic in "pushing" the colonies in a desired direction, and this sensitivity contributed to their success on their respective colonies. This finding resonates with Hostetler's (1997) point that "the teacher becomes an informal source of worldly knowledge to colony people and, if not properly controlled, a disruptive force." (p. 218). Over time, this educational theme has dogged the role of the non-Hutterite teacher, and it was quite apparent that the teacher/principals recognized and respected the concern.

6.2.4 “Edgewalking”: Working at the Cultural Interfaces

Perhaps the most common theme that resonated throughout this study was that of the teachers’ roles in negotiating cultural similarities and differences with a view to maximizing their professional effectiveness. For the four colony teachers, what they brought to their cross-cultural teaching contexts reflected the richness and intricacies of their own backgrounds, influenced by human views, communications, activities, customs, beliefs and values that characterized the multiple contexts within which they developed as individuals and professionals. Cultural self-understanding was therefore important to these professionals, as was their understanding and uncovering of the common ground across the cultures. As Diller (2004) observed: “there are certain psychological characteristics that all ethnic and culturally different [people] share.” (p. 5).

A measure of individuals’ cross-cultural understanding and ability to succeed in a cross-cultural context is their aptitude and ability to adjust to the environs of a different culture. I observed how these teacher/principals affirmed and demonstrated their willingness and desire to connect as professionals and individuals with colony members. As a reflection of the idiosyncratic nature of their personalities, they did so in a variety of ways. As a personal reflection of the simple satisfaction associated with this process, one of the teacher/principals stated, “I feel good when I participate in both cultures.”

In placing themselves in the contexts of the Hutterites, the teacher/principals appeared to develop insights into what was challenging and what was supporting the colony. In fact, their ability to connect in this manner facilitated their duties as teachers and as principals. I sensed that these teachers, as they worked at the interface between the colony world and their own world outside of the colony, displayed the attributes of cross-cultural leadership identified by

Pusch (2008) as mindfulness, cognitive and behavioural flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, cross-cultural empathy, with the colony world and their own world outside of the colony.

These ideas are consistent with the leadership style identified as *edgewalking* (Kemper, 2013; Neal, 2006). This characterizes colony teacher/principals, in spite of the small scale of their responsibilities, as leaders who can walk on the edge, who can appreciate and work in different cultures, and who can have a foot in both worlds and walk the fine line between them.

6.2.5 Developing and Maintaining Cultural Reciprocity

Each teacher/principal reported positive interactions with students, families, and the community. Negative interactions most often focused on issues found in most classrooms, for example misbehaviour, inattentiveness, health concerns. Peculiar to the colony setting in many respects, certainly at the 15 year old age group, there were instances of teachers disagreeing with parents on whether or not a child should continue with their formal education at the school.

The colony strived to make the teacher/principals feel part of the colony. If there were concerns about the teacher/principal's ability to develop social relations with the students, it was not due to colony reticence. Teachers participated in after-school games with non-student colony members; their vehicles were repaired *gratis* in the colony shops; they were invited to colony weddings, celebrations, and they attended the funerals of colony members. They frequently went home laden with fresh baking, meat, and produce. One of the teacher's concerns was the amount of weight they gained because they ate a hearty lunch daily (compliments of the colony), fresh snacks during the day, and the receipt of so many food items to take home.

The interdependence between the teachers and colony is highlighted by LaFramboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993), who identified the ability to maintain active social relations with the cultural group as a characteristic of cultural competence. The positive implications of

effective and positive relations with students was illustrated by Amit's (2002, p. 18) criteria for an effective community: "People care because they associate the idea of community with people they know, with whom they have shared experiences, activities, places, and histories. A community arises out of interaction between the imagination of solidarity and its realization through social relations." The teachers, the colony members and the students strengthened their cultural reciprocity by reinforcing each other's efforts in their own idiosyncratic ways.

6.3 Implications

Implications related to the study focus on the research findings in terms of future changes to educational systems, ideas for future research and my reflections on the research journey in terms of my own personal response to the study.

6.3.1 Tapping the Voices of Hutterite Communities

The role of technology and distance education in colony education lends itself to research and review. The dedicated intranet utilized by colony schools in some jurisdictions to deliver high school courses, for example, may have applicability to Saskatchewan colonies. Internet use by colony students and members and the potential for deleterious effects on culture was raised by the colony teachers. Who was accessing the internet appeared to be a concern at the colony, based on comments of the teacher/principals and colony members. Any interagency collaborative efforts initiated by the Ministry of Education with respect to distance education, course selection and delivery would be well served by colony representation, if they were willing to participate. If colony members are reticent about participating, colony teacher/principals should be included, as one would expect them to be.

An initiative from the Ministry of Education regarding teaching and administration on colony schools would, I believe, be welcomed. As the number of colonies increase, more

schools will be established, and Hutterites continue to be an economic and social force in the province. Due to a principle of being apolitical, Saskatchewan Hutterites have not lobbied as effectively as other cultural, economic, and social groups. In other jurisdictions, for example Manitoba, Hutterites have pursued a stronger lobbying role in the political domain. In Saskatchewan, a provincial commission inviting the participation of colony educational and other stakeholders may be beneficial. At this point in time, it may well be beneficial to examine the possibilities and the potential that lies behind tapping the voice of Hutterite communities regarding educational matters.

6.3.2 Recruitment and Selection: Essential Qualities for Colony Teaching

According to Manning (2003), as a result of an analysis of leadership studies, technical competence and organizational experience are not enough to be an effective leader/manager. Teacher/principals recommended that other teachers going to a colony need to ensure, what Manning referred to as, “relationship competence and openness to new perspectives” (p. 21). The context of the colony teacher/principal is a unique setting, and the role of the individual is somewhat apart from the foundations of the greater culture. A suggestion to those hiring new colony teachers would be to check for the presence of *relationship competence*. According to Terpstra (2002), relationship competence is characterized by understanding the behaviour of others, possessing communication skills, sociability, being an encourager, being motivational, and being a confidence builder, as well as being positive and dynamic. These are attributes manifested by effective leaders and managers. Terpstra (2002) described the ability to adapt to new cultures and to reconcile the differences between *yours and theirs* as to “think in both directions,” taking a reverse view to the conflicting

values; there are, however, similarities and differences between the settings of a colony and those of an English school.

How well did the teacher/principals demonstrate their cultural intelligence at these colony schools? What did their actions suggest as behaviours that would be useful to those contemplating professional work in these communities? As a possible guide, Deardorff (2009, p. ix) offered a definition of cultural intelligence and the commensurate competence as follows: “the prevalence of cross-cultural understanding and an ability to live and work productively and harmoniously with people having very different values, backgrounds, and habits.” Cultural intelligence (Thomas, 2006), with respect to this study, is perceived as an understanding and appreciation of one’s cultural identity, the similarities and differences between cultures, and the utilization of one’s knowledge of Hutterite culture to maintain active relations with and among their students. In my study, I observed parallels between the communal background of the Hutterites and the commitment of the teachers, a commitment that endorsed cross-cultural connections.

6.3.3 Facilitating the Dual Role

The teachers expressed concerns about their feelings of professional, cultural, and physical disengagement, coupled with a desire for greater interaction between themselves and school-based and school division administrators across their school system. The monthly Division-level administrative council meetings were seen by them as not always as relevant as they could have been for their needs. They viewed their administrative colleagues to be quite unfamiliar with the role and setting of colony teachers, and they saw this as an area in need of some attention on the part of senior administrators within the school division. For example, with the cooperation and participation of the colonies, connections, knowledge and understandings

would likely be facilitated by inviting colony schools to host divisional administrators' meetings. If the group of administrators were too large, perhaps school administrators of schools within a fifty kilometre radius of the colony could be invited.

I would suspect that for many off-colony educators, the experience would be a revelation. When a Hutterite school hosted a divisional administrators' meeting, according to Kleinsasser (*n.d.*, p. 10), "the administrators could not get over the generous size of rooms. They also expressed surprise at the educational and multimedia resources that were available to enhance instruction and to accommodate diversity in learning styles." The administrators could observe their colleague's school, share ideas, be introduced to the colony members, and hopefully to some of the nuances, challenges and joys of cross-cultural schooling.

As revealed by the teachers in their interviews and our discussions, administrative responsibilities at the colony school have increased and are continuing to expand. Ultimately, the quality of colony student instruction possibly will be inhibited as a result of time pressures and allocation, fatigue, and diminished professional interest in the colony teacher/principal position. As a point of departure in considering ways and means of alleviating concerns about the administrative demands of the role, several questions come to mind: What processes are causing an unnecessary burden within the colony schools? What is the impact of this on the work of the teacher/principal? How could procedures and practices be improved to reduce negative impacts or burdens? Perhaps the increased presence of parent volunteers may create administrative efficiencies, and would seem viable, provided that issues of confidentiality and willingness of the colony to permit this type of activity could be successfully addressed. Alternatively, where an educational assistant works less than full-time, their time could be increased to allow attention to clerical tasks that would facilitate the administrative aspect of the teacher/principal's role.

Regarding the ‘teaching’ side of the role, the substance of teacher professional development based upon cultural literature and related instructional strategies has tended to focus predominantly on *multi*-cultural and/or diverse classrooms, schools, and communities. While these have relevance in the context of colony teaching, the design and delivery of culturally aligned professional development for teachers, staff, and administrators in colony schools has much to recommend it.

6.3.4 Embracing the Culture

Teachers and educators may consider other perspectives in their views about career objectives. A teacher in an urban or town school may view student and community issues differently than might a colony teacher/principal. Although they share many educational perspectives, their different viewpoints will be enriching, professionally and personally. The teacher/principals expressed the gratification that had been brought to their lives as a result of teaching in a colony school. To adopt the mindset required for success in cross-cultural classrooms, *empathy* (viewing experience through the eyes of the other) would seem to be a requisite skill, one that nurtures engagement with students, supportive classroom climates, and culturally-relevant pedagogy.

One feature expressed by the four teacher/principals was their support of the Hutterite culture. They accepted the goals of the colony, they endeavoured to understand the Anabaptist traditions, and they sympathized with the challenges faced by the colony and its residents, on a human level and on a cultural level. However, a systemic ethnic, cultural, and language schism existed among the teacher/principals, the colony, and the students. Highlighting the importance and necessity of intercultural communication, Ting-Toomey (2012) emphasizes:

With rapid changes in global economy, technology, transportation, and immigration policies, the world is becoming a small, intersecting community. We find ourselves in increased contact with people who are culturally different, working side by side with us. From workplace to classroom diversity, different cultural beliefs, values, and communication styles are here to stay. In order to achieve effective intercultural communication, we have to learn to manage differences flexible and mindfully. (p. 3)

In any classroom, school, and community, it is vital for teachers to demonstrate competencies and attributes related to educating students from a culturally distinct background. Cultural awareness at the intellectual and affective level is required: including an awareness of their assumptions, values, biases, limitations, and world view; an understanding of the world view of the culturally different group; and an appreciation for appropriate intervention strategies and techniques for working with culturally diverse students and communities. As the teachers in my research amply demonstrated, teachers need to exhibit a comprehensive understanding of their roots and who they are; they need to embrace their cultural backgrounds, their connection to the students, schools, and community.

In the broader Canadian context, one of the federal government's goals is to encourage the retention of one's cultural background; hence, the *mosaic* concept that is often used to explain Canadian culture. Whether a community with a multicultural flavour or one with a more monocultural flavour, whether it is an urban or a rural community, northern or southern, Francophone or Ukrainian, it is incumbent upon teachers to embrace the local culture and celebrate it in their classrooms and their school.

Culture symbolizes the unified configuration of human views, communications, activities, customs, beliefs, values, and foundations of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group

(Diller, 2004). This perspective rests upon the assumption that “there are certain psychological characteristics that all ethnic and culturally different [people] share” (Diller, 2004, p. 5). This precept needs to resonate with educational mission statements and behaviour and actions in the classroom.

6.4 Research-Related Reflection

This was a rich and valuable, though challenging, learning experience. Consequently, it left a great deal to reflect on. In this section, my reflections are presented in five areas: the impact of prior relationships with the participants; and reflections on the participant-observer role, the interview process, the dynamics of the settings and the case, and on the constructivist orientation more generally.

6.4.1 The Impact of Prior Relationships

Reflecting upon my methodological and research experiences, I found it had been beneficial to spend time with the teacher/principals in their schools and to meet on- and off-site for the pre- and semi-structured interviews and informal discussions. An eight-year professional relationship with the teacher/principals facilitated the alleviation of the awkwardness sometimes present when people are meeting for the first time. Did a prior association with the participants influence my judgment? What perspectives would another researcher have developed in a similar setting? These questions and reflections *contribute to my contemplation of the research process and my individual journey.*

My relationships with the teachers provided insight to the work they were doing and their individuality. Rapport had been established and I believed it enriched my research. The familiarity and comfort that can develop over time were quickly present. As well as interviewing the teacher/principals, I believe my interactions could be labelled conversations. A concern was

whether my past relationships with the teacher/principals would cloud my judgment of their work and affect my perceptions. This unease is articulated by Seidman (2006): “The desire to build rapport with the participant can transform the interviewing relationship into a full ‘We’ relationship in which the question of whose experience is being related and whose meaning is being made is critically confounded” (p. 96). My awareness of Seidman’s (2006) observations helped to ensure I did not transform the interview and the relationship into a “We” relationship. My efforts were influenced by Wolcott’s (2009) observation that it was important to keep the focus of my work on the participants and not strictly on me. Etherington (2004) stated that “including ourselves in our work needs to be intentional, in terms of the research outcome: a means to an end and not an end in itself” (p. 31).

6.4.2 Reflections on the Participant Observer Role

MacKenzie and Ling (2009) captured my perceptions of my role and my presence in the research process:

[The] research study was conducted within my own professional experience: I was therefore a ‘participant observer’ in my study. The education system studied was my work context and the phenomenon being studied was one with which I had recent, personal experience. At times participants' comments resonated with my own experience, ‘ringing true,’ while others made me stop and reflect from the perspective of experiences which were very different from my own. (para. 12)

The opportunity for interviewing and interacting with the colony school teacher/principals was partially achieved as a result of the autonomy their school setting provided (e.g., fewer staff with opportunities to interrupt their work, the absence of school assemblies, and the absence of intercom announcements). Many opportunities existed for asides,

elucidation, and explanation with the participants during student desk work, recess, class breaks, lunch time, and before school. As a result of their semi-isolated positions (e.g., professionally, culturally, and geographically) and the dearth of interactions with other educators, the participants appeared eager to talk and share.

I utilized participant observation as an attempt to involve myself with what was occurring to the teacher/principal in the classroom and the school. Although unable to duplicate the experiences of the teachers, I felt that I had been introduced to their classrooms. Richards (2009) described a predicament of researchers that I could identify with: Although participant observation is a natural way to gather data, it is one of the most difficult because the roles of participator and observer conflict. It can be difficult to remember and participate at the same time. Digital audio recordings, observation, and note-taking contributed to the data, but it was not always possible to concurrently complete these tasks and be part of the classroom community.

I did, however, make concerted efforts to participate in classroom activities. I assisted with seat work, I took small groups aside and we read together, and I read stories to students. I would listen and follow along as a student read to me. Although I did not know the students well, I was recognized by some of them. Similar to my relations with the teachers, I believe this presence represented the behaviour I would likely see on a regular basis and allowed observations that I may not have experienced were I a total stranger. This sentiment was captured by Etherington (2004): “By allowing ourselves to be seen and heard by others, we open up the possibility of learning more about our topic and ourselves, and in greater depth” (p. 25). Pitfalls of participant observation, and which I reflected on, are the issues of inaccurate identification, perceptions, and personal bias (Baker & Lee, 2011).

6.4.3 Reflections on the Interview Process

Semi-structured interviews were arranged at the convenience of the teachers. Where and when they were held was their prerogative. For example, one of Margaret's interviews was held in the living room of her home while her husband watched television. She quietly and efficiently attended to a child on occasion, and two large dogs demanded their share of our attention (when they were not sleeping). This was a setting that worked for Margaret and she had chosen the circumstances of our meeting. It was a reminder to me of the sometimes idiosyncratic nature of constructivist research and of qualitative research more generally. Clarification and follow-up on a particular point or question was accomplished through e-mail correspondence or later conversations.

To assist with the gathering of data, I believed that interviewing the teacher/principals was an appropriate method. Prior to the commencement of my research, I pondered how the participants' accounts reflected on their beliefs and how well their accounts mirrored the setting (Silverman, 2004). I kept in mind the observation of Dilley (2004) that "there are skills – physical, social, mental, communicative – that embody the act of interviewing" (p. 128). Following the recommendation of Silverman (2004), I strived to utilize effective interviewing techniques such clear framing of questions, body language, and eye contact.

Consistent with issues raised by Silverman (2004), I was cognizant of how the relationships between me and the interviewees could be understood by others, for example our past associations and my experiences with colony school teaching. Some of the topics we discussed arose as a result of what occurred in the classroom and some were questions about programs and programming, school resources, teaching English language learners, and other subjects relevant to my research.

Considerable time was invested in travelling to and from the colonies. Two of the colonies were 90 minutes one-way from my residence, and I travelled during the coldest and darkest months of the year. Blizzards and poor driving conditions were a possibility while I was on the road. The trips on the road were opportunities to reflect and review what I had observed. While I could have interviewed and spoken with the teacher/principals using Skype (an interactive program that allows individuals to speak and see one another using a computer's webcam), I found the personal interviews preferable in all instances.

6.4.4 Reflections on the Setting and the Cases

While I have a keen interest in the Hutterite people, their schools, and the teachers who teach there, the colony school and teachers stood as the setting for my research. While I was interested in how four educators from one culture interacted professionally and personally in another culture, I occasionally wondered whether I was concentrating too much on the Hutterite people when I should be focusing on the schools and the teacher/principals, but I constantly returned to the fact that each teacher/principal worked in a unique cultural context and this, in its totality, was central to my study. Schools and communities have characteristics and particularities that distinguish them from other schools and communities. I believed that a *gestalt* existed and that the sites and the participants were interconnected at a foundational level. Bill taught at a colony that was developing its identity and finding its way in a new iteration. Daniel was at a school that was well-established, with a gymnasium, on the cusp of extending its mandate to high school. The community was anticipating the formation of a daughter colony within the following year. In conducting this multi-site case study, I was aware that my data were unique to my study and its participants: four sites, four communities that provided the opportunity for depth of perspective and analysis.

6.4.5 Reflections on the Constructivist Orientation

My study was based upon a constructivist epistemology. It concentrated on what Wilson & Liepot (2004) referred to as the lives and experiences of the participants. I found that, in the process, Bloomberg and Volpe's (2008, p. 9) statement that reality is socially constructed, and that individuals develop multiple subjective meanings of their own personal experiences, provided a strong insights and guideposts for my interactions with the participating teacher/principals.

However, I also found that the research process demanded of me an element of faith. I initially pondered the extent to which teachers may have attempted to deceive me and have me believe what they were not. However, I believed that my past relationships with the participants had negated that type of behaviour. None of the teachers seemed to act any differently than they did when I had observed and interacted with them on previous occasions over the eight year period of time I worked with them. Regardless, I accepted what I saw, what I observed, and how I interpreted those interactions as they were meant for me to see and believe. I believed it was contingent upon me to accept what the teachers revealed about their setting and their practices. I held that what the teachers reported about themselves and their role was how it existed. During the course of their time spent on the colony, the teacher/principals had constructed their own meanings of their role in the school (Brooks & Brooks, 2012). For example, Daniel's perspective, influenced by his interest in theological issues, on his role in the school and how education should be delivered differed from Bill's perspective, that is of a mechanic and carpenter not strongly connected to his religion. As Etherington (2004, p. 27) observed, "There is no fixed and unchanging Truth." Regardless of similarities and differences, I am persuaded

each one of them authentically represented their school settings and their relationships with the students and the colony members.

I reflected on the functional value of comparing the similarities and differences between Hutterite and non-Hutterite cultures, colony teachers and teachers in off-colony schools.

Respecting the utility of inter-cultural comparisons, I contemplated the observations of Jacob (2005): “If [communities] are indeed culturally distinguishable, can they usefully be compared against each other? Or are apples being compared to oranges” (p. 514)? One final critique pertains to the absence of critique and challenge from the participants. Whether or not this was a failing of the constructivist orientation, the fact remains that this was a limitation of the study and its method. According to Brenna (personal communication, June 24, 2013):

Limitations may exist in light of the study’s multi-site case study framework supporting a researcher mutually engaged with participants on a complex landscape where notions of border crossings are personally interpreted. The field may require further research to delineate aspects of critique not available due to the terms of the project where four participants well known in the contexts wherein they live may have been reluctant, under the narrow confines of the anonymity in such a study, to divulge aspects of their life and work that might possibly reflect upon the status quo.

6.5 Implications for Further Research

After observing the roles of self-identity, self-awareness, and a strong connection to the colony in the study’s participants, what might conceivably be found in a parallel study involving teachers in other colony contexts? What should we look for and what might we find? Are teacher/principals in other colony schools encountering administrative challenges? What other

strategies might be uncovered that would facilitate teaching and administration in a cross-cultural context?

With respect to further research in this area, an exploration and critique of the appropriateness of various educational arrangements for colony schools may be appropriate. To what extent might the autonomy of the colonies hamper a focused examination? One of the reasons for such an inquiry is that the duration of formal schooling and training appears to be increasing in many jurisdictions. Government regulations concerning qualifications for the trades are an additional consideration. Manitoba, for example, has determined that Hutterites must be certified journeypeople in some trades (electrician, plumber) or the colony would be compelled to employ certified contractors from outside the colony (Kleinsasser, *n.d.*).

It would be worthwhile to complete a multiple site case study of Hutterite teachers, for example *Schmeideleut* colony teachers in Manitoba, with a focus on such topics as the role of language in the educational setting when students and teachers are fluent German speakers, the implications for schools, students, and communities when they are assigned teachers with a sound and comprehensive understanding of Hutterian students' cultural, linguistic, and historical backgrounds; professional development needed and received by colony teachers; the effect colony philosophy (e.g., attitudes towards school completion or educational technology) on the administration of the school and the instructional strategies of the teacher; Hutterian perspectives on the adequacy and nature of provincial curricula; a qualitative analysis comparing non-Hutterite teachers and Hutterite teachers could examine issues that were raised respecting the relative advantages and concerns of being taught by Hutterites or non-Hutterite teachers. An examination of the views of Hutterite communities regarding the ability of non-Hutterite teachers to meet the needs of the students and the community would be worthwhile.

The issue of suitable educational resources for colony schools was raised by the four teachers, and I concur, having observed the available educational materials in the classroom, the school library, and on the students' desks. If teachers are going to teach from a culturally competent and responsive position, support is required. The applicability and utilization of appropriate resources is a topic worthy of further study. According to Montiel-Overall (2009), for example, there is a need to develop cultural competence guidelines for school resources and libraries.

Related to the research process, within some jurisdictions community members do the research, ask the questions, and propose changes, innovations, or revisions (Umphrey, 2007). These initiatives occurred as a result of their curiosity and desire to improve the community (Umphrey, 2007). Are there champions of this type of research within the Hutterite community, as they are currently organized? The impetus may come from Hutterite colony teachers as they desire to take their learnings to another level of action and animation and improve the delivery of education in their schools. This approach is referred to as participatory action research (PAR). PAR's purpose is to improve the quality of people's communities and family lives (Creswell, 2005). PAR extends into the community and beyond the school and the teacher/principal. A possible constraint could be whether a culture, such as the Hutterites, condones such a study, and who would do the research? Grants are available to educators for such professional research. For example, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation created the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching "in response to teachers' needs for greater involvement in educational research. Its goal is to support inquiry, reflection, and the communication of information and ideas that improve education" (2013, para. 1). This holds promise as one vehicle by which to deliver such studies.

Possibilities related to the process of research itself were evident as this study progressed. How do teacher/principals and other members of the educational establishment approach cross-cultural research in a respectful manner? How can cultures at variance with the researcher be examined? I consider it valid to assume that a teacher may be better able to fulfil their professional responsibilities if they are aware of these issues. One case in point is the assumption of homogeneity that individuals bring to their research and professional roles in a Hutterian context. Reiterating the observations of Jacob (2005), assuming that a high level of cultural homogeneity exists does a disservice to the culture being studied. “Cultural purity” is a bias that underestimates the diversity of a community and its connections to the greater society and the rest of humanity (Jacob, 2005). It demonstrates a degree of disrespect toward the community and those associated with it.

6.6 Reflecting on My Research Journey

MacKenzie and Ling (2009) related the research process metaphorically, as a journey. According to MacKenzie and Ling (2009):

A researcher cannot be part of the context of research without having an impact on that context at the same time as the context is impacting upon the researcher. . . . In the course of this . . . relationship, both the context and the researcher are changed. (para. 9)

When I embarked on my research journey, I left areas of comfort and familiarity (my knowledge, my biases, my perceptions) and delivered myself into settings and interactions that I anticipated would offer insight and hone my perspectives on education (Clifford, 1997).

Relating to the concept of crystallization, I reflected upon the questions posed by Ellingson (2008): “How does my identity relate to my work? How do my age, gender, race/ethnicity,

nationality, abilities and disabilities, special talents, and formative experiences shape how I understand my data” (p. 75)?

6.6.1 Crossing My Own Borders

It is valuable, upon reflection, to explore what new learnings I have come away with, having conducted this study of four colony teacher/principals. The dissertation journey provided a valuable experience in introspection, learning about others, and learning about another culture. Reynolds (2000) stated that “whether the keyword is travel or journey or border crossing, how we get there is a crucial part of the equation that is often conveniently ignored. Why do we go, with whom, and under what conditions” (p. 545)? These were some of the unanswered and unanticipated questions I faced. Reynolds (2000) nurtured my view that borders, geographical, social, and professional, was an apt metaphor for me and the teacher/principals:

Rooted in a premise of exclusion, the idea of borderlands or margins offers a theory that seems to be truly empowering and liberating. That is, the occupants of borderlands are outsiders to the dominant culture; they have some freedom of movement and the ability to see from the outsider perspective precisely because they do not "belong." (p. 543)

The few inconveniences to educators that were presented during my study, for example commuting on gravel roads and relative professional and physical isolation, may be found in other settings. Promoting the benefits of teaching on a Hutterite colony should be encouraged. Teaching on a Hutterite colony appeared to be an unintentionally well-kept professional secret that deserves to be discovered. A multiplicity of educational settings exists (e.g., classrooms, administration, urban and rural locales). Until I started visiting colony schools to assist them in their introduction of high school programming, my knowledge of them was scant and my awareness of the benefits and challenges of teaching at a colony school was negligible.

As a consequence of spending some time with colony members, I was inspired and charmed by their friendliness, industry, tenacity, and history. I observed, heard, and was party to the fulfilment the colony teacher/principals received as a result of their work. With respect to my “borders” and journey, the thought-provoking research and the crossing of my professional and personal borders enhanced my cultural proficiency, my role as an educator, and enriched my identity. “*What I knew and who I was* at the start of the journey was very different from *what I knew and who I was* at the end” (MacKenzie & Ling, 2009, para. 12). The borders I crossed opened onto mental and emotional terrain that will contribute toward the development of my potential as an individual with a better understanding of Hutterite culture.

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Appendix A

Application for Approval of Research Protocol

Application for Approval of Research Protocol

Letter of Consent to the Director of Education

Letter of Consent to Teacher/Principals

Letter of Consent to Four Principals

Letter of Consent for Research Project

Application for Approval of Research Protocol

Submitted to
University of Saskatchewan, Behavioural Research Ethics Board

1. Name of supervisor:

Dr. Patrick Renihan

1a. Name of student:

William Randall Rodger - College of Education, Ph.D. Candidate

This study is part of a research project related to the program requirements of the College of Education.

1b. Anticipated Start Date of Research Study and Expected Completion Date of Research Study

Anticipated Start Date of Research Study: November 1, 2011

Expected Completion Date of Research Study: June 30, 2012

2. Title of Study:

Hutterite colony teacher/principals' understandings related to their teaching and principal roles

3. Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to examine the cross-cultural implications for the work of teacher/principals in selected Hutterian colonies. Hutterian children's education is being subjected to change internally and externally (Hostetler, 1997; Janzen & Stanton, 2010). Internally, there are curricular and instructional pressures as Hutterian students advance their education. Traditionally, the colony's teacher/principal has provided the education for the colony's children in a one-room school setting, primarily from grades K-8 (Hostetler, 1997; Janzen & Stanton, 2010). In recent years, as the role of teachers has expanded, the role of the colony's teacher has followed suit (Guthrie & Schuermann, 2010). Colonies desirous of their children attaining high school matriculation, the requirements of students with special needs, and increasing administrative responsibilities and demands have impacted the colony teacher/principal. To meet the goals of dynamic agricultural and manufacturing markets, Hutterites have been required to upgrade their skills and expertise. The following questions comprise the focus of the study. The research questions addressed in this study are:

- 1) What are the norms and related expectations necessary for cultural competence among Hutterite colony teacher/principals and how do they relate to their work?
- 2) What are non-Hutterite teacher/principals' understandings of their level of cultural competence concerning the nature of their role?
- 3) How is cultural competence demonstrated in the work-life of colony teacher/principals?

4. Funding: Self-funded

5. Expertise: Not applicable

6. Conflict of Interest:

There is a prior relationship (professional colleagues) between the researcher and the participants in the study (teacher/principals of the eight Hutterian colony schools). This relationship is no longer in effect due to the researcher's superannuation from the Prairie Spirit School Division and the Saskatchewan teaching profession in 2010. The researcher administering the survey and conducting the interviews is cognizant of this relationship and will address it verbally with the participants prior to commencing the study.

Participants will be assured that they are not obliged to participate in the research and there will be no adverse consequences should they choose not to participate. The subjects will be assured that their responses will be kept anonymous. There are no financial benefits that will accrue from the research. There are no potential limits on the publication or distribution of the findings.

7. Participants

The researcher is seeking application to administer a survey to four of the eight teacher/principals of Hutterite colony schools in the Prairie Spirit School Division. Prairie Spirit School Division is primarily a rural school division surrounding the city of Saskatoon and comprised of 44 schools. The division office for Prairie Spirit School Division is located in the town of Warman. A letter will be sent to the Director of Education, Prairie Spirit School Division, requesting permission to conduct interviews with four of the eight colony teacher/principals.

When the Director of Education approves the application, the researcher will contact the teacher/principals by phone to gauge their willingness to participate. A group of four will be selected by the researcher from the eight teacher/principals. Each teacher/principal will receive a detailed outline of the study and a consent form to be signed and returned to the researcher. The four principal/teachers will be observed in their schools by the researcher over a variety of school days (probably not totalling more than five days total; not one continuous week at the school) during the school year.

7a. Recruitment Material:

See attached recruitment material:

- (a) Invitation letter to Prairie Spirit School Division Director of Education (see Appendix A).
- (b) Invitation letter to selected Hutterian colony teacher/principals to participate in the interviews (see Appendix A).
- (c) Invitation letter to selected Hutterite colony teacher/principals for observation (see Appendix A).
- (d) Data/Transcript Release Form (see Appendix A).

8. Consent:

- (a) A copy of the letter requesting the permission of the Director of Education's permission to interview selected Hutterian colony teacher/principals and observe any of the teacher/principals in their schools is attached.
- (b) Copies of the consent letter sent to the Hutterian colony teacher/principals are attached.
- (c) No children attending the schools will be interviewed or surveyed.

9. Methods/Procedures:

Participants will be selected as detailed in section 7. The surveys will be completed by participants as indicated in the letter of explanation. See attached.

10. Storage of Data

During and after the completion of the study, all data collected will be securely stored by my research advisor, Dr. Patrick Renihan, at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of five years and then destroyed, as per University of Saskatchewan guidelines and requirements.

11. Dissemination of Results

The results of this study will be used to complete requirements for a dissertation in the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. The results of this study will be shared with the faculty of the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. The results may be utilized in the preparation of published articles and presentations at conferences and seminars.

12. Risk, Benefits, and Deception

Subjects' participation in this study is voluntary. The anonymity of the subjects will be assured. Participants may withdraw from the study at any point without penalty such as the loss of services or other such benefits.

13. Confidentiality

Confidentiality of the participants' involvement will be maintained and respected during the study. Although the four schools are within the Prairie Spirit School Division, pseudonyms for each of the four selected schools and the teacher/principals will be selected by the participants themselves. The school division has eight Hutterian colony schools within its jurisdiction.

Geographical or physical descriptions which may provide the identity of the school will not be provided; or, they will be generic enough to mask the location of the colony. Currently (the 2010-2011 school year), the population of principal/teachers of the eight colony schools includes five females and three males.

14. Data/Transcript Release

The participants will be provided with an opportunity to review any written and transcribed transcripts. This is to ensure that the data reflects accurately what took place during the interviews and interactions between the researcher and the participants. Each participant will receive an affidavit as described below to affirm their understanding of the data/transcript release protocol:

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 Wm. Randy Rodger. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Wm. Randy Rodger 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

15. Debriefing and Feedback

The participants will be informed that the dissertation is available at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education Library and the Department of Educational Administration. Participants will be furnished with a summary of the research and the results, if they wish.

16. Required Signatures

Student researcher: _____

Research supervisor: _____

Department Head: _____

17. Required Contact Information

William Randall Rodger

Tel: 966-7619, c/o Dayna Boechler, Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Email: randy.rodger@usask.ca

Mailing address of student researcher, research supervisor, and Department Head: College of Education, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan, College of Education Building, 28 Education Road, Saskatoon, SK, S7N 0X1, Canada

Letter of Consent to the Director of Education

Dear Director of Education:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. I am conducting a study entitled *Hutterite colony Teacher/Principals' Understandings Related to Their Teaching and Principal Roles*. The purpose of this study is to examine the cross-cultural implications for the work of teacher/principals in selected Hutterian colonies.

I seek your permission to administer a number of brief questionnaires and interview four of the teacher/principals of the Hutterite colonies in Prairie Spirit School Division. The school division and all those involved are assured complete anonymity and confidentiality. The study has been approved on ethical grounds and by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Ethics Board on August 26, 2011.

From the eight colony teacher/principals in Prairie Spirit School Division four will be chosen by me to participate in the study. I may contact the various teacher/principals within six months for points of clarification that will assist me in my analysis. The four subjects will be observed in their schools by the researcher over pre-arranged and approved periods during the school year

There will absolutely be no video-taping during the time I spend in the school. No students will be interviewed. Each subject will have the right to not answer any questions, or to turn off the tape recorder if he/she does not wish to have some responses recorded.

The data from this study will be used in the completion of a doctoral dissertation. The data may also be published and presented at conferences. These data will be stored in the office of my supervisor, Dr. Patrick Renihan, for five years after which they will be destroyed. The teacher/principals may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If any teacher/principals withdraw from the study at any time, any data collected from them will be destroyed.

Due to the fact that participants are being drawn from a small and specialized population, participants may be identifiable based on what they have said. The researcher (Wm. Randy Rodger) will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside the group, and be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality.

The schools and Prairie Spirit School Division can benefit from the study through an examination of the results and implications for teacher/principals of Hutterite colony schools. Prairie Spirit School Division was chosen because of its reputation for excellence within its schools and its administrative staff and because of the relationships I established while I was employed there as a school administrator, teacher, and program coordinator over a seventeen year period of time.

I am looking forward to your response to this request. If your school division is willing to participate, please complete the attached form and return it to me. You can mail the completed form to me at the address below or scan and e-mail it to me at randy.rodger@usask.ca.

Thank you for your assistance with the study. If you are interested, I will forward you a copy of the results of the completed study.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact me at 966-7619, c/o Dayna Boechler, Graduate Administrative Assistant. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Patrick Renihan, professor at the Department of Educational Administration, at pat.renihan@usask.ca or 966-7611.

Thank you for giving this request your attention.

Yours in education,

Wm. Randy Rodger
Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

Please sign, detach, and return to Wm. Randy Rodger, 313 Eighth Street East, SASKATOON, SK, S7H 0P4 in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Prairie Spirit School Division is willing to participate in the study entitled: *Hutterite colony Teacher/Principals' Understandings Related to Their Teaching and Principal Roles*. This research will be undertaken by Wm. Randy Rodger in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan as partial requirement for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

I have read and understood the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I am providing consent for the school division to participate in the study described above, and I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time. I will return a copy of this signed consent to you.

Director of Education/or Coordinator/Superintendent of Assessment and Research, Prairie Spirit School Division.

Date: _____

Letter of Consent to Teacher/Principals

Dear Teacher/Principal:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. I am conducting a study entitled: *Hutterite colony Teacher/Principals' Understandings Related to Their Teaching and Principal Roles*. The purpose of this study is to examine the cross-cultural implications for the work of teacher/principals in selected Hutterian colonies.

From the eight colony teacher/principals in Prairie Spirit School Division you are one of four chosen to participate. You were chosen in order to derive a balance in gender and years of teaching experience on a Hutterite colony. You are assured complete anonymity and confidentiality. The study has been approved on ethical grounds and by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Ethics Board on August 26, 2011.

You have the right not to answer all the questions, if you so wish. I may contact you within six months for points of clarification that will assist me in analysis.

From the group of eight teacher/principals, four have been selected for observation and focused interviews. The four subjects will be observed in their schools by the researcher over a pre-arranged period not exceeding one-week total during the school year.

There will absolutely be no video-taping during the time I spend in the school. No students will be interviewed. Each subject will have the right to not answer any questions, or to turn off the tape recorder if he/she does not wish to have some responses recorded. Each subject has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without recourse or penalty.

The data from this study will be used in the completion of a doctoral dissertation. The data may also be published and presented at conferences. These data will be stored in the office of my supervisor, Dr. Patrick Renihan, for five years after which they will be destroyed. You may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data collected from them will be destroyed.

I would like to share my background with you. I was an educator in Saskatchewan and Alberta for 31 years. My experience includes that of a substitute teacher in Edmonton, classroom teacher at a junior high school in Lloydminster for five years, junior high school vice-principal and principal in North Battleford for eight years, principal of Rosthern High School for nine years, and eight years as a division office program coordinator in Prairie Spirit School Division until my superannuation in June, 2010. During my employment with PSSD, I developed an interest in the Hutterite colonies and particularly the role of the teacher/principal on the colony.

You and the Prairie Spirit School Division can benefit from the study through an examination of the results and implications for teacher/principals of Hutterite colony schools. Prairie Spirit School Division was chosen because of its reputation for excellence within its

schools and its administrative staff and because of the relationships I established while I was employed there. I am looking forward to your response to this request. If you are willing to participate, please complete the attached form and return it to me. You can mail the completed form to me at the address below in the self-addressed stamped envelope or scan and e-mail it to me at randy.rodger@usask.ca. I will return a copy of your consent form to you.

Due to the fact that participants are being drawn from a small and specialized population, participants may be identifiable based on what they have said. The researcher (Wm. Randy Rodger) will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside the group, and be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality.

Thank you for your assistance with the study. If you are interested, I will forward you a copy of the results of the completed study.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact me at 966-7619, c/o Dayna Boechler, Graduate Administrative Assistant. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Patrick Renihan, professor at the Department of Educational Administration, at pat.renihan@usask.ca or 966-7611.

Thank you for giving this request your attention.

Yours in education,

Wm. Randy Rodger
Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan
Home address:
313 Eighth Street East,
Saskatoon, SK
S7H 0P4

Please sign, detach, and return to Wm. Randy Rodger, 313 Eighth Street East, SASKATOON, SK, S7H 0P4 in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

I am willing to participate in the study entitled: *Hutterite colony Teacher/Principals' Understandings Related to Their Teaching and Principal Roles*. This research will be undertaken by Wm. Randy Rodger in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan as partial requirement for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

I have read and understood the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I am providing consent for my participation in the study described above, and I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

Teacher/principal, Prairie Spirit School Division

Date: _____

Letter of Consent to Four Principals

Dear [*principal's name*]:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my study. You and the other principal/teachers will be observed in your schools by me over a no more than five days total, either for a half-day, a full day, or a brief visit during the school year. In this role it is my expectation that I can assist you in the daily happenings of your school, similar to a community volunteer or a parent helper. At various convenient scheduled times, we will sit together for a short discussion of the events which have occurred in the school and I will register this as data (through note-taking or audio recordings) and subsequently look for prevailing themes. We can meet after school, or at another location of your choosing, whenever, wherever!

There will absolutely be no video-taping during the time I spend in the school. No students will be interviewed during this study. All interviews will take place in a safe place designated by the participant. I will not discuss with the dissertation committee or anyone else any names, teaching locations, or identifying characteristics of any of the participants. Pseudonyms (you can choose your own for self and school) will be substituted in the transcripts for all names of persons, schools, school divisions, towns, and counties. The teacher/principals may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time. If any teacher/principals withdraw from the study at any time, any data collected from them will be destroyed.

Due to the fact that participants are being drawn from a small and specialized population, participants may be identifiable based on what they have said. The researcher (Wm. Randy Rodger) will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside the group, and be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact me at 966-7619, c/o Dayna Boechler, Graduate Administrative Assistant. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Patrick Renihan, professor at the Department of Educational Administration, at pat.renihan@usask.ca or 966-7611.

Yours in education,

Wm. Randy Rodger
Department of Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

Please sign, detach, and return to Wm. Randy Rodger, 313 Eighth Street East, SASKATOON, SK, S7H 0P4 in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

[*Insert name*] is willing to participate in the study entitled: *Hutterite colony Teacher/Principals' Understandings Related to Their Teaching and Principal Roles*. This research will be

undertaken by Wm. Randy Rodger in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan as partial requirement for a Doctor of Philosophy Degree.

I have read and understood the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I am providing consent for the school to participate in the study described above, and I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time. I will return a copy to you.

Teacher/principal

Date: _____

Interview Transcript Release Form

Title of Study:

Hutterite Colony Teacher/Principals' Understandings Related to Their Teaching and Principal Roles.

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview with the researcher, 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 interviews with Wm. Randy Rodger. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Wm. Randy Rodger to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Transcript Release Form for my records.

Participant

Date

Researcher

Date



Box 809 • 121 Klassen St.
Warman SK CAN • S0K 4L
Phone: 306-683-2800
Fax: 306-934-8221
www.spiritsd.ca

Oct. 14, 2011

WM. RANDY RODGER
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
HOME ADDRESS:
313 EIGHTH STREET EAST
SASKATOON SK S7H 0P2

Dear Randy:

Thank you for your request indicating that you would like to conduct a study entitled, "**School Leadership in a Cross-cultural Context: The Role of the Teacher/Principal on Selected Hutterite Colonies**" in Prairie Spirit School Division.

Please be advised that your request to conduct a study with schools from Prairie Spirit School Division has been approved.

We would appreciate receiving the results of the research when the project has been completed.

Sincerely,

Sharon Compton
Learning Superintendent

Lori Jeschke
Coordinator Schools and Learning

LJ/mb

Appendix B
Classroom Observation Instrument

Classroom Observation Instrument

Length of Activity:

Descriptive Notes:

Reflective Notes:



Appendix C
Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Talk about your own cultural identity and its influences on your teaching.
2. Describe two or three ways you think you have grown or developed (or not) as a result of teaching on a Hutterite colony? Can you provide an example?
3. What suggestions would you give other teachers on getting the most out teaching on a Hutterite colony? How did you reconcile your expectations, those of the parents, and the Division Office?
4. Was this assignment what you expected? What are the similarities and differences to other teaching assignments?
5. How is the administrative role different from what you would find in another school? Can you give an example?
6. What are your understandings about the lives and culture of Hutterites?
6. How do your understandings about the Hutterites influence your teaching? Give some examples of how these understandings are incorporated in your teaching.
7. What, if anything, have you observed that may be responsible for bringing about change on this colony? What changes have you observed?
8. How do you negotiate the cultural differences between your students and you in your teaching? Could you give an example?
9. How would you describe your ability to communicate cross-culturally? Provide a couple of examples.
10. “*Cross-cultural interactions enhance the quality of one’s life.*” To what extent do you believe this is true for you and your students?

Appendix D

***NVivo9* Coding Summary**

NVivo9 Coding Summary

Hierarchical Name	Number Of Coding References
Shirley	
Node	
Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.	7
Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to communicate cross-culturally.	7
Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to communicate cross-culturally.	7
Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.	9
Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.\Understands differences in multiple contexts	2
Administrative duties and functions	21
Background	10
Background\religious	10
Discrimination due to one's cultural status is unjust.\Assumptions about an individual cannot be solely based on one's group membership.	1
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity	9
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\Knowledge of other cultures and how they are similar or different from one's own cultural group	8
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\Knowledge of other cultures and how they are similar or different from one's own cultural group\knowledge of other cultures and the effect it has on other groups	8
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\knowledge of other cultures and the effect it has on other groups	8
Knowledge about issues of oppression and the effect it has on different groups.	1
Knowledge about issues of oppression and the effect it has on different groups.\Knowledge about interactions between multiple oppressions such as race, gender, class, lifestyle, and religion	1
Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.	5
Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.\Knows the effect cultural differences can have in communication patterns.	1
One must take risks in life.	8
One must take risks in life.\Cross-cultural interactions enhance the quality of one's life.	4
Pride within one's own cultural group.	3

Pride within one's own cultural group.\No one group is better than the other	1
Self-reflection	20

Hierarchical Name	Number Of Coding References
Self-reflection\Ability to identify similarities and differences across cultures and the ability to articulate that with others	13
Socializing with Hutterites	4
teaching	17
teaching\colony experience	14

Margaret Node

Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.	10
Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to communicate cross-culturally.	9
Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to communicate cross-culturally.	9
Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.	20
Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.\Understands differences in multiple contexts	14
Administrative duties and functions	12
Background	13
Background\farming	2
Background\religious	3
Background\religious upbringing	2
Discrimination due to one's cultural status is unjust.\Assumptions about an individual cannot be solely based on one's group membership.	12
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity	16
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\Knowledge of other cultures and how they are similar or different from one's own cultural group	13
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\Knowledge of other cultures and how they are similar or different from one's own cultural group\knowledge of other cultures and the effect it has on other groups	13
Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\knowledge of other cultures and the effect it has on other groups	13
Knowledge about issues of oppression and the effect it has on different groups.	5

Knowledge about issues of oppression and the effect it has on different groups.\Knowledge about interactions between multiple oppressions such as race, gender, class, lifestyle, and religion	3
Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.	16
Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.\Knows the effect cultural differences can have in communication patterns.	7
One must take risks in life.	16
One must take risks in life.\Cross-cultural interactions enhance the quality of one's life.	13
Pride within one's own cultural group.	8

Hierarchical Name	Number Of Coding References
Pride within one's own cultural group.\No one group is better than the other	6
Self-reflection	32
Self-reflection\Ability to identify similarities and differences across cultures and the ability to articulate that with others	11
Socializing with Hutterites	9
teaching	23
teaching\colony experience	16
teaching\regular school	2

Bill

Node

Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.	8
Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.\Understands differences in multiple contexts	6
Administrative duties and functions	5
Background	1
Background\religious	1
Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.	4
Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.\Knows the effect cultural differences can have in communication patterns.	2
One must take risks in life.	3
One must take risks in life.\Cross-cultural interactions enhance the quality of one's life.	3
Pride within one's own cultural group.	2
Pride within one's own cultural group.\No one group is better than the other	2
Self-reflection	7
teaching	15

teaching\colony experience	10
----------------------------	----

Daniel

Node

Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.	4
---	---

Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to communicate cross-culturally.	4
--	---

Hierarchical Name	Number Of Coding
-------------------	------------------

Ability to challenge acts of discrimination.\Ability to communicate cross-culturally.	4
---	---

Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.	10
---	----

Ability to see things from multiple perspectives.\Understands differences in multiple contexts	8
--	---

Administrative duties and functions	6
-------------------------------------	---

Background	5
------------	---

Background\religious upbringing	1
---------------------------------	---

Discrimination due to one's cultural status is unjust.\Assumptions about an individual cannot be solely based on one's group membership.	6
--	---

Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity	11
--	----

Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\Knowledge of other cultures and how they are similar or different from one's own cultural group	9
--	---

Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\Knowledge of other cultures and how they are similar or different from one's own cultural group\knowledge of other cultures and the effect it has on other groups	9
--	---

Knowledge of self as it relates to one's cultural identity\knowledge of other cultures and the effect it has on other groups	9
--	---

Knowledge about issues of oppression and the effect it has on different groups.	5
---	---

Knowledge about issues of oppression and the effect it has on different groups.\Knowledge about interactions between multiple oppressions such as race, gender, class, lifestyle, and religion	3
--	---

Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.	16
---	----

Knowledgeable about elements involved in social change.\Knows the effect cultural differences can have in communication patterns.	8
---	---

Self-reflection	22
-----------------	----

Self-reflection\Ability to identify similarities and differences across cultures and the ability to articulate that with others	10
---	----

Socializing with Hutterites	3
-----------------------------	---

teaching	24
----------	----

Appendix E

Bar-Graph Representations of Primary Coding Characteristics for Each Teacher/Principal

