

Boundless Horizons: A Mother-Daughter Odyssey to Shape Education and the Future

by

Sara Rahbani, BA, Azad University of Tabriz, 2005

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION in Curriculum Studies

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

© Sara Rahbani

2024 University of Victoria

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Tim Anderson, Co-supervisor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Ruthanne Tobin, Co-supervisor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

All rights reserved. This project may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction	4
1.1 Setting the Stage	4
1.1.1 Personal Journey and Inspiration	4
1.1.2 Key Questions Driving the Inquiry	6
Chapter Two: Literature Review	9
2.1 Setting the Stage: An Overview	9
2.2 Theoretical Framework	9
2.3 Defining the Landscape: Context and Rationale	11
2.3.1 Language Learning Arenas: ELL Classes	11
2.3.2 Navigating the Journey: Acculturation	14
2.3.3 Unpacking Concepts: CRP and CRT	25
2.3.4 Telling the Story: Narrative Inquiry and Autoethnography	31
2.4 Bringing It All Together	36
Chapter Three: Art as a Bridge: Reflecting on Workshop Design and Outcomes	38
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Project Overview and Motivation	39
3.3 Context and Participants	40
3.4 Reflection on Personal Experiences	41
3.5 Connections to Support Research	43
3.6 Implications for Future Research	44
3.7 Conclusion	45

References 46

Appendices 54

Appendix A: Project Exploration 54

Appendix B: Worksheet Template and Sample 68

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Setting the Stage

1.1.1 Personal Journey and Inspiration

I am a Master of Education student in Curriculum Studies at the University of Victoria. I moved to Canada in August 2022, leaving behind my family (my daughter and my husband). It was a different and challenging start to my new school life after a 15-year gap. I can remember starting my first day at the University of Victoria. Receiving the course outline and the entire content of the semester was surprising enough for me as it was quite different from my home country of Iran and the universities I attended. In our classes back in Iran, there was no course outline. As students, we never knew what the next step would be or what a university instructor considered for us, except for a special book title that was usually introduced in the first session to be studied during the semester. The instructors usually gave lectures during the semester, and students took notes during sessions and studied hastily on exam nights. We were assessed using a few random questions asked in the final exam. You could choose to be a responsible student and thoroughly review every detail provided in classes, or you could be fortunate enough to focus solely on important parts and be assessed accordingly. I chose to be the former and graduated with good grades, but I did not anticipate the implications this studying habit would have for me in the future.

Given such a conception of studying and learning in Iran, in my new student life in Canada, I found myself reading all the articles introduced in the course outline for the first class in detail, highlighting every single sentence that appeared important, taking notes, and

attending class with great pride, ready for potential questions and answers. I encountered a completely different method of classroom engagement and article discussion. That day I was introduced to a new educational system at the University of Victoria. The first hour of the class passed with a friendly circle discussion, and I could not even concentrate on the topic because I could not stop myself wondering when she (the instructor) would start *teaching*. After a while, I found myself engaging in conversations based on my reading.

I remember my first months, especially my first days in class, as both joyful and challenging. I enjoyed the new process of learning and the challenges I faced with my intermediate English skills in an academic community, as a native English speaker instructor, and international students with a variety of accents and dialects. I couldn't catch all of what they were talking about, sometimes struggling with the fast pace of their speech. The instructor asked me to remind her to slow down when she went fast; however, she had a habit of speaking fast, and I could not interrupt her every five minutes to ask her to slow down. I have made several mistakes. I misunderstood some details about the assignments discussed in class, which led me to redo a large portion of my work in the last few days before the submission deadline. It was challenging, but I learned a lot.

Six months later, in late February, my family joined me. My daughter, Selena, studied grade one half in person and half online due to Covid-19 lockdowns in a well-known Iranian private elementary school and studied the first semester of grade two in another private school in Iran. In March 2023, she started school in Grade 2 in Canada. It was a completely different experience for both of us as parents and students. The first school in Iran was expensive in terms of tuition, and to prove it was worth the money we invested in our child's education, the

school provided a variety of supplementary books despite the books they already were studying at school. Besides carrying 4-5 books back and forth to school every day, we needed to do homework given by the grade one teacher every day nonstop after school that lasted at least four to five hours, and at the end of the day Selena was too tired to play or watch television. The quality of education at the second school in Iran was superior due to a lighter homework load compared to the previous one. However, the teaching approach remained traditional, with students passively awaiting the end of each lesson.

When Selena began school in Canada in March 2023, she assumed that it was the beginning of the school year because she was new to school. I remember when she asked, after one week of going to school: “When they will start teaching?”. It was rather amusing how familiar the question was to me.

1.1.2 Key Questions Driving the Inquiry

Selena came to Canada with basic English skills, and this was one of my major concerns. A new community, new faces, new culture, and totally different language, yet she managed to express herself properly to do well at school. I had the same experience as a student and was worried about how she would feel as a child not being able to express her feelings appropriately. She had a challenging first month. She couldn’t understand what people were saying most of the time, but she pretended that she did because she felt frustrated with not being able to communicate with people. The school team started sending Selena and other EAL (English as an Additional Language) students to English Language Learners (ELL) classes three times a week. Selena found it challenging to stay focused during her ELL classes because

she was curious about what was happening in her regular class. Monitoring her struggles, I started looking for ways to help her.

It has been and is still a challenging journey for me too. I discovered that acculturation was the formal term for these challenges. Then, I was introduced to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). Finally, learning about narrative inquiry and autoethnography helped guide me to voice my experiences this final project. There is still much to learn and a long way to go, but these experiences have led me to the following research questions that guide the following literature review (interspersed with my self-reflective experiences) and final project description:

1. What challenges do EAL children face in the Canadian curriculum? (What can be derived from observing my daughter as she transitions from an Iranian to Canadian early primary classroom?)
2. What does a Culturally Responsive classroom look like?
3. To what extent do Culturally Responsive environments influence students' language learning processes?

As we move forward, Chapter Two will delve into the influential works of pioneering scholars in ELL classes, examining the positive impacts and challenges of the ELL classes, along with the presentation of core concepts such as acculturation, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. Additionally, I will explore narrative inquiry and autoethnography as research methods, connecting this literature to my personal narrative and self-reflection of my transition to and life in Canada.

Chapter Three will focus on the project itself, detailing a six-hour workshop designed to help immigrant students integrate their linguistic and cultural backgrounds into the learning process, enhancing academic performance by increasing engagement through Culturally Responsive Teaching. The workshop also aims to create an inclusive classroom environment where all cultures are celebrated and shared. In addition to outlining the workshop, Chapter Three will include a reflective section that ties back to the personal experiences introduced in Chapter One and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. This reflection will provide a deeper understanding of how these experiences have informed the workshop's design. The chapter will also briefly review the key insights from the earlier chapters, ensuring a cohesive connection between theory and practice.

Following this, the chapter will briefly outline implications for future research, considering how the strategies discussed might be further explored and adapted in different educational contexts. Finally, the appendix will provide detailed information on the 90-minute sessions of the workshop, offering a practical guide for educators interested in implementing or adapting this project. By addressing these objectives, the workshop seeks to create a supportive and dynamic educational experience for all participants.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Setting the Stage: An Overview

This literature review chronicles a journey that began in 2022, first started by me and later joined by my daughter. Together, we explore the critical components of the educational experiences of immigrant students, guided by a comprehensive theoretical framework. Our journey will take us through *English Language Learner (ELL)* classes, where we will observe the dynamics and challenges faced by these students. The next and perhaps most challenging stop is *acculturation*, a complex process that my daughter and I, like many other immigrants, have navigated in our new community. We will spend considerable time here because understanding acculturation is crucial for effectively supporting immigrant students.

Following this, we examine the principles of *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* and *Culturally Responsive Teaching*, which are essential frameworks for creating inclusive and supportive educational environments. Additionally, we will examine *narrative inquiry* within the realm of a qualitative approach to capture the detailed stories of immigrant students. This review highlights some of the challenges encountered by immigrant students as they transition to new educational systems and identify key factors that can support their academic and social integration.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Driven by the challenges immigrant students may encounter in their academic lives in a new community, this chapter sheds light on my daughter and my own educational experiences through Clandinin and Connelly's (1990, 1991) autoethnographical narrative. This approach

provides a personal and reflective lens on the educational journey, illustrating the lived experiences of immigrant students, including myself and my daughter. Although this present discussion is not reporting on a formal empirical study, the forthcoming discussion was guided by the principles of autoethnographical narrative.

Next, I delve into the concept of acculturation as defined by Berry (1989, 1997).

Acculturation theory explores the psychological and social processes involved when individuals of different cultural backgrounds come into contact with another. I will discuss the different strategies of acculturation—assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization—and their varying impacts on immigrant students' adaptation to a new educational environment. This section examines both the negative and positive effects of acculturation, highlighting the complexities and individual variations of the adaptation process.

Furthermore, I draw on Whiting's (2017) perspective on the role of English Language Learners (ELL) classes as critical support systems for immigrant students. These classes are often introduced as essential supports in immigrant students' school lives, helping them overcome language barriers and facilitating better communication with peers and friends. I will explore the effectiveness of different instructional strategies used in ELL classes and their impact on students' second or additional language acquisition and overall academic performance.

Ladson-Billings' (1995) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Gay's (2010, 2015, 2018) Culturally Responsive Teaching are key teaching methods discussed in relation to their effectiveness in the academic lives of immigrant students. CRP emphasizes the importance of incorporating students' cultural references in all aspects of learning, while CRT focuses on

recognizing and utilizing students' cultural strengths to promote their academic success. I will provide examples of how these pedagogical approaches have been successfully implemented in multicultural classrooms, particularly in Canada, and discuss their potential to create more inclusive and equitable educational environments.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this chapter provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted educational experiences of immigrant students. The insights gained from this exploration will inform the development of effective strategies and practices to support these students in their academic and social integration.

2.3 Defining the Landscape: Context and Rationale

2.3.1 Language Learning Arenas: ELL Classes

Based on findings from Statistics Canada (2017), Canada is experiencing a significant rise in linguistic diversity, particularly with an increasing number of Canadians reporting languages other than English or French as their mother tongue or primary language spoken at home. This surge has been largely driven by immigration, which has become the main factor contributing to the country's population growth, marking a notable increase of 13.3% since 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2017). More recent data indicates that the proportion of immigrants in Canada continues to rise, reaching approximately 23% of the total population, with significant growth observed in the past few years (Immigration.ca, 2023). In response to this demographic shift, in certain North American regions, students who use a language other than English at home are identified as either English Language Learners (ELLs) in countries like Canada or Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) in the United States, based on their performance in English language proficiency assessments upon school enrollment. This classification ensures that ELLs from

these regions (specifically in Canada) are eligible for targeted language support services designed to address their specific needs (Shin, 2018).

Programs designed to support ELLs are implemented differently in various provinces, states, districts, and even within individual schools. In elementary schools, these programs are typically led by teachers who hold ELL certification or endorsements. These educators utilize diverse methods for English Language Development (ELD), including push-in, pull-out, and co-teaching strategies, to address the unique needs of ELLs. For more details on the methods used in these programs, see Baecher and Bell (2017) and Saunders, Goldenberg, and Marcelletti (2013). Selena participated in ELL classes once a week in grade three as well, and the feedback she provided on the ELL classes she attended at school closely resembled the findings of a study by Zinga and Gordon (2016) on a resource room designed to offer academic, social, and emotional assistance to Indigenous students in their schoolwork.

This study was conducted at a well-regarded school in Northern Ontario, known for its strong Indigenous education programming. The school featured a specialized room where Indigenous students could receive academic help and other supportive services. The focus groups, comprising 44 students from both minority (Indigenous) and majority (Caucasian) groups, were held on school grounds. Participants were drawn from various grades and academic levels, with Indigenous students predominantly in applied classes and Caucasian students in academic classes. Researchers asked open-ended questions to prompt students to discuss their educational experiences and guided the discussions based on each student's progress. The discussions revealed a significant racial divide in educational tracking. Due to limited funding, the school had to prioritize services, giving preference to students attending

high school for the first time and those who were continuing successfully. The sessions provided valuable insights into the educational experiences of Indigenous students. The findings highlight the importance of targeted support in promoting academic success and addressing the complex dynamics of multicultural education. These findings align with ELL classes held in many schools, including BC elementary schools, that aim to help immigrant students improve their language skills. However, while some Indigenous students acknowledge the potential benefits of the resource room, they also express concerns that it might further isolate students and lead to feelings of jealousy or discrimination among their non-Indigenous peers (Zinga & Gordon, 2016).

Zinga and Gordon (2016) identified issues affecting all students within the school community that shaped their perceptions, such as fears of being labeled racist if certain topics were openly discussed, since some matters are often understood but not openly addressed. This lack of dialog may lead other students to feel isolated and unaware of the benefits of supportive classes, as they may have limited understanding of the availability of those facilities (Zinga & Gordon, 2016). Additionally, Zinga and Gordon (2016) suggested that students in this community, including both non-Indigenous and Indigenous students, may frequently face challenges related to race, social exclusion, cultural clashes, and feelings of marginalization. These challenges are often discussed in terms of “othering” or “stigma” in related research works (see, e.g., Durand & Blackwell, 2024; Earnshaw et al., 2018; Whiting, 2017).

In theory, it is believed that ELL students improve their language, content knowledge, and social abilities most effectively when they remain in regular classrooms (push-in); however, some ELL instructors believe that students prefer an ELL classroom (pull-out) because they feel

safer taking larger risks without worrying about their classmates who speak English well (Whiting, 2017). In response to the suggestion for ELL teachers to teach in mainstream classrooms (co-teaching), they feel their expertise is perceived as less valuable than that of the mainstream teacher's, often being assigned to assistant roles supporting the main teacher's curriculum (Whiting, 2017).

Overall, the effectiveness of ELL programs depends on finding a balance between inclusive classroom experiences and the specific support that ELL students require. Each approach has its advantages, but the main goal is to improve both educational outcomes and student well-being. Achieving this balance is key to helping ELL students thrive academically and socially.

2.3.2 Navigating the Journey: Acculturation

In the first months that Selena arrived in Canada, she asked many questions during the preparation to do crafts for Halloween. Initially, she inquired about the story of Halloween and then continued to question why we had not celebrated this day before. She asked if there are similar occasions in our country and why people here knew nothing about our special and important dates and celebrations. She wondered, why do they decorate Christmas trees while we make *Haft-sin*? (*Haft-sin* which refers to “seven items starting with the letter S (sin),” is a traditional part of the Nowruz celebration, the Persian New Year festival that marks the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere) (see Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2024, for more information). Why, while almost everybody knows what a Christmas tree is, does nobody have an idea about *Haft-sin*? Why do we make crafts for Halloween and Christmas, but we do

not perform any similar activities for our celebrations? Aren't we important enough for the people here? Do they like us? Do they like to be friends with us?

Later, the idea of "acculturation," discussed by Ward and Geeraert (2016), deeply resonated with the feelings that Selena and I had been carrying for a long time. Berry (1997) explained that acculturation involves cultural changes that occur when different groups meet, which are intertwined with psychological adjustments and adaptations. This includes shifts in mindset and eventual outcomes that individuals experience as they adapt to new environments after migrating. Understanding how people from one cultural background adjust to new places is key to exploring acculturation and its psychological effects. Appau et al. (2019) asserts that the influence of being part of one's immediate neighborhood on well-being differs from that of belonging to a broader community, such as one's country, with the former generally having a more substantial effect on overall welfare.

Keifert (2021) also clarified the challenges Selena encountered in forming friendships at school, which affected her participation in class activities. This study explores how observing detailed activity patterns within a small community can provide insights into learning moments by demonstrating how family culture shapes, and is shaped by, social interactions. A good example of this is varying assumptions that Selena and her friends often make about playing games and participating in class activities. Moreover, the cultural origins of children can sometimes influence their ideas they develop and the media they consume. In fact, the traditions and practices within a family influence how children navigate the world (Keifert, 2021). To understand any situation, it is important for an analyst to think about past traditions, previous interactions, the goals of the people involved, and how they work together because

what happened before affects what is currently happening (Keifert, 2021). As stated by Weinsheimer (1985), “The past exists always and only in relation to its future” (p. 173). From my experience meeting immigrant mothers since my arrival in Canada, the most recommended solution has been allowing time to pass. However, I could not ignore the difficulties of adapting to cultural and psychological changes, which often lead to stress and feelings of losing one's status, a viewpoint also supported by Berry (1997).

Naturally, it is expected that the family play a vital role in supporting children during this transition, offering emotional support and maintaining a connection to their home country as a cultural reference point as they integrate into their new society (Berry & Hou, 2016). This aspect of acculturation can shape immigrant abilities to find comfort and belonging by culturally rooting themselves into their home country while also establishing a sense of acceptance and security, akin to feeling *at home* in their host community (Berry & Hou, 2016; Schimmele & Wu, 2015). Encouraging a feeling of belonging to a wider community is important for social unity. When people feel integrated, they are more likely to invest in relationships and participate in common objectives and institutions. This mirrors the process of acculturation, where immigrants establish comfort in their cultural heritage (Schimmele & Wu, 2015). It also reflects the extent to which individuals feel accepted, secure, and at ease in their new environments (Bornstein, 2017).

For integration to be achieved, Berry (1997) suggested the need for mutual acceptance and adjustment between different cultural groups. This involves recognizing and respecting the rights of all groups to maintain their cultural identities. Non-dominant groups are encouraged to adopt the fundamental values of the broader society, while the dominant group should be

willing to modify national institutions such as education, health, and labor to accommodate the diverse needs of all groups living together in a multicultural society. People often have specific attitudes about how they want to engage with others and the groups they encounter during their process of cultural adjustment, which is termed as "acculturation attitudes" (Berry et al., 1989). These attitudes include various approaches as *assimilation*, *integration*, *separation*, and *marginalization*, as defined in the literature and discussed in greater detail below.

Assimilation involves adopting behaviors that are more aligned with the dominant culture, facilitating participation in its social and economic systems (Berry et al., 1989). Conversely, integration emphasizes maintaining cultural integrity while becoming an integral part of the larger societal framework through cooperation among ethnic groups (Berry et al., 1989). Separation, on the other hand, occurs when ethnic groups maintain their identity and traditions while having minimal interaction with the larger society, sometimes leading to independent communities or enforced segregation (Berry et al., 1989). Marginalization describes feelings of isolation and disconnection, where individuals or groups experience the loss of identity and cultural erasure imposed by their dominant society (Berry et al., 1989). These attitudes and their implications have been extensively studied among diverse groups, including Indigenous peoples, immigrants, and established ethnic groups in countries such as Australia and Canada (Berry et al., 1989).

Adaptation involves psychological, sociocultural, and economic aspects that determine the extent to which individuals need to engage with other cultural groups or maintain their own cultural identity through assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization (Berry, 1997). When acculturation affects language proficiency, it can weaken an individual's connection to

their culture and family, thus impacting communication and meaning-making within the family structure (Cox et al., 2021). The presence of family members like grandparents helps maintain this connection by teaching the heritage language to their grandchildren, providing both support and creative freedom despite language barriers (Liaqat et al., 2022). Unfortunately, Selena and several other immigrant children I know did not have the advantage of having grandparents or close relatives nearby to offer this support.

Research by Ward and Geeraert (2016) suggests that as people interact with different cultures, understanding the qualities and features of both their original and adopted culture is crucial. This involves recognizing the similarities and differences between these cultures. According to their findings, as the gap or difference between cultures grows, integrating them becomes more challenging. This growing inequality can increase stress during the adjustment phase, which can negatively affect psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

Weber et al. (2018) regard ethnic identity and surrounding culture as significant factors in how immigrant students develop their cultural identities within their new communities. When considering cultural identity, it is important to understand how immigrant students might encounter a stereotype threat in school, where stereotypes, such as assumptions about lower academic ability (OECD, 2015) or lack of belonging, can negatively affect their performance and sense of fitting in. Ongoing experiences of such threats can harm students' educational achievement, their ability to fit in, and their engagement with school subjects. Teacher, peer, and parental support, as well as extracurricular activities like sports, club membership, and field trips, are some ways students benefit as they adapt and integrate into new school environments (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). However, they may face challenges due

to social, cultural, and language differences, along with stereotypical responses and discrimination, which negatively impact their academic success and sense of belonging (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). This could mean that they do not do well in school and possibly drop out (Weber et al., 2018), with long lasting negative impacts on their lives.

To better understand these dynamics, it is crucial to examine specific acculturation facilitators and the corresponding challenges that they address. Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2020) identify the following acculturation facilitators:

Acculturation Facilitators

- *Teacher guidance and support.* Teachers can help new students adjust to their new schools by providing counseling, information, adaptation strategies, encouragement to join clubs and participate in class, and guidance on school rules and routines.
- *Parental guidance and peer support.* When immigrant students arrive in a new country, they are likely unfamiliar with the culture and how to fit in. Support from classmates can help them successfully adjust to their new school. The classmates can assist by embracing the new culture and teaching them how to adapt. The support they get from peers helps them learn to adjust to school, making the process easier. This shows that support from peers and parents helps immigrant students adopt the new culture while keeping their own.
- *Social and electronic media.* Social media sites like Facebook and Instagram can help immigrant students interact with friends and learn about new cultures largely in their target language. Watching television news and shows gives them insights into adapting to a new culture. Access to technology also allows them to play video games, read or

write blogs, listen to podcasts, and watch sports at home. These activities can influence their attitudes, cultural identities, and social behaviors, helping them understand and integrate into their dominant culture.

- *The role of extracurricular activities at school.* Participating in extracurricular activities can help immigrant students navigate school life effectively. Engaging in sports such as soccer and athletics, and joining clubs, enables students to collaborate with peers and adjust to new surroundings. Building friendships in these settings provides emotional support and insights into social expectations. Sports activities often provide a more inclusive environment than classrooms, fostering interactions between native students and coaches. Joining environmental and debate clubs can help students connect with peers and understand cultural values. Discussions on civic issues with fellow students and teachers can deepen students' understanding of societal views toward immigrants and help them adapt to new cultural norms. In addition to academic growth, participation in sports and other activities influences students' social skills, likability, and self-discipline during their adaptation process (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020).

Undoubtedly, the British Columbia (BC) curriculum has proven more effective than Iranian ones in enhancing Selena's academic and social skills, notably her English-language proficiency. I have observed her teacher's proactive efforts to foster connections among students by regularly altering seating arrangements and facilitating partnerships between students who may have difficulty cooperating. Her peers frequently assisted her in engaging with unfamiliar games and ensured that she did not feel excluded. She learned a great deal from her friends during playdates and school field trips. These actions align with the literature

on teacher and peer guidance and support as facilitators of acculturation stated by Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2020) and discussed above. However, despite these positive outcomes, Selena continued to express concerns about her unfamiliarity with her peers' interests and struggles to form new friendships, which I believe share similarities in the acculturation challenges introduced by Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2020), discussed below.

Acculturation Challenges

- *Dealing with social and cultural integration.* Differences in cultural experiences can create challenges for immigrant students during their adjustment to school. Understanding and adapting to new cultures can be difficult for these learners, affecting their learning and grades. They often feel isolated since they may not relate to their peers' experiences because of their background. Adjusting to classroom routines and socializing with other students can likewise be challenging. Sharing their thoughts and experiences with classmates, however, can be transformative, but sometimes they may feel frustrated and unwelcome because of stereotypical comments and behaviors from their native-born peers. They can face negativity, teasing, and mocking because of their cultural background, which adds to their stress of learning a new culture and feeling marginalized.
- *Discrimination, stress, and social integration.* Stereotypes play a significant role in immigrant students' difficulties in their new schools. They may feel rejected and discriminated against by teachers and peers. Negative portrayals in textbooks and comments from teachers labeling their home countries as poor, "dirty," and less

intelligent can make them feel ashamed of their identity. Overcoming racial prejudice and discrimination adds intense pressure to students' academic performance.

- *Cultural and language differences.* Differences in teaching styles can also create challenges in adapting to school situations. Immigrant students can encounter conflicts with their parents, who emphasize maintaining their native culture at home while schools promote adoption of the new culture. Balancing these expectations becomes difficult as students must navigate between two worlds. This dual challenge often causes stress in the school environment (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020).

In my case, in seeking connections to the academic literature, the good news is that Selena has never experienced discrimination at school. However, she frequently compares herself with her friends of the same age, focusing on aspects such as physical appearance, the facilities they have access to, and their social status. For example, while we are trying to navigate the challenges of our first years of immigration and starting our lives over in a new community, Selena is concerned about her peers' holiday activities, such as paddling, camping, and occasionally traveling abroad. Recently, she asked some questions which further highlights her preoccupation with fitting in with her peers. "Why does hair grow on my legs and forearms while my Canadian friends do not? My friends think I look like a man with so much hair on my body. Do I look like my dad because there is no hair growing on your body too?" I tried to explain genetic differences in appearance, such as hair color, skin color, and height. Yet, she did not feel confident enough to wear shorts or skirts for a while.

Bekteshi and Kang (2020) also discussed various factors that may act as protectors against or contribute to acculturative stress among immigrants. Protective factors that help

reduce this stress include having a choice in the decision to migrate, support from social networks, higher income, proficiency in English, longer duration of stay in the destination country, being married, cultural competence, and coping through religious practices.

Conversely, risks that exacerbate acculturative stress encompass experiences of discrimination, the emotional impact of leaving family members behind, fear of deportation, conflicts between family and cultural expectations, pressures from ethnic communities or enclaves, and challenges specific to females (Bekteshi & Kang, 2020). Although the specific challenges faced by women in the context of immigration are not extensively discussed in the literature, I have included them in my writing due to notable examples from women in my country of origin, Iran. These challenges can significantly impact important life decisions, such as the legal requirement for women to obtain official permission from a male guardian (father, husband, or father-in-law if the others are unavailable) to obtain a passport or travel abroad. Building on prior research, Bierwiazzonek and Kunst (2021) showed that while integrating one's heritage culture with the mainstream culture is seen as beneficial for immigrants' well-being, the actual impact of these strategies is limited, suggesting that addressing external factors like discrimination may be more influential. This highlights the complexity of the acculturation process and the importance of a multifaceted approach to supporting immigrant students.

The existing body of knowledge on acculturation theories also includes several approaches that were initially introduced by prominent theorists (e.g., Park, 1950; Gordon, 1964; Berry, 1974, 1980; Phinney, 1990). These approaches, notably **unidirectional**, **bidimensional**, and **interactive** acculturation, provide different perspectives on the adaptation process. Critiques of acculturation theories highlight significant limitations across different

approaches previously introduced by these prominent theorists. For example Ngo (2019) critiques unidirectional acculturation theories for oversimplifying adaptation by emphasizing complete assimilation into the dominant culture, neglecting the systemic nature of immigrants' struggles, and ignoring the impact of losing cultural identity (Ngo, 2019). They often continue inequalities by framing immigrants' difficulties as personal failures and reinforcing Eurocentric norms. Bidimensional acculturation theories, while offering a more nuanced perspective by recognizing simultaneous engagement with both heritage and dominant cultures, still face criticism for retaining elements of the assimilationist perspective and lacking a critical examination of power dynamics and social justice issues. This approach is seen as overly functionalist and insufficiently addressing the complex, evolving identities and interactions between immigrants and the dominant culture (Ngo, 2019). The interactive acculturation model, although innovative in considering the interplay between immigrant and dominant cultures, falls short by maintaining a focus on immigrant adaptation without adequately addressing how the dominant culture should adjust or maintain its identity. It also suffers from vague and arbitrary relational outcomes and does not fully interrogate the role of oppressive structures in shaping immigrants' experiences (Ngo, 2019).

It is crucial for educators, policymakers, and communities to create inclusive environments that not only encourage cultural integration but also actively combat discrimination, and provide tailored support for newcomers. Future research should continue to explore the interplay between internal acculturation strategies and external societal factors to develop more effective interventions that enhance the well-being and academic success of immigrant students.

2.3.3 Unpacking Concepts: CRP and CRT

In recent decades, educational approaches have emerged as pivotal frameworks for supporting students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds within multicultural societies. These frameworks, including Culturally Relevant Pedagogy introduced by Ladson-Billings (1995) and Culturally Responsive Teaching advocated by Gay (2010, 2015, 2018), highlight the role of diverse cultural backgrounds in enhancing students' academic learning and overall development. Using constructivist methods and inclusive curricula, these approaches connect students' cultural references to academic skills and concepts, fostering enhanced learning outcomes and inclusive educational environments (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). In countries like Canada, note Brosseau and Dewing (2018), celebrated for its cultural diversity and policies promoting multiculturalism, these frameworks play a crucial role in ensuring equitable access to education, particularly for English Language Learners. Cultural groups in Canada for example are assisted through the *Multiculturalism Policy* published by *the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, in retaining and fostering their identity, overcoming barriers to full participation in society, promoting creative exchanges among cultural groups, and helping immigrants acquire at least one of the two official languages spoken in Canada (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018).

Ladson-Billings (1995) first introduced Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, emphasizing the need for educational practices that reflect and respect the cultural backgrounds of students (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). Different scholars interpret culturally appropriate teaching methods. For example, Ladson-Billings (1995) proposed a vision of CRP as a counterhegemonic pedagogy that challenges traditional educational standards, emphasizing group empowerment rather than

personal achievement. The author outlined three core principles that support this method: guaranteeing educational success, promoting cultural understanding, and developing critical awareness to question social standards. This approach not only helps students succeed academically and maintain their cultural identities but also focuses on developing their critical thinking. It encourages students to examine and question societal norms, values, and institutions that maintain social inequalities in place (Ladson-Billings, 1995). By increasing sociopolitical awareness, educators empower students to participate actively in democratic societies and equip them to challenge unfair systems and views (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

In recent years, the scope of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy has expanded. It now includes the application of CRP in secondary classrooms and across various subjects, including STEAM areas (Ladson-Billings, 2021). Scholars have documented the effectiveness of CRP in multiple educational contexts, highlighting its broad applicability. "Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy" has also been introduced, which expands on CRP by focusing on challenging the status quo and supporting marginalized communities in maintaining their linguistic and cultural identities (for more details, see Paris, 2012). The influence of youth culture on education has also emerged as a significant aspect of CRP. Scholars like Christopher Emdin and Bettina Love have demonstrated how youth culture can transform teaching and learning, making education more relevant and engaging for students (Ladson-Billings, 2021). By incorporating these contemporary developments, CRP continues to evolve, addressing the dynamic needs of diverse student populations and promoting inclusive, equitable educational practices.

Building upon this educational approach and using ethnographic observation, researchers can pinpoint important moments such as "sharing time" in elementary school

classrooms, where students discuss familiar topics such as park and restaurant visits, shopping trips, toys, haircuts, and loose teeth (Gallagher, 2016). Implementing Culturally Relevant Teaching not only enhances understanding of classroom dynamics and supports students' engagement with everyday experiences in educational settings, but also integrates critical elements such as requiring students to navigate academic language demands and providing differentiated teacher scaffolding, and fostering a linguistic third space (Gallagher, 2016). This approach creates opportunities for students to work on language skills through familiar topics, blending personal narration with instructional language to keep students engaged and facilitate their acquisition of the academic language necessary for successful participation (Gallagher, 2016).

Building on Ladson-Billings's works on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Gay (2018) presents her views on Culturally Responsive Teaching. Gay emphasized that teaching is most effective when it takes into account the previous experiences, community environments, cultural backgrounds, and ethnic identities of both students and teachers. However, the author noted that this approach is often neglected for Native, Latino, African, and Asian American students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, who are instead taught using a middle-class, Eurocentric approach. Gay calls this oversight "cultural blindness" and considers it discriminatory. According to Gay, Culturally Responsive Teaching involves incorporating the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of their learning experiences (Gay, 2015, 2018).

Gay also argued that this approach is crucial for addressing the misconception that all students should be treated the same and that education should aim to assimilate students into mainstream society, disregarding their unique cultural differences. She further explained that integrating diverse cultural perspectives both enriches academic instruction and also supports students' overall personal, social, cultural, and civic growth (Gay, 2015). Culturally Responsive Teaching therefore foregrounds the importance of teachers adjusting their actions by considering and valuing the diversity of races and cultures present in educational settings (Gay, 2010).

The literature on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Teaching primarily focuses on race and ethnicity in culture to support students of color and ethnic minority groups who encounter educational obstacles (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). However, an often overlooked factor in school success, especially for marginalized students, is access to *school social and cultural capital* (Gay, 2015). This includes informal knowledge and skills like effective study techniques, test-taking strategies, and appropriate communication styles for school (Gay, 2015). Gay emphasized that these skills are usually acquired through interactions with family members rather than formal instruction and are crucial for navigating educational settings. The significance of family in this context was also discussed earlier in relation to the process of acculturation by Keifert (2021). Improving communication skills is crucial at the same time for boosting the academic success of ethnically diverse students who are not reaching their full potential, as stated by Gay (2010).

Culturally Responsive education emphasizes the role of teachers' beliefs and actions in fostering a classroom environment that promotes social justice (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). According

to Johnson and Gonzalez (2014), classrooms, which are often focused on societal preparation, can inadvertently overlook the power dynamics inherent in capitalism, creating a paradox. While teachers are responsible for delivering specific content, they must also ensure equal opportunities for student to succeed within this complex landscape (Johnson & Gonzalez, 2014).

While many educators are ill-equipped to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, despite these students possessing valuable knowledge and resources in their homes (Parkhouse et al., 2019), some teachers believe that effective teaching requires a deep understanding of the subject matter and the use of proven teaching methods. Howard (2016) supports this view in their book titled *We Cannot Teach Something if We do not Understand it*. The importance of understanding diverse cultures has also been underscored by other scholars. For example, DeCapua (2016) advocated for using students' cultural backgrounds to enhance learning and reduce cultural barriers. By acknowledging students' educational backgrounds and complexities, teachers can create supportive environments that meet individual needs and promote academic success. Similarly, Kieran and Anderson (2018) emphasized the necessity of understanding students diversity in race, culture, language, and prior knowledge to create inclusive and effective educational experiences. In this regard, Culturally Responsive Teaching incorporates students' cultural backgrounds into all learning activities, acknowledging that factors such as culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, gender identity, and religion influence learning processes (Volante et al., 2019). Addressing these needs not only validates immigrant students experiences but also encourages them to contribute positively to classroom dynamics and enriches the learning environment (Roessingh, 2020).

Teachers may also encounter difficulties when using Culturally Responsive Teaching methods. Culturally Responsive Teaching is acknowledged as relevant in international contexts, though it requires careful adaptation to account for specific societal dynamics and the diverse characteristics of student populations, including ethnic, cultural, racial, immigration/migration, economic, and linguistic characteristics (Gay, 2015). These challenges often come from outside factors like not having enough resources and how the students interact with other school staff and families. Teachers assert that it is important to obtain support from both the school and the community when dealing with these challenges. They reported that building strong relationships and talking openly about Culturally Responsive Teaching are easier with such support (Alaca & Pyle, 2018). In response to these challenges, Gay (2015) also recommended integrating Culturally Responsive Teaching practices consistently across all subjects and all students. She emphasized that Culturally Responsive Teaching should be embedded in every aspect of teaching and learning, rather than being restricted to specific areas or used only during crises. Gay highlights the need to customize instructional strategies to students' unique needs, considering their diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, curricular content, and classroom environment. Additionally, she underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing cultural influences on education because understanding how culture affects learning and teaching is vital for developing inclusive and effective educational practices.

To effectively teach culturally diverse students, educators need to design tasks that merge self-regulated learning and Culturally Responsive Pedagogical practices, integrating academic, personal, and cultural elements. This approach helps address challenges like low academic performance and inclusion by prioritizing cultural considerations, which are crucial in

shaping student engagement and learning (Anyichie et al., 2023). A good example of this was a few presentations or events held by Selena's grade 3 teacher. Selena was very confident and happy sharing Persian treats with her classmates during Nowruz and her giving a brief lecture on what Nowruz is and how we celebrate it. The response I received from her teacher was encouraging, noting how Selena started to overcome her timidity and speak in public. The teacher also gave each student a certificate recognizing their talents and interests, with titles like "Amazing Author," "Best Artist Ever," and "Illustrator of the Future" at the end of the school year. I believe these actions greatly boosted her students' confidence by helping them feel seen and understood.

In summary, *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* and *Culturally Responsive Teaching* are essential frameworks for creating inclusive and effective educational environments. By recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds, these approaches enhance learning experiences and academic success. They require teachers to adapt their methods to address diverse needs and foster a more equitable and engaging classroom. Despite the challenges faced by both teachers and students, the benefits of CRP and CRT are significant. These frameworks not only promote academic achievement and support the development of cultural competence and critical thinking skills. Ultimately, CRP and CRT contribute to a more just and inclusive education system, enabling students to succeed in multicultural societies.

2.3.4 Telling the Story: Narrative Inquiry and Autoethnography

In exploring the complex journey of adapting to a new educational system in Canada, this section delves into the challenges, successes, and reflections encountered along the way. The experiences of cultural adjustment, educational transformation, and language acquisition

echo the broader themes examined by scholars such as Clandinin and Connelly in narrative theory. Autoethnography as a research methodology informs this section because it provides a detailed and personal view of these experiences, offering a unique way to understand how personal stories and educational theories connect. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) assert, storytelling is not merely a human trait but a fundamental mechanism through which individuals construct and make sense of their experiences. Within these narratives about myths, heroes, and folk wisdom, cultural knowledge is shared and grows (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991; Popper & Castelnovo, 2018).

My narrative thus becomes a lens through which to examine the transmission of cultural understanding and the transformative power of education. By sharing my reflective voice, I aim to illuminate not only personal challenges and growth and contribute to the broader discourse on narrative in education, echoing Clandinin and Connelly's insights into the profound impact of personal storytelling on educational practices and cultural understanding. Given this knowledge, I try to face myself by sharing my stories and reflecting on who my daughter and I are, as suggested by Dubnewick et al. (2018).

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argued that storytelling is inherent to humans, shaping both individual and collective experiences. They view the study of narratives as essential for understanding how humans perceive the world and engage in education. Clandinin and Connelly (1991) assert that there is growing interest in cultural transmission through personal narratives. This, as mentioned above, involves exploring how cultural knowledge is passed down through myths, heroes (Popper & Castelnovo, 2018), and folk knowledge (Clandinin &

Connelly, 1991). With this aim, as a storyteller, I have the opportunity to add my own reflective voice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991).

Dubnewick et al. (2018) frame autobiography narrative as reflexive investigations, highlighting that people actively participate in shaping their life narratives rather than passive observers. Clandinin and Connelly (1991) discuss experience, time, personal knowledge, reflection, and deliberation as outstanding components of autobiography narrative inquiry. They noted the widespread use of the term experience in educational contexts, as it exists in homes, schools, higher education, and adult learning institutions. Furthermore, educating children involves recognizing their role as social beings and integrated within a society in which individual growth and collective development are interdependent (Burroughs & Barkauskas, 2017). Considering individuals' educational history and recognition of the connection between people's traditions and their cultures, we can regard a person as a fusion of the individual and the social (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991). Clandinin and Connelly (1991) describe reflection and deliberation as methods that involve moving back and forth in time and carrying uncertain outcomes. Reflective practices include looking back, examining past experiences, and gathering data. Looking forward by contrast, involves preparation for the future that can be captured (including in school based settings) through activities such as journaling and letter writing (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991).

As previously mentioned, autobiographical narratives are a form of reflexive inquiry. This approach allows me to delve deeply into my personal reflections and interactions, enhancing the depth of my insights as Dodgson (2019) points out. Such narratives highlight the value of reflexivity and can be beneficial in understanding and communicating my experiences.

This method acknowledges the importance of subjectivity and multiple perspectives, emphasizing the significance of depth over quantity (O’Leary, 2021). By engaging in this approach, I can comprehensively explore and understand the interactions, processes, lived experiences, and belief systems (O’Leary, 2021) that have shaped my journey.

Casey and Schaefer (2016) believed that every individual lives within and contributes to stories. While we inhabit our personal stories, we are also immersed in institutional, cultural, and other stories, that continuously influence our lives (Casey & Schaefer, 2016). We share our personal narratives and discuss the narratives surrounding the institutions we are part of and the cultures we inhabit (Casey & Schaefer, 2016). Although we all live and share stories, we may not always have the opportunity to retell them and reflect on the various narratives that influence our lives, our *stories to live by*, and potentially gain new perspectives on our own stories (Casey & Schaefer, 2016). Documenting the narratives of us provides an opportunity to describe and reconstruct the educational experiences we share, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (1991). We can revisit and reconsider our own narratives. Narrative researchers have characterized this revisiting and reflection process as an inquiry into personal experiences (Casey & Schaefer, 2016).

Delmont (2020) maintains that academic autobiographies refer to writings by scholars who engage in practical research. Scholars who construct and reconstruct personal and social narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) reflect on how they collect and analyze data, as well as how they produce written materials (Delmont, 2020). They serve as both narrators and subjects in their own and other’s stories and explore how these activities influence their personal and

professional journeys, contribute to their achievements, and impact their respective fields of study (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Likewise, O'Leary (2021) asserts that a qualitative approach aims to achieve a deep understanding of individuals, environments, cultures, and contexts via thorough engagement and potentially immersion into the phenomena under investigation. This approach aligns with the portrayal of autobiography in Metz (2018), which emphasizes the need for teacher education programs to look beyond course content and structure to understand the learning opportunities offered to teacher candidates. The author believes that the personal histories and motivations of teachers significantly influence their instructional decisions, especially regarding social justice issues. Therefore, it is important for teacher education programs to closely examine how teachers' backgrounds shape curriculum in preparation courses for a diverse and unequal society (Metz, 2018). Similarly, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) discussed narrative inquiry, which focuses on personal experiences, life aspects, and educational qualities. This narrative approach, embedded within a qualitative approach, highlights the importance of understanding stories and their implications, further supporting the need for a deep, contextual understanding of teacher education.

Despite the widespread acclaim for autobiographical narrative inquiry, notable criticisms still exist. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argued that narratives often excessively emphasize the individual over the broader social contexts. They also caution against what they term "the Hollywood plot," where narratives tend to present unrealistically favorable conclusions.

2.4 Bringing It All Together (Conclusion)

Acknowledging these critiques, I find autobiographical narrative inquiry particularly suited to inform my reflection within this literature review. This approach offered a unique opportunity to position ourselves as mother and daughter, framing our past experiences from our present perspective, within the broader literature in the field. It allowed me to explore our personal stories and how they have shaped our identities (Casey & Schaefer, 2016). By drawing on the ideas of autobiographical narrative inquiry, I could illuminate the personal experiences that have defined our lives. This method helped us understand how our past influences our present selves and how we perceive and interact with the world around us. It facilitated a reflective and introspective examination of our journey, highlighting the significant moments and decisions that have defined our path, and how our paths connected with other research and insights from the field.

Furthermore, this approach provided a rich context for which to explore the experiences of our close circle, including our friends and teachers we have observed. By positioning ourselves within the narration, we aimed to create a relatable and authentic story framework that resonates with readers. This connection fosters deeper engagement with the literature review and its implications. Ultimately, the self-reflective approach used served as a powerful tool for uncovering stories that give our lives meaning. This underscores the importance of storytelling in shaping our identities and our understanding of the world. Okri (1997, p.46) best states:

(...)

we live by stories, we also live in them.

One way or another we are living the stories

planted in us early or along the way,

or we are also living the stories we planted— knowingly or unknowingly—in ourselves.

We live stories that either give our lives meaning

or negate it with meaninglessness.

If we change the stories we live by,

Quite possibly we change our lives.

Note

Names were replaced with pseudonyms to ensure participant confidentiality.

Chapter 3

Art as a Bridge: Reflecting on Workshop Design and Outcomes

3.1 Introduction

In today's multicultural educational landscape, incorporating students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process can be key to promoting academic achievement and social inclusion. This workshop is designed to address these needs through a series of arts-based activities specifically tailored for elementary students, which teachers can implement with their students. By focusing on art as a medium for self-expression and cultural exploration, the workshop aims to support language development while helping students feel a stronger sense of belonging in their new educational environment.

The primary goal of this workshop is to facilitate the integration of immigrant students' cultural identities into their educational experiences. Recognizing art as a powerful tool that can build bridges between cultural gaps, the workshop provides opportunities for personal expression and cultural sharing. This approach is intended to enhance student engagement and motivation, thus making the learning process more relevant and meaningful to each student's unique background. Additionally, by incorporating Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies, the workshop strives to ensure that all students feel represented, valued, and included in their classrooms.

Within an elementary school, the workshop targets young learners who are adjusting to a new educational system and the cultural context. Over four 90-minute sessions, students will engage in creative activities such as creating self-portraits, creating cultural collages, and designing cultural artifacts. These activities are designed to foster a sense of cultural pride and

self-expression while developing artistic skills. Using materials like pastel crayons, modeling clay, paper, fabric, acrylic paints, and beads, the workshop aims to be both interactive and immersive, allowing students to explore and celebrate their cultural identities through art.

At the end of this workshop, students are expected to have developed a stronger sense of cultural identity and improved language skills. The workshop aspires to create a more inclusive classroom environment in which diverse cultural expressions are celebrated, contributing to both the academic and personal growth of students and enriching the overall educational experience.

3.2 Project Overview and Motivation

This project connects various cultures by engaging students in activities that highlight and celebrate their cultural backgrounds. Emphasizing cultural diversity within educational environments may help create a sense of belonging among immigrant students. Rather than overlooking cultural differences that may hinder students' academic success or even contribute to potential school dropout (Weber et al., 2018), it is beneficial to view culture as a resource that can enhance students' language skills and overall learning experience.

Immigrant children often face challenges, such as the absence of extended family and friends, who typically participate in cultural events and celebrations (Liaqat et al., 2022). The loss of these connections, coupled with the inability to celebrate important occasions in their culture of origin, could contribute to feelings of isolation. The workshop described in this chapter will provide students with the opportunity to share their cultural memories and traditions with their peers, which may help them build a sense of identity within their new community.

Sharing cultural differences can also help reduce the frustration students may feel about standing out due to their appearance, clothing, language differences, or customs. For example, Muslim students who wear hijabs might not feel uncomfortable with their choice, and other students may no longer find this way of dressing unusual. By creating a space where students can learn about and discuss various cultural practices, such as the tradition of Iranian students celebrating Nowruz as the start of the new year or Christian students celebrating Christmas, the workshop aims to foster mutual understanding and respect among peers.

The workshop can therefore serve as a facilitator for elementary school students to embrace their differences and develop positive relationships without judgment. By engaging in these activities, students can learn to appreciate the richness of diverse cultures and potentially build a more inclusive school environment in which every child feels valued and accepted.

3.3 Context and Participants

This workshop is designed to support immigrant students by integrating art into their language-learning and cultural adaptation processes. Spanning six hours, it is divided into four 90-minute sessions, held weekly within a classroom setting. The sessions will involve approximately 20 third-grade students, encompassing both immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds, regardless of their origin. The activities will include crafts, drawing, and painting, designed to engage all participants. The rooms where the workshops occur should be well-suited for artistic activities, and include a mini-exhibition area where students can display their work and walk around to view their peers' creations. Both the workshop instructor and classroom teacher will be present to provide additional support and help students build confidence.

3.4 Reflection on Personal Experiences

In designing this workshop, I was guided by my personal experiences and observations of the challenges my daughter Selena faced as she adapted to a new cultural and educational environment when we arrived in Canada. It became clear that immigrant children require opportunities to share their cultural backgrounds while also engaging with the traditions of their new community to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion.

One of the primary motivators was Selena's repeated questions about why we did not celebrate special occasions as people in Canada do. This highlighted the need for a platform to introduce her own cultural traditions and connect with those of others. Although ELL classes that Selena participated in during her second and third grades were beneficial in developing her language and communication skills, it also led to feelings of exclusion (by being away from her classmates during the pull-out ELL classes she participated in). She often missed classroom activities that were held during her ELL sessions and felt that her peers negatively viewed these extra classes. This situation made it difficult for her to build friendships because her limited English skills created barriers to social interaction and her understanding of social norms in our new community.

Adding to her challenges was the frustration she felt when comparing her situation to that of her Canadian peers. She noticed that many of her classmates' parents had more time to spend on family activities, while my demanding schedule left me with less time for engagements. This made Selena feel that she was missing out on experiences that her peers had enjoyed. I recognized that providing her with opportunities to share her cultural experiences, such as festivals and events from our home country, could help her appreciate her

past and understand the difficulties of immigration as temporary. Sharing memories of fun activities in Iran may help her realize that she had valuable experiences and that the challenges would eventually pass, leading to more positive experiences in the future.

In the classroom, Selena participated in activities centered around Canadian holidays like Father's and Mother's Day (celebrated on different dates in our culture), Halloween, and Easter (which we do not celebrate in Iran), highlighting differences from the celebrations in Iran. Allowing immigrant students like Selena the opportunity to present their own cultural traditions and crafts could foster a sense of pride and belonging. This will also create a more inclusive environment where all students feel valued and recognized for their unique cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, Selena's past experiences in Iran continued to influence her social interactions in Canada, often leading to misunderstandings and judgments. If she had more opportunities to share her cultural background, her peers and teachers would better understand her, reducing instances of judgment and fostering a more accepting classroom environment. Selena's third-grade teacher reinforced this idea through the consistent rearrangement of classroom seating to encourage students to interact with different classmates. This strategy not only facilitated better social integration but also inspired me to consider how random integration in hands-on activities can help students overcome cultural barriers and build new friendships. Such an approach could promote an environment in which students appreciate diverse characteristics and learn to understand their peers without judgment. Reflecting on these experiences, I realized the importance of creating opportunities for immigrant students to share their cultural backgrounds and the need for an inclusive

environment that supports their social and academic development. The workshop I designed is rooted in these observations, aiming to help students like Selena navigate the challenges of adapting to a new culture while maintaining a connection to their heritage.

3.5 Connections to Supporting Research

Given the ongoing rise in immigration in Canada, there is an increasing need for targeted language support services for ELLs (Immigration.ca, 2023). These changes underscore the importance of tailored support for students from diverse linguistic backgrounds, as recommended by existing literature (Shin, 2018). To address these needs, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Teaching offer valuable frameworks for integrating students' cultural backgrounds into the educational process (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2010, 2015, 2018), as described in Chapter Two of this final project. In addition to addressing these needs, incorporating acculturation facilitators as peer support and extracurricular activities can greatly ease immigrant students' transition by fostering connection and a sense of belonging (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). Peer support enhances social and academic integration, while extracurricular activities offer additional opportunities for students to engage with their peers and share their cultural backgrounds. Whether woven into the school day or offered as an after-school experience, this workshop seamlessly integrates cultural experiences into the learning environment, fostering peer connections and enriching students' overall integration.

Zinga and Gordon (2016) also highlights that while resource rooms are designed to provide additional academic, social, and emotional support and offer essential help, they can sometimes isolate students. This finding emphasizes the need for inclusive environments where immigrant students can feel integrated rather than segregated. Moreover, the concept of "co-

teaching," where ELL teachers collaborate with mainstream educators, has been shown to enhance learning outcomes by providing targeted support within regular classroom settings (Whiting, 2017). This workshop adopts a co-teaching approach, involving both a workshop instructor and the classroom teacher, to create a collaborative and inclusive environment that integrates cultural sharing and hands-on activities, thereby addressing concerns of isolation and supporting both academic and social development.

Ultimately, this workshop embodies CRP and CRT principles by integrating students' cultural backgrounds into their learning through engaging activities. Utilizing peer support and interactive experiences creates an inclusive environment that enhances both academic growth and social integration for immigrant students.

3.6 Implications for Future Research

This workshop is designed to bridge cultural divides through art, providing immigrant students with a platform to express their identities while enhancing their language skills. By engaging in creative activities that celebrate their cultural backgrounds, students are expected to experience not only improved academic performance but also a stronger sense of belonging within a more inclusive classroom environment. The incorporation of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies ensures that each student feels represented and valued, potentially enriching the educational experience for all. Looking ahead, several significant questions arise for future research.

- How might these or similar art-based strategies be adapted to support older students better or be implemented in different educational settings?

- What role could family and community involvement play in deepening students' connections to their cultural identities within the classroom?
- How can art-based workshops be tailored to address the unique challenges faced by immigrant students with different levels of language proficiency?
- How might digital tools and technology be incorporated into culturally responsive art workshops to engage students in diverse learning environments?

Exploring these questions can offer valuable insights into the broader application and effectiveness of culturally responsive education practices.

3.7 Conclusion

The *Art as a Bridge* workshop, described in the forthcoming Appendix, is designed with the expectation that it will foster meaningful connections among students and promote an inclusive classroom environment. By offering opportunities for students to express their cultural identities and engage in creative activities, the workshop aims to enhance students' sense of belonging and potentially improve their language development. This approach is expected to support academic growth while enriching students' educational experience. The positive outcomes envisioned through this workshop underscore the potential benefits of incorporating cultural experiences into learning, suggesting a promising avenue for further exploration in educational practice.

References

- Alaca, B., & Pyle, A. (2018). Kindergarten teachers' perspectives on culturally responsive education. *Canadian Journal of Education, 41*(3), 753–782.
- Anyichie, A. C., Butler, D. L., Perry, N. E., & Nashon, S. M. (2023). Examining classroom contexts in support of culturally diverse learners' engagement: An integration of self-regulated learning and culturally responsive pedagogical practices. *Frontline Learning Research, 11*(1), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.14786/flr.v11i1.1115>
- Appau, S., Churchill, S. A., & Farrell, L. (2019). Social integration and subjective wellbeing. *Applied Economics, 51*(16), 1748–1761. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2018.1528340>
- Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(1), 163–206. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066>
- Baecher, L., & Bell, A. (2017). Opportunity to teach: Push-in and pull-out models of English learner instruction. *Journal of Education and Culture, 1*(1), 53–68. <https://doi.org/10.22158/jecs.v1n1p53>
- Bekteshi, V., & Kang, S. (2020). Contextualizing acculturative stress among Latino immigrants in the United States: A systematic review. *Ethnicity & Health, 25*(6), 897–914. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13557858.2018.1469733>
- Berry, J. W. (1974). Psychological aspects of cultural pluralism: Unity and identity reconsidered. *Topics in Culture Learning, 2*, 17-22.

- Berry, J. W. (1980). Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. In A. M. Padilla (Ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, models, and some new findings* (pp. 9–25). Westview Press.
- Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Power, S., Young, M., & Bujaki, M. (1989). Acculturation attitudes in plural societies. *Applied Psychology, 38*(2), 185–206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1989.tb01208.x>
- Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology, 46*(1), 5–34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x>
- Berry, J. W., & Hou, F. (2016). Immigrant acculturation and wellbeing in Canada. *Canadian Psychology, 57*(4), 254–264. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000064>
- Bierwiazzonek, K., & Kunst, J. R. (2021). Revisiting the integration hypothesis: Correlational and longitudinal meta-analyses demonstrate the limited role of acculturation for cross-cultural adaptation. *Psychological Science, 32*(9), 1476–1493. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976211006432>
- Bornstein, M. H. (2017). Parenting in acculturation: Two contemporary research designs and what they tell us. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 15*, 195–200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.03.020>
- Burroughs, M. D., & Barkauskas, N. J. (2017). Educating the whole child: Social-emotional learning and ethics education. *Ethics and Education, 12*(2), 218–232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2017.1287388>
- Casey, A., & Schaefer, L. (2016). A narrative inquiry into the experience of negotiating the dominant stories of physical education: Living, telling, re-telling, and re-living. *Sport,*

Education and Society, 21(1), 114–130.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2015.1108300>

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1991). Narrative and story in practice and research. In D. A. Schön (Ed.), *The reflective turn: Case studies in and on educational practice* (pp. 258–281). Teachers College Press.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2–14.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X019005002>

Cox, J., deSouza, D. K., Bao, J., Lin, H., Sahbaz, S., Greder, K. A., Larzelere, R. E., Washburn, I. J., Leon-Cartagena, M., & Arredondo-Lopez, A. (2021). Shared language erosion: Rethinking immigrant family communication and impacts on youth development. *Children (Basel)*, 8(4), Article 256. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children8040256>

DeCapua, A. (2016). Reaching students with limited or interrupted formal education through culturally responsive teaching. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 10(5), 225–237.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12183>

Delamont, S. (2020). Academic autobiographies. In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J. W. Sakshaug, & R. A. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE*.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036923407>

Dodgson, J. E. (2019). Reflexivity in qualitative research. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 35(2), 220–222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334419830990>

Durand, T. M., & Blackwell, R. (2024). Dimensions of belonging and “Othering” in middle school: Voices of immigrant and island-born puerto rican adolescents. *Journal of Education for*

Students Placed at Risk, 29(2), 130–150.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2022.2136179>

Dubnewick, M., Clandinin, D. J., Lessard, S., & McHugh, T. L. (2018). The centrality of reflexivity through narrative beginnings: Towards living reconciliation. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24(6), 413–420. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417727762>

Earnshaw, V. A., Reisner, S. L., Menino, D. D., Poteat, V. P., Bogart, L. M., Barnes, T. N., & Schuster, M. A. (2018). Stigma-based bullying interventions: A systematic review. *Developmental Review*, 48, 178–200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2018.02.001>

Encyclopaedia Iranica. (2024). *Haft-sin*. In *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/haft-sin>

Gallagher, C. (2016). Socialization to academic language in a kindergarten classroom. *Language and Education*, 30(5), 383–399. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2015.1118122>

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2015). The what, why, and how of culturally responsive teaching: International mandates, challenges, and opportunities. *Multicultural Education Review*, 7(3), 123–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2015.1072079>

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Gordon, M. M. (1964). *Assimilation in American life: The role of race, religion, and national origins*. Oxford University Press.

Howard, G. R. (2016). *We can't teach what we don't know: White teachers, multiracial schools*.

Teachers College Press.

Immigration.ca. (2023). *Canada immigration remains on track for record-breaking 2023*.

Immigration.ca. <https://www.immigration.ca/canada-immigration-remains-on-track-for-record-breaking-2023>

Johnson, L. P., & Gonzalez, J. (2014). Culturally relevant practices and management of an ELA teacher: A tale of two classrooms. *e-Journal of Balanced Reading Instruction*, 2(1),

Article 5. <http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/jblri/vol2/iss1/5>

Keifert, D. T. (2021). Family culture as context for learning through inquiry. *Cognition and Instruction*, 39(3), 242–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07370008.2021.1913162>

Kieran, L., & Anderson, C. (2019). Connecting universal design for learning with culturally responsive teaching. *Education and Urban Society*, 51(9), 1202–1216.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124518785012>

Kumi-Yeboah, A., Brobbey, G., & Smith, P. (2020). Exploring factors that facilitate acculturation strategies and academic success of west african immigrant youth in urban schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 52(1), 21–50.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124519846279>

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3), 159–165.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849509543675>

- Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). Three decades of culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining pedagogy: What lies ahead? *The Educational Forum*, 85(4), 351–354.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2021.1957632>
- Liaqat, A., Axtell, B., & Munteanu, C. (2022). “With a hint she will remember”: Collaborative storytelling and culture sharing between immigrant grandparents and grandchildren via magic thing designs. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 6(CSCW2), 1–37. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3555158>
- Metz, M. (2018). The role of teacher educators’ personal histories and motivations in shaping opportunities to learn about social justice. *Teachers College Record*, 120(7), 1–34.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811812000708>
- Ngo, H. V. (2019). A critical examination of acculturation theories. *Critical Social Work*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.22329/csw.v9i1.5762>
- OECD/European Union. (2015). *Indicators of immigrant integration 2015: Settling in*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264234024-en>
- Okri, B. (1997). *A way of being free*. Phoenix House.
- O’Leary, Z. (2021). *The essential guide to doing your research project* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12441244>
- Park, R. E. (1950). *Race and culture*. Free Press.

- Parkhouse, H., Lu, C. Y., & Massaro, V. R. (2019). Multicultural education professional development: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 89*(3), 416–458. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319840359>
- Phinney, J. S. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescents and adults: Review of research. *Psychological Bulletin, 108*(3), 499–514. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.108.3.499>
- Popper, M., & Castelnovo, O. (2018). The function of myths about great leaders in human culture: A cultural evolutionary perspective. *Leadership, 14*(6), 757–774. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715017720309>
- Roessingh, H. (2020). Culturally responsive pedagogy and academic vocabulary teaching and learning: An integrated approach in the elementary classroom. *TESL Canada Journal, 37*(1), 51–62. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v37i1.1334>
- Schimmele, C., & Wu, Z. (2015). The new immigration and ethnic identity. *Population Change and Lifecourse 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>
- Shin, N. (2018). The effects of the initial english language learner classification on students' later academic outcomes. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 40*(2), 175–195. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373717737378>
- Statistics Canada. (2017, August 31). *Linguistic diversity and multilingualism in Canadian homes*. Statistics Canada. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016010/98-200-x2016010-eng.cfm>

- Volante, L., DeLuca, C., & Klinger, D. A. (2019). *Culturally responsive teaching in a globalized world*. The Canadian Press. Canadian Press Enterprises Inc.
- Ward, C., & Geeraert, N. (2016). Advancing acculturation theory and research: The acculturation process in its ecological context. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 8*, 98–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.021>
- Weber, S., Kronberger, N., & Appel, M. (2018). Immigrant students' educational trajectories: The influence of cultural identity and stereotype threat. *Self and Identity, 17*(2), 211–235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2017.1380696>
- Weinsheimer, J. C. (1985). *Gadamer's hermeneutics: A reading of Truth and method*. Yale University Press.
- Whiting, J. (2017). Caught between the push and the pull: ELL teachers' perceptions of mainstreaming and ESOL classroom teaching. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 8*(1), 9–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26390043.2017.12067793>
- Zinga, D. M., & Gordon, M. K. (2016). "Racism under the radar": Student perceptions of school experiences in a multicultural context. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 19*(5), 1088–1116.

Appendices

Appendix A

Project Exploration

Activities for Session 1: Introduction to Art and Culture

Introduction (20 minutes)

The workshop provider will begin by playing a 3-minute YouTube video where children share their own ideas about what culture could be. This video will encourage students to think about their own definitions of culture. Following the video, the workshop provider, together with the classroom teacher, will engage students in a discussion about their assumptions and thoughts on culture, asking them questions like, "How do you define culture?" and "How many cultures do you think exist in the world?"

Next, a 9-minute YouTube video will be played, but only the first 5 minutes will be shown. (Both YouTube videos are listed below.) This portion of the video will introduce what culture is and briefly discuss its components. The video will be paused before it delves into more examples of different cultures around the world. At this point, the workshop provider will invite students to give their own examples of different cultures they know, including aspects like their own country, language, food, and traditions. This activity encourages students to actively participate by sharing what they know and asking each other questions about their home countries and cultures.

Activity 1: Art Around the World (30 minutes)

The session will continue with a 3-minute YouTube video explaining the concept of art. A discussion will follow on how art serves as a powerful medium for expressing cultural identity,

inviting students to share their personal experiences of cultural festivals and occasions. To connect these personal experiences with broader cultural expressions, a mini-exhibition will be set up in the classroom. This exhibition will feature artwork from various countries represented by the students. If available, physical samples of art provided by parents will be included; otherwise, photos will be used to showcase diverse cultural art forms, such as African masks, Chinese calligraphy, Indigenous totems, Indian Rangoli designs, and Persian miniature paintings. The specific examples presented will be tailored to reflect the cultural backgrounds of the students in the workshop, ensuring the content is relevant and relatable.

Students will observe the displayed artwork and engage in interactive discussions, prompted by questions such as what they notice about the work, which one they like most and why, and how the artwork makes them feel. Afterward, students will be divided into small groups, each assigned an artwork to discuss. The workshop provider and the classroom teacher will facilitate group discussions, helping students explore the cultural significance of their assigned pieces before sharing their insights with the class.

Activity 2: Drawing Cultural Memories (30 minutes)

For the second activity, students will create a work of art by drawing a picture of a memorable place, tradition, religious practice, or any other cultural element that the class discussion brought to mind. Examples of cultural artifacts and symbols will be provided to inspire creativity. Drawing paper and pastel crayons will be distributed, and students will be given time to work on their drawings independently. As they draw, the workshop provider and classroom teacher will circulate to offer guidance and encouragement.

Once the drawings are complete, students will form small groups to share their artwork. Each student will explain why their artwork is important and what it represents. After each presentation, group members will write short paragraphs of feedback on provided papers, focusing on the following aspects:

- What part of the drawing did you find interesting or different? Why?
- What do you like about how your friend drew their picture?
- What do you think they did well?

After writing, students will be encouraged to read their feedback aloud, which will help improve their reading skills and build confidence in expressing their thoughts. The teacher and workshop provider will provide support and model examples of effective feedback as needed.

Wrap-up (10 minutes)

To conclude the session, selected volunteers from each group will present their drawings to the entire class, sharing the stories behind their artwork. The workshop will close with a brief discussion on how art can tell stories about our lives and cultures, highlighting the unique and valuable cultural backgrounds each student brings to the classroom. A preview of the next session will be given to build excitement and curiosity for the upcoming activities.

Medium Used

- Drawing paper
- Pastel crayons
- Projector or printed images for displaying cultural artworks
- Small pieces of paper and pencils

Resources

- Age-appropriate (9 to 12 years old) and engaging YouTube videos.

Link for the YouTube videos:

<https://youtu.be/H-P3wm1Fvv4?si=9HTCJOLbR2eGbmU8>

<https://youtu.be/RwSYrsjTiW4?si=GZqd643YaWtZdpjJ>

https://youtu.be/QZQyV9BB50E?si=-E_MTw86p1kTQRrH

Reflection

The criteria to be observed for the first session:

- Student engagement and participation during discussions about culture and how they articulate their ideas.
- Interest and reactions to the mini-exhibition of cultural artwork, including how students describe what they see.
- Creativity and expression in students' drawings of cultural memories, along with the use of descriptive language to explain their artwork.
- Effectiveness of feedback sessions in building confidence, encouraging peer support, and enhancing verbal and written communication skills.
- Inclusivity and comfort levels of students sharing their thoughts and cultural experiences, particularly in using language to express themselves.

Expanded Activities for Session 2: Exploring Identity Through Painting

Introduction (20 minutes)

The workshop provider will begin the session by reminding students of the previous discussion on cultural identity and how different cultural characteristics such as food, clothing, and language shape who we are. Building on this understanding, they will explain how art,

specifically painting, can be a powerful tool for exploring and expressing our cultural identity. The provider will highlight how colors, styles, and symbols in paintings can represent different aspects of culture. To illustrate this, they will share examples of famous self-portraits and cultural scenes painted by artists from diverse backgrounds. A 5-minute video demonstrating traditional painting techniques will be shown, followed by a discussion on what makes each painting unique and how it reflects the artist's identity. This will help students see how they can use painting to express their own cultural identity in their work.

Activity 1: Self-Portrait or Cultural Scene (45 minutes)

The workshop provider, along with the classroom teacher, will begin by brainstorming ideas with students about what their self-portrait could look like. This could include a cultural scene that represents them, an aspect of their character, or a symbol of their culture. Students will be encouraged to use their creativity in imagining their self-portrait. A brief demonstration will be provided on how to apply acrylic paints, mix colors, and use different brush techniques. To inspire creativity, a YouTube video will be shown, featuring children sketching while listening to music.

After the video, students will begin creating their own paintings. Traditional music from various cultures will be played, and students will be encouraged to let the music influence their painting and help them connect emotionally with their work, painting as the music makes them feel. The music will vary to reflect different cultures, tailored to the backgrounds of the students in the workshop. Acrylic colors, paintbrushes, and canvas or thick paper will be distributed to the students. As they work on their paintings independently, the teacher and

workshop provider will circulate the room to offer guidance, feedback, and encouragement, helping students refine their techniques and express their ideas effectively.

Activity 2: Art Gallery Walk (20 minutes)

Once the paintings are complete, the workshop provider and the teacher will help students arrange them around the classroom to create an art gallery-like environment. They will ensure there is enough space for students to move around and view each painting. Each student will be given the opportunity to stand by their painting and, if they are willing, explain the inspiration behind their work, what it represents, and how music influenced their creativity. Students will be encouraged to ask questions and provide positive feedback, emphasizing the importance of respecting and appreciating each other's work and cultural expressions.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

To conclude, the workshop provider will conduct a brief reflective discussion on what students learned about themselves and their classmates through the painting activity. They will encourage students to talk about what they enjoyed most about expressing their identity through art and how they felt while doing it. Students will be asked to share one thing they learned about themselves and one thing they discovered about their classmates' artwork. The workshop provider will end with a fun preview of the next session's activities, sparking excitement and curiosity about what's coming up.

Medium Used

- Acrylic colors
- Paintbrushes
- Canvas or thick paper

- Water cups for rinsing brushes
- Palettes for mixing colors
- Protective aprons or old shirts

Resources

- Traditional music playlists featuring cultural background of each student in the workshop. I will select diverse, age-appropriate, and engaging playlists.
- Age appropriate (9 to 12 years old) and engaging YouTube videos.

Link for the YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/z-6kx9NZpF4?si=RSL0KoghSRbwKyzc>

Reflection

The criteria to be observed for the first session:

- How well students articulate their understanding of cultural identity through the discussion and painting activity.
- The clarity and detail of students' verbal explanations about their artwork and the cultural aspects they represent.
- Students' use of descriptive language in expressing their thoughts and ideas about their peers' art and their own.
- The level of engagement in providing constructive feedback and asking questions during the gallery walk.
- Students' participation in reflective discussions, focusing on their ability to summarize and share their learning experiences and insights about themselves and their classmates.

Expanded Activities for Session 3: Collage-Based Cultural Narratives

Introduction (15 minutes)

The workshop provider will begin the session by discussing the concept of collage and how different materials can be combined to create rich and textured stories. The workshop provider will explain how various cultures use different materials to tell their stories through art. To illustrate this, photos of notable collage works will be shared. As each photo is displayed, there will be a short discussion on how students feel about that particular work. The workshop provider will ask students which collage they liked best and what they found interesting or inspiring about the artworks.

Activity 1: Collage Creation (55 minutes)

The collage activity will begin with a YouTube video about a cultural festival from a country not represented in the workshop, ensuring inclusivity. The video will be engaging and age-appropriate, highlighting the colors, cultural and historical characteristics, and symbols of that country. After watching the video, students will be encouraged to discuss what they found most interesting and consider a cultural story or event that is meaningful to them.

The workshop provider and the teacher will assist students by asking guiding questions and facilitating brainstorming sessions. They will provide examples and demonstrate how to use various materials to create texture and depth in collages. A variety of materials, including fabric, felt, beads, paper, magazines, glue, and scissors, will be distributed. Students will also have empty containers, such as dish soap bottles and drink bottles, to use as bases for their collages. Emphasizing creativity and personal expression, the workshop provider and teacher will guide students in arranging their materials to effectively tell their stories through their

collages. As students work, both the workshop provider and teacher will move around the room to offer guidance, feedback, and encouragement, helping students think about how to best convey their cultural story or event through their artwork.

Activity 2: Group Discussions (20 minutes)

Once the collages are completed, students will be divided into small groups. Each student will take a turn sharing their collage with the group, briefly explaining the cultural story or event it represents and why they chose certain materials. Group members will be encouraged to ask one or two questions and give positive comments about each other's collages. Next, students will place their work on a single table so that everyone can see and compare the collages at the same time. Students will then work together to find one similarity and one difference between their cultural stories or events. This will help them recognize the diversity of cultural expressions and the unique ways each person can tell a story. They will be prompted to use simple sentences to describe these similarities and differences, helping to build their language skills.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)

To conclude the session, a brief reflective discussion will be conducted. Students will be asked to share what they learned about different cultures and how they used collage to tell a story. They will discuss how it felt to use various materials and what students discovered about the power of mixed media in art. The teacher and workshop provider will highlight the variety of stories and the unique ways each student expressed their culture, emphasizing the beauty of diversity. Finally, a sneak peek into the activities planned for the next session will be given to build anticipation and excitement for what's coming up.

Medium Used

- Fabric and felt scraps
- Beads
- Buttons
- Glue
- Scissors
- Assorted paper (colored, patterned, textured)
- Old magazines for cutting out images and text
- Projector or printed images for displaying cultural artworks

Resources

- Age-appropriate (9 to 12 years old) YouTube video, selected from countries not represented by the students in the workshop.

Link for the YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/nVE4pBwuO5c?si=Wjb021DH-0XPc7NC>

Reflection

The criteria to be observed for the third session:

- How clearly students describe their cultural story or event through their collage.
- The ability of students to explain their choice of materials and what their collage represents during group discussions.
- Students' use of descriptive words when talking about their own collages and those of their peers.
- How well students ask questions and give positive feedback about their peers' collages.

- Students' ability to identify and describe at least one similarity and one difference between their collages and those of their peers.
- Participation in the wrap-up discussion, including students' ability to share what they learned about different cultures and using mixed materials in their art.

Expanded Activities for Session 4: Designing and Sharing Cultural Artifacts

Introduction (10 minutes)

The session will begin with a discussion on the concept of cultural artifacts and symbols. The importance of artifacts in representing cultural values, traditions, and identities will be explained. Examples from various cultures, such as traditional clothing, ceremonial items, and symbolic objects, will be presented using either examples provided by the teacher, the workshop leader, students, and/or photographs. The significance of symbols and patterns in artifacts will also be covered, including how they convey messages and meanings. Specific symbols and patterns from different cultures will be shown to illustrate these concepts. If available, children will be encouraged to wear their traditional clothes and bring any cultural artifacts they would like to share with the class.

Activity: Designing Cultural Artifacts (50 minutes)

A video of Japanese candy art will be shown (the video will feature countries not represented by students in the workshop to ensure inclusivity). A discussion will be led on how the artist used Japanese cultural symbols in their art. The artifact creation activity will involve designing cultural artifacts using air-dry clay, paper mache, and various decorative materials. Students will incorporate symbols, patterns, and colors from their own culture into their designs. The workshop provider will demonstrate how to use air-dry clay to create shapes, and

how to apply paper mache either by hand or over balloons and plastic containers if needed. Additionally, markers, beads, buttons, glue, pipe cleaners, and sequins will be used to add texture and visual interest to the artifacts.

Materials for crafting will be distributed, and students will then have time to create their artifacts. They will be encouraged to consider the cultural significance of the symbols and patterns they selected. As students work, the workshop provider and teacher will move around the room to offer guidance, answer questions, and provide feedback, helping students refine their designs and incorporate meaningful cultural elements.

Wrap-Up: Artifact Gallery Walk (20 minutes)

Once the artifacts are complete and placed in a visible area to dry, a "Gallery Walk" will be organized. Students will view their peers' artifacts and share the stories behind their own creations. Each student will receive a worksheet to provide one piece of feedback and one question for each artifact they observe. The workshop provider and teacher will assist students in generating thoughtful feedback and analyzing the artifacts. (a sample of the worksheet is attached in Appendix B.) Following the Gallery Walk and worksheet completion, students will gather to discuss their observations and what they learned from their peers' artifacts. This reflection helps students practice their language and social skills while developing an appreciation for diverse cultural perspectives.

Final Reflection (10 minutes)

In the final reflection, students will briefly discuss their experiences with the art activities and what they learned about themselves and their peers' cultures. Guided by the workshop provider and teacher, students will share their favorite parts of the workshop and

how creating and presenting their artifacts helped them express their cultural stories. The discussion will focus on how the activities enhanced their understanding and language skills. The session will conclude with a quick recap of the workshop highlights and a thank you to all participants for their creativity and engagement.

Medium Used

- Air-dry clay
- Paper mâché supplies: Balloons, plastic containers (for molds), newspaper strips, and glue mixture
- Pipe cleaners
- Sequins
- Markers
- Beads
- Buttons
- Glue
- Scissors
- Plastic containers or trays
- Worksheet
- Projector or printed images for displaying cultural artworks

Resources

- Age-appropriate (9 to 12 years old) YouTube video

Link for the YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/udSzcAEjs4s?si=rIGCZvGRZqIYsicl>

General Reflection on the Workshop Project

The workshop is expected to have significantly enhanced third-grade students' language skills and cultural awareness through its engaging art-based activities. By starting with discussions on cultural identity and progressing through painting self-portraits, creating collages, and designing cultural artifacts, students had the opportunity to articulate and express their understanding of cultural concepts. The final session's Gallery Walk effectively allowed students to practice descriptive language, provide feedback, and discuss their peers' work, reinforcing their communication skills. The integration of art and culture not only supported their language development but also fostered a deeper appreciation for diversity and personal expression. Overall, the workshop aimed to enrich students' ability to discuss, describe, and reflect on cultural narratives, thereby contributing to their overall language proficiency and cultural competence.

Appendix B


Worksheet Template and Sample

LET'S TALK ABOUT Art

This worksheet is a fun way for you to share your thoughts and feelings about your classmate's artwork. You can use the sentence starters to help you.

I am _____ Today is _____

How I feel about the artwork:



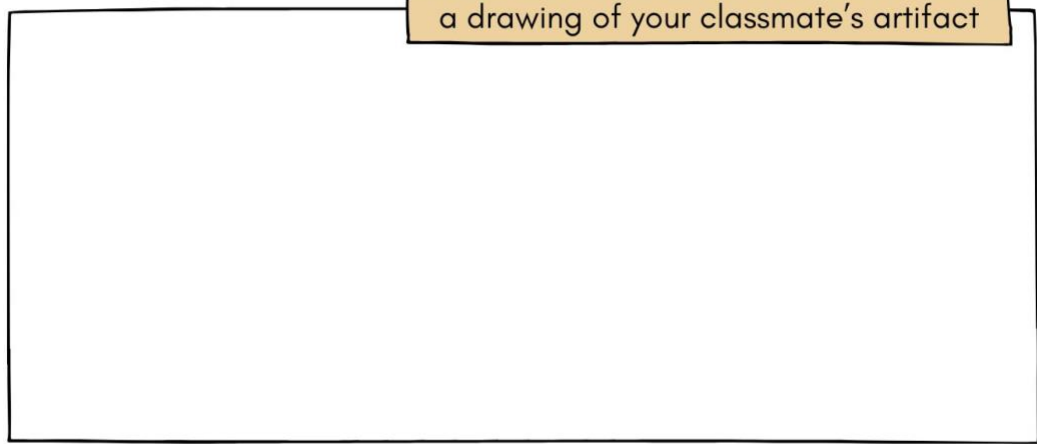
I felt ----- about yourclassmate's name's artwork because -----

The colors in this artifact reminds me of -----

I can see that your artwork tells a story about -----
The detail that shows this best is -----

My favourite part of this artwork is ----- because -----

a drawing of your classmate's artifact



Great job! Remember, there is no right or wrong way to express your feelings about art!