Anti-Bias and Culturally Supportive Curriculums in Early Childhood Education
Classrooms in Nova Scotia

Leah Quilty
Mount Saint Vincent University

A thesis submitted to the Department of Child & Youth Study

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts (Child & Youth Study)

September, 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

This study was designed to examine if anti bias and culturally responsive curriculums are present in urban and rural daycares in Nova Scotia. Additional factors were investigated to determine the relationship between early childhood educators' training, the length of time that they have been in the field, the number of professional training programs or academic courses on this curricula which they have attended, the ways in which the courses were conducted, the skills they were taught, a measure of cultural sensitivity, and the implementation and maintenance of a culturally responsive curriculum. Given that there is no current listing of early childhood educators in the province of Nova Scotia, the desired sample size was estimated using the following assumptions: at least 6 staff are employed in each urban center and 3 staff are employed in each rural daycare. Given that there are 379 licensed daycares in the province it was estimated that there would be 1527 early childhood educators in the province. Of the 308 early childhood educators who were approached, 32 (9%) responded to the invitation to participate. A decision was made not to seek more survey responses because of the time and expense relative to an anticipated low number of additional returns. An Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) and a questionnaire developed for the research was used to gather data in this study. The ISS was used to determine each participant's level of intercultural sensitivity and in particular how well each respondent interacted, enjoyed, respected, felt comfortable, and was attentive to students of various backgrounds. The questionnaire was used to gather information about demographics, the type of training early childhood professionals had received on anti-bias and culturally responsive curricula, the teacher's attitudes toward an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum, how teachers were

making their classrooms and curriculum responsive to all students, the supports that the teachers perceived as being in their schools for them to engage in anti-bias practice, and the problems and issues they believed must be addressed in order to carry out successful multicultural education programs. Based on the fact that participants of this study did not mention features of the anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum that past researchers have mentioned as critical, and the fact that this study showed no significant outcomes between those who were trained, either by degree, diploma, or the equivalency, and their culturally sensitivity, and the fact that one's level of experience did not have any significant impact on the way in which they were trained, it was suggested that in order for these outcomes to be adjusted it is the training program facilitator that needs to adjust.

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1

Due to the fact that in the past five years immigration and poverty levels have increased in Canada (Canadian Council On Social Development, 2000; Statistics Canada, 2005), I believe ensuring that all professionals working in the field are made aware of how to approach, teach, and interact effectively in a culturally respectful and bias-free manner is critically important. According to Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (1989) this goal can be reached through the implementation of a culturally responsive and anti-bias curriculum; as it is one that provides an inclusive education while focusing not only on cultural diversity but also on gender, socioeconomic, and physical differences (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Alongside this, it has also been noted as a teaching practice that takes into consideration the way in which a child's developmental undertakings construct identity and attitudes towards various genders, social classes, and ethic groups (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). In addition, it is also a style of teaching that addresses the impacts that stereotyping, biases, and discriminatory behaviors can have on a young person's development and social interactions (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Educators often bring preconceived cultural biases that are primarily based upon the unproven descriptions about a group's physical and mental characteristics into their classrooms (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). Children as young as six-months-old are able to learn and model power codes and racist rules, and researchers have noted that developments of racial tendencies are often linked to problems within curriculums which purport to promote messages of respect and equality (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005).

Therefore, it is important to incorporate other cultures into an early childhood education curriculum by including this aspect into the teaching methodology whereby one is able to learn about the "unique customs, rules, rituals, and norms of a particular ethnic group" (Hoskins, 1999, p. 76-77)

On a professional level, I have experienced problems pertaining to cultural bias throughout past work experiences when I have worked alongside professionals in the sector who have obtained training on anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum but have not found reason to implement it into their daily routines. It is, therefore, essential that the training and attitudes of early childhood educators be examined to discover the road blocks to implementation.

Chapter 2

Canada is recognized around the world as a country with a high standard of living (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000). As a result of this world view and the rapid growth of the Canadian economy, Statistics Canada has reported that as there has been an increase in immigration and poverty rates in the past five years (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000; Statistics Canada, 2005). Based on these facts, today's early childhood education classrooms encompass children from various cultures and socio economic backgrounds. As a result of this trend, it has become critically important to ensure that all professionals working in the field are made aware of how to approach, teach, and interact effectively with these students. Furthermore, I believe that once these teaching practices are understood, not only will a teacher be able to pass on knowledge in a culturally responsive and anti-bias manner in which the child can process, but it will also ensure that all the children in attendance will be given an equal opportunity to developmentally excel.

Based on past and present experiences in the sector, not only do I understand the importance of educating professionals on culturally responsive and anti-bias curriculum practices, but I also believe that the ways in which early childhood educators are being trained on this subject matter should also be evaluated. My reasoning behind this statement is based on the premise that various studies, both old and new, have stated that in order to ensure that an educator fully understands the logical reasoning behind this type of practice, teachers must be educated on the history of cultural biases, the development of prejudice in young children, the exploration of ethnicity intolerance in the educator themselves, and the proper implementation of an anti-bias

curriculum(Bernhard, Diaz, & Allgood, 2005; Colville-Hall, Macdonald, & Smolen, 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Geist & Baum, 2005; Gonzalez-Mena, 2005; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Jacobson, 2000; Kieff, 2005; Killoran, 2004).

History of Cultural Biases

The ideology that states that differences exist amongst those who belong to various ethnic groups has been primarily constructed through the observation of historic economic and political power relationships (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). Moreover, the variances that are believed to exist are primarily based upon unproven scientific facts about a group's physical and mental characteristics (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). When racism is learned through these false assumptions cultural biases often translate into a system of power (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). In turn, these classifications decide which racial groups are economically, politically, and culturally advantaged or disadvantaged (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). The decided upon benefits and shortcomings are then maintained at both an institutional and individual level (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). For example, they are preserved through "…political structures, ideologies, and behaviors and they are also endorsed through individual bigotry, prejudice, and discrimination …" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005 p.2). As a result of these trends, societal violence against those who are poor or immigrants often increases (Giroux, 2004)

Traditional beliefs concerning racial advantages and disadvantages have had a profound impact on the way social relationships are formed and life predictions are shaped for people all over the world (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). For example,

Giroux (2004) states that culture plays a key role in ways in which people think about themselves and their relationships to others and that this phenomenon is produced in the way in which one's ethnic backdrop plays a central role in constructing an individual's "narrative, metaphors, images, and desiring maps" (p. 78) . As a result of this trend, individuals who are coloured often believe that their relationships and life long goals can only reach a minimum standard, while those who are white trust that they are able to live with unearned racial privilege (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). In addition to this, economic gaps are usually produced and maintained by those who belong to colorless cultures (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). This is due to the fact that members of this group are rarely able to observe that their dominant position in society is a result of having an ingrained need to excel to their highest potential (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). Furthermore, this trend is often the start of a discriminatory snowball; many individuals live in denial or ignorance that the systemic inequalities of racial discrimination have provided them with advantages, they progress through their life believing an assumption of superiority, they then exploit the economic resources of colored people, and the cycle of inequality continues (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005).

Based on the historic background of inappropriate cultural and financial biases amongst various cultural groups, it is important that early childhood educators understand that both the children and teachers who are attending their programs may be reinforcing some of the false assumptions about how other cultures live and act. In addition to this information, they must also realize that until professionals are able to recognize that these trends exist, culturally responsive and anti-bias early childhood education programs will primarily be unsuccessful.

Culturally Responsive and Anti-Bias Early Childhood Education

Definition of Culturally Responsive and Anti-Bias Early Childhood Education. A curriculum that can be classified under the terms of culturally responsive and anti-bias is one that provides an inclusive education (Derman-Sparks, 1989). According to various experts, it is a curriculum that addresses more than cultural diversity as it also aims at including gender and differences in physical abilities (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). These professionals state that this type of curriculum should also be based on the way in which a child's developmental undertakings construct identity and attitudes towards various genders, social classes, and ethic groups (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Alongside these criteria, this style of teaching should also address the impacts that stereotyping, biases, discriminatory behaviors, and the relationship between culture and power can have on a young person's development and social interactions (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Giroux, 1999).

Throughout the implementation of this type of teaching process, specialists insist that the adults in charge of executing these programs have two key responsibilities; as they work daily at providing children with an anti-bias curriculum through their teaching and presentations of materials, they must also aim at eliminating biases which exist in today's societal institutions (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Giroux, 1999). This being said, anti-bias curriculum consultants also uphold the belief that the adults must also be able to recognize a clear difference between the problems of the teachers and the needs of the children (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-

Sparks, 1992). When this area of concern is avoided some educators often view the work that they are doing, with the children in their care, as insufficient (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). When an individual's efforts are viewed as inadequate, responsibilities are often abandoned, and the adult looses all previously obtained motivation to aid in the creation of society which promotes the idea of equality (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Implementation of a Culturally Responsive and Anti-Bias Curriculum. First and foremost, in order for an anti-bias culturally responsive curriculum to be implemented correctly, the primary goal of the educator is to ensure that the new teaching style is developmentally appropriate to the children who will be in attendance (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). A developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) provides its teachers with guidelines regarding curriculum, positive adult-child interaction, and strong relations between the home and program. In addition to these considerations, DAP principles also place emphasis on the fact that an educator's information gathering and decision making processes should be based on the premise of three, equally important, fundamentals; age , individual, social and culture appropriateness (Coopel and Bredekamp, 2006; Kostelink, Soderman, & Whiren, 1993; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990). In order to maintain these guidelines it is necessary that a teacher bases his or her curriculum on what they know about the development and learning of children within a specific age range, understand about each student's individuality, and recognize the social and cultural contexts in which children live (Coople and Bredekamp, 2006). For example, Coople and

Bredekamp (2006) state that when age is used as a starting point educators are able to predict the characteristics, abilities, and understandings of their students. Additionally, these authors also state that educators are able to make specific plans to accommodate children with varying rates of development when they take the time to observe and get to know the children in their care (Coople and Bredekamp, 2006). In addition to these important characteristics, it has also been stated that young children learn and respond best in "…social and cultural contexts in which they are accustomed…" (Coople and Bredekamp, 2006, p. 12). This is due to the fact that children who come from different language, social, or cultural backdrops have drastic changes to get used to when entering into the early childhood education setting than their counterparts (Coople and Bredekamp, 2006). Thus, according to DAP guidelines it is the role of the educator to take these differences into account throughout the planning and implementation of the classroom environment and learning experiences (Coople and Bredekamp, 2006).

In addition to these characteristics, a developmentally appropriate curriculum should, through an integrated approach, focus on the advancement of a child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive domains (Kostelink et al., 1993; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990). The planning of the program should be based not only on the observation of each child's special interests, but also on their developmental progress (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990). In addition, the environment in which the students play, interact, and learn, should provide a variety of learning activities, concrete materials and equipment that are multicultural, non-sexist (Kostelink et al., 1993), " …real, and relevant to the lives of

young children…" (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990, p. 4).

In order to make certain that an anti-bias culturally responsive curriculum is following the guidelines of developmentally appropriate practice, educators must make certain that they understand what the children at hand are asking, want to know, and mean by question or comment (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Furthermore, if the curriculum planning fails to constantly take into account the children's perspectives, it may become a style of teaching that is oppressive to them (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). In order to ensure that oppression is not the end result, specialists agree that educators should make certain that the children who are participating always feel free to ask questions about any subject, use their own problem solving skills, engage in conversation with adults, make their own choices, and hold the self-confidence to stand up for themselves and each other (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Along with guaranteeing that the program which is being put into place is developmentally appropriate, experts state that teachers must also concentrate on creating the climate, executing it through specific implementation processes, following through on the process of ongoing integration of the curriculum (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). In order to make certain that a climate can support an anti-bias curriculum, various researchers have affirmed that teachers must first raise awareness concerning biases that they may have about themselves, their program, and the children in their care (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). However, in order for this process to be accomplished it is necessary that teachers first make the implementation of

this curriculum a personal commitment. The reasoning behind this process is due to the fact that learning to integrate an anti-bias curriculum into a pre-existing classroom requires a lot of time and dedication (Derman-Sparks, 1989).

In addition to ensuring that the commitment has been personalized, in order for this process to be accomplished it is necessary that teachers who are conducting these types of evaluations have immediate access to a support group (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). The necessity of the support group is derived out of the knowledge that "…everyone needs the diverse perspectives and honest feedback of peers in order to ensure that new insights and teaching practices are able to be developed…" (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992, p.2). In saying this, participants in the support group can range from staff members, teachers, and parents who wish to offer an anti-bias curriculum to children (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Due to the fact that no adult and teacher will be able to fully escape the learning and believing of stereotypes it is also necessary that the educators evaluate their own biases (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). In order for this type of task to be accomplished it is important that the teacher partakes in various forms of self awareness exercises that are aimed at clarifying one's thinking and identifying discomforts and prejudices that would interfere with an individual's ability to effectively implement an anti-bias curriculum (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Gonzalez-Mena states that in order for these types of programs to be successful we each need to take a close look inside ourselves and discover how often we define people and their behaviors by normal principles and by our own standards (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). Gonzalez-Mena states that once we are able to engage in this self reflection we will then start looking at differences

as sources of strength (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). Once professionals are able to think in this pattern the way in which they are currently applying a single standard of adaptive, healthy, and competent behaviors will diminish (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). Furthermore, specialists state that this goal can be accomplished when teachers start questioning various aspects of their own identity, inquiring about differences that may make others uncomfortable, and querying the experience, witness, or response of biases that may have occurred in their own lives (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Once teachers have evaluated their own thoughts and beliefs it is then necessary for them to learn about any biases that may exist in the children which the new curriculum will affect (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Teachers will be able to accomplish this goal by closely observing the way in which the children who are in their care play (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Through observations, teachers are able to recognize the types of resources with which boys and girls play , any children who may be excluded because of their identity, and the obstacles facing those students who may be physically or mentally challenged (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). In addition to these observations, experts state that educators should be interviewing their students in hopes of finding out what they know about various cultures, their understanding of different genders, and the varied work that individuals from diverse genders and cultures can do (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Once these types of observations are completed, teachers will then be able to brainstorm ideas in which all children would be able to make use of all classroom resources in hopes to improve social interactions and environment accessibility (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Another crucial step in implementing a culturally responsive curriculum is that the teachers must take a close look at the classroom environment and eliminate any props that may hold racial stereotypes (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). In order to do this properly it is important that teachers take a critical look at all the materials in the classroom environment while asking themselves if children see abundant images of people that reflect diverse abilities and current racial, ethnic, gender, and economic diversity (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). While the teacher is evaluating themselves, the children, and the classroom, it is necessary at this point that the teacher begins to explore the process of nonsystematic implementation.

Nonsystematic implementation begins when the teacher initiates searching for the processes available on carrying out anti-bias activities (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). This procedure can be accomplished by obtaining ideas about how the goal can be reached through the "…reading of relevant curriculum materials, the conversations with other teachers, and by the implementation of activities…" (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992, p.3). Throughout this phase it is important that the educator starts to involve the families of the children they are teaching (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Parents should not only be informed about how and why anti-bias activities are now part of the children's curriculum, but they should also be invited to participate in the programming decisions (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). During this phase, it is important that the educators realize that support groups are still necessary, as they can remain a vehicle in which successes can be shared, mistakes can be evaluated, encouragement can be provided, and plans can be made (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Once the teacher has taken the time to test an anti-bias curriculum, they are then ready to do more systematic long term planning (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). This is accomplished by an evaluation of the teacher which consists of answering questions around "…what has happened, what issues have surfaced, what has been accomplished, and what areas need further work…"(Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992 p.4). Alongside these concerns, it is also mandatory that the backgrounds and developmental needs of the children in which they are teaching are taken into account (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). In addition, the regular involvement of parents must also be maintained in the planning and implementation of not only activities for the children but in group discussions about specific anti-bias concerns (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Once a long term curriculum is put into place, it is important that the educators maintain some sort of ongoing integration (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). While in this phase, it must be maintained that the anti-bias perspective works as a "…filter in which the teacher plans, implements, and evaluates all materials, activities, and interactions with children, parents, and staff…" (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992, p.4). Furthermore, it is also crucial that the teacher works to ensure that the curriculum is constantly adapted to the needs of the students and continuously consulted upon with the parents (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). Furthermore, it is important throughout this phase that educators continue to expand upon their own anti-bias concerns (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). When these steps are maintained the anti-bias curriculum usually shifts from apprehensions that are solely work related, to a new way of life for all of those involved (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Above all it is also crucial during this stage that specific times of self reflection must be accessible to teachers who are hoping to properly facilitate this alternative to teaching (Derman-Sparks, 1989). This is seen as an important step as it is one that will assist the educators in developing awareness of past experiences; it is highly unlikely that teachers will be able to nourish these needs when they interact with children and families (Derman-Sparks, 1989). Furthermore, research has also supported the notion that reflective practice not only increases self awareness, but also enhances classroom practice (Jacobson, 2000). In fact, the need for this type of practice is seen as so important that the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development not only encourages professionals to carry out this type of approach, but expects them to as well (Jacobson, 2000). In efforts to reiterate its importance, guidelines on how to ensure that reflective practice is being properly achieved have been suggested. The guiding principles state, but are not limited to, encouraging teachers to develop specific attitudes towards reflective thinking and understanding the importance of accepting responsibility of the consequences (Jacobson, 2000).

Various researchers have stated, that in terms of reflective practice, support groups have been noted as the most effective tool available for achieving educational change (Bernhard, Diaz, & Allgood, 2005; Colville-Hall, Macdonald, & Smolen, 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Geist & Baum, 2005; Gonzalez-Mena, 2005; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Jacobson, 2000; Kieff, 2005; Killoran, 2004). As not only are teachers able to share their achievements and disappointments (Jacobson, 2000), "...but they are also able to find wisdom, a sense of justice, and a deep understanding of children; particularly of those who are neglected by prejudicial educational polices and

practices…" (Jacobson, 2000, p.172). Furthermore, if the humanity of the teacher cannot be altered other teaching characteristics such as education technique, technology, or equipment, do not matter (Jacobson, 2000). This is due to the fact that, educators often treat children as they were treated (Jacobson, 2000), so if teachers are hoping to care for children fairly, listen to them individually, and learn to fully accept and understand them in hopes of one day reaching out to them in a way that will enhance their self identity, supervisors must do the same for the teachers (Jacobson, 2000).

Effective and Ineffective Training Techniques. In order for administrators to ensure that their teaching staff are receiving culturally responsive training that they will not only benefit from but also be able to successfully implement, it is necessary for the supervisor to evaluate the training programs that are being offered to their staff (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). It must be ensured that they encompass not only information about anti-bias curriculum but that they are also being educated on the lifestyles, skills, attitudes and values of the various cultures in which they will encounter (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). In addition to this, it has also been stated that education courses of this stature which include various practical and clinical activities have proven to be the most successful (Colville-Hall et al., 1995).

Educating teachers about various objectives concerning diverse cultures ensures that educators are receiving a vast amount of knowledge not only about the curriculum that they hope to implement but also about the children whom they hope to reach (Colville-Hall et al., 1995).

When a teacher is trained about the lifestyles of the culturally diverse families they are working with it is important that they aim to gather information about various

communication patterns which exist across ethnic groups, attitudes concerning specific cultural learning styles, and the cognitive development patterns of diverse learners (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). This information has been noted as valuable as it has been known to help the teacher identify the learning patterns of the children with whom they are working with (Colville-Hall et al., 1995).

As this type of knowledge is important to be aware of, it is also essential that the educator become well-informed about any skills which may be considered superior to a particular culture (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). For example, some ethnicities have been to known to excel in mathematics and sciences, while others seem to do to extremely well in literature based studies (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). When an educator becomes aware of these dominant traits he or she will then be able to develop a curriculum which is appropriate for various types of learners (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). Along with the importance of educating the teacher on these objectives, it is also important that educators are made aware of the numerous attitudes and values that exist amongst cultures (Colville-Hall et al., 1995).

When an educator is conscious about the range of thoughts and principles which exist among cultures they are then able to accept the ideology of equal educational opportunities; a way of thinking that may not be possible without this type of training (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). In addition to this, when an educator is able to be responsive to these differences they are able to develop a respect for various lifestyles, values, learning styles, and communication patterns (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). However, in regards to this I believe that it is also important to take into consideration the comments of Gonzalez-Mena (2005). Gonzalez-Mena (2005), states that as educators are learning

about the key points of various cultures, it also important to reflect on the fact that knowing about an individual's ethnic background does not provide the teacher with the means to prophesize about their behaviors. Furthermore, Gonzalez-Mena (2005) suggests that the only way for educators to actually achieve cultural pluralism in early childhood education is for teachers to clearly distinguish the areas in which they do not connect with their students. When these regions have been recognized it is the educator, not the child, who must adjust (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). In order to stabilize these inconsistencies the teacher must know how to respond to the parent's goals, values, and beliefs related to the care and education of their children (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). Furthermost, the educator must know how to meet the children's needs in a culturally appropriate way (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005). These differences can usually be found in the way that a child has been taught how to interact with a teacher or caregiver and the proper conduct of body language and non verbal communication within these situations (Gonzalez-Mena, 2005).

Various researchers have stated that courses which present information, regarding anti-bias curriculum, through a lecture format have little effect on educators who are learning this methodology for the first time (Bernhard et al., 2005; Colville-Hall et al., 1995). Thus, experts have recommended that these training programs follow alternative formats. These suggested teaching styles include, but are not limited to, direct contact and interaction with minority groups, involvement within various communities, and meetings with various guest speakers (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). It has also been suggested that instructors center the discussion on both small and large group interaction, development of problem solving and investigative skills, application of concepts to case studies, use of

learning logs, development and use of assessment instruments, and hands on approach to knowing (Colville-Hall et al., 1995).

Various clinical activities that have been reported as effective for this type of learning include asking trainees to develop and share, in small class groups, a collage that represents who they are, including their family, their interests, their goals, and their cultural heritage (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). In addition to this, other suggestions include the requirement of watching videos that document children as they learn about prejudice and the writing of a reaction paper by those who have watched (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). It has also been stated that students who have been asked to read articles about cultural biases and prepare questions that will be asked to a panel of African American, Native American, Asia American, or Hispanic culture have been successful in teaching learners about racial discrimination that exists in today's society (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). As well as these successful teaching practices, it has also been stated that exercises which include such things as a wheelchair scavenger hunt and activities that involve blindness simulation also work well when training adults about culturally responsive curriculum (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). These activities aim at teaching the learner to create an atmosphere in which students are able to interact in situations that are culturally diverse (Colville-Hall et al., 1995).

Alongside these various clinical activities, various reports have suggested that students should also participate in various types of field experiences (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). These kinds of practices should include classroom observations of culturally diverse and exceptional learners, but in order for the participants to ensure that they are

learning from their observations a set of written questions that can later be transformed into a reaction paper should be prepared (Colville-Hall et al., 1995).

The Effects of Culturally Responsive Training. In the article "Reflections from Teachers of Culturally Diverse Children" Michaela Colombo reports the effects of a professional development initiative that was designed to educate the teachers of the public schools in one suburban Massachusetts city. Twenty-seven Caucasian teachers, from levels pre-K – three, participated in courses and cultural immersion and interaction events focused on Latino cultures (Colombo, 2005). Collectively these educational experiences consisted of twelve workshops and two Family Literacy Nights with Latino families and their children (Colombo, 2005). Courses provided to the participants focused on creating an environment which would resemble a cultural and linguistic minority group (Colombo, 2005). This was achieved through the use of games written in a foreign language with constantly changing rules (Colombo, 2005). In addition to this, teachers were also given the chance to explore their misconceptions about culturally diverse and socio-economic families (Colombo, 2005). These misconceptions included the way in which the teachers believed that every student is the same, thought that culturally diverse children should know and conform to the expectations of mainstream schools, judged families who did not participate in school activities, and were of the opinion that if you want children to learn English, just speak English (Colombo, 2005). Following course work, meetings, and community involvement with families from the Latino community the participants of these workshops reported that "…workshop content, combined with the invaluable interaction with families, promoted greater understanding and empathy" (Colombo, 2005 page. 7) It was also noted, by those who experienced the greatest change in their

sensitivity and outlooks, that ongoing workshops and regularly scheduled interactions with families would also be beneficial (Colombo, 2005).

Translating Knowledge into Practice.

In order to ensure that training programs are successful at their attempts, it has also been stated that simply providing awareness of these issues is not enough, but that educators must also be trained on the ways in which they can translate their new knowledge into their curricula (Espinosa, 2005). In addition , due to the fact that recent research indicates that teachers need to learn more specific skills in order to work effectively with children from diverse culture and socio-economic backgrounds (Daniel and Freidman, 2005), it is also necessary that the explicit mechanics of culturally responsive and anti-bias curriculum be put into place (Espinosa, 2005). To be successful, these types of teaching practices must also include; a revision to its instructional methods, an integration of home knowledge, and the organization of small group activities that allow for inter-student communication. Alongside these criteria, educators should also maintain that they are integrating resources that reflect the speech and traditions of the families, upholding relationships with families through mutual trust, and continuously focusing on the strengths of the child and family (Espinosa, 2005). In order for teachers to successfully accomplish these tasks questions which ask about the family's hobbies, interests, expectations, and aspirations should be asked (Espinosa, 2005). As well as this, it is also important that the educator require information about the child's age, play, strongest language, and special talents (Espinosa, 2005). Furthermore, specific inquiries

about the family size, primary caregiver, and first language heard and spoken are also seen as important (Espinosa, 2005).

In terms of working effectively with children from low socio economic status families Espinosa (2005) states the importance of early childhood education programs which provide the elements of "…high quality positive relationships, a comprehensive and coherent curriculum, rich responsive language interactions , and opportunities for meaningful parent involvements…" (p.842) Furthermore, researchers have stated that early childhood education programs whose primary focus is welfare reform are usually less effective than those whose approaches focus on enriching a child's environment and improving their chance of succeeding in school (Phillips, Voran, Kisker, Howes, & Whitebook, 1994). This phenomenon is due to the fact that programs that focus on reversing the backlashes of poverty are normally focused on adult goals which targets enhancing the supply of care at the expense of quality (Phillips et al., 1994). Furthermore, research in this area has also supported the fact that positive long term outcomes are often only the result of programs that are targeted at improving an individual's educational outcomes (Phillips et al., 1994). In addition to this information, Espinosa (2005) recommends that when educating young children it is essential to focus on educational outcomes and it is also necessary that these programs incorporate the features of high quality education.

Espinosa (2005), states that positive supporting relationships are not only essential but also critical to high quality education programs which hope to support low income children (Espinosa, 2005). This is due to the fact that research in the area continues to illustrate that "…young, vulnerable children can thrive academically and

socially when they have the support of a caring adult…" (Espinosa, 2005, p.842). In addition to positive relationships, language development should be considered as highly important (Espinosa, 2005). In order to ensure that this goal can be met it is important for educators to make certain that they are working with children both in small groups and individually through-out the day (Espinosa, 2005). Furthermore, they need to provide excellent models of speech while maintaining that the child's home language standards and the opportunity for children to express symbolic concepts through speech are preserved (Espinosa, 2005). In addition to these elements, it is also important that these curricula include school related skills and knowledge (Espinosa, 2005).

Due to the fact that low income children have fewer of the literacy abilities needed to learn to read than their peers it is essential that educators also be aware of the skills which they will need (Espinosa, 2005). For example, Espinosa (2005) states that students from this social class need to be educated on the basics of reading and writing before they can move onto learning literacy skills themselves. Thus, it is important that these literacy lessons start with teaching these children that "…print reads left to write, where to go when print ends, where the story finishes, the ability to recognize letters, beginning sounds, and ending sounds of words…" (Espinosa, 2005, p.841). In addition to this, it has also been stated that children from lower income families have less verbal skills than their counterparts (Espinosa, 2005). Therefore, it is also important that young children are provided with the opportunity to learn the alphabet, letter sounds, and early numeric skills (Espinosa, 2005).

In order to ensure that these types of goals can be met by educators it is important that class sizes are kept small, teachers engage in collaborative planning and reflection,

and that administrators ensure that all educators are highly qualified (Espinosa, 2005).

When class sizes remain small every child is given the chance to have individual

exchanges and learning occurrences that are personalized to meet their exclusive skills

(Espinosa, 2005). While teachers continue to plan and reflect together they are able to

discuss the progress and development of each individual child in their care; an essential

role to programming that has been named the most effective (Espinosa, 2005). In

addition to these criterion, when administrators ensure that each early childhood

educator in their center has at the minimum a college degree with a specialization in

early childhood education they are able to make certain that all of their staff encompass

the skills needed to work effectively with children and families from various ethic groups

(Espinosa, 2005).

In regards to these recommendations, the majority of experts in the profession

suggested that educators in the field should be cautious about being over reliant on the

outcomes of standardized, norm-referenced testing, especially when working with

children from linguistic and culturally varied backgrounds (Espinosa, 2005). In

consideration of this, various alternatives to evaluations have been suggested. For

example, many studies have recommended the use of ongoing assessments which take

into account the importance of an individual's background and history (Espinosa, 2005).

However, it is important, while doing this, that the educator maintains the respect of the

child's primary language and home culture (Espinosa, 2005). It has also been suggested

that these assessments be informal, non standardized procedures that include

observational notes, checklists, rating scales, and student work samples (Espinosa, 2005).

This type of evaluation is a necessary component of quality instruction as it provides

valuable information on each child's performance which in turn will allow teachers to personalize the curriculum and address each child's unique learning needs (Espinosa, 2005). In addition to maintaining a high quality curriculum it has also been noted that maintaining a relationship with the family is also necessary (Espinosa, 2005).

The importance of establishing a joint and respectful relationship with parents, or other family members, is based on the premise that when educators and relatives work together the young student is able to be developmentally supported as well as correctly understood in the classroom (Espinosa, 2005).

Based on the detailed past and present research of the proper implementation and training of an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum in early childhood education programs, and the fact that I have worked alongside professionals in the field who have not found reason to implement this sort of training into their daily routines, I believe that it is necessary to explore literature which examines whether or not cultural biases exist in teachers, and in turn if these prejudices are affecting the implementation of this teaching methodology and the children with whom they work.

The Effects of Implementing Specific Mechanics of Culturally Responsive and Anti-Bias Curriculum. In the article "Poverty, early childhood education, and academic competence: The Abecedarian experiment" Ramey and Campbell report the effects that the Abecedarian experiment had on children from low income families. This research project, known as the most intense early childhood education program offered to children from poor families, took place between 1972 and 1977 consisted of 111 infants with 57 randomly assigned to receive center based early childhood intervention and 54 who were placed into a control group (Ramey and Campbell, 1991). The program in which the

children were enrolled included implementation processes similar to those found in culturally responsive and anti-bias curricula. The incorporated characteristics embraced the importance of early childhood educators who could offer high-quality education and emotional support, educational experiences that were based on the child's needs that were altered when the student was ready for new challenges, immense emphasis on language development, and teacher training that focused on developmentally appropriate exchanges between educators and student (Ramey and Campbell, 1991). The study found that, children who attended this type of program outperformed the control children on every intellectual development test that was administered (Ramey and Campbell, 1991). For example, when the "…McCarty Scales of Children Abilities was administered to children at 54 months, the intervention group children's mean General Cognitive Index score was 101.10 points higher then the control group's mean score of 91 points (t = 4.00,p< .001)…(Ramey and Campbell, 1991 page. 197). In addition it was also found that, "by the age of 4 years, children in the control group were 6 times more likely to score within the mildly retarded range (IQ < 70) than the children in the intervention group" (Ramey and Campbell, 1991).

Culturally Bias Beliefs

Cultural Biases in Educators. Alexander, Entwisle, and Thompson (1987) stated that an educator's background not only attributes to how they treat the general population, but it has also been seen as a condition that becomes apparent in their classroom activities and interpersonal dynamic in the classrooms in which they teach (Alexander et al., 1987). Alexander et al., (1987) reiterate this point by stating that teachers who possess a shared

identity with the minority children have a much easier time fostering a sense of commitment to disadvantaged students, as when this connection exists they are able to think highly of their abilities and in turn reach greater success rates with the children with whom they are working (Alexander et al., 1987). When this kind of link is made and sustained between student and teacher educators are not misguided by miss-constructed ideologies concerning young people from various ethnic groups (Alexander et al., 1987). On the other hand, research has shown that teachers from high status backgrounds, are often less comfortable when working with children of various races and social classes other than their own (Alexander et al., 1987). This is primarily due to the fact that they are unaware of what the misconceptions are, working outside of their "…element, and lack common experiences with their students…" (Alexander et al., 1987, p.667).

It also important that it is understood, by those working in the field, that not all teachers are affected by status biases, and that it is more common for a teacher's social backdrop rather than their racial background to impair their effectiveness with certain types of students. Students school performance can be impaired due to social differences between teachers and their students (Alexander et al., 1987). For example, "…evidence indicates that high status teachers both black and white experience special difficulties relating to minority students…" (Alexander et al., 1987, p.679). This is trend can be explained by the examination of two assumptions. First, Giroux (2004) states that this problem can be seen as a direct result of the failure for theorists in the field to recognize and examine Antonio Gramsci's belief that "…within diverse contexts, education makes us both subjects of and subject to relations of power…"(as cited by Giroux 2004, p. 80). Secondly, Alexander et al., (1987) states that the tendency for educators to experience

difficulties when working with diverse groups is due to the fact that they believe that these students do not possess the characteristics needed to be labeled a good student, trust that they are unable to match the potential goals of their counterparts, and deem the school climate as hostile (Alexander et al., 1987). As many professionals in the field view these reports as upsetting, based on studies by Giroux (2004) and Alexander et al., (1987), I believe that these beliefs should be used as a focal point for teachers when they are contemplating implementing a change in their curriculum.

Cultural Biases of Young Children. Giroux (1999) states that due to the fact that children are often viewed as innocent creatures that are unable to absorb the impact of their environments, many believe that they are unable to recognize racial or socioeconomic differences. However, research that has been based on the assumption that young children are able to recognize ethnic or class differences between themselves and their counterparts has revealed that children are not only able to notice racial distinctions such as skin colour and class, but that they are also able to absorb racially related images and assumptions, and learn to express racist ideologies (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005; Giroux, 1999). Giroux (1999) states that this is due to the fact that "childhood is not a natural state of innocence; it is an historical construction" (p. 196). Furthermore, studies have also provided support for the notion that young children are fully capable of constructing their own ideas concerning the power relationships of racism (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005, Giroux 1999). These thoughts are not only learned through direct education, but are also studied through the observation of their day to day environments (Giroux, 1999). Furthermore, it has also been reported that children as young as six-months-old are able to learn and model these power codes and racist rules.

For example, ideologies which illuminate that a superior class exists have been proven to impact the social and emotional development of white children (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). The main result of this trend is a "…white child who is unable to function effectively in a diverse world…" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005, p.3).

Without proper guidance and modeling by the adults in which young children encounter on a day to day basis, such as parents, caregivers, and teachers, children are prone to be more at risk of developing cross racial biases that may develop into stereotypes (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). In turn, these learned labels may also work in influencing their feelings and potentially their behaviors toward people of colour (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). In addition to these facts, research that has been conducted on the racial awareness of children has shown that early childhood prejudices often exemplify various themes; 1) children are often wary of people who look different from their caregivers (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005), 2) a child's age and anxieties towards different ethnic groups often leads to "… racial isolation and negative images of unfamiliar groups…"(Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005 p. 4), and 3) preschoolers often begin to use cultural terms and values as a way to reject and degrade their coloured classmates (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). On the other hand, alongside these themes, young children who are demonstrating these types of behaviors are still able to play contently with counterparts from various ethnic and social backgrounds, more so if the environment in which they are surrounded is able to support and model interracial relationships (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005).

Rethinking the Training and Implementation Processes

Many studies have revealed that in order for early childhood educators to implement changes in themselves, which will in turn encourage change in the students that they are working with, it is important that a curriculum that encompasses features which promote anti-bias attitudes be put into place (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Espinosa, 2005; Geist & Baum, 2005; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Kieff, 2005; Killoran, 2004). However, due to the fact that Giroux (2004) states that individuals are not lacking the knowledge of how to interact with diverse groups but that their tendency not to act on this information is due to the way in which history has constructed the way in which the world views various ethnic groups, I agree that alongside the training of an anti-bias curriculum and culturally responsive curriculum it is also necessary that educators learn to recognize "…the political, economic, and social forces…" that have an impact on the young children that they are working with (Giroux, 1999, p. 215). Furthermore, until this process is completed I agree with Giroux (1999) that the new curriculum will redefine current teaching patterns without challenging existing thought patterns.

Alongside this implication, researchers have also noted that developments of racial tendencies in children are often linked to problems within curricula which hope to promote messages of respect and equality (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). These difficulties are mainly found in schools or centers that have "…teachers and administrators who are white and maintenance staff who are of colour…" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005 p.4). This is the kind of model which will teach children about the racial hierarchies that exist in their lives (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005).

Conclusion

Based on the knowledge that past and present research has emphasized the importance of implementing an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum in early childhood education programs, and the fact that immigration and poverty levels have increased in past five years, I believe that there is a responsibility by professionals in the sector to survey existing teachers on the ways in which culturally responsive and anti-bias forms of teaching are being implemented. The reasoning behind this train of thought is due to the fact that I have worked alongside educators who have obtained such training but yet have not found reason to implement it into their daily routines, and I believe that the failure to put this new knowledge into practice is socially irresponsible. This leads me to believe that education programs should be evaluated for their effectiveness in order to recommend ways in which the implementation and training programs can be improved. Furthermore, I am confident that once this step is achieved diverting the backlashes of those who have been labeled as culturally diverse and economically disenfranchised will then be made possible.

Research Questions

1) Are early childhood professionals being trained in anti-bias curriculum? If so, how are they being trained?

2) What steps are early childhood professionals ensuring when they implement an anti-bias curriculum?

3) Once an anti-bias curriculum has been implemented how are professionals ensuring that ongoing integration is being maintained throughout the program?

4) Are professionals in the field being taught how to be culturally sensitive?

5) To what extent are professionals in the field bringing their own cultural insensitivities to the classroom? If cultural insensitivities exist amongst the professionals, to what extent is it affecting their teaching practices?

6) What areas of an anti-bias curriculum do professionals in the field deem as important or unimportant?

Chapter 3

Participants

Based on the Nova Scotia Child Care Connections- Child Care Directory there are 379 daycare centers in Nova Scotia. Assuming that each rural center employs approximately 3 teachers and that each urban center maintains 6 teachers the researcher assumed that there were approximately 1527 daycare teachers in the province as a whole. Therefore, based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error the adequate sample size determined by the researcher was 308 with 154 participants coming from urban areas and 154 participants coming from rural areas.

Materials & Instrumentation

The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) and a questionnaire developed for the research was used. The ISS was developed and validated in 2000. The original form of this instrument was a 44 item scale focused on testing intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The authors, Chen and Starosta, chose a sample of 414 college students, enrolled in a basic communication course, to generate a 24 item final version of the scale (Chen & Startosta, 2000). To ensure that correct factors of intercultural sensitivity were established a factor analysis was performed (Chen & Startosta, 2000). Five factors with were pulled out of the original 44 item list (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The first factor to be described was labeled Interaction Engagement (Chen & Startosta, 2000). Six items, centered on how participants felt about intercultural communication, were clustered in this factor (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The second factor to be described was labeled Respect for Cultural Differences (Chen & Startosta, 2000). Six items, focused on how

participants accept and adjust to the background and outlook of other individuals, were included in this factor (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The third factor to be described was labeled as Interaction Confidence (Chen & Startosta, 2000). Five items, based on the participants' level of confidence in an intercultural situation, were included in this factor (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The fourth factor to be described was labeled Interaction Enjoyment (Chen & Startosta, 2000). Three items, aimed at determining whether or not participants had experienced positive or negative reactions when communicating with people from various ethic backgrounds, were included in this factor (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The fifth factor to be described was labeled Interaction Attentiveness (Chen & Startosta, 2000). Three items, based on how the participant made an effort to understand what is going in an intercultural interaction setting, were included in this factor (Chen & Startosta, 2000).

Once this revision was completed in order for the authors to evaluate the consistency of the revised 24 item scale a second study of the ISS was conducted (Chen & Startosta, 2000). A sample consisted of 162 students, 66 males and 96 females with the average age of 19.46, from a college communication course (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The participants were asked to complete the 24 item ISS (Chen & Startosta, 2000). It was stated by the authors that higher scores of this measure would suggest an increased level of intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Startosta). "The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of this scale was .86" (Chen & Startosta, 2000, p. 9).

In order to find relationships between the ISS and other valid tests, participants of this study were also asked to complete five other measures that were predicated by the authors to have significant relationships (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The results that were

reported in this study are as follows; the reliability coefficient of a seven item Interaction Attentiveness Scale (IAS) (Cegala, 1981) in this study was .72 (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The reliability coefficient of a 10 item Impression Rewarding Scale (IRS) (Wheeless& Duran, 1982) in this study was .90 (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The reliability coefficient of a 10 item Self Esteem Scale (SES) (Roesenberg, 1965) was .85 (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The reliability coefficient of a 13 item Self Monitoring Scale (SMS) (Lennox &Wolfe, 1984) was .79 (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The reliability coefficient of a 14 item Perspective Scale (PS) (Davis, 1996) was .81 (Chen & Startosta, 2000). In order to find the correlation between the ISS, the IAS, the IRS, the SES, the SMS, and the PS Person product-moment correlations were computed (Chen & Startosta, 2000). "It was found that significant correlation exists between ISS and all the five measures at the $p < .05$ level, with values ranging from $r = .17$ to $r = .52$" (Chen & Startosta, 2000, p. 11).

Once this study was a completed a third test to evaluate the concurrent validity of the ISS was administered (Chen & Startosta, 2000). A sample consisted of 176 students, 70 males and 106 females with the average age of 19.43 , from a college communication course (Chen & Startosta, 2000). The participants were asked to complete the 24 item ISS. It was stated by the authors that higher scores of this measure would suggest an increased level of intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Startosta, 2000). "The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of this scale was .88" (Chen & Startosta, 2000, p. 11).

In order to measure intercultural effectiveness and attitudes towards intercultural communication, the participants of this study who had a >.50 loading were asked to complete a 13 item Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (Hammer and Gudykunst, 1978) and a 22 item Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale (Chen, 1993) as it was predicted

that those who scored high on the ISS would also score high on these two tests (Chen & Startosta, 2000). "In this study the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for Intercultural Effectiveness Scale was .87 and .84 for Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale" (Chen & Startosta, 2000, p. 12). In order to find the correlation between the ISS and two measures, Person product-moment correlations were computed (Chen & Startosta, 2000). "It showed that the correlation between the ISS and the Intercultural Effectiveness Scale were .57 (p<.001) and .74 between the ISS and Intercultural Communication Attitude Scale (p<.001)" (Chen & Startosta, 2000, p.12)

In addition to this instrument, participants were also asked to respond to a questionnaire developed in part by the adaptation of statements from the Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Handbook for Health Educators which was developed by the Association for the Advancement of Health Education and two Multicultural Teaching Handbooks; Multiculturalism: A Handbook for Teachers and Multicultural Teaching A Handbook of Activities, Information, and Resources. Additionally, the researcher developed questions that examine teacher's perceptions and classroom practices in regards to how they feel about, learn, and implement an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum into their classrooms. Questions are divided into three sections. Section 1 was comprised of demographic information such as gender, number of years teaching, teaching certification level, and student population. As well, there were questions that asked if teachers had taught students from various ethnic and socio-economic groups. For some questions in this section teachers were asked to check the appropriate response from those listed and for other questions they were asked to fill in a response, as listing choices would be inappropriate.

This demographic information was used to determine how the gender, age, training level, type of center either non-profit or private, student population, teacher population, age of children under their care, and cultural and socioeconomic variability in the students they have taught, have or have not affected the way in which the teachers felt, implemented, and/or integrated an anti-bias culturally responsive curriculum into their programs.

Section 2 contained questions regarding the type of training early childhood professionals had received on anti-bias and culturally responsive curricula. For some of the questions in this section the teachers were asked to chose either "yes" or "no" and for other questions they were asked to fill in a response, as listing choices would be inappropriate. The list of statements that was developed to examine teacher's training programs had 2 sections. Section 1 contained 11 statements which was divided into two parts: Skills building which contained 4 statements and Cultural sensitivity training which contained 7 statements. All 11 statements were adapted from a Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Handbook for Health Educators which was developed by the Association for the Advancement of Health Education. An examination of current teacher training programs was considered, but was deemed inappropriate since the study participants may not have experienced current training program curriculum. The first two questions and the first four statements in this section were used to answer research question number 1: Are professionals in the field being trained on an anti-bias curriculum? If so how are they being trained? The last seven statements of this section were used to answer research question number 6; Are professionals in the field being taught on how to be culturally sensitive?

Section 3 contained 13 statements, and teachers were asked to circle a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). These questions were used to measure via Likert-type scales, the teacher's attitudes toward an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum. The results of this section were used to gather data for research question number 8, what areas of an anti-bias curriculum do professionals in the field deem as important or unimportant?

Section 4 contained five open-ended questions that required short written responses. These questions were designed to examine how teachers were making their classrooms and curriculum responsive to all students, the supports that the teachers perceived as being in their schools for them to engage in anti-bias practice, and the problems and issues they believed must be addressed in order to carry out successful multicultural education programs. The results of this section were used to gather data for research question number 4 and 5.

Data gathered from all sections of this questionnaire and the ISS were used to gather information for part b of research question number 7; if cultural insensitivities exist amongst the professionals, to what extent is it affecting their teaching practices?

Procedure

Once ethical approval was granted by Mount Saint Vincent University's board of ethics, the director of each randomly selected daycare within Nova Scotia was contacted by e-mail to ask permission to conduct a study in his or her daycare facility. Contact information (name and phone number of the researcher, supervisor, and Director of Research at Mount Saint Vincent University) was provided in the event of concerns and

/or questions. By viewing the Nova Scotia Child Care Connections Child Care Directory daycare centers were selected and center directors were contacted by e-mail. The e-mail indicated that their center had been randomly selected to participate in a study and to request a time to come to the center to drop off packages which included the ISS and questionnaire developed by the researcher. Daycares that were selected from outside the HRM were notified by the researcher that the packages would be sent by mail. It was also indicated in the e-mail that if they did not wish their school (i.e. teachers) to participate that they should indicate so in a return e-mail.

Upon arrival at each daycare facility the researcher spoke with each director or assistant director and gave him or her the information letter. In cases where the daycare was located outside of the HRM the information letters were included in the packages and the directors were asked to return them signed. With the directors' or assistant directors' permission, questionnaires were either distributed into the teacher's mailboxes or handed to their staff in the near future (i.e. by the end of the school day). The questionnaire that was distributed to teachers also included a consent form. A large, brown envelope was left at the office at each school for teachers to return their questionnaires. In the case that they were outside the HRM a large, brown, self addressed stamped envelope was provided in each package. One week after the distribution of questionnaires, and two days prior to going to schools to collect the questionnaires, the researcher e-mailed the directors and the assistant director of each participating daycare and asked him or her to announce to his or her faculty that questionnaires would need to be completed if teachers were planning to do so (as participation is voluntary).

Data Analysis - Quantitative

All data collected over the course of the study underwent analysis using quantitative methods. First, the ISS questionnaires were scored according to its specific scoring criteria. The resulting scores from this questionnaire and the questionnaire that was developed by the researcher were entered into a data set using SPSS for Windows computer package for further statistical analysis and considerations. Following the establishment of the data set, the data then underwent a number of statistical analyses. The researcher conducted a number of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA's) in order to determine whether or not any significant differences existed in the data between groups (i.e. looking across different ages, years of experience, education levels). Secondly, the researcher conducted a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation calculation to indicate the degree to which the two quantitative variables (ISS and the early childhood educator questionnaire) were linearly related. The researcher also conducted a Chi-Test for Goodness of Fit so that participants could be classified into distinct categories and that a hypothesis about the population could be built.

Data Analysis – Qualitative

Once the qualitative responses were categorized by codes percentages were calculated. The reliability of the categories was established by an independent coder who assigned statements to the categories that were developed. Agreements and disagreements were noted and the Kappa statistic was used to establish the reliability of the coding. The Kappa Coefficient is a adaptable measure that reduces the expected possibility of consensus among raters and is capable of processing multinomial events involving more than one coder (Suen and Ary, 1989). Accordingly, kappa is the proportion of actual

nonchance agreements divided by total potential nonchance agreements (Suen and Ary, 1989). Kappa values of 0.80 suggest "good" reliability (Suen and Ary, 1989). For question 1 the kappa reliability score was 0.81, for question 2 the kappa reliability score was 0.85, for question 3 the kappa reliability score was 0.75, for question 4 the kappa reliability score was 0.91,and for question 5 the kappa reliability score was 0.91.

Chapter 4

This study was designed to examine if anti bias and culturally responsive curriculums are present in urban and rural daycares in Nova Scotia. Five research questions were used to determine if and how early childhood educators are being trained on these teaching methodologies, the steps of the curriculum that are ensured during implementation by these professionals, the ways in which ongoing integration is being maintained throughout the programming of the curricula, the ways in which these educators are being taught how to be culturally sensitive, and the extent to which professionals are bringing their insensitivities into the classroom, and whether or not their cultural sensitivities are affecting their teaching practices. In regards to these questions, additional factors such as an early childhood educators' training, the length of time that they have been in the field, the number of professional training programs or academic courses on this curricula which they have attended, the ways in which the courses were conducted, the skills they were taught; their geographic location, a measure of cultural sensitivity and the implementation and maintenance of a culturally responsive curriculum were used to determine if any differences existed between groups. The data relevant to each of the research questions follow.

Participants

Given that there is no current listing of early childhood educators in the province of Nova Scotia, the desired sample size was estimated using the following assumptions: at least 6 staff are employed in each urban center and 3 staff are employed in each rural daycare. Given that there are 379 licensed daycares in the province it was estimated that

there would be 1527 early childhood educators in the province. Therefore, based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error a sample size of 308 with 154 participants coming from urban areas and 154 participants coming from rural areas was calculated. Of the 308 early childhood educators who were approached, 32 (9%) responded to the invitation to participate. A decision was made not to seek more survey responses because of the time and expense relative to an anticipated low number of additional returns.

Thirty-one of the 32 questionnaires were completed by female teachers, one by a male educator. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 – 61 years. The training levels of the participants were: 34% degree trained, 38% diploma trained, 16% trained to the equivalent, and 12% were listed in the category of other. Of those who answered "other" 3% had a Masters degree, 6% had an education degree, 3% had an education diploma, 3% were working on their equivalent status, 3% had a B.A, and 6% had a B.Sc. Forty-three percent had been working in the field for 1-10 years, and 57% had been working in the field for 11-26 years. Fifty-three percent of the participants came from urban centers and 47% from rural centers.

Results of Research Questions

Are early childhood professionals being trained in anti-bias curriculum? If so, how are they being trained? Forty percent of the participants of this study have not participated in courses which have focused on anti-bias and culturally responsive training and 59.9% reported that the have attended at least one or more courses in this area. Seventy-one percent of the participants who participated in these training programs gained information

on multicultural education, 31% learned about the history and culture of students from a wide variety of backgrounds, 9% received training on how a student learns a first and second language, and 46% were offered student teaching opportunities with children from different backgrounds. Of those who participated in these training programs 62% participated in courses that were discussion based, 34% used a text book, 9% were conducted through lecture format, 34% had a guest speaker, 34% were project based, and 34% received handouts. In addition to this information, the findings also showed that none of the respondents were provided with the opportunity to have direct contact and interaction with minority groups, involvement within various communities, application of concepts to case studies, use of learning logs, and the development and use of assessment instruments; techniques which have been noted by past researchers as critically important. A number of Chi-Square Tests were conducted to determine if there was a difference between location, level of training, years of teaching, and number of courses and the way in which training programs were conducted. Based on these breakdowns it was found that there was a significant difference between those who were working in urban and rural settings pertaining to whether or not their training program offered them a hands on approach to learning. The Chi –Square test found that those who lived in rural setting were more likely then those who lived in urban areas to be trained through this type of practice, χ^2 (2) = 8.00 p = .018. No other significant outcomes were noted.

What steps are early childhood professionals ensuring when they implement an anti-bias curriculum? Section 3 of the survey contained 13 statements, and teachers were asked to circle a number between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). These questions were used to measure the way in which an early childhood educator maintained an anti-

bias and culturally responsive curriculum. In order to determine how participants would score in this section all questions except numbers 5, 11, and 13 were reverse coded, and the total score was calculated for each participant. Based on this calculation, respondents who reached values close to 65, the maximum score, would be determined as the respondents who are more likely to ensure that an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum are maintained. Nine percent scored between 31 and 39, 40.6% scored between 41 and 49, 47% scored between 50 and 59, and 3% scored 61. Thus, based on the data obtained from this question it was found that half of our early childhood educators in the province are working to maintain an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum and half are not. A number of tests in which implementation was used as the dependent variable were conducted to determine if there was a difference between location, training, and years of experience, and the way in which curriculums were maintained. As a result of these analyses no differences were found.

Once an anti-bias curriculum has been implemented how are professionals ensuring that ongoing integration is being maintained throughout the program? In section 4 of the survey, early childhood educators were asked to provide some qualitative information about the way in which they ensured that ongoing integration was maintained throughout their programs. Responses to questions which asked participants to list the ways in which they provide and maintain an environment and curriculum that is positive and welcoming for all children, how they evaluate the literature and materials that they use in their classroom, how they support and interact with the students in their class for whom English is not their first language, and the problems and issues they must address if they are to carry out successful multicultural education programs were used to measure a

professional's knowledge of curriculum maintenance. Once responses were coded

according to theme, percentages were calculated according to location.

Question 1 in this section provided the researcher with a variety of techniques that

educators in the province are using anti-bias filters in their classrooms with 75% of the

respondents, 47% urban and 30% rural, reporting that they provide a variety of age

appropriate play materials and activities such as dolls and books, celebrations of

traditions through music and crafts that represent the center population and allow children

to chose what they want to participate in.

"All children in our center are always equally welcomed. I make a conscious effort to learn about the child on an individual level. We operate on the needs of the children and the interests of the children. We focus on creativity, imagination, and find a way to openly answer any questions or interests the children may have. We provide materials that represent a wide range of cultures, incorporate elements of other cultures into the program, such as music and art based or traditional crafts" Urban respondent

"We try to follow the interests of the child by letting the child choose the activities he wants to engage in" We also use multicultural books, posters, and dolls and teach about other cultures for example; Christmas around the world. Rural respondent

In addition, 62% of the respondents, 37.5% urban and 25% rural, reported that

they are careful to embrace differences, treat each child as an individual, and not to judge

a child because of their race, social class, sex, or culture.

"When working with the children at the center, I see children with much to offer and willing to learn, they have wonderful imaginations and are very creative. I personally do not see them as colour or race, low, middle, or upper class, but as wonderful individuals with very trusting hearts and minds. A real joy and pleasure to work with. I daily value each thing that I as a child care provider is able to teach them" Urban respondent

"By being open to the parents requests for their child, for example not eating pork, not celebrating certain holidays. I would not judge a child because of their parents social class" Rural respondent

As well as these responses, 31%, 15.5% urban and 15.5 % rural stated that

provide a welcoming atmosphere for parents and families that encourages parents to

come in and share information about culture and events that can reinforce positive

feelings. In addition to this, they also observe and participate in open dialogue with

children, family, staff and friends.

"Observing and participating in open dialogue with children, families, grandparents, staff, and friends" Urban respondent

"Provide a cheerful and welcoming "good morning" taking time to notice the little things. Close contact with parents so children feel safe, and confident with teachers. Listen so that conversation skills in children can be encouraged" Rural respondent

In addition to these responses, 9%, 3% urban and 6% rural, commented about the

importance of having friendly and attentive teachers.

"Friendly, open teachers to greet children as they arrive. Attentive children to be there for the children" Urban respondent

"It is important that teachers model pleasant and respectful behaviour" Rural respondent

Furthermore, when these responses were coded by level of training, and years of

experience it was found that those who had a degree or a diploma in early child hood

education were more likely then those who were trained as the equivalent to provide a

wide range of materials and activities. In addition to this, those who had a degree were

more likely to report that they concentrate on providing a welcoming atmosphere for

parents and families that encourage parents to come in and share information about

culture, events, that can reinforce positive feelings. In regards to years of experience,

those who have been in the field for 1 to 10 years reported that they are more likely then

their counterparts to provide a wide range of materials and activities to children in their center.

"Try to have things familiar for all children" Diploma respondent

"Include materials and pictures of children and families. Also include a variety of race, cultures represented in program materials" Degree Respondent

"Make sure that all materials are age appropriate, fun, with a wide of variety" 10 years of service respondent.

Question 2 provided the researcher with the ways in which the educator uses the anti-bias filter when choosing which literature and learning materials to bring into the classroom. In response to this question 41%, 28% urban and 12.5% rural, stated that they provide materials that are diverse, reflect on value, content, and illustrations asking if it reflects a positive society, while asking does it contain anti-bias material.

"Purchase books/materials that represent a wide variety of cultures, family groups, and both genders in a positive manner. For example, dolls of different ethnicities, books that portray females and males equally as well as different family groups, and lego/duplo people of both genders and a variety of ethnic groups" Urban respondent

"We read different books that talk about different cultures and celebrate different holidays" Rural respondent

In addition to these responses, 40%, 25% urban and 15% rural, claimed that when they are deciding what literature and materials to bring into the classroom, they often decide by asking the children, observing what looks appealing to children of different ethnicities, and what books or materials would make all of the children in the classroom/center feel included.

"Step back and look around every once in a while to see if it makes all children feel included" Urban respondent

"See what books, toys appeal to children of different ethnicities" Rural respondent

In addition to these comments, 19%, 9.5% urban and 9.5% rural, claimed that they try to provide open ended, age appropriate materials that will bring out the children's creativity and imagination.

"We change toys and books regularly according to children's interests, but also change toys and books monthly to promote social and language skills" Urban respondent

"We use age appropriate materials" Rural respondent

In contrast to these comments, 12%, all urban, reported that they have no formal means of evaluating the literature and materials that enter into their early childhood education classroom, 6%, all urban, claimed that they ask the parents opinion, and 6%, 3% urban and 3% rural, evaluate materials and literature as a team.

"We do not have any set means of evaluating our materials or literature" Urban respondent

"We preview books together before we use them" Rural respondent

When these questions were coded by level of training and years of experience, it was found that those who had a degree were most likely to use the anti-bias filter when reviewing materials and literature that went into their classrooms than their counterparts (15% degree, 9 % diploma, and 0% equivalent). However, when the responses were coded by years of experience no significant differences were found.

"I ask myself if these materials are developmentally appropriate, interesting, and engaging for all of the children in my classroom" Diploma respondent

"Step back and look around every once in a while to see if it makes all children feel included" Degree respondent

Question 4, was used to inquire whether or not the participant was able to identify what problems and issues must be addressed if an anti bias and multicultural education program was to be a success. Thirty-seven percent, 25% urban and 12% rural, stated that everyone involved in the programming should be open minded and be able to see the value in differences.

"Being closed minded or making/putting your own cultural demands and beliefs on the children is wrong. Being ignorant is not acceptable. Education and acceptance are key" Urban respondent

"Some people are not accepting of other cultures and language barriers" Rural respondent

Twenty-eight percent, 19% urban and 9% rural reported that they are missing important information about the families that they are working and that they are worried that they are using some given information inappropriately.

"*Lack of knowledge of specific cultures" Urban respondent*

"Not knowing what is the right way to say or react to a situation. When you have not been educated about the culture you can only get so much information from computers. Some parents do not give you information for mixed reasons" Rural respondent

In addition to these comments, 25%, 21% urban and 4% rural, stated that one of the problems that should be discussed is the availability of student props, books, and posters.

"*Access to more toys, books, and dolls, at my center" Urban respondent*

"Sometimes materials are not readily available, especially for my age group" Rural respondent

Additionally, 19%, 9.5% urban and 9.5% rural, reported that one of the barriers that they would have to encounter would be the ability to include all cultures into their curriculum.

"Cultural differences need to be known and respected and used in class" Urban respondent

"Holidays were being celebrated in our culture but not in theirs. To concur this problem we invited the parents in to tell us about and celebrate their holidays. Rural respondent

Fifteen percent, 9% urban and 6 % rural, stated that it was important to have a connection with their families.

"Teachers should send a not home to all parents to see if any parents are interested in contributing information on their culture or if they want to come in and do something with the children" Urban respondent

"It would be nice to have a mini lesson regarding a families particular background and cultural history" Rural respondent

Six percent of the participants, all urban, claimed that it would be important to provide an inclusive environment.

"Inclusion. Adapting to the child not the child adapting to the center" Urban respondent

When these responses were coded by level of training and years of experience no differences were found. However, the answers did show that each category was represented equally by each category.

Are professionals in the field being taught how to be culturally sensitive? In order to determine if the participants of this survey had been taught how to be culturally sensitive,

respondents were asked to answer questions about their training programs. This section was comprised of statements which have been noted by the Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Handbook for Health Educators which was developed by the Association for the Advancement of Health Education as the criteria in which culturally sensitive training programs should be based. Once responses were recorded according to response, percentages were calculated. Sixty-five and one-half percent reported that they had been trained on how to communicate, verbally or non verbally, with positive regard, encouragement, and sincere interest. Sixty-two and one-half percent claimed that were taught how to recognize how their own values, beliefs, and perceptions can influence daily human interaction and to regard such as relative instead of absolute. Eighty-one percent stated that have been trained on how to try and understand others from their point of view. Sixty-two percent reported that they have be taught how to avoid the use of value loaded, evaluative statements, which may cause internal conflicts, and to listen to students and parents in such a way that allows them to completely share and explain themselves. Seventy-eight percent said that they were trained on how to take turns talking, share interaction, and promote circular conversations when involved in group work. Sixty-two and one-half percent said that they were taught how to cope with cultural differences, to accept a degree of frustration, and to deal with circumstances and people effectively.

To what extent are professionals in the field bringing their own cultural insensitivities to the classroom? If cultural insensitivities exist amongst the professionals, to what extent is it affecting their teaching practices? In order to determine if educators were bringing their own cultural insensitivities into the classroom and how these insensitivities may or

may not be affecting their teaching practices. Educators were asked to respond to an intercultural sensitivity scale. The results of the measure were used to determine how educators interacted, enjoyed, and respected other cultures. Once these scores were calculated the researcher did a correlation test between theses scores and the educators' implementation scores. As a result it was found that no correlation existed between the two data sets.   A number of Chi-Square Tests were conducted to determine if there was a difference between location, level of training, years of teaching, and number of courses and the way in which training programs were conducted. Based on these breakdowns it was found that there was no significant difference between those variables.

What areas of an anti-bias curriculum do professionals in the field deem as important or unimportant? In section 4 of the survey, early childhood educators were asked to provide some qualitative information about the way in which they were translating their knowledge into practice. Responses to questions which asked how participants supported and interacted with the students in their class for whom English is not their first language, and to identify if the supports that are needed to successfully carry out a curriculum that is responsive to all children was in place, were used to gauge how well they were doing in this area. Once responses were coded according to theme, percentages were calculated according to location.

Through the responses, the researcher was able to determine if educators in the province are working effectively with students in which whom English is not their first language. Forty-six percent, 28% urban and 18% rural, reported that when working with English as a second language (ESL) children they often help the children learn English

through patience, encouragement, affection, and repetitiveness . In addition to this, they often resort to peer teaching, visuals, and language modeling as a way to teach the child.

"Assistance to complete tasks so actions are immediately paired with language, respond to all communication attempts, and encourage the child to reference peers to know what to do if unclear with verbal instructions" Urban respondent

"In the past , I've made an effort to talk to the child and to use objects or pictures for clarification. However, this is no different than the way that I talk to all my children as many are at the stage where they are progressing from non-verbal to verbal" Rural respondent

Twenty-Five percent, 15% urban and 10% rural, reported that in order to work effectively with children who could not speak English they would try and learn some of the child's language.

"Learn some simple/common words from their mother tongue" Urban respondent

"Try and learn some of their language, if possible" Rural respondent

Twenty-one percent, 6% urban and 15% rural, reported that when working with ESL children they often ask the parents for common words and gestures that the child uses to communicate.

"Ask for help from parents and co-workers" Urban respondent

"I may ask the parents common words that they may say, try to make the child as comfortable and welcomed. I would ask for gestures that ma help me understand their wants and needs" Rural respondent

In addition to these results, 9%, all urban participants, reported that they would make the child feel welcome, 6%, all urban, claimed that they would let the child learn and respond based on their own timetable, and 3%, all rural, stated that they would take the time to explain those other cultures to the English speaking children.

To identify if the supports that are needed to successfully carry out a curriculum responsive to all children was in place, Question 5 asked the participants to identify if the supports that were needed to carry out a curriculum that is responsive to all children was in place. The purpose of asking the participants to identify such supports was two fold. First, the researcher wanted to know what supports were or were not in place, and second it was used to investigate whether or not the respondents were aware of which supports needed to be in place in order to ensure a successful implementation of the programming.

There were various responses to this question. Fifty-five percent, 34% urban and 21% rural stated that their centers were providing them with the supports needed to carry out a curriculum that was responsive to all students. The responses ranged from many books (16%, 9% urban and 6% rural) use of a computer (6%, all rural), open minded and supportive staff (12%, 3% urban and 9% rural), serving various foods (3%, all rural), supportive families (3%, all urban), secured funding for materials and training (9%, 6% urban and 3% rural), planning based around the children's interests (9%, all urban), inclusive atmosphere (3%, all urban), to the celebration of various multicultural holidays (3%, all urban).

"Our program at the center is based on the Emergent curriculum where we focus on the children's interest, needs and abilities at the time. The children lead the

ideas through planning as a group or individual. We offer information as needed and

if multiculturalism arises during these teachings we answer the questions together."

Urban respondent

In addition to these answers, 12%, 3% urban and 9% rural reported that the

supports needed were not made available to them.

"We have to do a lot of research ourselves. If we lived in the city, there are more

support groups i.e. Greek, Arabic, communities that could provide access to cultural

information and events. We are rural so there are limitations because we really don't

have many children from different cultures. It is up to us how much exposure we want

the children to have of different cultures" Rural respondent

Chapter 5

Discussion

  This study was designed to examine if anti bias and culturally responsive curriculums are present in urban and rural daycares in Nova Scotia. Additional factors were investigated to determine the relationship between early childhood educators' training, the length of time that they have been in the field, the number of professional training programs or academic courses on this curricula which they have attended, the ways in which the courses were conducted, the skills they were taught, a measure of cultural sensitivity, and the implementation and maintenance of a culturally responsive curriculum. The study was based on six research questions. The first question asked if early childhood educators in the province of Nova Scotia were being trained in anti-bias curriculum and if so how were they being trained. This question was used to determine how early childhood professionals are gathering knowledge about various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and if the training programs encompass the practical and clinical teaching methods that have been noted by those who have evaluated these types of training programs.

  Based on the historic background of inappropriate cultural and poverty biases, it is important that educators take part in anti-bias and culturally responsive training in order to provide an inclusive education (Derman-Sparks, 1989). In addition to this, it must be ensured that these training programs encompass not only information about anti-bias curriculum but also provide information on the lifestyles, skills, attitudes and values of the various cultures (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). As well, various researchers have stated that courses which present information, regarding anti-bias curriculum, through a

lecture format have little effect on educators who are learning this methodology for the first time (Bernhard et al., 2005; Colville-Hall et al., 1995). Thus, experts have recommended that these training programs should include direct contact and interaction with minority groups, involvement within various communities, meetings with various guest speakers, discussion on both small and large group interaction, development of problem solving and investigative skills, application of concepts to case studies, use of learning logs, development and use of assessment instruments, and hands on approach to knowing (Colville-Hall et al., 1995).

The results of this study support past research on anti-bias and culturally responsive training as most early childhood educators reported that they are being offered courses in this area. However, it was reported, by those who participated in this type of training, that these courses are being facilitated in the effective and ineffective ways as noted by previous experts. For example, the data shows that these courses are equally focused on teaching through projects, discussions, visits from guest speakers, and teaching opportunities with children from various backgrounds. In addition to this information, the findings also showed that none of the respondents were provided with the opportunity to have direct contact and interaction with minority groups, involvement within various communities, application of concepts to case studies, use of learning logs, and the development and use of assessment instruments. In addition, the data also demonstrated that these training programs are being conducted through textbook, lecture, and handout format, methods that have been noted as the most ineffective by pervious experts. Furthermore, it should also be noted that not only are the training programs being facilitated through unsuccessful teaching practices, but that a high percentage of the

survey respondents claimed that have not participated in any type anti-bias or culturally responsive training. This information is important as it illustrates that not only are these training programs, which have been noted by past researchers as critically important, being conducted in ways in which have been noted as most effective for the learner, but that in some cases they are not being offered at all. As a result of this and their ineffectiveness, one could assume that necessary knowledge that should be distributed to the educator is failing to be passed on and/or misinterpreted. Thus, it raises the question; are early childhood educators fully prepared to work with young children from various socio-economic classes and cultures when they enter into the work force?

The second question was used to determine which elements of the anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum early childhood professionals ensuring were implementing an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum is put into place. Once a long term curriculum is put into place, it is important that the educators maintain some sort of ongoing integration (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). While in this phase, it must be maintained that the anti-bias perspective works as a "…filter in which the teacher plans, implements, and evaluates all materials, activities, and interactions with children, parents, and staff…" (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992, p.4). In addition, it is also crucial that the teacher works to ensure that the curriculum is constantly adapted to the needs of the students and continuously consulted upon with the parents (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

Based on the data obtained from this survey it was found that half of our early childhood educators in the province are working to maintain an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum and half are not. This finding is concerning as according to DAP

guidelines it is the role of the educator to take these differences into account throughout the planning and implementation of the classroom environment and learning experiences (Coople and Bredekamp, 2006). Due to the fact that children who come from different language, social, or cultural backdrops have drastic changes to get used to when entering into the early childhood education setting than their counterparts (Coople and Bredekamp, 2006) this step is crucial. As, if the curriculum planning fails to constantly take into account the children's perspectives, it may become a style of teaching that is oppressive to them (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

The third question in this survey was used to find out how professionals were ensuring that ongoing integration was being maintained throughout the program. In order to ensure that ongoing integration is taking place, the educator should be making sure that the anti-bias perspective is being used as "…a filter in which the teacher plans, implements, and evaluates all materials, activities, and interactions with children, parents, and staff…" (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992, p.4), the curriculum is constantly adapted to the needs of the students and continuously consulted upon with the parents (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992), the anti-bias concerns of the educators are being expanded upon, that specific times of self reflection are accessible to teachers who are hoping to properly facilitate this alternative to teaching (Derman-Sparks, 1989), and that support groups be made available to teachers. Above all it is also crucial during the stage of ongoing integration that specific times of self reflection must be accessible to teachers who are hoping to properly facilitate this alternative to teaching (Derman-Sparks, 1989). This is seen as an important step as it is one that will assist the educators in developing awareness of past experiences; it is highly unlikely that teachers will be able to

accomplish this while they are interacting with children and families (Derman-Sparks, 1989). Furthermore, research has also supported the notion that reflective practice not only increases self awareness, but also enhances classroom practice (Jacobson, 2000). In fact, the need for this type of practice is seen as so important that the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development not only encourages professionals to carry out this type of approach, but expects them to as well (Jacobson, 2000). In efforts to reiterate its importance, guidelines on how to ensure that reflective practice is being properly achieved have been suggested. The guiding principles state, but are not limited to, encouraging teachers to develop specific attitudes towards reflective thinking and understanding the importance of accepting responsibility of the consequences (Jacobson, 2000).

Various researchers have stated, that in terms of reflective practice, support groups have been noted as the most effective tool available for achieving educational change (Bernhard, Diaz, & Allgood, 2005; Colville-Hall, Macdonald, & Smolen, 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Geist & Baum, 2005; Gonzalez-Mena, 2005; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Jacobson, 2000; Kieff, 2005; Killoran, 2004). As not only are teachers able to share their achievements and disappointments (Jacobson, 2000), "...but they are also able to find wisdom, a sense of justice, and a deep understanding of children; particularly of those who are neglected by prejudicial educational polices and practices…" (Jacobson, 2000, p.172). Furthermore, if the humanity of the teacher cannot be altered other teaching characteristics such as education technique, technology, or equipment, do not matter (Jacobson, 2000). This is due to the fact that, educators often treat children as they were treated (Jacobson, 2000), so if teachers are hoping to care for

children fairly, listen to them individually, and learn to fully accept and understand them in hopes of one day reaching out to them in a way that will enhance their self identity, supervisors must do the same for the teachers (Jacobson, 2000).

Based on the survey responses, it is clear that those who responded to the survey are, for the most part, using the anti-bias filter when evaluating the literature and materials that are being brought into the classroom. However, none of the respondents talked about the importance of self reflection or the importance of having a support group when trying to ensure that ongoing integration is being maintained throughout the curriculum. Based on the fact that previous research states that once self reflection and support groups are eliminated from this process then nothing else matters, it must be questioned whether or not these types of curricula are being fully maintained by professionals in Nova Scotia. Furthermore, based on the fact that past research would support the assumption that the elimination of support groups and periods of self reflection could affect the way in which educators interact with families of various cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, it could also be assumed that educators, in the province, are using the anti-bias filter as a way to select materials and literature and not as a way to filter interactions with young children and their families. In addition, based on the elimination of these crucial criteria it must also be questioned whether or not professionals truly understand what it means to maintain these types of curricula. The fourth question was used to measure if professionals in the field are being taught how to be culturally sensitive. Traditional beliefs concerning racial advantages and disadvantages have had a profound impact on the way social relationships are formed and life predictions are shaped for people all over the world (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey,

2005). For example, Giroux (2004) states that culture plays a key role in ways in which people think about themselves and their relationships to others and that this phenomenon is produced in the way in which one's ethnic backdrop plays a central role in constructing an individual's "narrative, metaphors, images, and desiring maps" (p. 78) .

Based on the fact that most of the participants responded positively to the criteria laid out by the Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Handbook for Health Educators which was developed by the Association for the Advancement of Health Education, it can be stated that early childhood educators are being trained on how to be culturally sensitive. For example, a majority of the respondents reported that they have been taught how to recognize that their own values and beliefs should be recognized as relative instead of absolute, try and understand others from their point of view, avoid the use of value loaded, evaluative statements, which may cause internal conflicts, and to listen to students and parents in such a way that allows them to completely share and explain themselves. In addition to this, most of the participants also claimed that they have been trained on how to take turns talking, share interaction, promote circular conversations when involved in group work, cope with cultural differences, accept a degree of frustration, and to deal with circumstances and people effectively.

The fifth question was used to measure the extent in which professionals in the field are bringing their own cultural insensitivities to the classroom and if cultural insensitivities exist amongst the professionals, to what extent is it affecting their teaching practices. Alexander, Entwisle, and Thompson (1987) stated that an educator's background not only attributes to how they treat the general population, but it has also been seen as a condition that becomes apparent in their classroom activities and

interpersonal dynamic in the classrooms in which they teach (Alexander et al., 1987). Alexander et al., (1987) reiterate this point by stating that teachers who possess a shared identity with the minority children have a much easier time fostering a sense of commitment to disadvantaged students, as when this connection exists they are able to think highly of their abilities and in turn reach greater success rates with the children with whom they are working (Alexander et al., 1987). However, a majority, if not all, of the participants of this survey reported that they are working with children who come from a different socio-economic background and culture then their own, and correlation results between the intercultural sensitivity scale and implementation levels did not show any significant results. In addition to this, no differences were found between one's level of training and their cultural sensitivity scores. Based on these results, agreeing with past literature on this topic is difficult, however in saying this one must also take into account the impact that a low response rate may have had on the data that the question developed.

The last question, of this study, was used to determine what areas of anti-bias curriculum professionals in the field deem as important or unimportant and to what extent were they able to translate their knowledge of this type of programming into practice.

In order to work effectively with children from diverse culture and socio-economic backgrounds it is necessary that the explicit mechanics of culturally responsive and anti-bias curriculum be put into place (Espinosa, 2005). To be successful, these types of teaching practices must also include; a revision to its instructional methods, an integration of home knowledge, the organization of small group activities that allow for inter-student communication, the integration of resources that reflect the speech and traditions of the families, the upholding of relationships with families through mutual

trust, and the continuous focus of the strengths of the child and family (Espinosa, 2005).

In order for teachers to successfully accomplish these tasks questions which ask about the family's hobbies, interests, expectations, and aspirations should be asked (Espinosa, 2005). As well as this, it is also important that the educator obtain information about the child's age, play, strongest language, and special talents (Espinosa, 2005). Furthermore, specific inquiries about the family size, primary caregiver, and first language heard and spoken are also seen as important (Espinosa, 2005).

In addition to this, in order to work effectively with children from low socio economic status families it is important that early childhood education programs provide the elements of "…high quality positive relationships, a comprehensive and coherent curriculum, rich responsive language interactions , and opportunities for meaningful parent involvements…" (Espinosa, 2005 p.842) Furthermore, researchers have stated that early childhood education programs whose primary focus is welfare reform are usually less effective than those whose approaches focus on enriching a child's environment and improving their chance of succeeding in school (Phillips, Voran, Kisker, Howes, & Whitebook, 1994). In addition to this information, Espinosa (2005) recommends that when educating young children it is essential to focus on educational outcomes and it is also necessary that these programs incorporate the features of high quality education. Furthermore, in order to accomplish this goal, Espinosa (2005), states that positive supporting relationships are not only essential but also critical to high quality education programs which hope to support low income children (Espinosa, 2005). This is due to the fact that "…young, vulnerable children can thrive academically and socially when they have the support of a caring adult…" (Espinosa, 2005, p.842). In

addition to positive relationships, language development should be considered as highly important (Espinosa, 2005). In order to ensure that this goal can be met it is important for educators to make certain that they are working with children both in small groups and individually through-out the day (Espinosa, 2005). Furthermore, they need to provide excellent models of speech while maintaining that the child's home language standards and the opportunity for children to express symbolic concepts through speech are preserved (Espinosa, 2005). In addition to these elements, it is also important that these curricula include school related skills and knowledge (Espinosa, 2005). In addition to this, it has also been stated that children from lower income families have less verbal skills than their counterparts (Espinosa, 2005). Therefore, it is also important that young children are provided with the opportunity to learn the alphabet, letter sounds, and early numeric skills (Espinosa, 2005).

In order to ensure that these types of goals can be met by educators it is important that class sizes are kept small, teachers engage in collaborative planning and reflection, and that administrators ensure that all educators are highly qualified (Espinosa, 2005).

 In addition to maintaining a high quality curriculum it has also been noted that maintaining a relationship with the family is also necessary (Espinosa, 2005). The importance of establishing a joint and respectful relationship with parents, or other family members, is based on the premise that when educators and relatives work together the young student is able to be developmentally supported as well as correctly understood in the classroom (Espinosa, 2005).

Based on the survey responses, it is clear that most, if not all, of the educators who participated in this survey do work on revising their instructional methods. This is

seen in the way in which they provide assistance in helping children complete tasks, use flash cards when working with ESL children, and try and learn some of the student's mother tongue. However, none of the participants reported that they organize small group activities that allow for inter-student communication, integrate resources that reflect the speech and traditions of the families, uphold relationships with families through mutual trust, and the continuously focus of the strengths of the child and family (Espinosa, 2005). In addition, the respondents have not reported that they ask the family about the child's hobbies, interests, play, and special talents (Espinosa, 2005).

In addition to these answers, it is clear that the participants believe that the supports needed to carry out a curriculum that is responsive to all children range from books, computer use, open minded and supportive staff, the serving of various foods, supportive families, secured funding for materials and training, planning based around the children's interests, an inclusive atmosphere, and the celebration of various multicultural holidays. When in fact research in this area states that in order to support these types of curricula class sizes should be kept small, teachers should engage in collaborative planning and reflection, a joint and respectful relationship with parents, or other family members should be maintained , and that administrators ensure that all educators are highly qualified (Espinosa, 2005).

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the low survey response rate and the ability to generalize results. The first limitation of this study was the approximate response rate of 9%, which was significantly below a typical survey response rate of 30%.

The second is a typical limitation to most studies, the limitation of generalizing the results beyond the population being studied. Low return rates also indicate the need for caution regarding generalizability of all early childhood educators in the province. It is also difficult to distinguish if there is something uniquely different between the educators who choose to complete the survey, and those who do not. It is possible that those who participated were greater advocates of early childhood education, or were not as limited for time as other educators.

Further Research

There are many aspects to consider regarding the question of anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculums. One possibility is to compare the training and implementation processes with other regions (including urban/rural Canada/US) that work with children from a wide variety of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. It would also be very interesting to explore parents' satisfaction and compliance rates within these curriculums as well.

Further research could also explore the variables influencing training and implementation rates in different settings and with different participants (members of associations/non-members). Future studies cold also ask ECEs who did not participate in the study to identify barriers to their participation as time and interest.

Future research could also explore which components of the training processes were valued by the educators. Educators could be asked about their preferences for the way in which a course is conducted and the information they would hope to gain. Further research in this area would help develop more useful training programs and provide educators with valuable information about various dimensions of their practice.

Recommendations

Many recommended changes in early childhood curricula require additional time and money, and are therefore dependent on the workload and income of the educator. Unfortunately, due to current service models, an early childhood educators' workload is excessive and spare time and extra monetary resources are not a luxury. Therefore, in light of these problems some changes that should be made are:

- increasing an educator's curricula preparation time

- increasing allotted budget amounts

- increasing educator's awareness about these types of curricula and the current availability of training for this service

- increasing parent's awareness about the roles and responsibilities of the early childhood educator

- providing teacher's with further information about how to implement these curricula

- assisting educators in their efforts to support their students by encouraging parental involvement in the decision making process

- incorporating changes that are relevant to the child and the home life

- providing more opportunities for the educator to discuss their questions and concerns with a facilitator of a training program

Conclusion

Anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculums have been reported by various researchers as a teaching method that is not only active, in the way in which it works on eliminating preconceived biases of various diversities which may exist in an educator's classroom, but that it is also one that is problem solving(Anti-Defamation League [ADL], 2008; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992). This notion is based on the fact that one of the main goals of this instructional method is to educate children on how to understand others and their differences, while at the same time working on providing young people with the tools needed to create social change (ADL, 2008; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992).

In addition, this type of curricula is not only beneficial to its students; it also holds many positive impacts for those who implement it as well. While educators work on finding accurate and tangible information about other cultures, genders, religions, physical and mental abilities, and economic classes they are learning, through research, how to address biased behaviors, within themselves, when it surfaces (ADL, 2008; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2005). Furthermore, through the use of support groups, professional development, and diverse assessment tools teachers can aid in the creation of a constructive and unbiased community (ADL, 2008; Bernhard, Diaz, & Allgood, 2005; Colville-Hall, Macdonald, & Smolen, 1995; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Geist & Baum, 2005; Gonzalez-Mena, 2005; Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Jacobson, 2000; Kieff, 2005; Killoran, 2004). Based on the fact that Statistics Canada has predicted that by the year 2017 twenty-three percent of Canadians will belong to a visible minority, and the knowledge that in 2006 1.7 million people in Canada applied for social assistance

benefits, the formation of a balanced society is something that everyone should be aiming for.

However, at present, based on the fact that in this current study early childhood educators did not mention the importance of support groups, self reflection, or the necessity of using diverse assessment tools while trying to implement an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum it is clear that they hold only surface knowledge about this type of teaching methodology. Thus, it seems that early childhood education is paired with ineffective service. Based on the fact that this study showed no significant outcomes between those who were trained, either by degree, diploma, or the equivalency, and their culturally sensitivity, and the fact that one's level of experience did not have any significant impact on the way in which they were trained, it can be stated that in order for this level of ineffective service to be adjusted it is the training program facilitator that needs to adjust. They need to amend their teaching techniques and discuss the implications of this type of teaching methodology with all stakeholders including parents, teachers, and administrators. Due to the fact that past research has stated that courses which present information, regarding anti-bias curriculum, through a lecture format have little effect on educators who are learning this methodology for the first time (Bernhard et al., 2005; Colville-Hall et al., 1995), instructional methods should be following the suggested alternative formats (Colville-Hall et al., 1995). In addition to this, as all stakeholders have the best interest of the children and the community at heart, increasing awareness about the limitations of the way in which the curricula is currently being implemented would be a way in which facilitators could begin rallying for the support

needed by early childhood educators who are struggling to find the time and monetary

resources needed to implement and support these curricula effectively.

References

Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Maxine S. Thompson. (1987). School performance, status relations, and the structure of sentiment: bringing the teacher back [Electronic version]. *American Sociological Review, 52*(5), 665-682.

Anti-Defamation League (2008) What is anti-bias education*?* Retrieved August 10, 2008 from http://www.adl.org/tools_teachers/tip_antibias_ed.asp

Association for the Advancement of Health Education. (1994). *Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: Guidelines for Health Educators.* Reston, Virginia: Association for the Advancement of Health Education.

Bernhard, J. K.., Diaz, C. F. ., & Ilene Allgood. (2005). Research-based teacher education for multicultural contexts. [Electronic version]. *Intercultural Education, 16*(3), 263-277.

Canadian Council On Social Development. (2000). *The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty 2000.* Retrieved July 10, 2007, from http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2000/fbpov00/hl.htm

Chen, G., & Starosta, William. J. (2000). The development and validation of the intercultural sensitivity scale. *Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of National Communication Association,*

Colombo, M.W., (2005) Reflections from teachers of culturally diverse children. [Electronic version]. *Beyond the Journal*, November 2005

Colville-Hall, S., Macdonald, S., & Lynn Smolen. (1995). Preparing pre-service teachers for diversity in learners. *Journal of Teacher Education, 46*(4), 295-303.

Cohen, J (1960). A coefficient of agreement for nominal scales. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20, 37-46*

Coople, C., Bredekamp, S. (2006). *Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice: An Introduction for Teachers of Children 3 to 6.* Washington, D.C: National Association for the Education of Young Children

Daniel, J., Friedman, S., (2005). Preparing teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse children. [Electronic version]. *Beyond the Journal,* November 2005

Derman-Sparks, L. (1989). *Anti-Bias Curriculum Tools for Empowering Young Children.* Washington, D.C: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Derman-Sparks, L., Ramsey, P. G. (2005). What if all the children in my class are white?[Electronic version]. *Beyond the Journal, November*

Espinosa, L. M. (2005). Curriculum and assessment considerations for young children from culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds.[Electronic version]. *Psychology in the Schools, 42*(8), 837-853.

Geist, E., & Baum, A. C. (2005). Yeah, but's that keep teachers from embracing an active curriculum.[Electronic version]. *Young Children, May*, 1-8. Retrieved July 6,2007.

Giroux, H. A. (1999). Public intellectuals and the challenge of children's culture: youth

and the politics of innocence. *The Review of Education/Pedagogy/Cultural Studies,*

21(3), 183-225.

Giroux, H. A. (2005). The terror of neoliberalism: rethinking the significance of cultural

politics. *College Literature, 32*(1), 1-19.

Giroux, H. A. (2004). Cultural studies and the politics of public pedagogy: making the

political more pedagogical. *Parallax, 10*(2), 73-89. www.tandf.co.uk/journals

Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2005). *Diversity in Early Care and Education*. Napa Valley College:

Mcgraw Hill.

Hoskins, Marie. L. (1999). *Worlds Apart and Lives Together: Developing Cultural*

Atonement. Child and Youth Care Forum.

Hohensee, J. B., Derman-Sparks, L. (1992). Implementing an anti-bias curriculum in

early childhood classrooms.[Electronic version]. *Eric Digest,* 1-6.

Jacobson, T. (2000). Prod and pry from inside out: ethnography of an anti-bias support-

supervision group for teachers of young children.[Electronic version]. *Educational*

Resources Information Center, 5(7), 172-179. Retrieved July 6,2007.

Kieff, J. (2005). Let's talk about friendship: an anti-bias unit on building community.

Childhood Education, 82(2), 98-100.

Killoran, I. (2004). Rethink, revise, react using an anti-bias curriculum to move beyond the usual.[Electronic version]. *Childhood Education, 80*(3), 149-156.

McCreath, P. L. (1981). *Multiculturalism : A Handbook for Teachers*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

Phillips, D. A., Voran, M., Kisker, E., Howes, C., & Marcy Whitebook. (1994). Childcare for children in poverty: opportunity or inequity? *Child Development, 65*, 472-492.

Ramey, C.T., Campbell, F.A, (1991), Poverty, early childhood education, and academic competence: The abecedarian experiment. *Children and Poverty* 190-221.

Statistics Canada. (2005). *Population and Growth Components.* Retrieved July 11, 2007, from http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo03.htm?sdi=immigration

Suen, H. K., Ary, D., (1989) Analyzing quantitative behavioral observations data: L. Erlbaum and Associates. Hillsdale, New Jersey

Tiedt, P. L.., & Tiedt, Iris. M. (1995). *Multicultural Teaching: A Handbook of Activities, Information, and Resources*. Needham Heights, Mass: Allyn & Bacon.

Appendix A: Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

Below is a series of statements concerning intercultural communication. There are no right or wrong answers. Please work quickly and record your first impression by indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Thank you for your cooperation

5 = strongly agree 4 =agree 3 = uncertain (Please put the number corresponding to your answer 2 = disagree in the blank before the statement) I = strongly disagree

__ l. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
__ 2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.
__ 3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.
__ 4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.
__ 5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
__ 6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.
__ 7. I don't like to be with people from different cultures.
__ 8. I respect the values of people from different cultures.
__ 9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.
__10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.
__II. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.
__12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.
__13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.
__14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.
__15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.
__16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.
__17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.
__18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.
__19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.
 __20. I think my culture is better than other cultures
. __21. I often give positive responses to my 'culturally different counterpart during our interaction.
__22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.
__23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues.
 __24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.

Note. Items 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18,20, and 22 are reverse-coded before summing the 24 items. Interaction Engagement items are 1, 11, 13,21,22,23, and 24, Respect for Cultural Differences items are 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, and 20, Interaction Confidence items are 3,4,5,6, and 10, Interaction Enjoyment items are 9, 12, and 15, and Interaction Attentiveness items are 14,17, and 19.

Appendix B. Questionnaire

Teacher's Perceptions and Classroom Practices in Regards To How They Feel, Learn, and Implement an Anti-Bias and Culturally Responsive Curriculum Into Their Classrooms

Teacher's today are asked to perform a great number of duties. This questionnaire is to help us learn more about your opinions and practices of an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum. We understand that teachers today are extremely busy, so we greatly appreciate you taking the time out of your schedule to complete questionnaire. It is our hope that this questionnaire will help in formatting the future directions of educational policy inside the ECE classroom. Thank you.

Section 1: *Demographic Information*

Gender:

☐ Male
☐ Female

Age:

☐ 19 – 24
☐ 25 – 30
☐ 31 – 36
☐ 37 – 42
☐ 43- 48
☐ 49- 54
☐ 55-60
☐ 61 – Older

How many years have you been teaching in the Early Childhood Education Sector?
_____

What is the highest level of training you have obtained?

☐ Degree Trained
☐ Diploma Trained
☐ Trained to the Equivalent
☐ Other (Please specify) _____

Your daycare is:
☐ Private
☐ Non-Profit

What is the student population of your daycare? _____

How many teachers (regular/general classroom & special education/ resource) work at your daycare? _____

What age group do you teach? _____

Have you ever taught a student who was from a different ethnic group than your own?

    Yes
    No

If "yes", please indicate the cultures in which children you have taught have come from.
_____

Have you ever taught a student who was from a different socio-economic class than your own?

    Yes
    No

If "yes", please indicate the classes in which children you have taught have come from.
_____

Section 2: *Training Information*

Number of university/college/ professional development courses you have taken on teaching and implementing an anti-bias and/or culturally responsive curriculum_____

Describe the way in which these courses or professional development seminars were conducted.(e.g. was the course more hands on than text book, did it entail group work and discussion)

_____

_____

_____

Please answer the following questions regarding your training by marking "yes", "no", or "somewhat" in the space provided.

Your ECE training program or professional development workshops provided…	Yes	No	Somewhat
At least one course in multicultural education			
Information about the history and culture of students from a wide number of cultural backgrounds			
Information about how one learns a first and second language and effective teaching practices for working with students from limited English language backgrounds			
Student teaching opportunities with students from varying backgrounds			
Your ECE training program(s) focused on training professionals on how to:	**Yes**	**No**	**Somewhat**
Communicate, verbally or nonverbally, with positive regard, encouragement, and sincere interest			

Recognize how your own values, beliefs, and perceptions can influence daily human interaction and to regard such as relative, rather than absolute			
Try and understand others from their point of view			
Avoid the use of value loaded, evaluative statements, which may cause internal conflicts, and to listen to students and parents in such a way that allows them to completely share and explain themselves			
Be able to get a task accomplished in a manner and time frame appropriate to the learner, and to be flexible in the process for getting things done, particularly participation and group activities.			
Take turns talking, sharing interaction, and promoting circular conversations when involved in group work			
To be able to cope with cultural differences, to accept a degree of frustration, and to deal with various circumstances and people effectively			

<u>Section 3</u>

For this section circle one (1) number between 1(strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree)

The academic achievement of students from diverse cultures is increased if the school environment is not consistent with their culture

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

Positive attitudes toward diversity are mainly associated with environments that are homogenous

<div align="center">

1   2   3   4   5

</div>

A multicultural approach to learning has little impact on a student's self concept

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Effective implementation of an anti-bias curriculum is not related to the way in which an educator increases their ability to be successful in culturally diverse settings

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Educators harbor biases, prejudices, and stereotypes

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

It is only somewhat necessary for an educator to know the exact race, ethnicity, and culture of all the children they serve

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

It is acceptable for a teacher to instruct a child who exhibits variances in body language and traditions on how to adjust

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Keeping an anti-bias curriculum up to date has little to due with the developmental assessments of young children

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

It is not always necessary to include multi cultural issues such as holidays, foods, and traditions, into a daycare center curriculum.

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

It is not necessary to always include literature that promotes ideas of multiculturalism, non-traditional gender roles, and the various lifestyles of families, through pictures and story telling in the daycare classroom.

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

Low income homes contain the same range of positive and negative influences on learning as do middle-class homes.

        1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

When a teacher is trying to decide which children to challenge in their classroom it is sometimes acceptable to use gender, culture, or class as a starting point.

1   2   3   4   5

Equity between the sexes in the classroom should be appreciated by teachers.

1   2   3   4   5

Section 4

1) **Please list the ways in which you provide and maintain an environment and curriculum that is positive and welcoming for all children.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2) **How do you evaluate the literature and materials that you use in your classroom?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3) **How do you support and interact with the students in your class for whom English is not their first language?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4) **Identify the problems and issues you must address if you are to carry out successful multicultural education programs.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5) Are the supports needed to successfully carry out a curriculum that is responsive to all children in place? If yes, please indicate how. If no, please indicate why.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C. Letter of Information

Dear Director,

My name is Leah Quilty and I am a graduate student in the Masters of Arts Child and Youth Study program at Mount Saint Vincent University. I am gathering information on teacher's perceptions and classroom practices in regards to how they feel, learn, and implement an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum into their classrooms in urban and rural areas of Nova Scotia under the supervision of my thesis supervisor Dr. Kim. Kienapple.

Your daycare has been randomly selected to participate in this study. The centers that were chosen were selected on geographical location, and it is anticipated that this will allow for an accurate reflection on teacher's current perceptions and practices concerning the teaching methods used in classrooms that aim at teaching or teaching about various cultures and classes.

Should you agree o participate, you will be asked to distribute a package in your daycare facility. Each package will contain an Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), questionnaire, a consent form, and an envelope; teachers will not incur any out of pocket expenses. Completion of the questionnaire and returning it to the researcher is voluntary. The ISS and the questionnaire together will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. There is no space for the teachers to indicate their names, and they will be asked to remain anonymous. The consent form sent to the teachers will indicate a specific date in which they will be asked to return their responses. A large brown envelope will be left in the office for teachers to return their completed questionnaires. By returning their questionnaire to the researcher, the participant (teacher) will have agreed to participate in the study. As part of the masters thesis in the Child and Youth Study department, this study has been reviewed and granted approval by the university ethics committee. By the end of April 2008 a summary of the results of the study will be mailed to all daycares who have participated in this study.

If you have questions and/or concerns regarding the research or questionnaire itself, please contact me at ██████████ or ██████████████, my thesis supervisor, Dr. Kim. Kienapple at (902) 457-6199 or kim.kienapple@msvu.ca, or Brenda Gange Mount Saint Vincent University Research Ethics Board at 457-6350 or Brenda.Gagne@msvu.ca , who is not directly involved in this study , who is not directly involved in this study.

Sincerely

_____
Leah Quilty, BA (Political Science)
Graduate Student in Child and Youth Study
Mount Saint Vincent University

Appendix D. Letter of Consent

Information and Consent to Participate

Teacher's Perceptions and Classroom Practices in Regards To How They Feel, Learn, and Implement an Anti-Bias and Culturally Responsive Curriculum Into Their Classrooms

Dear Educator,

My name is Leah Quilty and I am a graduate student in the Masters of Art Child and Youth Study program at Mount Saint Vincent University. I am gathering information on teacher's perceptions and classroom practices in regards to how they feel, learn, and implement an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum into their classrooms in the HRM (or province of Nova Scotia) under the supervision of my thesis supervisor Dr. Kim Kienapple. You and some of your fellow teachers have been selected to participate in the study. Participation in this study includes completing an Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) and a questionnaire (attached) about one's thoughts, training experiences, and implementation of an anti-bias and culturally responsive curriculum. Your responses to the ISS and questionnaire will help in understanding current classroom practices that affect both yourself and your students.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you do not have to reveal your identity. Whether or not you choose to contribute to this study will in no circumstances affect your current employment situation The ISS and the questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You may skip any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering and you may discontinue participation (filling out the questionnaire) at any time. **Please do not put your name anywhere on the questionnaire.** We are only interested in grouped data, and therefore in reporting the results you and your school will not be individually identified in any way.

By returning their questionnaire to the researcher, you will have agreed to participate in the study. As part of the masters thesis in the department of Child and Youth Study program, this study has been reviewed and granted approval by the university ethics committee. By the end of April 2008 the results of the study will be mailed to all the daycare centers who participated in this study. Your daycare's office will have a large brown envelope for collection of the questionnaires. If you decide to participate in this study would you please complete the questionnaire and return it to the office at your school as-soon-as-possible or by (date).

If you have questions and/or concerns regarding the research or questionnaire itself, please contact me at ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ or▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓, my thesis supervisor, Dr. Kim. Kienapple at (902) 457-6199 or kim.kienapple@msvu.ca, or Brenda Gange Mount Saint Vincent University Research Ethics Board at 457-6350 or Brenda.Gagne@msvu.ca , who is not directly involved in this study.

Please tear this one sheet off from the rest of the questionnaire, and keep it for your personal reference.

Thank you for your participation.

_____
Leah Quilty, BA (Political Science)
Graduate Student in Child and Youth Study
Mount Saint Vincent University