

## Diversity, Growth, and Understanding: School Responses to Immigration in Rural New Brunswick

Lyle D. Hamm, Marc Bragdon, John McLoughlin, Helen Massfeller et Lauren A. Hamm

Numéro 197, 2021

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1083330ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1083330ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan

ISSN

1207-7798 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Hamm, L., Bragdon, M., McLoughlin, J., Massfeller, H. & Hamm, L. (2021). Diversity, Growth, and Understanding: School Responses to Immigration in Rural New Brunswick. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy / Revue canadienne en administration et politique de l'éducation*, (197), 2-27. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1083330ar>

### Résumé de l'article

The province of New Brunswick is growing its population through immigration and retention strategies of newcomers to grow and stabilize its economy. Many communities, traditionally unaccustomed to such growth, are now experiencing a rapid shift in their ethnocultural populations. This report is based on a case study research conducted in three rural New Brunswick schools in three closely connected communities. Each school is confronting their own issues with the shift in their student demographics, but all share common strengths and challenges. The researchers identified four main intersecting themes, each connected to a sub-theme. They found that: 1). Newcomer students are striving hard to learn and live in an English culture; 2). Newcomer students are working to belong in their school through finding Canadian-born friends and allies; 3). Educators and newcomer students are mindful that deficit thinking hinders language and verbal communication; and 4). Stereotypical perceptions about new immigrants taking jobs away from New Brunswickers are pervasive and consistent in the schools and communities that were studied. As more newcomers arrive in the province, the researchers advocate that educators and school leaders need more knowledge and support for working with newcomer students and families. Further, deeper conversations about stereotyping and racism will need to occur to effectively eradicate the negative perceptions about immigrants and immigration in the province.



## **Diversity, Growth, and Understanding: School Responses to Immigration in Rural New Brunswick**

Lyle Hamm, Marc Bragdon, John McLoughlin,  
Helen Massfeller, & Lauren Hamm  
University of New Brunswick

### **Abstract**

The province of New Brunswick is growing its population through immigration and retention strategies of newcomers to grow and stabilize its economy. Many communities, traditionally unaccustomed to such growth, are now experiencing a rapid shift in their ethnocultural populations. This report is based on a case study research conducted in three rural New Brunswick schools in three closely connected communities. Each school is confronting their own issues with the shift in their student demographics, but all share common strengths and challenges. The researchers identified four main intersecting themes, each connected to a sub-theme. They found that: 1). Newcomer students are striving hard to learn and live in an English culture; 2). Newcomer students are working to belong in their school through finding Canadian-born friends and allies; 3). Educators and newcomer students are mindful that deficit thinking hinders language and verbal communication; and 4). Stereotypical perceptions about new immigrants taking jobs away from New Brunswickers are pervasive and consistent in the schools and communities that were studied. As more newcomers arrive in the province, the researchers advocate that educators and school leaders need more knowledge and support for working with newcomer students and families. Further, deeper conversations about stereotyping and racism will need to occur to effectively eradicate the negative perceptions about immigrants and immigration in the province.

*Keywords:* New Brunswick, immigration, demographic change, ethnocultural diversity, rural education, community

### **Context**

Statistics Canada (2021) reported that Canada has a population of 38,008,005 people. This marks an increase of 6,878,886 people over the past 20 years. The largest growth has occurred in Ontario (+2,771,330), Alberta (+1,349,776), Quebec (+1,164,275), and British Columbia (+1,060,203) (see Appendix 1). The western provinces of Manitoba (+227,434) and Saskatchewan (+178,709) have experienced modest growth over this timeframe.

The remaining growth of 127,156 is dispersed over the four easternmost provinces and three northern territories. The site of the study, New Brunswick (+32,020), along with the Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia (+45,779) and Prince Edward Island (+22,837) contribute over 100,000 of this amount with the remainder from Newfoundland and Labrador (-583) and the three northern territories of Nunavut (+11,105), Yukon (+12,097), and Northwest Territories (+3,901) (see Appendix 1).

The Maritime provinces marked where Canada's first major industries began and thrived. Ancient forests were harvested, while farms, homes, and businesses were built. Large commercial industries like shipbuilding, with their subsidiary industries and businesses, flourished. Coastal fishing communities enjoyed easy access to ocean food sources, thus, providing abundant sources of protein for local consumption and export. The region developed as an economic power player. Subsequent retraction of

forestry, fisheries, and other traditional industries in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century pushed families to look elsewhere for employment. Hence, a steady out-migration of Maritimers followed westward, where expanding energy, agricultural, and manufacturing industries provided employment opportunities (Broadway, 2013; Corbett & Forsey, 2017).

### ***Growing the Atlantic Population Through Immigration***

In Canada, most new immigrants settle in larger cities (James, 2004). Recent reports, however, suggest Toronto and Montreal are losing people to smaller regions across Canada (Agecoutay & Anderson, 2021; Slaughter, 2021). Today, all four Atlantic coast provinces are striving hard to grow and stabilize their populations, and provincial policymakers have devised strategies to attract and retain more people (New Brunswick Government, 2019; Newfoundland and Labrador Government, 2015; Prince Edward Island Government, 2017; Thevenot, 2019). In three of the provinces, the legislation seems to be working. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have experienced modest growth in recent times (Cox, 2020; Jerrett, 2019). Prince Edward Island's population has also grown, but one report stated that out-migration from that province has also increased substantially (Neatby, 2019). Newfoundland and Labrador policymakers are working overtime to attract people to their towns and cities so that provincial industries can grow and be sustainable once again (Mullin, 2019).

### **The Study and Research Questions**

This project is set in a rural region of New Brunswick where newcomers (i.e., permanent new immigrants, refugees, international students, and temporary workers and families) have bolstered the population and the economies of several close-knit communities. The research question is: *How are educators and students (newcomer and Canadian-born) in rural New Brunswick responding to rapid demographic changes through their teaching, learning, and community involvement?* Rapid demographic changes evoke an increase in ethnocultural and linguistic diversity, as reflected in the regional site of this project over the past 10 years. Rapid demographic change and increasing ethnocultural diversity have impacted to varying degrees the three participating schools and communities. Contrary to the province's challenges for growth, prospects for this particular region are promising. This is due to vibrant agricultural, transportation, and small manufacturing industries each attracting families from all over the world. One report suggested that "In the next 10 years, about 120,000 jobs will become available in our province" (New Brunswick Government, 2019, p. 3). Continued growth of New Brunswick's economic base will require the rural reaches of the province to play a role in attracting and retaining newcomers. Thus, it is imperative that community members, school leaders, educators, and students continue to prepare themselves for the social and cultural impact that rapid demographic changes will have on local citizens, community institutions, and established organizations (Egbo, 2009; Lopez, 2016).

### ***Rurality and Resistance Toward Newcomers***

Canadians have not always embraced demographic change and increasing ethnocultural diversity (Lund, 2006a, 2006b; Preibisch, 2004). Often characterized internationally as a kind and caring nation, Canada's deep, dark past has dominated recent academic and public discourse with respect to the historical and contemporary mistreatment and marginalization of its Indigenous population/citizens (Battiste, 2013; Daschuk, 2013; King, 2013). Further, new immigrants, refugees, temporary foreign workers, as well as non-white and Indigenous Canadians continue to face perpetual, and blatant institutional racism and marginalization throughout Canadian society (Ibrahim, 2021; Perkel, 2018). New Brunswick has experienced its share of racially charged incidents (Blanch, 2017; Burgos, 2021).

In 2021, one must consider the impact of rapid demographic change on rural regions in Canada. "Rural areas are seeing larger numbers of immigration without the benefit of years of extensive research to know how these areas are uniquely positioned to welcome newcomers, and what barriers and opportunities exist for integrating newcomers in rural areas" (Lam, 2019a, p. 78). Smaller centres across Canada are struggling to support new immigrants, migrants, and their families as they settle and integrate into local communities (Carter et al., 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2016).

The voices of rurally situated educators are not well understood by policymakers (Hamm et al., 2017). Many educators experience doubt and anxiety when responding to rapid changes in their schools

and communities brought on by demographic shifts. It is even more difficult for newcomer students and families who work hard to integrate into their communities and school cultures (Raby, 2004). Newcomer and refugee families face barriers related to housing stability, quality, and cost. Many newcomer families downplay the need for assistance, making it even harder for communities to understand and empathize with their struggles (Oudshoorn et al., 2019). Newcomers also face financial instability in Canada where they have to rely on low paying ‘survival jobs’ in cyclical tourism and service industries (Depner & Teixeira, 2012).

Suggesting new immigrant students face language barriers in their schools has been problematic for many researchers, given the implications that such ideas contribute to deficit thinking perspectives toward English language learners (Shields, 2018). Researchers also report that media (print, digital, and social) play an outsized role in contributing to the resistance many new immigrant and refugee families face in Canada. As Esses et al. (2013) have written,

Over the course of the past 10 to 15 years, portrayals of immigrants and refugees in many western countries have become increasingly negative, with the media focusing on the threats that immigrants and refugees pose to members of host societies. (p. 520)

Racism directed towards minoritized new immigrant students is a prime factor in newcomer student marginalization and the sense of separation from their own culture that they experience as they try to navigate the Canadian education system and fit in among their peers (Baker et al., 2016; Berg, 2010; Phan, 2003). Varma-Joshi et al. (2004) reported that subtle and covert racism is a common experience for many visible minorities in New Brunswick. Many minoritized adolescents become resigned to name-calling racism because they feel that their teachers and school leaders will not respond effectively if they call it out in classrooms, hallways, or playgrounds (Baker et al., 2001).

Social isolation can be common among refugee students who are streamed into non-academic school programmes (Schroeter & James, 2014). Some researchers have found that “the experience of racism or discrimination discourages a sense of belonging to the host nation. This experience can also lead to “politicized” identities as immigrants react to exclusion through in-group solidarity and a rejection of the mainstream” (Schimmele & Wu, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, it is essential that educators “show absolute intolerance to any hurtful acts or use of language based on stereotypes. Educators must be diligent and consistent in responding to these actions so that all students feel safe” (Kristmanson et al., 2017, p. 21).

### *Welcoming Rural Communities*

Newcomer students need to feel and experience an immediate sense of belonging in their school and wider community. For this to occur, newcomer students require that all school personnel - and especially their Canadian-born student peers – intentionally include them in classroom, extra-curricular, and social activities (Wilson-Forsberg, 2016). Educators in ethnocultural diverse schools must work toward inclusivity by creating people-oriented school cultures that are more welcoming to students and families who risk being marginalized due to cultural and language concerns. It may be necessary, for example, to visit homes and communities of parents if they are reluctant to come to the school for events such as parent/teacher meetings (Wang, 2018).

To counter isolation for newcomer families in rural regions, intentionally formed relationships with the host society, based on mutual inquiry and understanding, help newcomers gain a sense of social support. Strong community relationships might then motivate newcomers to remain in the community where their children are being educated. Preibisch (2004) noted that “friendships help migrant workers exercise rights they are accorded and often denied” (p. 222). Newcomers also require support and guidance to navigate community agencies. Burgess et al. (2016) suggest that this support often arrives directly through community mentors. They found that access to additional support networks through social media has been invaluable in assisting newcomers access the services they need to live in Canada.

As a proactive and equity-oriented response, ethnocultural and linguistically diverse schools across Canada have set up English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming for new immigrant students who do not speak one of the two official languages. Coelho (1998) strongly supports this pedagogy, arguing that “although they continue to need support for

several years, second language learners also need opportunities for involvement in the mainstream program of the school” (p. 81). Therefore, when such programs are conceptualized in schools, it is important for leaders and educators to understand unintended consequences of such learning structures including academic tracking (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Starratt, 2005).

The ESL and/or EAL educator may be identified as the key professional for bolstering the language development of new immigrant students (Roessingh, 2006), but it is critically important for all educators in an ethnoculturally diverse school to share in the responsibility of teaching the language of instruction along with course content. This ‘proactivity’ enables newcomer students to be more successful in core courses, rather than languish in ESL and EAL classes where they may experience alienation (Li, 2010; Schoeter & James, 2014). Though it is a challenge for school administrators in rural areas, Abbott and Rossiter (2011) argue that it is important for them to hire qualified ESL and EAL teachers for newcomer students who require language development.

With the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees to Canada in the past two decades, it is critical to provide extensive and continuous professional development to both new and experienced teachers related to global events and the plight of refugees (Gagné et al., 2017; Stewart, 2017; Stewart & Martin, 2018). When teachers and school leaders learn deeply about their students and the experiences of refugees and new Canadians, it places them in a better position to attempt pedagogical reconceptualization and culturally responsive practices (Gay, 2010). In fact, some researchers argue that “the ‘how’ of supporting refugee learners cannot reasonably be addressed without understanding who the learners are and what lived experiences shape their engagement with the education system” (Gagné et al., 2017, p. 439).

The following section will briefly describe the methodological approach, data collection, and analytical processes we employed in our study.

## Methodology

This collective case study (Stake, 1995) is set in three rural schools within a large Anglophone school district in New Brunswick and aligns with constructivist (interpretive/subjectivist) epistemology (Greenfield & Ribbons, 1993). The schools are enrolling increasing numbers of newcomer and international students. Bush (2003) suggests that “within schools ... subjective theorists point to the different values and aspirations of individual teachers, support staff, and pupils. They all experience the institution from different standpoints and interpret events and situations according to their own backgrounds and motivations” (p. 115). As multiple realities overlap in a school environment, a promising strategy for researchers to employ to gain a better understanding of them is to engage, unpack, and analyze the perceptions of their social actors.

Dimmock and Walker’s (2005) cross-cultural school focused model provided a useful framework to investigate and understand how the current international and national societal cultures were impacting the stakeholders in each school, especially as it related to increasing immigration, demographic change, and diversity. Each outer ring in the model represents the external influences on school curriculum, teaching and learning, leadership and management, and the organizational structures holding everything together. “Equally, the framework intends to provide a vehicle appropriate for building increased understanding of the influence on leadership on schools containing communities, teachers and students drawn from different cultures” (Dimmock & Walker, 2005, p. 23).

An openly ideological approach was employed guided by insights from multiple critical writers who toil within the critical theoretical tradition (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Delpit, 2006; Kincheloe, 2008; Lather, 1986). Carspecken (1996) suggests “Criticalists find contemporary society to be unfair, unequal and both subtly and overtly oppressive for many people. We do not like it, and we want to change it” (p. 7).

An open-ended survey questionnaire was distributed to educators in all three schools during a regularly scheduled professional staff meeting (see Appendix 2). In total, 68 surveys were completed, returned, and numbered by the researchers in a staggered fashion up to 90. This part of the method provided the survey respondents and their schools additional anonymity. Responses were openly coded and analyzed and added to the overall study data set. Initial themes from these responses were used to construct questions for subsequent semi-structured interviews. Researchers conducted interviews with 21 respondents who had identified on the survey a willingness to be interviewed.

With the help of educators in each school through a snowballing recruitment method, 24 students were interviewed ( $n=24$ ). As a modification late in the study, new Canadian parents from each community were invited to participate. However, after working with the school leaders and the regional multicultural association to help us gain parental voices, only two parents agreed to be interviewed. The parent data added some illuminating ideas to the project's thematic mapping. The following table illustrates the total survey and interview data sets from all three schools. All three schools have been given pseudonyms.

**Table 1**

*Total Survey and Interview Data Sets from Three Schools*

Highlands Rural Academy (HRA): $n=12$ Surveys; $n=2$ Educators; $n=1$ Student; $n=2$ Parents
North Country High School (NCHS): $n=25$ Surveys; $n=2$ Educators; $n=9$ Students
Western Regional High School (WRHS): $n=31$ Surveys; $n=17$ Educators; $n=14$ Students

Additional data were collected through relevant news articles and documents from local, provincial, national, and international sources. These were organized systematically by headline/title and date of publication ( $n=168$ ). The rationale for collecting and analyzing news articles extends from Dimmock and Walker (2005), who state “that the reality of school life results from the complex interplay of cultural elements from society, region and locality, on the one hand, and the organizational culture, on the other” (p. 24). The messaging underlying the content of articles illustrates some of the ways New Brunswickers and Canadians are feeling about immigration.

Finally, a constant running record of descriptive field records was also added to the overall data set in the project ( $n=113$  pages of content). Field notes include email communications with project stakeholders (i.e., Provincial Education, District, and School Leaders, Research Ethics Chair, and study participants), visual observations in the research settings, and conversations among our team related to the work.

The total data were categorized through constant comparative analysis, namely, “an iterative and inductive process of reducing the data through constant recoding” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 as cited in Fram, 2013, p. 3). Selected data from each stage of collection (surveys, interviews, news stories, and fields notes), were counted and fused into categories containing key themes and sub-themes. Miles et al.'s (2014) method for counting data frequencies or “data events” enriched our understandings of the social realities in the schools and provide further confirmation for our thematic findings. The researchers write that “a lot of counting goes on in the background when judgments of qualities are being made ... When we say that something is “important,” “significant,” or “recurrent,” we have come to that estimate, in part, by making counts, comparisons and weights” (p. 282). The final themes of the project emerged through checking and cross-referencing data and comparing them with other data being added to the project.

## Key Findings and Analysis

Our analysis yielded four major themes, each with an intersecting sub-theme (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Research Data Major Themes and Intersecting Sub-Themes*

Major Themes	Intersecting Sub-themes
1. Learning, Speaking, and Living English Culture	Supportive Educators
2. Language and Verbal Communication: Avoiding Deficit Thinking	Curriculum Differences between Nations
3. Establishing Friends and Allies: Working to Belong	Giving Voice to Future Goals
4. Unpacking and Understanding Community Stereotyping and Marginalization	The Impact of Industry

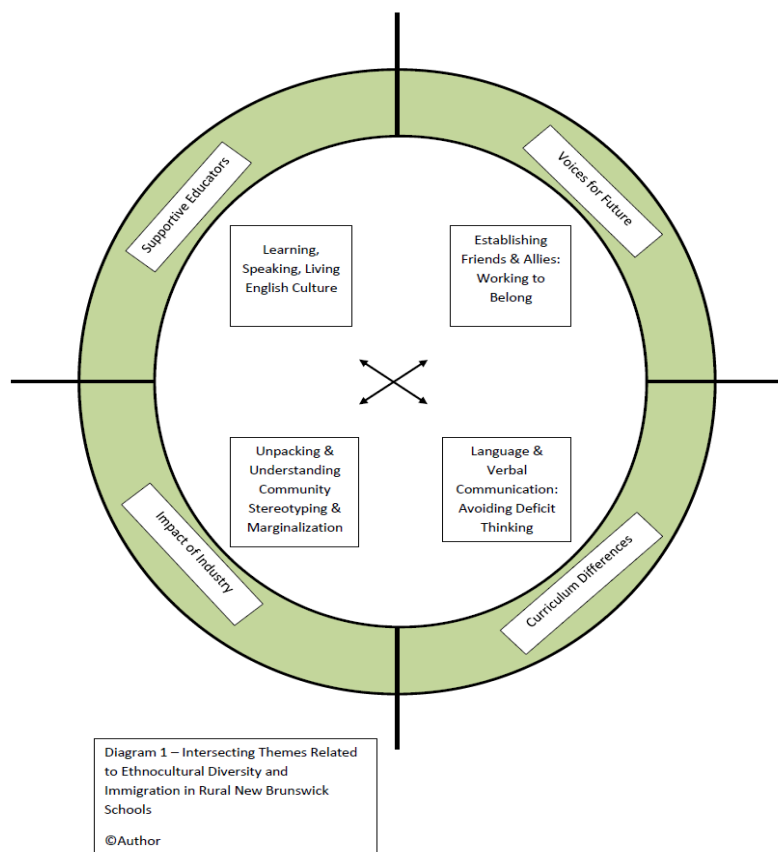
For example, the students needed supportive educators to help them build resilience and learn to live in and understand rural Canadian culture (Theme 1). Further, many newcomer students told us that they were one or two years ahead of their Canadian student peers in mathematics and in some sciences. Several teachers noted this and explained how they shifted their mindset to support these students in their classrooms as best they could with learning how to communicate effectively what they knew and didn't know about particular curricula (Theme 2).

Students shared stories about how efforts to fit into their school culture and social context while at the same time sustaining hopes and dreams for their futures (Theme 3). Finally, several educators noted that as more new immigrants and families arrived in the region for employment opportunities, community and regional resistance increased and stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes showed up in the classroom. One of the prevailing perceptions that emerged in interviews in all three schools was that many community members believed new immigrants were taking jobs away from Canadians (Theme 4).

Figure 1 below illustrates each of the major intersecting themes in the center with the intersecting sub-themes located on the perimeter.

**Figure 1**

*Intersecting Themes Related to Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Rural New Brunswick Schools*



Next, we shift attention to our findings including select data that ground our interpretation.

### *Learning, Speaking, and Living English Culture: Supportive Educators*

The integration of newcomer families and students into Canadian society largely depends on acquiring the spoken and written language of the region where they reside (i.e., English, French). Newcomers need the language for social interaction in public spaces, and students require one of Canada's official languages for comprehending school instruction. Conclusively, language is vital for community adjustment,

social and economic wellbeing, and personal growth as students acquire social and cultural capital (Delpit, 2006; Field, 2003). Newcomer students advance more quickly in language and cultural learning alongside supportive and empathetic educators.

Educators were challenged but clearly inspired by their newcomer students' work ethic to gain command of the English language and culture. One teacher said,

*There's a [named country] girl in one of my classes; she is one of the hardest workers that I have in class. Her mark is in the 90s and she has probably only been speaking English for a couple of years.* (Educator Participant 6)

Many newcomer students highlighted challenges encountered while learning the English language and culture but noted its significance for their lives in Canada.

*First of all, learn English. It is really important because you need to use it everywhere.* (Student Participant 13)

Another student said:

*Sometimes I didn't understand when assignments were due or what it was, so I had to ask for help maybe from another student.* (Student Participant 11)

Having the courage to ask for help was an action that came through many student narratives. One newcomer expressed concern for an international exchange student friend who was not adjusting well to the school and social culture due to a lack of confidence.

*He always stayed with other people that were from his country that all had a similar language because he was bad at English. I didn't care if I made mistakes, things like that. I would say to my friends, like, if I make mistakes, just tell me. I will correct myself. Don't worry, tell me.* (Student Participant 7)

Many students described their coping mechanisms for learning the English language and culture; one student was adamant that newcomer students have to engage courageously when she said:

*Get out of your comfort zone. That's how life works. Don't be shy because you are from another country. And just be yourself.* (Student Participant 8)

### **Supportive Educators**

Students overwhelmingly described their teachers, tutors, and guidance counselors in glowing terms and expressed appreciation for the help they received. Many of the students described specific experiences of educator support that enabled growth in their learning and social acclimatization. One international exchange student said,

*I really love to go to school here. The atmosphere. The relationships between students and teachers and people in general; it's very relaxed. I really like it.* (Student Participant 6)

Other students said:

*Every teacher that I have. Every time they try to help you.* (Student Participant 13)

*Where I am coming from and reaching out makes a real difference, as good teachers have done for me and being role models.* (Student Participant 24)

*He was always trying to make me speak more in class. And trying to make me speak with*

---

*him about what I did back in [my country]. Always trying to make me feel more comfortable when I first came here. (Student Participant 7)*

### ***Establishing Friends and Allies: Working to Belong; Voices for the Future***

Friendships and gaining a sincere sense of belonging in their school were critical for newcomer students that were interviewed. What eluded many newcomer students were effective ways to engage and talk to Canadian-born peers. Many students spoke to us about the strategies they used for making friends; however, what worked in their home country did not seem to work in New Brunswick.

*First of all, in our place [former country], if you say hi, it means you are friends, but in here (her school in New Brunswick) when you see them again, they don't know you. I have a hard time approaching them [Canadian students]. (Student Participant 8)*

Another student's narrative aligned with her international peer's impression when she told us:

*I still don't have as many friends as I want here. Like in [my country], people go and talk with each other, but here you have to go and talk to them [Canadian students], like HEY, you wanna be my friend? It's kinda different. It's kinda hard because I don't know if they want to be friends with me. (Student Participant 4)*

Many educators confirmed that all three schools in the study had hosted international students for periods of six months to a year. Some survey data noted that newcomer and international students do not always mix with Canadian-born students.

*A class with several exchange students is challenging because they do not tend to mix with other students. (Survey Respondent 1)*

Another educator wrote,

*Students are not open to exchange students. They don't embrace the exchange students. (Survey Respondent 8)*

Still, it was apparent that several educators worked tirelessly to engage newcomer students in their classes and in the school culture and encouraged them to get involved in extra-curricular activities. One educator stated:

*...the biggest thing is that they [newcomer students] just want to integrate and they want to form relationships with adults and the students and that they're looking for ways to be able to do that outside the classroom. Like just being able to have people that they can turn to for guidance or people they can turn to, like fellow students, for friendship and how to learn how to be a teenager. (Educator Participant 7)*

Further, getting new Canadian students interacting with Canadian-born students is critical. For that to happen, one student said,

*Find the people you feel comfortable with and then have them help you. (Student Participant 21)*

The student added that it was imperative for teachers to introduce students to one another so that they understand each other's struggles and begin to empathize. A student in another school said,

*I would probably say to match every new student up with a student who knows the ropes and*

*if it can be a student who has the same language and cultural background, that would be even better so they are greeted with something (language and experience) that is familiar to them. (Student Participant 15)*

### **Giving Voice to Future Goals**

The students interviewed expressed their hopes for the future. One student's level of creative expression was inspiring as she wanted to channel her creativity into a future goal.

*I want to become an interior designer. Art allows [me] to relax and de-stress about school-work. (Student Participant 8)*

Another student was keeping his future options open when he told us:

*My hopes and dreams, this is since I've been a kid, right? Because my family, from my dad's side, I come from a family where there's doctors, engineers. I always had this feeling or notion I've always wanted to become a doctor, any kind of doctor, dentist, orthopedic surgeon. (Student Participant 10)*

Students described several possible career trajectories they might pursue after high school, and many went into great depth describing how they would achieve their dreams. Several students named the universities they wanted to attend to study electrical and chemical engineering, veterinarian studies, police service, and even cyber-education. As one student said,

*I would like to become a mechatronic engineer. It's a new branch of engineering. It's about robotics ... you press a button and it does a certain action. (Student Participant 11)*

### **Language and Verbal Communication: Avoiding Deficit Thinking and Curriculum Differences**

Educators in all three schools described multiple challenges associated with verbally communicating with newcomer students and the importance of being mindful of language interactions with them. One educator said,

*You have to be aware of when you have people coming from diverse cultural backgrounds, something as simple as when you're explaining something in the classroom, you can't be using colloquialisms. You have to very specific with your language, clear, enunciate, and so you do have to be sensitive about those kinds of things. (Educator Participant 17)*

Language, communication, and barriers showed up as frequent words on many of the initial educator surveys. A sample of this data is listed below:

*I have taught students from Brazil and Mexico. Communication/clarification was challenging. (Survey Respondent 22)*

*Tutored kids in NB from Romania, Haiti, and Israel. Language communication is always an issue. (Survey Respondent 24)*

*My classroom is multinational and multilingual; I can't always communicate with parents; I have grown up with cultural bias I am trying to defeat. (Survey Respondent 70)*

The last respondent showed a willingness and commitment to overcome their bias, while relearning, reshaping, and adjusting their pedagogies in support of newcomer students. This understanding aligns with the sub-theme of curriculum differences, as many teachers and newcomer students noted how the

Canadian curriculum differed from that of their home country. This reality was most evident in math where several students told us that they were well ahead of their Canadian peers. One student said,

*The education was at a higher level before I came here in grade 6, 7, and 8. I already knew everything like math. Science and English were a little hard for me but math, I was able to do it with my eyes closed.* (Student Participant 5)

Many teachers in turn highlighted the differences between the New Brunswick education system and those of countries from which newcomer students had arrived. As one teacher said,

*They've done a ton of math growing up whereas in our system we value diversity of learning. How can we, first of all, challenge them in math but at the same time make sure they're making connections with kids their own age?* (Educator Participant 16)

### **Curriculum Differences and Avoiding Deficit Thinking**

Insights provided by several participants for the construction of this sub-theme intersect with the major theme of speaking and learning English. One student described her early frustrations with trying to communicate to one of her teachers that math and science were not difficult for her:

*The worse thing is I didn't speak English and everyone thought because I don't speak English I can't do anything else. But actually, it's not true. When I tried to explain that math is easy or science is too easy, they were just like, 'just learn English' and it didn't help at all.* (Student Participant 9)

A new finding in this study regarding language and communication mindfulness concerns the usage of current digital technologies to enhance effective student-educator communications. One example involves language applications (apps) on Smartphones:

*I think everybody should have a text to text translator paid for on their phones so we can actually really communicate with kids as opposed to all of the sign language and pointing and everything.* (Educator Participant 9)

Many educators and students pointed out that language learning need not be perceived as a weakness or deficit. Perceiving it as such can be damaging all around. Instead, as one educator stated,

*Nice to see students more educated in language over a relatively short period of time. New Friendships are forged and cross language barriers.* (Survey Respondent 52)

This was confirmed by several students who had struggled with communication. But they did not give up. One student told us,

*My advice? Don't worry about how you sound...Don't be afraid to make mistakes.* (Student Participant 14)

### **Unpacking and Understanding Community Stereotyping and Marginalization: The Impact of Industry**

Stereotyping, racism, and acts of discrimination are becoming widely reported on the national and provincial scene (Blanch, 2017; Burgos, 2021; Varma-Joshi et al., 2004). Overall, students described that they were adjusting comfortably in their schools. Yet some mentioned experiencing marginalization amidst implicit and explicit biases. One student believed that some of his peers used hurtful humor with little constraint.

*The sarcasm is a problem; many kids would not care if a comment hurt somebody.* (Student Participant 17)

Another student described a situation that made her uncomfortable during her first year.

*I don't want to say this to make [the school] look bad, but I have experienced bullying here...I was in Grade 10 when that happened and they called me, like a black people or person. That's the bad thing that happened, the worst thing that happened.* (Student Participant 1)

However, after newcomer students had settled down, learned the cultural nuances of the school (i.e., bells, timetables, curriculum, and assessment expectations), and found a friend, they all seemed on their pathway to thriving in their school.

### ***The Impact of Industry and Community Stereotypes***

Many educators described a common community perception that new immigrants were taking the jobs of New Brunswick citizens. This perception was confirmed by educator participants from all three schools. One educator said,

*I don't think people understand that people ... are filling vacant positions, not taking jobs... We have a culture who feel they are entitled and shouldn't have to work [in] lots of jobs, like in the service industry. People here won't take them.* (Educator Participant 20)

The community perception then filtered into classroom discourse, according to many of the educators as the data set below outlines:

*There is a group like this ... we see immigrants coming over and taking jobs, which to me is the biggest bunch of crap. You'll get those kids, I know they're hearing it at home, that's where it begins and I'll say to them, "listen, do you know what? We have people come over and do the jobs us as Canadians won't do.* (Educator Participant 6)

*Some parents are choosing...they have their own slant on, or their own attitude towards what the newcomers...like they are taking our jobs and they're sending their own children to school with that attitude of we can't accept these people in our community.* (Educator Participant 10)

*And of course, the locals...they complained because they were taking our jobs. That was the statement, right? And I remember working in the [job] and I said to a couple of guys I knew growing up, "so how are they taking your job?" I remember having that conversation, I was probably 22. And they said, "Well, they are in our area taking jobs from our people.* (Educator Participant 1)

*We had an interesting conversation in my business class when we looked at immigration and jobs and I said, "what do you hear on the news?" They said, "They're taking our jobs!" So, I said, "what does that mean, they're taking our jobs? Which jobs are you referring to? Well, whose jobs are these jobs?"* (Educator Participant 8).

This last perception above is startling in that it was present in every school and described in similar descriptive terms. That is, according to the educators, some Canadian-born students in their schools were perpetuating resistant attitudes toward immigration and new immigrants in classroom discussions, and the educators perceived that their attitudes were extending from home. One educator reflected deeply on the social reality of community resistance to immigration in the area:

---

*It's a shock to the people in the area and you want to be welcoming. We need people to come in and we want them to feel welcomed. If they come in here and the population isn't ready to accept them, you can have friction and people leaving. That's what happens. That's what I find. Sometimes the area can be a little quiet and muted and not as accepting and they sometimes move. A lot of people have moved to Toronto or Montreal. (Educator Participant 2)*

The presence of divisive attitudes in the communities was further probed. The research team asked educators why they thought such attitudes existed, and how they were responding to the attitudes in their classrooms. One educator reflected on the probe and said:

*I think there's a sense of ignorance just not knowing where people come from and what they are here doing. You hear people talk, oh you can't understand them and there's certainly a negative stereotype there, 'Oh, I can't understand them. They're taking our jobs...it's a sense of entitlement and the worst part is so much of this comes from, at times, they're hearing it at home. (Educator Participant 6)*

The educators interviewed were working hard to disrupt the negative attitudes about immigration and newcomers in their classrooms, but it was apparent that many of them felt overwhelmed.

Of relevance is the New Brunswick government's active encouragement of immigration to the province, as noted in the introduction (see New Brunswick Government, 2014, 2016, 2019). One participant referred to the population growth strategies, stating,

*The government has an immigration strategy for population growth, and I just think that's a trend we'll see here, right? The trucking industry in the area, they struggle to get local drivers and I've heard of many people moving here for those jobs and bringing families with them. (Educator Participant 8)*

In fact, one educator described the active recruiting done by one of the employers in the region.

*I have a friend who works for [The Employer named]; he has a fulltime job. He just travels to Europe to try and recruit truckers. The trucking industry here is always in need of drivers. (Educator Participant 9)*

The perceived harmful attitudes in the wider community and societal spheres cannot go unreported, unchecked, or undisrupted. Teachers shared multiple stories of challenging community stereotypes as illustrated here:

*I am very accepting of just about anybody. I find it difficult that people have racist attitudes and you and I both know that there are people who don't want to see immigrants come to Canada and that they feel that they take people's jobs. The same old stereotypes that you always hear, but it's usually the people who are not informed that have those views, right? (Educator Participant 9)*

This perception aligned with a survey response mentioning rural resistance to change:

*I've always been a teacher. It used to be a challenge to hit urban and rural students; however, now the demographic is the world. Our local area has been sheltered and is notoriously slow to change so students come to school with many "outdated" attitudes about people and cultures. (Survey Respondent 70)*

## Discussion of the Findings

The guiding research question for this study was: *How are educators and students (newcomer and Canadian-born) in rural New Brunswick responding to rapid demographic changes through their teach-*

*ing, learning, and community involvement?* The themes and sub-themes, as derived from coding and analysis, intermesh to form various patterns that reveal how participants are responding to demographic changes in their schools and communities. For example, many newcomer students and their educators spoke about the importance of learning the dominant English language and culture.

Many students said they had a basic command of English before they arrived in New Brunswick and, through hard work, became increasingly fluent. Learning English enabled more confident engagement with their Canadian peers and teachers, thus, resulting in increased friendships and a better sense of belonging.

Still, several students, in trying to communicate with their Canadian-born peers, perceived that they were marginalized because they could not be understood well with their pronunciation skills. This was confirmed by many educators who noted that, owing to language barriers, international students and Canadian-born students did not sometimes mix well in their schools and classrooms. However, having supportive educators as allies and confidantes encouraged students in their learning and enabled them to get out of their comfort zones.

In the next section each theme and its sub-theme will be discussed in more depth with an emphasis on policy adjustment related to rural schools and demographic change.

### ***Learning, Speaking, and Living English Culture: Supportive Educators***

Learning another language and culture was interesting, intriguing, and important for the newcomer students, but it was challenging on many levels for several of them. According to Thomson and Derwing (2015), “explicit instruction of phonological forms can have a significant impact, likely because it orients learners’ attention to phonetic information, which promotes learning in a way that naturalistic input does not” (p. 339).

Many students improved their English skills in additional ways. One student said it was important to:

*watch movies in English. Learn or read books in English. And if you are here and there is a [person from their country], try to speak English. We challenge ourselves by not speaking our language.* (Student Participant 3)

It is also important for teachers to learn as much as they can about the newcomer students.

*We don’t tap into their culture enough, yet. That will change over time.* (Educator Participant 6)

As Cummins (2015) found in his work and advocacy for intercultural education:

Fortunately, in an increasing number of classrooms across Canada and elsewhere, educators are beginning to shift their orientation from benign neglect of students’ languages and cultures to an intercultural orientation that actively connects curriculum to students’ lives and affirms the cultural knowledge and linguistic accomplishments of students and communities. (p. 459)

Some of the teachers in our study challenged relatively settled newcomer students to improve their speaking skills by connecting them to more recent arrivals as translator and mentor. August (2019), in positing seven principles for teaching and mentoring ELL learners, determined that peer-to-peer learning opportunities were key in additional language development and acquisition. This is where the theme of learning and speaking English overlaps with the theme of finding and having allies in a school. It is important that students get the help they require at the point of need for learning the language and finding friends.

Students invariably appreciated their teachers’ efforts to support their success. The data did occasionally reveal students’ early frustration when they felt they could not communicate effectively. This is to be expected since students and teachers both need time to process and negotiate their shared situation.

Collectively, students reported receiving the help they needed from their educators. Though only two parents were interviewed for the study, their insights also explored the theme of learning language and culture.

*One of the reasons we don't want to move is because of the school. I like the smaller class sizes. I like the fact that they (the boys) are not just a number in a huge school system where they are just going to get lost in and nobody knows them. We love that the teachers know our kids by name, they see them around town. It is everything we had always hoped for in having a community here in Canada to live in. The teachers will email you if there is a problem. It is a real personalization in education in a small town like this and we don't want to lose this.* (Parent Participant 1)

### ***Establishing Friends and Allies: Working to Belong; Voices for the Future***

More than ever in 2021, students need strong allies in their school, be it peer friendships or the supportive teachers. In most interviews, students explicitly stated they liked both their school and living in New Brunswick. As Wilson-Forsberg's (2012) study of immigrant adolescents' experiences of settling in rural New Brunswick suggests, newcomer students value the safety, quiet, and opportunities afforded by their new surroundings. Yet, several students discussed struggles with making friends, and the accompanying loneliness. If newcomer students to Canada do not feel welcomed in a new social context like their school, loneliness will gradually set in for them (Kirova, 2001; MacDonald, 2000; Pryor, 2001).

One student participant described the loneliness that she experienced and not wanting to share how she felt at the time. It took a teacher's prodding to get her to acknowledge that she was homesick and missing friends. Kristmanson et al. (2017) suggest several actions educators can take to help their new Canadian students gain a stronger sense of belonging in their schools:

If we show an interest in various cultures, demonstrate a desire to learn more about languages and backgrounds represented in our classrooms, and act in ways that show respect for a diversity of values and experiences, our students may follow suit. Taking action to intentionally build relationships and foster partnerships allows us to have, and learn from, meaningful exchanges with a diverse array of people. (p. 21)

It may be worth considering the role of teacher education and professional development in providing frameworks for encouraging proactive measures on the part of teachers. School leadership, whether through formal or informal structures, may have the biggest role of all to play in reorienting the teaching culture toward pedagogies informed by intercultural curiosity and research on diversity in schools (Horsford et al., 2011).

### **Language and Verbal Communication: Avoiding Deficit Thinking and Curriculum Differences**

The students in the study clearly did not want to be pitied or have teachers and Canadian peers feel sorry for them because of their language and verbal communication abilities. But their narratives do attest to the need for patience from teachers and Canadian peers as they catch up academically and socially. When asked about what they would do differently given the chance to start over again, or what they would tell another newcomer student arriving in Canada, many stated that hard work...works! This notion of work ethic arose often in educator survey responses.

*[Newcomer] students work diligently and take presentations very seriously – the students I teach never hesitate to speak in front of class – even if their English isn't strong.* (Survey Respondent 58)

*Often these students are more driven and seek success. They generally work hard and do not expect to pass without effort.* (Survey Respondent 28)

Being mindful of new Canadian students' communication skills was embedded in many of the educator narratives when conversation turned to responsive teaching strategies for their ethnoculturally diverse classrooms. In fact, pedagogies that many teachers had relied on prior to the demographic changes in their region did not seem to work as effectively for them anymore. One teacher described in detail how she had to be flexible and adjust the curriculum:

*An ESL learner is not the same as someone growing up speaking English their entire life. You can't just give oral instructions anymore; you can't just hand out a sheet and say read this and do that. You can't do that anymore. You have to explain; you have to show and reading books and showing didn't always go hand in hand...Even just expressions that we use. You have to explain those kinds of things. Everything takes an extra bit of thought, like is that coming across as I want it to come across. Are they going to interpret the way I want it to be interpreted? Is this something that they will be able to do and participate in? And even conversations about life. Some of them have lived a very different life than we will ever know. I don't want them to feel different and on the fringe. I want them to feel they are part of the class. (Educator Participant 11)*

The students said that it was important to be engaged with Canadians from the beginning and to work through the anxiety and trepidation that naturally arises when learning a new language. It was also important not to fixate on what you perceive other people to be thinking about you or about your pronunciation. As one student related:

*First of all, don't think what anyone else thinks because when you think about other people, they can see that you are scared, you know, that someone is going to talk bad stuff about you. You don't speak English and it could be fun for them. And if you don't think about it and just speak as you can, even if you can't, just try. My English teacher thought that because I have friends that speak Russian that it stops me from English learning, but it actually doesn't because I am getting a lot of English in my classes and I also communicate with kids in my classes who speak English. But when you have friends who speak your first language, it just helps you not forget it. You cannot not learn English in Canada! (laughing). You're drowning in it. (Student Participant 9)*

The student's narrative follows two lines of thought from the literature. First, her courage is apparent as she challenges the deficit thinking she senses in some peers and in her teacher. She understands the value of her Russian friends while also acknowledging the value of having Canadian peers and engaging in classroom conversations (Lam, 2019a, 2019b). Second, she is confident that in time, she will learn how to pronounce her English words accurately and is not concerned about how she is perceived by other students. This strengthens her identity in the school (Derwing, 2003). In fact, gaining mastery in the content they are studying increases their confidence, as Cummins (1986) argues:

Students who are empowered by their school experiences develop the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed academically. They participate competently in instruction as a result of having developed a confident cultural identity as well as appropriate school-based knowledge and interactional structures. (p. 23)

Further, students and teachers described in depth the discrepancies between the content of some courses and the high competency level in the subject matter at which some new Canadians operate. This was particularly true for mathematics, with many students saying that the math they were taking in New Brunswick was what they had studied earlier in their home countries.

## *Unpacking and Understanding Community Stereotyping and Marginalization: The Impact of Industry*

Only three students of the 24 interviewed described situations that might be considered negative. Given the current social realities of 2021 including large protests across North America due to long-standing conflicts and inequities, it might not be surprising that some local attitudes reflect aspects of news media coverage about immigration and refugees. The educators consistently reported that they were professionally challenging the community stereotypical attitudes in their classrooms and communities through deep dialogues with their students.

Two teachers, for example, described in depth how they took pre-emptive action when discussions related to immigrants and refugees turned negative. Still, the educator data clearly indicated that more support in understanding and teaching about current issues surrounding immigration in their area, province and across the country is required. One teacher said,

*I find I have to be just constantly aware of what people are going to say. In 10 years so much has changed and I'm navigating that with them, [the students] and I find I'm not knowledgeable enough and I have a hard time teaching them and the right words to use...that's been a bit of a challenge for me. (Educator Participant 13)*

The big concern among many interviewed educators is how to address the stereotyping and damaging attitudes about immigration that are present locally. The data revealed multiple frequency counts reinforcing this concern. One participant turned to the researchers in an interview and asked:

*The other question I have for you is how do we talk to them about something that is racist or prejudiced without turning them off the idea of deconstructing that and thinking about it and that it's not okay, but you're not evil...people think racism is you hate somebody and you openly say it and you call names, and as long as you don't do that, you're not racist. But we all are racist because we're human beings and the mind does things to make life easier to sort for us and I think when we call racism on stuff, it's right to call it, but if we do it in a confrontational way...people turn away and the educative moment is lost. (Educator Participant 8)*

In her book on transformative leadership, Shields (2018) calls upon educators to exhibit moral courage in confronting inequities and injustices, large and small. Many of our participants seemed able to do this. But many did not. To lead courageous conversations in their classrooms, educators may require additional support, especially because they all live in or near the communities where they teach and are well known there. They in turn know the community members well. In the case of the teacher from the preceding narrative, it is apparent that he wants to educate the students about racism and disrupt some of their notions about immigrants. Yet he knows he needs to be cautious to break through the long-held regional stereotypes about immigration. This recalls the words of another educator in the study who described how he challenged his friends and neighbors on their stereotypes about immigrants taking the jobs of local citizens, where in fact there was no basis in reality for their beliefs.

*I remember having that conversation with locals and they would get angry...I didn't have problems having conversations with older people in our community, but I started doing that when I was 20-21. (Educator Participant 1)*

As more and more new immigrants settle in rural areas across New Brunswick, it will be important for policy makers, community leaders, and educators to advocate for them. As provincial economist David Campbell said, "We absolutely have to attract significantly more people into the workforce in the coming years. It's very important to have the public support for that and public support is predicated on public knowledge" (Hatchard, 2020, p. A9). Better regional distribution of immigrants, and policies supporting their retention, help address population and economic decline in smaller centres while mitigating growth pressures in larger ones (Carter et al., 2008; Cox, 2020). Schools, businesses, and community organizations all have leadership roles to play in building awareness among the local population of the

vital contributions newcomers make to civic life. As Lam (2019a) argues:

Immigration does not only benefit those coming into the country. For smaller centres, one advantage of newcomers is that it offsets out-migration, or the exodus of rural dwellers for larger cities. An increase in population through immigration allows local services and resources to stay local, such as a local dentist or pharmacist with dwindling numbers being able to stay viable in a small town thanks to an influx of newcomers. (p. 79)

Research into civic versus ethnic national identities (Guerra et al., 2015, 2016) cites inclusivity as a precondition to valuing the active participation and contribution of groups to society rather than treating them as threats. Esses et al.'s (2012) work, as well as Stephan's (2012) research, suggest that, when local leaders endorse multiculturalism and draw explicit links between newcomers and a better quality of life for all, space is created for a shifting of beliefs. Perhaps there are opportunities in the rural New Brunswick context, with its implicated industrial, educational, and community stakeholders, to consider innovative, well-supported awareness initiatives along these lines. As one newcomer Canadian stated in a recent report:

There's room for everyone. This is a growing province, this is a potential province. I'm sure many New Brunswickers – immigrants and locals – are doing their best to make sure we flip the trend about this province struggling and put it back on the road for prosperity and growth. (Hatchard, 2020, p. A9)

Communication will be key to mitigate any misunderstandings about new immigrants taking the jobs of New Brunswickers (Hatchard, 2020). This sub-theme aligns with the theme of community stereotyping and only through focused and active education and communication can the stereotypes about new immigrants be disrupted.

## Conclusions and Suggestions for Educational Stakeholders

The educators, leaders, and students in the study are responding reasonably well to their shared circumstances. However, the evidence suggests educators need more knowledge and support for working with students new to the province, particularly for working with those who do not speak the language of instruction. The students interviewed offered many insights into how to improve the experience of being a newcomer student, which lead to several recommendations for various stakeholders.

Given that New Brunswick schools are still grappling with COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions, what school will look like going forward for New Brunswickers in the future is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that immigration will remain a key contributor to the province's population and economic growth. Each of the three schools studied here are taking in growing numbers of newcomer and international students, and the trend will continue - in this region and beyond. It is important that educators, leaders, students, parents, and community members work with this social reality and do their best to welcome newcomer Canadians. Accordingly, we invite educational stakeholders to consider the following suggestions.

### *Students – Newcomer and Canadian-Born*

A school needs to serve its entire student population. It is important that each student feels welcome and safe so they can learn optimally. But as great a role as educators play in creating the conditions for this to happen, students must also share some of the responsibility. We suggest a focus on peer-mentoring. Pairing Canadian-born or else relatively established newcomer Canadian students with recent arrivals might go far in creating shared spaces of intellectual, social, and cultural engagement. Semi-structured mentoring relationships might also mitigate some of the loneliness mentioned by educator and student participants alike.

In all three schools, welcoming committees must be administratively supported and sustained. The students will require adult guidance and mentoring from the outset. All parties should commit to ensuring that welcoming newcomer students (i.e., international, permanent, temporary foreign, and refugee)

becomes an integral part of each school's culture – a culture, in other words, of sharing, acceptance, and growth. Otherwise, as researchers point out, the students will not want to be there long and may disengage from effective learning (Schroeter & James, 2014; Shields, 2018).

### *Educators*

The most notable data from educator sets (survey and interviews) relate to student interactions in the classroom (i.e., negative attitudes expressed about immigration) and the unfortunate stereotyping of newcomers. Educators must develop the confidence necessary to address and disrupt prejudice in their classrooms, schools, and communities. Along with – or in the absence of – professional development opportunities, educators can actively educate themselves in this arena. Teachers can increase their global awareness and mindedness by engaging the news as we have done throughout this study, but they can go deeper than that. They would do well to make a careful study of the interrelated global and regional contexts that have brought newcomers to their doorsteps.

We encourage teachers to understand the reasons for and implications of the New Brunswick government's push to attract significant immigration, whether through media, government sources, academic reading, or conversing with interested and uninterested alike. Considerable research on ethnocultural diversity and schooling can be mined. As one's own investigator of the province's – not to mention the world's – ever-shifting intercultural dynamics, educators better equip themselves to navigate this space with their students and make changes to classroom practice accordingly (Gay, 2010).

Teachers would also benefit from greater connectedness with researchers who study the impact of immigration on society. Through conversation and joint action research, researcher-practitioner collaborations can generate and test ideas for better integrating newcomer students into schools, whether through innovative projects or new curricula. What is most important here is that educators find effective ways of bridging diverse cultures (Cummins, 1986).

### *School Leaders*

Through the surveys and educator interviews, we asked specifically about professional development. We also asked educators whether they were aware of any community agencies that worked with newcomers in the region. The feedback we received was rich and informative. The direct questioning did not support making it a theme. However, the evidence collected identified some gaps that we consider important to address.

Most educators said they had not received much professional learning associated with ethnocultural and linguistic diversity and that more would be beneficial. This is not an uncommon finding among teachers in increasing ethnoculturally diverse schools. However, in many schools and districts, teachers are not the ones responsible for directing the professional learning. They may have input, but not the final word. That is where school leaders need to take charge.

If newcomers continue to settle in our province, as the evidence we have put forth in this report suggests, then we recommend school leaders initiate and support an ongoing conversation about immigration, welcoming families, integrating students, and confronting and disrupting conscious and unconscious bias, and that these become a professional learning focus for schools – particularly in New Brunswick, with its push for ongoing immigration (Cox, 2020; Hatchard, 2020). This may not be possible in the next year as teachers continue to respond to the challenges of COVID 19, but we do not think it wise to pass over topics related to immigration (as described in the report) and their impact on the schools' settings.

School leaders could plan common reading exercises as part of their professional learning sessions. They might invite university educators to work with their staff on topics related to intercultural competence and learning. Schools could even create their own social justice and action research teams to investigate and examine in depth some of the more pressing challenges they might be confronting related to ethnocultural diversity. Another strategy would be to connect to newcomer parents and community agencies working with new Canadians. These individuals could come into schools and describe their experiences of being new to the region and to New Brunswick. They could also recount what it was like living in their home country.

When we asked the educators about community agencies, most of them knew about the Multicultural

Association in the region, but very few understood what its community service mandate was. This gap could be closed with more engagement between school and multicultural agency personnel.

Another action each of the school leaders can take is to stay connected with each other and offer additional support and peer-mentoring. In another study, Hamm (2017) recounts that several administrators in highly diverse schools within the same district in Alberta stayed in touch with each other through email and educational blogs. Those administrators said that they leaned on each other to navigate topics like newcomer student enrolment protocols, parent communication, assessment, and cultural challenges in their school yards.

### *District Leaders, Policy Makers, and Community*

Individually each of these stakeholders contribute critical pieces to the schooling picture. While recommendations could be made to each separately, it is suggested that more collective advocacy and action is needed to address the concerns raised in this study.

The personnel responsible for policy making at the district and provincial levels, along with parent leaders from various ethnocultural communities in the region, must commit to deeper conversations about the social upheaval that stereotyping, racism, and discrimination inflicts upon schools. Teachers and students should not confront these challenges alone.

It is incumbent upon all stakeholder groups to acknowledge and collaborate on how best to confront community stereotyping as more and more new Canadians call New Brunswick home. If newcomer students and families do not feel welcome in New Brunswick, they may leave the province, as Blanch (2018) suggests. In an increasingly online world, negative views against people from all walks of life easily circulate. Such views can impact a child's life for a long time. As a first step toward collaboration, leaders from these groups must come together at a mutually welcoming location to discuss key issues related to community stereotyping.

In closing, the impact of this research will be reflected through moving conversations forward in scope and in context to encompass broader community dialogue. Students, leaders, teachers, policy makers, and community members must continue to address the challenges and opportunities presented in the changing landscape of New Brunswick.

### **References**

- Abbott, M. L., & Rossiter, M. J. (2011). The professional development of rural ESL instructors: Program administrators' and instructors' views. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 57(2), 204-219. [www.ajer.ca](http://www.ajer.ca)
- Agecoutay, C., & Anderson, R. (2021, January 18). Canadians leaving big cities in record numbers: Statistics Canada. *CTV News Online*. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/canadians-leaving-big-cities-in-record-numbers-statistics-canada-1.5270161>
- August, D. (2019). Educating English language learners. *Education Digest*, 84(8) 12-20.
- Baker, J., Price, J., & Walsh, K. (2016). Unwelcoming communities: Youth observations of racism in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19(1), 103-116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2015.1052048>
- Baker, C., Varma, M., Tanaka, C. (2001). Sticks and stones: Racism as experienced by adolescents in New Brunswick. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, 33(3), 87-105.
- Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Purich Publishing Limited
- Berg, L. D. (2010). Experiences of newcomers to Fransaskois schools: Opportunities for community collaboration. *McGill Journal of Education*, 45(2), 287. <https://doi.org/10.7202/045609ar>
- Blanch, V. (2017, October 19). 'Why don't you go back home?': Rivalry fuels racism at high school football game: Stands at Moncton football game erupts with racial slurs, swearing and water bottles thrown at Syrian students. *CBC Online News*. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/racism-moncton-high-riverview-football-syria-newcomers-1.4358217>

- Blanch, V. (2018, February 3). Racism in province's schools just drives immigrants to 'bigger world,' researcher says: If children don't feel welcome in province striving for diversity, their families won't want to stay. *CBC Online News*. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/racism-manju-varma-marcus-marcial-1.4516303>
- Broadway, M. (2013). The world "meats" Canada: Meatpacking's role in the cultural transformation of Brooks, Alberta. *American Geographical Society's Focus on Geography*, 56(2), 47-53.
- Burgess, K., McKenzie, W., & Fehr, F. (2016) International female students' experiences of navigating the Canadian health care system in a small town setting. *Intercultural Education*, 27(5), 425-436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2016.1240501>
- Burgos, M. J. (2021, February 8). Leaving Doone. *CBC News Online*. <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/doone-street>
- Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Carspecken, P. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. Routledge.
- Carter, T., Morrish, M., & Amoyaw, B. (2008). Attracting immigrants to smaller urban and rural communities: Lessons learned from the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. *Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l'integration et de la migration internationale*, 9(2), 161-183.
- Coelho, E. (1998). *Teaching and learning in multicultural schools*. Multilingual Matters.
- Corbett, M., & Forsey, M. (2017). Rural youth out-migration and education: Challenges to aspirations discourse in mobile industry. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 38(3), 429-444.
- Cox, A. (2020, February 20). 6,000 newcomers in N.B. last year, more settling in smaller centres: data. *The Post Gazette*, p. 2.
- Cummins, J (1986). Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(1), 18-36.
- Cummins, J. (2015). Intercultural education and academic achievement: a framework for school-based policies in multilingual schools. *Intercultural Education*, 26(6), 455-468. doi:10.1080/14675986.2015.1103539
- Daschuk, J. (2013). *Clearing the plains: Disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of aboriginal life*. University of Regina Press.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. New York University Press.
- Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. The New Press.
- Depner, W., & Teixeira, C. (2012). Welcoming communities? An assessment of community services in attracting and retaining immigrants in the South Okanagan Valley (British Columbia, Canada), with policy recommendations. *The Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 7(2), 72-97. <https://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/download/623/141>
- Derwing, T. M. (2003). What do ESL students say about their accents? *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 59(4), 547-566.
- Dimmock, C., & Walker, A. (2005). *Educational leadership: Culture and diversity*. Sage.
- Egbo, B. (2009). *Teaching for diversity in Canadian schools*. Pearson.
- Esses, V. M., Brochu, P. M., & Dickson, K. R. (2012). Economic costs, economic benefits, and attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 12(1), 133-137.
- Esses, V., Medianu, S., & Lawson, A. (2013). Uncertainty, threat, and the role of the media in promoting the dehumanization of immigrants and refugees. *Journal of Social Issues*, 69(3), 518-536.
- Field, J. (2003). *Social capital*. Routledge.
- Fram, S. (2013). The constant comparative analysis method outside of grounded theory. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(1), 1-25. <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR18/fram1.pdf>

- Gagné, A., Schmidt, C., & Markus, P. (2017). Teaching about refugees: Developing culturally responsive educators in contexts of politicised transnationalism. *Intercultural Education*, 28(5), 429-446. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2017.1336409>
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Greenfield, T., & Ribbins, P. (1993). *Greenfield on educational administration: Towards a humane science*. Routledge.
- Guerra, R., Gaertner, S. L., António, R., & Deegan, M. (2015). Do we need them? When immigrant communities are perceived as indispensable to national identity or functioning of the host society. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(7), 868-879.
- Guerra, R., Rodrigues, D., Gaertner, S. L., Deegan, M., & António, R. (2016). The Functional and Identity Indispensability Scale (FIIS). *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 54, 34-46.
- Hamm, L. (2017). Becoming a transformative vice-principal in culturally and linguistically rich diverse schools: "Pace yourself. It's a marathon, not a sprint." *International Journal of Mentoring & Coaching in Education*, 6(2), 82-98. <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdf-plus/10.1108/IJMCE-11-2016-0072>
- Hamm, L., Massfeller, H., Scott, A., & Cormier, K. (2017). "They wanted to study us; they didn't want to help us": Socially just and participatory research methodologies for demographically changing schools. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, 12(1), 53-70. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313540940\\_They\\_Wanted\\_to\\_Study\\_Us\\_They\\_Didn%27t\\_Want\\_to\\_Help\\_Us\\_Socially\\_Just\\_and\\_Participatory\\_Research\\_Methodologies\\_for\\_Demographically\\_Changing\\_Schools](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313540940_They_Wanted_to_Study_Us_They_Didn%27t_Want_to_Help_Us_Socially_Just_and_Participatory_Research_Methodologies_for_Demographically_Changing_Schools)
- Hatchard, S. (2020, June 13). Support for immigration strong in New Brunswick, poll suggests. *The Daily Gleaner*, A9.
- Horsford, S. D., Grosland, T., & Gunn, K. M. (2011). Pedagogy of the personal and professional: Toward a framework for culturally relevant leadership. *Journal of School Leadership*, 21(4), 582-606.
- Ibrahim, H. (2021, January 25). Ticket reversed after parking commissioner tells business owner 'come back when you learn English'. *CTV News Online*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/saint-john-arab-business-owner-racism-1.5886942>
- James, C. (2004). Assimilation to accommodation: Immigrants and the changing patterns of schooling. *Education Canada*, 44(4), 43-45.
- Jerrett, A. (2019, September 30). Population of Nova Scotia reaches all-time high. *CTV News Online*. <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/population-of-nova-scotia-reaches-all-time-high-1.4617347>
- Kincheloe, J. (2008). *Critical constructivism*. Peter Lang.
- King, T. (2013). *The inconvenient Indian: A curious account of native people in North America*. Anchor Canada.
- Kirova, A. (2001). Loneliness in immigrant children: Implications for classroom practice. *Childhood Education*, 260-267.
- Kristmanson, P., Lafargue, C., & Whynot, K. (2017). Developing intercultural competence for our language classrooms. *Réflexions*, 36(3), 19-21.
- Lam, M. (2019a). Language education for newcomers in rural Canada: Needs, opportunities, and innovations. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 14(1), 77-97.
- Lam, M. (2019b). Effects of Canada's increasing linguistic and cultural diversity on educational policy, programming and pedagogy. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, 14(2), 16-32. <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/jcie/index.php/JCIE/article/view/29370>
- Lather, P. (1986). Issues of validity in openly ideological research: Between a rock and a soft place. *Interchange*, 17(4), 63-84.
- Li, J. (2010). 'My home and my school': Examining immigrant adolescent narratives from a critical sociocultural perspective. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 13(1), 119-137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320903550154>

- Lopez, A. (2016). *Culturally responsive and socially just leadership in diverse contexts: From theory to action*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lund, D. E. (2006a). Social justice activism in the heartland of hate: Countering extremism in Alberta. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 52(2), 181-194.
- Lund, D. E. (2006b). Rocking the racism boat: School-based activists speak out on denial and avoidance. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 9(2), 203-221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320600696813>
- McDonald, S. (2000). A touch of...class! Trauma and second language learning. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 56(4), 690-696.
- Miles, M., Huberman, M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Mullin, M. (2019, September 20). The rest of Canada is booming. Why is N.L.'s population falling behind? By 2043, N.L. could lose 90,000 residents. *CBC News Online*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/nl-population-projection-1.5289419>
- Neatby, S. (2019, July 20). Report shows P.E.I. population up, but so is out-migration. *The Guardian Online*. <https://www.theguardian.pe.ca/news/local/report-shows-pe-i-population-up-but-so-is-out-migration-334902/>
- New Brunswick Government. (2014). *New Brunswick population growth strategy 2014-2017: Putting our resources to work*. <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/petl-epft/PDF/PopGrowth/PopulationGrowthStrategy2014-17.pdf>
- New Brunswick Government. (2016). *New Brunswick's economic growth plan: Why growth is imperative*. <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/EconomicGrowth-Plan2016.html>
- New Brunswick Government. (2019). *New beginnings: A population growth strategy for New Brunswick 2019-2024*. [https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/petl-epft/PDF/PopGrowth/Population\\_growth\\_strategy.pdf](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/petl-epft/PDF/PopGrowth/Population_growth_strategy.pdf)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Government. (2015). *Live here, work here, belong here. A population growth strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador, 2015-2025*. <https://www.gov.nl.ca/populationgrowth/pdf/strategy.pdf>
- Nieto, S., & Bode, P. (2008). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Oudshoorn, A., Benbow, S., & Meyer, M. (2019). Resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Published Online. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-019-00695-8>
- Perkel, C. (2018, December 12). Racism exists at all levels' of Thunder Bay, Ont., police service review finds. *CTV Online News*. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/racism-exists-at-all-levels-of-thunder-bay-ont-police-service-review-finds-1.4214534>
- Phan, T. (2003). Life in school: Narratives of resiliency among Vietnamese-Canadian Youths. *Adolescence*, 38, 555-566.
- Preibisch, K. L. (2004). Migrant agricultural workers and processes of social inclusion in rural Canada: Encuentros and Desencuentros. *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 29(57), 203-239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08263663.2004.10816857>
- Prince Edward Island Government. (2017). *Recruit, retain, repatriate: A population growth plan for Prince Edward Island (2017-2022)*. [https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei\\_population-action-plan\\_2017.pdf](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_population-action-plan_2017.pdf)
- Pryor, C. (2001). New immigrants and refugees in American schools: Multiple voices. *Childhood Education*, 275-283.
- Raby, R. (2004). 'There's no racism at my school, it's just joking around': Ramifications for anti-racist education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 7(4), 367-383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332042000303388>
- Roessingh, H. (2006). The teacher is the key: Building trust in ESL high school programs. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 64(2), 563-590.

- Schimmele, C., & Wu, Z. (2015) «The new immigration and ethnic identity,» *Population change and life course strategic knowledge cluster discussion paper series / Un Réseau stratégique de connaissances Changements de population et parcours de vie Document de travail*, 3(1), Article 1. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/pclc/vol3/iss1/1>
- Schroeter, S., & James, C. E. (2014). “We’re here because we’re Black”: The schooling experiences of French-speaking African-Canadian students with refugee backgrounds. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 18(1), 20-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2014.885419>
- Shields, C. M. (2018). *Transformative leadership in education: Equitable changes in an uncertain and complex world* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Slaughter, G. (2021, January 19). These are Canada’s fastest growing communities as cities see record exodus. *CTV News Online*. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/these-are-canada-s-fastest-growing-communities-as-cities-see-record-exodus-1.5273723>
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.
- Starratt, R. J. (2005). Responsible leadership. *The Educational Forum*, 69, 124-133.
- Statistics Canada (2021). *Table 17-10-0009-01 Population estimates, quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.25318/1710000901-eng>
- Stephan, W. G. (2012). Improving relations between residents and immigrants. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 12(1), 33–48.
- Stewart, J. (2017). A culture of care and compassion for refugee students. *Education Canada*, 57(1), 20-25.
- Stewart, J., & Martin, L. (2018). *Bridging two worlds: Supporting newcomer and refugee youth*. CERIC. <https://ceric.ca/resource/bridging-two-worlds-supporting-newcomer-refugee-youth/>
- Thevenot, S. (2019). Record immigration drives Nova Scotia’s population to all-time high. *CIC News*. <https://www.cicnews.com/2019/12/record-immigration-drives-nova-scotias-population-to-all-time-high-1213404.html#gs.t8f1dw>
- Thomson, R., & Derwing, T. (2015). The effectiveness of L2 pronunciation instruction: A narrative review. *Applied Linguistics*, 36(3), 326-344. <http://doi:10.1093/applin/amu076>
- Varma-Joshi, M., Baker, C., & Tanaka, C. (2004). Names will never hurt me. *Harvard Educational Review*, 74(2), 175-208.
- Wang, F. (2018). Social justice leadership—theory and practice: A case of Ontario. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(3), 470-498. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x18761341>
- Wilkinson, L., Ashton, W., Yan, M., Kirova, A., Garcea, J., Pettigrew, R., & Galatsanou, E. (2016). *Welcome to Canada’s West: New demographic and economic realities of increased migration to rural western and northern regions*. Working Paper Series, 184. Rimisp, Santiago, Chile.
- Wilson-Forsberg, S. (2012). “Getting used to the quiet.” *Immigrant adolescents’ journey to belonging in New Brunswick, Canada*. McGill-Queen’s University Press.
- Wilson-Forsberg, S. (2016, October 6). *Just trying to fit in: The settlement and integration experiences of youth from migrant families*. Public lecture for the Gregg Center, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB.

**Appendix 1**

## Canada Population Growth 2000 - 2020

Geography	Q4 2000	Q1 2001	Q2 2001	Q3 2001	Q4 2001
Canada	30,783,969	30,824,441	30,910,996	31,020,902	31,129,119
NFLD/Lab	526,732	525,299	523,235	522,046	521,581
PEI	136,400	136,377	136,499	136,665	136,876
NS	934,459	933,463	932,909	932,494	933,336
<b>NB</b>	<b>750,252</b>	<b>749,715</b>	<b>749,789</b>	<b>749,820</b>	<b>749,295</b>
QC	7,368,772	7,373,978	7,383,844	7,396,456	7,411,504
ON	11,748,348	11,771,945	11,827,345	11,897,534	11,961,789
MB	1,148,183	1,148,456	1,149,684	1,151,454	1,152,150
SK	1,006,027	1,003,469	1,001,643	1,000,239	999,175
AB	3,016,947	3,027,941	3,041,238	3,058,108	3,078,336
BC	4,049,297	4,055,229	4,066,132	4,076,950	4,085,648
YK	30,294	30,147	30,124	30,158	30,076
NWT	40,575	40,624	40,625	40,845	41,173
NVT	27,683	27,798	27,929	28,133	28,180
Geography	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020
Canada	37,802,043	37,899,277	37,979,854	38,005,238	38,008,005
NFLD/Lab	524,137	523,631	522,994	522,103	520,998
PEI	158,334	158,629	159,249	159,625	159,713
NS	975,231	975,898	977,043	979,351	979,115
<b>NB</b>	<b>780,154</b>	<b>780,040</b>	<b>781,024</b>	<b>781,476</b>	<b>781,315</b>
QC	8,540,429	8,556,650	8,572,054	8,574,571	8,575,779
ON	14,637,880	14,689,075	14,723,497	14,734,014	14,733,119
MB	1,373,574	1,377,004	1,378,818	1,379,263	1,379,584
SK	1,176,272	1,179,154	1,179,618	1,178,681	1,177,884
AB	4,384,968	4,402,045	4,417,006	4,421,876	4,428,112
BC	5,125,659	5,131,575	5,142,404	5,147,712	5,145,851
YK	41,668	41,731	41,980	42,052	42,176
NWT	45,100	45,119	45,201	45,161	45,074
NVT	38,637	38,726	38,966	39,353	39,285

## Appendix 2

### Educator Survey Questionnaire for Teachers and Administrators

**Project Title:** The impact and implications of immigration and demographic changes on teachers, administrators, and students in a New Brunswick high school context

---

Please circle or check off that you have agreed to provide your responses to this survey questionnaire. Please put all completed surveys in the envelope and seal it and place it in the large envelope in the office. Thank you.

**I have read Dr. Hamm's information about the project and...**      **I agree to participate**\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for allowing me to introduce myself and describe this project. The information you provide on this questionnaire is very important and will guide me and my team in constructing questions for the interviews in stage two of the study. We will also incorporate your responses on this survey into the data analysis. Below are open-ended questions. Based on your experience, please answer each to the best of your ability. Please feel free to use additional pages if necessary.

1. Generally speaking, what do you perceive to be some of the more interesting, inspiring and/or challenging situations you encounter in your role(s) in your school and working life? Please describe them as well as you can.
2. To what extent are the experiences that you have described enhancing or impeding your attention, focus and ability to perform your job? (i.e., accountability, busyness, classroom management, curriculum/resource implementation, demographic change, lesson pacing, time constraints) Do these experiences enhance your teaching practice? Please explain.
3. If you have taught in this school or school district for longer than 10 years, what are some of the significant differences in the school and community and changes in your role that you have become aware of now compared to when you began teaching? Please describe.
4. To what extent are you familiar with the demographic changes occurring in this province? In this community? From your perception and experience, how have the demographic changes impacted your planning and classroom pedagogy as well as your classroom management? Please describe and explain.
5. If you are teaching students from diverse backgrounds (i.e., linguistic, cultural, racial, religious, gender) in your classes, what are some of the experiences you have encountered that have had an impact on your planning and pedagogical strategies that you employ in your class? How have you responded to these experiences? Please describe in detail.
6. In your perception, has the increasing school and community diversity contributed to your classroom and teaching practices in productive and positive ways? Has the diversity made your school and your job more interesting, fulfilling, and meaningful? Please describe.
7. What type of professional development activities and learning experiences do you believe may support you as an educator and help you to understand learning and teaching in diverse classrooms? Please describe.
8. How much and what type of professional development and educational support have you experienced where teaching students from diverse backgrounds has been the primary focus?

---

Where have you encountered this education? How did this education benefit your teaching and understandings? Please describe these educational and professional development activities further? (i.e., ESL training, cultural awareness)

**To help with our analysis, can you please also provide the following demographic data:**

9. What is your gender? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
10. How long have you been a teacher? 0-10 yrs \_\_\_\_\_ 11-20 yrs \_\_\_\_\_ 21 + yrs \_\_\_\_\_
11. How long have you been a teacher in this school district?

***Thank you for helping us in our research. We wish you the best in your teaching and learning.***