

A Diversity Inventory of Saskatchewan Teachers

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EDU 750: Diversity in Organizations

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July 26 2024

Abstract

Saskatchewan teachers find themselves in a precarious position both politically and professionally as matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion are being challenged at the highest political level. A mixed method convergent design was selected to investigate the attitudes, trainings, and experiences that Saskatchewan teachers believe to be important in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts both in the workplace and classroom. Thirty participants were contacted to complete a diversity survey instrument through non-random convenience sampling. Twenty-one usable surveys were returned yielding a 70% response rate. Quantitative data were used to analyze demographic details of survey respondents. Qualitative data responses were analyzed using descriptive coding methods to determine emerging themes. Findings suggest that Saskatchewan teachers prefer informal community-based activities to learn about new cultures, working and cooperating with others build effective relationships, becoming actively immersed in a culture rather than passive education, and experiencing new places through travel and working in different places. Thus, Saskatchewan teachers place a significant importance on and value human interactions in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Despite encouraging data collected, concerns remain in educational workplaces including feeling pressured to assimilate, lack of understanding surrounding disabilities, and rural Saskatchewan locations tend to lack representation of diverse populations.

Keywords: Saskatchewan teachers, diversity, inclusion, mixed methods, education

A Diversity Inventory of Saskatchewan Teachers

In October 2023, the Saskatchewan government invoked the notwithstanding clause to pass Bill 137 – the Parents’ Bill of Rights (the Bill). The notwithstanding clause can be used by provincial and federal governments to override promised liberties to enact a particular legislation. The use of the notwithstanding clause is controversial and rare (Pelletier, 2022). Among other newly introduced education-related stipulations, all educational staff must now seek parental/guardian consent for students 16 and under if the student wants education workers to use a different name and/or pronoun in the school environment (Government of Saskatchewan, 2023). The policy’s intent states that education is a shared responsibility between educational staff and parents. Thus, the Bill will help reinforce important relationships among teachers, parents, administration, and students. According to the government, the Bill also reaffirms and supports students who wish to have their names and/or pronouns change to align with their gender identity (Government of Saskatchewan, 2023).

Concerns related to the impact of the Bill have been expressed. The Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation (STF) states that educational and mental health staff were not consulted in the development of this bill (STF, 2023). Interestingly, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (SHRC), Heather Kuttai, resigned from her post in protest of the bill (SHRC, 2023). A Saskatchewan-based advocate group, UR Pride, is legally challenging the Saskatchewan Party’s decision to invoke the notwithstanding clause to pass the new law. The group believes that the provincial government has restricted the rights of gender-diverse youth who are entitled to a safe educational environment. Specifically, the group believes that the new law infringes upon section 12 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) which protects people from cruel and unusual treatment or punishment (Simes, 2024). In response, the government

rallied provincial courts urging them to drop the challenge because the notwithstanding clause was used and no Charter rights were violated. However, the courts believe that there is no true basis to deny the advocate group the opportunity to argue against the government (Simes, 2024). In recent weeks, the STF, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and CUPE Saskatchewan have issued a joint statement indicating that an application to intervene in the Bill has been made. The three organizations believe that the government's new Bill inflicts unnecessary harm to youth, compels teachers and education workers to inflict harm, and sets a unique precedent to supersede Charter rights in future situations (STF, 2024).

Additionally, Saskatchewan teachers were without an active provincial bargaining collective agreement (PBCA) in the 2023-2024 school year. The agreement expired in August 2023 and negotiations have been challenging. After many attempts to negotiate at the bargaining table failed, the STF declared several impasses. Interestingly, one of the key bargaining proposals that the STF would like addressed is classroom complexity (STF, 2023). A current definition of classroom complexity is challenging to find, especially in peer-reviewed literature but an understanding exists that classroom increases in complexity based on the number of students in a given classroom, the factors that may inhibit a given student's ability to achieve grade-level curriculum outcomes in combination with chronic underfunding compounded over several years (Idowu, 2024; Prisciak, 2024; Salloum, 2024; Wong, 2024; Yip & Saito, 2024). Factors may include (but are not limited to) students with learning disabilities, language barriers, behavioural concerns, split grades, and lack of additional supports. As well, classroom complexity is linked to teacher workload. Highly complex classrooms necessitate a greater workload for any given teacher (Prisciak, 2024). The Saskatchewan government believes classroom complexity cannot be provincially bargained and should be discussed with school

divisions (Idowu, 2024). Due to stalled progress, Saskatchewan teachers' enacted job sanctions including work-to-rule and rotating strikes. Productive bargaining did not gain considerable momentum between the STF and the Saskatchewan government until April and May 2024. Two tentative agreements were reached between both parties. However, the two agreements were ultimately voted down by Saskatchewan teachers. As a result, negotiations between the STF and the Saskatchewan government have stopped and both parties have called for and agreed to binding arbitration; both parties remain too far apart on issues related to education for productive negotiations to continue (STF, 2024).

Considering the current political and legal climate that educators find themselves in, an exploration of personal attitudes and experiences of Saskatchewan teachers seems timely. Despite the circumstances, Saskatchewan teachers must still work with the public and all students regardless of personal feelings and political affiliations. Teachers are critical in delivering an inclusive education for all students (Atkin, 2012; Beaudry & Samek, 2023; Yip & Saito, 2024). Therefore, a compelling question remains: what attitudes, trainings, and experiences remain important to Saskatchewan teachers so that workplaces and classrooms support diversity, equity, and inclusion? Since individual frames of reference and experiences with diversity are significantly influenced through social interactions at school, work, travel, and/or within families as well as communities, the perspectives of Saskatchewan teachers with respect to personal attitudes, personal experiences, reflective responses, and demographic data were selected to investigate the aforementioned research question. Insights gained from data analysis may provide a unique geographical context with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Literature Review

Many people seem to have their own understanding of and qualifiers for diversity making a firm definition challenging. Mor Barak (2015) has attempted to define diversity as the association and belonging to groups that are fundamentally different than what is considered to be mainstream. Diversity encompasses demographic details that are observable (i.e. age and skin colour) and non-observable (i.e. religion and culture). Moreover, individuals that identify with groups that are different than the dominant culture are more susceptible to discrimination, especially in the workplace. Therefore, diverse people are prevented from contributing fully to their organization (Mor Barak, 2015). With respect to equity, the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) (n.d.) makes a clear distinction from equality. Equality means that everyone should be treated the same while equity includes treating people fairly based on their own unique needs and circumstances. Equality and equity should not be used interchangeably (OHRC, n.d.). Inclusion is also an important concept to identify. For someone to feel fully included in their organization, there ought to be a strong sense of belongingness and uniqueness. Mor Barak (2015) believes that individuals must feel a sense of belonging without abandoning aspects of themselves that make them unique. Thus, inclusion should not be interchangeable with diversity.

Teachers in western countries currently work with some of the most diverse student populations ever the trend is likely to continue (Coady et al., 2015; Anyiche et al., 2023; Yip & Saito, 2024). Approximately 50% of the entire Canadian population will consist of immigrants and their children by 2041 (Anyiche et al., 2023). In managing culturally responsive classrooms, teachers are implementing culturally responsive teaching by incorporating a variety of different topics, perspectives, and instructional practices in an attempt to authentically connect with each

student on an individual level. Moreover, students that are able to make direct connections between class content with their families, friends, and favourite topics demonstrate increased engagement in their learning (Anyiche et al., 2023). Ultimately, teachers must go beyond general education techniques to ensure that all students are seen, heard, and included in classroom instruction by implementing differentiated teaching strategies for students who need different methods of learning (Coady et al., 2015). Anyiche et al. (2023) also argue that teachers who interact with and incorporate evidence-based research into their teaching practice experience more fruitful learning with their students. However, teachers who fail to address the differing needs of students in their classroom may negatively influence student interest, increase frustration, and promote inadequate attainment of curricular outcomes (Anyiche et al., 2023).

The composition of education staff within schools remains a concern. According to Yip and Saito (2024), the diversity of the student population continues to increase but the representation of diverse staff stagnates. While no Canadian statistics were mentioned in their study, Yip and Saito (2024) suggest that only 20% of all K-12 teachers in the United States are diverse, and approximately 51% of all elementary and secondary students are from under-represented racial-ethnic groups. Based on these statistics, 80% of teachers in the United States are likely to be white. Therefore, the challenge exists for racialized students to see themselves represented in their classrooms and schools. In fact, Yip and Saito (2024) believe that having diverse staff working in schools will increase the quality of relationships with their students. Diverse education staff also have a more positive attitude towards culturally diverse students. Additionally, diverse education staff may be more aware of inequalities, social justice issues, and can relate due to similar experiences (Yip & Saito, 2024). Given the statistics and rationale, a case exists for increasing the number of diverse staff in schools.

Building and retaining a diverse educational staff is also a prominent topic in the literature. Diverse teachers feel that they are often passed over for promotional opportunities within their schools so the desire to progress in their careers decreased. As an example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2021) states that women are under-represented in educational leadership roles despite being over-represented in teaching positions. For migrant teachers (i.e. teachers who were once certified and licensed in a country other than the country in which they wish to teach) getting an overseas license and professional experience recognized can be very challenging which leads to burnout (Yip & Saito, 2024). Staffing schools in disadvantaged or isolated places can also prove to be a challenge. OECD (2021) argues that students who are in more disadvantaged settings are more likely to experience lower-quality classroom instruction.

Teacher preparation for diversity, equity, and inclusion also appears to be a topic of concern in published literature. One-off courses related to diversity or special education need not be the norm. Rather, topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion ought to be clearly embedded throughout the entire teacher preparation program (Coady et al., 2015; Ash & Maguire, 2024). Thus, preservice teachers will be able to see to see how diversity, equity, and inclusion can be integrated in a variety of instructional contexts. Additionally, Marchitello and Trinidad (2019) argue that preservice teachers ought to learn about classroom management, instruction, and assessment from scholars of colour as a way to actively confront societal norms. In an attempt to increase cultural awareness and critical personal reflection, preservice teachers should spend more time investigating their own racial identity and truly examining how inequalities are built into everyday society (Marchitello & Trinidad, 2019).

While guaranteeing a life-longer learner mindset of veteran teachers may prove to be difficult, the literature suggests that teachers ought to be automatically adhere to a pre-programmed setting to continuously improve and enhance their skillset. Such a mindset is not always willingly adopted by teachers. OECD (2021) believes that teacher learning is lifelong and continues to progress throughout professional years of experience. In fact, teachers are encouraged to use any type of diversity, equity, and inclusivity training to challenge pre-existing mindsets, stereotypes, and assumptions (OECD, 2021). However, Ash and Maguire (2024) argue that the quality of diversity training as professional development for individuals currently teaching remains unclear.

The delivery of diversity, equity, and inclusion training ought to be reconsidered. The experiential learning theory is a mental model used to understand how individuals learn through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984; Goosby Smith, 2011). The experiential learning theory is a cyclical model divided into four different categories including concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Concrete experiences ultimately provide an opportunity for someone to have reflective observations. The reflective observations gleaned from a concrete experience may result in fairly abstract concepts becoming clearer and easier to realize. Once abstract concepts are concrete then new decision-making processes and actions can be implemented (Kolb, 1984; Goosby Smith, 2011). Goosby Smith (2011) recognizes that many DEI learning opportunities do not always work despite many organizations asking employees to take part. Thus, the experiential learning theory ought to be used to help people make sense of abstract concepts. Goosby Smith (2011) argues that making sense of cross-cultural experiences is difficult to do in the absence of a concrete learning

experience. Thus, a suggested approach to educating people about different cultures ought to include immersive concrete examples and experiences.

The literature presented encompasses large overarching themes related to diversity, equity, and inclusion with respect to teachers in K-12 classrooms. Themes include how classroom topics are delivered to diverse groups of students, the composition of educational staff, teacher preparation, professional development, and how to make training more meaningful. Researchers generally agree that maintaining diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in school is worth doing because students, staff, and communities benefit (Goosby Smith, 2011; Coady et al., 2015; Marchitello & Trinidad, 2019; Anyiche et al., 2023; OECD, 2021; Ash & Maguire, 2024; Yip & Saito, 2024). However, what remains minimal in available literature are the voices of teachers. In particular, perspectives of teachers that currently face government challenges to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are missing (Goosby Smith, 2011; Coady et al., 2015; Marchitello & Trinidad, 2019; Anyiche et al., 2023; OECD, 2021; Ash & Maguire, 2024; Yip & Saito, 2024). Thus, providing Saskatchewan teachers with an opportunity to share their perspectives on concepts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion is sensible.

Method

Research Design

While considerable literature exists available to define and address the nature and scope of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the topic remains highly subjective. Individuals experience the world differently because of personal experiences, interactions with others and overall worldview. The amount of available literature on diversity, inclusion, and equity would not warrant a fully qualitative research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Marshall et al., 2022). As well, since the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion inherently calls upon deeply personal

experiences, selecting a purely quantitative research design may undermine the human experience. Thus, a mixed method research design was selected to investigate the types of things that remain important to Saskatchewan teachers so that workplaces and classrooms are supportive of all people. Creswell and Creswell (2023) argue that selecting a mixed method research design is prudent when studying complex problems that require gathering numerical data but also hearing the voices of individuals; a complete understanding of the research problem is developed by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. Therefore, perceptions of diversity of Saskatchewan teachers were explored through one survey instrument (see appendix A) which gathered both qualitative (open-ended questions) and quantitative (close-ended questions) data at the same time (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

In an effort to understand and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data, a convergent mixed method approach was selected. The goal of a convergent design is to compare both quantitative and qualitative data with the assumption that (hopefully) both sets of data yield similar outcomes. Additionally, an advantage of adopting a convergent design is to potentially validate one form of data with the other (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In terms of qualitative data analysis, participant responses were analyzed using descriptive coding (see appendix B), which is appropriate for non-interview coding (Saldana, 2022). In terms of quantitative data analysis, course instructors will treat data to a variety of statistical analysis techniques to determine potential relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Data Sources

In an effort to establish a local geographical context within a challenging political climate, Saskatchewan teachers were central in attempting to understand personal attitudes and experiences related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The sources of data were responses

provided by individuals who have Saskatchewan teachers' licenses. Responses collected by the survey instrument included quantitative and qualitative data.

Participant Selection

Before individuals were recruited, ethical approval was sought from Niagara University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Through the application process, the IRB was informed of the purpose, scope, involvement of participants, risks, and anticipated outcomes related to the investigation. In the application, an emphasis was placed on the fact that participants did not have to answer every question and that they could remove themselves from the project at any time without consequence. As well, an informed consent letter was not provided to participants because consent to participate was implied by simply completing the survey. The IRB application, along with the survey instrument, was submitted on May 26 2024 and was approved on May 29 2024 (see appendix C).

An ideal scenario included the successful recruitment of 20-30 participants. Thankfully, 21 responses to the survey were usable. Participants needed to have a Saskatchewan teaching license to participate. No other inclusion criteria were established. Participant selection was the same for both quantitative and qualitative sections of the survey. Individuals were selected through snowball sampling, meaning that a small number of individuals were invited to participate due to possessing particular knowledge and frame of reference as some sort of pre-existing relationship with the researcher (Kovach, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Due to the large geography of Saskatchewan and the timing of participant recruitment, all participants were invited through email, text message, or Facebook Messenger. After an individual indicated a willingness to participate, an electronic link to the survey was sent.

Data Collection

The survey was published on June 2, 2024, and closed June 22, 2024; the survey was available for 20 consecutive calendar days. A total of 30 electronic survey links were sent and 27 surveys were returned via Qualtrics. However, only 21 responses could be used due to 6 list-wise deletions (Kang, 2013). Thus, the response rate was 70%. The survey instrument itself was divided into 4 major components. Thirty-three questions comprised the first component of the survey which addressed personal attitudes of the survey respondents on a 1-4 Likert scale (i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree). The second component of the survey had an additional twenty questions which aimed at capturing the frequency (i.e. never, sometimes, often, and very often) with which the survey respondent addressed issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Subsequently, the third component consisted only of 4 questions which were qualitative in nature. Respondents were permitted to share personal experiences and reflections in detail rather than being bound to the confines of scaled quantitative questions. The fourth and final section of the survey recorded demographic data which included gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, and country of residence. Participants were also provided an opportunity to submit any feedback regarding their experiences completing the survey instrument.

Analysis

Once the survey closed, raw quantitative and qualitative data were exported from Qualtrics into a Microsoft Excel file. Twenty-seven survey responses were received, and six responses were unusable because the vast majority of questions in the survey were left blank. Thus, six listwise deletions were made resulting in 21 usable responses (Kang, 2013). The remaining responses of the quantitative questions were mostly complete. Only two individual

question responses required an average to be calculated to “fill in the blanks” within the survey (Kang, 2013). Once the data was “cleaned,” the data was saved into a new Microsoft Excel for easy viewing and to remove unnecessary information inserted automatically by Qualtrics like IP addresses. As well, Excel was used to generate simple and clear pie charts to visualize the demographic data. As per the instructions from the course instructors, no further quantitative data analysis took place.

Qualitative responses were analyzed using manual descriptive coding. Saldana (2022) suggests that descriptive coding is used in non-interview situations and is a preferred method for novice qualitative researchers. Descriptive coding analyzes participant responses for unique nouns (i.e. people, places, or things). For ease and clarity, participant responses were copied from the raw Excel data file and pasted into a chart within a Microsoft Word document. While the chart in the Word document housed participant responses, the chart also provided two additional columns for descriptive codes and code categories. Organizing the qualitative data into a chart allowed for easy access, streamlined organization, and grouped participant responses based on the question being asked. Once all questions were analyzed to determine descriptive codes, larger categories were determined based on the frequency of the codes. Categories were then reviewed to determine larger overarching themes from each question asked of the participants (Saldana, 2022).

Results

Qualitative Question Number 1

Participants were asked to comment on specific diversity-related activities that they have attended of which two themes emerged. The first theme related to formal workplace trainings and activities which included things like leadership training, antiracist training, conferences,

workshops, book studies, and online learning sessions. The second theme that emerged was informal community-based activities such as Pride parades, gay straight alliances (GSAs), and cultural events which highlighted Indigenous culture. One participant explained that *“I live in a Metis/Indigenous community, and as such have attended many events focused on Indigenous culture and language ... we host an annual Pride parade in June.”* In terms of Indigenous culture, many individuals cited activities like smudging, jigging, land-based activities, powwows, making ribbon skirts, and learning Indigenous languages.

Qualitative Question Number 2

Participants were asked to reflect upon the skills and/or methods that they have gained and developed to successfully work with a wide range of people. Three major themes emerged which included mental health training, cooperating with others, and participating in cultural activities. Participants cited that mental health awareness is key to demonstrating empathy towards others. As well, exposure to other people that are fundamentally different than themselves helps foster greater cooperation among different people. Thus, participants believe that relationship building is also important. In fact, a few participants have stated that thinking and listening are key skills in building relationship building rather than talking. One participant said that *“I’ve learned to listen more and talk less to explore before I judge and to understand what’s ‘normal’ for me is not the same for everybody.”* Another participant encouraged others to *“think before you speak ... you never know when you’ll offend someone. It doesn’t always matter if you meant to offend someone or not ... what matters is how they experience it.”* Similar to the first qualitative question, participants believed that participating in cultural activities broadened their understanding of cultures that a different than their own.

Qualitative Question Number 3

Participants were asked to comment on any attitudes and/or self-awareness that they have gained from their organizational experiences. Three themes emerged from the qualitative data which included awareness of self, awareness of others, and allyship. Specifically, participants believed that an awareness of privilege and personal biases allows oneself to be able to challenge long-standing personal viewpoints that could have been damaging to minority groups. In fact, one participant shared that *“teaching in a northern Indigenous community has opened my eyes to Indigenous issues and stereotypes ... these biases and attitudes may have been under the surface when I was younger but I know better so I do better now.”* Furthermore, being aware of how people treat others is closely related to awareness of self. Participants believed that treating others with kindness, respect, and dignity is important. The concept of allyship was another interesting theme that some participants discussed. In fact, one participant implied that working alongside people rather than against is more productive. Supporting others in their fight for equality and equity seems to be an important concept to consider.

Qualitative Question Number 4

Participants were asked to elaborate on their own contextual experiences (i.e. travel, research, readings, and family dynamics) that may have either enhanced or limited their experiences with working with diverse groups of people. Three themes emerged from the participants which included interactions with others, experiencing new places, and education. Participants believe that getting actively involved in cultures that are different than their own is important to working with others. Some participants said that living in an Indigenous community, marrying into a different culture, and debating with older or younger generations of people are all forms of transformative interactions. Furthermore, travel, experiencing a different

language, and moving away from family are all ways of experiencing new places. One participant stated that *“travelling and working in other places has really opened my mind to other ways of thinking and challenges my own beliefs.”* Other individuals stated that furthering one’s own education and reading works from diverse authors are important in working with others.

Qualitative Question Number 5

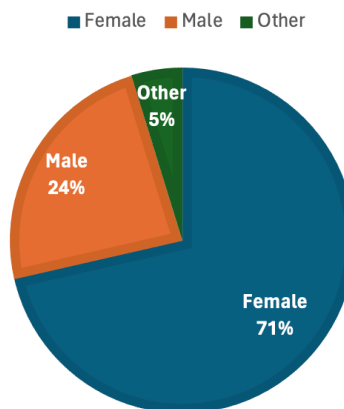
The final qualitative question provided participants to add any additional comments about diversity in their respective workplaces. Responses indicated that concerns remain in the teaching profession. In fact, one individual stated that they *“feel very pressured to act whiter than white”* and that *“it can get very tiring as I feel like I am not living my true authentic self.”* The same participant admits that *“it is a debate that I am are not sure I can resolve.”* Another participant shared that a lack of understanding surrounding disabilities exists. Specifically, they believe that *“disability is too often approached through a medical framework rather than an identity one ... this results in it being portrayed as a problem to be accommodated or overcome rather than a difference to be accepted.”* Additionally, challenges associated with the rural context of Saskatchewan was commented on by a different participant. Interestingly, the participant stated that *“teaching in small town Saskatchewan can result in a very limited amount of visual diversity amongst staff and even students.”* Despite the concerns mentioned, a participant commented on positive progress that has been made in Saskatchewan education. Encouragingly, the participant stated that *“over the 38 years I’ve worked at the same school the ratio of Indigenous to non-Indigenous employees at all levels has shifted greatly and most employees are Indigenous now.”*

Demographics

The demographics of the participants were collected, and the figures below illustrate the uniqueness of surveyed Saskatchewan teachers. Figure 1 demonstrates gender, Figure 2 shows the spread of ages of participants, Figure 3 conveys the ethnicity of participants, Figure 4 illustrates the sexual orientation in which the participants identify with, Figure 5 describes the instances of diversity-related activities or events that participants typically experience in their organization per year, Figure 6 depicts those who have a classifiable disability, and Figure 7 confirms country of residence.

Figure 1

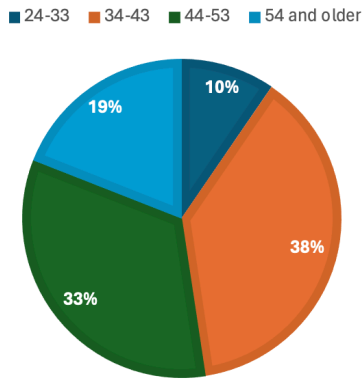
Genders of Surveyed Saskatchewan Teachers



Note. The total number of surveyed individuals was 21. Fifteen individuals identified as female, five identified as a male, and one identified as other.

Figure 2

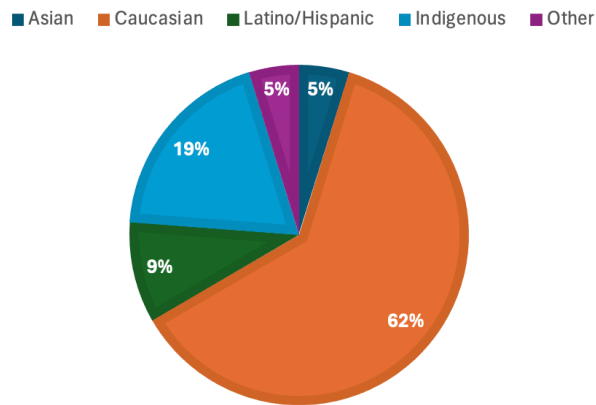
Ages of Surveyed Saskatchewan Teachers



Note. The total number of surveyed individuals was 21. Two individuals are between 24-33, eight individuals between 34-43, seven individuals between 44-53, and four individuals that are 54 and older.

Figure 3

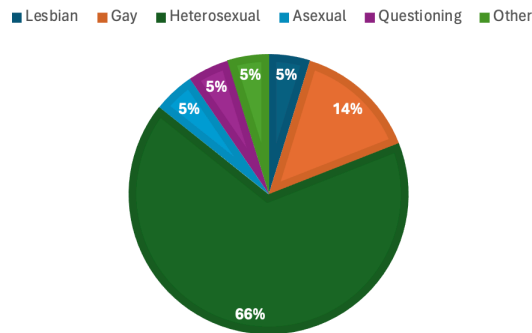
Ethnicity of Surveyed Saskatchewan Teachers



Note. The total number of surveyed individuals was 21. One individual is Asian, 13 are Caucasian, two are Latino/Hispanic, four are Indigenous, and one identified as other.

Figure 4

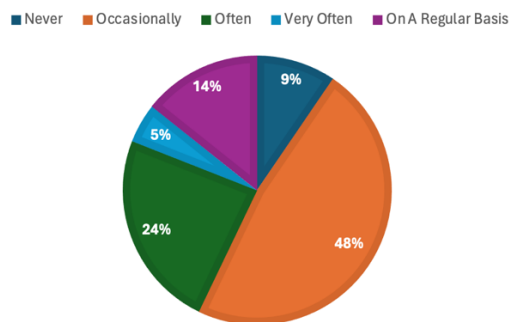
Sexual Orientation of Surveyed Saskatchewan Teachers



Note. The total number of surveyed individuals was 21. One individual identified as lesbian, three individuals identified as gay, 14 individuals identified as heterosexual, one individual identified as asexual, one individual identified as questioning, and one individual identified as other.

Figure 5

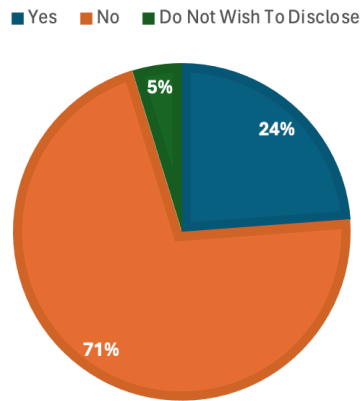
Instances of Diversity Initiatives Held Per Year in the Workplace



Note. The total number of surveyed individuals was 21. Two individuals said never (0 instances per year), 10 individuals indicated occasionally (1-3 instances per year), five individuals indicated often (4-6 instances per year), one individual indicated very often (7-9 per year), and three individuals indicated on a regular basis (10 or more instances per year).

Figure 6

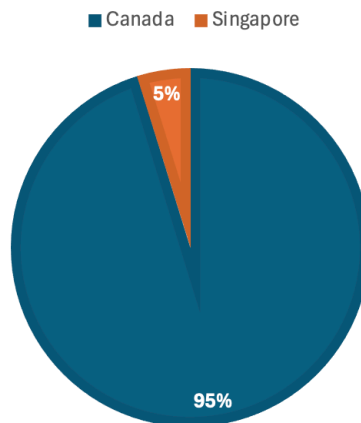
Surveyed Saskatchewan Teachers with a Classified Disability



Note. The total number of surveyed individuals was 21. Five individuals indicate that they do have a classified disability, 15 individuals indicate that they do not have a classified disability, and one individual chose not to disclose.

Figure 7

Country of Residence for Surveyed Saskatchewan Teachers



Note. The total number of surveyed individuals was 21. Twenty individuals indicated Canada as their country of residence while one individual indicated that Singapore was their country of residence.

Discussion

A number of personal experiences, attitudes, and trainings remain important to Saskatchewan teachers. During a time where top government officials are questioning matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, clear salient concepts of working with others, experiencing new things, and building self-awareness are important to Saskatchewan teachers in working with a wide range of colleagues and students in educational settings. Results from the qualitative analysis align with some concepts outlined within the literature review. Mor Barak (2022, p.388) discusses the idea of “effective diversity respondents” wherein people respond to and learn from those who are very different than oneself. Based on the ideas presented in the qualitative questions, Saskatchewan teachers ought to be considered “effective diversity respondents” since many have indicated that learning from others that are different from themselves is important in building awareness of self and others. In raising awareness of self as well as others, Saskatchewan teachers are also challenging previously curated ideas of belongingness by analyzing biases and privileges (Anderson & Billings-Harris, 2010). Thus, a demonstrated effort is being shown by Saskatchewan teachers to question the status quo and understand a broader range of people.

As per the demographic data indicated in Figure 3, 19% of the respondents identified themselves as Indigenous. Unsurprisingly, many responses in the qualitative questions discussed ideas related to Indigenous culture. Interestingly, one of the trainings that some cited as useful was Mental Health First Aid Training First Nations. The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCOF) (2024) is aimed at providing tailored mental health support to Indigenous people given the historical oppression they have faced in Canada. The Indigenous population in Canada is one of the most oppressed group due to forced assimilation through attempted cultural

genocide in the residential school system (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; Matheson et al., 2022; Weiss et al., 2023). Those who survived the residential school system are more likely to have increased mental health concerns (Weis et al., 2023). As well, descendants of the residential school survivors are also more likely experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) because their parent survived a significant traumatic stressor (Matheson et al., 2022). Thus, having a general understanding of how the Indigenous population in Canada has been treated historically helps generate empathy. A greater awareness of how the Indigenous population has been treated also helps build and enhance allyship within other ethnicities which is evidenced in the qualitative data collected.

The preferred method to build capacity in working with diverse individuals and learning about cultures different than one's own is through experiential means. While some individuals believed that participating in advanced education and reading was a way to understand different perspectives, the majority of individuals believed that actively participating in something seemed to be more productive. Interestingly, the preference for experiential learning aligns with Goosby Smith's (2011) suggestion of adopting Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model. Attempting to understand something that may be fairly far removed from an individual's frame of reference, like culture, may be best understood through activities and events. Then, abstract concepts become more concrete to the learner which results in a greater understanding and more intentional actions moving forward (Kolb, 1984; Goosby Smith, 2011). Based on the qualitative responses, community-based activities like Pride and Indigenous cultural events, underscores the importance of human interactions.

The literature review suggests that representation of different people matters both in the classroom and the workplace (OECD, 2021; Yip & Saito, 2024). While the balance of

individuals tends to be more representative of heterosexuality and being Caucasian, representation of different genders, ethnicities, ages, and sexual orientation does exist within the Saskatchewan teachers surveyed. Specifically, 90% of individuals surveyed are 34 and older, 71% identified as female, 5% of individuals identified as a gender other than male or female, 34% of respondents are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and 38% of individuals surveyed are an ethnicity that is not Caucasian. While an ideal scenario would include a relative balance of the aforementioned data, data do show promise in including different types of individuals within the Saskatchewan teaching landscape. Therefore, relationships with marginalized students may benefit from diverse individuals and educational workers may have a deeper appreciation for and understanding of their colleagues resulting in higher instances of cooperation as well as inclusion.

Implications

Since teachers are tasked with the duty of offering numerous perspectives to students, conversations and trainings related to diversity, equity, and inclusivity should continue especially during a time when there is increasing opposition for the topic (Peavoy, 2004; Atkin, 2012; Beaudry & Samek, 2023; STF, 2024). Ethically speaking, Saskatchewan teachers find themselves in a strange position of balancing the law of the land (which some do not necessarily agree with) with the moral standards of the teaching profession (such as providing a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students). Sufficient reasoning exists that Saskatchewan teachers are currently facing both personal and professional dilemmas. As well, the consequences for a teacher opposing either the law of the land or the moral professional standards remain unclear. After all, in a democratic society such as Canada, students have the right to access all knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinions as well as the right to read

(United Nations, 1948; Canadian Federation of Library Associations, 2024; Peavoy, 2004; Maxwell et al., 2019; Brooks Kirkland, 2023). Shifting focus from certain topics, forcing to confirm to specific ideals, or even denying a student's right has the potential to further marginalize students that are already different than the mainstream culture. Moreover, Anyiche et al (2023) argue that the exclusion of topics may result in loss of student interest, frustration, and inadequate attainment of curricular outcomes.

The data also indicates that Saskatchewan teachers are engaging in diversity-related trainings. Ninety-one percent of surveyed teachers indicated that diversity-related trainings are being held in their organizations each year but with variances in frequencies among respondents (see Figure 5). Teachers have reported that they have experienced diversity-related trainings have either occurred occasionally (1-3 instances per year), often (4-6 per year), very often (7-9 per year), or on a regular basis (10 instances or more per year). While 91% is an encouraging number, 9% indicated that their organization has never held diversity-related training. However, the nature and scope of the diversity-related trainings are unclear as the survey assumes that teachers are able to identify and classify diversity-related professional development trainings. Respondents were not provided with an example to help confirm what constitutes diversity-related trainings unknowingly. Thus, there may have been a misunderstanding and those that contributed to the 9% may have, in fact, experienced diversity-related training. Regardless, that occurrence of diversity-related training is encouraging given that teachers are tasked with providing students with as many different perspectives as possible. Diversity-related trainings ought to continue but with experiential components (Kolb, 1984; Goosby Smith, 2011) and with consistent frequencies.

Ultimately, there is still work to do because concerns remain. As evidenced in the qualitative data, pressure exists to be “*whiter than white.*” The ability for individuals to freely express themselves to actualize their own authenticity is a challenge for some. The participant’s experience of assimilation is, unfortunately, supported by the fact that the majority of survey respondents are Caucasian (see Figure 3). Therefore, more intentional analysis and organizational audits ought to take place in workplaces to examine the perceptions and reasons that individuals feel that they have to confirm. Although the process of an organizational audit would be a considerable amount of work and some employees may resist, invaluable insight into norms, policies, and leadership could be gleaned so that positive progress can be made (Mor Barak, 2022). Not only would an organizational audit support educational works, but students would also be supported as a direct beneficiary of an improved school climate.

Limitations

A few limitations exist in investigating perceptions of diversity among Saskatchewan teachers. The bulk of the work related to surveying Saskatchewan teachers occurred at the end of the traditional school year (i.e. June) and the recruitment of enough willing participants was a challenge. At the end of the school year, teachers are ready to finish their responsibilities and begin their summer break. Thus, the likelihood of teachers willing to do extra work outside of their regular duties declines. As well, as mentioned in the introduction, Saskatchewan teachers experienced a challenging year with new questionable legislation and tricky collective bargaining negotiations which may have contributed to low participant numbers. Given the new legislation regarding preferred pronoun usage in schools, teachers may have also felt fearful to speak their mind despite the fact that the survey was anonymous. Additionally, the survey emphasized to participants that they were not required to answer all questions as a means to

minimize discomfort but maximize confidentiality, sensitivity, and tact. Therefore, some teachers may not have comprehensively and coherently expressed their views in the qualitative questions so authentic analysis may be lacking.

Conclusion

Saskatchewan teachers find themselves in a precarious position politically and professionally with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Thus, an investigation in determining what attitudes, trainings, and experiences that Saskatchewan teachers believe to be important in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in education settings is timely and prudent. Ultimately, teachers believe that working and cooperating with others, building self-awareness, and experiencing new things remain important to the education profession. While concerns remain with matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, components of data collection from surveyed Saskatchewan teachers are encouraging. An emphasis on human interactions is evident. Findings and discussion ignites a renewed importance of teachers being equipped to provide a pluralistic education in an increasingly polarizing (but democratic) society.

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Appendix A

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

“Reflective Diversity Inventory: A Study of Personal Attitudes and Experiences”

May 2023 Edition

Dear Focus Group Participant,

Dr. Walter S. Polka, Professor of Leadership and Coordinator of the Ph.D. Program in Leadership and Policy and Dr. Sushma Marwaha, Adjunct Professor of Education at Niagara University in both Canada and the USA, are researching diversity reflections of individuals with the assistance of Niagara University’s Ph.D. students. We respectfully request your participation in this study about your attitudes and previous and current experiences with diversity. The Reflective Diversity Inventory 2023 (RDI) survey questions are based on literature reviews of diversity perspectives initially articulated by Polka, Heaggans, and Menzie (2010). This 2023 survey instrument has been revised based on user input.

We seek your assistance in completing the survey instrument to elicit responses to your attitudes and diversity experiences. This survey instrument consists of the following four (4) parts:

Part A. “Personal Attitudes”

Part B. “Personal Experiences”

Part C. “Reflective Responses”

Part D. “Demographic Data”

The survey instrument will take you about 15-20 minutes to complete. You are not required to respond to every question in each part; however, please note that the more comprehensive your responses, the more meaningful your input will be in evaluating the current status of individual diversity attitudes and experiences. We would like to hear many different and honest viewpoints from everyone.

Please be advised that all responses will be treated anonymously and neither you nor your peers will be specifically identified in any publication associated with this study. We sincerely thank you for your responses to this research study, and we look forward to including your data in our campus diversity study.

Respectfully yours,

Walter S. Polka, Ed. D.

Sushma Marwaha, Ph.D.

A. “Personal Attitudes”

This updated quantitative research instrument (*Polka-Marwaha RDI 2023 Instrument*) consists of thirty-three statements to which you are asked to respond on a Likert 1-4 scale. *Please note that “Personal Attitudes” may be in your social interactions at school, work, travel, or in your family and community.*

Directions: Indicate how you feel about the following statements concerning diversity using the scale provided.
Strongly Disagree = (1) Disagree = (2) Agree = (3) Strongly Agree = (4)

Personal Attitudes Towards Diversity	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My previous experiences based on culture, age, race, ethnicity, and bi-racial individuals created positive images of all kinds of people.	1	2	3	4
2. My previous experiences taught me that all cultures are relevant in society.	1	2	3	4
3. My previous experiences taught me that all cultural groups should be respected.	1	2	3	4
4. My previous experiences taught me about the struggles faced by all kinds of people in society.	1	2	3	4
5. My previous education promoted equal rights amongst all people.	1	2	3	4
6. My previous education taught me about the injustices that certain groups of people continue to experience.	1	2	3	4
7. My previous education prepared me to live in a multicultural society.	1	2	3	4
8. My previous education gave me the attitudes and skills to promote equitable distribution of power and income.	1	2	3	4
9. My previous education allowed me to learn about the world from the perspective of different kinds of people.	1	2	3	4
10. It is difficult for me to understand/empathize with all kinds of people.	1	2	3	4
11. I can easily communicate with all kinds of people I interact with.	1	2	3	4
12. Organizational leaders should promote respect among everyone in their organization.	1	2	3	4
13. I can learn more about culture and beliefs by interacting with all kinds of people.	1	2	3	4
14. Multicultural awareness workshops and events assist me in working with all kinds of people.	1	2	3	4

Personal Attitudes Towards Diversity	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Learning about other people’s cultures enriches an individual’s personal and professional life.	1	2	3	4
16. The interests and values of diverse people are reflected in the events held at my organization.	1	2	3	4
17. My organization celebrates cultural diversity and personal differences.	1	2	3	4
18. I believe that organizations should provide a comfortable and safe place for all members.	1	2	3	4
19. I am confident in recognizing my biases and prejudices through my cultural lens.	1	2	3	4
20. I believe I can learn about diversity by interacting with a wide variety of people.	1	2	3	4
21. I learn best about diversity by participating in personal development programs sponsored by an organization.	1	2	3	4
22. I believe the Internet, social media, watching television, and online programs provide me with information about diversity-related issues.	1	2	3	4
23. I believe promoting multicultural events and programs for all kinds of people improves the culture of any organization.	1	2	3	4
24. I believe that more events and programs that recognize gender identity issues should be respected in the organization’s culture.	1	2	3	4
25. I believe the promotion of more events and programs that recognize people with various sexual orientations would improve the culture of an organization.	1	2	3	4
26. I believe the promotion of more events and programs that recognize people with disabilities would improve the culture of an organization.	1	2	3	4
27. An organization that respects and recognizes different religions and their practices by providing accommodations would improve organizational culture.	1	2	3	4
28. I believe promoting events and programs that recognize people of different races, including bi-racial and mixed races, would improve organizational culture.	1	2	3	4

Personal Attitudes Towards Diversity	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. I believe promoting events and programs that recognize diverse socioeconomic status (SES) would improve an organization's culture.	1	2	3	4
30. I believe that the environment at my organization is friendly toward all kinds of people.	1	2	3	4
31. I believe that there is gender discrimination in my organization.	1	2	3	4
32. I believe that there are no racial issues at my organization.	1	2	3	4
33. I believe that there is sexual orientation intolerance at my organization.	1	2	3	4

Part B: “Personal Experiences.”

This Polka-Marwaha RDI 2023 Instrument component is designed to capture the frequency with which you have confronted contemporary dilemmas associated with diversity issues. The statements were gleaned from research and literature about diversity. *Please note that “Personal Experiences” may include social interactions at school, work, travel, or in your family and/or community.*

Directions: Indicate the frequency with which you have experienced the following statements about diversity experiences using the scale provided.

Never= (1) Sometimes= (2) Often = (3) Very Often = (4)

Personal Experiences with Diversity Issues	Never	Sometime	Often	Very Often
34. I have witnessed racial discrimination at my organization.	1	2	3	4
35. I have witnessed sex discrimination at my organization.	1	2	3	4
36. I have witnessed gender discrimination at my organization.	1	2	3	4
37. I have witnessed age discrimination at my Organization.	1	2	3	4
38. I have witnessed sexual harassment at my Organization.	1	2	3	4
39. I have witnessed the exclusion of people of different backgrounds at my organization.	1	2	3	4
40. I have witnessed racial, and ethnic jokes, comments and slurs at my organization.	1	2	3	4
41. I have personally felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization.	1	2	3	4

Personal Experiences with Diversity Issues	Never	Sometime	Often	Very Often
42. I have personally felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization because of my age.	1	2	3	4
43. I have personally felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization because of my disability.	1	2	3	4
44. I have felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization because of my socioeconomic status (SES).	1	2	3	4
45. I have personally felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization because of my gender identity.	1	2	3	4
46. I have personally felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization because of my race, ethnicity or being bi-racial or mixed race.	1	2	3	4
47. I have personally felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization because of my religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4
48. I have personally felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization because of my sexual orientation.	1	2	3	4
49. I have personally felt discriminated against or harassed at my organization because English is not my first language.	1	2	3	4
50. My organization values the diverse perspectives and ideas that come from all members based on their culture, beliefs and unique experiences.	1	2	3	4
51. People are treated fairly at my organization with regard to their age, race, bi-racial, mixed race, ethnic background, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or veteran status and socio-economic status.	1	2	3	4
52. In my organization, offensive behaviours (sexual harassment, discrimination, insensitive remarks, slurs etc.) are tolerated.	1	2	3	4
53. My organization does have an inclusive work environment where diverse members at all levels are valued and encouraged.	1	2	3	4

Part D. “Demographic Data”

This portion of the study is designed to gather personal information about survey respondents and to assess relationships between the respondent’s individual backgrounds and experiences to the survey questions or statements.

Directions: Indicate your response by circling the number that corresponds to the most appropriate answer for you.

1. **Gender:** 1) *Female* 2) *Male* 3) *Non-binary* 4) *Gender-Queer* 5) *Two-Spirit*
6) *Transgender* 7) *Do not wish to identify*
8) *Please specify if your personal preference is not listed above* _____.
2. **Age:** 1) *21- 23* 2) *24 -33* 3) *34-43* 4) *44-53* 5) *54 and older*
3. **Ethnicity:** 1) *African American/Black* 2) *Caucasian/White* 3) *Asian/Southeast Asian*
4) *American Indian/Indigenous* 5) *Latino/Hispanic* 6) *Middle Eastern*
7) *Please specify if your personal ethnicity is not listed above* _____.
4. **Sexual Orientation:** 1) *Heterosexual* 2) *Gay* 3) *Lesbian* 4) *Asexual*
5) *Bisexual* 6) *Pansexual* 7) *Questioning (not sure yet)*
8) *Please specify if personal preference is not included* _____.
5. **Rate your school/university/organization’s diversity initiatives/activities held per year:**
1) *Never (0)* 2) *Occasionally (1-3)* 3) *Often (4-6)*
4) *Very Often (7-9)* 5) *On a regular basis (10 or more)*
6. **Do you have a classified disability?**
1) *Yes* 2) *No* 3) *Do not wish to answer*
7. **What is your country of residence?**
1) *United States* 2) *Canada* 3) *Other (Please Specify)* _____

Note: We would appreciate your feedback on the demographic questions in the space below. Your suggestions and comments will assist us in improving our survey.

Appendix B

Qualitative Codes and Code Categories

1. What specific diversity-related activities and events have you attended at your current or previously organization?

Responses	Descriptive Codes (nouns)	Categories of Codes
<p>Helping out with GSA (gay straight alliances) Attending pride events Helping to create artwork for gay events on social media</p> <p>We have cultural activities on a fairly regular basis. There is a strong focus on Indigenous culture, as there should be. However, I think students would benefit from having exposure to the cultural aspects of even our diverse staff members. I know they do have this exposure when it comes to the students taught by various staff members. It might be nice to see that expanded.</p> <p>Pow wow, conferences, trainings</p> <p>I have been to pds on land based learning, indigenous first aid.</p> <p>POW-wows, community gatherings, funerals, elder meetings and socials.</p> <p>Blanket exercise (residential schools) a variety of indigenous cultural experiences indoors and out smudging</p> <p>Previous - First Nations cultural days, ribbon skirt making Current - Anti-racist educator training</p> <p>Jigging Batoche</p> <p>I live in a Metis/Indigenous community, and as such have attended many events focussed on Indigenous culture and language. We host an annual Pride parade in June.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSA • Pride events • Indigenous culture • Powwow • Conferences • Trainings • Land based learning • Indigenous MHFA • Elder meetings • Funerals • Blanket exercise • Smudging • Indoor and outdoor Indigenous activities • Ribbon skirt making • Anti-racist training • Jigging • Batoche • Indigenous languages • Pride parade • Online workshops • Book studies • Key note speakers • Leading to Learn (USASK) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQ-related activities • Indigenous-related activities • Generic workplace activities • Anti-racist training • Leadership training

<p>Mental health for First Nations workshop.</p> <p>Online workshop, book studies, keynote speakers</p> <p>Leading to Learn Online training</p> <p>As I work in a predominantly indigenous community. I have learnt and experienced a great deal of learning towards indigenous groups</p>		
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2. Based on your organizational experiences, **what skills or methods have you gained** to help you work with people from diverse backgrounds?

Responses	Descriptive Codes (nouns)	Categories of Codes
<p>Think before you speak. You never know when you'll offend someone. It doesn't always matter if you meant to offend someone or not, what matters is how they experienced it.</p> <p>Empathy Counseling skills Mental health first aid skills Having grown up in a multiracial society Worked in many outstanding international firms at a corporate level</p> <p>First seek to understand, then seek to be understood. This helps you to get to know people and understand their thoughts/choices.</p> <p>I feel like there is a gap when it comes to communication between parents and staff. I worry that cultural elements are a factor. I know the school works hard to engage parents but there is a long way to go.</p> <p>Become more educated about their traditional and cultural beliefs, values and ways of living, without being judgmental or prejudiced about them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with others different than you • Think before speaking • Empathy • Counseling skills • MHFA skills • Seek to understand • Seek to be understood • Clear communication • Educate yourself • Remove judgement • Learn local languages • Build relationships • Build tolerance • Build acceptance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health training and awareness • Exposure to others different than yourself • Interpersonal relationship building • Cultural activities

<p>I have took initiative to learn the language of the communities I serve.</p> <p>Developing a relationship with the student is key in creating a positive learning experience.</p> <p>Tolerance for all, acceptance of all</p> <p>Multiple oppotunities to engage in culture and diversity</p> <p>I try to be understanding of everyone and realize I never know anyone’s personal experiences or background.</p> <p>Respectful listening, beading, traditional cooking,</p> <p>Experience working with children of different SES and disabilities Pronoun awareness</p> <p>As I have taught in a Metis/Indigenous community, the culture is diverse, and as such, I have worked with people from many different cultures. Inclusion of culture is important.</p> <p>I was able to better understand my students' struggles by learning more about their cultural identity crisis.</p> <p>I’ve learned to listen more and talk less, to explore before I judge, and to understand that what’s “normal” for me is not the same for everybody. Treat people with respect</p> <p>Be kind. Treat all with respect and dignity.</p> <p>I have learned to adapt my communication style to accomodate other people's backgrounds.</p> <p>I have worked abroad and learnt a great deal about other cultures in this way. I have learnt that patience and tolerance is always the best when dealing with people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen • Beading • Cooking • Work with different SES • Work with differently abled • Increase pronoun awareness • Learn about cultural identity crisis • Talk less • Normalcy is subjective • Respect • Kindness • Communication styles • Working abroad • Patience 	
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3. What specific knowledge and awareness about yourself and your attitudes about working with people from diverse backgrounds have you gained from your organizational experiences?

Responses	Descriptive Codes (nouns)	Categories of Codes
<p>Think before you speak.</p> <p>People are similar in that they all want to avoid suffering, achieve happiness and reach their fullest potential. Being nice always opens door. When one is in a position of privilege, to always remember where one has come from. And to always help the underdogs. People are always watching and judging -- never discriminate. And always have the courage to call out discrimination where possible. Today while i am fighting a battle for myself, I am also fighting a battle for everyone who will come after me.</p> <p>Be aware that we all have bias that sometimes need to be checked to ensure we are being respectful at all times.</p> <p>I have learned a lot about working in Indigenous communities through my experiences in the north. I have also had the privilege of working with a very diverse group of staff.</p> <p>By becoming an ally for those that need more support, and also using my own experience by coming to a country that is multi-diverse</p> <p>I am aware of the historical trauma between my tribe and the people I serve. I am aware of the personal biases passed down to both tribes that exist today.</p> <p>Seeing people and actually being part of the culture is essential.</p> <p>Everyone is unique and should be valued and honoured for who they are</p> <p>The opportunity to learn and grow, to find new opportunities to learn about diversity are abundant in my organization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think before speaking • Be nice always • Understand privilege • Help underdogs • Address discrimination • Trailblazer • Reflect on biases • Be respectful • Working in Indigenous communities • Privilege of working with diverse staff • Be an ally • Aware of historical trauma • Residential schools • Biases are passed down • Get involved • Support individuality • Seek opportunities to learn • Experiences are not universal • Do not impose experiences on others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of privilege • Awareness of personal biases • Challenge personal viewpoints • Treatment of others • Work alongside rather than against

<p>Sometimes I need to remember that my experience is not reflected in all people and I remind myself of this when dealing with everyone I come across. I cannot place my ideas or preferences on someone else and I try my best not to do that as much as possible.</p> <p>Learned about the biases I was taught when I was young and about the horrors of residential schools. As a child I visited a residential school once a year with my Brownie Pack but had no idea of the horrors that went on there. We played on the beach and ate hot dogs with the indigenous girls at the school and caught the ferry home at the end of the day</p> <p>Reminders of my own privilege</p> <p>Teaching in a northern community has opened my eyes to Indigenous issues and stereotypes. These biases and attitudes may have been under the surface when I was younger but I know better so do better now.</p> <p>I became more aware of my limited knowledge about other cultural groups in SK. My organization's focus on First Nation culture provided me with plenty of information to learn more about First Nation people. Unfortunately, other groups never included or discussed at those activities. I feel strongly that more information needed, especially about religion diversity.</p> <p>I've come to appreciate differences in perspective about time management, childcare, communication, and a plethora of other issues for which I used to believe there was a right and a wrong answer.</p> <p>Respect</p> <p>That I have had privileges that others have not had. Sometimes I am not aware of the privilege that I have or had.</p> <p>I realized working with people from diverse backgrounds requires an open minded attitude.</p> <p>I learnt that I do have some underlying beliefs that were challenged and I become much more open minded in how to look at situations. I learn that there</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of Indigenous stereotypes • Challenge personal beliefs • Increase self awareness • Appreciate differences • Abandon old perspectives • Respect • Open-minded attitude • Abandon old approaches • Not "black and white" 	
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are many ways to approach an issue and often it's not right or wrong, just different		
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4. How do you feel about your contextual experiences (e.g. travel, research, readings, family interactions, etc.) have enhanced or limited your experiences working with people of diverse backgrounds?

Responses	Descriptive Codes (nouns)	Categories of Codes
<p>The more educated I am, through reading and/or experience, the more egalitarian, fairer and more empathic I become. Being closed off, having a cloistered and monochromatic (racially/socially) experience, is a sure way to breed elitism, create a racially segregated mentality and an unenlightened soul.</p> <p>Travel has immensely helped me enhanced my ability to work with people of diverse backgrounds. I got to know many different people, their cultures and their thought process. It has helped to deepen my understanding of other people's backgrounds.</p> <p>My education has provided me with a good set of contextual learning. I also have had the opportunity to travel. I believe I also come from a family that attempts to be accepting and open-minded.</p> <p>Sometimes just the language is the biggest barrier for me, but I always try my best to learn directly from the people that could be from a different background than me</p> <p>Yes, interacting and learning from the people first hand is directly making me a better person and ally.</p> <p>Many books, articles and media create false narratives. Living it and learning first hand; asking questions and getting involved.</p> <p>Travel and personal experiences are key</p> <p>Reading a variety of books written by diverse authors has been helpful to gain an understanding of how different people experience the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More education • Travel • Open-minded family • Language is a barrier • Learn best from people themselves • Living it • Ask questions • Get involved • Read diverse authors • Live in an Indigenous community • Marry into an Indigenous family • Generational differences cause debate • Working with diverse colleagues • Working in an Indigenous community • Moving away from family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Travel • Reading • Immersion • Family Dynamics • Language

<p>Living in an indigenous community and marrying into an indigenous family have taught me a lot. I look back on the things I learned (or didn't learn) when I was younger with a very different lens now.</p> <p>Family interactions do not include much about people of diverse backgrounds. Some generational differences of perspective cause some debate. Readings that share background information on FNMI history in an open and honest way</p> <p>Interactions with my work colleagues enhanced my experience with people of diverse backgrounds. Majority of information about diversity I gained through readings and personal research.</p> <p>I now have a great deal of knowledge and experience for working with Indigenous communities, but still don't have a lot of knowledge or experience about many other types of diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Moving away from family and where I grew up helped me to see other perspectives.</p> <p>I have not had much experience traveling and enjoy learning about the backgrounds, and practices of people with more diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>I feel it's helped immensely. I am from a small community with little to no dealings with people from other backgrounds, race, beliefs etc... travelling and working in other places has really opened my mind to other ways of thinking and challenging my own beliefs.</p>		
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5. Do you wish to add any additional comments about diversity in your organizational experiences?

Responses	Descriptive Codes (nouns)	Categories of Codes
<p>It is odd but I have noticed that colourism is a real thing here in Canada when it comes to the spectrum of indigenous-ness in northern saskatchewan. While Canadian may not overtly discriminate against skin colour, they do discriminate on accents and behaviour (e.g. the 'perceived' lower class Rez accent will exclude one from a career in management/academia). I actually</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadians discriminate on accents and behaviour • More pressure to act whiter to fit in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination • Assimilation • Authenticity • Lack of understanding • Employee representation

<p>feel very pressured to act whiter than white in my organization just to fit in. And it can get very tiring as I feel like I am not living my true authentic self. It is a debate I am not sure I can resolve still.</p> <p>I believe there is a general lack of understanding that disability is just as much a culture as other cultural groups. Even the questions in this survey demonstrate a lack of awareness on this point. Disability is too often approached through a medical framework rather than an identity one. This results in it being portrayed as a problem to be accommodated or overcome rather than a difference to be accepted.</p> <p>Over the 38 years I've worked at the same school the ration of indigenous to non indigenous employees at all levels has shifted greatly and most employees are indigenous now.</p> <p>Teaching in small town Saskatchewan can result in a very limited amount of visual diversity amongst staff and even students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not living authentic self • Lack of understanding re: disabilities • Disabilities viewed as a problem • Shift in number of Indigenous employees (greater now) • Limited diversity amongst staff and students in small towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity in small towns
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Qualitative Themes based on Categories

1. What specific diversity-related activities and events have you attended at your current or previously organization?	
<p>Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQ-related activities • Indigenous-related activities • Generic workplace activities • Anti-racist training • Leadership training 	<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal workplace trainings and activities • Informal community-based activities
2. Based on your organizational experiences, what skills or methods have you gained to help you work with people from diverse backgrounds?	
<p>Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health training and awareness • Exposure to others different than yourself • Interpersonal relationship building • Cultural activities 	<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health training • Working with others • Participating in cultural activities
3. What specific knowledge and awareness about yourself and your attitudes about working with people from diverse backgrounds have you gained from your organizational experiences?	
<p>Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of privilege • Awareness of personal biases • Challenge personal viewpoints • Treatment of others • Work alongside rather than against 	<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of self • Awareness of others • Allyship
4. How do you feel about your contextual experiences (e.g. travel, research, readings, family interactions, etc.) have enhanced or limited your experiences working with people of diverse backgrounds?	
<p>Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Travel • Reading • Immersion • Family Dynamics • Language 	<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions with others • Experiencing new places • Education
5. Do you wish to add any additional comments about diversity in your organizational experiences?	
<p>Categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination • Assimilation 	<p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive improvements • Concerns remain

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unable to be authentic• Lack of understanding• Employee representation• Diversity in small towns	
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Appendix C



Institutional Review Board

Application for Human Subjects Research

Project Title:

A Diversity Inventory of Saskatchewan Teachers

Principal Investigator Name:

Mitchell Keene

This is a: New Project Application Project Renewal. IRB Case Number:

IRB Application Date (mm/dd/yy): 05/26/2024

Anticipated Project Start Date (mm/dd/yy): 5/31/2024

Project End Date (mm/dd/yy): 8/31/2024

Form Instructions:

Please read all instructions very carefully.

Incomplete applications will be returned to you unreviewed, and will result in a delay in the start of your project.

Empty gray boxes (e.g.) will expand as you type in them. These boxes will accept cut-and-paste, formatting, etc.

Black squares (e.g.) are checkboxes. Clicking on the box will check/uncheck the box.

Approved by the Niagara University IRB Committee
Approval Date: 5/29/24
Expiration Date: 5/29/25

This Section for IRB Committee Use Only

Does the IRB approve this application?

- Yes. This research is exempt under 45 CFR 46.101. Approval is not required.
- Yes. Risks to subjects are either negligible or minimized with responsible research design and data management procedures are warranted by study goals.
- Yes, pending resubmission to the IRB Chair for approval with the following minor revisions:
- No. The applicant must address significant concerns before resubmitting for committee review:

Ped R S Shypp
Signature of IRB Chairperson:

5/29/24
Date (mm/dd/yy)

2024-066
IRB Case Number

1. Personnel

The **Principal Investigator (PI)** on this application must be a current Niagara University faculty, staff member, or student. Graduate and undergraduate students may serve as a PI, but **their advisor must be listed as a Co-Investigator (CI)**. **If you need to list more than two co-investigators**, please include their information in the 'additional information' section on the last page of this IRB application.

If a CI is not affiliated with Niagara University: Please include the IRB application *submitted* to their home institution when you submit your NU IRB application. Once the IRB application from the CI's home institution is *approved* by their institution, it must then be sent to the NU committee. No human-subjects research can begin until *both* institutions have granted IRB approval.

Principal Investigator Name: Mitchell Keene
 Status: Faculty at Niagara University Graduate Student
 Staff at Niagara University Undergraduate Student
 Title/Position: **Ph.D. Student**
 Email Address: **keene@niagara.edu**
 Department: **College of Education**
 Telephone Number: **(306) 960-3841**

Co-Investigator 1 Name: Dr. Walter Polka
 Status (check one): Faculty at Niagara University Graduate Student
 Faculty at Other University Undergraduate Student
 Staff at Niagara University

I am the NU faculty advisor for the PI's student project: Yes No Not Applicable
 Title/Position: **Professor**
 Email Address: **wpolka@niagara.edu**
 Department: **College of Education**
 Telephone Number: **(716) 425-1860**
 Home Institution & Mailing Address (if not at Niagara):

Co-Investigator 2 Name: Dr. Sushma Marwaha
 Status (check one): Faculty at Niagara University Graduate Student
 Faculty at Other University Undergraduate Student
 Staff at Niagara University

Title/Position: **Adjunct Professor**
 Email Address: **smarwaha@niagara.edu**
 Department: **College of Education**
 Telephone Number: **(416) 985-5526**
 Home Institution & Mailing Address (if not at Niagara):

2. Study Activities and Description

It is important that your responses are clear and understandable for reviewers. In your responses, please summarize the proposed research using non-technical language that can be readily understood by someone outside of your discipline.

2.1 Describe the purpose and goals of this study (100-250 words):

The purpose of this study is to examine teacher experiences and reflections related to diversity. It is not unreasonable to assert that an individual's frame of reference and experience with diversity is significantly influenced through social interactions at school, work, travel, and/or within families as well as communities. Thus, my goal is to investigate the unique reflections of Saskatchewan teachers with respect to personal attitudes, personal experiences, reflective responses, and demographic data. This investigation may also provide insights into the potential relationship between individual backgrounds, frames of reference, and worldviews and the meaning-making of personal experiences.

2.2 Explain the activities and tasks that participants will undertake as a part of your study (100-250 words):

Participants will be asked to complete an anonymous survey instrument called the Reflective Diversity Inventory 2023 (instrument is attached), which are based on literature reviews of diversity perspectives. Participants will be asked about their own personal attitudes (quantitative responses), personal experiences (quantitative responses), reflective responses (qualitative responses), and basic demographic data. The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and administered through Qualtrics so that participants have improved accessibility. Quantitative data are derived from a Likert 1-4 scale. Quantitative data are derived from open-ended questions that provide participants with a more in-depth opportunity to share experiences that could not be captured in quantitative questioning.

2.3 Discuss any potential risks to participants that may result from your research and how you will minimize them:

Risks are minimized with this investigation. Participants are encouraged to answer all questions related to the study but are not required to do so. Responses are also anonymous and identifiable information is not collected. In the event that a participant chooses to disclose identifiable information in the qualitative response section, that will be redacted during analysis. The demographics section does ask about age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, classified disability, and country of residence. However, participants do not have to respond if they do not wish to and I still wouldn't be able to determine/match survey responses with individuals that I will ask to participate because there may be information that I do not know about them (for example, sexual orientation).

2.4 Discuss any potential benefits to society that may result from your research:

Given that my project will focus on the experiences of Saskatchewan teachers with respect to diversity, the insights gained from this study may provide a unique context in my geographic region of Canada. Literature typically focuses on highly populated provinces like British Columbia or Ontario. This may provide unique information related to how Saskatchewan teachers experience their workplace, local communities (largely rural with a few urban pockets), and the impact this may have on instruction and classroom management.

3. Research Participants

Please include a copy of all study procedures and documents with your IRB application (e.g. survey questionnaires, measurement tools, study procedures, scripts, interview protocols and questions, informed consent forms, email recruitment scripts, etc.).

Please note: Answering affirmatively on any of the following questions will **not** automatically disqualify your IRB application (e.g. researching vulnerable populations, using deception, etc.). Each question is part of the IRB risk-assessment procedure, and will be placed within the context of the study's activities, goals, and procedures.

3.1 Research Subjects:
The primary research participants will include: (check all that apply)

Non-Vulnerable Populations:

Adults (18 years or older)

Vulnerable Populations:

- Minors (younger than 18 years old)
- Medical or other clinical patients
- Individuals who may lack fluency in the language of the study
- Mentally or developmentally disabled or impaired individuals
- Prisoners, parolees, or incarcerated individuals
- Pregnant women or fetuses
- Native American/First Nations/Other indigenous persons
- Other vulnerable populations (please list):

Please provide a rationale for the involvement of vulnerable individuals and why alternative approaches cannot be used:

3.2 Data Sources:
The data collected will include: (check all that apply)

- Interviews (Face-to-face, video, telephone, focus group etc.)
- Questionnaires or surveys (paper, online, electronic, etc.)
- Experimental data collection
- Existing data banks, archives, or documents
- Physiological measurements, medical tissue, or blood samples
- Public records
- Educational tests
- Other (please explain):

3.3 Estimated number of participants (if any):

Minimum 20; ideal 30.

3.4 Estimated time for a participant to complete study procedures (if any):

15-20 minutes

3.5 Will there be any incentives offered for participation in your study? (e.g. cash, class points or extra credit, entry in prize drawing, etc.)

- No.
- Yes. Please describe what incentives will be offered, and how you will deal with compensating participants that choose to withdraw from your study:

3.6 Please briefly discuss how you will recruit participants, if any:

I will be using a non-random sampling technique (snowball sampling) method and I will recruit potential participants through informal conversations about this

If you plan on using recruitment letters, posters, mass email/web materials, oral scripts, etc., please include along with this IRB application.

study using established relationships. If they agree to participate, then I will send them the link to participate.

Yes. Please include your informed consent form or statement as an attachment with your IRB application.

3.7 Will all participants be required to complete informed consent procedures prior to participating in the study?

No. Please provide a rationale for why informed consent will not be required of study participants. Also include a script, statement, or other documentation as an attachment with your IRB application.

Completing the survey will act as informed consent. If they do not wish to participate, then they do not have to complete the survey. Introduction letter and instrument are attached.

3.8 Will any participants be deceived as part of your study's activities or procedure?

No.

'Deception' is defined as *intentionally misleading the participants in a research study in order to obscure the actual purpose of the study, and may only be used when effective nondeceptive alternative procedures are not feasible.*

Yes. Please describe the details of the deception, and provide a rationale for deception. Please also include your debrief documentation or procedure with your IRB application.

4. Participant Confidentiality

4.1 Who will have access to individually identifiable data for this project (if any)? Please be specific about each person, their roles, and their level of access.

The only individuals that will have access to the data are myself and the co-investigators (Dr. Polka and Dr. Marwaha). They will review the raw data and assist with data analysis.

4.2 What steps will you take to ensure confidentiality of individually identifiable data (if any)? Please be specific about your steps in collecting, storing, securing, analyzing, anonymizing, and publishing information.

The survey itself does not collect any identifiable data. I will not be able to determine individual survey submissions based on my snowball sample. However, if individuals choose to disclose identifiable information in the qualitative section, information will be redacted. Raw data will be stored in a secure password-protected database administered by Qualtrics. Quantitative data may be exported to Microsoft Excel during analysis. Qualitative data may be exported to Microsoft Word

4.3 How, and for how long, will you retain individually identifiable data? If you are required by a funding agency or academic publication to retain data for an extended period of time, please explain.

during analysis. Exported data will be stored in a password-protected external hard-drive which is stored in a locked drawer in my desk. Any eventual published data will not include identifiable information.

After completion of this project, any data exported from Qualtrics onto my own personal computer and hard drive will be destroyed (August 2024). However, raw data will be stored in Qualtrics for 5 years to assist with conference presentations, potential publications, and future doctoral work.

5. Funding and Conflicts of Interest

5.1 Funding Sources: Have any of the researchers applied for or received any form of funding, including grants, fellowships, or contracts (please include internal NU grants)?

No.

Yes. Please provide the funding source(s) and grant/contract numbers (if any):

5.2 Financial Conflict of Interest: A financial conflict of interest may exist whenever financial considerations or publication rights have the potential to compromise or have the appearance of compromising one's professional judgment and independence in the design, conduct or publication of research.

Does any investigator (including principal or co-investigator), key personnel, or their immediate family members have a financial interest (including salary or other payments for services, equity interests, or intellectual property rights) that would reasonably appear to be affected by the research, or an interest in any entity whose financial situation would reasonably appear to be affected by the research?

No.

Yes. **Please disclose:** Name of the person with the potential conflict of interest:

Explain the potential financial conflict of interest:

Explain how the potential conflict of interest will be managed:

6. Applicant Comments

6.1 Please use the space below to provide any additional comments that you think might be of use to the committee in reviewing your IRB application (optional).

7. Primary Investigator Signature & Assurance

7.1 Please check the following boxes, and sign and date.

- I confirm that I am familiar with and abide by the guidelines and best practices of ethical research involving human subjects, and I agree to comply with the conditions outlined in university, state, and federal regulations.
- I confirm that should this study need to CHANGE ANY procedure, measurement device, process, population, or other aspect of this study involving human subjects before or after IRB approval, I must notify the IRB Director prior to implementing these changes, and additional reviews may be required.
- I understand that ethics approval is only granted until the application's expiration date. Should this project require renewal, I confirm that it is my responsibility to submit the annual renewal ONE MONTH prior to the expiry date of this application.
- I confirm that should an ADVERSE EVENT (i.e. an unanticipated negative consequence or result affecting participants) should occur, I will report it to the IRB director within three days.

/Mitchell Keene/

Signature of the Principal Investigator.

[type a slash on either side of your name to indicate signature,
e.g. /jane smith/]

05/26/2024

Date (mm/dd/yy)